

## **Lessons from Proverbs**

"Wisdom calls aloud to the people. She cries out." Thus Proverbs 1:20-21 reveals the theme of one of the greatest books of the Bible. The Book of Proverbs is full of great tips and advice – and wisdom is praised more than anything else – more than 100 times. So, let's enjoy – and learn from – Solomon's great volume of wisdom. Proverbs deals with various aspects of the human experience and guides us in the way of right living. The book of Proverbs also encourages us to seek after wisdom, while also telling us where that wisdom can be found. This wisdom must be sought like buried treasure. It also must be viewed as a precious jewel. We must seek after it diligently and not let go of it for all our days. The truth is, true wisdom always begins with God. Ultimately, the book teaches that wisdom can be found, but only by those who search for it diligently. Are you ready to discover what wisdom this incredible book has for your life? Here are 20 life lessons from the Book of Proverbs.

1. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction. Proverbs 1:7

This verse teaches that the fear of God is foundational to true wisdom; all other types of learning are worthless unless built upon knowledge of the Lord Himself. Notice there is a sharp contrast between the wise life and the foolish life.

More than 3,000 years ago, King Solomon realized it isn't enough to just acknowledge God. We have to respect the Lord for who He is – the great Creator of all that exists, the wise Architect of this incredible universe, and the loving Father who is listening to your call out for help – and waiting to teach you just a little more of the lessons of life.

2. Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs. Proverbs 10:2

"Be nice!" your mother used to tell you. Caring about those around us isn't always easy. But it's so much better to live in harmony than in constant strife. It all starts with "Love one another!"

When Solomon refers to guarding the heart, he really means the inner core of a person, the thoughts, feelings, desires, will and choices that make that person who he or she is. The Bible tells us that our thoughts often dictate who we become. The mind of a person reflects who they really are, not simply their actions or words. This is why God examines the heart, not simply the outward appearance and what he or she appears to be.

3. A beautiful person who exercises no wisdom is like a gold ring in a pig's snout. Proverbs 11:12

Yes, she may have a great smile. Sure, he look like a classic Greek statue. But if they don't use the good sense God gives them, they are as useful as jewellery in a pigpen.

The book of Proverbs is a treasure trove of practical wisdom inspired by our Creator God. Each proverb is a short statement that uses every day, familiar illustrations to teach moral, ethical and spiritual principles. These principles apply to all people. The real appeal of this remarkable book is that it contains practical wisdom, understanding and knowledge that people can understand easily, at least on the surface.

4. Wealth is useless on the day of wrath, but virtue saves from death. Proverbs 11:4

The dying rich man instructed his butler to hang all of his gold in bags in the attic so when death came, he could take the money with him on his way to heaven. After he died, the butler checked in the attic. Yes, the bags of gold were still there. "I knew it," the butler muttered. "Should have hung them in the basement." It's a silly story, but the truth is wealth is temporary. However, virtue is eternal.

5. Truthful lips endure forever, the lying tongue for only a moment. Proverbs 12:19

Truth endures! Lies will be eventually exposed – and that's humiliating! When you tell the truth, you don't have to remember what you said. If you lie, you'd better take good notes so you can keep your bogus story straight. Telling the truth empowers us to change and grow. Change is not possible without confronting truth and truth is power. We should learn to use it and start bringing more integrity in our lives.

6. Every Word of God is flawless; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.  
Proverbs 30:5

We live in a time that tends to shrug its shoulders when confronted with error. We've grown accustomed to being lied to, and many people seem comfortable with the false notion that the Bible, too, contains errors. The doctrine of biblical inerrancy is an extremely important one because the truth does matter. The issue reflects on the character of God and is foundational to our understanding of everything that the Bible teaches.

7. He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honours God. Proverbs 14:31

Jesus focused on the poor and marginalized during His earthly ministry. While He was a king, he embraced the lowly and called the disciples to do the same. There are countless examples in the Bible of His commitment to helping those in need, and His desire for us to model the same love in our lives. Jesus warns us about ignoring those in need. John 3:17 tells us "If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?" We have a calling to help those who need help most.

8. A mild answer calms wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. Proverbs 15:1

Proverbs 15:1 speaks softly about a soft answer bringing calm to an agitated situation. Too often we react with anger, responding when we're frustrated and emotionally charged, when it's precisely the time to speak softly. Instead of being a reaction waiting to happen, we should follow the straightforward wisdom of this Proverb and speak softly. By doing this, we refrain from stirring up anger and causing more breakdown.

9. In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps. You and I will always be happier when following God's plan for our lives – instead of our own short-sighted schemes. Proverbs 16:9

This verse is a great place to start if you want to understand what the book of Proverbs is all about and what you can really take away from it. Proverbs is the central book of the "wisdom literature" of the Bible. In addition to Job, Psalms, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs in the Old Testament, Proverbs teaches us how to avoid the pitfalls of life.

10. When a man walks in integrity and justice, happy are his children. Proverbs 20:7

They take pride in their family. They know who they are! It's important that you start looking at your own values and what you want from the people that you involve in your life. Ask yourself, am I living out a life of integrity and self-respect? Am I being authentic in my personal relationships? If you're constantly allowing toxic people in your space, the answer to the previous questions is probably no.

11. A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold. Proverbs 22:1

What's in a name? In centuries past, a person's name was very important and even today, a person's name carries a lot of meaning. A good reputation is so valuable. You can't buy it. You have to earn it – and protect it with a life of honesty, generosity and integrity. You can put on perfume or aftershave and you'll smell good for a short time, but a good name is lasting. It stays with you wherever you go and in every setting in life.

12. Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6

Spending time with the kids and grandkids is such an important investment in the future. At first glance this sounds like a wonderful promise to parents – exactly what every God-fearing parent would love to have as a promise from the Creator of marriage and family. Naturally, Christian parents possess an unquenchable hope that their children will remain with the faith in which they are reared. Or, if their child departs for a while, the parents cling to the belief that the child will return. But it isn't a guarantee from God to parents that their children will stay in church. While this verse doesn't guarantee to parents that children reared faithfully will keep the faith as adults, we know that there are numerous benefits to teaching your child the way and obeying His way of life.

13. If you answer a silly question, you are just as silly as the person who asked it. That might explain why your spouse smiles and changes the subject so much of the time. Proverbs 26:4

The Book of Proverbs are statements of common sense that have been observed and verified by people over the course of centuries. Ultimately, Proverbs gives us keys to a better life now and forever. Do you trust what God is telling you?

14. If you find honey, eat just enough – too much of it, and you will be sick. Proverbs 25:16

Wisdom and knowledge like honey is sweet, desirable, excellent and nourishing. People should take care to keep within due bounds and not seek to be too wise or to exercise themselves in things too high for them and aim at that which is above their capacity. Instead, they should content themselves with what is within their reach. Don't be greedy. Don't take more than you need.

15. As a dog returns to his own vomit, so a fool repeats his folly. Proverbs 26:11

While this verse is disgusting, the lesson is that repeating mistakes over and over makes no sense.

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16. Like a thornbush in a drunkard's hand is a proverb in the mouth of a fool. Proverbs 26:9

Bottom line? Just because you can recite clever phrases doesn't mean you're wise. It's what you do with wisdom that counts. A wise person fears, reverences and obeys the Lord; a fool despises God's instruction and cannot be told what to do. The wise person is wise because he has started at the starting place; the fool has no foundation on which to build wisdom.

17. As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another. Proverbs 27:17

We've all seen this in action! Two people complement each other to that they become far more than they could ever be by themselves. No two people are exactly alike, which means that no two friends will have the same way of relating to us. Some we can trust to help us with certain tasks that our friends will not assist us in completing. Proverbs 27:17 have such a friend in mine. The passage likens the interaction between two faithful friends who are seeking the improvement of one another to the sharpening of an iron stone or other iron tool against an iron sharpener. Just as a man might sharpen the face of his sword against a sharpening iron in order to make it more suitable for combat, so does a faithful friend equip his friend for success by constructive criticism.

18. Where there is no vision, the people perish. Proverbs 29:18

We've all been in that terrible place where nobody knows what they're doing. All you can think about is getting out of there – because nothing is going to be accomplished. It is possible that in a quick reading of one translation of the Bible could lead to confusion as to this verse's meaning but if you pay attention to the sense of the text and the meaning of the specific words used, the meaning of the verse is obvious. While many people this verse is about the importance of vision and leadership, this verse says nothing of the importance of having a church that is led by vision or a visionary. Ironically, this verse should underscore the importance of honouring God's revelation and warn those who would water it down by intentional or unintentional misuse.

19. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. Proverbs 3:5

God is God and you are not. So, quit pretending you know more than the Creator of the Universe. This is a familiar passage to many. Verse five is a complementary pair of commands. We are told, positively to trust the Lord and negatively, not to trust our own understanding. Those two things are mutually exclusive. In other words, if we trust in the Lord, we cannot also depend upon our own ability to understand everything God is doing. Most of us have a desperate desire to understand, but in so many areas we must acknowledge that we cannot understand. Our limited understanding will lead us astray.

20. A capable, intelligent, and virtuous woman--who is he who can find her? She is far more precious than jewels and her value is far above rubies or pearls. Proverbs 31:10

Without a doubt, God gives women strength. As with everything God gives us, we then become the stewards of that gift. We also become responsible to use it right and

accountable for how we use it. A strong-willed woman isn't afraid to meet the world head-on. She's undeterred by those who say something can't be done. Her God-given passion produces clear-eyed purpose, deep compassion and a bold spirit that has the power to change the world.

## **Conclusion**

Ultimately, our goal is to approach Scripture reverently and prayerfully, and when we find something we do not understand, we pray harder, study more and if the answer still eludes us, humbly acknowledge our own limitations in the face of the perfect Word of God. The Book of Proverbs will help you channel this wisdom.