

# The Keys To Wisdom

Love

Patience

Obedience

Mercy

Trust

Understanding

Truth

Discretion



## Proverbs

WEEK 3

## “Get Wisdom”

**Study:** Proverbs 4:1-9

**Reading:** James 1:19-25, I Corinthians 9:19-27

**Memory:** Isaiah 40:18

**M**y high school senior class took our class trip to Colorado. We started fund raising for this trip when we were in seventh grade. We had a few class wide fund raisers, like car washes and selling pizza, but most of the money had to be raised on an individual basis. We sold candy bars, suckers, nuts and a few other things to raise the money. I remember standing outside a grocery store selling candy bars in the middle of winter, more than once. When it came time to go to Colorado for our trip all the work that I had put in during the previous six years had paid off. The cost of the trip was somewhere around \$650 per person, and I had raised over \$900. The excess money was all mine to do whatever I wanted with it. Needless to say, I didn't have to worry about having enough money for souvenirs and other extra activities.

Today, we are going to see how we need to work to get wisdom. It is not always easy and doesn't come naturally, but it is well worth the effort.

### What Does the Bible Say?

Solomon wanted all his readers to listen to what he was about to write. It is almost as if he wanted to sit down with you and talk to you one on one. He had learned many things and knew the importance of sharing those things with others. He knew the great results that would come about in a person's life if they followed his instruction (vs 1-2).

The reason he wanted to do this was because his father had sat him down and instructed him (vs 3-4). The main thrust of the passage is the need to get wisdom and understanding. A person doesn't suddenly become wise, but wisdom comes through a process. When we know the Word of God and are obedient to it, we are on our way to being wise (vs 5). Solomon knew that if you listened to his instruction about wisdom your life would be on the right path (vs 6). He stated that wisdom is the main thing in life. Because of this, we need to do everything possible to be people of wisdom. We also need to do our best to acquire understanding. When we have understanding,

we are able to understand why things have happened and understand what will happen as a result of our actions. Basically, we understand what the Word of God says, and we also understand the blessings or cursings that He will bring about because of our actions (vs 7).

We need to seek after wisdom as we would seek after a trophy or a prize. Just as an athlete trains hard so that he may win a prize, we need to work hard to have wisdom. We need to embrace wisdom so that it becomes part of our daily lives (vs 8). Solomon speaks about wearing a wreath of flowers and a crown of beauty on our heads as a result of wisdom. This is saying that others will view us in high esteem because of the wisdom that God gives us (vs 9).

## **How Does this Apply to Me?**

Are you regularly listening to the instruction of the Word of God and wise people? Are you striving to be a wise person? Wisdom doesn't just come naturally, but it takes work. There is no magic formula or words that you can say that will make you wise. You have to work daily on becoming a wise person. This is accomplished by your desire to know more about God and His Word. Some days, you just have to make yourself study and meditate on the Word because there will be times when you just don't feel like it. It also takes work to apply God's Word to your life everyday. It is easy to feel good about yourself when you have your devotions everyday, but you can't just hear the Word, you must apply the Word. As you study the Word of God today and everyday, find out what needs to be changed in your life and change it.

## **Suggestions for Prayer**

- \* *Ask God to help you to become a wise person.*
- \* *Thank God for giving you instruction in His Word.*

## **Thought for the day**

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What two things are you instructed to do in verse 1?

Why do you think that similar instructions to these have been repeated several times in the beginning of Proverbs?

What are practical ways that you can put yourself in a position to do those things?

Why did Solomon challenge his listeners to listen attentively (vs 2)?

Where did Solomon get his instruction from (vs 3)? – See 2 Samuel 12:24

How can you keep the Word of God with your heart (vs 4)?

What will be the result of keeping God's Word (vs 4)? What does that mean?

What does "get" mean in verse 5?

What is the price that it will cost you to get wisdom and understanding?

What are the results of loving wisdom and understanding (vs 5-6)? What does that mean?

What do you think the beginning of verse 7 means?

\*\*\**The emphasis is that seeking after wisdom is one of the first things you should do.*

What is "understanding"?

What are the benefits of acquiring wisdom and understanding (vs 8-9)?

# “A Desire For Instruction”

**Study:** Proverbs 4:10-19

**Reading:** I Thessalonians 5:12-22, Hebrews 2:1-8

**Memory:** Isaiah 40:18

Several years ago, my wife decided that she was going to learn how to play the guitar. When she first bought her guitar, she wanted to play it all the time, but she wasn't sure how. She wanted someone to instruct her on what to do. One of the teenagers in the area had been playing for a couple of years, so she asked him how to play a few chords. He showed her, and she worked on them until she was able to do all that she had been taught. She wasn't satisfied with that though, because she wanted to learn more. For that Christmas that year, all she wanted for a present was a teaching CD that could be used on the computer. She was extremely happy when I gave her that CD for Christmas. She put it in the computer and spent many hours practicing. She did all of this because she had a desire to be instructed and to learn more.

Today, we are going to see how we should desire instruction from the Word of God. When we do, we will receive great benefits and blessings from the Lord.

## What Does the Bible Say?

Solomon knew that it was one thing to read the words that he was writing, but it was another thing to accept them and obey them. He again promised a full life to those who walk in wisdom (vs 10). He also described how he had written down words of wisdom that will lead you on the path of righteousness (vs 11). When you are walking on the right path with the Word of God as your light, you can run and not fall and you can walk and not stumble. By this he is describing how we can avoid the pitfalls of sin that many Christians fall into when they don't pay attention to God's Word (vs 12).

Not only should we strive to become wise, but we should also take hold of instruction. We need to be careful that we don't let it go and be on guard so no one takes it away from us. This means that we need to listen carefully when we read God's Word or sit under the preaching of God's Word. We

need to constantly seek instruction and counsel from the Word of God. When we love God's instruction, we will have a vibrant spiritual life (vs 13).

When we are holding tight to the Word of God, we will be able to discern what is evil and what is good. When we see evil coming our way, we need to flee from it. We can also learn from other people's mistakes and not follow the same path that they did (vs 14-15). There are some people who are bent on doing evil and one of their main goals in life is to get other people to share the miseries of sin with them. They feed on evil and become worse and worse (vs 16-17).

Solomon contrasted the evil man with the righteous man. The wicked man walks in darkness and stumbles and falls not even knowing what he is tripping over. Those who live in righteousness will be able to see the path and enjoy the brightness of day (vs 18-19).

## How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you flee from evil when it comes your direction, or do you see how close you can get to it? Do you love the instruction of the Lord? The benefits of living a righteous life far outweighs the short-lived pleasures of sin. To live righteously, you must take hold of instruction and learn to love it. That means that every time you approach the Word of God, whether in your own personal time with God or the teaching of others, you must be open to the Holy Spirit's moving in your life. You should never get to the point where you don't want to be taught anymore. Sometimes God's instruction is painful because it means that you will have to give up some of the things that you enjoy. Other times it is painful because you have to admit that you were wrong. Though it may be difficult at times, the benefits of obedience and righteousness are worth it.

## Suggestions for Prayer

- \* Thank God for the instruction He gives you in His Word.
- \* Ask God to help you be open to His instruction and teaching.

## Thought for the day

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Why should you hear the words of wisdom (vs 10)?

Why is it vital to not only hear, but to accept the words of wisdom (vs 10)?

Why is it so important to have a guide for your life (vs 11)?

What does it mean that “your steps shall not be hampered” (vs 12-ESV)?

*\*\*\*Hampered- to bind, be distressed, be in distress, be cramped, be narrow, be scant, be in straits, make narrow, cause distress, beseege*

What does Solomon mean when he says you won't stumble while you run (vs 12)?

What three actions are you told to do in regards to wisdom (vs 13)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why are you told to do these things?

How can you as a believer be tempted to enter the path of the wicked (vs 14)?

Give an example of how you or others have given into this temptation?

How do we avoid it and turn from it (vs 15)?

Why is this easier said than done?

Do verses 16 & 17 mean that wicked people always intend to hurt people?

*\*\*\*Many sinful people don't realize what they are doing by their actions, they are simply giving into their flesh.*

How are the wicked and the righteous contrasted in verses 18-19?

## “Don't Get Sidetracked”

**Study:** Proverbs 4:20-27

**Reading:** Mark 7:17-23, Ephesians 5:6-21

**Memory:** Isaiah 40:18

Several years ago, My wife and I were on a trip heading out east. We had just eaten lunch and were back on the highway when I saw a sign that attracted my attention. There was a sign for a restaurant called “Friendly's.” When I was a teenager, there was a Friendly's restaurant by my house that I would visit often before they went out of business. Every time I went to Friendly's, I ordered the Recess Pieces sundae. This sundae had delicious French Vanilla ice cream smothered with hot fudge and peanut butter sauce and then topped with Recess Pieces and whip cream. They served this sundae in a huge dish, and it was absolutely divine.

I hadn't been to a Friendly's for several years, but as soon as I saw that sign, I had to stop. I didn't care that I had just eaten or that an extra stop would cause us to arrive at our destination later. I couldn't resist, so I stopped and ordered myself one of those delicious sundaes.

Today, we are going to see how Satan wants to sidetrack us as we run the race of the Christian life. He stands along side our path, hanging temptations right in front of our face. He wants us to turn from God.

### What Does the Bible Say?

Solomon repeated himself in different ways, to help his readers understand the importance of wisdom. He emphasized that wisdom is a vital part of our lives and wanted men to see their need to constantly examine decisions to be made in order to exercise proper wisdom (vs 21).

These verses challenge us to watch over our hearts. The word heart doesn't refer to the physical heart, but to the spiritual heart. Our heart is who we are deep down inside. It is where we make our decisions and choices. It is where our emotions come from. When we watch over our hearts, we are making sure that all of our actions, thoughts, and emotions are in conformity to the Word of God. Solomon told us that the issues of life flow out of the heart. Who we are on the inside will affect what we do with our physical bodies on the outside (vs 22-23).

We are commanded to stay away from deceitful thoughts and actions. It is easy to try and deceive others into thinking that we are something that we are not. Many times, we even deceive ourselves into thinking or acting a way that is against God's law. This comes when we try to justify our actions, though the Bible says they are wrong (vs 24).

Verse 25-27 parallel the Apostle Paul's illustrations that he used about running a race. We need to have our eyes fixed on our goal and follow the path that God has planned for us. When our eyes are fixed on Him, we will not be tempted to turn aside and follow the paths of evil. Satan and his demons will do their best to sidetrack you from the purpose God has for your life. He is waiting on the side of the road, wanting you to stop so he can cause spiritual ruin.

## **How Does this Apply to Me?**

Are you guarding your heart from evil? It is so easy to give into the temptations of Satan, and it is also easy to justify your actions. You need to examine your heart on a regular basis to see if your heart is on the right track. This is where an accountability partner is extremely beneficial. This is a person that you look up to spiritually and who you can share your deepest feelings with. For me, it is my wife. I am not afraid to share anything with her. I know that she won't look down on me when I tell her my struggles. In fact, she encourages me to do what is right. If she sees something in my life that doesn't match up to the Word of God, she helps me see where I have strayed. Do you have a person like that in your life? If not, it would be a great idea to get one. The mark of a true friend is that they are not afraid to tell you when you aren't doing what is right. The problem is that we often want to find friends that agree with what we are doing, instead of finding friends that will be a spiritual help.

## **Suggestions for Prayer**

- \* *Thank God for the spiritual leaders and friends He has given you.*
- \* *Ask God to help you keep your heart from evil.*
- \* *Praise God that He is a God of holiness.*

## **Thought for the day**

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What should you be attentive to (vs 20)?

What does verse 20 emphasize about listening to God?

Why is listening a vital first step that many people often overlook when it comes to relationships?

What should you do with the words of truth once you hear them (vs 21)?

What will God's Word be to you if you listen and apply the truth contained in them (vs 22)?

What does verse 23 teach you about the importance of the heart?

Why do you think it is easier to get caught up with the things on the outside of a person rather than what is on the inside?

What should you put away from your life (vs 24)?

How would you practically define these things?

Where should your eyes look (vs 25)?

What is meant by this?

How can you think about the path your feet will take (vs 26)?

What happens when you fail to think about the direction you are going?

Where should you not go (vs 27)?

What do you think is to the left and to the right (vs 27)?

How can you know you are on the right path?

How can you practically live out these verses in your life today?

# “Lips of Honey”

**Study:** Proverbs 5:1-14

**Reading:** Genesis 39:1-23, Romans 13:11-14

**Memory:** Isaiah 40:18

**T**here is one type of cookie that I learned to make at a very young age. These cookies are called “No-bake Cookies.” They are made up of four main ingredients – sugar, peanut butter, cocoa and oatmeal. I have found that when I began eating these cookies, I can’t just eat one. There have been times when I lost all self control and ate eight cookies all in a short time period. To me they are addictive. Once I have tasted one, I want to keep eating more.

Today, we are going to see how sexual temptation is like that cookie because it is sweet to the taste and hard to resist. There is a big difference between food temptation and sexual temptation because the consequences for giving in are far different. Once a person falls into sexual sin, there is nothing he can do to reverse what he has done.

## What Does the Bible Say?

Solomon again challenged his readers to make wisdom, understanding, discretion, and knowledge a major part of our lives (vs 1-2). He knew that men need these things in order to keep themselves pure. He described how an adulteress or seductive woman’s speech is sweet and smooth. He warned men not to give into sexual temptations because of the terrible consequences faced by those who give into their lustful desires. When people give into premarital or extramarital sexual desires, they are just thinking about the here and now, and do not consider the long term results of their actions (vs 3-6).

We are told to stay as far away from our lustful desires as possible. Solomon declared that we shouldn’t even go near the door of sexual temptation (vs 7-8). When it was found that a man committed adultery, they would often take the guilty party, strip him of his wealth and make him a slave. He would live the rest of his life under a cruel master because of his lack of wisdom and moments of pleasure (vs 9-10).

The decision to give into sexual temptation will be a decision that a

person will regret for the rest of his or her life (vs 11). People who commit sexual sin will look back and wonder why they didn’t listen to their teachers. They will be saddened by the fact that they thought they knew better than those who were giving them instruction from the Word of God. Choosing to do things our own way and not listening to others, will result in long term consequences that will not be good (vs 12-14).

## How Does this Apply to Me?

Are you getting closer and closer to the door of sexual sin in your life? Maybe you have been looking at magazines or internet sites that aren’t considered “pornography,” but contain pictures that cause you to think lustful thoughts. Maybe you have been talking with the opposite sex about sexual things or establishing relationships outside of marriage that are leading you in the wrong direction. It is possible that you have even done some things that you are trying to justify as “ok” in your mind. Solomon warns you to stay far away from the door of sexual temptation. God has created sex to be a beautiful and wonderful thing inside the bounds of marriage. When you step outside of God’s boundaries, whether before you are married or after you are married, you are headed down a road of trouble. Regardless of what society tells you, sexual acts don’t bring satisfaction into your life. In fact, they will often lead to a greater desire that can never be fulfilled outside of the love that is found in marriage. Don’t let Satan trick you into living in the bondage of pornography or sexual sin. If you have a problem with these things, seek biblical help from a pastor or spiritual leader as soon as possible.

## Suggestions for Prayer

- \* *Ask God to help you avoid the pitfalls of lust.*
- \* *Thank God because He has and will give you the strength to resist.*
- \* *Praise God because He is a God of Holiness.*

## Thought for the day

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What did Solomon emphasize about listening (vs 1)

Why should we pay attention and listen intently?

What are you told to do in verse 2?

How are the words of a “forbidden woman” described (ESV - vs 3)?

What does this mean?

What is “wormwood” (vs 4)?

*\*\*\*A plant whose root is very bitter and harmful – looks like other plants – whose roots can be eaten*

Why is her end compared to a sharp two-edged sword?

What does verse 5 mean?

How can a strange woman not know what she is doing (vs 6)?

What are we commanded to do about the strange woman (vs 8)?

How does this apply to all areas of life?

What measures will this take to practically apply this in your life?

What does it mean to give your honor unto others (v 9)?

How will sexual sin cause a loss in wealth (vs 10)?

What does the person who has given into sexual sin often face the rest of their life (vs 11)?

What does giving into sexual sin reveal about the heart of the person who does so (vs 12-13)?

What does verse 14 mean?

# “God’s Design for Marriage”

**Study:** Proverbs 5:15-23

**Reading:** Ephesians 5:21-33, Matthew 19:3-10

**Memory:** Isaiah 40:18

**W**hen I was growing up, I worked at a privately owned pizza place. I would sometimes get into conversations with the owner’s wife. During one of our conversations, we talked about marriage. I told her that I wasn’t going to have sexual relations until I was married. She didn’t agree with me. She thought that a couple should sleep together and even live together before they are married so that they know they are compatible together. Though common, this is a warped view of sex and marriage. Marriage should be based on love, and sex is just an out flow of the husband and wife relationship.

Today, we are going to see what God has to say about sex. Many times we get the idea that sex is bad and dirty, but it is not. It is something that God has created for a husband and wife to enjoy.

## What Does the Bible Say?

In verses 1-14, we were warned by Solomon to stay away from the temptation of adultery and fornication. He used the next portion of Scripture to show us how to avoid these temptations as well as to show the sacredness and fulfillment that is found in proper sexual relationships.

There are not many rivers that run through the land of Israel. When a person was going to settle in an area, they usually dug a well and built a cistern. A cistern was a large underground storage container for water. They would try to store as much water as they could during the rainy season so that they would have enough for the rest of the year. Solomon used the example of a cistern and a well to relate to sexual relations in a marriage. Just as a man would only take water from his well and his cistern, so married partners should find their sexual fulfillment in each other. Sexual relations should be confined to a husband and wife and shouldn’t be shared with anyone else (vs 15-17).

What often happens in cases of adultery is the man or woman becomes unsatisfied with their mate. Sometimes it is because of physical appearance,

other times it is the result of a poor relationship. The simple fact is that as a person gets older, they will not have the body of a 20 year old mister or miss USA. That doesn't mean that a person should lose sexual passion for his or her spouse. In fact, it should actually grow as their relationship with each other grows. Sexual relations between a husband and wife can and should be a wonderful and exhilarating experience (vs 18-19).

Solomon reminded us that the Lord knows and sees all that we do. God doesn't want us to fall, but if we do, he will punish us for our actions. Many people cause great pain to themselves and their families because of a couple of moments of foolishness (vs 20-23).

## **How Does this Apply to Me?**

What is your view about sex and marriage? Society tells us that there is nothing wrong with having sex outside of marriage, but there is. God has made us to be sexual creatures and has designed sex to be enjoyed. The key to sexual satisfaction is the deep relationship found in a biblical marriage. People often think that it is ok to have sex if they love a person, but God directly prohibits any type of sexual relationships outside of marriage. A person should save their whole self for that special someone that God has waiting for them if they are single or the one that they are married to already. God will also give grace to overcome sexual desires for those He has called to be single. Don't let Satan trick you into thinking that you are missing out if you save yourself for your marriage partner. In actuality, you will miss having the closest relationship possible with your spouse if you give part of your love to someone else. God has designed sex to be a wonderful thing, but you must follow his guidelines to find true sexual fulfillment and satisfaction.

## **Suggestions for Prayer**

- \* *If you are single, ask God to lead you directly to that special person that he has waiting for you.*
- \* *Thank God for creating sexual relations to enhance your marriage.*

## **Thought for the day**

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How does verse 15 fit into the context of the passage?

What would happen to water that would flow out in the street (vs 16)?

Who are we to share the precious water with (vs 17)?

*\*\*\*Some think these verses describe the seed of man being spread abroad and having children with others.*

When will our "fountain" be truly fulfilling (vs 18-19)?

Why do you think Solomon referenced "the wife of your youth (ESV - vs 18)?

How can we be satisfied with one person (vs 19)?

How can you choose to be satisfied with your spouse?

How does pornography and the world's fascination with good looks interfere with this satisfaction?

What does verse 21 reveal?

How should the fact that the Lord sees all that you do and knows all that you think affect the way you live and think every day?

What will be the result of sexual sin (vs 22)?

What is the opposite of that?

What does verse 23 mean?

What are practical steps you can take to avoid giving into sexual temptation?

Why you think Scripture consistently warns of the importance of avoiding fornication and adultery?



# “Money & Work”

**Study:** Proverbs 6:1-15

**Reading:** I Timothy 5:1-8

**Memory:** Isaiah 40:18

Over the years we had “professional” beggars visit the churches where I pastored and ask for money. Many of these people have learned to live by going from church to church and asking for money without being willing to work. I am all for displaying Christian love to all men, but I am not for supporting laziness. Normally, I try to ask as many questions as I can to understand the whole situation to determine if the person has a real need or not. If I am not sure if their need is real, I will offer them some work to do around the church. I will then pay them for the work they have done. Most of the time, the people are unwilling to do the work even though they physically are able. When that is the case, I don’t help them out because I don’t want to continue to enable them.

Today, we are going to see how Solomon gives us practical advice about the way we handle money and how we should work.

## What Does the Bible Say?

In verses 1-5, Solomon gave us some practical advice about money. He tells us not to agree to pay someone else’s debt. The Old Testament law does support helping those who had gone into debt by giving them interest free loans (Leviticus 25:35-38), but here Solomon discourages us from taking on someone else’s financial burdens. God desires us to be good stewards of the money that He has given us, and Solomon told us that there are wiser ways to use our money for the Lord than paying off another’s debt. Verse 3 tells us what we need to do if we find ourselves responsible for another person’s debt. Solomon encouraged anyone who cosigned for the debt of another to go to the creditor and find a way out of the agreement. Solomon illustrated the freedom that we will feel when we do this. He used the picture of a deer or a similar animal who has escaped from the hunter and a bird that has escaped being trapped. Millions of people get trapped into co-signing for someone else on a regular basis and end up having to pay much of the loan for the person they signed for.

Solomon then moved on to the subject of laziness. He told us to look at the ants as an example of how to work. The ants don’t have someone watching over their shoulder and telling them what to do. They just go out and provide for themselves and for others around them by storing up food for the winter. We should be like the ants in the sense that we should do what it takes to provide for our families. We shouldn’t be lazy and let someone else take care of us. We are the ones who are supposed to support our families. We should not have to rely on the government or other organizations to take care of our needs when we have the ability to work for our needs (vs 6-11).

We are warned to be careful about wicked people who go around lying and trying to deceive. These verses give the idea of people working together to attempt to trick another into believing a lie. They scheme together to find ways to trick others out of their wealth so they can have it for themselves. This type of person may get away with it for a while, but when they are caught or trapped in their schemes, they will face great heartache.

## How Does this Apply to Me?

The Bible commands us to be kind to one another, but in this passage it also warns us about taking on another person’s debt, even as a display of kindness. When a person incurs a debt, they should take the responsibility to pay it. You can display kindness to them by helping them setup a budget, or by helping them find a job to earn enough money to pay off their debt. You could even give them some money to help. Yet, you also want them to be able to learn the great importance of fiscal responsibility.

The Bible also tells us the importance of providing for our families. Sometimes, we get the idea that a person is lazy if they take a couple of days off or if they take a vacation, but that isn’t laziness. Laziness happens when a man chooses not to work or provide for his family. We need to take time off to rest and relax, but we also need to make sure that our families are provided for.

## Suggestions for Prayer

- \* *Ask God to give you wisdom as you display kindness to others.*
- \* *Thank God for the body he gave you so that you can work.*

What are you told not to do (vs 1)?

*\*\*\*Today we would call this “co-signing.”*

What are you to do if you have made a pledge on behalf of someone else (vs 2-3)?

Why did Solomon use the picture of the hunter and hunted to describe escaping from someone else’s debt (vs 5)??

What does this mean to you practically?

Who is this next portion of proverbs addressed to (vs 6)?

What does the ant do (vs 6-7)?

What was Solomon saying here?

How can we apply this to our financial situations in a practical way?

What was Solomon warning against (vs 9-10)?

Where is the balance between being a sluggard and working too much?

How can this apply to your spiritual walk?

What type of person is mentioned in verse 12?

What does verse 13 mean?

*\*\*\*Using signs to tell others that what you are saying really isn’t what you are meaning.*

What does this man do with his words (vs 14)?

What is the end result of a person who lives like this (vs 15)?

How can we fall into some of the things that this type of man does?

## Memory Verses

*Isaiah 40:1 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. 2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD’s hand double for all her sins. 3 A voice cries: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God? 4 Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. 5 Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will see it together. The LORD has spoken!” 6 A voice says, “Cry!” And I said, “What shall I cry?” All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. 7 The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the LORD blows on it; surely the people are grass. 8 The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. 9 Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, “Behold your God!” 10 Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. 11 He will feed his flock like a shepherd. He will carry the lambs in his arms, holding them close to his heart. He will gently lead the mother sheep with their young. 12 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? 13 Who has measured the Spirit of the LORD, or what man shows him his counsel? 14 Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? Who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding? 15 Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales; behold, he takes up the coastlands like fine dust. 16 Lebanon would not suffice for fuel, nor are its beasts enough for a burnt offering. 17 All the nations are as nothing before him, they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness. 18 To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him?*