

# The Keys To Wisdom

Love

Patience

Obedience

Mercy

Trust

Understanding

Truth

Discretion



## Proverbs

WEEK 9

## “What Are You Reaping”

**Study:** Proverbs 13:1-6

**Reading:** II Peter 1:1-11, Proverbs 13

**Memory:** Proverbs 3:35

**T**he first year that Jennifer and I were married, we decided to plant a garden. Neither of us really wanted to do this, but since we lived in a farming community and that is pretty much what everyone else did, we went ahead and planted one. What I didn't realize is that a garden not only takes the initial work of preparing the soil and planting the seed, but it continually takes upkeep. By the end of the summer, after we were gone for numerous trips and activities, we could barely tell the difference between what we planted and all the weeds. I realized that sowing and reaping a garden was not just a two day a year event, but that if we wanted great harvest, we had to be continually working at the sowing process.

Just as proper sowing is one of the most important things in farming, proper sowing is very important in the Christian life. The more seeds of righteousness that we sow, the more blessings we will reap.

### What Does the Bible Say?

A wise person will graciously accept discipline from their authority. In this context, Solomon referred to the discipline of a father, but the same principle could apply to anyone who has authority. While the person who is wise accepts discipline and rebuke from his authority, the prideful person will reject his authority when he is corrected (vs 1).

Solomon describes the biblical principle, “You reap what you sow” in verse 2. The righteous will reap righteousness, joy and peace, but evil men will reap evil and violence. His life will be in a continual state of turmoil because the peace of God will not be dwelling in his heart (vs 2).

One of the ways we sow with our lives is through the words we say. The person who controls what they say will keep himself out of trouble. He will avoid all the problems that come from a mouth that is not under control (vs 3).

Those who are lazy will never be satisfied. They will always want more than they have because they won't work to earn more. On the other hand, those who work hard will be blessed and obtain the things that they are

working for. Remember to keep in mind that you must be diligent in what God has called you to do. Even if God has called you to a low-paying job where you might not be able to earn all the money that is needed for something, God will bless you and will often provide many of the things that you desire on top of what you need (vs 4).

The person who is righteous will see sin as God sees it. He will hate evil because God hates evil. He will not try to see how close he can get to the pleasures of the world, but will hate the evil that goes on. He will see the results of sin and his heart will break when he sees people committing sin. The wicked person does the exact opposite. He takes pleasure and enjoyment in his sin and the sin of others (vs 5).

When a person is striving to be righteous, he will avoid the troubles that sin brings about, but those who flirt with sin will be sucked into evil. They will have to face the consequences for their actions (vs 6).

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

We have looked at several different principles of wisdom in the six verses we have studied today. As you go through the personal application of each one, be honest with yourself and evaluate your life with the Word of God. Are you the type of person who graciously accepts discipline, correction and rebuke, or do you get upset when someone even suggests that you aren't doing things right? Are you sowing seeds of kindness with the words that you say, or are you making enemies? How are you doing at controlling your tongue? Are you a lazy worker or are you a diligent worker? If I were to ask your boss that question, what do you think he would say? Do you have a hatred for sin? Do you see the evil consequences that come about when someone sins? Are you continually facing troubles and problems in your life? Could it be that you have brought some, or many, of these things upon yourself because of your sin?

### **Suggestions for Prayer**

\* Thank God for the correction that He brings into your life.

\* Praise God for being a righteous God.

### **Thought for the day**

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What does a wise son hear (vs 1)?

Why do you think it is not always easy to receive instruction from your authorities?

What does a scoffer not listen to (vs 2)?

What are ways that you can be a scoffer in light of this verse?

What do you think the “fruit” is referring to (vs 2 - ESV)?

*\*\*\*Basically, the “fruit” that your mouth produces will lead to abundance or want. What you say with your words can earn you great favor and blessing and you can greatly benefit, or the words from your mouth can also produce great harm.*

What happens when a person guards his mouth (vs 3)?

What happens to a person who doesn't guard what he says (vs 3)?

What type of person do you think you are? Explain.

What does the soul of a sluggard desire (vs 4)?

Why does it only stop at desire?

What are the benefits for being diligent (vs 4)?

In what ways are you a diligent person?

What do righteous people hate (vs 5)?

What can help guard your life (vs 6)?

What do you think is meant by this?

What causes great problems (vs 6)?

# “Making A Difference”

**Study:** Proverbs 13:7-11

**Reading:** II Corinthians 12:1-18

**Memory:** Proverbs 3:35

**W**hen I pastored in Wisconsin, our local funeral director called me up and asked me if I would be willing to conduct a funeral. The lady who died was only 48 years old and died from a blood clot in her brain. Neither she nor any of her family attended church so they asked the funeral director to find a minister to do the funeral. My wife and I made a visit to the family to find out more about this lady who had passed away. When I started inquiring about her life to help see what a difference her life made in the world around her, the only thing her boyfriend could think of was she saved a puppy who was wandering in the streets. As I thought of that lady's life, it made me very sad. All she could be remembered for was the way that she saved one puppy during her 48 years of existence.

Today, we are going to learn how we can make our lives count for something. We can build lasting memories and can make a great difference in this world if we choose to live for Christ.

## What Does the Bible Say?

Verse 7 is a very interesting verse. One of the things that makes it so interesting is that there is no context from which to draw the true meaning of the verse. The three commentaries I consulted gave three different meanings for the verse. Each meaning can be supported by other Scripture, so we can learn from all three. The first is that men shouldn't pretend to be something they are not. Our lives need to be honest and transparent. When we allow people to see who we really are, we will be able to build deep, lasting relationships. The second explanation is that sometimes we are rich spiritually, but poor materially. The opposite of that is true as well. The third explanation is that some people want to be viewed as rich so that they will have a higher place in society. Some who are rich will want to be viewed as poor so they don't have to give some of their money away to help others. We can learn from all three of these explanations (vs 7).

Many people strive to be wealthy because they think that all their problems can be solved with money. Solomon told us that rich people face problems also. Rich men are often taxed more, sued more, and taken advantage of more than poor men because others want their wealth. Having money doesn't solve all your problems, it just gives you new ones.

The works of a righteous man will last and make a difference in the lives of others. His effects will be long lasting. On the other hand, those who live for themselves and do everything selfishly will only have an effect on a few people, and their effect will not last (vs 9).

We see in verse 10 that Solomon warned us about the importance of controlling our emotions. He wanted us to realize that the only reason we have fights and arguments is because of pride. In the context of this verse, pride refers to the inability to accept advice or correction from others. It is our pride that gets us into trouble when someone who cares about us tries to help us see the truth about ourselves. The wise man will listen to what is said and evaluate it. The reason that people often become angry is because they feel guilty. They feel that way because they know they are not doing what God wants them to do (vs 10).

## How Does this Apply to Me?

How are you going to be remembered when you are gone from this earth? What difference are you making on this generation and the generations to come? When was the last time you told someone about your faith? When is the last time you encouraged another Christian to do what is right? One person can make a great difference in the lives of others. Are you willing to make a difference? To make a difference, you must stand up for Christ. That means that you will have to say no to your fleshly desires. If you continually strive to do what is right and to be a righteous person, you will make a difference. Don't be satisfied with the status quo. Don't compare yourselves with others and what they are doing, but compare your life with the Word of God and do what God wants you to do.

## Thought for the day

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What scenario is presented in verse 1?

What do you think this verse might mean?

What problems will wealth cause (vs 8)?

What freedom will a poor man have (vs 8)?

*\*\*\*This verse is not saying that you should desire to be poor, nor does it say it is wrong to be rich. Solomon appears to be pointing out that a person with riches will be threatened a little more with people desiring to take their money, while a poor man doesn't have to worry about that. I believe the point is that it is easy to desire a different status in life, but we don't realize that no status is without its struggles.*

What will cause great rejoicing (vs 9)?

What influence will a wicked man have (vs 9)?

If you were to die today, how do you think others would remember you?

What is the cause of strife (vs 10)?

What will be the result of those who listen to advice (vs 10)?

What do you think is the main point of verse 10?

What will quickly dwindle (vs 11)?

What are ways that people seek to quickly gain wealth?

What will grow over time (vs 11)?

What does verse 11 teach us about handling our wealth?

Describe how you are carrying out this verse in your daily life?

## “By Your Actions”

**Study:** Proverbs 13:12-16

**Reading:** Matthew 7:1-29

**Memory:** Proverbs 3:35

One of the greatest decisions that a football coach must make is deciding who will be his quarterback. Fans quickly become impatient with a quarterback who struggles to get the job done. Several years ago, I watched one of the last games of the season for the Detroit Lions. Their quarterback had struggled all year and the fans were begging the coach to give their first round draft pick, Chuck Long, a chance to show his stuff. The coach gave into the chants of the fans and put Chuck in. The first pass of his career was a 64 yard touchdown pass. The excitement for the future was high because of that completed pass. The next year was entered with great anticipation as high hopes were placed on Chuck Long to take them to the Superbowl. Needless to say, Chuck's success was short-lived and the Lions still struggled.

Today, we are going to see how we need to be faithful examples of Christ. Just as an all-star is an all-star because of his consistency, we are godly because of our faithfulness to God.

## What Does the Bible Say?

When a person hopes for something to happen, and it doesn't happen, it causes him to experience great disappointment. But when something that a person has been hoping for happens, it renews his energy and strength. The spiritual application of this verse is not exactly clear, but we do know that if we have hope in God, He will never fail us (vs 12).

The person who despises instruction and doesn't seek to learn from the Word of God will face the punishment that he brings upon himself. On the other hand, those who approach God and His Word with reverence and awe of Him, will be greatly rewarded. God will reward evil with evil and good with good (vs 13).

In general, Israel is a pretty dry land with very few fresh water sources, but there are many springs in Israel that produce an abundant amount of fresh water. That is why Solomon described wisdom as a fountain of

life. It doesn't just help us a little, but we receive abundant help when we listen to godly, wise men. When a person is striving to become wise, the wisdom that he gains will help keep him from the traps of Satan and the enslavement of sin (vs 14).

When we are able to gain a proper understanding of any given situation, it will be much easier to make the wise choice. When we exercise that wisdom, those involved in the situation will look on us with favor, but when we don't seek to have understanding, we are setting ourselves up to go through difficult times (vs 15).

The actions of a person determine whether they are a wise man or a foolish man. If you find yourself continually making foolish decisions, that probably means that you are a fool and need to change something in your life. If you have been making wise decisions, that probably means that you are on your way to being wise and that you need to continually work to gain more wisdom. Just as a sports player is good because of the good that he does on the court, field or rink, we are known by our works (vs 16). Matthew 7:20 says, "Thus you will recognize them by their fruits."

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

How are you known by those who see you every day? How are you known by those who know you best? Are you known as a wise person who is continually doing what is right, or are you known as a foolish person? Many people get upset because others judge them based upon their actions. They say, "But that's not really who I am!" The fact is, that is who you are. You are not two different people who are different on the inside and out. What you really believe and think on the inside will be displayed in your outward actions. If your close friends wouldn't consider you wise and righteous, then you need to evaluate what areas of your life need to change. Every day of your life, you need to allow God to speak to you through His Word to show you how you can be more like Him.

### **Suggestions for Prayer**

- \* *Thank God for bringing correction through His Word.*
- \* *Ask God to show you what changes you need to make to become wise.*
- \* *Praise God because He is a God of wisdom.*

What makes the heart sick (vs 12)?

What is compared to a tree of life (vs 12)?

What do you think verse 12 means?

How have you experienced the truth of verse 12 in your life?

How do you think you can apply verse 12 in your life to help you become a wiser person?

What will happen to the person who despises instruction found in the commandments of God (vs 13)?

What will be the results for a person who follows the instructions of God (vs 13)?

What is a "fountain of life (vs 14 - ESV)?

Why would a fountain of life be so important?

How will listening to wise teaching be a help to you (vs 14)?

What wins favor (vs 16)?

How have you seen this true in your life?

What leads to ruin (vs 16)?

What do you think the "way of the treacherous" is (vs 15 - ESV)?

What do you think it means to be "prudent" (vs 16 - ESV)?

What will a foolish man do (vs 16)?

How have you seen this verse practically carried out in life?

# “Are You Faithful”

**Study:** Proverbs 13:17-19

**Reading:** I Corinthians 4:1-21

**Memory:** Proverbs 3:35

**W**hen I used to coach soccer, one of the things that I emphasized the most is the importance of working hard. Even if a player wasn't that talented, they could still be a good player if they hustled. When a player would stand around or not give full effort, they didn't do much good for the team. I would have rather played with fewer players that give their all than field a full team that didn't. When players didn't work hard, they would get in the way and hurt the team. At least if they weren't there, the other players wouldn't count on them, only to be let down.

Today, we are going to see how we either help the cause of Christ or we hurt it. Look at your life and determine whether you are helping the cause of Christ or hurting it.

## What Does the Bible Say?

Verse 17 has to do with being reliable or unreliable. Solomon didn't have a phone, email, or even the US postal service to use to correspond with others. He and others living in that day relied on messengers to carry all their messages. When a message didn't reach the proper destination, it could cause many problems. An army might not receive the message to move to a different spot. Another country might not receive a message that was sent to resolve a conflict. For one reason or another, the wicked messenger turns aside from his purpose to follow his wicked desires. On the other hand, the messenger that was faithful and promptly delivered the message would help a country avoid destruction. Solomon described how a faithful messenger will bring health to a country. They would be able to avoid many of the conflicts and problems that would be caused by an unfaithful messenger. This principle applies to our spiritual warfare. When we are faithful to Christ, we are helping to create a healthy church body, but when we are unfaithful, we begin to cause problems for the church. Just as a messenger can get turned aside from his purpose, we can get caught up in the world and forget why God has left us on the earth (vs

17).

Throughout the book of Proverbs, we have seen how Solomon put great emphasis on listening to instruction. He knew men tend to let their pride stand in the way of admitting that they are wrong. The person who rejects instruction will bring destruction to his own life. It will cause spiritual hardness and will result in problems and difficulties. To avoid these problems, we need to listen when we are being corrected. When we listen to correction, it will bring us honor and blessings. Whether reproof comes from reading the word of God or a godly Christian, we need to be willing to compare our lives with the Word of God (vs 18).

It causes great joy in a person's life when their desires are fulfilled. But those who live in evil not always get to experience that joy. They love their evil and because of that, they will not experience the blessings that God gives. They will not have their prayers answered and will not find satisfaction or fulfillment in life. They will experience disappointment and pain (vs 19).

## How Does this Apply to Me?

Are you a faithful Christian? Do your everyday actions help the cause of Christ, or do they hurt the cause of Christ? In Luke 11:23, Jesus said, "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters." You are either helping the cause of Christ, or hurting the cause of Christ. There is not much room for middle ground. If you say that you aren't helping but you aren't hurting, you are probably wrong. One of the best ways that you can help the cause of Christ is by being faithful to Him. This means that your public and private life should be lived for His glory.

## Suggestions for Prayer

- \* *Ask God to help you be a help and not a hindrance.*
- \* *Thank God because He wants to use you.*
- \* *Praise God because He is a God of faithfulness.*

## Thought for the day

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Who gets into trouble (vs 17)?

Who brings healing (vs 17)?

How do you think this verse can apply to your life today?

*\*\*\*The key emphasis in this verse is on faithfulness. The messenger that gets sidetracked and doesn't carry out his task commits wrong by allowing himself to neglect his duty. On the other hand, the person that is faithful to carry out what they are called to do brings great help and healing to all those they are involved with.*

Describe how you are a faithful messenger. If not, describe how you can become one.

What two things come to a person who ignores instruction (vs 18)?

- 1.
- 2.

Why do you think these things are a result of a person who will not be corrected?

How can a person receive honor (vs 18)?

Describe how good or bad you are at receiving instruction.

What is sweet to the soul (vs 19)?

Why do fools fail to obtain personal desires (vs 19)?

*\*\*\*Everyone has dreams and desires. Those who see these things accomplished often do so because of their wisdom. Those who are foolish want these things, but hardly ever reach their goals because of their foolish choices.*

What are dreams and desires you have? How can wisdom help you obtain them?

## “*Godly Discipline*”

**Study:** Proverbs 13:20-25

**Reading:** Proverbs 29:15-25, Hebrews 12:1-15

**Memory:** Proverbs 3:35

**O**ne very effective form of discipline that we used as a family was spanking. As a child, I was occasionally spanked when I disobeyed my parents and I was very thankful for it, so I chose to spank my children at times when they needed correction. Spankings did not occur very often when we parented, but at times, our children needed to face the consequences for their actions. My wife and I were very careful not to spank out of anger and to take the time to fully explain to the child being disciplined that their disobedience is what caused them to be spanked. Though this type of child rearing seems to be “out of style” in our society today, I do believe it is biblical and I do believe it was extremely helpful in raising healthy, godly children.

Today, we are going to look at part of God’s model for discipline. This model has helped countless numbers of parents, including mine, to raise children who are obedient to God and their authorities.

### What Does the Bible Say?

Choosing the right friends and companions is a very important part of wisdom. Proverbs 27:17 says, “Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.” When our close friends are wise, it will help us to become wise. When we hang around with fools, we will become more foolish. Many people have gone down the wrong path because they chose the wrong people as their friend. This doesn’t mean that we shouldn’t befriend the unsaved person or the fool, but it does mean that when we are choosing who will be our intimate friends that we should choose very wisely (vs 20).

Solomon didn’t hesitate to describe the wonderful benefits of living righteously and the terrible consequences for those who live ungodly lives. He knew that it was natural for many people to choose unrighteousness over righteousness, but he also knew the pain that sin causes. God will bless the godly in great ways financially, physically and spiritually, but

will cause loss in those areas in an unrighteous person's life (vs 21-22).

The contrast that Solomon presented in verse 23 is between the poor yet industrious man and the rich careless man. The poor man will be rewarded for his efforts, but the rich man will have problems because of his greed (vs 23).

In verse 24, Solomon wrote about the need for parents to discipline their children. He tells us that if we don't discipline our children, then we don't love our children like we should. The reference to the "rod" doesn't mean that parents should beat their children, but it does give support to the idea of physical discipline. Though the current modern thought is to attempt to reason with children, the reality is that mental reasoning does not always do the trick, especially with younger children. They need to understand that there are physical consequences for their actions.

Those who live in righteousness will live a fulfilled and satisfied life, but those who live in sin will never be satisfied. They will always want more and they will find that having more never brings satisfaction (vs 25).

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

What type of friends do you hang around? Are your friends godly or do they live like the world? Many people think that they are an exception to the rule and that they can live righteously while being close companions with the unrighteous, but it doesn't work that way. You need to establish relationships with godly Christians so that you can help them and so that they can help you.

Do you think that physical punishment for children is wrong? In our modern day society, there is a strong movement to outlaw spanking or even the slapping of a hand. People call it child abuse and think it should be stopped. This is often a reaction to discipline methods that were practiced out of anger and not out of love. Loving discipline often involves physical punishment such as the spanking of a child's bottom or the slapping of a hand (toddler age). When practiced properly, physical punishment is very effective and is a very loving way to help train a child. Don't let society control your thinking when it comes to determining what is helpful and loving.

## **Suggestions for Prayer**

- \* Ask God to show you who to let speak into your life.
- \* Thank God for parents who properly discipline their children.

Who becomes wise (vs 20)?

Who suffers harm (vs 20)?

Why do you think it is so important to pick who you interact with on a daily basis?

Do you think this verse can also apply to the voices that you let speak into your life on a daily basis (things like podcasts, social media, news stories, media choices)? Explain your answer.

What pursued sinners (vs 21)?

What do you think Solomon meant by this?

What will the righteous experience (vs 21)?

What will a good man do (vs 22)?

What will happen to the wealth of a sinner (vs 22)?

What do you think verse 22 is teaching?

*\*\*\*The focus of the verse is not on leaving money to your children, but it is another way of saying that you will be blessed when you are righteous.*

What often happens to poor people (vs 23)?

What do you think Solomon is encouraging through his observation in verse 23?

What did Solomon say about discipline in verse 24?

How do you view physical discipline for children? Why do you think you view it this way?

How will God reward the righteous (vs 25)?

# ***“Working For God”***

**Study:** Proverbs 14:1-4

**Reading:** Proverbs 31:10-28, I Corinthians 9:1-14

**Memory:** Proverbs 3:35

I have talked with many people who were in the final days of their lives and never once have I encountered a person who said, “I wish I would have worked more.” Many people have told me that they wish they would have spent more time with their family and had taken time to do more things with the ones they loved. As I look back in my life, one of the things I am most grateful for is mothers who chose to place their families above their own personal desires. My mother was a stay at home mom who did work during the school year, but only when we were at school. My wife’s mom was a stay at home mother who greatly invested in her family and chose not to work outside the home while her children were young. Her influence on her family has made and continues to make a powerful difference in the world. My wife chose not to work outside the home through most of the child rearing years, but spent hours investing in our children when they were home and many hours when they weren’t home by making our home a place the children loved.

Today, we will be reminded of the importance of motherhood and why it is so important to follow the biblical plan for a family rather than the one that society tries to sell us.

## **What Does the Bible Say?**

Our society has corrupted the biblical idea of motherhood. From a young age, many women are encouraged to be just like the men and to find their value and worth in their careers. Though there is nothing wrong with a woman having a career, one of the greatest gifts that God has given to most women is the ability to be a mother. Women who are wise place their home and family as a priority in their lives. The woman who is not wise, places herself and her desires above those of her family and ends up hurting her family in the process (vs 1).

We have seen how Solomon spent much of his time talking about the benefits of living righteously. He didn’t just tell us that we should be

righteous, but he also told us how. One of the best ways to become a righteous person is to develop a proper fear of the Lord. When we gain an understanding of who He is, we will also have a greater respect for Him. The more we know Him and respect Him, the more we will desire to live for Him (vs 2).

A foolish man brings punishment upon himself. The reason that he will have to be corrected is because he has made foolish decisions. We can avoid a lot of pain and misery in our lives if we choose to do what is right. Wisdom will protect us from the ill effects of sin (vs 3).

If we want to have meaningful results in our lives, it will take hard work. I would guess that one of the least favorite tasks of most farmers is cleaning their barns. A farmer could avoid having to clean his barn if he didn’t have any animals. But if he didn’t have any animals, he wouldn’t be able to do his work. If you want to be successful at your job or in your spiritual life, you will have to put work and effort into what you are doing (vs 4).

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

Have you let society give you the wrong idea of motherhood? It has become natural for both parents to work full time jobs outside of the home. Though in some cases this is necessary, in many other cases, parents overlook the great value a mother has to her children and home by not working a full time job. A mother’s main priority should be her home and family. In many cases both parents don’t need to work full time to survive, but with all the things our society has to offer, parents often feel this way. This type of thinking often puts personal wants and desires above the good of their children. Financial sacrifices will have to be made to allow a mother to be at home more with her children, but those sacrifices are worth it. There is not a “one size fits all” approach to families and parenting, but it is the responsibility of parents to carefully examine how God would have them raise their families.

## **Suggestions for Prayer**

- \* *Ask God to help you understand the biblical direction for your family.*
- \* *Thank God for giving you the ability to serve Him.*
- \* *Praise God because His ways are best.*

Who focuses on building her home (vs 1)?

Why do you think she is described as wise?

How do you think a woman can tear her home down?

Why do you think it has become so common in our society today to think that a woman needs to work outside of the home?

Why is deciding if a mother should or shouldn't work outside of the home be a "one size fits all" proposition?

What will a person who fears the Lord do (vs 2)?

Who despises the way of the Lord (vs 2)?

What will bring punishment to a fool (vs 3)?

What will bring deliverance to a wise man (vs 3)?

Think about how you have used your words in the past few days. Would you be described as a fool or a wise man. Explain.

Why would a manger be clean (vs 4)?

Why would a manger be dirty (vs 4)?

What do you think Solomon was teaching in verse 4?

*\*\*\*The only clean barns are those without any animals, but if there were not animals, work would not be getting done and crops would not be grown.*

What do you think are some practical applications of this verse?

*\*\*\*This could apply to homes, churches or numerous other places. If you don't have people, then things are cleaner, but you miss out on all the joys those people provide.*

*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. 35 The wise will inherit honor, but fools get disgrace.*