

The Keys To Wisdom

Love

Patience

Obedience

Mercy

Trust

Understanding

Truth

Discretion



Proverbs

WEEK 17

“A Humble Heart”

Study: Proverbs 21:1-5

Reading: Luke 18:9-30

Memory: Psalm 51:7

When I graduated from college, I lived in a small town in northern Wisconsin, then after 17 years, our family moved to a small town in northern Michigan. My whole adult life, I have been surrounded mainly by people who look like me. When I travel to larger cities in the United States I often find myself quite shocked and surprised with the variety of people and nationalities I see. It is at these times that I begin to realize how prideful I really am because I start judging others by their appearance and find myself looking down on others while exalting myself, even though I often never meet or get to know these people who are different than me. I find myself asking God to remove the judgmental spirit from me and to help me look beyond a person's outward appearance. I have to ask him to remove this pride from my life.

Today, we are going to see that one of the marks of a wise man is humility rather than pride.

What Does the Bible Say?

Though all men are given the ability to choose and not choose what they desire to do with their lives, the Bible is also clear that God does as He pleases. He has the ability to work in hearts to change the plans of men, believers or unbelievers. There are many examples in the Old Testament that describe how God used pagan kings to accomplish His divine purpose, though some of them had no idea they were really being directed by God (vs 1).

It is easy to allow ourselves to do what we think is right rather than to follow what is really right. God knows if we do things because we are striving to do what He desires or if we act for selfish gain. Though this verse does not directly state it, the emphasis is on the importance of not trusting what you think is right. It is very easy to be deceived into thinking you are doing what is right, but actually do wrong. God has revealed in his Word what is right and He knows your motives behind it (vs 2).

Many times in the Scriptures we are reminded that God does not just

want our outward obedience in situations, but wants us to obey and follow Him from our hearts. Going through the motions on the outside means nothing to Him if we are not choosing to live with a heart of love for our God. It is often much easier than you realize to get caught up in outward service and to neglect giving Him our hearts (vs 3).

Viewing yourself better than those around you is very easy to do, but it is sin. Arrogance and pride hurt you in ways that you may never realize, but we are told here in verse 4 that pride and arrogance are wicked. The “lamp of the wicked” is reference to what a person is deep down inside. All wickedness is based in pride and when we as believers allow that to exist and become common place in our lives, we are choosing to allow wickedness to exist in us (vs 4).

Diligence is a key life attitude for those who are wise. The person who is not in a hurry to get what he wants, but who patiently works day in and day out will be rewarded. Diligence involves being faithful in the little daily chores of life that lack excitement or thrill, but need to be done (vs 5).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you realize that God is in complete control? Yes, you are allowed to make decisions and given choices in life, but understanding the sovereignty of God should cause you to rejoice in Him because He is constantly at work, accomplishing His purposes.

How often do you find yourself thinking you are right, rather than seeking God for wisdom and finding out what is truly right? Are you being led by God or by your human desire?

Are you following God from your heart, or do you just seek to give him outward service? You are constantly warned in Scripture not to just give God some of you, but to give Him your all. Part of that includes giving Him your heart in complete humility. When you think you are better than others, you won't fully be giving Him your all because you will think that you are good enough to earn some merit with God. Take time to read the extra reading today and see if you have more of the attitude of the publican or pharisee.

Are you diligent in all that you do, or do you find yourself lazy, especially when it comes to the things that you don't want to do. Seeking to do things the easy and quick way all the time can be very harmful. Instead, you need to focus on being faithful in the little mundane tasks of life and be committed though you may not see immediate results.

How is the king's heart described (vs 1)?

How do you make sense of this in light of the fact that God gives us our own choices in life?

What is a biblical example where God used an ungodly king to accomplish His plan?

How can you find great rest and comfort in the sovereignty of God?

What do most men think about their actions (vs 2)?

What does God know (vs 2)?

****There was an ancient Egyptian practice which weighed the hearts of pharaohs after their deaths. A heavy heart signified a pharaoh was guilty of great wrong in life and was subject to eternal punishment. It is uncertain if this is what Solomon had in mind, but it is clear that God has a standard of right and wrong that is different than men's standard.*

What does God want more than sacrifice (vs 3)?

What are ways that a person can sacrifice for the Lord, but not be doing what God really desires?

What three things are listed as sin in verse 4.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How are you tempted to sin in any of these areas?

What leads to abundance (vs 5)?

What leads to poverty (vs 5)?

How do you think this verse can apply to you in the way you live your everyday life?

“Various Truths”

Study: Proverbs 21:6-15

Reading: Ephesians 5:14-20, Matthew 5:38-42

Memory: Psalm 51:7

What Does the Bible Say?

Riches that are gained through dishonesty are not riches that will last. It might appear to be a good thing at first, but you will pay the price for your dishonesty. Things obtained dishonestly will only lead to problems and difficulties (vs 6).

Just as dishonest gain will hurt people, those who are violent will also bring harm to themselves. Their anger and outbreaks of violence will come back to hurt them (vs 7).

Those who live in cruelty and dishonesty are crooked in the way that they live. They will not receive the same blessings and benefits that the pure will receive because they will reap what their conduct has sowed. Those who are pure will live in righteousness and will reap the great benefits for the way that they have lived (vs 8).

Verse nine is a challenge for men to choose to find a loving and caring wife, and it is also a challenge for wives to choose to be loving and caring. Though this might come more naturally for some, for others it is very difficult. Having a woman who is constantly fighting, arguing and disgruntled puts a drain on the whole family. Most women do not realize the power they hold, but there is great truth in the saying, “If momma ain’t happy, ain’t nobody happy” (vs 9).

Those who act in a manner that is wicked will not be doing themselves any favors, especially when they need the help of others. People are much more likely to help those who express and live in love and kindness than they are to help those who have lived in selfishness (vs 10).

Choosing to withhold punishment from those who deserve it is not wise. When a person who is rebellious against authority is punished, they may not learn, but those around them who have not matured will learn what to avoid. On the other hand, those who are wise will take correction and realize the great value of letting it change their lives. They will take it well and carefully evaluate their lives, making the necessary changes that will help them become wiser people (vs 11).

The “Righteous One” (ESV) is not man, but God. He knows exactly what is taking place in the hearts of wicked men and He does what is necessary to defeat their wickedness and reward them for the evil they have earned (vs 12).

The Bible speaks often about giving to those who are poor and needy and here we are told that if we close our ears to the poor, God will close his ear to us. This is a challenging principle because it is very easy to overlook the poor. If you keep your eyes open to the needs of others, you will find people around you who will need help, and, when you ask God, He will direct you on how and when to help (vs 13).

Verse 14 is not supporting bribery, but simply stating how bribes help you gain the favor of another. The verse is encouraging you to give gifts to others, especially to help make things right when there has been a conflict. Of course, a gift without the heart behind it will get nowhere, but when you have the heart of repentance and love, your gift will help calm the waters and restore relationships (vs 14).

People who love righteousness also love justice. When fair decisions are made, even if it does not benefit the righteous person, that person chooses to rejoice because justice has taken place (vs 15).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Today, you read several different principles dealing with several different areas of life. Take time to meditate on the truths that were given and ask God to reveal to you any changes that you need to make in your life. Let these simple little principles given in Proverbs help you become the man or woman God wants you to be.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Ask God to help you walk in honesty and integrity.*
- * *Ask God to help you see the needs of those around you.*
- * *Praise God because He knows what is best for your life.*

Thought for the day

What will happen to treasure that is gained through lies (vs 6)?

What are ways that you can be tempted to gain treasures dishonestly?

What will happen to the wicked who do hurtful things (vs 7)?

How have you seen this verse play out in the lives of people you have known?

What do “crooked” people bring on themselves (vs 8)?

What do you think it means to be “crooked” (vs 8)?

How will an upright person live (vs 8)?

What do you think it meant to live in the corner of a housetop (vs 9)?

Why is living with a quarrelsome wife so hard?

How is this verse a challenge to both men and women?

What will the wicked do to their neighbor (vs 10)?

Why is it important to show mercy to others around you?

Who becomes wise when a scoffer is punished (vs 11)? Why do you think this is the case?

What happens when a wise man is instructed (vs 11)?

What will the Righteous One do (vs 12)?

What will happen if you refuse to help those who need help (vs 13)?

What will gifts do (vs 14)? What do you think this verse is encouraging?

What happens when righteousness is the prevailing attitude (vs 15)?

“*Re-Focusing*”

Study: Proverbs 21:16-19

Reading: II Timothy 2:1-7, II Corinthians 9:24-27

Memory: Psalm 51:7

Occasionally, when I am driving down the highway to get somewhere, I will drive right past the exit that I was supposed to get off at. Why? Because my mind was thinking about something else and wandered off into something other than the purpose that I was driving for. Though I normally catch myself right when I get past the exit, there are times where I have driven a great deal out of the way before I realized what happened. Most of the time it is no big deal, but some of the times it causes me to be late for an appointment or run short of time to do what I needed to do.

Today, we are going to see how easy it is to let our minds wander from the purposes that God has called us to and to spiritually stray from the truth, causing ourselves heartaches and problems.

What Does the Bible Say?

It is easier than most people think to stray from what is known to be true or known to be good for you. The things of this world catch our eyes and cause our minds to focus on things other than the path of wisdom that God has designed for us. Before long, if we don't readjust our focus, we can find ourselves somewhere we thought we would never be and will have to face the consequences for wandering from the truth. The proverb says that we will find ourselves in the “assembly of the dead”(ESV). Though this could be referring to actual death, spiritual death normally occurs first. The way to avoid this wandering is to have your eyes fixed continually on Christ and to pay attention when the warning sings of wandering come your way (vs 16).

Though there are some people who live for pleasure and still have money to spend, the majority of people who live for the pleasures of this world will find themselves in a spot where they financially are strapped. This happens a great deal in the United States as people take loan after loan out for the next new toy or a bigger house in order to fill their pleasures. Instead of saving, they spend and spend, finding themselves with nothing

except payments and trying to figure out how to make them all. This leads to poverty. Being poor is not just a physical condition because it can easily be a spiritual position. When we seek after the pleasures of this world to fill up our lives, we will soon find ourselves empty and will be spiritually poor (vs 17).

Verse 18 seems to be complicated at first, but here is a simple explanation given in the Bible Knowledge Commentary. “This verse does not mean that the wicked redeem the righteous. Instead it may mean that the wicked who have caused the righteous to suffer will themselves suffer and will thereby “set free” (become a ransom for) the righteous, for the godly will no longer suffer at the hands of the wicked.” (vs 18)

Verse 19 gives a similar teaching to verse 9. Dwelling in the corner of a housetop (vs 9), would have not been a comfortable place to live, but would have been much better than with a woman on a rampage. Living in a desert area is the same idea. To be alone and lonely with little comforts of a home is said to be more enjoyable than to be in a plush house with an unhappy woman. Looking at this from a different angle than we did in verse 9, one of the great responsibilities of a man is to give of himself to help make his wife happy. This means that the burden is not placed completely on the wife to choose to be happy, but it is also the responsibility of the husband to love her in a way that will help lead her to fulfillment and happiness (vs 19).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Are you focused on Christ and doing what He has planned for you, or do you find yourself wandering after the riches and pleasures of this life? It is much easier than you realize to take your focus off what is really important and to seek after things that are not so important. Wandering will lead to spiritual dryness and an empty soul, while focus and purpose will lead to life and the fullness of your spirit.

What are your relationships like? Is there constant tension between you and others or is there a consistent spirit of love? No, everything will not always go well in your relationships, and sometimes it is the other person’s fault. Many times though, it is easy to blame another person because they are somewhat at fault without realizing that you are the one who caused their outbreaks of anger or disgruntlement. It is vital that both women and men do their part to show deep love to one another and help avoid many outbreaks of anger.

What will happen to those who wander from the way of good sense (vs 16)?

What do you think this means?

Why do you think it is easy to “wander” in life?

How do you think this wandering is avoided?

Describe a time where you have wandered from the way God wants you to go? How can you avoid this in the future?

What will happen to those who love pleasure (vs 17)?

Why do you think this is the case?

Who will not be rich (vs 17)?

****Wine and oil signified the great pleasures the world had to offer. We have many more things today, but the desire for pleasure is still the same.*

What are areas in life you tend to live for pleasure?

How can you balance out experiencing fun and pleasure in this life with the challenge not to become a lover of the pleasure?

What is the wicked a ransom for (vs 18)?

What do you think this means?

What does verse 19 say is better in life?

Why do you think Solomon described it this way?

What are ways that you can be a quarrelsome and fretful person?

How can you avoid becoming this type of person?

“Results of Wisdom”

Study: Proverbs 21:20-23

Reading: Luke 6:37-49, James 3:1-18

Memory: Psalm 51:7

For a few years, I was a financial counselor for Crown Financial Ministries. One common scenario I found was a couple who would have a good source of income but would fail to put any money away in savings because they didn't think they could afford it. The problem arose when they faced an unexpected circumstance. The loss of a job, medical bills, physical problems, a major car or home repair was all it took to send them on a downward financial spiral. The only option was for them to take out a loan or purchase something on credit and making those payments would often become difficult. Many times the problem would start to snowball, leading them to seek financial counseling. Most of this could have been avoided if they chose to set money aside in an emergency fund, rather than spending all the income they received.

Today, we are going to see how a wise man doesn't spend all he has, but saves some of his money to use when unexpected things happen in life.

What Does the Bible Say?

Though a person could be wise in some areas of their lives, they could be foolish in other areas. One of these areas is the area of finances. A fool spends his money as soon as he gets it, while a wise man's house is filled with “treasure and oil.” Basically, the wise man was prepared for tougher times and saved his money and things that were needed rather than using it all up at once. This is a valuable principle when it comes to handling your money because many people budget their money with very little margin. Many people drown themselves in payments for furniture, appliances, vehicles, recreational toys, etc. and though they normally have money to meet the monthly payments, if something happens to their source of income, they have no margin to make all of their payments. A wise man does not over extend himself, but makes sure there is enough in his house for the difficult times (vs 20).

A general principle found in Scripture is that you will reap what you sow. When you sow kindness and deal with others in a just and righteous

manner, the end result is that you will receive blessings in return. If you want to be blessed in life, you need to choose to give yourself wholly to kindly loving and caring for others. In doing this, you will reap benefits for yourself and your whole family (vs 21).

Many people trust in their physical strength or position in life to be their fortress to protect them from harm, but verse 22 encourages you to allow wisdom to be your strength. Wisdom is gained by a deeper understanding of God and the more wisdom you gain, the stronger you will be in this life. This verse pictures how you have the ability to conquer the mighty walls of the city with your wisdom, which is much better than physical might alone (vs 22).

One of the best ways to stay out of trouble and avoid problems in life is to guard what comes out of your mouth. Though this is very hard to do at times, those who do learn to keep their mouths shut save themselves a great deal of problems. The problem of the tongue can be overcome by taking a few different steps. First, you need the power of God to get victory. Having the Holy Spirit of God give you power to overcome any strongholds in your life and being led by Him will help you keep your mouth shut when you need to. Other practical steps include caring about the feelings of others that you speak to and filling your mind and heart with good things and the joy of the Lord. When your heart is full of joy, you will be much more likely to speak positive things from your mouth (vs 23).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Are you wise or foolish in your financial dealings? One of the best ways to be wise with money is to make sure you are not spending everything you get but saving for times when you really need it. When you create margin in your budget, you create a safety net and also give yourself the peace of mind that comes from financial freedom.

Are you treating others with love and kindness? Do your words express kindness or are they cutting and hurtful? Controlling your tongue from saying hurtful words will keep you from trouble and using your words to show kindness and love will help you reap great blessings in your life.

Are you seeking to become wise? Are you pursuing a great knowledge of God or are you trusting in yourself and your own power? As you seek to know God more and place a great dependence and trust in Him you will experience great power and the ability to overcome any problem and trial that comes your way.

What is in the house of a wise man (vs 20)?

What does a fool do with the things he gets (vs 20)?

According to this verse, would you be a fool or a wise man?

****In Bible times, wealth was often measured by how many physical objects you possessed since physical money wasn't as common.*

What are ways that you can practice wisdom in this area of your finances?

What are you challenged to pursue (vs 21)?

- 1.
- 2.

What do you think this looks like?

What will be the result when you pursue after these things?

What will a wise man be able to do (vs 22)?

What does this indicate about wisdom compared to power (vs 22)?

Why do you think that power is often sought out more than wisdom is?

How do you know if you are seeking after wisdom or if you are seeking after power?

Who keeps himself out of trouble (vs 23)?

What do you think it looks like to keep your mouth and tongue?

What are areas in your life where you tend to find yourself saying the wrong things?

What do you think you can do about this?

Who are examples in this area that you can learn from?

“*Humility & Sacrifice*”

Study: Proverbs 21:24-27

Reading: I Samuel 15:1-35

Memory: Psalm 51:7

One of the areas that I have struggled with most of my life is thinking that I am better than others around me. God has gifted me in certain areas where I have found that things come much easier and quicker than they do for many other people. I tend to focus on those areas and it is easy to look down on others who are slower or not as good in those things as I am. As I have battled with this, one thing the Lord constantly reminds me of is that He has made all men to be different. Any abilities I have are because of Him. Rather than criticize or look down on differences, I need to view them as a wonderful gift from God.

Today, we will be challenged to live a life of humility, giving God our hearts before anything else.

What Does the Bible Say?

One of the key evidences of pride and arrogance makes itself known through scoffing. Scoffing includes making fun of others, laughing at authority and instruction and choosing to fight off correction through joking and snide remarks. When you start to exhibit signs of scoffing, you would do well to take a moment to look at your heart and ask God to show you your pride so that He can weed it out (vs 24).

People who are sluggards will have a lack of desire to work and it is that lack of desire to work that will often be very harmful to him. You can be a sluggard in some areas of your life while at the same time be diligent in other areas. Take a moment today to examine your life so that God can show you any areas of laziness in your life (vs 25).

One of the differences between a godly man and an earthly man will be seen in the way he gives or the way he takes. An earthly man is focused on gaining more and taking all he can get. Many things in his life will have to center around him, while it is the opposite for a godly man. His life is not lived for himself, but for God and others. He is focused on what he can give and what he can do to help others. He is self-sacrificing and pours out

his life for others (vs 26).

Many times people think that it is good that a person living in rebellion comes to church. While it is true that they have a chance to hear and be convicted, many people who live in sin come to church to feel better about themselves because they think they are doing something to please God. There are other people who are only partially following God with their lives and will use a phrase like “I am praying about it” when it comes to making a decision in life. According to this verse their prayers mean nothing. When hearts are wicked, God is not pleased with outside actions whether it is church attendance or prayer (vs 27). Psalm 51:17 says, “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.”

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you have a hint of pride and arrogance in your life? Sometimes this may be difficult to see on your own, but a careful evaluation of your life will reveal what is really going on inside your heart. If you find yourself critical of others, whether you say anything out loud or not, it is revealing that you have a pride issue. You cannot cure yourself completely of pride, nor can you in your human strength and power gain victory over it. With the help of God you can keep it under control and even become a person of great humility.

Are you a taker or a giver? You are probably both, depending on what area of your life it is. It is vital that you recognize the areas of life where you are a taker and ask God to help you become a giver. A person who is a taker will never have enough, but a giver will be satisfied in his soul.

Are your sacrifices given out of a pure heart in worship and thankfulness to God, or are they given in order to earn favor with Him and appease Him? God doesn't just want your outward service if you are not giving Him your heart.

Suggestions for Prayer

* *Thank God for loving you like He loves everyone else.*

* *Ask God to help you realize your pride and teach you humility.*

Thought for the day

What three terms are used to define a scoffer (vs 24)?

How would you define a scoffer according to verse 24?

How have you seen these things in the lives of others?

How have you seen these things in your own life?

What do you think you can do to fight becoming a haughty, arrogant and prideful person?

What kills a sluggard (vs 25)?

Why does this kill him?

What do you think this verse means?

What are areas in your life where you battle laziness?

What do you think it means to be a person who is a taker (vs 26)?

What does the righteous person do (vs 26)?

Who in your life do you know to be a taker? How does it affect you and others?

Who in your life do you know is a giver? How does it affect you and others?

How can you determine if you are a giver or taker?

What is an abomination to God (vs 27)?

What do you think the end of verse 27 means?

Why do you think a wicked person would want to offer a sacrifice to God?

How do you think verse 27 can practically apply to you?

“Let God Do His Part”

Study: Proverbs 21:28-31

Reading: Judges 7:1-25

Memory: Psalms 51:7

When our youngest daughter started school it was quite funny to listen to her tell my wife and I how much she thought she knew. If you would ask her if she was learning new words, she would tell you she already knows big words and she wasn't learning much in class. She thought that since her older sister taught her a few words while they were playing school, she didn't need to learn much more. This mentality even hindered her for a little while when she first started kindergarten because she thought she knew more than she really did. This hindered her from being fully teachable.

Today, we are going to see how the mentality of thinking we know more doesn't stop in kindergarten, but affects us all no matter what our age.

What Does the Bible Say?

The warnings against dishonesty in the book of Proverbs are many. Here it says that a “false witness will perish.” This does not mean that everyone who lies will instantly fall dead, but is giving a general principle that those who are dishonest will find problems and often live a shorter life. On the other hand, those who will gain a constant audience and live longer lives are those who are honest in their dealings. People respect honesty and those who are honest gain respect and cause others to listen to what they have to say (vs 28).

Many times, those who are not doing what is right will try to put on a front for others in an attempt to show that they are someone who they really aren't. They spend a great deal of time trying to cover up for their actions and often live in fear and depression because they are not who they appear to be. On the other hand, the person who is wise and upright does not live a double life. They carefully give thought to their lives and don't have to cover things up because they do things the right and honest way. They don't have to pretend they are something they are not because they are perfectly content with who they are before God. Their desire to know and follow God keeps them on the path of righteousness and allows them to

avoid many of the mistakes that the unrighteous make (vs 29).

Though men think they are extremely smart and some think they can outsmart God, the reality is that their wisdom is nothing compared to God's. Trying to reason everything out and trying to make sense of God's plan in this world gets people nowhere in life, but causes greater doubt and confusion. God doesn't want us to get caught up in our own wisdom, but He wants us to approach Him with a child like faith (vs 30).

God has instructed us in His Word about the role that He wants us to play in life. We can't just sit back and do nothing because “He is in control,” but He calls us to do our part and asks us to trust Him to do His. This is the truth presented in verse 31 as we are told that a king and his soldiers can do everything in their power to prepare for a battle, but no matter how much preparation is done, they are not guaranteed a victory. God is the one who is in ultimate control of a victory or defeat. Sometimes the balance between us doing our part and Him doing His part is hard to maintain because we could tend to sway one way or the other. The Bible is full of examples of people who chose to obey God, and as they did their part, He miraculously worked and gave them the victory over their circumstances in life (vs 31).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Are you practicing honesty in all areas of your life? The reason that so many warnings are given in the book of Proverbs about dishonesty is because being dishonest is one of the easiest things for all men to do. It is one of the sins that can often go undetected and can often bring you personal short term gain whether financial or personal. It is a temptation for all men and you must be aware of the great temptation to be dishonest. Choose to walk in integrity and think through what you are going to say and do before you talk and act.

Do you sometimes think you are smarter than God? Do you find yourself trusting in your own wisdom and abilities rather than in God? Are you doing what God has called you to do and trusting Him to do what He says He will do? It is so easy to think you are better or smarter than you really are. It is so easy to trust in yourself rather than trusting in God, yet this type of mentality is very destructive. In humility, you need to realize that His wisdom is so much greater than yours and His way is so much better than your plans. Take time today to examine your life to see if you are humbly obeying His desires and trusting Him to do His part.

What will happen to a false witness (vs 28)?

What do you think this means?

****The idea appears to be that people will stop listening to the person who they believe to be a false witness. He has lost credibility and when he opens his mouth, no one will want to listen.*

Who do people want to listen to (vs 28)?

How can you know if you are a person who is credible and people want to listen to you or if you are like the false witness?

What will wicked people do (vs 29)?

****It must be remembered that the term "wicked" describes those who chose not to do things God's way. People could be wicked people who put on a very good front.*

What does an upright person do (vs 29)?

In light of verse 29, would you describe yourself as a wicked or upright person? Explain your answer.

What three things are we told are not greater than the Lord (vs 30)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why do you think it may be easy to trust in these things rather than to trust in God?

Define ways that you may find yourself trusting in these things.

What point do you think verse 31 is teaching?

How can you balance out doing your part and trusting God to do His part?

MEMORY VERSES

Psalms 51:1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! 3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. 4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. 5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. 6 Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.