



THIRTY-ONE DAYS OF

WISDOM



INTRODUCTION

Known as the Proverbs of Solomon, although not every word of the book was penned by the wise king, there is an important consistency throughout the Proverbs that allows the reader to gain much from its content about how to live a healthy life. Spoken from a mentor's perspective, the reader is called "my son" and given solid instruction through careful teachings, warnings, and balanced examples between what happens to the wise and the fate of the foolish.

While seven months out of the year consist of 31 days, reading through one chapter of the Book of Proverbs each day for a month is a great way to form a consistency for a daily reading that will end in a healthy habit. Just begin by asking the Lord to speak to you through His Word and honor your time together.

The reading plan in this resource is designed to CONNECT you to the Lord in daily prayer and reading. If you couple that by meeting with a friend or family member, you add another layer of connectivity as you grow in community.

Start by reading the day's chapter in its entirety. Then go back and reread the focal verses for the day we have provided (you may also want to talk about other parts of the passage that spoke to you!) Next, answer the questions we've provided to consider a deeper level of the truths presented or ways to apply that truth to your day. (This part will be especially important if meeting with one of your children as you will want to hear how they process the passage if they are not yet Christians or if they are young believers. The same can be said for a friend situation if you are uncertain of their faith.) Once you consider how the scripture speaks directly into your day, end by praying to the Lord and thanking Him for the chance to meet with Him this way.

By diving into Proverbs, you will be asked to contemplate choices that you make. Be aware that there will be a battle for consistency. Things happen and enthusiasm wains. Once you change the meeting time or skip a day, it becomes easier to miss another day, and then another. Give yourself some grace during those times but make meeting with the Lord for just 10 minutes a day a priority! Hold your study partner accountable as well. There will be days that seem flat or redundant but remember; "destiny is determined by discipline and not desire."

DAY 01

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 1

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (v. 7)

THE POINT:

So much going on in chapter 1, right?! First off, you're given a quick description of the entire book, then told how this will benefit you: that you will know wisdom, understand words of insight, receive instruction, and give prudence! Then as spoken from a father (or mentor), "hear, my son..." You know that what follows is important. First a warning against thieves and then the calling out of Wisdom to us! Finally, the chapter ends with the old saying of, "you reap what you sow."

THE PRACTICE:

What do you think it means to understand that the beginning of our attaining knowledge starts with us FEARING God? Why is it important that the voice of a parent (or mentor) is used throughout the Book of Proverbs? What is unique about instruction from a parent or trusted mentor compared to other voices that speak into our lives? (the investment of a parent) In verse 33 it says, "whoever listens to me will dwell secure." How does that statement reflect Jesus' message from the Gospels? (Read Matthew 7:7 for a reminder)

DAY 02

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 2

"For the Lord gives wisdom, from His mouth come knowledge and understanding. He holds success in store for the upright; He is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, for He guards the course of the just and protects the way of the faithful ones." (vs.6-8)

THE POINT:

This chapter reveals the benefits of pursuing wisdom. God speaks wisdom into us, hands us success, and protects our path! That's not us agreeing to a moral code; that's God at work around us! We're then told wisdom will save us from the wicked man and the adulterous woman. We'll see all things as they are and be able to operate our lives within reality.

THE PRACTICE:

If God actively speaks to, provides for, and protects us, what is our responsibility in the relationship? (To listen to Him, trust His plan for our day, and live in obedience) As He gives, we receive. What gets in the way of your receiving good things from God? How does attaining wisdom make us aware of the wicked and the adulterous? "For the upright will live in the land, and the blameless will remain in it" v.21 How does this verse reflect Jesus' teaching? (Matt. 5:5)

DAY 03

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 3

"The Lord by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding He established the heavens; by His knowledge the deeps broke open, and the clouds drop down the dew." (vs. 19-20)

THE POINT:

Chapter 3 is full of good truths including the well-known section of verses 5 and 6. So besides remembering that we are better off trusting God in everything as opposed to trusting our ways, we are taught to honor the Lord with our wealth and first fruits, that God disciplines the ones He loves, that attaining wisdom is better than attaining gold, that the wisdom of God brings peace in our lives, and are given some instructions on what not to do when dealing with neighbors and evil men!

THE PRACTICE:

How are you honoring God with your money? How can you start if you aren't? Why is WISDOM portrayed as a female in Proverbs? (Hebrew chokmoth is feminine, the English reader benefits from the "companion" quality of the term as a father teaches a son) Why is it important to understand that through WISDOM the earth was created? (It shows us the attribute of God's character existed before creation) How can we see the proof of God's WISDOM in nature today? (the purpose to everything, the beauty) How can you relate God's WISDOM to every relationship you have?

DAY 04

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 4

“Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.” (v.23)

THE POINT:

Verse 23 is one of the most important verses from this chapter and in many ways the book of Proverbs. It acts like the hinge on a door allowing us to open the true meaning of wisdom. The next three verses mention practicing discipline and purity with our thoughts, words, and actions. Time and time again we are taught in the Bible that sin is a problem that exists at the HEART level. God’s healing power for our sin problem is a result of a transformation in our HEARTS. Wisdom is not just learned by trying to make better choices in our daily living; it is grown in us once we submit our hearts to God and allow Him to change us from the inside out.

Proverbs 4: 18 says “the path of the righteous is like the morning sun, shining ever brighter till the full light of day.” Like there is safety having a clear path set before us (so we don’t trip), we are better off in our walk with Jesus when all things are revealed for what they are. Part of guarding our heart is being honest with others and having relationships with family and friends who know Jesus we can share our burdens with and confess our mistakes to. Guarding your heart means daily submitting your thoughts, words, and actions to the Lord and asking for His power to be at work at your heart level.

THE PRACTICE:

Does God have access to your life at the heart level? Are you confessing the sins you struggle with to Him on a daily basis? Who do you have in your life that you can share your struggles with? Who can you confess your sins to and seek Godly counsel from?

DAY 05

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 5

"Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well." (v. 15)

THE POINT:

This chapter is a WARNING label for life, comparing the difference of being fooled into listening to the lies of the wicked/adulterous woman (the bitter gall) and having the wisdom to stay close to the Lord's instruction and enjoying the blessed fountain of healthy water that nurtures our souls.

THE PRACTICE:

Compare the two realities of sin and righteousness through faith in Jesus: What is it about sin that makes it so tempting? (It "feels" good, fun, the results are immediate, v. 3) But what's the price? (losing your honor, death, the grave, being ensnared) What is it about disciplined living that is unattractive? (it's hard to be consistent, takes energy, the payoff is so far in the future) But what's the benefit? (abundance, blessing, true satisfaction, confidence)

DAY 06

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 6

“There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to Him:” (v.16)

THE POINT:

This chapter speaks on a range of topics beginning with the danger of being a cosigner on a friend's loan! We're then told of the importance of working hard, what an evil man looks like and how he acts, a list of characteristics and actions the Lord wants us to have nothing to do with, and finally another warning of the dangers of the adulterous woman.

THE PRACTICE:

Look again at verses 16-19: What body parts are listed here? (eyes, tongue, hands, heart, feet) Why are these body parts listed? [Shows connection of internal (heart) to the external (hands and feet)] What ungodly characteristics are mentioned in these verses? (arrogance, lies, physical abuse, planning crimes, lack of self-control, gossip) If these are the things God wants us to avoid, what is a short list of the opposite things we should strive for that will please Him? (eyes that see with humility, a truthful tongue, healing hands, a pure heart, self-control, a true witness, and a desire to bring peace into a community)

DAY 07

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 7

"My son, keep my words and treasure up my commandments with you; bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart." (vs. 1,3)

THE POINT:

This chapter plays out a scenario between an adulteress and a foolish young man where the woman pursues the man ending in the death of the foolish young man. The chapter goes into detail revealing the preparation and convincing speech of the adulteress. This shows more reason why it is so important to have truth and wisdom present within our hearts and surrounding us daily; to see through the smoke screen of sin and remain true to the Lord in our decisions.

THE PRACTICE:

This passage mentions having physical reminders of God's instruction present on our bodies. What are some things you can do to make truths of scripture more visible in your daily life? How does memorizing scripture allow us to remain free from sin? How much time per week do you take to work on memorizing scripture?

DAY 08

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 8

"Blessed is the one who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my doors." (v. 34)

THE POINT:

After seven chapters of Proverbs instructing us on the importance of wisdom, chapter eight takes it a step further and emphasizes the AUTHORITY of wisdom! We hear from wisdom herself about her importance within a king's rule. We also learn of wisdom's being present before the creation of the world and working with God throughout the process "like a master craftsman" (v.30) The words of Jesus are reflected in verse 35, "whoever finds me finds life." (like John 14:9)

THE PRACTICE:

If seeking to develop wisdom in our lives is more important than spending our time trying to obtain wealth, what does that look like in the real world? What is one practical way you can exercise this commandment today?

DAY 09

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 9

"Stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." (v.17)

THE POINT:

We are told often in Proverbs that the voice of Folly lies to us so she can trick us into making poor choices with our lives. Verse 17 is interesting in that it is not a lie when looking at poor choices from the perspective of our flesh. Verse 18 brings us right back into reality though reminding us of the consequences.

THE PRACTICE:

Think about a time when you lied, cheated, or stole something. Do you remember it feeling good, even in some weird way? Did it bring a sense of satisfaction to "get away" with something? It is true that "being bad" sometimes "feels good." This is proof of our sinful nature and how it rejoices in wrong. Be thankful today that even though Folly cries out in hopes of destroying us, Wisdom has prepared a place for us and has provided a way for us to "walk in the way of insight." (v.6)

DAY 10

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 10

“Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.”
(v.12) Go check out what Peter wrote in 1 Peter 4:8!

THE POINT:

A lot of chapter 10-15 of Proverbs compare opposite ideas (righteous vs. wicked, wise vs. fool) in a series of one-liners that seem speak in a practical way about what to do and what not to do! At first glance, these passages speak to us almost like fortune cookie messages, and that may make you wonder how to read the instructions here. Even though there is a “jumping around” between topics, the common theme is that wisdom drives the proper ways of living while sin leads the fool to making poor choices.

THE PRACTICE:

As you read these single-sentence proverbs, ask yourself, “which you are more prone to do”? Are you making the right choices in your thoughts, words, and actions, or are you struggling to live out these principles in God-honoring ways?

DAY 11

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 11

"Whoever belittles his neighbor lacks sense, but a man of understanding remains silent." (v.12)

"Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful woman without discretion." (v.22)

THE POINT:

This chapter give us two very important (and visual) instructions over self-control and how to respond in social situations. Pairing these verses together shows us how we can bring honor to God and reflect His life-changing Grace to people in our lives. There will be times that people in our lives create opportunities for us to make fun of them (belittle them) and present opportunities for us to lack discretion. But these times are important for us in that they offer us the chance to have those people know more about who Jesus is when they are exposed to people of Godly character.

THE PRACTICE:

How can remaining silent when given the chance to make fun of a person reflect Godliness? What does it mean to lack discretion? How is that like a pig wearing fine jewelry?

DAY 12

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 12

“No one is established by wickedness, but the root of the righteous will never be moved” (v.3)

THE POINT:

Today's chapter offers a strong comparison between that which is temporary (which is a waste of time) and the eternal. Simply put, we are reminded to know the difference between the two and strive for what will last forever. Jesus spoke of two foundations in Matthew 7:24, the sand is the temporary and the rock is the eternal.

THE PRACTICE:

Is there anything weighing heavy on you today? Is it a temporary issue that could potentially distract you from hearing from God? Practice “casting your burdens” onto the Lord by sharing your anxieties, doubts, and worries through prayer. Just as He promises to take away our sin and give us new life in Christ, He wants to take away our temporary worries so that we can be rooted and built up in Him today!

DAY 13

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 13

“Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm” (v.20)

THE POINT:

Chapter 13 deals with topics ranging from money management to communication and our work ethic. Verse 20 really stands out in how simple it is to understand yet how difficult it may be to practice. We say in Skate Camp a lot that one of the easiest ways to become a better skateboarder is to hang out with better skaters. The same can be said for anything you're interested in; when you are exposed to people good at a thing you want to be good at, watching that thing done well (and getting advice from them) helps you gain confidence to get better at it. The same goes for wisdom! Do you want to make wise choices? Start by spending time with wise people.

THE PRACTICE:

Out of the people you surround yourself with, who makes the best decisions? Who gives the best advice? In other words, who is the wisest person you know? Maybe it is time to ask that person if they would be willing to mentor you on a weekly basis as you are learning what it means to understand and attain wisdom.

DAY 14

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 14

"All hard work brings profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty" (v.23)

THE POINT:

As the not-as-old-as-the Bible old saying goes – talk is cheap. This short and simple verse speaks an incredible truth, that hard work is profitable. Does it mean that you will always be monetarily successful after putting in long hours of work? Nope. You may invest lots of money and time into something in hopes of turning a large profit, and it may not ever happen. The truth here is that there is more that profits us than just a paycheck. The pride of a job well done, the satisfaction of staying on task with something, the chance to work on a project with a friend or mentor; these are profitable in themselves. So less talking and more doing.

THE PRACTICE:

Have you ever worked really hard on something and seen the payoff (even studying hard for a test and acing it)? How can working hard on simple tasks honor God? What is an area of your life you can commit to working harder on? In other words, what is something you do on a regular basis but honestly don't give it your best? Ask the Lord to help you in this area.

DAY 15

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 15

"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (v.1)

THE POINT:

So much of today's chapter deals with our power to affect others by the words we say and our attitude in general! In the book of James chapter three, the writer calls the tongue a fire able to do great damage to others. Think for a moment how great it is when someone you respect compliments you. What a gift right! Now think about what it feels like when someone you love insults you. Words are powerful. What you say and how you say something has the power to determine what someone thinks about how you feel about them and in turn how they feel about themselves.

THE PRACTICE:

We at Middleman believe that we all have an incredible opportunity each day to be a BLESSING or a BURDEN on people and that has a lot to do with what words we use when talking to others. Be mindful of this idea today. Commit to saying "life-giving" words of encouragement to people instead of "life-taking" speech that criticizes and insults. Your tongue is a weapon. Use it for good today.

DAY 16

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 16

"All a person's ways seem pure to them, but motives are weighed by the Lord" (v.2)

THE POINT:

Today's chapter is as helpful in our pursuit of wisdom as it is funny (read verse 30 again and when you see some crazy dude on the corner just winking and pursing his lips at everybody walk the other direction). But think about verse two for a second, isn't it easy for us to justify all of our actions, even the ones that hurt others? Why did we lie? Because we were lied to. Why did we steal? Because someone stole from us. It's a merry-go-round of blame, but at some point, we have to stop trying to justify all our wrongdoing and take responsibility for our words and our actions. This should lead to our being able to apologize to others and more importantly stop doing it!

THE PRACTICE:

The second half of this verse is so powerful. What does it mean that God weighs our motives? (go read 2 Corinthians 10:5 real quick) Allowing Christ to take every one of our thoughts captive means we want to have him screen our thoughts and make sure they really are pure. Do our words glorify God or do they glorify us? Do I want to praise Jesus with my thoughts and actions to give me wholeness or do I want to cut somebody down, so I can feel taller? God judges our motives. Remember to ask yourself these important questions while talking to people.

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 17

“Whoever mocks the poor shows contempt for their Maker; whoever gloats over disaster will not go unpunished. A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity” (vs. 5,17)

THE POINT:

How many countless hours of video is online right now of really unfortunate things happening to people? It seems like we have made an entire entertainment business out of other people's disasters. From car wrecks to fist fights, to drunks falling down stairs, the list goes on. The problem with making light of other's misfortune is that it numbs us to the pain they are going through. Today's verses remind us that not only are we to have compassion for the poor in their need; we are to go the step further to do whatever we can to meet need in the lives of those around us. When we refuse to serve people, we refuse to serve God.

THE PRACTICE:

Jesus said we are to serve the “least of these.” Who in your life is the least of these? Is there any specific person you know that you have a hard time serving (or even liking)? Is there any specific type of person your struggle to love? Being “born for a time of adversity” means the love you have for people is best shone when hard times hit. Can people count on you to be there for them when they need you the most?

DAY 18

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 18

“He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord” (v.22)

THE POINT:

Most of today's chapter deals with the power of our words; how they can be destructive, or they can be productive. At first glance verse 22 seems almost out of place as it is the only marriage-related verse from the entire chapter. But think for a moment about the importance of being a blessing within marriage. Maybe you never really think about marriage (if that's you I hope it's because you don't have a wife yet)! Here's what you need to know: a good marriage is lots of hard work, is super rewarding, and is one of God's most incredible gifts.

THE PRACTICE:

What kind of person do you hope to marry? What are some qualities you are looking for in a spouse? Have you ever prayed for your future wife or husband; that they would be protected and that they would know of God's love for them? Start praying for your future spouse today. Pray that God will partner you with someone who loves Him and that He will find favor in your marriage. Pray that you will continue to grow into the type of person worthy of their love for you too!

DAY 19

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 19

“Desire without knowledge is not good – how much more will hasty feet miss the way! Stop listening to instruction, my son, and you will stray from the words of knowledge” (vs. 2,27)

THE POINT:

How many times have you heard the motivational phrase, “you can accomplish anything you set your mind to” or “just follow your dreams”? As nice as it may be to think that all you have to do is “want it bad enough,” it takes more than raw desire to really make something happen. The writer of Proverbs knew that the problem with our feelings being the main driver behind our actions is that our feelings can betray us! It’s like working out; on day one we’re determined to lose thirty pounds of fat and replace it with 60 pounds of muscle, but by day three all we want is Xbox and tacos. It’s great to be passionate about things, but we also need to temper that desire with listening to wise counsel.

THE PRACTICE:

What are you most fired up about right now? What is the most essential thing in your life? Who do you allow to speak into your life? Are you open to having people give you constructive criticism? Pray for a teachable spirit and the ability to listen well to others who are wise.

DAY 20

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 20

“Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise” (v.1)

THE POINT:

Today’s chapter has a lot of great verses which deal with topics like justice, fairness, and glory. But our focal verse is found right at the beginning of the chapter. The writer personifies wine itself as a fool who mocks and makes fun of people while beer is personified as a senseless bully who picks fights with people. Wine and beer, in and of themselves, are not inherently evil. In another part of scripture, Paul tells Timothy that a little wine will be good for him. The main problem here is that alcohol and other controlled substances have the power to lead people astray. In other words, people make bad choices under their influence, and those choices result in terrible (and sometimes deadly) consequences.

THE PRACTICE:

What is your attitude towards alcohol, nicotine, and illegal drugs? Who helped shape how you feel about controlled substances? If you are underage, do you understand that if you drink and smoke you put yourself at risk in a number of ways?

DAY 21

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 21

"To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice" (v.3)

THE POINT:

Today we focus on doing things "for" God and doing things "with" God. Do you know the difference between the two? In the Old Testament, the prophet Samuel tells Saul "obedience is better than sacrifice" (1 Samuel 15:22). Think about it: God doesn't want you doing things for him out of your own power. He wants you to follow what He is doing and live your days WITH him. Pleasing God with wise choices may involve sacrificing some things that get in the way of His plans for your life. But remember that God desires your obedience to His more than anything else because He loves you and knows what is best for you.

THE PRACTICE:

Some people during Old Testament times would bring their sacrifices to the priest for atonement one day but then spend the rest of the week living for themselves. Have you ever struggled with something like that; where you go to church regularly but struggle to practice righteous living and justice other days of the week? Do you value obedience to God over sacrifice for Him? What is something you think He may want you to do but you are struggling with to obey? Pray for His courage in this area.

DAY 22

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 22

"Pay attention and turn your ear to the sayings of the wise; apply your heart to what I teach, for it is pleasing when you keep them in your heart and have all of them ready on your lips. So that your trust may be in the Lord, I teach you today, even you" (vs. 17-19)

THE POINT:

Today's chapter begins the "Thirty Sayings of the Wise," a section of Psalms with precise instructions spoken from a father/teacher/mentor. These instructions deal with real-life issues and act as warnings as many of them are preempted with a "DO NOT." Notice that in the first saying, we are instructed to not only hear these wise instructions but also keep them in our hearts. That means we are to memorize them. Make them a part of our daily thoughts. Just like the Psalmist said, "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you," we realize the importance of memorizing scripture, so we can know how to make wise decisions! The end result to this is that we would trust in God!

THE PRACTICE:

What is your attitude toward following instructions? Do you have a hard time obeying? Why is that? If you never have tried it, today's challenge is that you would start following the instructions given in Proverbs so that your life will be better and that you will see that you can trust God with your days. Are you willing to do that today? Pray for God to equip you with the power to obey Him.

DAY 23

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 23

“Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish them with a rod, they will not die. Punish them with the rod and save them from death” (vs. 13-14)

THE POINT:

Today we look at just one of the several verses in Proverbs dealing with parenting. You have probably heard the saying “spare the rod, spoil the child” which is based on Proverbs 13:24. At the core of these passages is the vital truth that disciplining is no fun, but it is necessary to keep our lives heading in the right direction. God disciplines His children (you and me) because he loves us. His discipline is not easy, but it teaches us valuable lessons. Someday when you are a parent, you will need to teach your kids that their poor choices and inability to obey your instruction for them result in consequences. **DISCLAIMER:** A parent should never hit a child. But the act of spanking a young child/grounding or otherwise disciplining older kids can be a necessary way of teaching the importance of obedience and consequences.

THE PRACTICE:

What has your experience been with discipline in your family? Did your parents discipline you and your siblings well? Have they been good role models for how to discipline to teach a lesson without going too far and losing control? How will you discipline your children when you are a parent?

DAY 24

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 24

“Eat honey, my son, for it is good; honey from the comb is sweet to your taste. Know also that wisdom is like honey for you; If you find it, there is a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off” (vs. 13-14)

THE POINT:

How cool that God wants you to eat good food, right? Maybe you've never thought about it, but the Lord wants you to enjoy little like skating with your friends, listening to good music, and, yes, eating tacos. But the writer takes it a step further to have us remember that like honey, wisdom is good for us. It brings us hope, and hope is what gets us through tough times. So, enjoy the little things in life but remember that all good things come from God and give us reason to thank Him!

THE PRACTICE:

So what's your favorite food? Did you realize that God is pleased when you eat it? Just don't overdo it. Today's challenge is to remain in a constant state of thankfulness to God when you enjoy something good. So enjoy your friends, the clean clothes you have to wear, the car you get to drive, the music you listen to, the food you eat, and the ledge you skate. Thank God for all of them.

DAY 25

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 25

“If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the Lord will reward you” (vs. 21-22)

THE POINT:

Oh man, what a great passage right! This chapter is a proverb of Solomon (the wisest man to ever live), and he speaks on a lot of topics in this one. As Solomon was a king, he had many enemies. So, his instruction for how to overcome our enemies is to serve them. Wait, what? Instead of cutting them down we're supposed to cut them a piece of cake?! The burning coals image reminds me of the "mind-blown" emoji. But think about it, what does showing kindness to our enemy do (besides confuse them)? It shows God's power! It shows our ability to forgive and tests our patience and even our contentment in the Lord. Be careful. Showing kindness to your enemies will result in your losing a lot. A lot of enemies that is.

THE PRACTICE:

Do you struggle with this passage today? Are you almost laughing at the idea of showing kindness to your enemies because it's ridiculous? Does it change your mind at all to know that you and I were once enemies of God (Romans 5:8), but He still sacrificed Jesus for us to be able to be forgiven and join His family? Here's another tough question: does God hate your enemy? Pray for the power to feel about your enemies how God feels about them. (mind-blown)

DAY 26

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 26

"Do you see a person wise in their own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for them" (v.12)

THE POINT:

Ok, we are 26 days into this month of devotions based on the search for wisdom, so it is times we say it: I PITY THE FOOL! That felt good. Lots of talk of fools in chapter 26. Lots of imagery through metaphors and similes used to describe what fools are like and what they do. The writer is trying to teach the reader not to be a fool! Verse 12 reminds us that anyone who believes they have attained complete wisdom in life is not just wrong, is not just a fool, but is actually worse off than a fool. Wisdom is a life-long journey, and although it can be practiced by all of us even today, we will spend the rest of our lives struggling with it, making mistakes, and relying on God's grace and mercy.

THE PRACTICE:

Have you ever felt like you had something beat only to realize you didn't? There are countless clips on YouTube of athletes celebrating prematurely: football players holding the ball out before crossing the end zone only to have another paler strip the ball or long distance runners showboating for the audience while another runner comes from behind and finishes first. As you pray today, thank God for the wisdom He has given you up to this point in your life but also pray for a teachable spirit so you can continue to grow in His wisdom.

DAY 27

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 27

"Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses" (v. 6)

THE POINT:

Have you ever thought about the difference between "friends" and "friendly"? A friendly person is going to want to always keep things polite and happy (in other words, friendly). A friend is someone who is willing to sacrifice being polite for being genuine. You will find the longer that you live that you will lose count of how many friendly people you know, but real friends are hard to find. A friend will say the hard thing to you that may hurt your pride but, in the end, will help you grow.

THE PRACTICE:

Think about your friends and fights you've had with them like a bone. Bones break, but once they heal, they are actually stronger at the fracture point than they were before. Friendships work the same way. Arguments happen but once apologies are made, and forgiveness is shown, that friendship is stronger than it was before. Today's challenge is for you to be a true friend today to the people in your life (serve them, be kind to them, speak truth to them) instead of just being friendly.

DAY 28

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 28

"Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy" (v.13)

THE POINT:

Let's begin with a simple working definition of sin: it is anything we think, say, or do that is disobedient to God. Sin lives not only in our behaviors, it also lives inside us. When Jesus died on the cross and rose again, He beat sin's power to kill us. Yet even when we confess with our mouths and believe in our hearts that Jesus is Lord, we still struggle with sin in this broken world. Sin disrupts but does not define us. BTW, Jesus is coming back to save us from sin forever, and that is why we are people of hope sharing the Good News of Jesus with the people in our lives!

THE PRACTICE:

So, do you want to know the most effective way to kill sin? Shine a light on it. Are you struggling with sin? Do you feel powerless to its power over you? Are you super embarrassed to share what you have done in the past or what you struggle with now for fear of being judged? Well, my friend, you are not alone. It is the privilege of any local pastor, youth minister, or Middleman Mentor to sit down with you and listen to your struggles in confidence and pray for God to free you from the sin that so easily entangles! Confessing to God and a trusted mentor sounds scary, but it is indeed the best way to begin letting the Lord heal you from sin.

DAY 29

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 29

“The bloodthirsty hate a person of integrity and seek to kill the upright” (v.10)

THE POINT:

Today we need to talk about a natural consequence to seeking wisdom and making wise choices. As you grow in the Lord, you may notice a wedge being driven between you and your friends. As you make a priority of pleasing God greater than pleasing them, it may create problems. The bible says the Light (Jesus) came into the world, but men loved the darkness rather than the Light. The people around you who don't know Jesus will have questions about your faith and life-choices. They may even make fun of you for not smoking or doing what you used to do. Peter tells us to be ready to explain the hope we profess but do it with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15).

THE PRACTICE:

Have you ever had somebody throw you shade because you pursue God? Have you ever felt some persecution because you're a Christian? Does the fear of that happening ever keep you from saying or doing the right thing? Pray for the confidence to live for Jesus today (and every day).

DAY 30

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 30

"Two things I ask you, Lord; do not refuse me before I die: keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the Lord?' or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God." (vs. 7-9)

THE POINT:

This powerful chapter is credited to being written by Agur, a man who had lived a long life yet did not believe he had attained wisdom. But we disagree. Agur also mentions the fact that God's words are entirely true, and he asks for very wise things in these verses. He asks for honesty and that God would provide just enough for him to keep him close to the Lord. Remember, when Jesus taught his disciples to pray he also mentioned "daily bread." Agur is also wise because he really seems to know himself, especially his weaknesses. Instead of denying his shortcomings, Agur prays about them to the Lord and wants nothing more than to be with him every day.

THE PRACTICE:

What is keeping you from praying for honesty and that God would provide just enough for you so that you would be sure to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus every day?

DAY 31

THE PASSAGE:

Read Proverbs 31

“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy” (vs. 8-9)

THE POINT:

This final chapter of Proverbs is one of the most famous passages in scripture as it ends with the incredible description of a noble wife. For the entire book of Proverbs to end describing how capable and smart and strong a woman can be is nothing short of remarkable. It is an aspiration for all young women to shoot for as much as it is a reminder how thankful we should be for Godly mothers, wives, and sisters in our lives. The chapter also includes our need to be a voice for the voiceless and defend the defenseless. Poverty has a way of stripping someone of their dignity, and all too often people with means look down on those without any.

THE PRACTICE:

What does speaking up for the needy and defending the poor have to do with wisdom? With great power comes great responsibility. Who do you know that needs to have someone speak up for them or defend them?

CONCLUSION

As we draw our 31 Days of Wisdom to a close, we hope you have been able to be consistent and that you have begun to form a healthy habit of getting into God's Word that will continue tomorrow and the day after that. Like all the books of the Bible, Proverbs has a wealth of knowledge that you will be amazed by each time you read it. If you need advice on what to read next contact us at Middleman and we will be happy to point you to another devotional for daily reading. If you have a Middleman mentor Bible, the back cover includes a reading plan.

Freely We Give,

John Barnard
Middleman Ministries

