

# The Keys To Wisdom

Love

Patience

Obedience

Mercy

Trust

Understanding

Truth

Discretion



## Proverbs

WEEK 8

## “Pliable”

**Study:** Proverbs 12:1-5

**Reading:** Romans 12:1-3, Psalms 119:97-104

**Memory:** Proverbs 3:34

While back, I fixed some brakes on my car. I had to put on a new brake cylinder and that also required that I buy a new brake line. When I went to the auto parts store to buy a new line, I forgot to take the old one. I thought that they would have the right part in their database, but they didn't. I found that they sell brake lines in lengths and not in specific sizes for specific cars. When they gave me the part that I needed, it was straight. The problem was that I needed it bent in two places. I felt kind of stupid when I asked the workers if they had a machine to bend it. The reason I felt that way was because I found out that I could easily bend the brake lines with my two hands. The metal that they are made out of is very pliable so that it can be bent to fit in the places that they need to fit.

Today, we are going to see how our lives should be pliable. We need to be like that brake line in the hand of the Master Mechanic and allow God to shape us into the Christians that we need to be.

## What Does the Bible Say?

The person who loves instruction, whether good or bad, loves learning. Throughout every area of your life, you should seek to improve. Whether it be at work, school, your relationships with others or in your relationship with God, you should always be willing to learn. Being willing to learn means that you must be willing to change. The person who chooses not to learn and not to change is described as “brutish” or “stupid.” The biggest reason why people are unwilling to change is because of their pride. To make a change means that a person has to say that they weren't doing things right or the best way in the first place (vs 1).

God finds favor in those who do what is good. On the other hand, those who do what is evil will find themselves condemned before God. We will receive His blessings if we do what is right (vs 2).

It was important in those days for people to be settled and established in the area where they were living. Everyone in those days, as well as in our

day, enjoys having a place that they can call their home. Solomon said that the wicked will not be established, but those who lived righteously will be able to firmly plant their roots (vs 3).

When a man has an excellent wife, he will excel in all that he does. The picture of a crown was one of a special position or royalty. It will be their love and their work together that makes them both great. One of the problems that interferes with this exaltation is selfishness. Many husbands and wives seek after their own pleasures. They aren't concerned with building one another up. Though it goes both ways, this passage is directed toward wives and describes how a wife who is selfish will cause shame and ruin to her husband (vs 4).

A person who is truly righteous on the outside will only be righteous because of what is on the inside. On the other hand, a person who does what is evil on the outside does so because his heart and his thoughts are evil (vs 5).

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

Do you struggle with trying to look the right way and act the right way? One of the reasons that you may struggle in that area, is because you have not taken care of the issues on the inside. You need to change the way you think and the way you believe before you can change the way you act. For example, you can't just stop looking at things on the internet that are unhealthy, but you must change your attitude about what you put into mind. This can be done by reading God's Word and learning how God views sin. When you begin to think righteously, you will live righteously.

Do you love instruction? Do you desire to learn more about God and how you can be a better Christian? Are you willing to change when you are confronted with the truth? If you have a broken spirit and a pliable heart, God will use you in a mighty way. The difficulty is that you must give up your selfishness and humble yourself before God and others. You have to admit that you don't always know what is best.

## **Suggestions for Prayer**

- \* *Ask God to help you humbly receive instruction and correction.*
- \* *Thank God for the mate He has given you or will give you.*
- \* *Praise God because He knows all things -even what you are thinking*

What do you think it means to "love discipline" (vs 1 - ESV)?

Why do you think loving discipline is equated with loving knowledge (vs 1)?

How is the person who hates being reproved described (vs 1)?

Are you a person who loves or hates being reproved? Explain your answer.

What does a good man obtain (vs 2)?

What do you think it means to be a "good man" (vs 2- ESV)?

How does God view evil (vs 2)?

Why do you think it is easier to be "evil" than we often realize?

What will wickedness not do (vs 3)?

What do you think it means to be "established" (vs 3 -ESV)?

What will happen to those who are righteous (vs 3)?

What do you think verse 3 is trying to teach us?

Why is having an "excellent wife" so important (vs 4)?

What does this reveal about the importance of making the right decision about who to marry?

How can you strive to be the husband or wife God desires you to be?

What type of thoughts will the righteous think (vs 5)?

What do you think this means?

What will the counsel of the wicked lead to (vs 5)?

# “A Loving Person”

**Study:** Proverbs 12:6-11

**Reading:** John 15:1-17

**Memory:** Proverbs 3:34

One of the things that made a powerful difference in my life as a young college student was the love I experienced from the faculty and staff. As a semi-rebellious 18 year old teen, I didn't feel condemned by the leadership of the college and did not feel judged by them, even when I didn't make the right choices. Instead, what was very evident was the love of Christ that they constantly displayed. This was a major factor in my decision to choose to submit to God's leading and surrender to be a minister for Him.

Today we are going to see how one way that Christians should stand out is the way that they love others. As you read through the passage today, ask yourself how much you love others.

## What Does the Bible Say?

A wicked person cares only about himself and what is best for him. Because of this, he will use his mouth to hurt others and tear them down. He often enjoys ruining people's lives with his words. While the mouth of a wicked will lead to ruin, the mouth of a godly person will deliver them from sin and the heartache that sin causes (vs 6).

The wicked person tries to ruin the lives of others, but in the process he is ruining his own life. On the other hand, the righteous person tries to rescue other people's lives and in doing so, he causes great blessing to fall upon him and his family (vs 7).

A man who exercises great insight and wisdom in dealing with situations will be praised by others. It is not that he is seeking praise, but it will come to him because he has done things God's way. People look up to others who are willing to take a stand for Christ and who continually make wise decisions. But Those who choose not to be wise and disobey God will eventually be despised (vs 8).

A paraphrase of verse 9 would be, “A person who is not important but has a servant is better off than someone who acts important but has no

food.” Solomon wants us to know that being a noble nobody is far better than talking about ourselves and not having anything to show for it. There are many people in life who are “big talkers” but their lives don't match up to what they say (vs 9).

The righteous man knows how to treat others, even his animals, but the wicked man is cruel to others and his animals (vs 10).

Throughout Proverbs, Solomon taught the importance of hard work. Those who put work and effort into something will reap what they sow. As Christians, we need to be hard workers and take care of ourselves and our families by the work that we do. On the other hand, those who try to get rich quick and earn a fast buck are fools. This doesn't mean that we shouldn't trust God to take care of us and provide for our needs. Sometimes God will just give us money that we need, but other times He will give us ways to earn the money that we need (vs 11).

## How Does this Apply to Me?

Is one of your goals in life to build others up? Are you known as a person who continually encourages others, or are you known as a person who tears others down? It is easy to look down on others and hurt others with your words. This is expected of the world, but if you are a Christian you should be different. You have experienced the great love of Christ and in turn, you should share that love with others. Make it your goal not to say negative things to people, but to say positive things. Think about the people that you love and respect the most? Do you love and respect them because they put you down and hurt you with their words or do you love them for how they have been there for you to help and encourage you? What type of person do you want to be?

## Suggestions for Prayer

- \* *Thank God for giving you the ability to love.*
- \* *Ask God to treat others with great love.*
- \* *Praise God for being a God of love.*

## Thought for the day

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What do the words of wicked men do (vs 6)?

What do the words of righteous men do (vs 6)?

What do you think verse 6 is teaching?

What happens to the legacy of wicked people (vs 7)?

How will the legacy of a righteous person affect many others in a positive way (vs 7)?

Who is respected and commended (vs 8)?

What do you think it means to have “good sense” (vs 8- ESV)?

What do you think it means to have a “twisted mind” (vs 8 - ESV)?

What does it mean to be “lowly” (vs 9 - ESV)?

What are ways that you can act like someone you are not (vs 9)?

What point do you think Solomon was making in verse 9?

What will a righteous person care for (vs 10)?

What will a cruel person do (vs 10)?

How can you know if you are a righteous person or a cruel person?

What does verse 11 encourage you to do?

Why is consistent, hard work so important (vs 11)?

What do you think “worthless pursuits” are (vs 11)?

How have you seen the truth of this verse in your life and in the lives of others around you?

## “*Emotional Wisdom*”

**Study:** Proverbs 12:12-16

**Reading:** John 18:1-11, 19-24

**Memory:** Proverbs 3:34

**A**s a young pastor I used to pick up children in the community and take them to church. I found that many of them suffered from some type of verbal abuse. Many of their parents had not learned how to control their emotions and they often took their emotional frustrations and anger out on their children. In turn, their children didn't learn the right way to deal with their emotions and they responded in the same way with their brothers, sisters, friends and parents. The end result was an abundance of emotional pain that went unresolved. Many of the children never learned how to build deep lasting relationships because much of what they mimicked led to ruined relationships.

Today, we are going to see that wise men know how to control their emotions. It will not always be easy, but the end results are far better than the destruction that anger brings. As you read through today's reading, evaluate how you react to adversity.

### What Does the Bible Say?

In verse 12, Solomon contrasts the simple life of obedience and the many blessings that it brings with the desires of evil men. Evil men love making money dishonestly. The verse pictures money that is captured illegally by stealing or deception. Those who live righteously don't have to scheme and cheat to get more, they will have all that they need in Christ and will live a fruitful life (vs 12).

A person who lives a life of lies and deception will become trapped in the problems that his lies bring about. He will have to continue to lie to avoid being caught and getting in trouble. He will always have a fear that he will be caught and will not have true peace inside. On the other hand, the man who lives righteously won't have to worry about living in the prison of his own lies. He will have great freedom because He tells the truth. John 8:32 spoke about the truth of salvation by saying, “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.” (vs 13)

The good words that we say with our mouths and the good works that

we do with our hands will not go unrewarded. God will bless us when we use our lives for Him (vs 14).

Many times fools think they are wise and think that they know what is best for themselves. They think that they are right and justify their actions in their minds. On the other hand, wise men listen to the counsel of others. In fact, they strongly desire the counsel of others.

When a fool gets angry everyone knows about it. He doesn't know how to control his temper and attitude and will often lash out at others with his tongue. Many fools also show their anger towards others with physical violence. This is a completely opposite reaction of those who are wise and sensible. Wise men know how to control their emotions. Wise men do get angry, but they know how to deal with their anger in a biblical manner. They know that verbal and physical outbreaks will make things worse than they already are. They know when and how to approach the person who has caused their anger, and they attempt to make things right (vs 16).

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

How do you react when someone does something that you don't like? Do you call them names or yell at them? Do you physically hurt them? Do you have a desire to harm their reputation? If you answered yes to any of these, the Bible says that you are a fool. With God's help you can control your anger. This is done by learning to see others as God sees them. It also helps to think through the situation and determine what affect your reaction will have on the person you are angry with. Physical and verbal violence never solves anything. In fact, the situation will become worse when it is not dealt with in a correct way. God will give you the strength and the wisdom that you need if you just seek to do things His way. What a difference Christians could make for Christ if they stopped reacting like the world and started acting more like Christ. Do you need to change your attitude? Read the suggested reading passages in John to see how Christ reacted to adversity.

## **Suggestions for Prayer**

- \* *Ask God to help you deal wisely with adversity.*
- \* *Thank Jesus for the example that He set for us when He was on earth*

What does a wicked person covet (vs 12)?

What do you think are the "spoils of an evildoer" (vs 12 - ESV)?

What does a righteous person bear (vs 12)?

Why do you think it mentions the "root of a righteous person" (vs 12 - ESV)?

How is a person described when they commit evil with their lips (vs 13)?

How do you think these evil things trap them (vs 13)?

How do the words of a righteous person bring benefit to them (vs 13)?

What brings about good in a person's life (vs 14)?

How do you think this happens?

What principle is being taught in verse 14?

*\*\*\*Throughout Scripture, we see the principle of reaping what you sow. Whether it is with your words or the work you do with your hands, you are the one who has to make the right choices if you want the right results.*

How does a fool determine right and wrong (vs 15)?

What will a wise man do (vs 15)?

Explain how you are a righteous man or a fool according to this verse.

What makes a person a fool (vs 16)?

*\*\*\*When you respond with verbal or physical anger, you act like a fool.*

What does a prudent person do when he is insulted (vs 16)? Why is this something that is hard to do?

# “Tragedy or Triumph”

**Study:** Proverbs 12:17-21

**Reading:** Job 1:13-22, 42:10-17

**Memory:** Proverbs 3:34

Several years ago there was a disturbing story that topped the headlines in the national news. A missionary family was flying in Peru when a Peruvian military pilot shot the missionaries’ plane down. The CIA was working with the Peruvian government to stop the flow of drugs into America and targeted this plane as a possible drug smuggling plane. On board the plane was a missionary pilot and a missionary family, Jim and Roni Bowers. The pilot was shot in both of his legs and survived. Jim and his son survived without harm, but Roni and her infant child were shot and killed.

“How could God allow this to happen? The mom and her daughter would still be alive if they hadn’t chose to serve God in a foreign country.” Statements like this are often said after a tragedy like this occurs. We don’t often know exactly why things like this happen, nor do we really know they would be alive if they would have not served God. We do know we can trust that God is sovereign and has a purpose for what He allows. Today, we are going to read that God promises to always allow what is best for us to happen in our lives.

## What Does the Bible Say?

One of the tests of whether a person is truthful or not comes when a person has to testify in court. When a person is under pressure and the words that they say could win or loose a court case, they are tempted to bend the truth. The person who is truthful will tell the truth no matter what the outcome, but the false witness will practice deceit (vs 17).

Solomon used vivid language as he described the importance of words. People who speak quickly and don’t think through what they are saying use their tongues like piercing swords. The unkind words that are said cut deep into the heart of those whom they are spoken against. On the other hand, words that are said in wisdom and kindness help heal the wounds that the words of others have caused (vs 18).

Truth is one thing that will never fail. It is something that will last

forever, but lies will only last for a short while. They will be found out and the liar will face the consequences (vs 19).

People who are evil will be deceivers. This verse implies that they will not have any joy and peace because they will always be looking over their shoulder to make sure they don’t get caught. While this is true of the evil man, the opposite is true of the righteous man. He doesn’t have to worry about getting in trouble or whether he is going to succeed or not. God has promised him that he will be successful when he lives righteously. He will live a life that is full of peace and joy (vs 20).

The phrase, “The safest place to be is in the center of God’s will” has already been quoted in this devotional because it is true. Solomon said that no harm will befall those who are living righteously, but the lives of the wicked will be filled with trouble. This doesn’t mean that God won’t allow bad things to happen to you, it just means that He will take care of you through those trials. Many people die or are injured when they are in the center of God’s will, but that is because it is God’s plan. God does things so that He will be glorified. If God wants you to live, you will live, but if God wants you to die, you will die. He will protect you and keep you safe when you are living your life for Him.

## How Does this Apply to Me?

If I were to ask your spouse, children, co-workers or friends if you use your tongue like a sword or like medicine, what would they say? You don’t realize the affect that your tongue has on others that you come into contact with everyday. One ill-advised word that comes out of your mouth could turn someone away from Christ and cause extreme damage.

Are you a fearful person? You have no reason to be afraid of anything if you are trusting in God. He won’t allow any thing to happen to you that shouldn’t happen to you if you are living for Him. This means that when you trust in God you can live without letting fear or worry have control over your life. You can trust in Him even when “bad” things come your way. You can have confidence that He is in control and that He knows what is best.

## Suggestions for Prayer

- \* Ask God to help you use your tongue like medicine.
- \* Ask God to help you live a righteous life.

Who gives honest advice (vs 17)?

Why would a person be tempted not to give honest advice?

How do you know when you are speaking the truth compared to when you are just speaking your opinion?

What does a false witness do (vs 17)?

Why would a person be tempted to be a false witness?

What are rash and harsh words compared to (vs 18)?

What are times in your life where you have been hurt by the words of others?

What does this reveal about the great power of your words?

What does the tongue of the wise do (vs 18)?

Would you characterize yourself as a person who hurts with your words or a person who brings healing with your words? Explain.

What endures forever (vs 19)?

How do you know if you are speaking the truth with your words?

What do you think the last part of verse 19 means?

What is an evil person characterized by (vs 20)?

What helps produce joy (vs 20)?

What does not happen to the righteous person (vs 21)?

Is this verse lying when something bad happens to a good person?

Who will face trouble (vs 21)?

## *“Avoiding Anxiety”*

**Study:** Proverbs 12:22-25

**Reading:** Psalms 15:13-24, II Corinthians 2:1-11

**Memory:** Proverbs 3:34

**W**orry takes on different forms for different people. I was made aware of this in a recent discussion with a person who had a hard time sleeping at times because they would be thinking about family situations. I mentioned how I had a hard time sleeping when I think about physical things that need to be done. I clearly understood that the other person struggled with sleep because they worried about their family, but my eyes were opened to the fact that I worried about forgetting something on an upcoming project and that is why I replayed it over and over in my mind, not allowing me to sleep.

Each one of us will have opportunities to allow worry into our lives. Today, we are going to read that God has given us no reason to worry about things in this life. He has promised to take care of us through every circumstance and situation that occurs or could occur in our lives.

### What Does the Bible Say?

If you haven't figured it out yet by reading the book of Proverbs, God hates dishonesty. He calls it an “abomination.” Abomination can be described as wicked, terrible, and disgusting in the sight of God. That means that there is no such thing as a little white lie. It also means that there is no such thing as a little sin. People normally wouldn't put lying on their “terrible sin” list because lies are often viewed as acceptable as long as they are “small,” but God thinks that it is terrible (vs 22).

It is easy to become a “blabber mouth.” By that I mean that we can easily tell someone something that they don't need to know. There are some things that are better off when they are kept secret. When someone confesses a sin to you, you don't need to tell everybody. The only people who need to know about it are the people that have been affected by it. The problem is that it is easy to make it our responsibility to find out about another's problems and it is very easy to tell people the information that we have discovered. A wise man knows when to keep his mouth shut and

knows who he should and shouldn't tell (vs 23).

Verse 24 deals with the way that we work. When we work hard and are diligent in our work, we are being a good example of Christ. We will be rewarded by being given the ability to be in charge of our affairs and possibly be put into positions of authority. But when we are lazy, we are giving other people the privilege of ruling our lives and we will have little chance to be given greater responsibilities (vs 24).

Depression is on the rise in our society. When someone becomes overly worried about a situation, it can lead to depression. At times a depressed person can feel like he or she is carrying heavy weights on their shoulders. One of the ways to help people who are worried or depressed is by showering them with words of kindness and comfort. When you let them know how God can take care of their problems and help gently lead them to focus on God, you are doing them a great favor and helping them drop their weights (vs 25).

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

Is your life full of worry and stress? Do you cause someone else's life to be stressful? You can help yourself and others around you by viewing life from a biblical perspective. When you choose to trust God through every situation in life, it will not only benefit you but will benefit those around you. By following the principles in God's Word, you will have the greater chance to live a peaceful life.

Another way to relieve worry is by realizing that God is in control of all things. Even when situations look bad and it seems that there is no way out, simple words of thanks and praise to God can help pull you out of your pit of worry. When you realized that He can do all things, even the impossible, you will realize that there is no reason to worry because God is and always will be on the throne. This is not always easy because human emotions are very powerful and have the tendency to overwhelm your mind. Through the help of the Holy Spirit and other believers, you can focus on God.

## **Suggestions for Prayer**

- \* *Thank God for always taking care of you.*
- \* *Ask God to help you to trust Him with your life.*
- \* *Praise God because He never changes.*

What are an abomination to the Lord (vs 22)?

Why do you think God views a lying tongue with such disdain?

What are areas where you may be tempted to think that lying is not that big of a deal?

According to the end of verse 22, what is the opposite of lying?

How is lying not being faithful to God and to others?

How is the person who is faithful described (vs 22)?

What does it mean to be "prudent" (vs 23- ESV)?

What does a prudent man do?

What do you think this means?

What does a fool do (vs 23)?

Why do you think it is easy to be a fool in the context of this verse?

What will the hand of the diligent lead to (vs 24)?

What do you think it means to be diligent?

Is this always true in every situation?

*\*\*\*It has to be remembered that proverbs are general principles and not always 100% fulfilled like other promises in Scripture.*

What will happen to a slothful person (vs 24)?

What weighs on a man's heart (vs 25)?

What is a simple thing you can do to help others with their anxiety (vs 25)?

# “A Diligent Effort”

**Study:** Proverbs 12:26-28

**Reading:** Ezekiel 18:1-24

**Memory:** Proverbs 3:34

I did not hunt until I moved to northern Wisconsin and realized it was a great way to fit into the culture. I found I really enjoyed bow hunting and looked forward to relaxing in the woods with the possibility of taking home that trophy buck. I probably would have shot more deer than I did end up taking if it wasn't for one thing. I know that if I shot a deer, I would have to clean the deer. I didn't mind gutting the deers as much as I did having to spend the few hours cutting it up for meat. Whenever I became focused on all the work that I had to do, I didn't want to shoot any deer, but when I focused on how good the meat would taste and the money it would save, I didn't mind shooting the deer.

Today, we are going to read how the lazy man looks at all the work that is involved in the spiritual life and chooses not to do it. We will also see how the diligent man has a passion for what he is doing because He knows why he is doing it.

## What Does the Bible Say?

One of the things that influences us the most as we live our daily lives is our friendships. Verse 26 teaches us a couple of important things that we can apply to our everyday friendships. The first is that we need to choose our friends carefully. We need to search out those who have good character and choose to hang around those people. This doesn't mean that you can't befriend an unsaved person or a believer who is in need of help. You should befriend them in hopes to bring them to Christ, but there is a difference between befriending a person and making them a close personal friend. Not only should you choose your friends wisely, but you should be a leader to your friends. Even if they are doing wrong, you need to stand up for what is right. You need to encourage each other to live for Christ and develop a positive peer pressure that encourages others in righteousness (vs 26).

Verse 27 warns us about being lazy. Solomon referred to a man who went out hunting but was too lazy to cook the meat that he shot. It wasn't that important to him to put the extra effort that was needed into cooking the

animal that he caught. On the other hand, diligent men will take every advantage of what God has given him because he knows how precious it is. The difference between the lazy man and the diligent man is that the diligent man sees how important something is and puts his time and effort into accomplishing what God has called him to do (vs 27).

We are again reminded by Solomon that when we live righteously, we are allowing God to give us the abundant life that He has promised us. God is not the author of a dead religion, but is the Creator of abundant relationships. By living righteously, you will find the joy and the peace that is found in the life that He gives. Not only will you enjoy abundant life on the earth, but the Bible says that you will not have to face death. This verse is not telling us that we will escape physical death, it is telling us that our souls will live forever with God. The righteous will have eternal life.

## How Does this Apply to Me?

What type of people do you choose to be close friends with? Do your friends encourage you to live godly, or do they encourage you to give into your fleshly desires? How are you being a spiritual leader to your friends? God knows the importance of friendships and relationships because He has created you with those desires. You need to seek His will and choose your friends wisely. Countless numbers of Christians have been turned away from Christ because they chose to hang around the wrong friends.

Do you care about spiritual things? Are you spiritually lazy or are you spiritually diligent? One of the reasons that many people don't do what God wants them to do is because they really don't care. They think of themselves as more important than God. When you take time to remember who God is and what He has done for you through salvation in Jesus Christ, you will have a greater desire to live for Him.

## Suggestions for Prayer

- \* *Thank God for all He has done for you.*
- \* *Ask God to help you be a diligent Christian.*

## Thought for the day

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What will a righteous person be (vs 26)?

What do you think Solomon meant by this?

How are you being the righteous person God desires you to be?

What happens when you hang around those who are not righteous (vs 26)?

Take time to evaluate who you allow to influence your life the most. This could be friends, social media, podcasts or daily inputs into your life. Describe the type of influences these things have in your life.

What does a slothful person fail to do (vs 27)?

What do you think it means to be slothful?

What are areas where you are tempted to be slothful in?

What will a diligent person get (vs 27)?

What does it mean to be diligent?

Describe areas where you are diligent and then list the benefits you have received for being diligent in those areas.

*\*\*\*Sometimes people are so afraid of being lazy that they work too hard. There has to be a balance in your life between being diligent and being lazy. This balance often is the result of regular, honest evaluation of your own life.*

What will righteousness produce (vs 28)?

What do you think is meant by “life” (vs 28)?

What will a person who is righteous not have to deal with (vs 28)?

What do you think that means?

## Memory Verses

*Proverbs 3:1 My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments, 2 for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you. 3 Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. 4 So you will find favor and good success in the sight of God and man. 5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. 7 Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. 8 It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones. 9 Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; 10 then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine. 11 My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline or be weary of his reproof, 12 for the LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights. 13 Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding, 14 for the gain from her is better than gain from silver and her profit better than gold. 15 She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her. 16 Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. 17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. 18 She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called blessed. 19 The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens; 20 by his knowledge the deeps broke open, and the clouds drop down the dew. 21 My son, do not lose sight of these— keep sound wisdom and discretion, 22 and they will be life for your soul and adornment for your neck. 23 Then you will walk on your way securely, and your foot will not stumble. 24 If you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. 25 Do not be afraid of sudden terror or of the ruin of the wicked, when it comes, 26 for the LORD will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught. 27 Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it. 28 Do not say to your neighbor, “Go, and come again, tomorrow I will give it”—when you have it with you. 29 Do not plan evil against your neighbor, who dwells trustingly beside you. 30 Do not contend with a man for no reason, when he has done you no harm. 31 Do not envy a man of violence and do not choose any of his ways, 32 for the devious person is an abomination to the LORD, but the upright are in his confidence. 33 The LORD's curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the dwelling of the righteous. 34 Toward the scorners he is scornful, but to the humble he gives favor.*