

# Wise & TRUE

DISCOVER THE TIMELESS WISDOM THAT CAN SHAPE OUR LIVES AND  
LEAD US TO A YEAR FILLED WITH PURPOSE AND UNDERSTANDING.

A 31-DAY DEVOTIONAL THROUGH  
THE BOOK OF  
PROVERBS

# DAY 1

## READ PROVERBS 1

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSES / Proverbs 1:5-6 NIV

*Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance - for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise.*

This verse tells us that we can gain wisdom by learning from others. It takes a hunger for wisdom and humility to seek it out, but God has promised to give wisdom to those who ask for it.

### REFLECTION

Think about the people you know and consider to be wise. Where do you think their wisdom comes from? Where do you turn when you are seeking wisdom or guidance?

### APPLICATION

Pray that God will reveal the wisdom of the scriptures to you as you read through the Proverbs this month. Ask the Lord to guide you in all that you are facing in this new year.

# DAY 2

## READ PROVERBS 2

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSES / Proverbs 2:1-6 NIV

*My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding - indeed, if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.*

In this passage, the writer uses many active verbs to convey his message. This tells us that we must actively seek wisdom - we don't just fall or drift into it. The LORD wants to give it to us, for our protection and our joy.

### REFLECTION

What are some ways you can actively seek to become wise? What are some actions you can put aside, that detract from wisdom?

### APPLICATION

Pray that God will give you a hunger and a desire for wisdom, and attentiveness to see how He is working in and around you.

# DAY 3

## READ PROVERBS 3

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSES / Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV

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

Trust is at the heart of faith and yet it's sometimes difficult to trust a God we cannot see. If we listen to His word he will keep us on the right path.

### REFLECTION

Are you the kind of person who has a need to figure everything out? How can you make the shift from trusting yourself to acknowledging him in all you do?

### APPLICATION

Memorize and meditate on Psalm 138:8, "The Lord will fulfill His purpose for me."

# DAY 4

## READ PROVERBS 4

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSE / Proverbs 4:23 NIV

*Above all else, guard your heart for it is the wellspring of life.*

Wisdom comes from listening, and in this particular passage, we are listening to the wise words of a father to his sons. We listen, however, with both our eyes and ears, and what we consume matters to who we become; it matters to what becomes of our heart. Christ already created the perfect path to life, to health. Will you choose His way (wisdom), or your own?

### REFLECTION

How challenging is it for you to create space to listen to God? What is something you can consider giving up, e.g. scrolling Instagram, in order to help fix your gaze and tune your ears and heart to Christ?

### APPLICATION

Find a quiet moment, earliest in the day as possible, and ask God, “God, what will you have me see today? Where will you have me go?” Then, just listen.

# DAY 5

## READ PROVERBS 5

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSES / Proverbs 5:1-2 ESV

*My son, be attentive to my wisdom; incline your ear to my understanding, that you may keep discretion, and your lips may guard knowledge.*

Proverbs 5 is full of so much wisdom and understanding concerning the temptation of the flesh. But the entire chapter, in all of its details, hangs on the truth of these opening verses. Our efforts to withstand our desires are temporary, and ultimately fruitless without being tethered to the wisdom and strength of the Father. He is the one who can bear the weight of our shortcomings. He is offering each of us an understanding of His heart, and in understanding our Father, we find freedom.

### REFLECTION

Do you feel that your discipline and discretion are affected by your desire for God? What is a moment where you have heard and understood God's desires for you?

### APPLICATION

Be still and listen to the Lord's wisdom. Invite Him to guide the desires of your heart. Give Him permission to redeem the places where you may feel helpless to your desires.

# DAY 6

## READ PROVERBS 6

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSE / Proverbs 6:9 NLT

*But you, lazybones, how long will you sleep? When will you wake up?*

I don't know about you, but a verse like that is hard for me to read. I'm someone who can resemble a sloth at times. It can be hard for me to find motivation when I'm tired and need rest. Rest is important, but the question remains - when will I wake up? What a beckoning question it is. It's starting to make me think it's not about how many hours of sleep I got last night. I hear Jesus calling my name, trying to get my attention. It's much more like a gentle nudge than it is a startling wake up call. It's my dear friend, Jesus, rubbing my shoulder to whisper, "Wake up!"

## REFLECTION

What does it feel like to you to think about Jesus asking you when you'll wake up? What would it look like to invite Jesus into the spaces of your life that feel dormant?

## APPLICATION

Do something today that makes you feel awake, alive, or the most like yourself. Allow the Lord to enter in and celebrate who he made you to be. Take time to stop and listen to hear Jesus' gentle nudge to you - "Wake up!"

# DAY 7

## READ PROVERBS 7

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSES / Proverbs 7:2-3 NIV

*Keep my commands and you will live; guard my teachings as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers and write them on the tablet of your heart.*

Eye, fingers, heart - these verses tell us to be intentional with what we look at, touch, and care about. It reminds me of the children's song, "Oh be careful little eyes what you see..." It takes discipline and a desire for God's goodness to stay focused on His teachings, while understanding that it's not through our might or our works that we are saved - it's only through His grace. But the wise will understand that internalizing biblical teaching (putting it into active practice) directly affects our character.

### REFLECTION

Where do you direct most of your attention? In an honest assessment, do these things foster wisdom in you?

### APPLICATION

Today, be very intentional about how you spend your time, especially your downtime. Actively choose activities that focus your attention on Christ and His love. This could be spending time in nature, praying, listening/singing to worship music, etc.

# DAY 8

## READ PROVERBS 8

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSES / Proverbs 8:10-11 NIV

*Choose my instruction instead of silver, knowledge rather than choice gold, for wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her.*

All of Proverbs 8 counsels us to prioritize gaining wisdom over and above every other goal we have in life. Furthermore, it tells us that wisdom is not elusive, that it is there for the taking for the one who desires it.

### REFLECTION

Most of us would like to be successful. What describes a successful person in your mind? What describes a wise person? Are they different? Is there room for overlap? How might you begin the journey to becoming a wise person?

### APPLICATION

Take some time to look honestly into your own heart. What are the three things that you most desire in life? What steps might you take to make sure that gaining wisdom is at the top of that list?

# DAY 9

## READ PROVERBS 9

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSE / Proverbs 9:10 NIV

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.*

While the distinction in Proverbs 9 between wisdom and folly is clearly laid out, it's verse 10 that gets to the real heart of this chapter. That is, wisdom is more than simply knowing about God, it's about truly and deeply understanding Him and His character. Understanding God requires not only doing as He did, but also spending time getting to know Him, and being with Him.

### REFLECTION

Consider the difference between how much you know about God, intellectually, and how much you understand Him. How would you describe the closeness of your relationship to Him now?

### APPLICATION

Take time to imagine the perfect relationship with Christ. Where are you now, and where would you like it to go? Pray that God helps you to see Him more clearly, and directs your steps to grow closer to Him.

# DAY 10

## READ PROVERBS 10

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSE / Proverbs 10:25 ESV

*When the tempest passes, the wicked is no more, but the righteous is established forever.*

It feels easy to dismiss this chapter as Solomon's monologue. If you are like me, it may feel like reading 32 verses of "good things are good, bad things are bad." But in this repetition lies a constant drumbeat reminder of who our God is. He desires righteousness, wisdom, and kindness. Our God is goodness. And we can rest in the permanence of His goodness, knowing that wicked things will pass away, and His love establishes a righteousness that will not fade.

### REFLECTION

What are some ways in your life that God reminds you of His goodness? How does the idea that God's goodness is permanent shape how you see Him? What is a call to action that you feel when you think of God's desire for righteousness?

### APPLICATION

Allow yourself to experience the righteousness of God. Lean into His goodness. Trust that the kingdom He is establishing has taken root in you, giving you the desire and strength to chase after His righteousness.

# DAY 11

## READ PROVERBS 11

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSE / Proverbs 11:24 NLT

*Give freely and become more wealthy; be stingy and lose everything.*

The practicals of this chapter are not lost on me. However, I can't help but think about how this particular verse echoes Jesus' words in the Gospels. Matthew 10:39 says, "Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." Jesus offers us a better way - to live freely and to find freedom by offering up our whole selves to Him. When we're willing to lose it all, we'll find it all in Christ. Because of Jesus, we're able to live out of His abundance. We don't have to live in a state of scarcity, grasping at all sorts of counterfeit sources of life. We have been given Life himself and there is a better way in Him.

## REFLECTION

What are some practical ways you can give and live freely today?  
What does it mean to you to give yourself away to Jesus?

### APPLICATION

Reflect on this contrast between abundance and scarcity. Think about the differences between having access to the source of Life versus grasping at all sorts of counterfeits.

# DAY 12

## READ PROVERBS 12

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSE / Proverbs 12:26 NIV

*The righteous choose their friends carefully, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.*

This verse emphasizes the importance of our personal relationships. Who we choose as friends has an impact on the direction of our lives - friends can encourage us in our faith and point us to Jesus along the way, or they can lead us away from Christ. Who we choose as friends has eternal implications.

### REFLECTION

Who is in your circle of closest friends? One thought suggests that you are the average of your five closest friends. If this is true, what does it say about you? Is this the direction you want for your life?

### APPLICATION

Choose to surround yourself with people who point you to Jesus and encourage you in wise living. Pray that God will guide you into relationships with others who are following Him. If you don't have a circle, consider joining a small group at HOPE.

# DAY 13

## READ PROVERBS 13

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSE / Proverbs 13:9 NIV

*The light of the righteous shines brightly, but the lamp of the wicked is snuffed out.*

Righteousness (a well lived life) is its own reward. Regardless of a person's station in life, or their circumstances in life, being true to God's purposes gives meaning and purpose to our lives, it blesses others, and it leaves a legacy we can be proud of.

### REFLECTION

Have you ever thought about your legacy? When all is said and done, what would you like to leave behind?

### APPLICATION

Just for fun (and for your own clarity's sake) take a shot at writing your own obituary or the epithet for your tombstone.

# DAY 14

## READ PROVERBS 14

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSE / Proverbs 14:31 NIV

*He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God*

We are all children of God, created in His image and with purpose, no matter our circumstances or financial standings. God calls us to treat others, particularly the needy, with kindness and charity. It's in doing this work, though oftentimes challenging, that we actively participate in sharing God's love and His glory with others.

### REFLECTION

Consider how challenging, or perhaps easy, it is to put yourself in someone else's shoes - more specifically, in the shoes of one who requires charity. What does this say about you? In what ways can you grow more charitable in order to do God's work and honor Him?

### APPLICATION

In this new year, identify an organization that supports the underprivileged in your community, and actively seek out a way to get involved. Feeling overwhelmed? Check out HOPE's Outreach page [here](#) for ideas.

# DAY 15

## READ PROVERBS 15

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSES / Proverbs 15:16-17 ESV

*Better is a little with fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble with it. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a fattened ox and hatred with it.*

Scarcity is an uncomfortable place to rest in. So often we struggle to trust that we have what we need. Our human nature drives us to chase after plenty with no end goal of satisfaction, no point where we say "I have enough." We keep chasing because what our heart cries out for is security, a depth of security that the world, in all of its riches, does not have to offer. Here, we are promised that there is no place more secure, no well deeper, than the reverent fear and love of God.

### REFLECTION

Is there a time in your life where you felt a deep lack of security in what you had? What is the hardest thing about trusting in God's provision instead of your own searching? Have you given God the chance to show you what He can do with your scarcity?

### APPLICATION

Give God the opportunity to show you how much He wants to provide for you. Maybe even take a leap of faith, actively choosing less over more. You may be surprised by the freedom that comes with choosing less control, less plenty.

# DAY 16

## READ PROVERBS 16

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSE / Proverbs 16:9 NLT

*We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps.*

I'm sure I'm not the only one who has made all sorts of plans that did not happen the way I envisioned. But here's the thing - I feel like my plans are pretty good. I don't think I'm making horrible, no-good plans for my life. And yet, the Lord is sovereign over it all and His hand paints a better picture than mine do. He is more powerful than anything, which is hard to reconcile in a painful, disappointing situation. But the God of all comfort and the God of all of our steps is with us. Our hope is unchanging no matter how things turn out. He is still good and He is still God even when the plans fall through. He is holding it all and He is holding you.

### REFLECTION

When have your plans fallen through? What was it like to try to reconcile the tension between your own plans and God's?

### APPLICATION

Take time to look back and take note of the ways you've seen and experienced God's faithfulness in your life in the past. Invite the Lord into your present and into your future with the same faithfulness.

# DAY 17

## READ PROVERBS 17

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSE / Proverbs 17:27 NIV

*Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding.*

It takes a lot of self-control to limit your words - when and if you speak, and if so, what words you use. Words have the power to build up and tear down, so it takes a wise person to know when to speak and when to remain quiet. This verse tells us that having a demeanor that is measured and isn't easily riled up is a sign of wisdom.

### REFLECTION

What are some subjects or situations that make it hard for you to hold your tongue? Why do you think this is the case?

### APPLICATION

Ask God to help you practice restraint in your words today. Ask Him to help you limit what you say, in an effort to hear Him more clearly. When you're tempted to speak quickly, pray for wisdom first.

# DAY 18

## READ PROVERBS 18

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSE / Proverbs 18:8 NIV

*The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts.*

Several verses in Proverbs 18 deal with controlling our tongues (as does James 3:3-12). Gossip can do great damage in a church.

### REFLECTION

Why is gossip such a great temptation to us? What is at the root of our inclination to pass juicy morsels along? What feeds my need to know the worst about what's going on?

### APPLICATION

Who are the people that I am most prone to talk about in a less than flattering way? Why? Would I be willing to make a written commitment to myself to become their reputation defender instead of their reputation destroyer? Can I choose to be their champion instead of their detractor? Will I make the commitment that the next time I hear a negative rumor about someone else that it will stop with me?

# DAY 19

## READ PROVERBS 19

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSE / Proverbs 19:21 NIV

*Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails.*

It's so human of us to believe that we are in control (and we desperately want to be in control) but we're not at all. God is working all of the time, and in each of our lives. Sometimes we're aware, oftentimes we're not. Nonetheless, Christ is at the center of it all, and it is His purpose we are here to fulfill, that is, His purpose is our purpose.

### REFLECTION

Take a look at your calendar or your agenda. What does it feel like when something unexpected comes up and changes your plans? Are you flexible, easy-going, maybe frustrated, or even angry? What does that say about you? How much of it feels like you-centered, and how much of it feels Christ-driven?

### APPLICATION

Many people like to make goals this time of year. Instead of, or perhaps in addition to, take time to write a purpose statement that is Christ-centered. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. When finished, keep it somewhere visible or easily referenced.

# DAY 20

## READ PROVERBS 20

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSE / Proverbs 20:22 ESV

*Do not say, 'I will repay evil', wait for the LORD, and he will deliver you.*

I think we all feel the pull to be the judge; we want to take it upon ourselves to right the wrongs we see around us. Do we trust that we already have a judge that is just towards evil, and merciful towards His children? God desires to free us from the never-ending spiral of revenge. Jesus has set us free from the civil war that breaks out in families, friendships, jobs, churches, and everywhere where there is brokenness between us. Jesus pays the price for each of us so that we can be set free from the chains of revenge. What a gift it is that I do not have to be the judge; instead, my work is to love the LORD and love one another, giving Christ permission to bear the weight of judgment.

### REFLECTION

Have you felt the cycle of revenge take over in your life? How did that time feel? What would it look like to completely give up the weight of judgment? Do you trust that God delivers justice towards evil? When acknowledging your own brokenness, how do you respond to God's promise of equal judgment and mercy through Jesus?

### APPLICATION

Practice letting God take over the places where revenge and justice feels needed. Trust that the LORD knows where you are, and can handle the act of righting the wrongs in your life, both what has been done by you, and what has been done against you.

# DAY 21

## READ PROVERBS 21

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSE / Proverbs 21:13 NLT

*Those who shut their ears to the cries of the poor will be ignored in their own time of need.*

In Matthew 25, we read Jesus' words of wisdom and warning, "For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me." This is about keeping our eyes open and up and our ears attuned to the Spirit and the needs of those around us. It's about moving slowly enough and being quiet enough to make sure we don't miss the move of God in a broken, needy, and hurting world. It's so easy to get lost in our own worlds and in our own troubles - which is valid, we don't need to feel shame about that. However, it's important to make sure we don't eventually lose our sight or close our ears altogether. Instead, let's keep our eyes open, heads up, and listening ears on.

## REFLECTION

What are some things that tend to bog you down and give you tunnel vision? Note some common distractions in your life that make your vision foggy and your hearing less sharp. What would it be like to work to minimize these things?

## APPLICATION

Take action today - engage in a random act of kindness to a stranger or a friend, maybe even anonymously. Find one person today who is in need and help to meet that need, even if it's not convenient for you or you have to go out of your way. What do you notice about yourself and about Christ in this experience?

# DAY 22

## READ PROVERBS 22

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSE / Proverbs 22:2 NIV

*Rich and poor have this in common; The LORD is the Maker of them all.*

Contrary to the teachings of the world, the true worth of a person is not determined by his or her socioeconomic status or wealth. This proverb tells us that every single person, regardless of rank in the world's economy, is made in the image of God and indebted to our Maker. Because He has formed each of us in the womb, we are imbued with dignity that comes from being made in His image. And it's His desire that each of us would be filled with the Holy Spirit and walk in communion with Him each moment.

### REFLECTION

How heavily do you weigh a person's social status when you're interacting with them? What if you made it a practice to view everyone through the lens of God's creative handiwork? How might your interactions change? How might it increase your love for others?

### APPLICATION

Today, ask the Lord to remind you that each person you encounter is made in God's image. Let that realization lead the way you treat them, whether it's simply with a smile, a door hold, or a deeper conversation over coffee. Pray for those you meet, that they would know the LORD in a personal way and live into the freedom and hope He has for them.

# DAY 23

## READ PROVERBS 23

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSE / Proverbs 23:4 NIV

*Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint.*

The Bible is not against either money or wealth per se but it often cautions against putting our trust in money. It also recognizes that the love of money is a great temptation for many and can ruin our soul.

### REFLECTION

How would you describe your relationship with money? Is it healthy? What would a healthy relationship look like? Do you know the joy of giving?

### APPLICATION

Perhaps it's time to do a little financial check up. Have you recently analyzed your habits (as opposed to your portfolio)? If you are in major debt that is eating your lunch where could you go to begin to get help?

# DAY 24

## READ PROVERBS 24

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSES / Proverbs 24:17-18 NIV

*Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when he stumbles, do not let your heart rejoice, or the Lord will see and disapprove and turn his wrath away from him.*

We should not relish in our enemies' failures. This is not the heart of Christ. Instead, think of Matthew 5:43-44 which tells us to love our enemies, and Ephesians 4:32 which says, "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." Love and forgive, that is the heart of Christ.

### REFLECTION

How difficult is it for you to forgive, yourself and others? What do you feel like you need forgiveness for? What are your barriers to forgiveness?

### APPLICATION

Meet this sinful part of your heart exactly where it is, and pray for God's forgiveness. Allow yourself to breathe in the love of Jesus. Have an enemy in mind? Boldly pray for that person, too. Did you know HOPE has a Prayer Team, ready to receive and pray on your behalf. Find their information [here](#).

# DAY 25

## READ PROVERBS 25

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSES / Proverbs 25:27-28 ESV

*It is not good to eat much honey, nor is it glorious to seek one's own glory. A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.*

Maybe you can relate to this Winnie the Pooh-esque, whole-fist-in-the-honey-jar approach to life. I know I can. As silly as the image is, if you have been in that place, having stuffed your flesh far past its fill, you know the shame and embarrassment that lies in that state. There is a beautiful goodness in self-control, living in a way that makes room for satisfaction, makes room for the word "enough." Our God is a God that knows when to rest and when to be satisfied. He knew when to look at His creation, call it "very good," and stop to enjoy His work. We are designed in that image, made to feel satisfaction and fullness, freed from the huffing and puffing pursuit of more.

### REFLECTION

Can you think of a time when you felt shame or embarrassment from a lack of self-control? Does the idea of self-control feel like a task or a legalistic chore? What are some steps you can take towards viewing self-control through a lens of freedom?

### APPLICATION

Find an area in your life where you feel stuck feeding your flesh. We can try and fight these things, but ultimately, the Holy Spirit can provide so much more strength and desire than we can muster up on our own. I invite you to pray into whatever your honey jar may be, and give God permission to enter into that battle with you.

# DAY 26

## READ PROVERBS 26

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSE / Proverbs 26:11 NLT

*As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his foolishness.*

My husband and I got a puppy this year. Something I've always wanted, but I had no idea what it really meant to raise a puppy. There are lots of unpleasanties when it comes to taking care of an animal, no matter how cute they are. I didn't realize how unpleasant it could be, and I know that the parents out there know what I mean and more. I think that's what stands out to me the most about this verse - it's pretty hard to stomach, but it's a very true statement about dogs, right? But it's harder to admit or come to terms with the fact that it's a very true statement about myself too. How often do I turn back to old patterns and old ways and wonder why I don't feel fulfilled? The good news is that the Lord is a lot kinder of a caretaker than us and much more patient and steadfast, persistent in reminding us to turn back around toward him. From death to life.

### REFLECTION

How does this verse make you feel or what does it make you think of? What are some patterns you tend to fall into? What would it look like for the Lord to interrupt your patterns?

### APPLICATION

Reflect on more life-giving alternatives for yourself today. Find one way to be intentional in turning toward Jesus today when you would normally choose your own way. Try to identify what is more like "vomit" in your life versus the Living Water. Think about these ways of both life and death.

# DAY 27

## READ PROVERBS 27

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSE / Proverbs 27:6 NIV

*Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.*

Have you ever had a friend who would tell you what you needed to hear, not just what you wanted to hear? We all have blind spots that need to be brought to our attention in order to grow wiser. True friendship involves truth-telling, done in love, and it takes a solid friendship built on trust and respect to handle the weight of it. Sometimes it hurts to hear the truth, but it's ultimately for our good.

### REFLECTION

Do you have a friend whom you can depend on to tell you the truth about yourself? Are you that friend to someone else? This kind of relationship needs wisdom from the LORD, to keep our words full of grace, truth, and love. We are stronger when we can lean on each other, grounded in the truth and goodness of the good news of Christ.

### APPLICATION

Think about a time someone you trusted gave you honest feedback about yourself. Although it might have been painful to hear, how did it help you grow? If they're still in your life, thank them for that gift. Nurture the relationships in your life so that you can have those honest conversations with the goal of coming closer to each other and to Christ.

# DAY 28

## READ PROVERBS 28

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSE / Proverbs 28:5 NIV

*Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the Lord understand it fully.*

Justice is a major expression of the righteousness in the heart of God. Those who seek to love God will necessarily seek justice for all people. Justice is meant to be a concern for all of us and it runs the gamut from our small, daily interactions with one another, to the weightiest large-scale issues of our day.

### REFLECTION

Consider your own emotional reaction when you hear the word justice used today. It has become largely politicized in many ways. Think of justice as fair play but also as compassion for those who are disadvantaged for whatever reason. Does it make a difference to you if their problems are to some degree of their own making? What do you think Jesus would say to them?

### APPLICATION

If you want to understand justice fully as this proverb suggests perhaps you might want to do some reading (or listening) to expand your understanding. Where could you find some good resources that might challenge your own thinking?

# DAY 29

## READ PROVERBS 29

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSE / Proverbs 29:25 NIV

*Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe.*

Fearing others, what they say, and how they treat us, is short-sighted and puts earthly relationships before our most important relationship with Christ. When we prioritize pleasing others over pleasing God, it's like being caught in a trap, and in this trap, we cannot fully actualize the glory and purpose of Christ. Alternatively, our goal is to remain God-centered, and keep our faith and trust in Him, even when, especially when, it means saying something unpopular or displeasing, which is oftentimes counterculture, and that's certainly not easy for many of us to do.

### REFLECTION

How comfortable are you speaking the truth of the Gospel into challenging conversations, into any conversations? What does this say about your level of trust in Christ? Consider some of the more sensitive topics of today. Perhaps pick one that's most challenging to you, and explore the Biblical passages that support a Christ-centered position.

### APPLICATION

Find a friend, and commit to learning and practicing biblical conversations that you are challenged with the most. Did you know Groups at HOPE launch on February 4? A small group is a great way to grow your relationship with Christ, with others, and can be a place to strengthen your confidence in spreading the Gospel.

# DAY 30

## READ PROVERBS 30

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSES / Proverbs 30:7-8 ESV

*Two things I ask of you; deny them not to me before I die: Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food that is needful for me,*

This is such a beautiful prayer of understanding, humility, and trust. The writer desires a heart after God's heart, and rather than attempting to purify his heart on his own, he asks God to take brokenness far away. His second request is one of deep trust in God as our provider, asking that God provides just enough for him. This is an active prayer against selfish control and self-determination. Instead, he fully leans into God as our savior and provider.

## REFLECTION

Is praying this prayer scary to you? Have you found yourself trying to fix your own heart rather than asking God to remove your sin far from you? What are you afraid will happen if you pray for God to just give you enough?

### APPLICATION

I challenge you and myself to pray this prayer, trusting that God's desire is to not let you sink, but to show you who He is as a loving and strong Father, worthy of your trust.

# DAY 31

## READ PROVERBS 31

### HIGHLIGHTED VERSE / Proverbs 31:25 NLT

*She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs without fear of the future.*

Things I tend to take on and wear: other people's words, shame, my failures, worry, and insecurity. I don't often feel clothed in strength; rather, I'm really aware of my weaknesses. Dignity is a hard, life-long work of character - it's not something you all of a sudden put on like a jacket you find in the closet. When fear and worry fill my mind, there's not a whole lot of room for laughter. What I'm saying is this - it is only by the grace of God that we're able to wear His righteousness and grow into it. It is because of Christ and Christ alone that our weakness can mean more of His strength and that, even in our sinful humanity, He has placed dignity in our hearts. The very creator of our souls holds our future. Joy Himself always stays the same and sustains - although the unknown is scary, we know the one who is holding it all.

### REFLECTION

Where have you experienced the grace of God recently in your life? When have you needed the strength of Christ in the midst of your weakness?

### APPLICATION

Reflect on the work of Christ on the cross today - His sacrifice and what He made possible for you. You have full access to your Creator. Take time today to thank God for this great grace that allows you freedom and life in Christ.