

REALLY
GOOD
ADVICE!

DAILY STUDY GUIDE



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What is a proverb?

Websters Dictionary defines it as: *a brief popular epigram or maxim*

Google defines it as: *a short, traditional, and memorable saying that expresses a perceived truth based on common sense, experience, or wisdom.*

The biblical definition based on the Hebrew word, “masal”: means, *sentences of ethical wisdom, a parable or in other words... a short saying that expresses a general truth for practical, godly living.*

The book of Proverbs is unlike any other book of the Bible. It is classified as “wisdom literature”, rather than historical or focused on God and salvation, and is a collection of sayings focused on practical and godly living. Topics include **wisdom, money, fools, relationships, and anger** among other important life subjects and are presented in short easy to remember sentences.

Whether we realize it or not, proverbial sayings from the Bible have made it into our daily language... for example, “*go the extra mile*” is a maxim/proverb for the time when the Roman soldiers of Jesus’ day would press people into service by forcing them to carry their gear. Traditionally the soldier was only allowed to have them carry it for one mile, but when Jesus was teaching this principle in the Sermon on the Mount ([Matthew 5:41](#)), He said, “*And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.*”, meaning when we follow God, we are to serve more than is required – willingly.

Although the book of Proverbs is focused on practical wisdom and daily living, it is easy to see that the wisdom comes from God and His word. The encouragement and instructions point us to Him and His commands for success in our Christian walk so we can be confident these are God’s wisdom and not man’s.

Week 1

Wisdom

- *Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance, Proverbs 1:5*
- *For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding; Proverbs 2:6*
- *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. Proverbs 3:5*
- *Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety. Proverbs 11:14*
- *A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion. Proverbs 18:2*
- *The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps. Proverbs 16:9*

Monday, Day 1

Memory Verse: Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance, Proverbs 1:5

What is the definition of “wisdom”? Many years ago, there was a nursery rhyme called, “A Wise Old Owl” that was used to teach that wisdom came from listening more than speaking. It went like this...

A wise old owl lived in an oak;

The more he saw, the less he spoke;

The less he spoke, the more he heard;

Why can't we all be like that wise old bird?

If we were to ask, “what makes the owl wise”, we find that their large forward-facing eyes make them look wise, giving them a human quality and the perception of contemplation. Interestingly, the owl was the symbol for the goddess Athena in Greek mythology, symbolizing skill, strategy and foresight, and it is the closest to the definition of the word wisdom in today’s verses. In Proverbs 1:2, the Hebrew word for wisdom is, *khokmah* and could be defined as “moral skill” – a type of skill that produces something of value as that of a craftsman. Moral skill, however, refers to a type of living that produces value, and in this case the value that comes from living faithfully according to God’s word. This week we will learn from the Proverbs different aspects of wisdom and where it comes from.

Read: [Proverbs 1:1-7](#)

Think: In today’s passage, who wrote the Proverbs?

What is their purpose?

Why is this important for us to know?

Engage: Would you consider yourself wise? Why or why not?

Although wisdom includes knowledge, it is not just knowing information. Many define wisdom as “knowledge that is applied”. For Christians, this takes us from knowing what God says to applying or practicing it. When it comes to your faith, do you have knowledge and/or wisdom? What is at least one Christian principle or bible verse you know?

How can you practice wisdom through application of that verse?

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for the wisdom of Your word. Help me to know the difference between knowing and practicing what I learn from Your word. Help me to hear more and speak less and live with “moral skill” so that I will grow in faithfulness to You, Amen.

Additional Verses: [Proverbs 2:6](#), [Proverbs 4:7](#), [Proverbs 9:9-10](#), [Proverbs 16:16](#)

Tuesday, Day 2

Memory Verse: For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding; Proverbs 2:6

There are many voices in our world these days telling us how to live, what to think or believe, what is good and what is bad... how do you choose which voice to listen to? How do you know if the wisdom they offer is real? Wisdom must have a source, a foundation, and biblically speaking there are only two options... God or Satan. If the foundation of our wisdom is not from God, it is from Satan – no matter how it is packaged and sold. Wisdom must be sought out and, in many cases, tested for truth. In [Matthew 7:24-27](#), Jesus taught that the person who *listens* to His words and does them is like a man who built his house on the rock. When the storms came his house stood firm – that’s what godly wisdom does for us when we are going through the storms of life... we are able to stand firm.

Read: [Proverbs 2:1-15](#)

Think: In today's reading, how do you gain wisdom (vs. 1-5)?

King Solomon knew from personal experience that true wisdom for all matters of life came from God. As a new king ruling over Israel, God came to Solomon in a dream and asked Solomon what he wanted God to give him ([1 Kings 3:5-12](#)) and rather than asking God for wealth or fame or an easy life, he asked God for the wisdom to lead His people. God was pleased with his request, so He gave Solomon incredible wisdom. According to the remaining verses, if we follow his example and seek God for wisdom, what can we look forward to?

How does this encourage you?

Engage: What is a decision or situation you have prayed for recently?

What did you ask God for in the prayer?

It is common for many to ask that God would work things out for our benefit or even for the best of others. However, do you or have you asked God for wisdom? If you haven't, why not?

If you have, what was the result?

Praying for wisdom doesn't mean we will suddenly know everything and have all the answers, it means God will show us how to apply His word in every area *when the moment of need arises*. This wisdom is based on His word, His character, His nature, and biblical principles so it would be incorrect for us to expect God to give us wisdom if we aren't seeking Him, reading our Bible, and praying. If you need godly wisdom in your life right now, how can you seek it out each day?

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, I ask for Your wisdom in my life. I pray for each situation, each decision, and in every thought, word and deed I will seek You first. Forgive me for any wrong expectations I may have had or selfishness in my requests. I thank You that You will give me abundant wisdom when I need it. Amen

Additional Verses: [Proverbs 8:11](#), [Proverbs 10:25](#), [Proverbs 16:16](#), [James 1:5](#)

Wednesday, Day 3

Memory Verse: Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. Proverbs 3:5

The hope of every parent is to pass on solid teaching and advice so their children will grow into productive and good people. The question is, what are we teaching our children and where did we come up with this advice or instruction? Throughout the last several generations, what people thought was important and solid instruction has radically changed. For example, methods of disciplining children – how are they different today than 50 years ago? Even in the adult world, how have opinions about gender identity changed? What about mental health? Relationships? These are just some examples of how “our understanding” about important aspects of life have shifted over the years. If the standards continue to change, how can we remain constant in our convictions and understanding?

Read: [Proverbs 3:1-8](#)

Think: In today’s verses, what are we to remain steadfast in?

How many times is the heart mentioned in these verses?

What does this indicate about where we are to store God’s word?

The word “heart” in this passage is *labe* in Hebrew and refers to the inner man (person), inner character and the seat of the emotions. How does this demonstrate that godly wisdom is more than head knowledge?

We are often taught to either follow our heart or “go with what you know” which is why our world is constantly changing the rules. What Solomon is teaching here is that our own, or human, understanding is flawed and self-motivated which will lead us to potentially damaging results. It also ignores what God is doing in our life and can hinder our ability to hear His direction clearly. According to these verses, if we acknowledge God in ALL our ways, what will He do?

Engage: God’s wisdom is constant – it never changes or based on popular opinion. When you are facing a difficult situation, making an important decision or change, or even planning something fun, do you rely on your past experiences to drive your current decisions? Why/why not?

Do you make decisions based on your own wisdom or gut instincts? Truthfully, all of this can be a part of the process! We should always examine our heart and motives, our past choices – good and bad, to lead us to the right path. However, Who makes our path if we let Him?

This is an incredible promise! When we put God first and our heart’s desire is to glorify Him in the process, He WILL lead us in the right direction. What we need to remember is that His path may not be the one we want or expect but it will always be the one that is best. How does this encourage or challenge you?

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to acknowledge You in every area of my life. I want to trust You to lead me in making decisions because I know You will do what is best for me and my family. Thank you for my past experiences and the understanding they have given me – help me to learn and grow from them. Amen

Additional Verses: [Proverbs 12:15](#), [Proverbs 23:12](#), [Proverbs 23:15](#), [Deuteronomy 30:14](#)

Thursday, Day 4

Memory Verse: Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety. Proverbs 11:14

It is a blessed person who has people in their life they can go to for advice. However, for Christians, it is important that we go to people who will give biblical advice and not just personal opinion. These days, Google is probably the most popular “counselor” many people have – let’s face it, it is so easy to type in our question and have an answer in seconds. In asking Google how many times a day it is asked for advice, the answer was (in general) between 8.5 and 16.4 billion searches - of that, 1 billion is health advice, 8.5% of queries are practical and “how-to” searches, and a recent survey found that 1 in 3 Americans go to Google for existential questions about life and the human condition. It is also noted that how people search is changing – meaning they are “increasingly turning to platforms like TikTok, Reddit, and ChatGPT for personal recommendations and “human-vetted” advice”. While looking to Google isn’t always a bad thing, when it comes to real wisdom for the important stuff, we need to be mindful of who we are listening to, so who do we go to?

Read: [Proverbs 13:9-10](#) and [20](#)

Think: Wisdom and good advice are often passed down to us through our grandparents and parents. If you had the gift of having this, what is the best advice or wisdom they gave you?

King Solomon also had the gift of a father who gave him some solid advice. Read [Psalm 1:1-2](#) and [Psalm 119:9](#) and you’ll quickly see some of the instructions and wisdom King David, Solomon’s father, gave him and as you read through the Proverbs, you will recognize his father’s advice as well as the wisdom God gave him. In today’s reading, we see two aspects of advice or counsel... in verses 9-10, what do those who take good advice gain?

In verse 20, how is a person influenced by the type of person they choose to listen to?

In your friend group or family, who can you trust to give good counsel?

Is it biblically based? As Christians, we must understand that even when a friend or family loves us, the advice they give may not always be wise. We should always have someone we know will point us to the Bible for sound counsel rather than affirm us in our feelings, thoughts, or actions (if they are sinful). Even if it is counsel that is hard to hear or even painful, the person who truly loves you will guide you on the godly path (See [Proverbs 27:6](#))

Engage: God created us for relationship with Him and others, so it is natural for us to seek out people who can help us through challenging times. In these moments, who do you tend to talk to?

Is it someone who will tell you what you want to hear or be truthful if you're in the wrong? If you haven't thought about this, take a moment to examine your motives in who you choose to talk to. This doesn't mean ending friendships or the need to quit sharing about your life, it is just a matter of choosing the right person for the "job". Think of it this way, you wouldn't go to a mechanic to fix a broken bone, nor would you ask a toddler for marriage advice! Most importantly, we have One who is our counselor at all times... the Holy Spirit ([John 14:26](#)) whom God sent after Jesus was crucified to teach, guide, and be our advocate. And If needed, as a church, we are here to help you find answers. Feel free to call and make an appointment to talk, our number is 760-384-3333.

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for sending Your Holy Spirit to guide me into all truth. I pray that You will guide me to the people who will help me grow in faith and maturity. I also pray that I can be a godly friend and counsel for others. Amen

Additional Verses: [Proverbs 15:22](#), [Proverbs 27:17](#), [Proverbs 27:12](#)

Friday, Day 5

Memory Verse: A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion. Proverbs 18:2

In a quote attributed to Albert Einstein, it has been said that the definition of insanity is “doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results”. This can also describe the person the Bible calls a *fool*, someone who refuses to learn or change but insists on going their own way. The book of Proverbs has much to say about the fool, especially when it comes to discerning those who are unwise or foolish in their words and actions. This isn’t a matter of intellect - it is a matter of choice – there are many very smart people who do very foolish things or act a fool. You may know some!

Read: [Proverbs 17:7-28](#)

Think: In this passage, how is the fool described?

We may recognize the characteristics of the fool as the person who can’t control their tongue – they’re always talking. They like to argue their point even if it’s wrong. This person also continues actions and behaviors even after they have been disciplined and as we’ve already mentioned, they insist on going their own way, even if what they’re doing is painful or causing harm to themselves and others. Do you know anyone like this? Have you behaved this way? Why do you think it is important for us to know this?

Turn to [1 Corinthians 15:33](#), what does this verse say about the dangers of keeping “bad company”?

It seems the Bible warns of those considered fools because Christians should not behave that way nor should we spend too much time with them. In fact, the hardest part of this is when we face making the decision to quit pursuing a person for the purpose of salvation because they continually reject Christ. Either they’re not interested or they argue they “don’t have time”. In [Matthew 7:6](#), Jesus makes a statement that sounds confusing and harsh but describes this perfectly. How does He teach this principle?

What Jesus is teaching is that we must use discernment when dealing with others, especially when correcting someone or sharing the Gospel. Although He is not telling us to stop, He is saying that we shouldn’t spend all our time and energy going after the person who is hostile to God – instead,

spend more time with those who are open to hearing. The same goes for the person who says they're Christian but refuses correction. There comes the moment when we love them, we pray for them, we are there for them when they are ready, but we must let them go their own way.

Engage: Is there someone in your life you have been trying to bring to Christ that has been hostile toward you and Christianity? Keep in mind that today's lesson is about discerning whether this is fruitful. If you can have good, honest conversation with the person where you both share, then please don't stop! But if the person just wants to argue without listening or makes fun of Christianity, then it may be time to stop. This doesn't mean our witness stops! There are other ways to witness and share the gospel without saying anything. Turn to [1 Peter 3:1-2](#), what does this verse teach?

Although this verse mentions wives, the principle applies to every other relationship we have. Does your conduct testify to your faith in Christ? How can you share the gospel through your actions, attitude, and behavior?

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, please help me discern rightly if there is anyone in my life who is living as a fool. I also ask that you help me live as a testimony to Jesus in every area of my life so they may be won over to You without me saying anything. Please show me if or where I have been a fool and thank you for giving me all I need to change. Amen

Additional Verses: [Romans 1:20-22](#), [Proverbs 18:6-7](#), [Proverbs 14:7-9](#)

Saturday, Day 6

Memory Verse: The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.

Proverbs 16:9

There is a saying, “the devil’s in the details” ... meaning it is often in the details of planning and carrying out the plan where success or failure is determined. But what if the reality is that God is in the details? Are you a person who makes plans or are you more spontaneous? There’s probably a little of both in all of us, but it is usually readily recognizable by how we choose to function in life. The reason we ask is because when a person is Christian, we must recognize that God is and should be part of all we plan for or do spontaneously – He IS concerned with and interested in the details of our life!

Read: [Proverbs 16:1-9](#)

Think: In this portion of Proverbs 16, we have a lesson in planning. Who makes plans?

Who are we to take our plans to?

What happens when we do?

We must not make the mistake of thinking these verses are about God giving His stamp of approval on everything we want to do! Even if our plans are good, they may not be what He has for us. Since God is eternal (outside of time) He sees past, present, and future – so He knows what is to come and will guide us in our planning, but we must commit our plans to Him. This means we acknowledge He is in control, not us. How easy is this for you to do? This is a major shift in thinking as a Christian, God is and wants to plan with us, He is and wants to be involved in EVERY detail – not to control us but to give us the best outcome possible - for us and His glory.

Engage: What plans do you currently have? It can be a job change, a major purchase, taking the next step in a relationship, a parenting situation, health issues, or even planning a vacation. Have you invited God into the planning process? In what way?

Has it been a prayer that it will go the way you want or have you handed every detail to Him? This can be difficult because we fear He will change our plans... and sometimes He does! Are you willing to accept that? Why/why not?

If we fight against God in this, we will invite the devil into the details. How can you take your current plans and give them to God?

The encouragement is that it is not required to stop everything and wait for God's approval, but simply move forward with your plans but pray, read, and listen for His voice and direction – He WILL guide you to the best outcome.

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, I give my plans to You and ask for Your direction. Help me to have peace in this process and recognize and discern where You are leading me. I thank You that Your plans are better and greater than mine and are for my good. Amen

Additional Verses: [Psalm 37:4-5](#), [Isaiah 55:8-9](#), [James 4:13-15](#)

Week 2

Words

- A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver. Proverbs 25:11
- For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, quarreling ceases. Proverbs 26:20
- A lying tongue hates its victims, and a flattering mouth works ruin. Proverbs 26:28
- A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. Proverbs 15:1
- Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Proverbs 27:5
- There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. Proverbs 12:18

Monday, Day 1

Memory Verse: A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver. Proverbs 25:11

It is said, there is life and death in the power of the tongue, [Proverbs 18:21](#). Some take this to mean we can speak things into existence, good or bad. This is partially true...

There was a little girl who took ice skating lessons. She loved skating but didn't have a competitive spirit. One time, her regular skating instructor broke his ankle and so his coach took on his students for a time. This coach was much harsher than her normal teacher. He pushed, he yelled, he criticized everything she did until she was at the point of tears and wanting to give up. Then one day, she managed a perfect spin and the coach smiled and said, "good job!". She was over the moon! His encouraging words and praise gave her the strength to keep trying. Have you had a similar experience with how someone speaks to you? We may not have literal power to speak things into existence, but the evidence shows we have the ability to lift up or tear down, encourage or discourage – it is our choice.

Read: [Proverbs 25:11-14](#)

Think: Not only is what we say important, but the timing of what we say and how we say it are equally important. Have you ever chosen poor timing to tell someone bad news, correct them, or change their plans? How did it go?

If you were the recipient of poorly timed and chosen words, how did it impact you?

In today's passage, how is good timing of what we say described?

How is bad timing described?

The right words at the right time have value and are refreshing to a person. Poorly chosen and timed words are like clouds that promise rain but give nothing. Jesus takes this subject very

seriously... read [Matthew 7:34-37](#). In these verses, what does He tell us about the source of our words?

Why is this important?

Engage: Are you mindful of how you speak to people? It can be very easy to say nice and encouraging things when everything is going well, it is when we are squeezed that our sinful nature can be revealed. The verses in Matthew have been described this way... if a glass of milk is shaken, what will spill out? The obvious answer is milk! It is the same with us, when we are shaken, pushed, tested and tried, what comes out? This is a very sobering lesson for all of us! The good news is that if it is your heart's desire to honor God with your words, then all you need to do is ask for forgiveness when you slip up. However, we must never make excuses for how we talk. When it comes to how you speak to others, evaluate your words and the motive in them through the lens of today's proverbs... do your words have or impart value (meaning are they encouraging, motivating, and uplifting even when you need to correct or discipline someone)? Are your words refreshing to others? Are they as life giving as cold water on a hot summer day in Ridgecrest? As you consider these questions, write a few ways you can practice this with your spouse, children, family, friends, and coworkers. If necessary, go back to anyone you need to and ask forgiveness for any unkind, harsh or foul words.

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, please forgive me for any hurtful or unkind words I have spoken to others. Please search my heart and help me speak only words that will build others up. Help me learn to use words that will honor You. Amen

Additional Verses: [Proverbs 13:3](#), [Proverbs 17:5](#), [Ephesians 4:29](#)

Tuesday, Day 2

Memory Verse: For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, quarreling ceases. Proverbs 26:20

If you're standing in line at the grocery store, you may have noticed magazines and tabloids like People, or The National Enquirer (enquiring minds want to know 😊) or "Star" magazine.

Magazines like these thrive on telling sordid, and often made up, details of the lives of the rich and famous. It's hard not to take a peek and see what they're up to! However, it is nothing more than gossip for the purpose of... well, nothing. There is no real purpose in gossip other than to tear others down. But there is something tempting about hearing negative things about others that make us feel better or superior. This is NOT new. Did you know that the "gossip column" got its start in the 1700's? With the rise of print media, reporting on the goings-on of high society began and over several hundred years developed focusing on the Hollywood elite. Today, with the click of a button, we have access to all forms of media that will tell us what's happening with the celebrities we follow. All for a brief moment of sinful satisfaction. Another interesting fact is that the reason gossip is so tempting and addictive is because there is a real hormonal response when we engage in gossip. Hormones like Oxytocin that create a sense of calm and Dopamine that creates a feel-good response are powerful and addictive.

Read: [Proverbs 26:18-22](#)

Think: Gossip, by definition, is the act of revealing personal information or rumors about another. If we think about it, when Satan came to Eve in the Garden of Eden, and asked her "did God really say?" ([Genesis 3:1](#)), he not only caused her to doubt God, but he was gossiping! His goal was to start a false rumor of God's motive for His creation. In today's passage, what is needed to keep gossip going?

Gossip, quarreling, strife, are all like a fire that requires a source of energy to stay lit. Fires need wood and oxygen, what does gossip and any other negative and unproductive talk need to keep going?

Engage: It is doubtful there's a person alive who hasn't engaged in a juicy piece of gossip. However, For Christians, the Bible is clear this should not be part of our character, rather love is the driving force in our life. If we say we love God and others, then shouldn't our words match? In [1 Corinthians 13:4-7](#), the apostle Paul teaches us the way of love – list the characteristics here.

What does this have to do with gossip? If Jesus taught that our words reveal what is in our heart, then the qualities/responses Paul lists are what we should find if we look deep inside. Each attitude

or response Paul mentions is often demonstrated through words – take a few minutes to write how you can practice each quality as you talk with people.

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, please forgive me for engaging in any form of gossip, intentionally and unintentionally. Please help me to be sensitive and mindful to not start gossip and encourage others to not gossip as well. Help me to always say uplifting and kind words to others. Amen

Additional Verses: [Ephesians 5:4](#), [Proverbs 11:13](#), [Proverbs 16:24](#), [Proverbs 26:2](#) (NLT)

Wednesday, Day 3

Memory Verse: A lying tongue hates its victims, and a flattering mouth works ruin.
Proverbs 26:28

We all know the person we would describe as a “smooth talker” or “two faced”. This is the person who is either very flattering with their words to get what they want or will say one thing to a person’s face while doing something else behind their back, and both traits are often found in the same person. In the movie world, we see these traits in characters like Captain Jack Sparrow from *Pirates of the Caribbean* or Loki from *Avengers* – the problem with these is that Hollywood often portrays them as likeable scoundrels! In real life these traits are hurtful and damaging and often found in people who hold leadership positions and even in those we love.

Read: [Proverbs 26:23-28](#)

Think: Today’s verses clearly describe the person who uses words to manipulate or deceive. How are their words and actions described?

Do you know people like this? How do you interact with them, or do you avoid them?

Verse 25 gives advice on what to do, what is it?

This verse mentions seven abominations in their heart. If we go to [Proverbs 6:16-19](#), Solomon names seven things that are an abomination to the Lord. What are they?

It is hard to say whether these are related but looking at the list, do these traits fit the person we find in today's passage? Of course this isn't a complete list of sins, but in general cover every sin a person can commit against the Lord and people.

Engage: Why is it important for us to learn about this?

When we learned about the person who is a fool, we learned that although there may be times when we need to know when to stop spending great effort in sharing the Gospel, we never really stop – we change strategies. Even with the person who lies, manipulates, exaggerates, or deceives, we may know not to believe them, but we may find the need to change strategies when we must interact with them. If we are not careful, we can fall into sin when we have to be around people like this at work, at school, in our family, or even church! What sin are we tempted with in this situation? We can fall into gossip, hardness of heart toward them, we might stop praying for them, and so on. So how can you maintain a heart of love and humility with them?

If the person says they are a believer, what is your responsibility?

Turn to [Galatians 6:1-5](#) and [Matthew 18:15](#), what are we taught in these verses?

First, we must never assume anything, whether motive or even that the person is aware of their behavior – they may be a new Christian. However, if it is clear they are intentional, then we should follow [Matthew 18:16-17](#) and in some cases [1 Corinthians 5:11-13](#). In reading these verses, do they seem harsh? We live in a world that tolerates sin so when we read what the Bible teaches about discipline issues, it may seem overly harsh. But Jesus warns the church that a little leaven, or sin, leavens the whole lump of dough. He is meaning that a tiny sin can cause great harm to Christians and the church.

Finally, if the person is not a believer, then our strategy is to witness to them through how we interact with them, all the while checking ourselves that we don't sin against them and the Lord.

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, please help me to interact with others in a way that will honor You. Please help me to always speak the truth in love to all people and never use deception, lies or exaggeration. I pray for the people I know who struggle with this, that they would see how it hurts themselves and others and will choose to stop, and choose to follow You. Show me how I can help them. Amen

Additional Verses: [Proverbs 30:10](#), [Proverbs 30:32](#)

Thursday, Day 4

Memory Verse: A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Proverbs 15:1

There is truth to the saying, “you can catch more flies with honey than vinegar” – in fact this is a great example of a modern-day proverb. The lesson here is that we can accomplish so much more when we speak and act with kindness than angry demands. If you have ever been spoken to in an angry and demanding tone, you know it does nothing to motivate you to respond nicely.

However, even when a task is burdensome, when we're asked nicely we're more inclined to help. However, in our world, even those who are normally nice people may feel the need to speak to others in a harsh and demanding way, thinking it is either expected or needed to accomplish tasks – this can be especially true in the workplace, but it's not the only area it can be a problem.

Read: [Proverbs 15:4](#), [23](#) and [26-29](#)

Think: In these verses, how do kind words help others?

In verse 28, how does the righteous person answer?

In these verses, the wicked person is noted... how does this hinder their relationship with God and their prayers?

Engage: There is so much to gain from controlling our tongue! And that's the real issue – CONTROL! People try to control others with anger, belittling, and condescending tones. Parents can do it to children, children to parents, employers to employees, husbands and wives to each other... why does this happen?

How we answer a person will impact all our relationships – how are you doing in this? When your children call for you, how do you answer them? What tends to wear down your ability to speak with gentleness?

Fatigue, stress, lack of sleep, pain, even hunger can impact how we respond and interact with others – take a moment to evaluate if there is anything you need to change if you are having a hard time with this. Do you speak before you think? Why/why not?

Our self-evaluation must be thorough in this area so we don't miss the times we respond with sarcasm, curtness, blunt rudeness, or insults.

The one that will impact how we respond to others is our quiet time with God. This time is for personal reflection, reading our Bible to be guided and corrected by God, praying to hear from Him. It is also a mental reset! It is not uncommon for our quiet time to be interrupted by schedule changes, life changes, or busyness, and it is noticeable within a few days how it impacts our ability to handle stress. Additionally, the quality of our time with God is as important – in your quiet time, is it quality time for the purpose of relationship or just checking the box? It is our relationship with

God that determines the quality of every area of our life and one of the most obvious changes we experience as Christians is in our words.

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, please show me where I am using harsh, hurtful, or demanding words. Also show me where I am speaking in a way that is coarse, irreverent, disrespectful, or sarcastic. I also ask that you show me if our quiet time has lacked quality and I am just checking boxes. If I have, please forgive me. Amen

Additional Verses: [Ephesians 4:31-32](#), [Ephesians 6:4](#),

Friday, Day 5

Memory Verse: Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Proverbs 27:5

There was a young woman who worked in a veterinary hospital. Part of her job was to fill prescriptions for the animals, and one day she mistakenly overfilled a prescription. Although the pet's owner discovered the error, thankfully, and returned the bottle, the veterinarian chose to call the young woman into the exam room and scold her in front of the owner. She was obviously mortified and saddened. Two lessons were learned that day – be more careful when filling prescriptions and the veterinarian was an unkind man. If you have ever been publicly rebuked in front of people, you know how embarrassing and hurtful it can be! Why is it hurtful? Even if it is deserved or needed, when done without love, it is a blow to our soul and often the relationship we may have with our rebuker.

Read: [Proverbs 3:11-12](#)

Think: Discipline comes in many forms from a variety of sources. The one source we should always be open to is God and His word. In today's verses how are we to view God's discipline?

What is the reason He disciplines us?

Engage: Discipline, at its core, is a matter of training, correcting, and in many cases, rebuking a person. Since God loves us and is completely holy and just, His discipline is ALWAYS for our good – whether we realize it or not. Have you been disciplined by God? In what way?

Discipline often comes through our Bible... read [Hebrews 4:12](#), how is God's word described?

Have you experienced this? How did it change you?

Discipline can also come through consequences and even other people but when it is from God, it is always from pure love.

This brings us to our memory verse and where we began the day. What is open rebuke?

What is hidden love?

Open rebuke isn't an endorsement of publicly embarrassing someone, it has the same heart as God in the motive and approach when it is necessary to rebuke or correct someone. Ideally this happens in private, with much preparation and prayer. If you are in any situation, whether parenting, work-related, etc., when you need to have this kind of hard conversation with someone, how much preparation do you put into it?

Is your goal for the person to help them improve? If it is with another Christian, what is your goal?

To the question of hidden love, this isn't describing a secret feeling for someone but the misplaced idea that love "overlooks" problems. Some call this unconditional love, but the problem is the definition. Should we love others always regardless of circumstances? Of course! But does this mean we are obligated to turn a blind eye to sin and damaging behavior or actions? Some people may believe real love is absent of discipline and rebuke, but this is the most unloving thing we can do – our world is proof of that. Have you overlooked disciplining or correcting anyone out of fear

or the misunderstanding that it is showing unconditional love? If so, think of how you can do this from the heart of godly love.

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for loving me enough to discipline me. Help me to be humble and accept it, knowing that it is what is best for me. When I need to correct someone else, please help me to have Your heart and give me the right motive and words. Amen

Additional Verses: [Proverbs 13:18](#), [Proverbs 17:10](#), [Proverbs 25:12](#)

Saturday, Day 6

Memory Verse: There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. Proverbs 12:18

“I’m sorry” ... there is more power and hope in these two words than anything else we can say. You may be thinking, “I love you” ranks higher, and it can, however a person can say I love you many times a day and still say hurtful, deceptive, or demeaning things. And we do! As we have learned about how important our words are, we may have found we have work to do. Even as Christians, we are always in the process of changing and growing and this is probably one of the most difficult areas of growth. As you read today’s verses, you will find they are reminders and encouragements of what we have already learned, so today just open your heart and mind to God and let Him grow you in this area.

Read: [Proverbs 12:16-25](#)

Think: As you read through these verses, list how honesty, truth and encouragement impact others and ourselves.

Also list how lying, rash words, deceit and wickedness impact others and ourselves.

Engage: Have you ever known a person who always seemed to have the right thing to say at the right time? Maybe you never hear them say anything negative about anyone? What do you notice about how they respond?

What is it like to be around them?

You might think of things like, it is peaceful and pleasant. Do you want to be like that and have that kind of impact on people? Even those of us who truly struggle in our words can accomplish this, we simply need to submit ourselves to God and practice what we've learned. For some, it may mean writing down a prayerfully thought-out response to practice saying it. Often, we stumble in our words when we haven't prepared ourselves in advance. We know when we're tempted to gossip, lie, or say hurtful things so our success is being proactive, prepared, and practiced. Our goal is to respond not react – reactions are usually made from an emotionally charged situation whereas responses take a step back to gather thoughts, pray, and choose words wisely. Do you tend to be reactive or responsive?

If you are reactive how can you change this?

If needed, follow the plan of written and practiced response.

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for giving us Your word to teach me about words. I pray that my words will always honor You and be a good testimony to who You are. Continue to help me learn to control my tongue and have the right heart when speaking to others. Amen

Additional Verses: [James 3:8-10](#), [Colossians 3:16-17](#)

Week 3

Money

- The rich and the poor meet together, the LORD is the Maker of them all. Proverbs 22:2
- Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity than a rich man who is crooked in his ways. Proverbs 28:6
- The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is the slave of the lender. Proverbs 22:7
- The sluggard says, "There is a lion outside! I shall be killed in the streets!" Proverbs 22:13
- Work brings profit, but mere talk leads to poverty! Proverbs 14:23
- Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will repay him for his deed. Proverbs 19:17

Monday, Day 1

Memory Verse: The rich and the poor meet together, the LORD is the Maker of them all.

Proverbs 22:2

There are so many quotes, proverbs, and maxims about money, wealth, and material possessions... “the one with the most toys wins”, “you can’t take it with you”, “money makes the world go around” – even songs talk about it, “too much month at the end of the money”! These are just some oldie-but-goodies. The truth is that money is important for living but we may find our perspective on it differs from God’s. What is your view of money? Is it a necessary evil? Is it yours to do with what you want? Love it or hate it, we do have a responsibility in how we view it and use it and in today’s world of emphasizing the differences between the “haves” and “have-nots”, we need a biblical understanding of the purpose of money.

Read: [Proverbs 22:1-2](#)

Think: What wisdom do you learn about wealth from these two verses?

Engage: King Solomon was an insanely rich man (See [2 Chronicles 1:11-12](#) and [2 Chronicles 9:13-28](#)). Because he asked for wisdom to govern Israel rather than riches, God not only gave him incredible wisdom but incredible wealth. Many people are under the impression that God hates money, but that is not true. There are many examples in the Bible of people who are wealthy and godly – it’s our attitude about it and what we choose to do with it that matters. Turn to [Psalm 24:1](#), according to this verse, who owns everything – including money?

Knowing this, who truly owns your money?

Based on today’s verses, it is God’s sovereign decision who will get what. How does this impact or challenge you?

Although it is true you may work hard for a living, and your job may pay very well, the question is, who gave you the job? Even if you don’t make much, as long as you are doing your best, you can still know that God is giving you what He wants you to have. The challenge in this is we might think

God owes us something, or we deserve more, but we must always check our attitude as well as how we handle the money we have. Do you save? Do you spend money you don't have on selfish things? What are your financial priorities and goals? Do you believe God owes you or are you thankful for what He's given you?

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for all you have given me. I want to honor you with my money and how I handle it. Help me to be financially responsible with what is rightfully Yours. Amen

Additional Verses: [Proverbs 11:4](#), [Proverbs 12:9](#), [Proverbs 19:4](#), [Proverbs 28:11](#)

Tuesday, Day 2

Memory Verse: Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity than a rich man who is crooked in his ways. Proverbs 28:6

Greed... it is defined in websters dictionary as *"a selfish and excessive desire for more of something (such as money) than is needed"*. Usually associated with money, greed is demonstrated in many ways – the excessive desire for food, status, attention, or hoarding. It is listed as one of the "seven deadly sins" (www.gotquestions.org/seven-deadly-sins.html) that we are to avoid. But the question is, why do people become greedy? Are they born that way? Did something happen that caused it? Is it fear of having nothing? Pride? Those are questions we may or may not have the answers to, but whether we view ourselves as greedy or not, we should always be willing to take a look inside our own heart.

Read: [Proverbs 15:27](#)

Think: To be clear, greed is not the same as wisely saving money. The problem with greed is the motive behind it – it is purely selfish and unwilling to share with others. There are a few examples in the Bible of how greed can impact or even destroy our relationship with God. Turn to [1 Timothy 6:9-10](#), in these verses, what is the person's desire and heart?

What is the danger of the pursuit of riches?

Does this mean that gaining wealth is always bad? Let's look at two examples; Read [Luke 19:1-9](#) and [Luke 18:18-25](#), what is the difference between these two men in their attitudes about money?

The lesson here is that money is not the issue, but the pursuit of it can be a terrible stumbling block.

Engage: For some people who grew up extremely poor, they run hard after money out of fear. Some who went without food and experienced true hunger overeat for fear of not having enough. Others simply want more – of everything. Why do you think this happens?

You may not have ever experienced this kind of extreme circumstance, but there may be something that you are greedy for. Take a moment to check yourself for this. Children and even adults can be greedy for attention, we can be greedy for more time to ourselves, or life on earth. However, is there ever a time when greed can be good? This may be a stretch, but if greed is motivated by desire and a longing for more, what if we were greedy for God? What if we pursued time with Him and faithful living as much as we pursued other things? Of course, like all things, in our humanity, if we're not careful, even this can become a bad thing. How can we avoid that?

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, check my heart and motives and show me if I am greedy anywhere in my life. If I have become selfish and unwilling to share what You have given me with others, I will commit to letting go of selfishly holding on to things and use what You have given me to help others. Amen

Additional Verses: [Proverbs 1:19](#), [Proverbs 20:17](#), [Proverbs 27:20](#)

Wednesday, Day 3

Memory Verse: The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is the slave of the lender.

Proverbs 22:7

It seems the reality of debt, especially monetary debt, has been around since the beginning of time. The need to borrow from others when we don't have what is necessary is both a good and bad situation. It is good that we can rely on others to help, however there is a great deal of caution in doing so. The average debt for Americans today runs roughly around \$105,000 per person, including mortgages, with Gen X being the group with the highest amount of debt at approximately \$158,108. Living with a large amount of debt has become so normal that for many people, living debt free is a dream that never comes true.

Read: [Proverbs 22:26-27](#) (NLT)

Think: In the verses above, as well as the memory verse, what is the caution for those in debt?

Engage: Do you know approximately how much debt you owe? Do you think carrying large amounts of debt is normal? Do you expect or hope to be debt free? Do you have a plan for this? For many, we simply accept the fact that we will always have debt, at least a mortgage and car payment – or two. However, how would your life be different if you didn't have debt? Would you have more freedom? If so, what way?

The problem for most people is they don't own their home or car, the home and car own them. Add in recreational vehicles/toys, phones, computers, and credit cards, we have now become slaves to everything we own. The other challenge in this may be that due to the amount of debt we have, there's nothing left to give God.

Another aspect in our scripture is not becoming attached to the debt of others. We may know this as cosigning or even adding a person as a user onto a credit card – if the primary debtor defaults, the cosigner becomes responsible. God knows we have debt, and besides cautioning against it, He also placed structure around what to do to prevent it from becoming an overwhelming problem. Read [Deuteronomy 15:1-2](#) and [Matthew 6:9-13](#). In the Old Testament, God established laws to protect people from debt as well as abusing the situation, the creditor controlling the debtor. In Deuteronomy, how was this to be done?

There are benefits to a person and a national economy when this is done correctly – it prevents poverty, it resets everything and produces more cash flow. The problem is done “correctly”. A few years ago, when the world was paralyzed by Covid, our government cancelled student loan and other debts. However, it left many people holding the proverbial bag with no way to cover their payments and many people were irresponsible with it, and it has had lasting impacts on our economy. Finally, we see the teaching of debt forgiveness in Matthew when Jesus teaches His disciples how to pray. What are they to forgive?

Why?

Here Jesus teaches debt forgiveness in a spiritual way – meaning not only are we to forgive monetary debt, but the debt of sin against us in the same way God has already forgiven us of our debt of sin against Him. When we do this, we are again released from the slavery of debt because lack of forgiveness keeps us chained to the debtor who sinned against us.

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to make a plan to live debt free. More importantly, I want to forgive anyone who has sinned against me because You have forgiven me and shown me incredible mercy.

Additional Verses: [Proverbs 22:16](#), [Matthew 6:14-15](#)

Thursday, Day 4

Memory Verse: The sluggard says, “There is a lion outside! I shall be killed in the streets!” Proverbs 22:13

We all know the person... the one at work that works harder to get out of working; the friend who just won't clean their house, or the child who lays on the couch all day watching TV or playing video games. What do you call them? Hopefully it wasn't a bad name! Most of us would say they are LAZY. They avoid and refuse to do any work, they are unwilling! It isn't a matter of ability but choice. The Bible calls them a “sluggard” – sluggish, indolent, or slothful. This kind of laziness isn't about the day off we need to refresh, but a lifestyle of consistently ignoring important work that can result in harm or danger to themselves and others.

Read: [Proverbs 6:6-11](#)

Think: The bible points people to one of the tiniest creatures in the world as an example of how to work. What do today's verses teach?

Not only are they an example but the ant is wonderful evidence of our Creator who designed them perfectly. Their size isn't the point though; the point is they prepare in advance for the coming winter month, so they collect food to survive.

Engage: It can be a challenging temptation for many people to put off until tomorrow what should be done today. The word is procrastination. We have included this in the subject of money because we often procrastinate or become lazy with our money. We wait to start saving or we choose to buy something on impulse rather than make the extra payment toward debt. Whether it comes to work, money, or even household chores and projects, do you procrastinate? Why/why not?

For Christians, we learn that our life belongs to God – money, relationships, homes, etc. - so does our time, energy, and efforts. To say we are Christian but live as a sluggard is somewhat of a contradiction. Is God lazy? In [John 5:17](#), Jesus was confronted for “working” (healing) on the Sabbath – what did Jesus tell the Pharisees?

God never rests! How would our life change if God was lazy?

Praise God He isn't!!! Laziness in the Christian faith is also addressed in [2 Thessalonians 3:10-12](#), what is taught in these verses?

We are commanded to work and work hard - It is a testimony to our faith. If you are parenting, how can you teach this to your children?

More on this tomorrow...

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, please show me if there is any area in my life that I have been lazy and help me to be diligent with the time, energy, and resources You have given me. Please help me to remember that it is a testimony to who You are. Amen

Additional Verses: [Proverbs 12:11](#), [Proverbs 10:26](#), [Proverbs 19:24](#)

Friday, Day 5

Memory Verse: Work brings profit, but mere talk leads to poverty! Proverbs 14:23

We know the lifestyle opposite the lazy person is the person who works hard and prepares for the future. We also know those who we call “workaholics” – that’s all they do. In fact, they don’t know how to take a break! At some point we need to strike a balance, but for now we also need to know the purpose for our work – it’s not just to pay the bills...

Read: [Proverbs 16:3](#)

Think: In today’s Proverbs verse, what are we to commit to the Lord?

Why do you think this is important?

Is it possible that how we work can be a form of worship to the Lord?

Engage: We have learned that our money belongs to God and the method in which we earn money is also from Him. Do you believe God gave you your job? Why/why not?

If our work is from God, what should our attitude toward it be?

There are many of us who are struggling at work – it is stressful for a variety of reasons. Is your work causing stress in your life right now? Is it impacting your mood, how you interact with others or how you talk? Are you bringing it home? This is common to many, if not all, of us. So how do we handle it? The first thing is remembering and thanking God for your job – even if it is currently difficult. Next, read [Colossians 3:23-24](#). What hope and reminder are we given in these verses?

How can it change your perspective when you realize that the effort, quality, and attitude of your work is for God?

This is what it means that work can be worship – when we are working to please God, He is pleased and glorified AND it can and should help our attitude, especially when work is tough. One thing to consider in this is why God is allowing this trial at work. We have an opportunity to grow through it, but He also may be leading you to change your job. This should be given a lot of prayer and Bible reading before any decisions are made.

Finally, hard work is good for us – physically, mentally, and spiritually. What does [Ecclesiastes 5:12](#) say about this?

From the beginning, mankind was created for work. In the Garden of Eden, Adam was tasked with naming the animals and tending the garden. Unfortunately, when he and Eve sinned against God, our work became more difficult – the result of sin was that the ground would not yield produce as easily (See [Genesis 3:17-19](#)) But this doesn't change the fact that we are created to work and be productive, and the resulting satisfaction of knowing you have been obedient and accomplished something brings a better sleep.

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for my job. I ask that you remind me and help me to work for You first as a form of worship, especially when work is challenging and stressful. Help me to see and hear You clearly and correctly if You are leading me elsewhere. Amen

Additional Verses: [Proverbs 30:25](#)

Saturday, Day 6

Memory Verse: Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will repay him for his deed. Proverbs 19:17

When you see a person on the side of the road asking for money, what is your first reaction? Many people are divided on this, even in the church! Some believe, if you have something to give, give it – while others believe giving money to homeless people will allow them to buy drugs or alcohol. Although that may be a safe assumption, it is still an assumption and can and has been wrong. Rather than focusing on what a person will do with the \$5.00 we give them, maybe we should check the heart behind it.

Read: [Proverbs 11:24-25](#)

Think: Today we are going to learn about generosity. When we think about it, it is connected to everything else we have learned about money this week. The money and job God has given us is not only for ourselves, but for others. When we have a generous heart, we open ourselves to God's blessings in all other areas of life. In today's proverb, what is taught about the generous person?

Engage: Have you ever struggled with generosity? When we feel we might not have enough money to cover bills, or enough food to give to someone else, we tend to hang onto it tightly. Then there is the person who has more than enough but is unwilling to share. Another type is a person considered a miser – someone who is wealthy but lives in wretched conditions to avoid “wasting” money. One of the most famous misers we know is Ebenezer Scrooge from “A Christmas Carol”. Even though he had more than enough money he not only refused to share with others, he lived as though he had nothing... and he was miserable.

The problem with these mindsets, is that they are entirely self-focused and even if there's plenty of money, they are often bankrupt in every other area of life. The point in today's Proverb is that we gain so much more when we give generously. It may not be monetary, but we will certainly gain in our relationship with God and others. Have you experienced this?

There is a good amount of scripture that addresses generosity, sacrificial giving, and its purpose. Turn to [Isaiah 58:6-7](#), in these verses God is rebuking Israel for fasting with the wrong motives. Fasting being a period of abstaining from food can apply to many things. We can fast from food, sugar, TV, cell phones, and so on. In these verses we may also see fasting as an act of sacrificial giving... how is that demonstrated?

How it is described is as if we are taught to fast from ourselves and our selfishness. How does that concept impact you?

When it comes to generosity, we should be generous in our giving – again, being reminded it is God’s to begin with. When you are met by a person asking for money or food, how does [James 2:14-17](#) tell you to respond?

It is God’s purpose that His children bless others as a means of worship and testimony. You may very well be the blessing God is sending to that person!

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to always have a generous heart and spirit and thank You for being generous to me. I want to honor You with my money, possessions, and work in every way and be a blessing to others. Amen

Additional Verses: [Proverbs 22:9](#), [Luke 6:30](#), [Matthew 6:1-4](#), [Mark 12:41-44](#)

Week 4

Temptation

- Let your eyes look directly forward and your gaze be straight before you. Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure. Proverbs 4:25-26
- For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Proverbs 5:3-4
- A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls. Proverbs 25:28
- Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise. Proverbs 20:1
- Keep my commandments and live; keep my teaching as the apple of your eye; bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart. Proverbs 7:2-3
- Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Proverbs 16:18

Monday, Day 1

Memory Verse: Let your eyes look directly forward and your gaze be straight before you.
Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure. Proverbs 4:25-26

Temptation... an enticement, whether from our own internal desires, outward circumstances, or even a moment of trial. Temptations are around all the time, and it starts when we are babies. What begins as an exploration of the world around us can quickly become a snare when what we desire causes us to rebel, disobey, and fulfill lusts and desires. From the moment our parents tell us our first “NO”, we are set to go after the very thing we aren’t allowed to have and as we grow, the desire to have is something we battle the rest of our lives.

Read: [Proverbs 4:20-27](#)

Think: In these verses, where does King Solomon tell his son to keep the wisdom he is teaching him?

How is he, (we) to direct his gaze (focus)?

What is his (our) responsibility regarding the path we walk?

Engage: When it comes to dealing with temptations, we may often feel there is nothing we can do about it, or we may believe that it is always the work of the devil. In his book “The Screwtape Letters” by C.S. Lewis, he pulls back the curtain on the demonic world where a seasoned demon, “Uncle Screwtape” is writing letters to his young demon nephew, “Wormwood”, teaching him how to tempt and derail a man from truly following Jesus. The basics of it are that the things that tempt/keep people from faithfully following Jesus are the tiny, moment by moment, almost imperceptible compromises that slowly deceive a person and pull them away from true Christianity. Surprisingly it doesn’t take much.

We all struggle with temptation, but they are varied and differ from one person to the next. Some wrestle with alcohol while others have no problem with it – some wrestle with sexual temptation, some overeating, some gossip, and others overworking. We may not always recognize when

something is a temptation, but the Bible can help us out here – turn to [James 1:13-15](#) and [Matthew 18:7](#). These two passages describe a path to temptation and sin. In James, how can we recognize the path?

In Matthew, what are we to be aware of and prepared for?

Using today’s passage from Proverbs 4, what should you do to avoid temptation?

You may have noticed that it is the responsibility of each person to diligently practice recognizing where we are weakest and putting into place practices that will help us steer clear. For many people, when we know we are being tempted we start praying. Do you do this? What is your expectations?

A common mistake is thinking that God is going to instantly remove the desire or snatch us out of temptations path while we do nothing. Turn to [1 Corinthians 10:13](#), in this verse we see that temptation is common to all people, but what does God do for us?

What is our responsibility?

It may be God’s plan to remove the temptation from you or you from it, but often, we are meant to endure it. If He means for you to endure, then He is giving you the ability to do so... what does God give you?

Controlling our eyes, thoughts, words, and actions can be accomplished by focusing on God’s word – memory verses. This is why we offer memory verses in the study guides, and this one includes many extra verses to memorize for the times we need them. In addition to this, Proverbs instructs us to “ponder” or “make level”, the paths for your feet. What does this mean?

Stay on the right track! Don't stray from biblical teaching, don't put yourself in temptations way, keep looking forward and you will stay strong!

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, forgive me for the times I have willingly allowed myself temptations. Please help me learn to recognize and make a strategic plan to avoid and resist any temptations in my life. Thank You that You give me Your word and Holy Spirit to stay strong. Amen

Additional Verses: [Psalm 105:4-5](#), [Isaiah 40:31](#)

Tuesday, Day 2

Memory Verse: For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Proverbs 5:3-4

The global adult entertainment industry makes roughly \$78 to \$280 billion, yes billion, dollars annually. 2025-26 data shows the addiction to pornography affects 3 to 11 percent of adults while 73% of teens (13-17) are exposed to pornographic material. As an addiction, it is one of the hardest habits to break! The reason is that it impacts the brain very much like drug addiction – brain changes impacted by hormones (dopamine, serotonin, and adrenaline) cause withdrawal symptoms when a person tries to stop. The reality is that this is not just a mental/physical issue but a spiritual one and God offers real hope of healing!

Read: [Proverbs 5:1-23](#)

Think: In today's reading, who does King Solomon warn his son to stay away from?

Why?

What damage can be caused?

What does he encourage instead?

Engage: The “forbidden woman” or “adulteress” is mentioned a few times in the book of Proverbs, yet the irony is that King Solomon did not take his own advice. He had 700 wives and 300 concubines! Clearly, he had a problem! However, what we are really talking about is lust. The word lust is defined as: desire, craving, or longing, especially for what is forbidden and it can apply to anything, not just sexual temptation. Lust to have what is not ours, or more of what we already have has been at the core of humanity from the beginning. In the Garden of Eden, Eve “saw” that the forbidden fruit was a delight to the eyes and good for food ([Genesis 3:6](#)), she ate it and gave it to her husband as well. How we respond to lust is always a choice – just as we learned yesterday with temptations – there is always a path. Lust and temptations are a very real issue and should not be taken lightly, many marriages and families have been destroyed by uncontrolled lust. How serious is this? Read [Matthew 4:1-4](#), in these verses, who was led into the wilderness?

Why?

What was the first thing Satan tempted Jesus with?

This is a key factor for us to learn. Satan will tempt us in the areas we are weakest, so it is extremely important to know your own weaknesses. What areas do you struggle with the most?

What have you done to protect yourself from temptation to lust?

How did Jesus respond to Satan?

Jesus didn’t respond with a human method, He went straight to scripture, this is another reason why we encourage scripture memory. What this does is address the psychological as well as spiritual need to “rewire” the brain and overcome the pull of lust. As you practice redirecting your thoughts to the things of God and removing any temptations, it will become easier.

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, please forgive me for giving into lust in my life. Thank You for the example through Jesus Christ to overcome temptation and lust – I ask that You please give me strength to focus on You alone. Amen

Additional Verses: [Matthew 5:27-30](#), [James 4:7](#), [1 John 2:15-17](#)

Wednesday, Day 3

Memory Verse: A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls. Proverbs 25:28

We may not understand the experience of a city with a wall around it, meant to keep the enemy out, but we do understand what happens when people choose to riot over an issue and start looting the local businesses. Mob mentality takes over and people break into stores stealing anything and everything they can carry. Not only does it cause damage and untold financial losses but trying to bring order and stop it is like plugging a hole in a dam with your finger! When it comes to temptation, what we are up against is self-control. How well are you doing at practicing self-control?

Read: [Proverbs 25:1-28](#)

Think: Although today's reading may seem like a collection of random thoughts, there is a theme running throughout. Do you see it? In each proverb, what is required to make the right choice?

Engage: It is safe to say the practice of self-control is absent in many areas of today's world. Defined by Merriam Webster as "*restraint exercised over one's own impulses, emotions, or desires*" we know that in society people are encouraged to throw off restraint and follow every emotion and feeling they have. So, how's it going? Do you think this may be why the Bible has much to say about the subject? The Bible also defines self-control as a "*call to a sound mind and moderation*" - once again we see this is something we must choose to do, and it starts in our thought life. What are some areas you struggle with self-control?

Do you see it as a spiritual issue? Why/why not?

What we have studied regarding temptation to this point is all a matter of self-control – how does your ability to exercise self-control impact your responses to temptation and lust?

The hope we have in this is that self-control is a fruit of the Spirit. Turn to [Galatians 5:22-23](#), list the fruit mentioned of those who have God’s Holy Spirit.

When we become believers, God gives us His Spirit – the Holy Spirit, and with Him all we need to practice each quality listed in the verses... including self-control. So even if you or someone you know is described as having no self-control, you now have the ability to change. How does this encourage you?

List some ways you can begin practicing self-control in the areas you struggle.

It is important to understand that this isn’t an arbitrary task or rule, the desire to control our emotions, thoughts, actions, and words must come from love for God and others – it is a heart issue.

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for Your Holy Spirit who gives me the ability to practice self-control in all areas of my life. My desire is to turn control over to you in the areas I struggle with daily so I can glorify You. Amen

Additional Verses: [2 Timothy 1:7](#), [2 Corinthians 10:5](#), [Proverbs 13:3](#),

Thursday, Day 4

Memory Verse: Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise. Proverbs 20:1

Another addiction that can destroy a person's life is alcohol. Similarly to addiction to pornography, consistent use and abuse of alcohol can alter the brain chemistry of a person. Add to that the fact that it "numbs" a person, often reducing stress it can become habitual and the felt need to have it to cope can arise. Physiologically it can also cause enormous health issues from liver disease to weight gain. But it's in the Bible... so what do we need to know?

Read: [Psalm 23:19-21](#) and [31-35](#)

Think: The subject of Christians drinking alcohol has become increasingly popular in the last few decades, so as a Christian, one must decide how to handle this. Let's start with today's verses... who does Solomon tell his son to avoid?

Why?

Engage: Do you know the difference between an alcoholic and a drunkard? Nothing... the only difference is the name. Chronic abuse of alcohol was seen as an illness in the late 1700's – early 1800's. In 1956 the American Medical Association declared alcohol abuse as a disease and then in the 1980's the term "alcohol use disorder" was given rather than alcoholism. Why is it important to know this? The Bible never identifies alcohol abuse as a medical disorder but the sin of drunkenness. Does this mean the Bible was wrong? Where and when it applies, the Bible is always correct in matters of math, science, and health issues. The challenge here is that to call drunkenness a medical disorder means we are not responsible and have little to no control, but think about it... no one naturally craves alcohol, it is developed. Some people do have a stronger desire for it than others, but that also applies to any other sin. The truth is it stings less to call oneself an alcoholic rather than a drunk, so what hope does this give?

If alcohol abuse is a sin, then when we become Christian we are FREE from sin – it no longer controls us (See [Romans 6:6](#))! We may experience intense cravings, but that doesn't mean we aren't free from it's power over us, we use the same practice of resisting temptation and walking in newness of life.

For those who do not struggle with this, there is no sin in having a glass of wine with dinner. We know that wine was a common drink in the Bible – in fact, Jesus’ first public miracle was turning water into wine (See [John 2:1-11](#)). There are guidelines though, read [1 Corinthians 6:12](#), what principle is taught in this verse?

Additionally, if you are with someone who does struggle with addiction, how should you handle it according to this verse [Romans 14:21](#)?

The loving thing to do is practice self-control for the benefit of others.

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You that by Your strength and wisdom I can overcome and control any addiction I struggle with. Even if I still experience cravings, thank You that You are with me and will use it for a greater purpose. Please help me to be sensitive to those who do wrestle with this and do nothing to cause them to stumble. Amen

Additional Verses: [Isaiah 5:22-23](#), [Proverbs 31:4-5](#)

Friday, Day 5

Memory Verse: keep my commandments and live; keep my teaching as the apple of your eye; bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart. Proverbs 7:2-3

It is said the eyes are the window of the soul. Normally, people take that to mean we can see into the soul of a person and “know” them by looking deeply into their eyes. The Bible has it the other way around... what the eyes look at and focus on will determine our mindset and the condition of our soul. How does what you look at impact your mindset and soul?

Read: [Proverbs 7:1-9](#)

Think: In today’s passage, what does friendship with wisdom keep a person from doing?

In verses 6-9, what does the writer of this proverb see happening?

Engage: Just as there is a path to sin that starts in our mind, there is a path starts with something we see or the danger we put ourselves in. In today’s verses, King Solomon is describing the naïve youth who isn’t paying attention to where he is going and finds himself in the path of an adulteress. If he is not prepared, he will fail to resist her – and if you read the remainder of the chapter, you will find he does lose this battle. Whether our temptation is alcohol, drugs, food, shopping, sexual sin, gossip, anger, and so on, we must have an “overcoming temptation plan”. This is a thought-out plan of practical ways to avoid temptation. It may include limiting interaction with certain people, removing items like movies, changing the route we take to work or home, or even taking down our Facebook page.

What we look at shapes our perspective and influences our desires. Read these two passages, [1 John 2:15-17](#), [Matthew 6:22-23](#), how do they describe the power of what we choose to look at?

Obviously, we can’t walk around blindfolded, but we can train ourselves to literally divert our gaze if we are visually tempted and change our mindset if tempted to become jealous or desire something we see. For example, if looking at a beautiful expensive car tempts us to complain about the one we have, rather than wishing we had something nicer, thank God for what He has given you. It is the same for homes, clothing, job, etc. In the Old Testament, God calls this desire, “coveting” (See [Exodus 20:17](#)) – or the desire to have what someone else has and is tied to the sin of greed. If in Matthew 6:22-23, our eye is the lamp of the body, that means what we focus on will either bring us closer to God or further away. What does your “eye” say about you? Is there anything you need to work on changing?

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for all that You have given me. Help me to always be content with what I have and please forgive me for the times I have greedily desired more or what someone else has. Thank You that by Your strength I can choose to focus only on what will bring me closer to You. Amen

Additional Verses: [Psalm 119:15](#), [Psalm 119:2-3](#),

Saturday, Day 6

Memory Verse: Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

Proverbs 16:18

It wouldn't take long for you to think of a person if asked, "do you know someone you would consider prideful?" People who are arrogant stick out like a sore thumb and they are not well liked. It is said that it was pride that caused Satan to fall from God's grace in that he thought he could be or should be like God. Since the result was rejection, Satan then focused his attention on God's beloved creation, humans, and what did he do to cause them to fall? He went after their pride – self-focus – to be like God if they ate the fruit. Even if in their innocence they didn't think that was a bad thing to want, the fact that they chose to doubt their Creator shows they thought they could do better... pride.

Read: [Proverbs 16:18-20](#)

Think: What do these proverbs warn of?

What condition is better to be in?

Engage: What is the difference between pride and haughty? For one thing... we don't use the word "haughty" anymore! Although these two words give a similar meaning, there is a slight difference. *Pride* means to exalt oneself or to be "puffed" up. *Haughty* means to think of yourself as superior or above others (as in looking down on others) both words carry a meaning of arrogance, and both words are intensely self-focused.

Like we stated earlier, you probably know someone like this – it is obvious to everyone. However, pride can run much deeper and in more deceptive ways than we realize. Think for a moment, when it comes to any sin, what is the core motive? When you lose your temper, what is the reason? When you lust or crave something, what is the motive? When you are jealous, who are you really thinking of? When you feel sorry for yourself, who is the focus? Even in the moments when our responses are directed at situations or people who are unkind, the fact is what we are unhappy about is that WE didn't get our way, and WE deserve better – PRIDE and self-focus! This is an inner moral issue and the scripture points that out by using the word "spirit" in these verses. It is our spirit, or the inner person, and the condition of our spirit that determines how self-focused we are. The cure?

Turn to [Philippians 2:3-8](#), [Ephesians 5:21](#) and [Matthew 5:3](#), based on these passages, what attitude and spirit should we have?

Who is our example and focus?

We are taught to focus on the temporal nature of life – instant satisfaction, acknowledgement, praise – but as followers of Christ, we are to set that down. Our focus is now on Christ and how we can live the way He did, in complete humility, meekness, and loving sacrifice. You may be tempted to think that sounds awful, but the true reward is far better than what this world can offer – the praise of our heavenly Father and eternity with Him!

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, please show me where I am prideful and self-focused and please forgive me. Thank You for giving Your Son, Jesus Christ to show me what a submissive spirit is. Please help me to live in this spirit each day. Amen

Additional Verses: [Proverbs 11:2](#), [Proverbs 18:12](#), [Proverbs 29:23](#)

Week 5

Pearls of Wisdom

- for wisdom is better than jewels and all that you may desire cannot compare with her. Proverbs 8:11
- Better is a dry morsel with quiet than a house full of feasting with strife. Proverbs 17:1
- It is better to live in a corner of the housetop than in a house shared with a quarrelsome wife. Proverbs 21:9
- Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6
- Whoever oppresses a poor man insults his Maker, but he who is generous to the needy honors him. Proverbs 14:31
- Be assured, an evil person will not go unpunished, but the offspring of the righteous will be delivered. Proverbs 11:21

Monday, Day 1

Memory Verse: for wisdom is better than jewels and all that you may desire cannot compare with her. Proverbs 8:11

It is difficult to pin down exactly where the saying, “Pearls of Wisdom” came from, but it is attributed to B. Gerrans work, “Tales of a Parrot”, published in 1792, where the text states: “*The richest pearls of wisdom and instruction, which lie deeply concealed in the above and similar dark passages of the Word of God.*”

The concept of “pearls of wisdom” is a metaphor describing the rarity and beauty of a pearl which is made through time and effort describing how wisdom in life is developed. The phrase is also said to have roots in the book of Job and gospel of Matthew as well as other religious and philosophical teachings. (Source: theidioms.com)

Read: [Proverbs 8:10-36](#)

Think: In our first week we learned how wisdom applies to us as well as learning about the person who reject wisdom, who the Bible calls a fool. Today we are learning about wisdom’s character and in today’s passage this is written in the first person, as though wisdom is the one speaking of herself. Yes, wisdom is referred to as a woman... in the Hebrew language words are often given gender, either male or female and the word wisdom in Hebrew is “*Chokmah*” which is a feminine noun. This also provides a stark contrast to other women Solomon teaches to avoid throughout Proverbs.

In verses 10-11, what is the value of wisdom?

In the remaining verses, wisdom is speaking in the first person, what are her qualities and characteristics?

Verses 22-31 provide a unique picture of wisdom, describe wisdom’s role here.

Engage: There are many things in life we place high value on – what are some of those things for you? Is wisdom one of them? We might think of wisdom as the engine that drives everything we think and do and whether we realize it or not, we either subscribe to worldly wisdom or godly wisdom. How do you know which you rely on? Consider your worldview – is it based on what the world teaches or what the Bible teaches? How do we gain godly wisdom?

Turn to [1 Corinthians 3:18-19](#), what must we do first to gain godly wisdom?

This may seem ironic considering we have already learned that being a fool is a bad thing, but what these verses are teaching is that we are to reject the world’s ways, or become a fool, to put ourselves in a position to gain godly wisdom. The one thing we can’t do is live with a foot in both worlds – worldly wisdom and godly wisdom are like oil and water – they don’t mix! One thing will happen, found in [Matthew 6:24](#), what is it?

Although Matthew is talking about money, the word is “mammon” which means possessions, treasures, or wealth – in a way, we can say that our true riches are God’s wisdom – but this can apply to anything that divides our loyalties or attention as Christians.

As we finish this day, it is important to clarify that wisdom is different than knowledge. GotQuestions.org describes it this way, *“The dictionary defines wisdom as “the ability to discern or judge what is true, right, or lasting.” Knowledge, on the other hand, is “information gained through experience, reasoning, or acquaintance.” Knowledge can exist without wisdom, but not the other way around. One can be knowledgeable without being wise. Knowledge is knowing how to use a gun; wisdom is knowing when to use it and when to keep it holstered.”* Take some time to evaluate your worldview – are there any changes needed? If yes, in what area?

To help discover godly wisdom on a subject, go to www.gotquestions.org and simply type your question in the search bar. Not only will you find an easy to understand explanation, but references to scripture to support it.

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for Your wisdom in all areas of life. Please direct me to Your word as I learn to live by Your wisdom throughout my life. Amen

Additional Verses: [Job 18:12-28](#), [Matthew 13:45](#)

Tuesday, Day 2

Memory Verse: Better is a dry morsel with quiet than a house full of feasting with strife.

Proverbs 17:1

This week, we are going to learn about a few additional areas where we can gain wisdom... like pearls, our goal is to string together all we have learned to create a “necklace”, so-to-speak, that can be worn at all times. Proverbs 6:20-21 says, *“My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching. 21 Bind them on your heart always; tie them around your neck.”* The best way to remember and practice biblical teaching is to carry it with us everywhere we go, inside (heart) and outside (neck). The Jewish culture had small leather boxes called *phylacteries*, containing scripture, that were worn on the arm and forehead as reminders of God's word. Deuteronomy 6:8-9 instructs, *“You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”* God knew His beloved creation is a forgetful and rebellious lot, so He not only gave us His wisdom, but instruction to wear it and carry it so we can live wisely and have a life filled with His goodness.

Read: [Proverbs 17:14, 19](#) and [27-28](#)

Think: Today's theme is about strife, arguing, and contention. If you have ever lived in a house or worked in an office where you spend a significant amount of time with someone who starts arguments or causes strife, you know it is a stressful, toxic environment. In today's verses, how is the person who loves strife described?

How are we to avoid arguing?

Engage: Based on today's verses, strife is often motivated by a form of greed, coveting, or pride. Solomon shows that strife is so unwanted that it is better to have no material wealth and live peacefully than be rich and live in a tense and argumentative environment. It makes us wonder if he is speaking from experience considering he had 700 wives and 300 concubines 😊 ! Where does this sin come from?

Turn to [James 4:1-3](#), what is the reason people argue?

This goes back to selfishness – our personal desires. Are you a person who tends to argue or start arguments? If so, what is your motive? Regardless of the reason, there is no question how God feels about it. He is opposed to it and that is why He instructs His followers to abandon that habit – it is contrary to His character and is a trait in non-believers. Since Christians are called to be holy as He is holy (See [1 Peter 1:15-16](#)), strife is something we need to work at avoiding. If you tend to argue, how can you apply and practice today's lesson?

If you know someone who is Christian who struggles with this, how can you help them?

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, my desire is to glorify You in my life. Forgive me for any strife or tension I have caused out of selfishness and please help me not to cause strife or arguments. Thank You for Your word to help me remember to be holy as You are holy. Amen

Additional Verses: [Galatians 5:19-20](#), [Galatians 5:22-23](#), [Proverbs 22:10](#), [Proverbs 26:21](#)

Wednesday, Day 3

Memory Verse: It is better to live in a corner of the housetop than in a house shared with a quarrelsome wife. Proverbs 21:9

One of the most challenging areas where fights and tension can exist is marriage. Disagreements are normal and to be expected, but if we're not careful, they can become THE normal and elevate to open hostility and... dare we say, *nagging*. Although today's lesson focuses on women, it does not mean men are off the hook. In fact, we could easily swap wife for husband and have the same principle. The point, and our goal, is not to pick on genders, but to remember that if we say we are Christian, we are to treat each other with love, grace, and forgiveness, outdoing one another showing honor (See [Romans 12:10](#)).

Read: [Proverbs 21:19](#), [Proverbs 31:10-31](#)

Think: Proverbs 21:9 and 19 make it clear that living with a quarrelsome wife is no fun. It isn't necessary to spend too much time on the issue – it is sin, period. A wife, or husband, must choose to be peaceful, choose words that are filled with grace, and are encouraging and this requires us laying down our lives, picking up our cross, and following Jesus. We will take some time today to focus on what we *should* do. In Proverbs 31:10-31 we find the description of an amazing wife and mother. List her qualities and actions.

What is her value?

Engage: This woman is known as “the Proverbs 31 woman” and is often seen as an impossible goal. Do you think her way of life is impossible? Why/why not?

If you are a woman doing this study, and if you are married and have children, do you realize you are probably already doing much of this? List what you do throughout your day as a wife and mom. Do you work? There are aspects of life that differ from that of the Jewish woman a few thousand years ago, but we are basically reading about a woman who is a good and loving wife, providing for her family by making sure the kids have what they need. She shops for food, cleans the house, works to earn a living, shares in household expenses, and invests wisely. These are not the only things that matter though... her character is an important part of her role. We live in a small town, so being known and recognized at the grocery store, Walmart, or doctor's office is common. Are you known for your character? Do you bring honor to your husband (if married) because of your character? Do you gossip and complain about your husband?

Sadly, women have been taught for decades to be independent and fight for their rights. There have been valid reasons for this in history, but in the daily life, women are encouraged to be aggressive and demanding – to get what they deserve. The bible doesn't require women to be weak, just Christlike, who didn't return evil for evil or fight back when he was reviled (See [1 Peter 2:23](#)). If it is your desire to be a Proverbs 31 woman, all you need to do is ask God to help you. Are there areas you can improve? If you don't have this desire, the question is why? If God has not called you to marriage or parenting, that is absolutely okay, but you can still desire her character and qualities.

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, please help me to desire and become the woman, wife and mother described in today's passage. Help me to have a heart that honors my husband and You and overcome any pride or fear I have in this. Amen

Additional Verses: [1 Peter 3:1-7](#), for a unique example of a wise wife, read the story of Nabal and his wife Abigail in [1 Samuel 25:1-38](#).

Thursday, Day 4

Memory Verse: Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6

Parenting in 2026 is a VERY different and much more difficult role than ever. Our children are bombarded by images that cause damage, pressure to be something God never created them to be, and anxiety inducing world issues. So how do parents give their children hope as well as teach them to love God and make right choices? These answers won't be found in the most popular parenting books, YouTube, or child psychologists, they can only be found in the Bible. This is wisdom... God's word has everything a parent needs and when parents train their children in the ways of God, they have a better chance at navigating this world successfully.

Read: [Proverbs 13:24](#)

Think: Parenting is a twofold job. We teach our children verbally, then we set it in through practice. Today we will see in our passages a consistent theme, instruction and discipline and both are to be done consistently, daily, throughout the time we have them. In today's reading, what are parents taught about discipline?

Engage: Aside from the removal of God in schools and homes, lack of moral teaching and discipline is probably the biggest reason our children are not doing well (in general). Issues like depression, suicide, drugs, gender dysphoria, anger, and criminal activity are on the rise and although we can point to social media and other reasons like that, the main issue is in the home. Not every family subscribes to the world's ways of doing things, but we may not realize we have picked up some secular philosophies without realizing it. What is the filter you use for training and

discipline? Do you go to the Bible or other sources? Many parents feel the Bible doesn't address specifics, like talking back or sneaking out of the house – which is true, but that's because we're trying to address the actions without addressing the heart of the issue – their heart. Addressing behavior without addressing the source is like taking Tylenol for a broken arm but never going to a doctor and getting a cast for proper healing. Our goal is getting to the source, the heart of our child, teaching them practically as well as through our own lives, what it means to love and be faithful to God. The heart directs everything else.

When it comes to training and discipline, the first thing parents need to remember is that children are sinners, we are born with a sin nature and that is what we are addressing. Training and discipline is, first, God's word - even as infants and toddlers, the first "NO" and the first timeout must be done with godly instruction in view. Bad behavior is rebellion, which is a sin, and must be handled as such – teaching children that rebellion is a sin against the Lord, and they must ask for forgiveness, just like we do in our own relationship with God. The bible has specific instructions for parents in [Deuteronomy 6:5-9](#) and [Ephesians 6:4](#) – what do these passages teach?

Who is the first person to model these instructions?

Parents must do all they can to avoid hypocrisy by teaching children standards they don't practice themselves. This is how fathers, and mothers, provoke their children to anger... inconsistent rules, hypocrisy, or lack of boundaries all impact children negatively. How are you doing in this area? Is there anything that needs to change? What are some practical ways you can include God's word to your instruction and discipline in parenting?

As we close today, it is important for parents to know that raising kids in God's ways according to Proverbs 22:6 is not a guarantee they will never leave the path. What it does mean is that His word will follow them around like a shadow, reminding them. Take a moment to write a prayer for your children or grandchildren.

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for the blessing of my children. Help me to see where I have not followed Your ways in raising them. Help me to also learn how to faithfully teach and discipline them biblically as well as be a biblical model for them. Amen

Additional Verses: Teaching children is pointing them to the very same scripture we are to live by. In addition to using everything we've learned through Proverbs, here are some other bible references for practical daily life: [Ephesians 4:22-32](#), [Ephesians 5:1-21](#), [1 Timothy 2:9](#), [1 Timothy 4:12](#), [1 Timothy 5:1-2](#)

Friday, Day 5

Memory Verse: Whoever oppresses a poor man insults his Maker, but he who is generous to the needy honors him.

Homelessness is one of the biggest problems of our day. In America alone, 2024 data reports that more than 770,000 people are homeless, and it is labeled as a public health issue. Rather than getting bogged down in the causes and who is responsible, we will give attention to what God say's about social justice and caring for the poor. Even Jesus taught His disciples that the poor will always be with us (See [John 12:8](#))

Read: [Proverbs 22:22-23](#), [Proverbs 31:8-9](#)

Think: According to these verses, what is God's view of the Christian responsibility to the poor and oppressed?

Engage: Homelessness as a public health issue is a reality bringing with it disease, crime, environmental problems, and so on. But the truth is homelessness is a spiritual issue... yes, everything is a spiritual issue! If God created everything then isn't everything a spiritual issue? You may be surprised to find that God's original plan for social justice and preventing poverty was His own people. Turn to [Deuteronomy 15:7-11](#), what do these verses teach about how we should treat the poor?

In context, these verses refer to the Sabbatical year, the 7th year when all debt was released for the purpose of preventing poverty and oppression. Now read [Deuteronomy 24:19-22](#), what were the farmers specifically instructed?

Who was it for?

The reason God wants His people to be part of the solution is to remind us how we are dependent on Him for all our needs. Out of gratitude for His provision, we should provide for those who struggle. Of course, now we struggle with discerning the need of those asking for help. There are so many issues here but to stay focused we'll keep it to this, what is God telling you to do? If you have a few dollars to give, is it your place to judge how it will be spent? What does [James 2:15-17](#) say?

Of course, we don't want to enable people to continue in sin and habits that destroy, but we aren't responsible for what they do with it, God will judge them. We are judged for what we do, our heart, and motive. The church is also here to help. We have a ministry that not only provides temporary assistance but counsels for long-term solutions. You may also be surprised to know that there are very few churches that help people who are homeless or need other assistance while government programs have the lion's share of resources.

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for all the blessings You have given me and help me to always be generous to those who have needs. All I have is Yours, please guide me in how to bless others. Amen

Additional Verses: [Proverbs 21:13](#), [Isaiah 58:6-7](#)

Saturday, Day 6

Memory Verse: Be assured, an evil person will not go unpunished, but the offspring of the righteous will be delivered. Proverbs 11:21

Why does God allow evil? Why doesn't He punish people who hurt others? These questions and others have plagued mankind for centuries. The problem is not God, but how we view evil. For most, we view evil through our own lens... we look at murders, pedophiles, thieves, and terrorists and easily judge them as evil, and they are - or we think of demonic practices and witchcraft. In such extreme measures it's easy to define that as evil, which means if we don't do those things we must be good! Biblically speaking, the evil person is simply a sinner, one who is hurtful, malicious, adverse, bad, wretched, and the truth is, before salvation in Christ, we are not only all sinners, but evil, and enemies of God (See [Romans 5:10](#))

Read: [Proverbs 11:19-21](#)

Think: What do these verses teach about how God deals with evil people?

What is the blessing of those who pursue righteousness?

Engage: It is funny how we want the bad people of the world to be brought to justice quickly, yet when it comes to our own sin, we want enormous patience and grace. Why is that?

Some people who commit crimes and hurt others are brought to justice by their own consequences, but as always we seem to be looking the wrong direction. We judge actions, as we should, but we also forget Jesus died for the person we want to be imprisoned. We forget that God isn't lazy about punishing sinners, but lovingly and patiently waiting for all to repent (See [2 Peter 3:9](#)). How does this impact your understanding?

We shouldn't want people punished or sent to hell, we should remember that we were headed there ourselves before submitting to Christ. How does it impact you to know that the person who abused children can be forgiven and go to heaven if they repent and commit their lives to Christ?

We do know that many, many people will never do that, and they will answer to God. Their punishment is something they chose when they chose to reject God and His grace. That said, rather than focusing on why God allows evil or people go unpunished, let's focus on our own faith and actions.

Pray this prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for your unending grace, mercy and forgiveness. Please help me to remember who I was before giving my life to You and pray for those who don't know You. Help me to maintain a tender heart toward those who are evil, knowing You love and died for them. Amen

Additional Verses: [Matthew 5:43-45](#), [Ezekiel 18:5-9](#), [Ezekiel 18:10-13](#), [Ezekiel 18:21](#), [Ezekiel 18:30-32](#)