



Proverbs

This book is a collection of wise sayings that were used in ancient Israel to teach God's people how to live right. One of the main teachings of Proverbs is that all wisdom is a gift from God. This wisdom supplies practical advice for everyday living.

How Proverbs Can Be Used

- 1 These are the proverbs of King Solomon of Israel, the son of David.
- 2 Proverbs will teach you wisdom and self-control and how to understand sayings with deep meanings.
- 3 You will learn what is right and honest and fair.
- 4 From these, an ordinary person can learn to be smart, and young people can gain knowledge and good sense.
- 5 If you are already wise, you will become even wiser. And if you are smart, you will learn to understand
- 6 proverbs and sayings, as well as words of wisdom and all kinds of riddles.
- 7 Respect and obey the LORD! This is the beginning of knowledge.▷
Only a fool rejects wisdom and good advice.

Warnings against Bad Friends

- 8 My child, obey the teachings of your parents,
- 9 and wear their teachings

- as you would a lovely hat or a pretty necklace.
- 10 Don't be tempted by sinners or listen ¹¹ when they say, "Come on! Let's gang up and kill somebody, just for the fun of it!"
- 12 They're well and healthy now, but we'll finish them off once and for all.
- 13 We'll take their valuables and fill our homes with stolen goods.
- 14 If you join our gang, you'll get your share."
- 15 Don't follow anyone like that or do what they do.
- 16 They are in a big hurry to commit some crime, perhaps even murder.
- 17 They are like a bird that sees the bait, but ignores the trap.▷
- 18 They gang up to murder someone, but they are the victims.
- 19 The wealth you get from crime robs you of your life.

Wisdom Speaks

- 20 Wisdom shouts in the streets wherever crowds gather.

- 21 She shouts in the marketplaces
and near the city gates
as she says to the people,
22 "How much longer
will you enjoy
being stupid fools?
Won't you ever stop sneering
and laughing at knowledge?"
23 Listen as I correct you
and tell you what I think.
24 You completely ignored me
and refused to listen;
25 you rejected my advice
and paid no attention
when I warned you.
26 "So when you are struck
by some terrible disaster,
27 or when trouble and distress
surround you like a whirlwind,
I will laugh and make fun.
28 You will ask for my help,
but I won't listen;
you will search,
but you won't find me.
29 No, you would not learn,
and you refused
to respect the LORD.
30 You rejected my advice
and paid no attention
when I warned you.
31 "Now you will eat the fruit
of what you have done,
until you are stuffed full
with your own schemes.
32 Sin and self-satisfaction
bring destruction and death
to stupid fools.
33 But if you listen to me,
you will be safe and secure
without fear of disaster."

Wisdom and Bad Friends

- 2 My child, you must follow
and treasure my teachings
and my instructions.
2 Keep in tune with wisdom
and think what it means
to have common sense.
3 Beg as loud as you can
for good common sense.
4 Search for wisdom

- as you would search for silver
or hidden treasure.
5 Then you will understand
what it means to respect
and to know the LORD God.
6 All wisdom comes from the LORD,
and so do common sense
and understanding.
7 God gives helpful advice[>]
to everyone who obeys him
and protects all of those
who live as they should.
8 God sees that justice is done,
and he watches over everyone
who is faithful to him.
9 With wisdom you will learn
what is right
and honest and fair.
10 Wisdom will control your mind,
and you will be pleased
with knowledge.
11 Sound judgment and good sense
will watch over you.
12 Wisdom will protect you
from evil schemes
and from those liars
13 who turned from doing good
to live in the darkness.
14 Most of all they enjoy
being mean and deceitful.
15 They are dishonest themselves,
and all they do is crooked.

Wisdom and Sexual Purity

- 16 Wisdom will protect you
from the smooth talk
of a sinful woman,
17 who breaks her wedding vows
and leaves the man she married
when she was young.
18 The road to her house leads
down to the dark world
of the dead.
19 Visit her, and you will never
find the road to life again.
20 Follow the example
of good people
and live an honest life.
21 If you are honest and innocent,
you will keep your land;

22 if you do wrong
and can never be trusted,
you will be rooted out.

Trust God

- 3 My child, remember
my teachings and instructions
and obey them completely.
- 2 They will help you live
a long and prosperous life.
- 3 Let love and loyalty
always show like a necklace,
and write them in your mind.
- 4 God and people will like you
and consider you a success.
- 5 With all your heart
you must trust the LORD
and not your own judgment.
- 6 Always let him lead you,
and he will clear the road
for you to follow.
- 7 Don't ever think that you
are wise enough,
but respect the LORD
and stay away from evil.
- 8 This will make you healthy,
and you will feel strong.
- 9 Honor the LORD by giving him
your money and the first part
of all your crops.
- 10 Then you will have
more grain and grapes
than you will ever need.
- 11 My child, don't turn away
or become bitter
when the LORD corrects you.
- 12 The LORD corrects
everyone he loves,
just as parents correct
their favorite child.

The Value of Wisdom

- 13 God blesses everyone
who has wisdom
and common sense.
- 14 Wisdom is worth more
than silver;
it makes you much richer
than gold.
- 15 Wisdom is more valuable
than precious jewels;

nothing you want
compares with her.

- 16 In her right hand
Wisdom holds a long life,
and in her left hand
are wealth and honor.
- 17 Wisdom makes life pleasant
and leads us safely along.
- 18 Wisdom is a life-giving tree,
the source of happiness
for all who hold on to her.
- 19 By his wisdom and knowledge
the LORD created
heaven and earth.
- 20 By his understanding
he let the ocean break loose
and clouds release the rain.
- 21 My child, use common sense
and sound judgment!
Always keep them in mind.
- 22 They will help you to live
a long and beautiful life.
- 23 You will walk safely
and never stumble;
24 you will rest without a worry
and sleep soundly.
- 25 So don't be afraid
of sudden disasters
or storms that strike
those who are evil.
- 26 You can be sure that the LORD
will protect you from harm.
- 27 Do all you can for everyone
who deserves your help.
- 28 Don't tell your neighbor
to come back tomorrow,
if you can help today.
- 29 Don't try to be mean
to neighbors who trust you.
- 30 Don't argue just to be arguing,
when you haven't been hurt.
- 31 Don't be jealous
of cruel people
or follow their example.
- 32 The LORD doesn't like
anyone who is dishonest,
but he lets good people
be his friends.
- 33 He places a curse on the home
of everyone who is evil,

but he blesses the home
of every good person.

34 The LORD sneers at those
who sneer at him,
but he is kind to everyone
who is humble.

35 You will be praised
if you are wise,
but you will be disgraced
if you are a stubborn fool.

Advice to Young People

- 4 My child, listen closely
to my teachings
and learn common sense.
- 2 My advice is useful,
so don't turn away.
- 3 When I was still very young
and my mother's favorite child,
my father 4 said to me:
"If you follow my teachings
and keep them in mind,
you will live."
- 5 Be wise and learn good sense;
remember my teachings
and do what I say.
- 6 If you love Wisdom
and don't reject her,
she will watch over you.
- 7 The best thing about Wisdom
is Wisdom herself;
good sense is more important
than anything else.
- 8 If you value Wisdom
and hold tightly to her,
great honors will be yours.
- 9 It will be like wearing
a glorious crown
of beautiful flowers.

The Right Way and the Wrong Way

- 10 My child, if you listen
and obey my teachings,
you will live a long time.
- 11 I have shown you the way
that makes sense;
I have guided you
along the right path.
- 12 Your road won't be blocked,
and you won't stumble
when you run.
- 13 Hold firmly to my teaching

and never let go.

It will mean life for you.

14 Don't follow the bad example
of cruel and evil people.

15 Turn aside and keep going.
Stay away from them.

16 They can't sleep or rest
until they do wrong or harm
some innocent victim.

17 Their food and drink
are violence and cruelty.

18 The lifestyle of good people
is like sunlight at dawn
that keeps getting brighter
until broad daylight.

19 The lifestyle of the wicked
is like total darkness,
and they will never know
what makes them stumble.

20 My child, listen carefully
to everything I say.

21 Don't forget a single word,
but think about it all.

22 Knowing these teachings
will mean true life
and good health for you.

23 Carefully guard your thoughts
because they are the source
of true life.

24 Never tell lies or be deceitful
in what you say.

25 Keep looking straight ahead,
without turning aside.

26 Know where you are headed,
and you will stay
on solid ground.

27 Don't make a mistake by turning
to the right or the left.

Be Faithful to Your Wife

- 5 My son, if you listen closely
to my wisdom and good sense,
2 you will have sound judgment,
and you will always know
the right thing to say.
- 3 The words of an immoral woman
may be as sweet as honey
and as smooth as olive oil.
- 4 But all that you really get
from being with her
is bitter poison and pain.

- 5 If you follow her,
she will lead you down
to the world of the dead.
- 6 She has missed the path
that leads to life
and doesn't even know it.
- 7 My son, listen to me
and do everything I say.
- 8 Stay away from a bad woman!
Don't even go near the door
of her house.
- 9 You will lose your self-respect
and end up in debt
to some cruel person
for the rest of your life.
- 10 Strangers will get your money
and everything else
you have worked for.
- 11 When it's all over,
your body will waste away,
as you groan ¹² and shout,
"I hated advice and correction!"
- 13 I paid no attention
to my teachers,
14 and now I am disgraced
in front of everyone."
- 15 You should be faithful
to your wife,
just as you take water
from your own well.
- 16 And don't be like a stream
from which just any woman
may take a drink.
- 17 Save yourself for your wife
and don't have sex
with other women.
- 18 Be happy with the wife
you married
when you were young.
- 19 She is beautiful and graceful,
just like a deer;
you should be attracted to her
and stay deeply in love.
- 20 Don't go crazy over a woman
who is unfaithful
to her own husband!
- 21 The LORD sees everything,
and he watches us closely.
- 22 Sinners are trapped and caught
by their own evil deeds.

- 23 They get lost and die
because of their foolishness
and lack of self-control.

Don't Be Foolish

- 6 My child, suppose you agree
to pay the debt of someone,
who cannot repay a loan.
- 2 Then you are trapped
by your own words,
3 and you are now in the power
of someone else.
- Here is what you should do:
Go and beg for permission
to call off the agreement.
- 4 Do this before you fall asleep
or even get sleepy.
- 5 Save yourself, just as a deer
or a bird tries to escape
from a hunter.
- 6 You lazy people can learn
by watching an anthill.
- 7 Ants don't have leaders,
8 but they store up food
during harvest season.
- 9 How long will you lie there
doing nothing at all?
When are you going to get up
and stop sleeping?
- 10 Sleep a little. Doze a little.
Fold your hands
and twiddle your thumbs.
- 11 Suddenly, everything is gone,
as though it had been taken
by an armed robber.
- 12 Worthless liars go around
13 winking and giving signals
to deceive others.
- 14 They are always thinking up
something cruel and evil,
and they stir up trouble.
- 15 But they will be struck
by sudden disaster
and left without a hope.
- 16 There are six or seven
kinds of people
the LORD doesn't like:
17 Those who are too proud
or tell lies or murder,
18 those who make evil plans
or are quick to do wrong,

- 19 those who tell lies in court
or stir up trouble
in a family.
- 20 Obey the teaching
of your parents—
- 21 always keep it in mind
and never forget it.
- 22 Their teaching will guide you
when you walk,
protect you when you sleep,
and talk to you
when you are awake.
- 23 The Law of the Lord is a lamp,
and its teachings
shine brightly.
Correction and self-control
will lead you through life.
- 24 They will protect you
from the flattering words
of someone else's wife.▷
- 25 Don't let yourself be attracted
by the charm and lovely eyes
of someone like that.
- 26 A woman who sells her love
can be bought for as little
as the price of a meal.
But making love
to another man's wife
will cost you everything.
- 27 If you carry burning coals,
you burn your clothes;
- 28 if you step on hot coals,
you burn your feet.
- 29 And if you go to bed
with another man's wife,
you pay the price.
- 30 We don't put up with thieves,
not even▷ with one who steals
for something to eat.
- 31 And thieves who get caught
must pay back
seven times what was stolen
and lose everything.
- 32 But if you go to bed
with another man's wife,
you will destroy yourself
by your own stupidity.
- 33 You will be beaten
and forever disgraced,
34 because a jealous husband

- can be furious and merciless
when he takes revenge.
- 35 He won't let you pay him off,
no matter what you offer.

The Foolishness of Unfaithfulness

- 7 My son, pay close attention
and don't forget
what I tell you to do.
- 2 Obey me, and you will live!
Let my instructions be
your greatest treasure.
- 3 Keep them at your fingertips
and write them
in your mind.
- 4 Let wisdom be your sister
and make common sense
your closest friend.
- 5 They will protect you
from the flattering words
of someone else's wife.
- 6 From the window of my house,
I once happened to see
7 some foolish young men.
- 8 It was late in the evening,
sometime after dark.
- 9 One of these young men
turned the corner
and was walking by the house
of an unfaithful wife.
- 10 She was dressed fancy
like a woman of the street
with only one thing in mind.
- 11 She was one of those women
who are loud and restless
and never stay at home,
- 12 who walk street after street,
waiting to trap a man.
- 13 She grabbed him and kissed him,
and with no sense of shame,
she said:
- 14 "I had to offer a sacrifice,
and there is enough meat
left over for a feast.
- 15 So I came looking for you,
and here you are!
- 16 The sheets on my bed
are bright-colored cloth
from Egypt.
- 17 And I have covered it
with perfume made of myrrh,
aloes, and cinnamon.

- 18 "Let's go there
and make love all night.
19 My husband is traveling,
and he's far away.
20 He took a lot of money along,
and he won't be back home
before the middle
of the month."
21 And so, she tricked him
with all of her sweet talk
and her flattery.
22 At once he followed her
like an ox on the way
to be slaughtered,
or like 'a fool on the way
to be punished'
23 and killed with arrows.
He was no more than a bird
rushing into a trap,
without knowing
it would cost him his life.
24 My son, pay close attention
to what I have said.
25 Don't even think about
that kind of woman
or let yourself be misled
by someone like her.
26 Such a woman has caused
the downfall and destruction
of a lot of men.
27 Her house is a one-way street
leading straight down
to the world of the dead.

In Praise of Wisdom

- 8 With great understanding,
Wisdom is calling out
2 as she stands at the crossroads
and on every hill.
3 She stands by the city gate
where everyone enters the city,
and she shouts:
4 "I am calling out
to each one of you!
5 Good sense and sound judgment
can be yours.
6 Listen, because what I say
is worthwhile and right.
7 I always speak the truth
and refuse to tell a lie.

- 8 Every word I speak is honest,
not one is misleading
or deceptive.
9 "If you have understanding,
you will see that my words
are just what you need.
10 Let instruction and knowledge
mean more to you than silver
or the finest gold.
11 Wisdom is worth much more
than precious jewels
or anything else you desire."

Wisdom Speaks

- 12 I am Wisdom —Common Sense
is my closest friend;
I possess knowledge
and sound judgment.
13 If you respect the LORD,
you will hate evil.
I hate pride and conceit
and deceitful lies.
14 I am strong, and I offer
sensible advice
and sound judgment.
15 By my power kings govern,
and rulers make laws
that are fair.
16 Every honest leader rules
with help from me.
17 I love everyone who loves me,
and I will be found by all
who honestly search.
18 I can make you rich and famous,
important and successful.
19 What you receive from me
is more valuable
than even the finest gold
or the purest silver.
20 I always do what is right,
21 and I give great riches
to everyone who loves me.
22 From the beginning,
I was with the LORD.▷
I was there before he began
23 to create the earth.
At the very first,
the LORD gave life to▷ me.
24 When I was born,
there were no oceans
or springs of water.

- 25 My birth was before
mountains were formed
or hills were put in place.
- 26 It happened long before God
had made the earth
or any of its fields
or even the dust.
- 27 I was there when the LORD
put the heavens in place
and stretched the sky
over the surface of the sea.
- 28 I was with him when he placed
the clouds in the sky
and created the springs
that fill the ocean.
- 29 I was there when he set
boundaries for the sea
to make it obey him,
and when he laid foundations
to support the earth.
- 30 I was right beside the LORD,
helping him plan and build.▷
I made him happy each day,
and I was happy at his side.
- 31 I was pleased with his world
and pleased with its people.
- 32 Pay attention, my children!
Follow my advice,
and you will be happy.
- 33 Listen carefully
to my instructions,
and you will be wise.
- 34 Come to my home each day
and listen to me.
You will find happiness.
- 35 By finding me, you find life,
and the LORD will be pleased
with you.
- 36 But if you don't find me,
you hurt only yourself,
and if you hate me,
you are in love with death.

Wisdom Gives a Feast

- 9** Wisdom has built her house
with its seven columns.
2 She has prepared the meat
and set out the wine.
Her feast is ready.

- 3 She has sent her servant women
to announce her invitation
from the highest hills:
4 "Everyone who is ignorant
or foolish is invited!
5 All of you are welcome
to my meat and wine.
6 If you want to live,
give up your foolishness
and let understanding
guide your steps."

True Wisdom

- 7 Correct a worthless bragger,
and all you will get
are insults and injuries.
- 8 Any bragger you correct
will only hate you.
But if you correct someone
who has common sense,
you will be loved.
- 9 If you have good sense,
instruction will help you
to have even better sense.
And if you live right,
education will help you
to know even more.
- 10 Respect and obey the LORD!
This is the beginning
of wisdom.▷
To have understanding,
you must know the Holy God.
- 11 I am Wisdom. If you follow me,
you will live a long time.
- 12 Good sense is good for you,
but if you brag,
you hurt yourself.

A Foolish Invitation

- 13 Stupidity▷ is reckless,
senseless, and foolish.
- 14 She sits in front of her house
and on the highest hills
in the town.
- 15 She shouts to everyone
who passes by,
16 "If you are stupid,
come on inside!"
And to every fool she says,
17 "Stolen water tastes best,
and the food you eat in secret
tastes best of all."

- 18 None who listen to Stupidity understand that her guests are as good as dead.

Solomon's Wise Sayings

10

Here are some proverbs of Solomon:

- Children with good sense make their parents happy, but foolish children make them sad.
- 2 What you gain by doing evil won't help you at all, but being good▷ can save you from death.
- 3 If you obey the LORD, you won't go hungry; if you are wicked, God won't let you have what you want.
- 4 Laziness leads to poverty; hard work makes you rich.
- 5 At harvest season it's smart to work hard, but stupid to sleep.
- 6 Everyone praises good people, but evil hides behind the words of the wicked.
- 7 Good people are remembered long after they are gone, but the wicked are soon forgotten.
- 8 If you have good sense, you will listen and obey; if all you do is talk, you will destroy yourself.
- 9 You will be safe, if you always do right, but you will get caught, if you are dishonest.
- 10 Deceit causes trouble, and foolish talk will bring you to ruin.▷
- 11 The words of good people are a source of life, but evil hides behind the words of the wicked.
- 12 Hatred stirs up trouble; love overlooks the wrongs that others do.

- 13 If you have good sense, it will show when you speak. But if you are stupid, you will be beaten with a stick.
- 14 If you have good sense, you will learn all you can, but foolish talk will soon destroy you.
- 15 Great wealth can be a fortress, but poverty is no protection at all.
- 16 If you live right, the reward is a good life; if you are evil, all you have is sin.
- 17 Accept correction, and you will find life; reject correction, and you will miss the road.
- 18 You can hide your hatred by telling lies, but you are a fool to spread lies.
- 19 You will say the wrong thing if you talk too much – so be sensible and watch what you say.
- 20 The words of a good person are like pure silver, but the thoughts of an evil person are almost worthless.
- 21 Many are helped by useful instruction, but fools are killed by their own stupidity.
- 22 When the LORD blesses you with riches, you have nothing to regret.▷
- 23 Fools enjoy doing wrong, but anyone with good sense enjoys acting wisely.
- 24 What evil people dread most will happen to them, but good people will get what they want most.
- 25 Those crooks will disappear when a storm strikes, but God will keep safe all who obey him.

- 26 Having a lazy person on the job
is like a mouth full of vinegar
or smoke in your eyes.
- 27 If you respect the LORD,
you will live longer;
if you keep doing wrong,
your life will be cut short.
- 28 If you obey the Lord,
you will be happy,
but there is no future
for the wicked.
- 29 The LORD protects everyone
who lives right,
but he destroys anyone
who does wrong.
- 30 Good people will stand firm,
but the wicked
will lose their land.
- 31 Honest people speak sensibly,
but deceitful liars
will be silenced.
- 32 If you obey the Lord,
you will always know
the right thing to say.
But no one will trust you
if you tell lies.
- 7 When the wicked die,
their hopes die with them.
- 8 Trouble goes right past
the LORD's people
and strikes the wicked.
- 9 Dishonest people use gossip
to destroy their neighbors;
good people are protected
by their own good sense.
- 10 When honest people prosper
and the wicked disappear,
the whole city celebrates.
- 11 When God blesses his people,
their city prospers,
but deceitful liars
can destroy a city.
- 12 It's stupid to say bad things
about your neighbors.
If you are sensible,
you will keep quiet.
- 13 A gossip tells everything,
but a true friend
will keep a secret.
- 14 A city without wise leaders
will end up in ruin;
a city with many wise leaders
will be kept safe.

Watch What You Say and Do

- 11 The LORD hates anyone
who cheats,
but he likes everyone
who is honest.
- 2 Too much pride
can put you to shame.
It's wiser to be humble.
- 3 If you do the right thing,
honesty will be your guide.
But if you are crooked,
you will be trapped
by your own dishonesty.
- 4 When God is angry,
money won't help you.
Obeying God is the only way
to be saved from death.
- 5 If you are truly good,
you will do right;
if you are wicked,
you will be destroyed
by your own sin.
- 6 Honesty can keep you safe,
but if you can't be trusted,
you trap yourself.
- 15 It's a dangerous thing
to guarantee payment
for someone's debts.
Don't do it!
- 16 A gracious woman
will be respected,
but a man must work hard
to get rich.▷
- 17 Kindness is rewarded—
but if you are cruel,
you hurt yourself.
- 18 Meanness gets you nowhere,
but goodness is rewarded.
- 19 Always do the right thing,
and you will live;
keep on doing wrong,
and you will die.
- 20 The LORD hates sneaky people,
but he likes everyone
who lives right.
- 21 You can be sure of this:
All crooks will be punished,
but God's people won't.

- 22 A beautiful woman
who acts foolishly
is like a gold ring
on the snout of a pig.
- 23 Good people want what is best,
but troublemakers
hope to stir up trouble.▷
- 24 Sometimes you can become rich
by being generous
or poor by being greedy.
- 25 Generosity will be rewarded:
Give a cup of water,
and you will receive
a cup of water in return.
- 26 Charge too much for grain,
and you will be cursed;
sell it at a fair price,
and you will be praised.
- 27 Try hard to do right,
and you will win friends;
go looking for trouble,
and you will find it.
- 28 Trust in your wealth,
and you will be a failure,
but God's people will prosper
like healthy plants.
- 29 Fools who cause trouble
in the family
won't inherit a thing.
They will end up as slaves
of someone with good sense.
- 30 Live right, and you will eat
from the life-giving tree.
And if you act wisely,
others will follow.▷
- 31 If good people are rewarded▷
here on this earth,
all who are cruel and mean
will surely be punished.
- 4 A helpful wife is a jewel
for her husband,
but a shameless wife
will make his bones rot.
- 5 Good people have kind thoughts,
but you should never trust
the advice of someone evil.
- 6 Bad advice is a deadly trap,
but good advice
is like a shield.
- 7 Once the wicked are defeated,
they are gone forever,
but no one who obeys God
will ever be thrown down.
- 8 Good sense is worthy of praise,
but stupidity is a curse.
- 9 It's better to be ordinary
and have only one servant▷
than to think you are somebody
and starve to death.
- 10 Good people are kind
to their animals,
but a mean person is cruel.
- 11 Hard working farmers have more
than enough food;
daydreamers are nothing more
than stupid fools.
- 12 An evil person tries to hide
behind evil;▷
good people are like trees
with deep roots.
- 13 We trap ourselves
by telling lies,
but we stay out of trouble
by living right.
- 14 We are rewarded or punished
for what we say and do.
- 15 Fools think they know
what is best,
but a sensible person
listens to advice.
- 16 Losing your temper is foolish;
ignoring an insult is smart.
- 17 An honest person
tells the truth in court,
but a dishonest person
tells nothing but lies.
- 18 Sharp words cut like a sword,
but words of wisdom heal.
- 19 Truth will last forever;
lies are soon found out.

You Can't Hide behind Evil

- 12** To accept correction is wise,
to reject it is stupid.
- 2 The LORD likes everyone
who lives right,
but he punishes everyone
who makes evil plans.
- 3 Sin cannot offer security!
But if you live right,
you will be as secure
as a tree with deep roots.

- 20 An evil mind is deceitful,
but gentle thoughts
bring happiness.
- 21 Good people never have trouble,
but troublemakers
have more than enough.
- 22 The LORD hates every liar,
but he is the friend of all
who can be trusted.
- 23 Be sensible and don't tell
everything you know—
only fools spread
foolishness everywhere.
- 24 Work hard, and you
will be a leader;
be lazy, and you
will end up a slave.
- 25 Worry is a heavy burden,
but a kind word
always brings cheer.
- 26 'You are better off to do right,
than to lose your way
by doing wrong.'
- 27 Anyone too lazy to cook
will starve,
'but a hard worker
is a valuable treasure.'
- 28 Follow the road to life,
and you won't be bothered
by death.
- 6 Live right, and you are safe!
But sin will destroy you.
- 7 Some who have nothing
may pretend to be rich,
and some who have everything
may pretend to be poor.
- 8 The rich may have
to pay a ransom,
but the poor don't have
that problem.
- 9 The lamp of a good person
keeps on shining;
the lamp of an evil person
soon goes out.
- 10 Too much pride causes trouble.
Be sensible and take advice.
- 11 Money wrongly gained
will disappear bit by bit;
money earned little by little
will grow and grow.
- 12 Not getting what you want
can make you feel sick,
but a wish that comes true
is a life-giving tree.
- 13 If you reject God's teaching,
you will pay the price;
if you obey his commands,
you will be rewarded.
- 14 Sensible instruction
is a life-giving fountain
that helps you escape
all deadly traps.
- 15 Sound judgment is praised,
but 'people without good sense
are on the way to disaster.'
- 16 If you have good sense,
you will act sensibly,
but fools act like fools.
- 17 Whoever delivers your message
can make things better
or worse for you.
- 18 All who refuse correction
will be poor and disgraced;
all who accept correction
will be praised.
- 19 It's a good feeling
to get what you want,
but only a stupid fool
hates to turn from evil.
- 20 Wise friends make you wise,

Wise Friends Make You Wise

13

- Children with good sense
accept correction
from their parents,
but stubborn children
ignore it completely.
- 2 You will be well rewarded
for saying something kind,
but all some people think about
is how to be cruel and mean.
- 3 Keep what you know to yourself,
and you will be safe;
talk too much,
and you are done for.
- 4 No matter how much you want,
laziness won't help a bit,
but hard work will reward you
with more than enough.
- 5 A good person hates deceit,
but those who are evil
cause shame and disgrace.

- but you hurt yourself
by going around with fools.
- 21 You are in for trouble
if you sin,
but you will be rewarded
if you live right.
- 22 If you obey God,
you will have something
to leave your grandchildren.
If you don't obey God,
those who live right
will get what you leave.
- 23 'Even when the land of the poor
produces good crops,
they get cheated
out of what they grow.'
- 24 If you love your children,
you will correct them;
if you don't love them,
you won't correct them.
- 25 If you live right,
you will have plenty to eat;
if you don't live right,
you will go away empty.
- 7 Stay away from fools,
or you won't learn a thing.
- 8 Wise people have enough sense
to find their way,
but stupid fools get lost.
- 9 'Fools don't care
if they are wrong,'
but God is pleased
when people do right.
- 10 No one else can really know
how sad or happy you are.
- 11 The tent of a good person
stands longer than the house
of someone evil.
- 12 You may think you are
on the right road
and still end up dead.
- 13 Sorrow may hide
behind laughter,
and happiness may end
in sorrow.
- 14 You harvest what you plant,
whether good or bad.

Wisdom Makes Good Sense

- 14 A woman's family
is held together
by her wisdom,
but it can be destroyed
by her foolishness.
- 2 By living right, you show
that you respect the LORD;
by being deceitful, you show
that you despise him.
- 3 Proud fools are punished
for their stupid talk,
but sensible talk
can save your life.
- 4 Without the help of an ox
there can be no crop,
but with a strong ox
a big crop is possible.
- 5 An honest witness
tells the truth;
a dishonest witness
tells nothing but lies.
- 6 Make fun of wisdom,
and you will never find it.
But if you have understanding,
knowledge comes easily.
- 15 Don't be stupid
and believe all you hear;
be smart and know
where you are headed.
- 16 Only a stupid fool
is never cautious—
so be extra careful
and stay out of trouble.
- 17 Fools have quick tempers,
and no one likes you
if you can't be trusted.
- 18 Stupidity leads to foolishness;
be smart and learn.
- 19 The wicked will come crawling
to those who obey God.
- 20 You have no friends
if you are poor,
but you have lots of friends
if you are rich.
- 21 It's wrong to hate others,
but God blesses everyone
who is kind to the poor.
- 22 It's a mistake
to make evil plans,
but you will have loyal friends
if you want to do right.

- 23 Hard work is worthwhile,
but empty talk
will make you poor.
- 24 Wisdom can make you rich,
but foolishness leads
to more foolishness.
- 25 An honest witness
can save your life,
but liars can't be trusted.
- 26 If you respect the LORD,
you and your children
have a strong fortress
- 27 and a life-giving fountain
that keeps you safe
from deadly traps.
- 28 Rulers of powerful nations
are held in honor;
rulers of weak nations
are nothing at all.
- 29 It's smart to be patient,
but it's stupid
to lose your temper.
- 30 It's healthy to be content,
but envy can eat you up.
- 31 If you mistreat the poor,
you insult your Creator;
if you are kind to them,
you show him respect.
- 32 In times of trouble
the wicked are destroyed,
'but even at death
the innocent have faith.' 1 ▷
- 33 Wisdom is found in the minds
of people with good sense,
'but fools don't know it.' 1 ▷
- 34 Doing right brings honor
to a nation,
but sin brings disgrace.
- 35 Kings reward servants
who act wisely,
but they punish those
who act foolishly.
- 3 The LORD sees everything,
whether good or bad.
- 4 Kind words are good medicine,
but deceitful words
can really hurt.
- 5 Don't be a fool
and disobey your parents.
Be smart! Accept correction.
- 6 Good people become wealthy,
but those who are evil
will lose what they have.
- 7 Words of wisdom
make good sense;
the thoughts of a fool
make no sense at all.
- 8 The LORD is disgusted
by gifts from the wicked,
but it makes him happy
when his people pray.
- 9 The LORD is disgusted
with all who do wrong,
but he loves everyone
who does right.
- 10 If you turn from the right way,
you will be punished;
if you refuse correction,
you will die.
- 11 If the LORD can see everything
in the world of the dead,
he can see in our hearts.
- 12 Those who sneer at others
don't like to be corrected,
and they won't ask help
from someone with sense.
- 13 Happiness makes you smile;
sorrow can crush you.
- 14 Anyone with good sense
is eager to learn more,
but fools are hungry
for foolishness.
- 15 The poor have a hard life,
but being content is as good
as an endless feast.
- 16 It's better to obey the LORD
and have only a little,
than to be very rich
and terribly confused.
- 17 A simple meal with love
is better than a feast
where there is hatred.

The LORD Sees Everything

15

- A kind answer
soothes angry feelings,
but harsh words
stir them up.
- 2 Words of wisdom
come from the wise,
but fools speak foolishness.

- 18 Losing your temper
causes a lot of trouble,
but staying calm
settles arguments.
- 19 Being lazy is like walking
in a thorn patch,
but everyone who does right
walks on a smooth road.
- 20 Children with good sense
make their parents happy,
but foolish children
are hateful to them.
- 21 Stupidity brings happiness
to senseless fools,
but everyone with good sense
follows the straight path.
- 22 Without good advice
everything goes wrong—
it takes careful planning
for things to go right.
- 23 Giving the right answer
at the right time
makes everyone happy.
- 24 All who are wise follow a road
that leads upward to life
and away from death.
- 25 The LORD destroys the homes
of those who are proud,
but he protects the property
of widows.
- 26 The LORD hates evil thoughts,
but kind words please him.
- 27 Being greedy causes trouble
for your family,
but you protect yourself
by refusing bribes.
- 28 Good people think
before they answer,
but the wicked speak evil
without ever thinking.
- 29 The LORD never even hears
the prayers of the wicked,
but he answers the prayers
of all who obey him.
- 30 A friendly smile
makes you happy,
and good news
makes you feel strong.
- 31 Healthy correction is good,
and if you accept it,
you will be wise.

- 32 You hurt only yourself
by rejecting instruction,
but it makes good sense
to accept it.
- 33 Showing respect to the LORD
will make you wise,
and being humble
will bring honor to you.

The LORD Has the Final Word

- 16 We humans make plans,
but the LORD
has the final word.
- 2 We may think we know
what is right,
but the LORD is the judge
of our motives.
- 3 Share your plans with the LORD,
and you will succeed.
- 4 The LORD has a reason
for everything he does,
and he lets evil people live
only to be punished.
- 5 The LORD doesn't like
anyone who is conceited—
you can be sure
they will be punished.
- 6 If we truly love God,
our sins will be forgiven;
if we show him respect,
we will keep away from sin.
- 7 When we please the LORD,
even our enemies
make friends with us.
- 8 It's better to be honest
and poor
than to be dishonest
and rich.
- 9 We make our own plans,
but the LORD decides
where we will go.
- 10 Rulers speak with authority
and are never wrong.
- 11 The LORD doesn't like it
when we cheat in business.
- 12 Justice makes rulers powerful.
They should hate evil
and like honesty and truth.
- 13 and like honesty and truth.
- 14 An angry ruler
can put you to death.
So be wise!
Don't make one angry.

- 15 When a ruler is happy
and pleased with you,
it's like refreshing rain,
and you will live.
- 16 It's much better to be wise
and sensible
than to be rich.
- 17 God's people avoid evil ways,
and they protect themselves
by watching where they go.
- 18 Too much pride
will destroy you.
- 19 You are better off
to be humble and poor
than to get rich
from what you take by force.
- 20 If you know what you're doing,[>]
you will prosper.
God blesses everyone
who trusts him.
- 21 Good judgment proves
that you are wise,
and if you speak kindly,
you can teach others.
- 22 Good sense is a fountain
that gives life,
but fools are punished
by their foolishness.
- 23 You can persuade others
if you are wise
and speak sensibly.
- 24 Kind words are like honey—
they cheer you up
and make you feel strong.
- 25 Sometimes what seems right
is really a road to death.
- 26 The hungrier you are,
the harder you work.
- 27 Worthless people plan trouble.
Even their words burn
like a flaming fire.
- 28 Gossip is no good!
It causes hard feelings
and comes between friends.
- 29 Don't trust violent people.
They will mislead you
to do the wrong thing.
- 30 When someone winks
or grins behind your back,
trouble is on the way.
- 31 Gray hair is a glorious crown
worn by those
who have lived right.
- 32 Controlling your temper
is better than being a hero
who captures a city.
- 33 We make our own decisions,
but the LORD alone
determines what happens.

Our Thoughts Are Tested by the LORD

- 17 A dry crust of bread eaten
in peace and quiet
is better than a feast eaten
where everyone argues.
- 2 A hard-working slave
will be placed in charge
of a no-good child,
and that slave will be given
the same inheritance
that each child receives.
- 3 Silver and gold are tested
by flames of fire;
our thoughts are tested
by the LORD.
- 4 Troublemakers listen
to troublemakers,
and liars listen to liars.
- 5 By insulting the poor,
you insult your Creator.
You will be punished
if you make fun
of someone in trouble.
- 6 Grandparents are proud
of their grandchildren,
and children should be proud
of their parents.
- 7 It sounds strange for a fool
to talk sensibly,
but it's even worse
for a ruler to tell lies.
- 8 A bribe works miracles
like a magic charm
that brings good luck.
- 9 You will keep your friends
if you forgive them,
but you will lose your friends
if you keep talking about
what they did wrong.
- 10 A sensible person
accepts correction,

but you can't beat sense
into a fool.

- 11 Cruel people want to rebel,
and so vicious attackers
will be sent against them.
- 12 A bear robbed of her cubs
is far less dangerous
than a stubborn fool.
- 13 You will always have trouble
if you are mean to those
who are good to you.
- 14 The start of an argument
is like a water leak—
so stop it before
real trouble breaks out.
- 15 The LORD doesn't like those
who defend the guilty
or condemn the innocent.
- 16 Why should fools have money
for an education
when they refuse to learn?
- 17 A friend is always a friend,
and relatives are born
to share our troubles.
- 18 It's stupid to guarantee
someone else's loan.
- 19 The wicked and the proud
love trouble and keep begging
to be hurt.
- 20 Dishonesty does you no good,
and telling lies
will get you in trouble.
- 21 It's never pleasant
to be the parent of a fool
and have nothing but pain.
- 22 If you are cheerful,
you feel good;
if you are sad,
you hurt all over.
- 23 Crooks accept secret bribes
to keep justice
from being done.
- 24 Anyone with wisdom knows
what makes good sense,
but fools can never
make up their minds.
- 25 Foolish children bring sorrow
to their father
and pain to their mother.
- 26 It isn't fair

to punish the innocent
and those who do right.

- 27 It makes a lot of sense
to be a person of few words
and to stay calm.
- 28 Even fools seem smart
when they are quiet.

It's Wrong to Favor the Guilty

- 18 'It's selfish and stupid
to think only of yourself
and to sneer at people
who have sense.'
- 2 Fools have no desire to learn;
they would much rather
give their own opinion.
- 3 Wrongdoing leads to shame
and disgrace.
- 4 Words of wisdom
are a stream that flows
from a deep fountain.
- 5 It's wrong to favor the guilty
and keep the innocent
from getting justice.
- 6 Foolish talk will get you
into a lot of trouble.
- 7 Saying foolish things
is like setting a trap
to destroy yourself.
- 8 There's nothing so delicious
as the taste of gossip!
It melts in your mouth.
- 9 Being lazy is no different
from being a troublemaker.
- 10 The LORD is a mighty tower
where his people can run
for safety—
- 11 the rich think their money
is a wall of protection.
- 12 Pride leads to destruction;
humility leads to honor.
- 13 It's stupid and embarrassing
to give an answer
before you listen.
- 14 Being cheerful helps
when we are sick,
but nothing helps
when we give up.
- 15 Everyone with good sense
wants to learn.

- 16 A gift will get you in
to see anyone.
- 17 You may think you have won
your case in court,
until your opponent speaks.
- 18 Drawing straws is one way
to settle a difficult case.
- 19 'Making up with a friend
you have offended'
is harder than breaking
through a city wall.
- 20 Make your words good—
you will be glad you did.
- 21 Words can bring death or life!
Talk too much, and you will eat
everything you say.
- 22 A man's greatest treasure
is his wife—
she is a gift from the LORD.
- 23 The poor must beg for help,
but the rich can give
a harsh reply.
- 24 'Some friends don't help,'
but a true friend is closer
than your own family.
- 9 Dishonest witnesses and liars
will be destroyed.
- 10 It isn't right for a fool
to live in luxury
or for a slave to rule
in place of a king.
- 11 It's wise to be patient
and show what you are like
by forgiving others.
- 12 An angry king roars
like a lion,
but when a king is pleased,
it's like dew on the crops.
- 13 A foolish son brings disgrace
to his father.
A nagging wife goes on and on
like the drip, drip, drip
of the rain.
- 14 You may inherit all you own
from your parents,
but a sensible wife
is a gift from the LORD.
- 15 If you are lazy
and sleep your time away,
you will starve.

It's Wise To Be Patient

- 19 It's better to be poor
and live right
than to be a stupid liar.
- 2 Willingness and stupidity
don't go well together.
If you are too eager,
you will miss the road.
- 3 We are ruined
by our own stupidity,
though we blame the LORD.
- 4 The rich have many friends;
the poor have none.
- 5 Dishonest witnesses and liars
won't escape punishment.
- 6 Everyone tries to be friends
of those who can help them.
- 7 If you are poor,
your own relatives reject you,
and your friends are worse.
'When you really need them,
they are not there.'
- 8 Do yourself a favor
by having good sense—
you will be glad you did.
- 16 Obey the Lord's teachings
and you will live—
disobey and you will die.
- 17 Caring for the poor
is lending to the LORD,
and you will be well repaid.
- 18 Correct your children
before it's too late;
if you don't punish them,
you are destroying them.
- 19 People with bad tempers
are always in trouble,
'and they need help
over and over again.'
- 20 Pay attention to advice
and accept correction,
so you can live sensibly.
- 21 We may make a lot of plans,
but the LORD will do
what he has decided.
- 22 What matters most is loyalty.
It's better to be poor
than to be a liar.
- 23 Showing respect to the LORD
brings true life—

- if you do it, you can relax
without fear of danger.
- 24 Some people are too lazy
to lift a hand
to feed themselves.
- 25 Stupid fools learn good sense
by seeing others punished;
a sensible person learns
by being corrected.
- 26 Children who bring disgrace
rob their father
and chase their mother away.
- 27 If you stop learning,
you will forget
what you already know.
- 28 A lying witness makes fun
of the court system,
and criminals think crime
is really delicious.
- 29 Every stupid fool
is just waiting
to be punished.
- 10 Two things the LORD hates
are dishonest scales
and dishonest measures.
- 11 The good or bad
that children do
shows what they are like.
- 12 Hearing and seeing
are gifts from the LORD.
- 13 If you sleep all the time,
you will starve;
if you get up and work,
you will have enough food.
- 14 Everyone likes to brag
about getting a bargain.
- 15 Sensible words are better
than gold or jewels.
- 16 You deserve to lose your coat
if you loan it to someone
to guarantee payment
for the debt of a stranger.
- 17 The food you get by cheating
may taste delicious,
but it turns to gravel.
- 18 Be sure you have sound advice
before making plans
or starting a war.
- 19 Stay away from gossips—
they tell everything.
- 20 Children who curse their parents
will go to the land of darkness
long before their time.
- 21 Getting rich quick >
may turn out to be a curse.
- 22 Don't try to get even.
Trust the LORD,
and he will help you.

Words of Wisdom Are Better than Gold

- 20 It isn't smart to get drunk!
Drinking makes a fool of you
and leads to fights.
- 2 An angry ruler
is like a roaring lion—
make either one angry,
and you are dead.
- 3 It makes you look good
when you avoid a fight—
only fools love to quarrel.
- 4 If you are too lazy to plow,
don't expect a harvest.
- 5 Someone's thoughts may be
as deep as the ocean,
but if you are smart,
you will discover them.
- 6 There are many who say,
"You can trust me!"
But can they be trusted?
- 7 Good people live right,
and God blesses the children
who follow their example.
- 8 When rulers decide cases,
they weigh the evidence.
- 9 Can any of us really say,
"My thoughts are pure,
and my sins are gone?"
- 23 The LORD hates dishonest scales
and dishonest weights.
So don't cheat!
- 24 How can we know
what will happen to us
when the LORD alone decides?
- 25 Don't fall into the trap
of making promises to God
before you think!
- 26 A wise ruler severely punishes
every criminal.
- 27 Our inner thoughts are a lamp
from the LORD,
and they search our hearts.

- 28 Rulers are protected
by God's mercy and loyalty,
but² they must be merciful
for their kingdoms to last.
- 29 Young people take pride
in their strength,
but the gray hairs of wisdom
are even more beautiful.
- 30 A severe beating can knock all
of the evil out of you!

The Lord Is In Charge

- 21 The LORD controls rulers,
just as he determines
the course of rivers.
- 2 We may think we are doing
the right thing,
but the LORD always knows
what is in our hearts.
- 3 Doing what is right and fair
pleases the LORD
more than an offering.
- 4 Evil people are proud
and arrogant,
but sin is the only crop
they produce.²
- 5 If you plan and work hard,
you will have plenty;
if you get in a hurry,
you will end up poor.
- 6 Cheating to get rich
is a foolish dream
'and no less than suicide.'¹
- 7 You destroy yourself
by being cruel and violent
and refusing to live right.
- 8 All crooks are liars,
but anyone who is innocent
will do right.
- 9 It's better to stay outside
on the roof of your house
than to live inside
with a nagging wife.
- 10 Evil people want to do wrong,
even to their friends.
- 11 An ignorant fool learns
by seeing others punished;
a sensible person learns
by being instructed.
- 12 God is always fair!
He knows what the wicked do
and will punish them.

- 13 If you won't help the poor,
don't expect to be heard
when you cry out for help.
- 14 A secret bribe will save you
from someone's fierce anger.
- 15 When justice is done,
good citizens are glad
and crooks are terrified.
- 16 If you stop using good sense,
you will find yourself
in the grave.
- 17 Heavy drinkers and others
who live only for pleasure
will lose all they have.
- 18 God's people will escape,
but all who are wicked
will pay the price.
- 19 It's better out in the desert
than at home with a nagging,
complaining wife.
- 20 Be sensible and store up
precious treasures—
don't waste them
like a fool.
- 21 If you try to be kind and good,
you will be blessed with life
and goodness and honor.
- 22 One wise person can defeat
a city full of soldiers
and capture their fortress.
- 23 Watching what you say
can save you
a lot of trouble.
- 24 If you are proud and conceited,
everyone will say,
"You're a snob!"
- 25 If you want too much
and are too lazy to work,
it could be fatal.
- 26 But people who obey God
are always generous.
- 27 The Lord despises the offerings
of wicked people
with evil motives.
- 28 If you tell lies in court,
you are done for;
only a reliable witness
can do the job.
- 29 Wicked people bluff their way,
but God's people think
before they take a step.

- 30 No matter how much you know
or what plans you make,
you can't defeat the LORD.
- 31 Even if your army has horses
ready for battle,
the LORD will always win.

The Value of a Good Reputation

22

A good reputation and respect
are worth much more
than silver and gold.

- 2 The rich and the poor
are all created
by the LORD.
- 3 When you see trouble coming,
don't be stupid
and walk right into it—
be smart and hide.
- 4 Respect and serve the LORD!
Your reward will be wealth,
a long life, and honor.
- 5 Crooks walk down a road
full of thorny traps.
Stay away from there!
- 6 Teach your children
right from wrong,
and when they are grown
they will still do right.
- 7 The poor are ruled by the rich,
and those who borrow
are slaves of moneylenders.
- 8 Troublemakers get in trouble,
and their terrible anger
will get them nowhere.
- 9 The LORD blesses everyone
who freely gives food
to the poor.
- 10 Arguments and fights
will come to an end,
if you chase away those
who insult others.
- 11 The king is the friend of all
who are sincere
and speak with kindness.
- 12 The LORD watches over everyone
who shows good sense,
but he frustrates the plans
of deceitful liars.
- 13 Don't be so lazy that you say,
"If I go to work,
a lion will eat me!"

- 14 The words of a bad woman
are like a deep pit;
if you make the LORD angry,
you will fall right in.
- 15 All children are foolish,
but firm correction
will make them change.
- 16 Cheat the poor to make profit
or give gifts to the rich—
either way you lose.

Thirty Wise Sayings

- 17 Here are some sayings
of people with wisdom,
so listen carefully
as I teach.
- 18 You will be glad
that you know these sayings
and can recite them.
- 19 I am teaching them today,
so that you
may trust the LORD.
- 20 I have written thirty sayings
filled with sound advice.
- 21 You can trust them completely
to give you the right words
for those in charge of you.
- 1-
- 22 Don't take advantage
of the poor
or cheat them in court.
- 23 The LORD is their defender,
and what you do to them,
he will do to you.
- 2-
- 24 Don't make friends with anyone
who has a bad temper.
- 25 You might turn out like them
and get caught in a trap.
- 3-
- 26 Don't guarantee to pay
someone else's debt.
- 27 If you don't have the money,
you might lose your bed.
- 4-
- 28 Don't move a boundary marker
set up by your ancestors.
- 5-
- 29 If you do your job well,
you will work for a ruler
and never be a slave.

23 When you are invited
to eat with a king,
use your best manners.
2 Don't go and stuff yourself!
That would be just the same
as cutting your throat.
3 Don't be greedy for all
of that fancy food!
It may not be so tasty.

-7-
4 Give up trying so hard
to get rich.
5 Your money flies away
before you know it,
just like an eagle
suddenly taking off.

-8-
6 Don't accept an invitation
to eat a selfish person's food,
no matter how good it is.
7 'People like that take note
of how much you eat.'
They say, "Take all you want!"
But they don't mean it.
8 Each bite will come back up,
and all your kind words
will be wasted.

-9-
9 Don't talk to fools—
they will just make fun.

-10-
10 Don't move a boundary marker
or take the land
that belongs to orphans.
11 God All-Powerful is there
to defend them against you.

-11-
12 Listen to instruction
and do your best to learn.

-12-
13 Don't fail to correct
your children.
You won't kill them
by being firm,
14 and it may even
save their lives.

-13-
15 My children,
if you show good sense,
I will be happy,

16 and if you are truthful,
I will really be glad.

-14-
17 Don't be jealous of sinners,
but always honor the LORD.
18 Then you will truly have hope
for the future.

-15-
19 Listen to me, my children!
Be wise and have enough sense
to follow the right path.
20 Don't be a heavy drinker
or stuff yourself with food.
21 It will make you feel drowsy,
and you will end up poor
with only rags to wear.

-16-
22 Pay attention to your father,
and don't neglect your mother
when she grows old.
23 Invest in truth and wisdom,
discipline and good sense,
and don't part with them.
24 Make your father truly happy
by living right and showing
sound judgment.
25 Make your parents proud,
especially your mother.

-17-
26 My son, pay close attention,
and gladly follow
my example.
27 Bad women and unfaithful wives
are like a deep pit—
28 they are waiting to attack you
like a gang of robbers
with victim after victim.

-18-
29 Who is always in trouble?
Who argues and fights?
Who has cuts and bruises?
Whose eyes are red?
30 Everyone who stays up late,
having just one more drink.
31 Don't even look
at that colorful stuff
bubbling up in the glass!
It goes down so easily,
32 but later it bites
like a poisonous snake.

- ³³ You will see weird things,
and your mind
will play tricks on you.
- ³⁴ You will feel tossed about
like someone trying to sleep
on a ship in a storm.
- ³⁵ You will be bruised all over,
without even remembering
how it all happened.
And you will lie awake asking,
"When will morning come,
so I can drink some more?"

-19-

- 24** Don't be jealous of crooks
or want to be their friends.
² All they think about
and talk about
is violence and cruelty.

-20-

- ³ Use wisdom and understanding
to establish your home;
⁴ let good sense fill the rooms
with priceless treasures.

-21-

- ⁵ Wisdom brings strength,
and knowledge gives power.
- ⁶ Battles are won
by listening to advice
and making a lot of plans.

-22-

- ⁷ Wisdom is too much for fools!
Their advice is no good.

-23-

- ⁸ No one but troublemakers
think up trouble.
- ⁹ Everyone hates senseless fools
who think up ways to sin.

-24-

- ¹⁰ Don't give up and be helpless
in times of trouble.

-25-

- ¹¹ Don't fail to rescue those
who are doomed to die.
- ¹² Don't say, "I didn't know it!"
God can read your mind.
He watches each of us
and knows our thoughts.
And God will pay us back
for what we do.

-26-

- ¹³ Honey is good for you,
my children,
and it tastes sweet.
- ¹⁴ Wisdom is like honey
for your life—
if you find it,
your future is bright.

-27-

- ¹⁵ Don't be a cruel person
who attacks good people
and hurts their families.
- ¹⁶ Even if good people
fall seven times,
they will get back up.
But when trouble strikes
the wicked,
that's the end of them.

-28-

- ¹⁷ Don't be happy
to see your enemies trip
and fall down.
- ¹⁸ The LORD will find out
and be unhappy.
Then he will stop
being angry with them.

-29-

- ¹⁹ Don't let evil people
worry you
or make you jealous.
- ²⁰ They will soon be gone
like the flame of a lamp
that burns out.

-30-

- ²¹ My children, you must respect
the LORD and the king,
and you must not make friends
with anyone who rebels
against either of them.
- ²² Who knows what sudden disaster
the LORD or a ruler
might bring?

More Sayings That Make Good Sense

- ²³ Here are some more sayings
that make good sense:
When you judge,
you must be fair.
- ²⁴ If you let the guilty
go free,

- people of all nations
will hate and curse you.
- 25 But if you punish the guilty,
things will go well for you,
and you will prosper.
- 26 Giving an honest answer
is a sign
of true friendship.
- 27 Get your fields ready
and plant your crops
before starting a home.
- 28 Don't accuse anyone
who isn't guilty.
Don't ever tell a lie
- 29 or say to someone,
"I'll get even with you!"
- 30 I once walked by the field
and the vineyard
of a lazy fool.
- 31 Thorns and weeds
were everywhere,
and the stone wall
had fallen down.
- 32 When I saw this,
it taught me a lesson:
- 33 Sleep a little. Doze a little.
Fold your hands
and twiddle your thumbs.
- 34 Suddenly poverty hits you
and everything is gone!
- 6 Don't try to seem important
in the court of a ruler.
- 7 It's better for the ruler
to give you a high position
than for you to be embarrassed
in front of royal officials.
Be sure you are right
- 8 before you sue someone,
or you might lose your case
and be embarrassed.
- 9 When you and someone else
can't get along,
don't gossip about it.▷
- 10 Others will find out,
and your reputation
will then be ruined.
- 11 The right word
at the right time
is like precious gold
set in silver.
- 12 Listening to good advice
is worth much more
than jewelry made of gold.
- 13 A messenger you can trust
is just as refreshing
as cool water in summer.
- 14 Broken promises
are worse than rain clouds
that don't bring rain.
- 15 Patience and gentle talk
can convince a ruler
and overcome any problem.
- 16 Eating too much honey
can make you sick.
- 17 Don't visit friends too often,
or they will get tired of it
and start hating you.
- 18 Telling lies about friends
is like attacking them
with clubs and swords
and sharp arrows.
- 19 A friend you can't trust
in times of trouble
is like having a toothache
or a sore foot.
- 20 Singing to someone
in deep sorrow
is like pouring vinegar
in an open cut.†
- 21 If your enemies are hungry,
give them something to eat.

More of Solomon's Wise Sayings

25

- Here are more
of Solomon's proverbs.
They were copied by the officials
of King Hezekiah of Judah.
- 2 God is praised
for being mysterious;
rulers are praised
for explaining mysteries.
- 3 Who can fully understand
the thoughts of a ruler?
They reach beyond the sky
and go deep in the earth.
- 4 Silver must be purified
before it can be used
to make something of value.
- 5 Evil people must be removed
before anyone can rule
with justice.

- And if they are thirsty,
give them something
to drink.
- 22 This will be the same
as piling burning coals
on their heads.
And the LORD
will reward you.
- 23 As surely as rain blows in
from the north,
anger is caused
by cruel words.
- 24 It's better to stay outside
on the roof of your house
than to live inside
with a nagging wife.
- 25 Good news from far away
refreshes like cold water
when you are thirsty.
- 26 When a good person gives in
to the wicked,
it's like dumping garbage
in a stream of clear water.
- 27 Don't eat too much honey
'or always want praise.'
- 28 Losing self-control
leaves you as helpless
as a city without a wall.
- 8 Are you going to honor a fool?
Why not shoot a slingshot
with the rock tied tight?
- 9 A thornbush waved around
in the hand of a drunkard
is no worse than a proverb
in the mouth of a fool.
- 10 It's no smarter to shoot arrows
at every passerby
than it is to hire a bunch
of worthless nobodies.'
- 11 Dogs return to eat their vomit,
just as fools repeat
their foolishness.
- 12 There is more hope for a fool
than for someone who says,
"I'm really smart!"
- 13 Don't be lazy and keep saying,
"There's a lion outside!"
- 14 A door turns on its hinges,
but a lazy person
just turns over in bed.
- 15 Some of us are so lazy
that we won't lift a hand
to feed ourselves.
- 16 A lazy person says,
"I am smarter
than everyone else."

Don't Be a Fool

- 26 Expecting snow in summer
and rain in the dry season
makes more sense
than honoring a fool.
- 2 A curse you don't deserve
will take wings and fly away
like a sparrow or a swallow.
- 3 Horses and donkeys
must be beaten and bridled—
and so must fools.
- 4 Don't make a fool of yourself
by answering a fool.
- 5 But if you answer any fools,
show how foolish they are,
so they won't feel smart.
- 6 Sending a message by a fool
is like chopping off your foot
and drinking poison.
- 7 A fool with words of wisdom
is like an athlete
'with legs that can't move.'
- 17 It's better to take hold
of a mad dog by the ears
than to take part
in someone else's argument.
- 18 It's no crazier to shoot
sharp and flaming arrows
19 than to cheat someone and say,
"I was only fooling!"
- 20 Where there is no fuel
a fire goes out;
where there is no gossip
arguments come to an end.
- 21 Troublemakers start trouble,
just as sparks and fuel
start a fire.
- 22 There is nothing so delicious
as the taste of gossip!
It melts in your mouth.
- 23 Hiding hateful thoughts
behind smooth talk
is like coating a clay pot
with a cheap glaze.

- 24 The pleasant talk
of an enemy
hides more evil plans
25 than can be counted—
so don't believe a word!
26 Everyone will see through
those evil plans.
27 If you dig a pit,
you will fall in;
if you start a stone rolling,
it will roll back on you.
28 Watch out for anyone
who tells lies and flatters—
they are out to get you.

Don't Brag about Tomorrow

27 Don't brag about tomorrow!
Each day brings
its own surprises.

- 2 Don't brag about yourself—
let others praise you.
3 Stones and sand are heavy,
but trouble caused by a fool
is a much heavier load.
4 An angry person is dangerous,
but a jealous person
is even worse.
5 A truly good friend
will openly correct you.
6 You can trust a friend
who corrects you,
but kisses from an enemy
are nothing but lies.
7 If you have had enough to eat,
honey doesn't taste good,
but if you are really hungry,
you will eat anything.
8 When you are far from home,
you feel like a bird
without a nest.
9 The sweet smell of incense
can make you feel good,
but true friendship
is better still.¹
10 Don't desert an old friend
of your family
or visit your relatives
when you are in trouble.
A friend nearby is better
than relatives far away.
11 My child, show good sense!
Then I will be happy
and able to answer anyone
who criticizes me.
12 Be cautious and hide
when you see danger—
don't be stupid and walk
right into trouble.
13 Don't loan money to a stranger
unless you are given something
to guarantee payment.
14 A loud greeting
early in the morning
is the same as a curse.
15 The steady dripping of rain
and the nagging of a wife
are one and the same.
16 It's easier to catch the wind
or hold olive oil in your hand
than to stop a nagging wife.
17 Just as iron sharpens iron,
friends sharpen the minds
of each other.
18 Take care of a tree,
and you will eat its fruit;
look after your master,
and you will be praised.
19 You see your face in a mirror
and your thoughts
in the minds of others.
20 Death and the grave
are never satisfied,
and neither are we.
21 Gold and silver are tested
in a red-hot furnace,
but we are tested by praise.
22 No matter how hard
you beat a fool,
you can't pound out
the foolishness.
23 You should take good care
of your sheep and goats,
24 because wealth and honor
don't last forever.
25 After the hay is cut
and the new growth appears
and the harvest is over,
26 you can sell lambs and goats
to buy clothes and land.
27 From the milk of the goats,
you can make enough cheese
to feed your family
and all your servants.

The Law of God Makes Sense

- 28** Wicked people run away
when no one chases them,
but those who live right
are as brave as lions.
- ² In time of civil war
there are many leaders,
'but a sensible leader
restores law and order.'
- ³ When someone poor takes over
and mistreats the poor,
it's like a heavy rain
destroying the crops.
- ⁴ Lawbreakers praise criminals,
but law-abiding citizens
always oppose them.
- ⁵ Criminals don't know
what justice means,
but all who respect the LORD
understand it completely.
- ⁶ It's better to be poor
and live right,
than to be rich
and dishonest.
- ⁷ It makes good sense
to obey the Law of God,
but you disgrace your parents
if you make friends
with worthless nobodies.
- ⁸ If you make money by charging
high interest rates,
you will lose it all to someone
who cares for the poor.
- ⁹ God cannot stand the prayers
of anyone who disobeys
his Law.
- ¹⁰ By leading good people to sin,
you dig a pit for yourself,
but all who live right
will have a bright future.
- ¹¹ The rich think highly
of themselves,
but anyone poor and sensible
sees right through them.
- ¹² When an honest person wins,
it's time to celebrate;
when crooks are in control,
it's best to hide.
- ¹³ If you don't confess your sins,
you will be a failure.
- But God will be merciful
if you confess your sins
and give them up.
- ¹⁴ The LORD blesses everyone
who is afraid to do evil,
but if you are cruel,
you will end up in trouble.
- ¹⁵ A ruler who mistreats the poor
is like a roaring lion
or a bear hunting for food.
- ¹⁶ A heartless leader is a fool,
but anyone who refuses
to get rich by cheating others
will live a long time.
- ¹⁷ 'Don't give help to murderers!
Make them stay on the run
for as long as they live.'
- ¹⁸ Honesty will keep you safe,
but everyone who is crooked
will suddenly fall.
- ¹⁹ Work hard, and you will have
a lot of food;
waste time, and you will have
a lot of trouble.
- ²⁰ God blesses his loyal people,
but punishes all who want
to get rich quick.
- ²¹ It isn't right to be unfair,
but some people can be bribed
with only a piece of bread.
- ²² Don't be selfish
and eager to get rich—
you will end up worse off
than you can imagine.
- ²³ Honest correction
is appreciated
more than flattery.
- ²⁴ If you cheat your parents
and don't think it's wrong,
you are a common thief.
- ²⁵ Selfish people cause trouble,
but you will live a full life
if you trust the LORD.
- ²⁶ Only fools would trust
what they alone think,
but if you live by wisdom,
you will do all right.
- ²⁷ Giving to the poor
will keep you from poverty,
but if you close your eyes

- to their needs,
everyone will curse you.
- 28 When crooks are in control,
everyone tries to hide,
but when they lose power,
good people are everywhere.

Use Good Sense

29

- If you keep being stubborn
after many warnings,
you will suddenly discover
you have gone too far.
- 2 When justice rules a nation,
everyone is glad;
when injustice rules,
everyone groans.
- 3 If you love wisdom
your parents will be glad,
but chasing after bad women
will cost you everything.
- 4 An honest ruler
makes the nation strong;
a ruler who takes bribes
will bring it to ruin.
- 5 Flattery is nothing less
than setting a trap.
- 6 Your sins will catch you,
but everyone who lives right
will sing and celebrate.
- 7 The wicked don't care
about the rights of the poor,
but good people do.
- 8 Sneering at others is a spark
that sets a city on fire;
using good sense can put out
the flames of anger.
- 9 Be wise and don't sue a fool.
You won't get satisfaction,
because all the fool will do
is sneer and shout.
- 10 A murderer hates everyone
who is honest
and lives right.▷
- 11 Don't be a fool
and quickly lose your temper—
be sensible and patient.
- 12 A ruler who listens to lies
will have corrupt officials.
- 13 The poor and all who abuse them
must each depend on God
for light.
- 14 Kings who are fair to the poor
will rule forever.
- 15 Correct your children,
and they will be wise;
children out of control
disgrace their mothers.
- 16 Crime increases
when crooks are in power,
but law-abiding citizens
will see them fall.
- 17 If you correct your children,
they will bring you peace
and happiness.
- 18 Without guidance from God
law and order disappear,
but God blesses everyone
who obeys his Law.
- 19 Even when servants are smart,
it takes more than words
to make them obey.
- 20 There is more hope for a fool
than for someone who speaks
without thinking.
- 21 Slaves that you treat kindly
from their childhood
'will cause you sorrow.'
- 22 A person with a quick temper
stirs up arguments
and commits a lot of sins.
- 23 Too much pride brings disgrace;
humility leads to honor.
- 24 If you take part in a crime
you are your worst enemy,
because even under oath
you can't tell the truth.
- 25 Don't fall into the trap
of being a coward—
trust the LORD,
and you will be safe.
- 26 Many try to make friends
with a ruler,
but justice comes
from the LORD.
- 27 Good people and criminals
can't stand each other.

The Sayings of Agur

30

These are the sayings
and the message
of Agur son of Jakeh.
Someone cries out to God,

- 1 I am completely worn out!
How can I last?
- 2 I am far too stupid
to be considered human.
- 3 I never was wise,
and I don't understand
what God is like."
- 4 Has anyone gone up to heaven
and come back down?
Has anyone grabbed hold
of the wind?
Has anyone wrapped up the sea
or marked out boundaries
for the earth?
If you know of any
who have done such things,
then tell me their names
and their children's names.
- 5 Everything God says is true—
and it's a shield for all
who come to him for safety.
- 6 Don't change what God has said!
He will correct you and show
that you are a liar.
- 7 There are two things, Lord,
I want you to do for me
before I die:
- 8 Make me absolutely honest
and don't let me be too poor
or too rich.
Give me just what I need.
- 9 If I have too much to eat,
I might forget about you;
if I don't have enough,
I might steal
and disgrace your name.
- 10 Don't tell a slave owner
something bad about one
of the slaves.
That slave will curse you,
and you will be in trouble.
- 11 Some people curse their father
and even their mother;
12 others think they are perfect,
but they are stained by sin.
- 13 Some people are stuck-up
and act like snobs;
14 others are so greedy
that they gobble down
the poor and homeless.
- 15 Greed[▷] has twins,
each named "Give me!"
There are three or four things
that are never satisfied:
- 16 The world of the dead
and a childless wife,
the thirsty earth
and a flaming fire.
- 17 Don't make fun of your father
or disobey your mother—
crows will peck out your eyes,
and buzzards will eat
the rest of you.
- 18 There are three or four things
I cannot understand:
- 19 How eagles fly so high
or snakes crawl on rocks,
how ships sail the ocean
or people fall in love.
- 20 An unfaithful wife says,
"Sleeping with another man
is as natural as eating."
- 21 There are three or four things
that make the earth tremble
and are unbearable:
- 22 A slave who becomes king,
a fool who eats too much,
23 a hateful woman
who finds a husband,
and a slave who takes the place
of the woman who owns her.
- 24 On this earth four things
are small but very wise:
- 25 Ants, who seem to be feeble,
but store up food
all summer long;
- 26 badgers, who seem to be weak,
but live among the rocks;
- 27 locusts, who have no king,
but march like an army;
- 28 lizards,[▷] which can be caught
in your hand,
but sneak into palaces.
- 29 Three or four creatures
really strut around:
- 30 Those fearless lions
who rule the jungle,
31 'those proud roosters,
those mountain goats,

and those rulers
who have no enemies.¹

³² If you are foolishly bragging
or planning something evil,
then stop it now!

³³ If you churn milk
you get butter;
if you pound on your nose,
you get blood—
and if you stay angry,
you get in trouble.

What King Lemuel's Mother Taught Him

31 These are the sayings
that King Lemuel of Massa
was taught by his mother.
² My son Lemuel, you were born
in answer to my prayers,
so listen carefully.
³ Don't waste your life
chasing after women!
This has ruined many kings.

⁴ Kings and leaders
should not get drunk
or even want to drink.

⁵ Drinking makes you forget
your responsibilities,
and you mistreat the poor.

⁶ Beer and wine are only
for the dying or for those
who have lost all hope.

⁷ Let them drink and forget
how poor and miserable
they feel.

⁸ But you must defend
those who are helpless
and have no hope.

⁹ Be fair and give justice
to the poor and homeless.

In Praise of a Good Wife

¹⁰ A truly good wife
is the most precious treasure
a man can find!
¹¹ Her husband depends on her,
and she never
lets him down.
¹² She is good to him
every day of her life,

¹³ and with her own hands
she gladly makes clothes.

¹⁴ She is like a sailing ship
that brings food
from across the sea.

¹⁵ She gets up before daylight
to prepare food for her family
and for her servants.▷

¹⁶ She knows how to buy land
and how to plant a vineyard,
¹⁷ and she always works hard.

¹⁸ She knows when to buy or sell,
and she stays busy
until late at night.

¹⁹ She spins her own cloth,
²⁰ and she helps the poor
and the needy.

²¹ Her family has warm clothing,
and so she doesn't worry
when it snows.

²² She does her own sewing,
and everything she wears
is beautiful.

²³ Her husband is a well-known
and respected leader
in the city.

²⁴ She makes clothes to sell
to the shop owners.

²⁵ She is strong and graceful,▷
as well as cheerful
about the future.

²⁶ Her words are sensible,
and her advice
is thoughtful.

²⁷ She takes good care
of her family
and is never lazy.

²⁸ Her children praise her,
and with great pride
her husband says,

²⁹ "There are many good women,
but you are the best!"

³⁰ Charm can be deceiving,
and beauty fades away,
but a woman
who honors the LORD
deserves to be praised.

³¹ Show her respect—
praise her in public
for what she has done.

Notes

Phrases enclosed in half square superscript brackets (‘’) are those that are difficult to translate from the original Hebrew with great certainty. Consequently, the English rendering given should be understood as only one possible way of translating such texts.

- ▷ **1.7** *the beginning of knowledge* : Or “what knowledge is all about.”
- ▷ **1.17** *They are ... trap* : Or “Be like a bird that won’t go for the bait, if it sees the trap.”
- ▷ **2.7** *helpful advice* : Or “wisdom.”
- ▷ **6.24** *someone else’s wife* : Or “an evil woman.”
- ▷ **6.30** *not even* : Or “except.”
- ▷ **8.22** *From the beginning ... with the LORD* : Or “In the very beginning, the LORD created me.”
- ▷ **8.23** *gave life to* : Or “formed.”
- ▷ **8.30** *helping ... build* : Or “like his own child.”
- ▷ **9.10** *the beginning of wisdom* : Or “what wisdom is all about.”
- ▷ **9.13** *Stupidity* : Or “A foolish woman.”
- ▷ **10.2** *good* : Or “generous.”
- ▷ **10.10** *and foolish ... ruin* : One ancient translation “but you can help people by correcting them.”
- ▷ **10.22** *When ... regret* : Or “No matter how hard you work, your riches really come from the LORD.”
- ▷ **11.16** *but ... rich* : Or “a ruthless man will only get rich.”
- ▷ **11.23** *Good people ... trouble* : Or “Good people do what is best, but troublemakers just stir up trouble.”
- ▷ **11.30** *act ... follow* : Hebrew; one ancient translation “but violence leads to death.”
- ▷ **11.31** *rewarded* : Or “punished.”
- ▷ **12.9** *It’s ... servant* : Or “It is better just to have an ordinary job.”
- ▷ **12.12** *An evil ... evil* : Or “Evil people love what they get from being evil.”
- ▷ **14.32** *but even ... faith* : Some ancient translations “but good people trust their innocence.”
- ▷ **14.33** *but ... it* : Some ancient translations “but not in the mind of a fool.”
- ▷ **16.20** *know what ... doing* : Or “do what you’re taught.”
- ▷ **20.21** *quick* : Or “the wrong way.”
- ▷ **20.28** *by God’s mercy ... but* : Or “by their mercy ... and.”
- ▷ **21.4** *but sin ... produce* : Or “but sin is the only light they ever follow.”
- ▷ **25.9** *When ... it* : Or “Settle a problem privately between you and your neighbor and don’t involve others.”
- ▷ **26.23** *smooth* : One ancient translation; Hebrew “hateful.”
- ▷ **29.10** *and lives right* : Or “and those who live right are friends of honest people.”
- ▷ **30.15** *Greed* : Or “A leech.”
- ▷ **30.28** *lizards* : Or “spiders.”
- ▷ **31.15** *and ... servants* : Or “and to tell her servants what to do.”
- ▷ **31.25** *She ... graceful* : Or “The clothes she makes are attractive and of good quality.”