



**Archdiocese of St. Louis
Office of Sacred Worship
Lectio Divina Bible
The Book of Proverbs**

The Book of Proverbs has nine sections:

- I. Title and Introduction (1:1–7)
- II. Instructions of Parents and of Woman Wisdom (1:8–9:18)
- III. First Solomonic Collection of Sayings (10:1–22:16)
- IV. Sayings of the Wise (22:17–24:22)
- V. Further Sayings of the Wise (24:23–34)
- VI. Second Solomonic Collection, Collected under King Hezekiah (25:1–29:27)
- VII. Sayings of Agur and Others (30:1–33)
- VIII. Sayings of King Lemuel (31:1–9)
- IX. Poem on the Woman of Worth (31:10–31)



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**I. Title and Introduction
Proverbs, chapter 1**

Purpose of the Proverbs of Solomon

The proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel: That people may know wisdom and discipline, may understand intelligent sayings; May receive instruction in wise conduct, in what is right, just and fair; That resourcefulness may be imparted to the naive, knowledge and discretion to the young. The wise by hearing them will advance in learning, the intelligent will gain sound guidance, To comprehend proverb and byword, the words of the wise and their riddles.

Fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and discipline.

II. Instructions of Parents and of Woman Wisdom

The Path of the Wicked: Greed and Violence

Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and reject not your mother's teaching; A graceful diadem will they be for your head; a pendant for your neck. My son, should sinners entice you, do not go if they say, "Come along with us! Let us lie in wait for blood, unprovoked, let us trap the innocent; Let us swallow them alive, like Sheol, whole, like those who go down to the pit! All kinds of precious wealth shall we gain, we shall fill our houses with booty; Cast in your lot with us, we shall all have one purse!" My son, do not walk in the way with them, hold back your foot from their path! [For their feet run to evil, they hasten to shed blood.] In vain a net is spread right under the eyes of any bird—They lie in wait for their own blood, they set a trap for their own lives. This is the way of everyone greedy for loot: it takes away their lives.

Wisdom in Person Gives a Warning



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Wisdom cries aloud in the street, in the open squares she raises her voice; Down the crowded ways she calls out, at the city gates she utters her words: “How long, you naive ones, will you love naivete, How long will you turn away at my reproof? [The arrogant delight in their arrogance, and fools hate knowledge.] Lo! I will pour out to you my spirit, I will acquaint you with my words: ‘Because I called and you refused, extended my hand and no one took notice; Because you disdained all my counsel, and my reproof you ignored—I, in my turn, will laugh at your doom; will mock when terror overtakes you; When terror comes upon you like a storm, and your doom approaches like a whirlwind; when distress and anguish befall you.’

Then they will call me, but I will not answer; they will seek me, but will not find me, Because they hated knowledge, and the fear of the LORD they did not choose. They ignored my counsel, they spurned all my reproof; Well, then, they shall eat the fruit of their own way, and with their own devices be glutted. For the straying of the naive kills them, the smugness of fools destroys them. But whoever obeys me dwells in security, in peace, without fear of harm.”



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Proverbs, chapter 2

The Blessings of Wisdom

My son, if you receive my words and treasure my commands, Turning your ear to wisdom, inclining your heart to understanding; Yes, if you call for intelligence, and to understanding raise your voice; If you seek her like silver, and like hidden treasures search her out, Then will you understand the fear of the LORD; the knowledge of God you will find; For the LORD gives wisdom, from his mouth come knowledge and understanding; He has success in store for the upright, is the shield of those who walk honestly, Guarding the paths of justice, protecting the way of his faithful ones,

Then you will understand what is right and just, what is fair, every good path; For wisdom will enter your heart, knowledge will be at home in your soul, Discretion will watch over you, understanding will guard you;

Saving you from the way of the wicked, from those whose speech is perverse. From those who have left the straight paths to walk in the ways of darkness, Who delight in doing evil and celebrate perversity; Whose ways are crooked, whose paths are devious; Saving you from a stranger, from a foreign woman with her smooth words, One who forsakes the companion of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God; For her path sinks down to death, and her footsteps lead to the shades. None who enter there come back, or gain the paths of life.

Thus you may walk in the way of the good, and keep to the paths of the just. For the upright will dwell in the land, people of integrity will remain in it; But the wicked will be cut off from the land, the faithless will be rooted out of it.



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Proverbs, chapter 3

Confidence in God Leads to Prosperity

My son, do not forget my teaching, take to heart my commands; For many days, and years of life, and peace, will they bring you. Do not let love and fidelity forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. Then will you win favor and esteem before God and human beings.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, on your own intelligence do not rely; In all your ways be mindful of him, and he will make straight your paths.

Do not be wise in your own eyes, fear the LORD and turn away from evil; This will mean health for your flesh and vigor for your bones.

Honor the LORD with your wealth, with first fruits of all your produce; Then will your barns be filled with plenty, with new wine your vats will overflow. The discipline of the LORD, my son, do not spurn; do not disdain his reproof; For whom the LORD loves he reproofs, as a father, the son he favors.

The Benefits of Finding Wisdom

Happy the one who finds wisdom, the one who gains understanding! Her profit is better than profit in silver, and better than gold is her revenue; She is more precious than corals, and no treasure of yours can compare with her.

Long life is in her right hand, in her left are riches and honor; Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace; She is a tree of life to those who grasp her, and those who hold her fast are happy.



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The LORD by wisdom founded the earth, established the heavens by understanding; By his knowledge the depths are split, and the clouds drop down dew.

Justice Toward One's Neighbor Brings Blessing

My son, do not let these slip from your sight: hold to deliberation and planning; So will they be life to your soul, and an adornment for your neck. Then you may go your way securely; your foot will never stumble; When you lie down, you will not be afraid, when you rest, your sleep will be sweet.

Attitude toward Fellow Men

Do not be afraid of sudden terror, of the ruin of the wicked when it comes; For the LORD will be your confidence, and will keep your foot from the snare.

Do not withhold any goods from the owner when it is in your power to act. Say not to your neighbor, "Go, come back tomorrow, and I will give it to you," when all the while you have it.

Do not plot evil against your neighbors, when they live at peace with you. Do not contend with someone without cause, with one who has done you no harm. Do not envy the violent and choose none of their ways:

To the LORD the devious are an abomination, but the upright are close to him. The curse of the LORD is on the house of the wicked, but the dwelling of the just he blesses; Those who scoff, he scoffs at but the lowly he favors. The wise will possess glory, but fools will bear shame.



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Proverbs, chapter 4

The Teacher as Model Disciple

Hear, O children, a father's instruction, be attentive, that you may gain understanding! Yes, excellent advice I give you; my teaching do not forsake. When I was my father's child, tender, the darling of my mother, He taught me and said to me: "Let your heart hold fast my words: keep my commands, and live!

Get wisdom, get understanding! Do not forget or turn aside from the words of my mouth. Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you; love her, and she will safeguard you;

The beginning of wisdom is: get wisdom; whatever else you get, get understanding. Extol her, and she will exalt you; she will bring you honors if you embrace her; She will put on your head a graceful diadem; a glorious crown will she bestow on you."

The Two Ways

Hear, my son, and receive my words, and the years of your life shall be many. On the way of wisdom I direct you, I lead you on straight paths. When you walk, your step will not be impeded, and should you run, you will not stumble. Hold fast to instruction, never let it go; keep it, for it is your life. The path of the wicked do not enter, nor walk in the way of the evil; Shun it, do not cross it, turn aside from it, pass on. For they cannot rest unless they have done evil; if they do not trip anyone they lose sleep. For they eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence. But the path of the just is like shining light, that grows in brilliance till perfect day. The way of the wicked is like darkness; they do not know on what they stumble.

With Your Whole Being Heed My Words and Live



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My son, to my words be attentive, to my sayings incline your ear; Let them not slip from your sight, keep them within your heart; For they are life to those who find them, bringing health to one's whole being. With all vigilance guard your heart, for in it are the sources of life. Dishonest mouth put away from you, deceitful lips put far from you. Let your eyes look straight ahead and your gaze be focused forward. Survey the path for your feet, and all your ways will be sure. Turn neither to right nor to left, keep your foot far from evil.



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Proverbs, chapter 5

Warning Against Adultery

My son, to my wisdom be attentive, to understanding incline your ear, That you may act discreetly, and your lips guard what you know. Indeed, the lips of the stranger drip honey, and her mouth is smoother than oil; But in the end she is as bitter as wormwood, as sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death, her steps reach Sheol; Her paths ramble, you know not where, lest you see before you the road to life.

So now, children, listen to me, do not stray from the words of my mouth. Keep your way far from her, do not go near the door of her house, Lest you give your honor to others, and your years to a merciless one; Lest outsiders take their fill of your wealth, and your hard-won earnings go to another's house; And you groan in the end, when your flesh and your body are consumed; And you say, "Oh, why did I hate instruction, and my heart spurn reproof! Why did I not listen to the voice of my teachers, incline my ear to my instructors! I am all but ruined, in the midst of the public assembly!"

Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. Should your water sources be dispersed abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be yours alone, not shared with outsiders; Let your fountain be blessed and have joy of the wife of your youth, your lovely hind, your graceful doe. Of whose love you will ever have your fill, and by her ardor always be intoxicated. Why then, my son, should you be intoxicated with a stranger, and embrace another woman?

Indeed, the ways of each person are plain to the LORD's sight; all their paths he surveys; By their own iniquities the wicked will be caught, in the meshes of their own sin they will be held fast; They will die from lack of discipline, lost because of their great folly.



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**Proverbs, chapter 6
Miscellaneous Proverbs**

Against Going Surety for One's Neighbor

My son, if you have become surety to your neighbor, given your hand in pledge to another, You have been snared by the utterance of your lips, caught by the words of your mouth; So do this, my son, to free yourself, since you have fallen into your neighbor's power: Go, hurry, rouse your neighbor! Give no sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids; Free yourself like a gazelle from the hunter, or like a bird from the hand of the fowler.

The Ant and the Sluggard at Harvest

Go to the ant, O sluggard, study her ways and learn wisdom; For though she has no chief, no commander or ruler, She procures her food in the summer, stores up her provisions in the harvest. How long, O sluggard, will you lie there? when will you rise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the arms to rest—Then poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like a brigand.

The Scoundrel

Scoundrels, villains, are they who deal in crooked talk. Shifty of eye, feet ever moving, pointing with fingers, They have perversity in their hearts, always plotting evil, sowing discord. Therefore, their doom comes suddenly; in an instant they are crushed beyond cure.

What the Lord Rejects

There are six things the LORD hates, yes, seven are an abomination to him; Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that plots wicked schemes, feet that are quick to run to evil, The false witness who utters lies, and the one who sows discord among kindred.



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Warning Against Adultery

Observe, my son, your father's command, and do not reject your mother's teaching; Keep them fastened over your heart always, tie them around your neck. When you lie down they will watch over you, when you wake, they will share your concerns; wherever you turn, they will guide you.

For the command is a lamp, and the teaching a light, and a way to life are the reproofs that discipline, Keeping you from another's wife, from the smooth tongue of the foreign woman. Do not lust in your heart after her beauty, do not let her captivate you with her glance! For the price of a harlot may be scarcely a loaf of bread, But a married woman is a trap for your precious life. Can a man take embers into his bosom, and his garments not be burned?

Or can a man walk on live coals, and his feet not be scorched? So with him who sleeps with another's wife—none who touches her shall go unpunished. Thieves are not despised if out of hunger they steal to satisfy their appetite. Yet if caught they must pay back sevenfold, yield up all the wealth of their house. But those who commit adultery have no sense; those who do it destroy themselves

They will be beaten and disgraced, and their shame will not be wiped away; For passion enrages the husband, he will have no pity on the day of vengeance; He will not consider any restitution, nor be satisfied by your many bribes.



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Proverbs, chapter 7

The Seduction

My son, keep my words, and treasure my commands. Keep my commands and live, and my teaching as the apple of your eye; Bind them on your fingers, write them on the tablet of your heart. Say to Wisdom, "You are my sister!"

Call Understanding, "Friend!"

That they may keep you from a stranger, from the foreign woman with her smooth words. For at the window of my house, through my lattice I looked out And I saw among the naive, I observed among the young men, a youth with no sense, Crossing the street near the corner, then walking toward her house, In the twilight, at dusk of day, in the very dark of night. Then the woman comes to meet him, dressed like a harlot, with secret designs. She is raucous and unruly, her feet cannot stay at home; Now she is in the streets, now in the open squares, lurking in ambush at every corner. Then she grabs him, kisses him, and with an impudent look says to him:

"I owed peace offerings, and today I have fulfilled my vows; So I came out to meet you, to look for you, and I have found you! With coverlets I have spread my couch, with brocaded cloths of Egyptian linen; I have sprinkled my bed with myrrh, with aloes, and with cinnamon. Come, let us drink our fill of love, until morning, let us feast on love!

For my husband is not at home, he has gone on a long journey; A bag of money he took with him, he will not return home till the full moon." She wins him over by repeated urging, with her smooth lips she leads him astray. He follows her impulsively, like an ox that goes to slaughter; Like a stag that bounds toward the net, till an arrow pierces its liver; Like a bird that rushes into a snare, unaware that his life is at stake.



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So now, children, listen to me, be attentive to the words of my mouth! Do not let your heart turn to her ways, do not go astray in her paths; For many are those she has struck down dead, numerous, those she has slain. Her house is a highway to Sheol, leading down into the chambers of death.



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Proverbs, chapter 8

The Discourse of Wisdom

Does not Wisdom call, and Understanding raise her voice? On the top of the heights along the road, at the crossroads she takes her stand; By the gates at the approaches of the city, in the entryways she cries aloud: "To you, O people, I call; my appeal is to you mortals. You naive ones, gain prudence, you fools, gain sense. Listen! for noble things I speak; my lips proclaim honest words. Indeed, my mouth utters truth, and my lips abhor wickedness. All the words of my mouth are sincere, none of them wily or crooked; All of them are straightforward to the intelligent, and right to those who attain knowledge. Take my instruction instead of silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold.

[For Wisdom is better than corals, and no treasures can compare with her.] I, Wisdom, dwell with prudence, and useful knowledge I have. [The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil;] Pride, arrogance, the evil way, and the perverse mouth I hate. Mine are counsel and advice; Mine is strength; I am understanding. By me kings reign, and rulers enact justice; By me princes govern, and nobles, all the judges of the earth.

Those who love me I also love, and those who seek me find me. With me are riches and honor, wealth that endures, and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, even pure gold, and my yield than choice silver. On the way of righteousness, I walk, along the paths of justice, Granting wealth to those who love me, and filling their treasuries.

"The LORD begot me, the beginning of his works, the forerunner of his deeds of long ago; From of old I was formed, at the first, before the earth. When there were no deeps I was brought forth, when there were no fountains or springs of water; Before the mountains were settled into place, before the hills, I was brought forth; When the earth and the fields were not yet made, nor the first clods of the world. When he established



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the heavens, there was I, when he marked out the vault over the face of the deep; When he made firm the skies above, when he fixed fast the springs of the deep; When he set for the sea its limit, so that the waters should not transgress his command; When he fixed the foundations of earth, then was I beside him as artisan; I was his delight day by day, playing before him all the while, Playing over the whole of his earth, having my delight with human beings. Now, children, listen to me; happy are they who keep my ways. Listen to instruction and grow wise, do not reject it! Happy the one who listens to me, attending daily at my gates, keeping watch at my doorposts; For whoever finds me finds life, and wins favor from the LORD; But those who pass me by do violence to themselves; all who hate me love death.”



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Proverbs, chapter 9

The Two Women Invite Passersby to Their Banquets

Woman Wisdom Issues Her Invitation

Wisdom has built her house, she has set up her seven columns; She has prepared her meat, mixed her wine, yes, she has spread her table. She has sent out her maidservants; she calls from the heights out over the city: "Let whoever is naive turn in here; to any who lack sense I say, Come, eat of my food, and drink of the wine I have mixed! Forsake foolishness that you may live; advance in the way of understanding."

Miscellaneous Aphorisms

Whoever corrects the arrogant earns insults; and whoever reproves the wicked incurs opprobrium. Do not reprove the arrogant, lest they hate you; reprove the wise, and they will love you. Instruct the wise, and they become still wiser; teach the just, and they advance in learning. The beginning of wisdom is fear of the LORD, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For by me your days will be multiplied and the years of your life increased. If you are wise, wisdom is to your advantage; if you are arrogant, you alone shall bear it.

Woman Folly Issues Her Invitation

Woman Folly is raucous, utterly foolish; she knows nothing. She sits at the door of her house upon a seat on the city heights, Calling to passersby as they go on their way straight ahead: "Let those who are naive turn in here, to those who lack sense I say, Stolen water is sweet, and bread taken secretly is pleasing!" Little do they know that the shades are there, that her guests are in the depths of Sheol!



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Lectio Divina Bible
The Book of Proverbs**

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**III. First Solomonic Collection of Sayings
Proverbs, chapter 10**

The Proverbs of Solomon:

A wise son gives his father joy, but a foolish son is a grief to his mother. Ill-gotten treasures profit nothing, but justice saves from death. The LORD does not let the just go hungry, but the craving of the wicked he thwarts. The slack hand impoverishes, but the busy hand brings riches. A son who gathers in summer is a credit; a son who slumbers during harvest, a disgrace.

Blessings are for the head of the just; but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence. The memory of the just serves as blessing, but the name of the wicked will rot. A wise heart accepts commands, but a babbling fool will be overthrown. Whoever walks honestly walks securely, but one whose ways are crooked will fare badly. One who winks at a fault causes trouble, but one who frankly reproves promotes peace. The mouth of the just is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.

Hatred stirs up disputes, but love covers all offenses. On the lips of the intelligent is found wisdom, but a rod for the back of one without sense. The wise store up knowledge, but the mouth of a fool is imminent ruin. The wealth of the rich is their strong city; the ruin of the poor is their poverty. The labor of the just leads to life, the gains of the wicked, to futility. Whoever follows instruction is in the path to life, but whoever disregards reproof goes astray. Whoever conceals hatred has lying lips, and whoever spreads slander is a fool. Where words are many, sin is not wanting; but those who restrain their lips do well. Choice silver is the tongue of the just; the heart of the wicked is of little worth.



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The lips of the just nourish many, but fools die for want of sense. It is the LORD's blessing that brings wealth, and no effort can substitute for it. Crime is the entertainment of the fool; but wisdom is for the person of understanding. What the wicked fear will befall them, but the desire of the just will be granted. When the tempest passes, the wicked are no more; but the just are established forever.

As vinegar to the teeth, and smoke to the eyes, are sluggards to those who send them. Fear of the LORD prolongs life, but the years of the wicked are cut short. The hope of the just brings joy, but the expectation of the wicked perishes. The LORD is a stronghold to those who walk honestly, downfall for evildoers. The just will never be disturbed, but the wicked will not abide in the land. The mouth of the just yields wisdom, but the perverse tongue will be cut off. The lips of the just know favor, but the mouth of the wicked, perversion.



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Proverbs, chapter 11

False scales are an abomination to the LORD, but an honest weight, his delight. When pride comes, disgrace comes; but with the humble is wisdom.

The honesty of the upright guides them; the faithless are ruined by their duplicity. Wealth is useless on a day of wrath, but justice saves from death. The justice of the honest makes their way straight, but by their wickedness the wicked fall. The justice of the upright saves them, but the faithless are caught in their own intrigue. When a person dies, hope is destroyed; expectation pinned on wealth is destroyed. The just are rescued from a tight spot, but the wicked fall into it instead. By a word the impious ruin their neighbors, but through their knowledge the just are rescued. When the just prosper, the city rejoices; when the wicked perish, there is jubilation. Through the blessing of the upright the city is exalted, but through the mouth of the wicked it is overthrown. Whoever reviles a neighbor lacks sense, but the intelligent keep silent. One who slanders reveals secrets, but a trustworthy person keeps a confidence. For lack of guidance a people falls; security lies in many counselors. Harm will come to anyone going surety for another, but whoever hates giving pledges is secure.

A gracious woman gains esteem, and ruthless men gain wealth. Kindly people benefit themselves, but the merciless harm themselves. The wicked make empty profits, but those who sow justice have a sure reward. Justice leads toward life, but pursuit of evil, toward death. The crooked in heart are an abomination to the LORD, but those who walk blamelessly are his delight. Be assured, the wicked shall not go unpunished, but the offspring of the just shall escape. Like a golden ring in a swine's snout is a beautiful woman without judgment. The desire of the just ends only in good; the expectation of the wicked is wrath. One person is lavish yet grows still richer; another is too sparing, yet is the poorer. Whoever confers benefits will be amply enriched, and whoever refreshes others will be refreshed. Whoever hoards grain, the people curse, but



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blessings are on the head of one who distributes it! Those who seek the good seek favor, but those who pursue evil will have evil come upon them. Those who trust in their riches will fall, but like green leaves the just will flourish. Those who trouble their household inherit the wind, and fools become slaves to the wise of heart. The fruit of justice is a tree of life, and one who takes lives is a sage. If the just are recompensed on the earth, how much more the wicked and the sinner!



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Proverbs, chapter 12

Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but whoever hates reproof is stupid. A good person wins favor from the LORD, but the schemer he condemns. No one is made secure by wickedness, but the root of the just will never be disturbed. A woman of worth is the crown of her husband, but a disgraceful one is like rot in his bones. The plans of the just are right; the designs of the wicked are deceit. The words of the wicked are a deadly ambush, but the speech of the upright saves them. Overthrow the wicked and they are no more, but the house of the just stands firm. For their good sense people are praised, but the perverse of heart are despised. Better to be slighted and have a servant than put on airs and lack bread. The just take care of their livestock, but the compassion of the wicked is cruel. Those who till their own land have food in plenty, but those who engage in idle pursuits lack sense. A wicked person desires the catch of evil people, but the root of the righteous will bear fruit. By the sin of their lips the wicked are ensnared, but the just escape from a tight spot. From the fruit of their mouths people have their fill of good, and the works of their hands come back upon them. The way of fools is right in their own eyes, but those who listen to advice are the wise. Fools immediately show their anger, but the shrewd conceal contempt. Whoever speaks honestly testifies truly, but the deceitful make lying witnesses. The babble of some people is like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise is healing. Truthful lips endure forever, the lying tongue, for only a moment. Deceit is in the heart of those who plot evil, but those who counsel peace have joy. No harm befalls the just, but the wicked are overwhelmed with misfortune. Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who are truthful, his delight. The shrewd conceal knowledge, but the hearts of fools proclaim folly. The diligent hand will govern, but sloth makes for forced labor. Worry weighs down the heart, but a kind word gives it joy. The just act as guides to their neighbors, but the way of the wicked leads them astray. Sloth does not catch its prey, but the wealth of the diligent is splendid. In the path of justice is life, but the way of abomination leads to death.



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Proverbs, chapter 13

A wise son loves correction, but the scoffer heeds no rebuke. From the fruit of the mouth one enjoys good things, but from the throat of the treacherous comes violence. Those who guard their mouths preserve themselves; we who open wide their lips bring ruin. The appetite of the sluggard craves but has nothing, but the appetite of the diligent is amply satisfied. The just hate deceitful words, but the wicked are odious and disgraceful. Justice guards one who walks honestly, but sin leads the wicked astray. One acts rich but has nothing; another acts poor but has great wealth. People's riches serve as ransom for their lives, but the poor do not even hear a threat. The light of the just gives joy, but the lamp of the wicked goes out. The stupid sow discord by their insolence, but wisdom is with those who take counsel. Wealth won quickly dwindles away, but gathered little by little, it grows. Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a wish fulfilled is a tree of life. Whoever despises the word must pay for it, but whoever reveres the command will be rewarded. The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, turning one from the snares of death. Good sense brings favor, but the way of the faithless is their ruin. The shrewd always act prudently but the foolish parade folly. A wicked messenger brings on disaster, but a trustworthy envoy is a healing remedy. Poverty and shame befall those who let go of discipline, but those who hold on to reproof receive honor. Desire fulfilled delights the soul, but turning from evil is an abomination to fools. Walk with the wise and you become wise, but the companion of fools fares badly.

Misfortune pursues sinners, but the just shall be recompensed with good. The good leave an inheritance to their children's children, but the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the just. The tillage of the poor yields abundant food, but possessions are swept away for lack of justice. Whoever spares the rod hates the child, but whoever loves will apply discipline. When the just eat, their hunger is appeased; but the belly of the wicked suffers want.



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Proverbs, chapter 14

Wisdom builds her house, but Folly tears hers down with her own hands. Those who walk uprightly fear the LORD, but those who are devious in their ways spurn him. In the mouth of the fool is a rod for pride, but the lips of the wise preserve them. Where there are no oxen, the crib is clean; but abundant crops come through the strength of the bull.

A trustworthy witness does not lie, but one who spouts lies makes a lying witness. The scoffer seeks wisdom in vain, but knowledge is easy for the intelligent. Go from the face of the fool; you get no knowledge from such lips. The wisdom of the shrewd enlightens their way, but the folly of fools is deceit. The wicked scorn a guilt offering, but the upright find acceptance. The heart knows its own bitterness, and its joy no stranger shares. The house of the wicked will be destroyed, but the tent of the upright will flourish.

Sometimes a way seems right, but the end of it leads to death! Even in laughter the heart may be sad, and the end of joy may be sorrow. From their own ways turncoats are sated, from their own actions, the loyal. The naive believe everything, but the shrewd watch their steps. The wise person is cautious and turns from evil; the fool is reckless and gets embroiled. The quick-tempered make fools of themselves, and schemers are hated. The simple have folly as an adornment, but the shrewd wear knowledge as a crown. The malicious bow down before the good, and the wicked, at the gates of the just. Even by their neighbors the poor are despised, but a rich person's friends are many. Whoever despises the hungry comes up short, but happy the one who is kind to the poor! Do not those who plan evil go astray? But those who plan good win steadfast loyalty. In all labor there is profit, but mere talk tends only to loss. The crown of the wise is wealth; the diadem of fools is folly. The truthful witness saves lives, but whoever utters lies is a betrayer. The fear of the LORD is a strong defense, a refuge even for one's children. The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life,



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turning one from the snares of death. A multitude of subjects is the glory of the king; but if his people are few, a prince is ruined. Long-suffering results in great wisdom; a short temper raises folly high.

A tranquil mind gives life to the body, but jealousy rots the bones. Those who oppress the poor revile their Maker, but those who are kind to the needy honor him. The wicked are overthrown by their wickedness, but the just find a refuge in their integrity. Wisdom can remain silent in the discerning heart, but among fools she must make herself known. Justice exalts a nation, but sin is a people's disgrace. The king favors the skillful servant, but the shameless one incurs his wrath.



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Proverbs, chapter 15

A mild answer turns back wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise pours out knowledge, but the mouth of fools spews folly. The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good. A soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a perverse one breaks the spirit. The fool spurns a father's instruction, but whoever heeds reproof is prudent. In the house of the just there are ample resources, but the harvest of the wicked is in peril. The lips of the wise spread knowledge, but the heart of fools is not steadfast. The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright is his delight. The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but he loves one who pursues justice. Discipline seems bad to those going astray; one who hates reproof will die.

Sheol and Abaddon lie open before the LORD; how much more the hearts of mortals! Scoffers do not love reproof; to the wise they will not go. A glad heart lights up the face, but an anguished heart breaks the spirit. The discerning heart seeks knowledge, but the mouth of fools feeds on folly. All the days of the poor are evil, but a good heart is a continual feast.

Better a little with fear of the LORD than a great fortune with anxiety. Better a dish of herbs where love is than a fatted ox and hatred with it. The ill-tempered stir up strife, but the patient settle disputes. The way of the sluggard is like a thorn hedge, but the path of the diligent is a highway. A wise son gives his father joy, but a fool despises his mother. Folly is joy to the senseless, but the person of understanding goes the straight way. Plans fail when there is no counsel, but they succeed when advisers are many. One has joy from an apt response; a word in season, how good it is! The path of life leads upward for the prudent, turning them from Sheol below.



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The LORD pulls down the house of the proud, but preserves intact the widow's landmark. The schemes of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD, but gracious words are pure. The greedy tear down their own house, but those who hate bribes will live. The heart of the just ponders a response, but the mouth of the wicked spews evil. The LORD is far from the wicked, but hears the prayer of the just. A cheerful glance brings joy to the heart; good news invigorates the bones. The ear that listens to salutary reproof is at home among the wise. Those who disregard discipline hate themselves, but those who heed reproof acquire understanding. The fear of the LORD is training for wisdom, and humility goes before honors.



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Proverbs, chapter 16

Plans are made in human hearts, but from the LORD comes the tongue's response. All one's ways are pure in one's own eyes, but the measurer of motives is the LORD. Entrust your works to the LORD, and your plans will succeed. The LORD has made everything for a purpose, even the wicked for the evil day. Every proud heart is an abomination to the LORD; be assured that none will go unpunished. By steadfast loyalty guilt is expiated, and by the fear of the LORD evil is avoided. When the LORD is pleased with someone's ways, he makes even enemies be at peace with them. Better a little with justice, than a large income with injustice. The human heart plans the way, but the LORD directs the steps. An oracle is upon the king's lips, no judgment of his mouth is false.

Balance and scales belong to the LORD; every weight in the sack is his concern. Wrongdoing is an abomination to kings, for by justice the throne endures. The king takes delight in honest lips, and whoever speaks what is right he loves. The king's wrath is a messenger of death, but a wise person can pacify it. A king's smile means life, and his favor is like a rain cloud in spring. How much better to get wisdom than gold! To get understanding is preferable to silver.

The path of the upright leads away from misfortune; those who attend to their way guard their lives. Pride goes before disaster, and a haughty spirit before a fall. It is better to be humble with the poor than to share plunder with the proud. Whoever ponders a matter will be successful; happy the one who trusts in the LORD! The wise of heart is esteemed for discernment, and pleasing speech gains a reputation for learning. Good sense is a fountain of life to those who have it, but folly is the training of fools. The heart of the wise makes for eloquent speech, and increases the learning on their lips. Pleasing words are a honeycomb, sweet to the taste and invigorating to the bones. Sometimes a way seems right, but the end of it leads to death!



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The appetite of workers works for them, for their mouths urge them on. Scoundrels are a furnace of evil, and their lips are like a scorching fire. Perverse speech sows discord, and talebearing separates bosom friends. The violent deceive their neighbors, and lead them into a way that is not good. Whoever winks an eye plans perversity; whoever purses the lips does evil. Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained by a life that is just. The patient are better than warriors, and those who rule their temper, better than the conqueror of a city. Into the bag the lot is cast, but from the LORD comes every decision.



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Proverbs, chapter 17

Better a dry crust with quiet than a house full of feasting with strife. A wise servant will rule over an unworthy son, and will share the inheritance of the children. The crucible for silver, and the furnace for gold, but the tester of hearts is the LORD. The evildoer gives heed to wicked lips, the liar, to a mischievous tongue. Whoever mocks the poor reviles their Maker; whoever rejoices in their misfortune will not go unpunished. Children's children are the crown of the elderly, and the glory of children is their parentage. Fine words ill fit a fool; how much more lying lips, a noble!

A bribe seems a charm to its user; at every turn it brings success. Whoever overlooks an offense fosters friendship, but whoever gossips about it separates friends. A single reprimand does more for a discerning person than a hundred lashes for a fool. The wicked pursue only rebellion, and a merciless messenger is sent against them. Face a bear robbed of her cubs, but never fools in their folly! If you return evil for good, evil will not depart from your house. The start of strife is like the opening of a dam; check a quarrel before it bursts forth! Whoever acquits the wicked, whoever condemns the just—both are an abomination to the LORD. Of what use is money in the hands of fools when they have no heart to acquire wisdom?

A friend is a friend at all times, and a brother is born for the time of adversity. Those without sense give their hands in pledge, becoming surety for their neighbors. Those who love an offense love a fight; those who build their gate high court disaster. The perverse in heart come to no good, and the double-tongued fall into trouble. Whoever conceives a fool has grief; the father of a numskull has no joy. A joyful heart is the health of the body, but a depressed spirit dries up the bones. A guilty person takes out a bribe from the pocket, thus perverting the course of justice.



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On the countenance of a discerning person is wisdom, but the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth. A foolish son is vexation to his father, and bitter sorrow to her who bore him. It is wrong to fine an innocent person, but beyond reason to scourge nobles. Those who spare their words are truly knowledgeable, and those who are discreet are intelligent. Even fools, keeping silent, are considered wise; if they keep their lips closed, intelligent.



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Proverbs, chapter 18

One who is alienated seeks a pretext, with all persistence picks a quarrel. Fools take no delight in understanding, but only in displaying what they think. With wickedness comes contempt, and with disgrace, scorn.

The words of one's mouth are deep waters, the spring of wisdom, a running brook. It is not good to favor the guilty, nor to reject the claim of the just. The lips of fools walk into a fight, and their mouths are asking for a beating. The mouths of fools are their ruin; their lips are a deadly snare. The words of a talebearer are like dainty morsels: they sink into one's inmost being. Those slack in their work are kin to the destroyer.

The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the just run to it and are safe. The wealth of the rich is their strong city; they fancy it a high wall. Before disaster the heart is haughty, but before honor is humility. Whoever answers before listening, theirs is folly and shame. One's spirit supports one when ill, but a broken spirit who can bear?

The heart of the intelligent acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge. Gifts clear the way for people, winning access to the great. Those who plead the case first seem to be in the right; then the opponent comes and cross-examines them. The lot puts an end to disputes, and decides a controversy between the mighty.

A brother offended is more unyielding than a stronghold; such strife is more daunting than castle gates. With the fruit of one's mouth one's belly is filled, with the produce of one's lips one is sated. Death and life are in the power of the tongue; those who choose one shall eat its fruit.



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To find a wife is to find happiness, a favor granted by the LORD. The poor implore, but the rich answer harshly. There are friends who bring ruin, but there are true friends more loyal than a brother.



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Proverbs, chapter 19

Better to be poor and walk in integrity than rich and crooked in one's ways. Desire without knowledge is not good; and whoever acts hastily, blunders. Their own folly leads people astray; in their hearts they rage against the LORD.

Wealth adds many friends, but the poor are left friendless.

The false witness will not go unpunished, and whoever utters lies will not escape. Many curry favor with a noble; everybody is a friend of a gift giver. All the kin of the poor despise them; how much more do their friends shun them! Those who gain sense truly love themselves; those who preserve understanding will find success. The false witness will not go unpunished, and whoever utters lies will perish.

Luxury is not befitting a fool; much less should a slave rule over princes. It is good sense to be slow to anger, and an honor to overlook an offense. The king's wrath is like the roar of a lion, but his favor, like dew on the grass. The foolish son is ruin to his father, and a quarrelsome wife is water constantly dripping. Home and possessions are an inheritance from parents, but a prudent wife is from the LORD. Laziness brings on deep sleep, and the sluggard goes hungry.

Those who keep commands keep their lives, but those who despise these ways will die. Whoever cares for the poor lends to the LORD, who will pay back the sum in full. Discipline your son, for there is hope; but do not be intent on his death. A wrathful person bears the penalty; after one rescue, you will have it to do again. Listen to counsel and receive instruction, that you may eventually become wise.



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Many are the plans of the human heart, but it is the decision of the LORD that endures. What is desired of a person is fidelity; rather be poor than a liar. The fear of the LORD leads to life; one eats and sleeps free from any harm. The sluggard buries a hand in the dish; not even lifting it to the mouth. Beat a scoffer and the naive learn a lesson; rebuke the intelligent and they gain knowledge. Whoever mistreats a father or drives away a mother, is a shameless and disgraceful child. My son, stop attending to correction; start straying from words of knowledge. An unprincipled witness scoffs at justice, and the mouth of the wicked pours out iniquity. Rods are prepared for scoffers, and blows for the backs of fools.



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Proverbs, chapter 20

Wine is arrogant, strong drink is riotous; none who are intoxicated by them are wise. The terror of a king is like the roar of a lion; those who incur his anger forfeit their lives. A person gains honor by avoiding strife, while every fool starts a quarrel. In seedtime sluggards do not plow; when they look for the harvest, it is not there. The intention of the human heart is deep water, but the intelligent draw it forth. Many say, "My loyal friend," but who can find someone worthy of trust? The just walk in integrity; happy are their children after them!

A king seated on the throne of judgment dispels all evil with his glance. Who can say, "I have made my heart clean, I am cleansed of my sin"? Varying weights, varying measures, are both an abomination to the LORD. In their actions even children can playact though their deeds be blameless and right.

The ear that hears, the eye that sees—the LORD has made them both. Do not love sleep lest you be reduced to poverty; keep your eyes open, have your fill of food. "Bad, bad!" says the buyer, then goes away only to boast. One can put on gold and abundant jewels, but wise lips are the most precious ornament. Take the garment of the one who became surety for a stranger; if for foreigners, exact the pledge! Bread earned by deceit is sweet, but afterward the mouth is filled with gravel. Plans made with advice succeed; with wise direction wage your war. A slanderer reveals secrets; so have nothing to do with a babler! Those who curse father or mother—their lamp will go out in the dead of night.

Possessions greedily guarded at the outset will not be blessed in the end. Do not say, "I will repay evil!" Wait for the LORD, who will help you. Varying weights are an abomination to the LORD, and false scales are not good. Our steps are from the LORD, how, then, can mortals understand their way? It is a trap to



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pledge rashly a sacred gift, and after a vow, then to reflect. A wise king winnows the wicked, and threshes them under the cartwheel.

A lamp from the LORD is human life-breath; it searches through the inmost being. His steadfast loyalty safeguards the king, and he upholds his throne by justice. The glory of the young is their strength, and the dignity of the old is gray hair. Evil is cleansed away by bloody lashes, and a scourging to the inmost being.



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Proverbs, chapter 21

A king's heart is channeled water in the hand of the LORD; God directs it where he pleases. All your ways may be straight in your own eyes, but it is the LORD who weighs hearts. To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice. Haughty eyes and a proud heart—the lamp of the wicked will fail.

The plans of the diligent end in profit, but those of the hasty end in loss. Trying to get rich by lying is chasing a bubble over deadly snares. The violence of the wicked will sweep them away, because they refuse to do what is right. One's path may be winding and unfamiliar, but one's conduct is blameless and right. It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop than in a mansion with a quarrelsome woman. The soul of the wicked desires evil; their neighbor finds no pity in their eyes. When scoffers are punished the naive become wise; when the wise succeed, they gain knowledge. The Righteous One appraises the house of the wicked, bringing down the wicked to ruin. Those who shut their ears to the cry of the poor will themselves call out and not be answered. A secret gift allays anger, and a present concealed, violent wrath. When justice is done it is a joy for the just, downfall for evildoers. Whoever strays from the way of good sense will abide in the assembly of the shades.

The lover of pleasure will suffer want; the lover of wine and perfume will never be rich. The wicked serve as ransom for the just, and the faithless for the upright. It is better to dwell in a wilderness than with a quarrelsome wife and trouble. Precious treasure and oil are in the house of the wise, but the fool consumes them. Whoever pursues justice and kindness will find life and honor. The wise person storms the city of the mighty, and overthrows the stronghold in which they trust. Those who guard mouth and tongue guard themselves from trouble. Proud, boastful—scoffer is the name: those who act with overbearing pride. The desire of sluggards will slay them, for their hands refuse to work. Some are consumed with avarice all the day, but the just give unsparingly.



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The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination, the more so when they offer it with bad intent. The false witness will perish, but one who listens will give lasting testimony. The face of the wicked hardens, but the upright maintains a straight course. No wisdom, no understanding, no counsel prevail against the LORD. The horse is equipped for the day of battle, but victory is the LORD's.



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Proverbs, chapter 22

A good name is more desirable than great riches, and high esteem, than gold and silver. Rich and poor have a common bond: the LORD is the maker of them all. The astute see an evil and hide, while the naive continue on and pay the penalty. The result of humility and fear of the LORD is riches, honor and life. Thorns and snares are on the path of the crooked; those who would safeguard their lives will avoid them. Train the young in the way they should go; even when old, they will not swerve from it. The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is the slave of the lender. Those who sow iniquity reap calamity, and the rod used in anger will fail. The generous will be blessed, for they share their food with the poor. Expel the arrogant and discord goes too; strife and insult cease.

The LORD loves the pure of heart; the person of winning speech has a king for a friend. The eyes of the LORD watch over the knowledgeable, but he defeats the projects of the faithless. The sluggard says, "A lion is outside; I might be slain in the street." The mouth of the foreign woman is a deep pit; whoever incurs the LORD's anger will fall into it. Folly is bound to the heart of a youth, but the rod of discipline will drive it out. Oppressing the poor for enrichment, giving to the rich: both are sheer loss.

IV. Sayings of the Wise

The Words of the Wise: Incline your ear, and hear my words, and let your mind attend to my teaching; For it will be well if you hold them within you, if they all are ready on your lips. That your trust may be in the LORD, I make them known to you today—yes, to you. Have I not written for you thirty sayings, containing counsels and knowledge, To teach you truly how to give a dependable report to one who sends you? Do not rob the poor because they are poor, nor crush the needy at the gate; For the LORD will defend their cause,



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and will plunder those who plunder them. Do not be friendly with hotheads, nor associate with the wrathful, Lest you learn their ways, and become ensnared.

Do not be one of those who give their hand in pledge, those who become surety for debts; For if you are unable to pay, your bed will be taken from under you. Do not remove the ancient landmark that your ancestors set up. Do you see those skilled at their work? They will stand in the presence of kings, but not in the presence of the obscure.



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Proverbs, chapter 23

When you sit down to dine with a ruler, mark well the one who is before you; Stick the knife in your gullet if you have a ravenous appetite. Do not desire his delicacies; it is food that deceives. Do not wear yourself out to gain wealth, cease to be worried about it; When your glance flits to it, it is gone! For assuredly it grows wings, like the eagle that flies toward heaven. Do not take food with unwilling hosts, and do not desire their delicacies; For like something stuck in the throat is that food. "Eat and drink," they say to you, but their hearts are not with you; The little you have eaten you will vomit up, and you will have wasted your agreeable words. Do not speak in the hearing of fools; they will despise the wisdom of your words. Do not remove the ancient landmark, nor invade the fields of the fatherless; For their redeemer is strong; he will defend their cause against you. Apply your heart to instruction, and your ear to words of knowledge. Do not withhold discipline from youths; if you beat them with the rod, they will not die. Beat them with the rod, and you will save them from Sheol. My son, if your heart is wise, my heart also will rejoice; And my inmost being will exult, when your lips speak what is right. Do not let your heart envy sinners, but only those who always fear the LORD; For you will surely have a future, and your hope will not be cut off.

Hear, my son, and be wise, and guide your heart in the right way. Do not join with wine bibbers, nor with those who glut themselves on meat. For drunkards and gluttons come to poverty, and lazing about clothes one in rags. Listen to your father who begot you, do not despise your mother when she is old. Buy truth and do not sell: wisdom, instruction, understanding! The father of a just person will exult greatly; whoever begets a wise son will rejoice in him.

Let your father and mother rejoice; let her who bore you exult. My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes keep to my ways, For the harlot is a deep pit, and the foreign woman a narrow well; Yes, she lies in wait like



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a robber, and increases the number of the faithless. Who scream? Who shout? Who have strife? Who have anxiety? Who have wounds for nothing? Who have bleary eyes?

Whoever linger long over wine, whoever go around quaffing wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup. It goes down smoothly, but in the end it bites like a serpent, and stings like an adder. Your eyes behold strange sights, and your heart utters incoherent things; You are like one sleeping on the high seas, sprawled at the top of the mast. “They struck me, but it did not pain me; they beat me, but I did not feel it. When can I get up, when can I go out and get more?”



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Proverbs, chapter 24

Do not envy the wicked, nor desire to be with them; For their hearts plot violence, and their lips speak of foul play. By wisdom a house is built, by understanding it is established; And by knowledge its rooms are filled with every precious and pleasing possession. The wise are more powerful than the strong, and the learned, than the mighty, For by strategy war is waged, and victory depends on many counselors. Wise words are beyond fools' reach, in the assembly they do not open their mouth; As they calculate how to do evil, people brand them troublemakers.

The scheme of a fool gains no acceptance, the scoffer is an abomination to the community. Did you fail in a day of adversity, did your strength fall short? Did you fail to rescue those who were being dragged off to death, those tottering, those near death, because you said, "We didn't know about it"? Surely, the Searcher of hearts knows and will repay all according to their deeds. If you eat honey, my son, because it is good, if pure honey is sweet to your taste, Such, you must know, is wisdom to your soul. If you find it, you will have a future, and your hope will not be cut off.

Do not lie in wait at the abode of the just, do not ravage their dwelling places; Though the just fall seven times, they rise again, but the wicked stumble from only one mishap. Do not rejoice when your enemies fall, and when they stumble, do not let your heart exult, Lest the LORD see it, be displeased with you, and withdraw his wrath from your enemies. Do not be provoked at evildoers, do not envy the wicked; For the evil have no future, the lamp of the wicked will be put out. My son, fear the LORD and the king; have nothing to do with those who hate them; For disaster will issue suddenly, and calamity from them both, who knows when?

V. Further Sayings of the Wise



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These also are Words of the Wise: To show partiality in judgment is not good. Whoever says to the guilty party, “You are innocent,” will be cursed by nations, scorned by peoples; But those who render just verdicts will fare well, and on them will come the blessing of prosperity. An honest reply—a kiss on the lips.

Complete your outdoor tasks, and arrange your work in the field; afterward you can build your house. Do not testify falsely against your neighbor and so deceive with your lips. Do not say, “As they did to me, so will I do to them; I will repay them according to their deeds.” I passed by the field of a sluggard, by the vineyard of one with no sense; It was all overgrown with thistles; its surface was covered with nettles, and its stone wall broken down. As I gazed at it, I reflected; I saw and learned a lesson: A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the arms to rest—Then poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like a brigand.



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**VI. Second Solomonic Collection, Collected under King Hezekiah
Proverbs, chapter 25**

These also are proverbs of Solomon. The servants of Hezekiah, king of Judah, transmitted them. It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, and the glory of kings to fathom a matter. Like the heavens in height, and the earth in depth, the heart of kings is unfathomable. Remove the dross from silver, and it comes forth perfectly purified; Remove the wicked from the presence of the king, and his throne is made firm through justice. Claim no honor in the king's presence, nor occupy the place of superiors; For it is better to be told, "Come up closer!" than to be humbled before the prince. What your eyes have seen do not bring forth too quickly against an opponent; For what will you do later on when your neighbor puts you to shame?

Argue your own case with your neighbor, but the secrets of others do not disclose; Lest, hearing it, they reproach you, and your ill repute never ceases. Golden apples in silver settings are words spoken at the proper time. A golden earring or a necklace of fine gold—one who gives wise reproof to a listening ear. Like the coolness of snow in the heat of the harvest are faithful messengers for those who send them, lifting the spirits of their masters.

Clouds and wind but no rain—the one who boasts of a gift not given. By patience is a ruler persuaded, and a soft tongue can break a bone. If you find honey, eat only what you need, lest you have your fill and vomit it up. Let your foot be seldom in your neighbors' house, lest they have their fill of you—and hate you. A club, sword, or sharp arrow—the one who bears false witness against a neighbor. A bad tooth or an unsteady foot—a trust betrayed in time of trouble. Like the removal of clothes on a cold day, or vinegar on soda, is the one who sings to a troubled heart.



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If your enemies are hungry, give them food to eat, if thirsty, give something to drink; For live coals you will heap on their heads, and the LORD will vindicate you. The north wind brings rain, and a backbiting tongue, angry looks. It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop than in a mansion with a quarrelsome wife. Cool water to one faint from thirst is good news from a far country. A trampled fountain or a polluted spring—a just person fallen before the wicked. To eat too much honey is not good; nor to seek honor after honor. A city breached and left defenseless are those who do not control their temper.



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Proverbs, chapter 26

Like snow in summer, like rain in harvest, honor for a fool is out of place. Like the sparrow in its flitting, like the swallow in its flight, a curse uncalled-for never lands. The whip for the horse, the bridle for the ass, and the rod for the back of fools. Do not answer fools according to their folly, lest you too become like them. Answer fools according to their folly, lest they become wise in their own eyes. Those who send messages by a fool cut off their feet; they drink down violence. A proverb in the mouth of a fool hangs limp, like crippled legs. Giving honor to a fool is like entangling a stone in the sling. A thorn stuck in the hand of a drunkard is a proverb in the mouth of fools. An archer wounding all who pass by is anyone who hires a drunken fool.

As dogs return to their vomit, so fools repeat their folly. You see those who are wise in their own eyes? There is more hope for fools than for them. The sluggard says, "There is a lion in the street, a lion in the middle of the square!" The door turns on its hinges and sluggards, on their beds. The sluggard buries a hand in the dish, too weary to lift it to the mouth. In their own eyes sluggards are wiser than seven who answer with good judgment.

Whoever meddles in the quarrel of another is one who grabs a passing dog by the ears. Like a crazed archer scattering firebrands and deadly arrows, Such are those who deceive their neighbor, and then say, "I was only joking." Without wood the fire dies out; without a talebearer strife subsides.

Charcoal for coals, wood for fire—such are the quarrelsome, enkindling strife. The words of a talebearer are like dainty morsels: they sink into one's inmost being. Like a glazed finish on earthenware are smooth lips and a wicked heart. With their lips enemies pretend, but inwardly they maintain deceit; When they speak graciously, do not trust them, for seven abominations are in their hearts. Hatred can be concealed by



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pretense, but malice will be revealed in the assembly. Whoever digs a pit falls into it; and a stone comes back upon the one who rolls it. The lying tongue is its owner's enemy, and the flattering mouth works ruin.



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Proverbs, chapter 27

Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what any day may bring forth. Let another praise you, not your own mouth; a stranger, not your own lips. Stone is heavy, and sand a burden, but a fool's provocation is heavier than both. Anger is cruel, and wrath overwhelming, but before jealousy who can stand? Better is an open rebuke than a love that remains hidden. Trustworthy are the blows of a friend, dangerous, the kisses of an enemy. One who is full spurns honey; but to the hungry, any bitter thing is sweet. Like a bird far from the nest so is anyone far from home. Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, but by grief the soul is torn asunder. Do not give up your own friend and your father's friend; do not resort to the house of your kindred when trouble strikes.

Better a neighbor near than kin far away.

Be wise, my son, and bring joy to my heart, so that I can answer whoever taunts me. The astute see an evil and hide; the naive continue on and pay the penalty. Take the garment of the one who became surety for a stranger; if for a foreign woman, exact the pledge! Those who greet their neighbor with a loud voice in the early morning, a curse can be laid to their charge. For a persistent leak on a rainy day the match is a quarrelsome wife; Whoever would hide her hides a stormwind and cannot tell north from south.

Iron is sharpened by iron; one person sharpens another. Those who tend a fig tree eat its fruit; so those attentive to their master will be honored. As face mirrors face in water, so the heart reflects the person. Sheol and Abaddon can never be satisfied; so the eyes of mortals can never be satisfied.

The crucible for silver, the furnace for gold, so you must assay the praise you receive. Though you pound fools with a pestle, their folly never leaves them. Take good care of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds; For wealth does not last forever, nor even a crown from age to age. When the grass comes up and



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the new growth appears, and the mountain greens are gathered in, The lambs will provide you with clothing, and the goats, the price of a field, And there will be ample goat's milk for your food, food for your house, sustenance for your maidens.



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Proverbs, chapter 28

The wicked flee though none pursue; but the just, like a lion, are confident. If a land is rebellious, its princes will be many; but with an intelligent and wise ruler there is stability. One who is poor and extorts from the lowly is a devastating rain that leaves no food. Those who abandon instruction praise the wicked, but those who keep instruction oppose them. The evil understand nothing of justice, but those who seek the LORD understand everything. Better to be poor and walk in integrity than rich and crooked in one's ways. Whoever heeds instruction is a wise son, but whoever joins with wastrels disgraces his father. Whoever amasses wealth by interest and overcharge gathers it for the one who is kind to the poor. Those who turn their ears from hearing instruction, even their prayer is an abomination. Those who mislead the upright into an evil way will themselves fall into their own pit, but the blameless will attain prosperity.

The rich are wise in their own eyes, but the poor who are intelligent see through them. When the just triumph, there is great glory; but when the wicked prevail, people hide. Those who conceal their sins do not prosper, but those who confess and forsake them obtain mercy. Happy those who always fear; but those who harden their hearts fall into evil. A roaring lion or a ravenous bear is a wicked ruler over a poor people.

The less prudent the rulers, the more oppressive their deeds. Those who hate ill-gotten gain prolong their days. Though a person burdened with blood guilt is in flight even to the grave, let no one offer support. Whoever walks blamelessly is safe, but one whose ways are crooked falls into a pit. Those who cultivate their land will have plenty of food, but those who engage in idle pursuits will have plenty of want.

The trustworthy will be richly blessed; but whoever hastens to be rich will not go unpunished. To show partiality is never good: for even a morsel of bread one may do wrong. Misers hurry toward wealth, not knowing that want is coming toward them. Whoever rebukes another wins more favor than one who flatters



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with the tongue. Whoever defrauds father or mother and says, “It is no sin,” is a partner to a brigand. The greedy person stirs up strife, but the one who trusts in the LORD will prosper. Those who trust in themselves are fools, but those who walk in wisdom are safe. Those who give to the poor have no lack, but those who avert their eyes, many curses. When the wicked prevail, people hide; but at their fall the just abound.



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Proverbs, chapter 29

Those stiff-necked in the face of reproof in an instant will be shattered beyond cure. When the just flourish, the people rejoice; but when the wicked rule, the people groan. Whoever loves wisdom gives joy to his father, but whoever consorts with harlots squanders his wealth. By justice a king builds up the land; but one who raises taxes tears it down. Those who speak flattery to their neighbor cast a net at their feet. The sin of the wicked is a trap, but the just run along joyfully. The just care for the cause of the poor; the wicked do not understand such care. Scoffers enflame the city, but the wise calm the fury.

If a wise person disputes with a fool, there is railing and ridicule but no resolution. The bloodthirsty hate the blameless, but the upright seek his life. Fools give vent to all their anger; but the wise, biding their time, control it. If rulers listen to lying words, their servants all become wicked. The poor and the oppressor meet: the LORD gives light to the eyes of both. If a king is honest for the rights of the poor, his throne stands firm forever.

The rod of correction gives wisdom, but uncontrolled youths disgrace their mothers. When the wicked increase, crime increases; but the just will behold their downfall. Discipline your children, and they will bring you comfort, and give delight to your soul. Without a vision the people lose restraint; but happy is the one who follows instruction. Not by words alone can servants be trained; for they understand but do not respond. Do you see someone hasty in speech? There is more hope for a fool! If servants are pampered from childhood they will turn out to be stubborn. The ill-tempered stir up strife, and the hotheaded cause many sins. Haughtiness brings humiliation, but the humble of spirit acquire honor. Partners of a thief hate themselves; they hear the imprecation but do not testify. Fear of others becomes a snare, but the one who trusts in the LORD is safe. Many curry favor with a ruler, but it is from the LORD that one receives justice. An abomination to the just, the evildoer; an abomination to the wicked, one whose way is straight.



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**VII. Sayings of Agur and Others
Proverbs, chapter 30**

The words of Agur, son of Jakeh the Massaite: The pronouncement of mortal man: "I am weary, O God; I am weary, O God, and I am exhausted. I am more brute than human being, without even human intelligence; Neither have I learned wisdom, nor have I the knowledge of the Holy One. Who has gone up to heaven and come down again—who has cupped the wind in the hollow of the hand? Who has bound up the waters in a cloak—who has established all the ends of the earth? What is that person's name, or the name of his son?" Every word of God is tested; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Add nothing to his words lest he reprimand you, and you be proved a liar.

Two things I ask of you, do not deny them to me before I die: Put falsehood and lying far from me, give me neither poverty nor riches; provide me only with the food I need; Lest, being full, I deny you, saying, "Who is the LORD?" Or, being in want, I steal, and profane the name of my God.

Do not criticize servants to their master, lest they curse you, and you have to pay the penalty. There are some who curse their fathers, and do not bless their mothers. There are some pure in their own eyes, yet not cleansed of their filth. There are some—how haughty their eyes! how overbearing their glance! There are some—their teeth are swords, their teeth are knives, Devouring the needy from the earth, and the poor from the human race.

The leech has two daughters: "Give," and "Give." Three things never get their fill, four never say, "Enough!" Sheol, a barren womb, land that never gets its fill of water, and fire, which never says, "Enough!" The eye that mocks a father, or scorns the homage due a mother, Will be plucked out by brook ravens; devoured by a brood of vultures.



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Three things are too wonderful for me, yes, four I cannot understand: The way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a serpent upon a rock, The way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a man with a woman. This is the way of an adulterous woman: she eats, wipes her mouth, and says, “I have done no wrong.” Under three things the earth trembles, yes, under four it cannot bear up: Under a slave who becomes king, and a fool who is gluttoned with food; Under an unloved woman who is wed, and a maidservant who displaces her mistress.

Four things are among the smallest on the earth, and yet are exceedingly wise: Ants—a species not strong, yet they store up their food in the summer; Badgers—a species not mighty, yet they make their home in the crags; Locusts—they have no king, yet they march forth in formation; Lizards—you can catch them with your hands, yet they find their way into kings’ palaces. Three things are stately in their stride, yes, four are stately in their carriage: The lion, mightiest of beasts, retreats before nothing; The strutting cock, and the he-goat, and the king at the head of his people. If you have foolishly been proud or presumptuous—put your hand on your mouth; For as the churning of milk produces curds, and the pressing of the nose produces blood, the churning of anger produces strife.



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**VIII. Sayings of King Lemuel
Proverbs, chapter 31**

The words of Lemuel, king of Massa, the instruction his mother taught him: What are you doing, my son! what are you doing, son of my womb; what are you doing, son of my vows! Do not give your vigor to women, or your strength to those who ruin kings. It is not for kings, Lemuel, not for kings to drink wine; strong drink is not for princes, Lest in drinking they forget what has been decreed, and violate the rights of any who are in need. Give strong drink to anyone who is perishing, and wine to the embittered; When they drink, they will forget their misery, and think no more of their troubles. Open your mouth in behalf of the mute, and for the rights of the destitute; Open your mouth, judge justly, defend the needy and the poor!

IX. Poem on the Woman of Worth

Who can find a woman of worth? Far beyond jewels is her value. Her husband trusts her judgment; he does not lack income. She brings him profit, not loss, all the days of her life. She seeks out wool and flax and weaves with skillful hands. Like a merchant fleet, she secures her provisions from afar. She rises while it is still night, and distributes food to her household, a portion to her maidservants. She picks out a field and acquires it; from her earnings she plants a vineyard. She girds herself with strength; she exerts her arms with vigor. She enjoys the profit from her dealings; her lamp is never extinguished at night. She puts her hands to the distaff, and her fingers ply the spindle. She reaches out her hands to the poor, and extends her arms to the needy. She is not concerned for her household when it snows—all her charges are doubly clothed. She makes her own coverlets; fine linen and purple are her clothing. Her husband is prominent at the city gates as he sits with the elders of the land. She makes garments and sells them, and stocks the merchants with belts. She is clothed with strength and dignity, and laughs at the days to come. She opens her mouth in wisdom; kindly instruction is on her tongue. She watches over the affairs of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband, too, praises her: "Many are the women of



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proven worth, but you have excelled them all.” Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting; the woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. Acclaim her for the work of her hands, and let her deeds praise her at the city gates.