

# 10 CHARACTERISTICS OF WISDOM

*How to walk in godly wisdom, according to the book of Proverbs.*

Mark Moring/Christianity Today

Proverbs is a collection of wise sayings that'll guide you through just about anything life might throw your way. The book is packed with good advice. So, from Proverbs, here's our Top 10 List of wise words for life:

1. **Guidance** (Proverbs 3:5-6)

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart  
and lean not on your own understanding;  
in all your ways acknowledge him,  
and he will make your paths straight.*

This might be the most quoted passage in all of Proverbs; maybe you've memorized it. But wherever you're headed in life, these words will always remind you who directs your steps.

2. **Discernment** (Proverbs 14:12)

*There is a way that seems right to a man,  
but in the end it leads to death.*

Yeah, that verse ends on kind of a downer. But you get the point: Sometimes something seems right, but it might be the wrong choice after all. That's why we've always got to ask God to help us make wise decisions.

3. **Confidence** (Proverbs 3:25-26)

*Have no fear of sudden disaster  
or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked,  
for the Lord will be your confidence  
and will keep your foot from being snared.*

You might not *feel* confident. But remember: "The Lord will be your confidence." (emphasis mine)

4. **Work** (Proverbs 6:6-9)

*Go to the ant, you sluggard;  
consider its ways and be wise!  
It has no commander, no overseer or ruler,  
yet it stores its provisions in summer  
and gathers its food at harvest.  
How long will you lie there, you sluggard?  
When will you get up from your sleep?*

Life lessons from an ant? Yep. Ants might be the hardest-working critters alive. They're always busy, always planning ahead. Being on your own—whether in college or at a full-time job—is hard work. It's tempting to get lazy—especially in college, where it's easy to sleep through those early-morning classes. Mom won't be there to tell you, for the 14th time, to get out of bed; there will be "no commander, no overseer or ruler." You'll have to kick yourself into gear, because nobody else will do it for you.

5. **Relationships** (Proverbs 12:26)

*A righteous man is cautious in friendship,  
but the way of the wicked leads them astray.*

Here's a great verse on choosing friends wisely. As you begin to develop new friendships...ask God to point you to people who won't lead you astray.

6. **Sexual purity** (Prov. 6:25-26, 28)

*Do not lust in your heart after her beauty  
or let her captivate you with her eyes,  
for the prostitute reduces you to a loaf of bread,  
and the adulteress preys upon your very life. ...  
Can a man walk on hot coals  
without his feet being scorched?*

You might be saying, "Prostitutes and adultery? That doesn't apply to me." But these verses are about much more than that. They're about the strong temptation of sex, a temptation that affects us all. This passage clearly says sex outside of marriage is also outside of God's perfect plan. When we violate that plan, we walk "on hot coals"—and get burned.

7. **Money** (Proverbs 11:28)

*Whoever trusts in riches will fall,  
but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf.*

It's easy to think that money will bring happiness or solve your problems. But the Bible is clear that money doesn't do those things. If you wanna "thrive like a green leaf," pursue righteousness, not riches.

8. **Parents** (Proverbs 23:22, 25)

*Listen to your father, who gave you life,  
and do not despise your mother when she is old. ...  
May your father and mother be glad;  
may she who gave you birth rejoice!*

It's perfectly natural to want independence—and, ultimately, to break away from Mom and Dad. But don't rush that process. Even when you're on your own, your parents are still your parents and deserve your respect. Do what you can to make them proud and glad you're their kid.

9. **Compassion** (Proverbs 19:17)

*He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord,  
and he will reward him for what he has done.*

We all tend to get so caught up in our own lives that we sometimes forget there are hurting people all around us. But God always wants us to share his great love with others. Volunteer with a local ministry. Take a short-term missions trip. Make time to reach out and touch someone.

10. **The future** (Proverbs 23:18)

*There is surely a future hope for you,  
and your hope will not be cut off.*

You're probably wondering what your future holds. But this verse says you don't have to worry about it: If you follow God, he'll take care of it—and he'll take care of you. Nothing can cut you off from his love. He will carry you through, all the way.

IF ANY OF YOU NEED

WISDOM



ASK GOD



WHO GIVES GENEROUSLY  
TO ALL

JAMES 1:5



## Truths About God & You From Proverbs

- His Omniscience (Prov 15:3, 11; 21:2; 5:21; 22:12)
- His Omnipotence (Prov 10:27, 29; 12:2; 16:3, 33; 21:30)
- His Justice (Prov 8:5; 21:13; 2:7-8; 16:2; 17:3, 5; 29:26; 11:1; 24:11-12; 24:24-25)
- His Mercy (Prov 3:3-4; 21:21; 24:17-18; 28:13)
- His Faithfulness (Prov 2:21-22; 3:5-8; 22:19; 29:25)
- His Sovereignty (Prov 16:4, 9, 33; 19:21; 21:1, 30; 22:2)
- Your Responsibility to God (Prov 1:7; 3:3-20)
- Your Morality (Prov 1:10; 14:30; 16:5, 18-19)
- Your Duties to Neighbors (Prov 12:26; 14:21)
- Your Family Responsibilities (Prov 20:7; 22:6)
- Your Civic Duty (Prov 16:10, 12; 20:28)

## Defining the word 'proverb'

- Hebrew word '*mashal*' - a sense of comparison or contrast
- Latin title for Proverbs—*Liber Proverbum* (pro =for and verba = words), describing how the Proverbs concentrate many words into few
- Rabbinical writings called the Book of Proverbs Sepher Hokhmah, Book of Wisdom
- Cervantes described a proverb as "A short sentence based on long experience."

## The Goal of the Book of Proverbs

"Proverbs as a whole is designed to both prevent and to remedy ungodly lifestyles. The book served as a manual to impart the legacy of wisdom, prudence, understanding, discretion, knowledge, guidance, competence, correction, counsel, and truth from generation to generation." (*Walk Thru the Bible*)

## Author:

Solomon & others (Hezekiah's scribes) – collections of sayings (Eccl 12:9)

3 groups of people communicated on behalf of God (Jer 18:18, Ezek 7:26):

*Priests* – The Law

*Prophets* – Divine Word & visions

*Sages* (elders) – practical application of Godly wisdom to specific problems and decisions

## Date & Setting

931 B.C. (Chp 25-29 collected by Hezekiah 230 years later during reign 715-686 BC)

"Solomon probably wrote his during his middle years before his character began to decline into carnality, materialism and idolatry" (*Walk Thru the Bible*)

## Structure

Chapters 10-15 Series of contrasts

Chapters 16-31 Counsel

## Audience

All sinners (human family) but God's covenant people particularly

The 'righteous' (God followers) vs 'the wicked' (the simple, the scorners, the fools) :

**The Simple**—Naïve, easily seduced, silly-minded, believing anything, standing for nothing, lacking conviction, unable to discern between truth and error, ignorant of their ignorance and unwilling to learn. In modern culture, those who insist there is no objective truth and whatever 'feels good' down inside is truth for you. Reject God's truth as absolute.

**The Scorer**—scoffers, mockers, cynics think they know everything and therefore resist being taught. Lacking a humble spirit and the will to be obedient, scorners are arrogant. They sneer at God's truth and deny it. Depends on ridicule and contempt to fight enemies. Are toxic in nature and spread their contention, stirring up division and derision. Scorners mock God.

**The Fool**—windbags full of air but lacking substance. In Proverbs, 3 different Hebrew words are translated "fool" with these meanings: (1) dull, stupid person who is stubborn; (2) the corrupt fool who is morally perverted and unreasonable; and (3) the fool who is like a stubborn animal and brutish. Their problem isn't intellect; it's pride! They won't submit to the Lord. Fools actually enjoy their folly and think they're really living! They talk much and hardly listen.

- ◆ Fools won't learn from God's Word
- ◆ Fools can't control their speech
- ◆ Fools can't control their temper
- ◆ Fools are proud and self-confident
- ◆ Fools create problems and bring sorrow to others (especially parents)
- ◆ Fools don't know how to use wealth properly
- ◆ Fools can't be trusted with responsibility
- ◆ Fools ruin their own lives (yet blame God for their misfortune)

# Proverbs by Topic

Adultery	5:1-11; 6:23-29; 23:27-28	Hope	11:23; 21:21; 10:28; 13:12
Anger	15:1, 18; 14:17; 16:32; 19:19; 22:25	Justice	21:3; 8:12-15; 18:5; 21:13,15;
Blessings	3:33; 8:33-35	The Mouth/Speech	4:24; 10:11; 10:19; 15:1; 15:7; 16:23; 17:9;
Children	28:7; 23:22; 20:20; 15:5; 20:7	Parents	1:8-9; 13:22; 13:24; 19:18; 20:7; 29:15; 22:6
Correction	3:11; 15:10; 6:23; 10:17	Poverty	6:9-11; 10:15; 17:5; 19:1; 20:13; 23:21;13:18
Debt	6:1-5; 17:18; 20:16	Pride	16:18-19; 11:2; 21:4; 26:12; 30:12-13; 29:23
Diligence	6:6-11; 10:4-5; 12:11; 13:11	Trials	10:30; 13:6; 14:26; 15:29; 24:16; 27:10
Envy	23:17; 14:30; 21:25-26; 27:4	Trust	3:5-7; 16:20; 29:25
Fear of the Lord	8:13; 15:16; 9:10	Truth/Lies	14:5; 8:1, 6-7; 6:12; 19:28; 12:17-19; 23:23
Fools	1:7; 1:22; 14:3; 9:6; 17:25; 8:13	Way of the Lord	10:29; 8:32-34; 12:28; 16:17; 28:6
God hates....	6:16-19; 3:31-32; 11:1; 12:22	Wealth	3:9-10; 11:4; 11:28; 15:27; 18:11; 15:6; 28:22
Good/Evil	13:21; 17:13; 10:29, 32	Wisdom	1:2-3; 1:7; 2:1-5; 3:6; 20:15; 16:21-23; 19:8
Happiness	10:28; 12:25; 15:13	The Wise	12:1; 14:7-8; 29:11
Health	3:7-8; 4:20-23; 12:18; 14:30; 15:30	Women	14:1; 11:16; 11:22; 19:14; 21:9; 31:30