

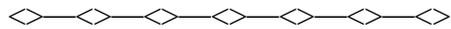
## **Fruitful Wisdom**

### **Day 1: Psalm 1**

1 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,  
nor stands in the way of sinners,  
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;  
2 but his delight is in the law of the LORD,  
and on his law he meditates day and night.

3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water  
that yields its fruit in its season,  
and its leaf does not wither.  
In all that he does, he prospers.  
4 The wicked are not so,  
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,  
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;  
6 for the LORD knows the way of the righteous,  
but the way of the wicked will perish.



Whipped cream might be the strangest concoction in the history of the world. Who created a foamy freezy froth that has virtually no substance. It is glorified air, flavored nothingness! This stuff creates a whole new feeling of whetting the appetite. By the time your taste buds realize what's going on, it's gone! Have I made you hungry yet?

The wisdom of fools does the same thing whipped cream does. The psalmist sings of the temporary pleasures of cheap folly in verses 4 and 5. He makes mention of this way of living's ineffective ability to help the fool on the day of judgment. This song is all about contrasting the wisdom of the righteous with the folly of the wicked. It is obvious that wisdom is desired.

Just as folly has temporary and ineffective qualities, so wisdom has qualities as well. But they are totally opposite those of folly. Wisdom creates a feeling of happiness, a long term blessedness that doesn't go away with time. This wisdom brings delight through the laws, the precepts, of the Lord. It also demands discipline through meditation, a practice of implanting the Word of God so deep that it becomes second nature, pondering it's every word and applying its message to our hearts every day.

The masterful portrait of the wise person is that of a tree that has grown up because of just the

right conditions, water and sunlight and nourishment. Wisdom lasts forever! It causes fruit in your life. Wisdom is that daily decision and follow-through that provides the best outcome. When two or more situations face you, wisdom is the ability to choose the best situation. We're talking about the means of living, the way you live, the choices you make, and the consequences of the path you choose.

There are only two paths, the righteous path and the wicked path. The righteous path guarantees blessing and the presence of the Lord, but the wicked path yields frustration, discontent, futility, and in the end, destruction.

**Which path are you on today? Right this moment? Where are your thoughts, your words, your deeds leading you? Robert Frost wrote a poem concerning to roads and he ends the poem saying that he took the path less traveled. Many of us want to be pioneers, rugged riders who seek the thrill of adventure. That adventure can be found only in the way of wisdom, for it promises such great things. As you go throughout your day today, seek the path of wisdom and follow its course. You'll be surprised where it leads. Wisdom requires work of us. It's not just something we can pick up. It requires the discipline of meditating on God's Word and rejecting the counsel of fools. But it yields so much fruit— eternity, blessing, prosperity, and the presence of the Lord. Will you give wisdom the time to become embedded in your soul today? So before you lie two roads...**

## Wisdom Declaration

### Day 2: Proverbs 1:1-7

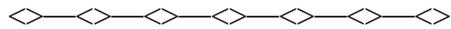
1 The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel:

2 To know wisdom and instruction,  
to understand words of insight,  
3 to receive instruction in wise dealing,  
in righteousness, justice, and equity;  
4 to give prudence to the simple,  
knowledge and discretion to the youth—

5 Let the wise hear and increase in learning,  
and the one who understands obtain guidance,

6 to understand a proverb and a saying,  
the words of the wise and their riddles.

7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge;  
fools despise wisdom and instruction.



We live our lives in pain and turmoil and darkness. We search and search for truth, God, goodness, and other hopes inside of each of us. Some of us never reach the end of the journey of discovery. We search until the flame of hope dwindles and snuffs out in our soul. What could possibly give us peace on this journey? Is there an end in which we begin to see that light of hope?

Wisdom is the practical guidance, the tutor on this discovery journey. Wisdom guides us in finding what we search for. Its goals are the tools to discover our deepest longings from the meaning of life to happiness and an inner joy that cannot be stolen or destroyed. Wisdom is key to gaining insight and understanding into life!

But it is not some paradoxical or whimsical statement. It is life. It is the road you walk on. It is the everyday decisions based on beliefs. It either helps you become better or worse by the end of the day. Wisdom's fruit is measurable and observable. It is not an absolute truth expressed in contradiction. Wisdom is the handmaiden to how to get the most out of this life. This is the goal of wisdom. This is the goal of life.

But to learn wisdom, to learn how to live and get the most out of life, one must fear the Lord. Fearing the Lord does not mean that you live in utter terror of a dangerous and impenetrable God who beats you every time you mess up. No, fearing the Lord is what it means to see God and

revere Him, to live in respect and awe of His attributes, His character, His deeds, His words, His love, His jealousy. To be sure, God is dangerous! But He is also loving, and long-suffering, and desires deep communion with you. He longs to be so close to you that He lives inside of you and has constant communication with you every moment of every day.

Only a fool would reject the wise counsel and power of God. Only a fool would seek to ignore the Lord of the universe. Fools despise wisdom because they despise God. God is the ever-good Giver of all wisdom, all practical help in our lives. If we revere the Lord, the Giver of wisdom, then He will bless us with that wisdom. Wisdom isn't some fact that no one else knows. Wisdom is how to live life to the full! If we live in awe of God and worship Him for who He is, He will give to us the keys to living life so fully that we will never live in want or in hurt or in pain. Instead, we will know how to live because the One who created life will be our Guide.

Have you ever spent time with someone who made a computer or a boat or built a house? They are your guide. They know the computer or boat inside and out. They know what it can do, what it was designed to do, how it works, why it was made. The designer is the only one who truly knows the limits and abilities of his or her creation. God is the same way. He made the world and He made you. He knows your limitations, your strengths, your abilities, your personality, your everything. And He also knows this world, its environment, its provision, and everything else about it. If you want to get the most out of life, ask the Author of life. Fear the Lord, and you will be wise beyond your years.

**God, let me know Your guidance today in my life, my situations. Let everything I do be done in awe of You, in the reverence of Your presence and the desire to please You. May you provide for me the right paths that lead me to a lasting relationship with You and a joy that is so deep inside of me that no one can take it away. Teach me Your paths to living holy, separate from the fools and evil people in this world. I want to devote every moment of every day to You. You are awesome and dangerous. May my adventures never cease as I step out in Your paths today.**

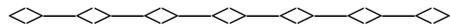
## Enticing Propositions

### Day 3: Proverbs 1:8-19

8 Hear, my son, your father's instruction,  
and forsake not your mother's teaching,  
9 for they are a graceful garland for your head  
and pendants for your neck.

10 My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent.  
11 If they say, "Come with us,  
let us lie in wait for blood;  
let us ambush the innocent without reason;  
12 like Sheol let us swallow them alive,  
and whole, like those who go down to the pit;  
13 we shall find all precious goods,  
we shall fill our houses with plunder;  
14 throw in your lot among us;  
we will all have one purse"—

15 my son, do not walk in the way with them;  
hold back your foot from their paths,  
16 for their feet run to evil,  
and they make haste to shed blood.  
17 For in vain is a net spread in the sight of any bird,  
18 but these men lie in wait for their own blood;  
they set an ambush for their own lives.  
19 Such are the ways of everyone who is greedy for unjust gain;  
it takes away the life of its possessors.



"Daddy knows best" has often been the saying of parents while teenagers roll their eyes. Most teens don't even want to talk to their parents, let alone take their advice. But this proverb begins by counseling us to not only pay attention to our parents' wisdom, but to heed it and learn it and use it. As surprising as it is to us at the time, our parents were once in our shoes. They made decisions whether wise or unwise that they can look back on. We do not have the luxury of years of experience or wisdom like our parents. But when we listen to the God-given wisdom of our father and mother, we set ourselves ahead of the pack in our own age bracket.

The fool promises many things in this proverb: wealth, plunder, excitement. All they ask for return in verse 14 is that we give them the wealth we already have. And it won't work out in the

end. These enticing propositions are smoke and mirrors. Maybe Solomon or your parents already know that because they might have given in to these guys in their youth. But you know what? You're not as foolish as your parents are! And that's their wisdom that they want to rub off on you. Take it and use it! It will lead to a good reputation and blessing.

When we desire to entrap others in a web, we may find that they are already prepared. How many villains in the movies walk into the good guy's trap only to have double-crossed and ambushed the good guy and imprison him? Better yet. God did the same thing to Satan! When Jesus hung on the cross on a Friday morning, Satan was one happy camper. He thought he had won, finally taken down the Son of God. He figured the Man failed in His mission. But when Sunday morning came, the devil realized that he had been ambushed by the King of Kings.

This is what happens to those same guys who wanted you to join in their "fun." What they will find out is that evil does not pay nearly as high as they had estimated. In fact, it only takes away from them anything they had going for themselves. Mess with evil and you'll get burned. That's the wisdom of this passage. Don't fall into the trap. Stay away from evil. Don't even let it have a foothold in your life! It's easier to avoid the pain evil causes by just not dabbling in it.

Take a look at your life up to now. Would you say you've dabbled in some evil? What has it cost you? What have you gained? Did your gains outweigh the costs? The human race has been ambushed by evil one too many times. It started in the Garden of Eden and continues to this day. Be different! Don't take the lie at face value. Declare today that you're watching those schemes and you're wiser than what Satan takes you for. Take the wisdom of your parents, of their hindsight and years of experience. You'll be well ahead of your peers if you do. Or maybe you didn't grow up with parents who cared about teaching you how to be wise. Find someone today that is a Christian who can speak wisdom into your life. Solomon was so wise because he got his hands on all of these wise sayings and he thought them through. Get your hands on some wisdom from your earthly parents, grandparents, or from a Christian mentor today! It will save you more than you could ever count.

## I Seek You

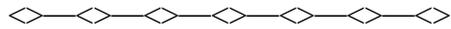
### Day 4: Proverbs 1:20-23

20 Wisdom cries aloud in the street,  
in the markets she raises her voice;

21 at the head of the noisy streets she cries out;  
at the entrance of the city gates she speaks:

22 “How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple?  
How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing and fools hate knowledge?

23 If you turn at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my spirit to you;  
I will make my words known to you.



Pink. Yep, you’re thinking girly, right? Hot rod, you name “her” some girl’s name. Why? Going to the gym, masculine thing. Farting, masculine thing. Did you ever notice how certain things are labeled masculine or feminine? It’s weird sometimes. Cars aren’t girls, but we name them with girl names. Pink is just a color. Gyms are attended by guys and gals. So it may seem weird to hear of wisdom as a woman crying out in the streets, but us naming a 2-ton vehicle “Bertha” might freak out Solomon!

But the point is made loud and clear, isn’t it? Wisdom is not some far-off and aloof concept. Wisdom is on the common streets, seeking out those who desire to become wise. She does not play hide and seek. She is a bright statue in the middle of the town square. She can be found on the street giving godly direction to everyone, in the markets providing direction for buying and selling, at the city gate (where judgment took place), in the court system deciding plaintiff or defendant, just waiting to be heard from by people who do not seek wisdom. Wisdom is lonely.

But the world in general doesn’t want to buy what wisdom is selling. Look at how she cries out against everyone, the fool who hates knowledge and the simpleton. She wonders why no one wants to understand wisdom, to seek out godly direction, to know how to live life to its fullest and get everything good out of life. You know why there aren’t any takers? Because it takes turning from the evil way and disciplining yourself to listen to her and obey. But the possibilities and blessings are endless when you hear and obey lady wisdom. She has good things in store for her customers. They will enjoy long life, God’s Spirit upon them, and they will know life at its very best!

**So many people refuse wisdom because they want to go for the short shot, the quick fix. But they don’t want to know what it’s like to live life without pain and get the most out of it. They can’t see past five minutes. That’s the kind of mindset wisdom calls us out of. Will**

**you live differently for just a little while, a way that reaps benefits not immediate but long-lasting, even eternal? You and I both know there's got to be more to life than that day-to-day routine. Life should be an adventure, and for the path, choose lady Wisdom as your guide. All you've got to do is answer the call by giving up immediate gratification for long-term prosperity. She's calling. Are you ready to answer?**

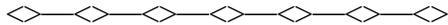
## Talk to the Hand

### Day 5: Proverbs 1:24-28

24 Because I have called and you refused to listen,  
have stretched out my hand and no one has heeded,  
25 because you have ignored all my counsel  
and would have none of my reproof,

26 I also will laugh at your calamity;  
I will mock when terror strikes you,  
27 when terror strikes you like a storm  
and your calamity comes like a whirlwind,  
when distress and anguish come upon you.

28 Then they will call upon me,  
but I will not answer;  
they will seek me diligently  
but will not find me.



Why are there so many expressions in our language for an angry woman? We've called them shrews, mad hens, and my personal favorite saying, "If Mamma ain't happy, nobody's happy." Well here, the mad hen is wisdom herself. After she called to us yesterday, we refused her call and so it's time to give us a piece of her mind. We saw all of the great benefits of wisdom yesterday, but today we see the other side.

When the back is turned to Lady Wisdom, she issues the statement, "Talk to the hand." When we need her most in our biggest jam, she's not helping out. You see, wisdom is not meant as a "Get out of jail free" card. It is meant as a preventative to going to jail. Make no mistake, wisdom can and will help you out of a pit you've dug, but wisdom's first question is, "Why'd you dig the hole?" Look at verses 26-27. What's the most often used word in these verses? When. The word "when" is very different from the word "if." If gives you a chance. But the word "when" guarantees that what happens is inevitable. Wisdom did not say calamity and terror might strike you if you don't heed her voice. She said they will strike you.

We always cry out in the midst of our struggle. Oftentimes, but not always, we are the ones who put ourselves in this position. No one enjoys this time of overwhelming circumstances. People without compassion tell us that we brought it on ourselves. Understand that Lady Wisdom does not lack compassion for us in these dire straits. She is upset that we did not listen to her in the

first place. This isn't an angry rage in which she yells, "I told you so," although if she did, she would not be wrong. Nope. This is Lady Wisdom lamenting and mourning our failure to heed her words. We will not find her because we were never interested in finding her in the first place. We are creatures of habit.

This may be a rather negative devotion for today, but we need to catch the point of this section of Proverbs. Inasmuch as there are abundant rewards and blessings and prosperity for those who heed the call of wisdom in their lives, there is abundant calamity and banishment and distress to those who turn a deaf ear to the wise and sturdy sayings of wisdom in their lives. Wisdom sets and changes the stage of life. Wisdom can turn a rainy day into a sunny day. Wisdom can make a grueling crawl for water in the desert a delightful and romantic walk on the beach with the waves nudging our feet. Wisdom is what makes the difference in what life looks like.

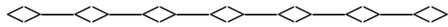
**When we go through trials in life that are initiated by our own unwise decisions, it would be so wonderful for someone to rescue us and set us free. But would we really appreciate wisdom if all it did was save us and never taught us how to live a better way and avoid needless toil and strife? The better way is marked on the road of life by signs full of practical guidance. I pray that as I travel this journey of life, as I walk the path, I will not miss the signs and wisdom that keeps me on a healthy and blessed path, so that I never hear wisdom proclaim in anguish, "You would not listen and now calamity has come upon you." Wisdom comes through God's Word, God's Spirit, God's people, and through situations in life. Seek out wisdom today while it may be found so that tomorrow will be bright and blessed. And don't harbor an attitude of "I told you so" to those who have missed the signs. God can use you to help them find the path again.**

**Into the Dark Night...**  
**Day 6: Proverbs 1:29-32**

29 Because they hated knowledge  
and did not choose the fear of the LORD,  
30 would have none of my counsel  
and despised all my reproof,

31 therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way,  
and have their fill of their own devices.

32 For the simple are killed by their turning away,  
and the complacency of fools destroys them;



Almost every human being does what they think is good. None of us, except the clinically insane or hateful, do things to hurt other people. But we do things that are good for us. Many people are selfish, but would not see themselves as evil or doing evil. Why? Because whatever they do is not evil to them if it works out in their favor.

Here, Lady Wisdom has a message for every person on the planet. When you don't choose the fear of the Lord, you will get just what you wanted. You want to be selfish, then have the full 5-course meal that you've ordered. In verse 31, she talks about people eating their own fruit. But fruit in the Bible doesn't always refer to food. Sometimes it is used to talk about the products of a person, their deeds and their motives and their speech and everything else visible to everyone. Fruit is what is produced by us.

When we seek our own way, our own desires, our own wisdom, and reject the fear of the Lord and God's wisdom, we seek our own demise. We seek our own devices. Left to our own devices, we bait our own hooks. While we all mean well and really do everything for our own good, all we're really doing when we ignore wise counsel is setting ourselves up for failure.

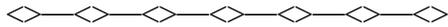
Verse 32 sums this principle up by saying that the simple (another word for fools) are destroyed or killed because they turn away from wisdom. Again the folly of the fool is stated: Complacency in the face of wisdom is foolish. God ain't playin'! This is some serious stuff. We're cutting our own legs out from under us and biting our own hand. The wisest step, although sometimes painful, is to put our foot in the direction of wisdom, to begin to make better decisions that honor and please God, to begin to fear the Lord.

**Father, I know that all good things come from You. I want to live in the freedom of fearing You with my whole being. Lord, with my life, with my words, with my hands, and with my heart, I want to revere you. May the ideas of my mind be thoughts about You. May the words that I speak be Your counsel and praise. May the works of my hands be ordered by You. I want to choose wisdom for this day. I want to live this day in the power of Your wisdom. May Your Spirit guide me into godly decisions and actions in my life on this day. Thank you for leading me on Your paths today, Father. Amen.**

## Priceless Treasure

### Day 7: Proverbs 2:1-5

1 My son, if you receive my words  
and treasure up my commandments with you,  
2 making your ear attentive to wisdom  
and inclining your heart to understanding;  
3 yes, if you call out for insight  
and raise your voice for understanding,  
4 if you seek it like silver  
and search for it as for hidden treasures,  
5 then you will understand the fear of the LORD  
and find the knowledge of God.



The greatest truth in all of history is the fact that when we seek something with our everything, we are bound to find it. People see what they want to see. People spend time and money on things they cherish. Here, Solomon wastes no images explaining that principle. If you really love wisdom, when you hear it, you listen and remember it. When you see it, you give full attention to its illumination. When you beckon it, wisdom comes to your aid.

Solomon says that we should seek wisdom as we seek hidden treasure. People who search for hidden treasure never give up. They spend their entire lives and resources on finding what may not even exist. Look at the movie National Treasure, for instance, or Indiana Jones. America has a thing for treasure hunters because they're crazy! They'll put any clues together to get to the treasure. They've sold themselves out for the possibility of finding something no one else has found.

If we approached wisdom with that same vigor, with that same drive and awe, then we would find wisdom! Wisdom is not hidden treasure, but finding it is the greatest treasure in the world because wisdom is the tutor that makes everything in life make sense. Wisdom is the map that leads to a full and happy life. If you want those things, to be a wise person, you don't have to go live in the mountains of Tibet as a recluse studying contrasting sayings of history's weirdest philosophers. All you have to do is seek it out, ask God, look in His Word, ask godly people, and you will find that which you seek. But the true question is not how to learn wisdom. The question is: How bad do you want it?

**Wisdom is the most precious gift we could ever receive. It keeps us grounded and brings us life to the full, an abundant and robust life worth living. It brings joy and contentment no**

**matter what life brings. It brings adventure and passion, as well as direction and purpose. And it can be yours if you desire it more than anything else. More than money. More than fame. More than anything else in your life. The Bible promises that you will find what you seek, but the only catch is that you've got to want it more than anything else. How committed are you today to learning wisdom from the All-Wise God?**