Proverbs

Introduction

1 These words are the wise teachings of Solomon, the son of David. Solomon was the king of Israel.

2 These words are written so that people can be wise and know the right things to do. These words will help people understand wise teachings. 3 These words will teach people to develop their minds in the right way—people will learn the right way to be honest, fair, and good. 4 These wise words can teach people who need to learn wisdom. These words can teach young people the things they need to know and how to use that information. 5 Even wise people should listen to these words. They will learn more and become even wiser. And people who are skilled at solving problems will gain even more understanding. 6 Then those people will be able to understand wise sayings and stories with hidden meanings. Those people will be able to understand the things wise men say.

7 The first thing a person must learn is to respect and obey the Lord—that leads to true wisdom. But evil people hate discipline and true wisdom.

Solomon’s Advice to His Son

8 My son,* listen to your father when he corrects you. And don’t ignore what your mother teaches you. 9 The things your parents teach you are like a nice hat or a beautiful necklace that makes a person look even better.

Warning Against Joining with Bad People

10 My son, some people love to do bad things—and those people will try to make you do bad things too. Don’t listen to them!

11 Those bad people might say, “Come with us! We are going to hide and wait for someone to kill. We will attack some innocent person. 12 We will kill that person. We will send that person to the place of death. We will destroy that person and send him to the grave. 13 We will steal all kinds of things worth lots of money. We will fill our houses with these things. 14 So come with us and help us do these things. We will all share everything we get!”

15 My son, don’t follow those people. Don’t even take the first step along that path.

16 Those bad people race to do bad things. They are in a hurry to kill someone!

17 People spread out nets to catch birds. But it is useless to set the trap while the birds are watching. 18 So those bad people hide themselves and wait to kill someone. But really, they will be destroyed by their own trap! 19 Greedy people are always destroyed by the things they take.

The Good Woman—Wisdom

20 Listen! Wisdom* is trying to teach people. She (Wisdom) is shouting in the streets and in the market place. 21 She is calling out on the busy street corners. She is near the city gates trying to get people to listen to her. [Wisdom says:]

Wisdom Solomon uses the picture of Wisdom and Foolishness as being two women. Both women are trying to get the attention of the young man Solomon is writing to. Wisdom is like a good woman calling the young man to be wise and obey God. Foolishness is like a bad woman calling the young man to be foolish and do many kinds of sin.
22“You are foolish people. How long will you continue doing foolish things? How long will you make fun of wisdom? How long will you continue to hate knowledge? 23You should have listened to my advice and teaching. I would have told you everything I knew. I would have given you all of my knowledge.

24“But you refused to listen to me. I tried to help. I offered my hand—but you refused to accept my help. 25You turned away and ignored all of my advice. You refused to accept my words. 26So, I will laugh at your trouble. I will enjoy seeing trouble come to you! 27Great trouble will come to you like a bad storm. Problems will hit you like a strong wind. Your troubles and sadness will be a very great burden on you.

28“When all these things happen, you will ask for my help. But I will not help you. You will look for me, but you will not find me. 29I will not help because you never wanted my knowledge. You refused to fear and respect the Lord. 30You people refused to listen to my words of advice. You would not listen to me when I showed you the right way. 31You people lived the way you wanted to live. You followed your own advice. So now you must accept the result of your own actions!

32“Foolish people die because they refuse to follow wisdom. They are happy to continue in their foolish ways, and this will destroy them. 33But the person who obeys me will live safely. That person will be comfortable. He will not have to be afraid of evil.”

Listen to Wisdom

2My son, accept these things I say. Remember my commands. 2Listen to wisdom, and try your best to understand. 3Cry out for wisdom, and shout for understanding. 4Look for wisdom like silver. Look for it like a hidden treasure. 5If you do these things, then you will learn to respect the Lord. You will truly learn about God.

6The Lord gives wisdom. Knowledge and understanding come from his mouth. 7He saves and protects good, honest people. 8He protects people who are fair to other people. He guards his holy people.

9So the Lord will give you his wisdom. Then you will understand the things that are good and fair and right. 10Wisdom will come into your heart, and your soul will be happy with knowledge.

11Wisdom will protect you, and understanding will guard you. 12Wisdom and understanding will stop you from living the wrong way like evil people. Those people are evil even in the things they say. 13They have given up goodness and now live in darkness (sin). 14They are happy in doing wrong and enjoy the bad ways of evil. 15Those people can’t be trusted—they lie and cheat. But your wisdom and understanding will keep you away from all these things.

16Wisdom will save you from the woman stranger. Wisdom will save you from that foreign woman who says such sweet words when she tempts you to sin with her. 17She married when she was young—but she left her husband. She forgot the marriage vows she made before God. 18And now, going with her into her house leads to death! If you follow her, she will lead you to the grave! 19She herself is like the grave—men who go into her lose their life and never return.

20Wisdom will help you follow the example of good people. Wisdom will help you live the way good people live. 21Good honest people will be able to live on their land. Simple honest people will get to keep their land. 22But evil people will lose their land. People who lie and cheat will be taken away from the land.

Living Right Will Add to Your Life

3My son, don’t forget my teaching. Remember the things I tell you to do. 2The things I teach you will give you a longer, happier, and more peaceful life.

3Never stop loving. Always be loyal and true. 4Make these things a part of yourself—tie them around your neck and write them on your heart. 4Then you will be wise and pleasing to God and people!

Trust the Lord

5Trust the Lord completely! Don’t depend on your own knowledge. 6Think about God in all that you do. Then he will help you. 7Don’t
depend on your own wisdom. But respect the Lord and stay away from evil. If you do this, then it will be like medicine for your body or a refreshing drink that makes you strong again.

Give to the Lord
9 Honor the Lord with your wealth. Give him the best you have. Then you will have all you need. Your barns will be full of grain and your barrels will be flowing over with wine.

Accept the Lord’s Punishment
11 My son, sometimes the Lord will show you that you are doing wrong. But don’t be angry about this punishment. Try to learn from it. Why? Because the Lord corrects the people he loves. Yes, God is like a father that corrects the son he loves.

The Blessings of Wisdom
13 The person who finds wisdom will be very happy. That person will be blessed when he begins to understand. The profit that comes from wisdom is better than silver. The profit from wisdom is better than fine gold! Wisdom is worth much more than jewels. Nothing you can want is as valuable as wisdom!
16 Wisdom gives you long life, riches, and honor. People with wisdom live peaceful, happy lives. Wisdom is like the Tree of Life.* It gives full life to people that accept it. People that keep wisdom will be truly happy!
19 The Lord used wisdom and understanding to make the earth and sky. The Lord used his knowledge to make the oceans and the clouds that produce rain.
21 My son, don’t ever let wisdom out of your sight! Guard your ability to think and plan wisely. Wisdom and understanding will give you life and make it more beautiful. Then you will live safely and you will not fall. When you lie down, you will not be afraid. When you rest, your sleep will be peaceful.
25 Don’t be afraid of some sudden disaster, the Lord will give you strength. And don’t be afraid of what evil people can do to you.* The Lord will protect you and keep you from being trapped.

The Wisdom of Living Right
27 Whenever you can, do good things for people who need help. If your neighbor asks you for something and you have it, then give it to him right then! Don’t tell him, “Come back tomorrow and get it.”
29 Don’t make plans to hurt your neighbor. You live near each other for your own safety!
30 Don’t take another person to court without a good reason. Don’t do that if he hasn’t done anything wrong to you.
31 Some people are easily angered and quickly do bad things. Don’t be like that. Why? Because the Lord hates evil people and he supports good, honest people.
33 The Lord is against the families of evil people. But he blesses the homes of people who live right.
34 If a person is proud and makes fun of other people, the Lord will punish him and make fun of him. But the Lord is kind to humble people.
35 Wise people live a life that brings honor. Foolish people live a life that brings shame.

The Importance of Wisdom
4 Sons, listen to your father’s teachings. Pay attention so you will understand! Why? Because the things I teach you are important and good. So don’t ever forget my teachings.
3 I was young once too! I was my daddy’s little boy and my mother’s only son. And my father taught me these things. He said to me, “Remember the things I say. Obey my commands and you will live. Get wisdom and understanding! Don’t forget my words. Always follow my teachings. Don’t turn away from wisdom. Then wisdom will protect you. Love wisdom, and wisdom will keep you safe.”
7 Wisdom begins when you decide to get wisdom. So use everything you own to get wisdom! Then you will become wise.
8 Love wisdom, and wisdom will make you great. Make wisdom most important, and wisdom

Tree of Life The tree whose fruit gives people the power to live forever. See Gen. 3:22 and Rev. 22:1–2. And don’t ... do to you Or, “And don’t be afraid of the destruction that comes to evil people.”
will bring you honor. 

9She (Wisdom) is the greatest thing that can happen to you.

10Son, listen to me. Do the things I say, and you will live long. 

11I am teaching you about wisdom. I am leading you along the straight path. 

12Follow this path, and your feet won’t be caught in any trap. You can run and not stumble. You will be safe in the things you try to do. 

13Always remember these lessons. Don’t forget these lessons. They are your life! 

14Don’t follow the path evil people walk on. 

15Stay away from evil. Don’t go near it. Walk straight past it. 

16Bad people can’t sleep until they do something wrong. Those people can’t sleep until they hurt some other person. 

17Those people can’t live without doing evil and hurting other people. 

18Good people are like the early morning light. The sun rises and the day becomes brighter and happier. 

19But bad people are like a dark night. They are lost in the darkness and they fall over things they can’t see. 

20My son, pay attention to the things I say. Listen closely to my words. 

21Don’t let my words leave you. Remember the things I say. 

22My teaching will give life to people who listen. My words are like good health to the body. 

23The most important thing is for you to be careful in the things you think. Your thoughts control your life. 

24Don’t bend the truth and say things that are not right. Don’t tell lies. 

25Don’t let yourself turn away from the good and wise goals that are before you. 

26Be very careful what you do. Live a good life. 

27Don’t leave the straight path—the way that is good and right. But always turn away from evil. 

The Wisdom of Avoiding Adultery 

My son, listen to my wise teaching. Pay attention to my words of understanding. 

2Then you will remember to live wisely and watch what you say. 

3Another man’s wife might be very charming; the words from her lips so sweet and inviting. 

4But in the end, she will bring only bitterness and pain. It will be like bitter poison and a sharp sword! 

5She is on a path leading to death. She will lead you straight to the grave! 

6Don’t follow her! She has lost the right way and doesn’t know it. Be careful! Follow the way that leads to life! 

Adultery Can Ruin You 

7Now my sons, listen to me. Don’t forget the words I say. 

8Stay away from the woman who does the sin of adultery. 

9Don’t even go near the door of her house. 

10If you do, then other people will get the honor you should have had. And some stranger will get all the things you worked years to get. 

11People you don’t know will take all your wealth. Other people will get the things you worked for. 

12-13Then you will say, “Why didn’t I listen to my parents? Why didn’t I listen to my teachers? I refused to be disciplined. I refused to be corrected. 

14So now I have suffered through almost every kind of trouble people can have—and everyone knows it!” 

Enjoy Your Own Wife 

15-16Drink only the water that flows from your own well. And don’t let your water flow out into the streets. 

17Your children should belong only to you. You should not have to share them with people out of your own home. 

18So, be happy with your own wife. Enjoy the woman you married while you were young. 

19She is like a beautiful deer, a lovely fawn. Let her love satisfy you completely. Let her love intoxicate you always. 

20But don’t go staggering into the arms of another woman! 

21The Lord clearly sees everything you do. The Lord watches where you go. 

22The sins of an evil person will trap him. His sins will be like ropes holding him. 

23That evil person will die because he refused to be disciplined. He will be trapped by his own desires.
Dangers of Helping a Person Get a Loan

6 My son, don’t make yourself responsible for another person’s debts. Don’t make such deals with friends or with strangers. 2 If you do, then you will be trapped. And you will have trapped yourself with your own words! 3 You are under that person’s power. So go to him and free yourself. Beg that person to free you from his debt. 4 Don’t even wait to rest or sleep. 5 Escape from that trap like a deer running from a hunter. Free yourself like a bird flying out of a trap.

The Dangers of Being Lazy

6 Lazy person, you should become like the ant. See what the ant does. Learn from the ant. 7 The ant has no ruler, no boss, no leader. 8 But during summer, the ant gathers all its food. The ant saves its food. And in the winter, it has plenty of food. 9 Lazy person, how long will you lie there? When will you get up from your rest? 10 The lazy person says, “I need a short nap. I will lie here for a short rest.” 11 But he sleeps and sleeps. And he becomes poorer and poorer. Soon he will have nothing! It will be like a robber has come and stolen everything.

The Evil Person

12 An evil and worthless person tells lies and says bad things. 13 He winks his eye and makes signs with his hands and feet to trick people. 14 That person is a troublemaker. He is always planning to do something bad. He makes trouble everywhere. 15 But he will be punished. All of a sudden, disaster will strike. He will suddenly be destroyed! And there will be no one to help him!

Seven Things That the Lord Hates

16 The Lord hates these six, no seven, things: 17 eyes that show a man is proud, tongues that tells lies, hands that kill innocent people, hearts that plan bad things to do, feet that run to do evil things, a person who tells lies in court and says things that are not true, a person who starts arguments and causes fights between other people.

Wisdom Will Keep You from Adultery

7 My son, remember my words. Don’t forget the commands I give you. 2 Obey my commands and you will have life. Make my teaching the most important thing in your life.

prostitute A woman paid by men for sexual sin. Sometimes this also means a person who is not faithful to God and stops following him.
Keep my commands and teachings with you always. Tie them around your fingers. Write them on your heart. Treat wisdom like a sister. Treat understanding like a part of your family. Then they will protect you from the “other women.” They will protect you from their nice words that can lead you into sin.

One day I was looking out my window at some foolish teenagers and noticed one that was especially foolish. He walked through the market place toward that bad woman’s corner and walked straight to her house. It was almost dark—the sun was setting. The night was beginning. The woman came out of the house to meet him. She was dressed like a prostitute. She had plans for the young man. She was wild and rebellious. She wasn’t going to stay at home! She walked the streets. She went everywhere looking for trouble.

She grabbed the young man and kissed him. Without any shame she looked him in the eye and said, “I had to offer a fellowship sacrifice today. I gave what I promised to give. Now I have plenty of food. So I came out to invite you to join me. I looked and looked for you. And now I found you! I put clean sheets on my bed. They are very beautiful sheets from Egypt. I put perfume on my bed. The myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon smell wonderful! Come, we can enjoy ourselves all night. We can make love until dawn. My husband is gone. He is away on a business trip. He took enough money with him for a long trip. He won’t come home for two weeks.”

The woman used those words to tempt the young man. Her smooth words tricked him. And the young man followed her to the trap. He was like a bull being led to the slaughter. He was like a deer walking into a trap, with a hunter ready to put an arrow through its heart. The boy was like a bird flying into a net. He didn’t know the danger he was in.

Now sons, listen to me. Pay attention to the words I say. Don’t let your heart lead you toward an evil woman—don’t follow where she wants to lead you. Don’t follow her ways. She has caused many men to fall. She has destroyed many men. Her house is the place of death. Her path leads straight to death!

Listen! Wisdom and Understanding are calling for you to listen.
They stand at the top of the hill by the road where the paths meet.
They are near the gates of the city. They are calling out from the open doors.

Wisdom says, “Men, I call out to you. I call out to all people. If you are foolish, learn to be wise. Foolish men, learn to understand. Listen! The things I teach are important. I tell you things that are right. My words are true. I hate evil lies. The things I say are right. There is nothing false or wrong in my words. All these sayings are clear to the person who has understanding. The person with knowledge understands these things. Accept my discipline. It is worth more than silver. It is worth more than the best gold. Wisdom is worth more than pearls. It is worth more than anything a person can want.”

“I am Wisdom. I live with good judgment. You can find me with Knowledge and Good Planning. If a person respects the Lord, then that person will hate evil. I (Wisdom) hate pride and people who think they are better than other people. I hate evil ways, and a lying mouth.
PROVERBS 8:14–9:9

14 But I give people the ability to make good decisions and have good judgment. I give understanding and power! Kings use me to rule. Rulers use me to make fair laws. Every good ruler on earth uses me to rule the people under them. I love people who love me. And if people try hard to find me, they will find me. I also have riches and honor to give. I give true wealth and success. The things I give are better than fine gold. And my gifts are better than pure silver. I lead people in the right way. I lead them along the paths of right judgment. I give wealth to people who love me. Yes, I fill their houses with treasures. I was the first thing the Lord made, long ago in the beginning. I was made in the beginning. I was made first, before the world. I was formed before the oceans; I was made before there was water. I was born before the mountains. I was born before the hills. I was born before the Lord made the earth. I was born before the fields. I was born before God made the first dust of the world. I was there when the Lord made the skies. I was there when the Lord drew the circle around the land and set the limits for the ocean. I was born before the Lord put the clouds in the sky. And I was there when the Lord put water in the ocean. I was there when the Lord set the limits for water in the seas. The water can’t rise higher than the Lord allows. I was there when the Lord made the foundations of the earth. I was beside him like a skilled worker. The Lord was happy every day because of me.

31 The Lord was excited about the world he made. He was happy about the people that he put there.

32 “Now, children, listen to me! You can be happy too, if you follow my ways!

33 Listen to my teachings and become wise. Don’t refuse to listen.

34 The person who listens to me will be happy. He watches every day at my doors. He waits at my doorway.

35 Any person who finds me finds life. He will get good things from the Lord!

36 But the person who sins against me hurts himself. All people who hate me love death!”

Wisdom and Stupidity

9 Wisdom built her house. She put the seven columns* in it. She cooked meat and made wine. She put food on her table. And then she sent her servants to town to invite people to come up to the hill in the city and eat with her. She said, “Come, you people who need to learn.” She also invited foolish people. She said, “Come, eat the food of my wisdom. And drink the wine that I have made. Leave your old, foolish ways, and you will have life. Follow the way of understanding.”

7 If you try to show a proud man that he is wrong, then he will only criticize you. That man only makes fun of God’s wisdom. If you tell an evil man that he is wrong, then he will make fun of you. So, if a man thinks that he is better than other people, don’t tell him that he is wrong. He will hate you for it. But if you try to help a wise man then he will respect you. If you teach a wise man, then he will become wiser. If you teach a good man, then he will learn more.

seven columns In ancient Israel, many houses had four main rooms with seven columns to support the roof. This shows Wisdom had a good house with a solid foundation.
Respect for the Lord is the first step toward getting wisdom. Getting knowledge of the Lord is the first step toward getting understanding.

If you are wise, then your life will be longer.

If you become wise, then you have become wise for your own good. But if you become proud and make fun of other people, then only you are to blame for your trouble.

A foolish person is like a loud, evil woman. She does not have knowledge. She sits at the door of her house. She sits on her chair on the hill in the city. And when people walk by, she calls out to them. Those people are not interested in her, but she says, "Come you people who need to learn." She also invited foolish people. But she (Foolishness) says, "If you steal water, it tastes better than your own. If you steal bread, it tastes better than the bread you cook yourself."

And those poor foolish people didn't know that her house was filled only with ghosts. She (Foolishness) had invited them into the deepest parts of the place of death!

Solomon’s Proverbs

These are the proverbs (wise sayings) of Solomon:

A wise son makes his father happy. But a foolish son makes his mother very sad.

If a person gets money by doing bad things, then that money is worthless. But doing good can save you from death.

The Lord cares for good people. He gives them the food they need. But the Lord takes away the things that evil people want.

A lazy person will be poor. But a person that works hard will be rich.

A smart man gathers the crops at the right time. But if a person sleeps during the time of harvest and does not gather the crops, then he will be shamed.

People ask God to bless a good person. Evil people might say those good things, but their words only hide the bad things they are planning.*

Good people leave good memories. But evil people will soon be forgotten.

A wise person obeys when someone tells him to do something. But a fool argues and brings trouble to himself.

A good, honest person is safe. But a crooked person who cheats will be caught.

A person who hides the truth causes trouble. A person who speaks openly makes peace.*

A good man’s words make life better. But the words from an evil man only shows the bad that is inside him.*

Hate causes arguments. But love forgives every wrong thing people do.

Wise people say things that are worth hearing. But foolish people must be punished before they learn their lesson.

Wise people are quiet and learn new things. But foolish people talk and bring trouble to themselves.

Wealth protects the rich person. And poverty destroys a poor person.

If a person does good, then he is rewarded. He is given life. Evil brings only punishment.

A person who learns from his punishment can help other people live too. But a person who refuses to learn only leads people the wrong way.

A person who hides his hate might be telling a lie. But only a fool tries to find gossip he can spread.

A person who talks too much gets himself into trouble. A wise person learns to be quiet.

The words from a good person are like pure silver. But the thoughts from an evil person are worthless.

A good person’s words will help many people. But a fool’s stupidity will kill him.

A blessing from the Lord will bring you true wealth. And it won’t bring troubles with it.

The foolish person enjoys doing wrong. But a wise person is happy with wisdom.

An evil person will be defeated by the things he fears. But a good person will get the things that he wants.

Evil people ... planning Or, “But violence will cover the mouth of evil people.”

A person ... peace This is from the ancient Greek translation.

But the words ... inside him In Hebrew, this is like the second half of verse 6.
25 Evil people are destroyed by their trouble. But good people will stand strong forever.

26 Never let a lazy man do something for you. He will irritate you—like vinegar in your mouth or smoke in your eyes.

27 If you respect the Lord, then you will live long. But evil people will lose years from their life.

28 The things good people hope for bring happiness. The things bad people hope for bring ruin.

29 The Lord protects good people. But the Lord destroys people that do wrong.

30 Good people will always be safe. But evil people will be forced to leave the land.

31 Good people say wise things. But people will stop listening to a person that says things that bring trouble.

32 Good people know the right things to say. But evil people say things that bring trouble.

11 Some people use scales that don’t weigh things properly. They use those scales to cheat people. The Lord hates those false scales. But accurate scales please the Lord.

2 People that are proud and boast will become unimportant. But people who are humble will also become wise.

3 Good, honest people are guided by honesty. But evil people destroy themselves when they cheat other people.

4 On the day God judges people, money is worth nothing. But goodness will save people from death.

5 If a good person is honest, then his life will be easy. But an evil person is destroyed by the bad things he does.

6 Goodness saves the honest person. But evil people are trapped by the bad things they want.

7 After an evil man dies, there is no hope for him. Everything he hoped for is gone—all of it is worth nothing.

8 A good person will escape trouble, and that trouble will happen to some evil person.

9 An evil person can hurt other people by the things he says. But good people are protected by their wisdom.

10 When good people are successful, all the city is happy. When evil people are destroyed, people shout with joy.

11 A city becomes great when the honest people living there give it their blessing. But the things an evil person says can destroy a city.

12 A person without good sense says bad things about his neighbors. But a wise man knows when to be quiet.

13 Any person who tells secrets about other people can’t be trusted. But a person that can be trusted does not spread gossip.

14 A nation with weak leaders will fall. But many good advisers will make that nation safe.

15 If you promise to pay another person’s debt, then you will be sorry. You will be safe if you refuse to make those deals.

16 A kind, gentle woman gains respect. Pushy men gain only money.

17 A kind man will profit. But a mean man will cause trouble for himself.

18 An evil man cheats people and takes their money. But a person that is fair and does right will get the real reward.

19 Truly, goodness brings life. But evil people chase after evil and find death.

20 The Lord hates people that love to do evil. But he is happy with people that try to do right.

21 It is true that evil people will surely be punished. And good people will be made free.

22 If a woman is beautiful but foolish, it is the same as a beautiful gold ring in a pig’s nose.

23 When good people get what they want, it brings more good. But when evil people get what they want, it brings only trouble.

24 If a person gives freely, then he will gain even more. But if a person refuses to give, then he will become poor.

25 A person who gives freely will profit. If you help others, then you will gain more for yourself.

26 People become angry at a greedy man who refuses to sell his grain. But they are happy with a man who sells his grain to feed other people.

27 People respect a person who tries to do good. But a person who does evil gets nothing but trouble.

28 The person who trusts in his riches will fall like a dead leaf. But the good person will grow like a new green leaf.

29 If a person causes trouble for his family, then he will gain nothing. And in the end, the
foolish person will be forced to serve the
wise person.
30 The things a good man does are like the
Tree of Life.* A wise man gives new life to
people.*
31 If good people are rewarded on earth,
then surely evil people will also get what they
deserve.

If a person wants to be wise, then he is
not angry if someone tells him when he
does wrong. The person who hates to be told
that he is wrong is stupid.
2 The Lord is happy with a good person. But
the Lord judges an evil person to be guilty.
3 Evil people are never safe. But good
people will be safe and secure.
4 A husband is happy and proud with a good
wife. But if a woman makes her husband
ashamed, then she is like a sickness in his body.
5 Good people are fair and honest in the
things they plan to do. But don’t trust the
things an evil person tells you.
6 Evil people use their words to hurt other
people. But the words of a good person can
save people from danger.
7 Evil people are destroyed and there is
nothing left. But people remember a good
man long after he is gone.
8 People praise a wise man. But people
don’t respect a stupid person.
9 It is better to be a person who is not
important but works hard than to be a person
who pretends to be important but has no food.
10 A good man cares for his animals. But
evil people can’t be kind.
11 The farmer that works with his land will
have enough food. But the person who wastes
time on worthless ideas is foolish.
12 Evil people always want to find wrong
things to do. But good people have strength
that goes deep like roots.
13 An evil person says foolish things and is
trapped by his words. But a good person
escapes from that kind of trouble.

A wise man gives new life to people  Or, “A wise man
takes souls.”

A person is rewarded because of the good
things that he says. In the same way, the work
he does gives him profit.
15 A foolish person always thinks his own
way is best. But a wise person listens to the
things other people tell him.
16 A foolish person is easily upset. But a
smart* person quickly forgives other people if
they say something wrong.
17 If a person tells the truth, then he is
honest in the things he says. But if a person
lies, then that leads to trouble.
18 If a person speaks words without
thinking, then those words can hurt like a
sword. But a wise person is careful with the
things he says. His words can heal those hurts.
19 If a person tells a lie, then those words are
wasted quickly. But the truth will live forever.
20 Evil people always want to cause trouble.
But people who work for peace will be happy.
21 Good people will be kept safe by the
Lord. But evil people will have many troubles.
22 The Lord hates people who tell lies. But the
Lord is happy with people who tell the truth.
23 A smart* person doesn’t tell everything he
knows. But a foolish person tells everything
and shows he is a fool.
24 People who work hard will be put in
charge of other workers. But a lazy person
will have to work like a slave.
25 Worry can take away a person’s happiness.
But a kind word can make a person happy.
26 A good man is very careful about the
friends he chooses. But evil people always
choose the wrong friends.
27 A lazy person won’t go after the things he
wants. But riches come to the person who
works hard.
28 If you live right, then you will have true
life. That is the way to live forever.
13 A wise son listens carefully when his
father tells him what to do. But a proud
person does not listen when people try to
correct him.
2 Good people are rewarded for the good
things they say. But evil people always want
to do wrong.
The person who is careful about the things he says will save his life. But the person who speaks without thinking will be destroyed. The lazy person wants things, but he can never get them. But people who work hard will get the things they want. Good people hate lies. Evil people will be made ashamed. Goodness protects a good, honest person. But evil defeats the person that loves to sin. Some people act like they are rich, but they have nothing. Other people act like they are poor, but they are really rich. A rich person might have to pay a ransom to save his life. But poor people never receive threats like that. A good person is like a light that shines brightly. But an evil person is like a light that becomes dark. People who think they are better than other people only cause trouble. But people who listen to the things other people tell them are wise. If a person cheats to get money, then that money will soon be gone. But the person who earns his money will make it grow more and more. If there is no hope, then the heart is sad. If the thing you wish for happens, then you are filled with joy. If a person refuses to listen when other people try to help him, then he will bring trouble to himself. But the person who respects the things other people tell him, will be rewarded. The teachings of a wise person give life. Those words will help you in times of trouble. People like a person with good sense. But life is hard for a person who can’t be trusted. A wise person always thinks before he does something. But a foolish person shows he is stupid by the things he does. If a messenger cannot be trusted, then there will be trouble around him. But if a person can be trusted, then there will be peace. If a person refuses to learn from his mistakes, then he will be poor and ashamed. But if a person listens when he is criticized or punished, then he will profit. If a person wants something and then gets it, he will be very happy. But stupid people only want evil, and they refuse to change. Be friends with people who are wise, and you will become wise. But if you choose fools to be your friends, then you will have trouble. Trouble chases sinners wherever they go. But good things happen to good people. A good person will have wealth to give to his children and grandchildren. And in the end, good people will get all the things that evil people have. A poor man might have good land that can produce plenty of food. But he makes bad decisions and stays hungry. If a person truly loves his children, then he will correct them when they are wrong. If you love your son, then you will be careful to teach him the right way. Good people will have what they really need. But evil people will always be without the most important thing. The wise woman uses her wisdom to make her home what it should be. But the foolish woman destroys her home by the foolish things she does. The person who lives right respects the Lord. But the person who is not honest hates the Lord. A foolish person’s words cause him trouble. But the words of a wise person protect him. If there are no cows to do the work, then the barn will be empty. The people can use the strength of a cow to have a great harvest. A truthful person does not lie—he is a good witness. But a person that can’t be trusted never tells the truth—he is a bad witness. People who make fun of God might look for wisdom, but they will never find it. People who believe God are truly wise. Knowledge comes easy to them. Don’t become friends with a foolish person. There is nothing he can teach you. Smart people are wise because they think carefully about the things they do. But foolish people are fools because they think they can live by cheating.
A foolish person laughs at the idea of paying for the bad things he did. But good people try very hard to get forgiveness.

If a person is sad, he is the only one that can feel that sadness. In the same way, if a person is happy, he is the only one that can feel that joy.

The house of an evil person will be destroyed. But the home of a good person will live forever.

There is a way that people think is right. But that way leads only to death.

A person might be sad, even if he is laughing. And after the laughter, the sadness will still be there.

Evil people will be fully paid (punished) for the wrong things they do. And good people will be fully rewarded for the good things they do.

A fool will believe anything he hears. But a wise man thinks carefully about everything.

A wise man respects the Lord and stays away from evil. But a foolish man does things without thinking—he is not careful.

A person who becomes angry easily does foolish things. But a wise person is patient.

Foolish people are punished for their foolishness. But wise people are rewarded with knowledge.

Good people will win against evil people. Evil people will be forced to bow down to them.

A poor person has no friends, not even his neighbor. But rich people have many friends.

You should not think bad things about your neighbors. If you want to be happy, be kind to those poor people.

Any person who plans to do evil is doing wrong. But the person that tries to do good will have friends that love and trust him.

If you work hard, then you will have the things you need. But if you do nothing but talk, then you will be poor.

Wise people are rewarded by wealth. But foolish people are rewarded by foolishness.

A person who tells the truth helps other people. The person who tells lies hurts other people.

The person who respects the Lord is safe and his children also live in safety.

Respect for the Lord gives true life. It saves a person from death’s trap.

A large, wealthy nation brings honor to a king, but a nation suffering famine brings shame.*

A patient person is very smart. A person who is easily angered shows that he is a fool.

If a person has peace in his mind, then his body will be healthy. But jealousy causes sickness in his body.

The person that causes trouble for poor people shows that he does not respect God—God made both people. But if a person is kind to poor people, then he shows honor to God.

During times of trouble, evil people are defeated. But good people win a victory even during death.

A wise person is always thinking wise things. But a foolish person knows nothing about wisdom.

Goodness makes a nation great. But sin is a shame to any people.

A king is happy when he has wise leaders. But a king is angry with leaders that are foolish.

A peaceful answer causes anger to disappear. But a rough answer causes anger to grow.

When a wise person speaks, other people want to listen. But a foolish person speaks only foolishness.

The Lord sees what happens everywhere. The Lord watches every person—good and evil.

Kind words are like a Tree of Life.* But lying words will crush a man’s spirit.

A foolish person refuses to listen to his father’s advice. But a wise person listens closely when people try to teach him.

Good people are rich in many things. But the things that an evil person has only cause him trouble.

Wise people say things that give you new information. But foolish people say nothing worth hearing.

The Lord hates the offerings that evil people give. But the Lord is happy to hear a good person’s prayers.

shame  Literally, “nothing.”

Tree of Life  The tree whose fruit gives people the power to live forever. See Gen. 3:22 and Rev. 22:1-2.
The Lord hates the way evil people live. The Lord loves people who try to do good. If a person begins to live wrong, then he will be punished. And the person that hates to be corrected will be destroyed. The Lord knows everything, even what happens in the place of death. So surely the Lord will know what happens in the hearts and minds of people.

The foolish person hates to be told when he is wrong. And that person refuses to ask wise people for advice. If a person is happy, then his face will show joy. But if a person is sad in his heart, then his spirit will show that sadness.

A wise person tries to gain more knowledge. But a foolish person only wants more foolishness.

Some poor people are sad all the time. But for people with happiness in their hearts, life is one big party.

It is better to be poor and respect the Lord than to be rich and have many troubles.

It is better to eat a little in a place where there is love, than to eat a lot where there is hate.

People that are easily angered cause trouble. But a patient person causes peace.

A lazy person will have trouble everywhere. But life will be easy for honest people.

A wise son brings happiness to his father. But a foolish person brings shame to his mother.

Doing foolish things makes a foolish person happy. But a wise person is careful to do the things that are right.

If a person does not get enough advice, then his plans will fail. But a person will succeed if he listens to the things wise people tell him.

A person is happy when he gives a good answer. And the right word at the right time is very good.

The things a wise person does leads to life here on earth* and stop him from going down to the place of death.

The Lord will destroy everything a proud person has. But the Lord protects the things that a widow has.

The Lord hates evil thoughts. But the Lord is happy with kind words.

If a person cheats to get things, then he will bring trouble to his family. But if a person is honest, then he will have no trouble.

Good people think before they answer. But evil people speak before they think, and that causes them trouble.

The Lord is far away from evil people. But he always hears the prayers of good people.

A person that smiles makes other people happy. And good news makes people feel better.

A person is very wise if he listens when someone tells him that he has done wrong.

If a person refuses to learn, then he is only hurting himself. But the person who listens when someone tells him he is wrong, will understand more and more.

The person who respects the Lord is learning to be wise. A person must be humble before he can truly respect the Lord.

People make their plans. But it is the Lord who makes those things happen.

A person thinks everything he does is right. But the Lord judges the real reasons people do things.

Always turn to the Lord for help in everything you do, and you will be successful.

The Lord has a plan for everything. And in the Lord’s plan, evil people will be destroyed.

The Lord hates every person who thinks that he is better than other people. The Lord will surely punish all those proud people.

True love and loyalty will make you pure. Respect the Lord, and you will stay far away from evil.

If a person is living a good life, pleasing to the Lord, then even that person’s enemies will be at peace with him.

It is better to gain only a little the right way than to gain much through cheating.

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* Literally, “above,” that is, “above the ground (grave).”

* Or, “make atonement.” The Hebrew word means “to cover or erase a person’s sins.”
A person can make plans about the things that he wants to do. But it is the Lord who decides what will happen. When a king speaks, his words are law. His decisions should always be fair. The Lord wants all scales and balances to be honest. He wants all business agreements to be fair. Kings hate people who do evil. Goodness will make his kingdom stronger. Kings want to hear the truth. Kings like people who don’t lie. When a king is angry, he can kill someone. And a wise person will try to keep the king happy. When the king is happy, life will be better for everyone. If the king is pleased with you, then it will be like spring rain falling from a cloud. Wisdom is worth much more than gold. Understanding is worth much more than silver. Good people live their lives trying to stay away from evil. The person who is careful with his life, is guarding his soul. If a person is proud, then he is in danger of destruction. If a person thinks he is better than other people, then he is in danger of defeat. It is better to be humble and live with poor people than to share wealth with people who think they are better than other people. The person who listens when people try to teach him will profit. And the person who trusts in the Lord will be blessed. People will know if a person is wise. And a person that carefully chooses his words can be very persuasive. Wisdom brings true life to people who have it. But fools only learn to be more foolish. A wise man always thinks before he speaks. And the words he says are good and worth hearing. Kind words are like honey. They are easy to accept and good for your health. There is a way that seems right to people. But that way leads only to death. A worker’s appetite keeps him working. His hunger makes him work so that he can eat. A worthless person plans bad things to do. His advice destroys like fire. A troublemaker is always causing problems. That person spreads gossip and causes trouble between close friends. A troublemaker causes a lot of trouble for his friends. He will lead them in a way that is not good. That person winks his eye while planning something destructive. He smiles while he is planning to hurt his neighbor. Gray hair is the crown of glory on people who have lived good lives. It is better to be patient than to be a strong soldier. It is better to control your anger than to take control over a whole city. People throw lots* to make decisions. But the decisions always come from God. It is better to have only a dry piece of bread to eat in peace than to have a whole house full of food with everyone arguing. A smart servant will gain control over his master’s foolish son. That wise servant will be treated like a son and get a share of the inheritance. Gold and silver are put into fire to make them pure. But the Lord is the One who makes peoples’ hearts pure. An evil person listens to the evil things other people say. People who tell lies also listen to lies. Some people make fun of poor people. They laugh at people who have problems. This shows that those bad people don’t respect God who made them. These bad people will be punished. Grandchildren make old people happy. And children are proud of their parents. It is not wise for a fool to speak too much. In the same way, it is not wise for a ruler to tell lies. Some people think a bribe is like a lucky charm—wherever they go, it seems to work. If you forgive a person who does wrong to you, then you can be friends. But if you continue to remember the wrong that he did, then it will hurt your friendship. A smart person learns from the things he does wrong. But a fool learns nothing, even after a hundred lessons.

lots Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for making decisions.
An evil person only wants to do wrong. In the end, God will send a messenger to punish him.

It is very dangerous to meet a mother bear that is angry because her cubs are stolen. But that is better than to meet a fool that is busy doing his foolishness.

Don't do bad things to people who do good things to you. If you do, then you will have trouble for the rest of your life.

If you start an argument, it is like breaking a hole in a dam. So stop the argument before it becomes bigger and bigger.

The Lord hates these two things—punishing someone that has done nothing wrong, and forgiving someone that is guilty.

If a foolish person has money, it is wasted. Why? Because that foolish person does not use the money to become wise.

A friend loves at all times. A true brother always supports you, even in times of trouble.

Only a fool will promise to be responsible for another person's debts.

A troublemaker loves to start arguments. A person that likes to brag is setting himself up for a fall. Both of them will end up in trouble.

A crooked person will not get a good profit. A liar will get into bad trouble.

A father with a foolish son will be very sad. A fool's father won't be happy.

Happiness is like good medicine. But sorrow is like a sickness.

An evil person accepts secret payment for cheating other people.

The wise man is always thinking of the best thing to do. But a foolish person is always dreaming about faraway places.

A foolish son brings sorrow to his father. And a foolish son brings sadness to the mother that gave birth to him.

It is wrong to punish a person who has done nothing wrong. It is wrong to punish leaders when they are honest.

A wise person uses words carefully. A wise person does not become angry easily.

Even a fool seems wise if he keeps quiet. People think he is wise if he doesn’t say anything.

Some people like to do things their own way. They get upset when people give them advice.

A foolish person doesn’t want to learn from other people. That person only wants to tell his own ideas.

People don’t like an evil person. People make fun of that foolish person.

The words of a wise man are like water bubbling up from a deep well—the well of wisdom.

You must be fair in judging people. If you let guilty people go free then you are not being fair to good people.

A foolish person causes himself trouble with the things he says. His words can start fights.

When a foolish person talks, he ruins himself. His own words trap him.

People always want to hear gossip—it is like good food going down into the stomach.

A person that does sloppy work is almost as bad as a person that destroys things.

There is much strength in the name of the Lord. It is like a strong tower. Good people can run to him and be safe.

Rich people think that their wealth will protect them. They think that it is like a strong fort.

A proud person will soon be ruined. But an humble person will be honored.

You should let other people finish speaking before you try to answer them. That way you won’t be embarrassed and appear foolish.

A good attitude gives a person support when he is ill, but no one can cheer up a person with a bad attitude.

The wise person always wants to learn more. That person listens closely for more wisdom.

If you want to meet an important person, give him a gift. Then you can easily get to meet him.

The first person to speak always seems right until someone comes and questions him.

A troublemaker ... in trouble This parable is hard to translate because of several word plays in Hebrew.

cheer up Literally, “lift up” or “heal.”
18 If two powerful people are arguing, throwing lots* may be the best way to decide the argument.
19 If you insult your friend, then he will be harder to win back than a city with strong walls. And arguments separate people like palace gates with strong bars across them.
20 The things you say affect your life. If you say good things, then good things will happen to you. But if you say bad things, then bad things will happen to you.
21 The tongue can speak words that bring life or death. And people who love to talk must be ready to accept what it brings.
22 If you find a wife, then you have found a good thing. She shows that the Lord is happy with you.
23 A poor person will beg for help, but a rich person is rude when he answers.
24 Some friends are fun to be with.* But a close friend can be even better than a brother.
19 It is better to be poor and honest than to be a fool that tells lies and cheats people.
25 Being excited about something is not enough. You must also know what you are doing. You should not rush into something or you will do it wrong.
26 A person’s own foolishness will ruin his life. But he will blame the Lord.
27 If a person is rich, then his wealth will bring him many friends. But if a person is poor, all his friends will leave him.
28 A person who tells a lie against another person will be punished. The person who tells lies will not be safe.
29 Many people want to be friends with a generous person. Everyone wants to be the friend of a person who gives gifts.
20 If a person is poor, then even his family is against him. And all of his friends turn away from him. That poor person can beg them for help. But they will not go near him.
21 If a person really likes himself, then he will work hard to become wise. He will try hard to understand, and he will get his reward.
22 Listen to advice and accept discipline. Then you will become wise.
23 People get a lot of ideas, but only the Lord’s plan will happen.
24 People want a friend they can trust. It is better to be poor than to be a liar.
25 A person who respects the Lord has a good life. That person is satisfied with his life and doesn’t have to worry about troubles.
26 Some people are too lazy to take care of themselves—they are too lazy to lift their food from their plate to their mouth!
27 Some people show no respect for anything—those foolish people must be punished and forced to learn their lesson. But for a wise person, it’s enough just to tell them that they did wrong.

 lots  Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for making decisions.
Some friends are fun to be with  Or, “Some friends can bring disaster.”

Trying ... problems  Literally, “a deceptive soul brings hunger.”
26A person who steals from his father and chases his mother away is a disgusting, shameful person.
27If you stop listening to instructions, then you will keep making stupid mistakes.
28A lying witness makes justice nothing but a joke! The things evil people say bring more evil.
29The person who thinks that he is better than other people will be punished. That foolish person must be punished!

20Wine and beer make people lose control of themselves. They get loud and start to brag. They become drunk and do foolish things.
21The anger of a king is like the roar of a lion. If you make the king angry, then you could lose your life.
22Any fool can start an argument. So you should respect a person who refuses to argue.
23A lazy person is too lazy to plant seeds. So, at the time of harvest he looks for food and finds nothing.
24Good advice is like getting water from a deep well. But a wise person will try hard to learn from another person.
25Many people call a person "friend." But it is really hard to find a person that can really be trusted.
26A good person lives a good life. And his children will be blessed.
27When the king sits and judges people, he must look carefully to separate the evil from the good.
28Can any person really say that he has always done his best? Can any person really say that he has no sin? ¡No!
29The Lord hates people that cheat other people using weights and measures that are not fair.
30Even a child shows that he is good or bad by the things he does. You can watch that child and know if he is honest and good.
31The Lord gave us eyes to see with and ears to hear with—use them!
32If you love to sleep, then you will become poor. But use your time working and you will have plenty to eat.
33The person who buys something from you always says, “It’s no good! It costs too much!” Then that person goes away and tells other people that he made a good deal.
34Gold and jewels can make a man rich. But a person who knows what he is talking about is worth much, much more.
35You will lose your shirt if you make yourself responsible for another man’s debts.
36If you get something by cheating, it may seem like a good thing. But in the end it will be worth nothing.
37Get good advice before you make plans. If you are starting a war, find good people to guide you.
38A person who tells gossip about other people can’t be trusted. So don’t be friends with a person who talks too much.
39If a person curses* his father or mother, then he is like a person whose light stops shining in the darkest darkness.
40If your wealth was very easy to get, it will not be worth much to you.
41If someone does something against you, don’t try to punish him yourself. Wait for the Lord! In the end, he will make you the winner.
42Some people use weights and scales that are not accurate. They use those things so they can cheat people. The Lord hates that. That does not make him happy!
43The Lord decides what happens to every person. So how can any person understand what happens in his life?
44Think carefully before you promise to give something to God. Later you might wish that you had not made that promise.
45A wise king will decide which people are evil. And that king will punish those people.
46A person’s spirit is like a lamp to the Lord. The Lord is able to see into the deepest parts of a person.*
47If a king is loyal and true, then he will keep his power. His true love will keep his kingdom strong.
48We admire a young man for his strength. But we respect an old man for his gray hair—it shows he lived a full life.
49If we are punished, we will stop doing wrong. Pain can change a person.

* To ask for bad things to happen to someone.
A person’s spirit = person Or, “The Lord examines a person’s breath (spirit) and searches his deepest thoughts.”
To the Lord, a king's mind is like a small ditch used to water the fields. The Lord can lead the king wherever he wants him to go.

A person thinks everything he does is right. But the Lord judges the real reasons people do things.

Do the things that are right and fair. The Lord loves that better than sacrifices.

Proud looks and proud thoughts are sins. They show a person is evil.

Careful plans can lead to profit. But if you are not careful, and you do things too quickly, then you will become poor.

If you cheat to become rich, then your wealth will soon be gone. And your riches will lead you to death.

The bad things that evil people do will destroy them. Those people refuse to do what is right.

Bad people always try to cheat other people. But good people are honest and fair.

It is better to live in a small corner of the attic than to share the house with a woman that is always arguing.

Evil people always want to do more evil. And those people show no mercy to people around them.

Punish the person who makes fun of God and foolish people will learn a lesson. They will become wise. And then they will gain more and more knowledge.

God is good. God knows what evil people are doing, and he will punish them.

If a person refuses to help poor people, then there will be no help for him when he needs it.

If a person is angry with you, give him a gift in secret. A gift that is given in secret can stop great anger.

Fair judgment makes good people happy. But it makes evil people very afraid.

If a person leaves the way of wisdom, then he is going toward destruction.

If having fun is the most important thing to a person, then that person will become poor. If that person loves wine and food, then he will never be rich.

Evil people have to pay for all the bad things they do to good people. People who are not honest have to pay for the things they do to honest people.

It is better to live in the desert than to live with a wife that has a short temper and loves to argue.

A wise person saves the things he needs. But a foolish person uses everything as fast as he gets it.

The person that always tries to show love and kindness will have a good life, wealth, and honor.

A wise person can do almost anything. He can attack a city defended by strong men. And he can destroy the walls that they trusted to save them.

If a person is careful about the things he says, then he saves himself from trouble.

A proud person thinks he is better than other people. He shows that he is evil by the things he does.

A lazy person destroys himself when he wants more and more. He destroys himself because he refuses to work for those things. But a good person can give because he has plenty.

The Lord is not happy when evil people offer him sacrifices, especially when those evil people are trying to get something from him.

A person who tells lies will be destroyed. Any person who listens to those lies will be destroyed with him.

A good person always knows that he is right. But an evil person has to pretend.

There is no person who is wise enough to make a plan that can succeed if the Lord is against it.

People can prepare everything for a battle, even the horses. But they can’t win unless the Lord gives them the victory.

It is better to be respected than to be rich. A good name is more important than silver or gold.

Rich people and poor people are the same. The Lord made them all.

Wise people see trouble coming and get out of its way. But foolish people go straight to the trouble and suffer because of it.

attic A small room above the main rooms of a house. Literally, “roof.” The roofs of houses in ancient Israel were flat and were often used as extra rooms.
4Respect the Lord and be humble. Then you will have wealth, honor, and true life.

5Evil people are trapped by many troubles. But the person who cares for his soul stays away from trouble.

6Teach a child the right way to live while he is young. Then when he grows older, he will continue living that way.

7Poor people are slaves to rich people. The person who borrows is a servant to the person who lends.

8A person who spreads trouble will harvest trouble. And in the end, that person will be destroyed because of the trouble he gave other people.

9A person who gives freely will be blessed. He will be blessed because he shares his food with poor people.

10If a person thinks he is better than other people, force him to leave. When that person leaves, trouble will leave with him. Then arguments and bragging will end.

11The king will be your friend if you love a pure heart and kind words.

12The Lord watches over and protects people who know him. But he destroys people who turn against him.

13The lazy person says, “I can’t go to work now. There is a lion outside. It might kill me.”

14The sin of adultery is like a trap. The Lord will become very angry at the person who falls into that trap.

15Children do foolish things. But if you punish them, they will learn not to do those things.

16These two things will make you poor—hurting poor people to make yourself rich, and giving gifts to rich people.

30 Wise Sayings

17Listen to the things that I say. I will teach you the things wise men have said. Learn from these teachings. 18It will be good for you if you remember these things. It will help you if you can say these words. 19I will teach you these things now. I want you to trust the Lord. 20I have written 30 sayings for you. These are words of advice and wisdom. 21These words will teach you true and important things. Then you can give good answers to the one that sent you.

22It is easy to steal from poor people, but don’t do it. And don’t take advantage of those poor people in court. 23The Lord is on their side. He supports them and he will take things away from any person that takes from them.

24Don’t be friends with a person who becomes angry easily. Don’t go near a person who becomes mad fast. 25If you do, you may learn to be like him. Then you will have the same troubles he has.

26Don’t promise to be responsible for another person’s debts. 27If you can’t pay his debt, then you will lose everything you have. Why should you lose the bed you sleep on?

28Never move an old property line that was marked long ago by your ancestors.

29If a person is skilled in his work, then he is good enough to serve kings. He will not have to work for people who are not important.

30When you sit and eat with an important man, remember who you are with. 2Never eat too much, even if you are very hungry. 3And don’t eat too much of the fine food he serves. It might be a trick.

4Don’t ruin your health trying to become rich. If you are wise, you will be patient.

5Money goes very quickly, as if it grows wings and flies away like a bird.

6Don’t eat with a selfish person. And stay away from the special foods he likes. 7He is the kind of man who is always thinking about the cost. He might say to you, “Eat and drink.” But that is not really what he wants.

ancestors Literally, “fathers,” meaning a person’s parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.
And if you eat his food, then you will become sick. And you will be embarrassed.

Don’t try to teach a fool. He will make fun of your wise words.

Never move an old property line. And never take land that belongs to orphans. The Lord will be against you. The Lord is powerful and he defends those orphans.

Listen to your teacher and learn all you can.

Always punish a child if it needs it. It will not hurt him to spank him. If you spank him, you may save his life.

My son, if you become wise, then I will be very happy. I will be happy in my heart if I hear you say things that are right.

Don’t be jealous of evil people. But always try as hard as you can to respect the Lord. There is always hope. And that hope will never be gone.

So listen, my son, and be wise. Always be careful to live the right way. Don’t be friends with people who drink too much wine and eat too much food. People who drink too much and eat too much become poor. All they do is eat, drink, sleep, and soon they have nothing.

Listen to the things your father tells you. Without your father, you would never have been born. And respect your mother, even when she is old. Truth, wisdom, learning, and understanding are worth paying money for. And they are worth far too much to ever sell. The father of a good person is very happy. If a person has a wise child, then that child brings joy.

So let your father and mother be happy with you. Let your mother have joy.

My son, listen closely to what I am saying. Let my life be your example. Prostitutes and bad women are a trap. They are like a deep well that you can’t get out of. A bad woman waits for you like a thief. And she causes many men to become sinners.

It will be very bad for people who drink too much wine and strong drinks. Those people have many fights and arguments. Their eyes are red and they stumble and hurt themselves. They could have avoided all those troubles!

So be careful with wine. It is pretty and red. It sparkles in the cup. And it goes down so smooth when you drink it. But in the end it bites like a snake.

Wine will cause you to see strange things. Your mind will be confused. When you lie down, you will think you are on a rough sea. You feel like you are lying on a ship. You will say, “They hit me but I never felt it. They beat me but I don’t remember it. Now I can’t wake up. I need another drink.”

Don’t be jealous of evil people. Don’t even want to be around them. In their hearts they plan to do evil. All they talk about is making trouble.

Good homes are built on wisdom and understanding. And knowledge fills the rooms with rare and beautiful treasures.

Wisdom makes a man more powerful. Knowledge gives a man strength. You must make careful plans before you start a war. If you want to win, you must have many good advisers.

Foolish people can’t understand wisdom. And when people are discussing important things, the foolish person can say nothing.
8*If you are always planning trouble, then people will know that you are a person who makes trouble. And they will not listen to you. 9*The things that a foolish person plans to do are sin. People hate a person who thinks he is better than other people.

— 24 —

10*If you are weak during times of trouble, then you really are weak.

— 25 —

11*If people are planning to kill a person, then you must try to save him. 12*You can’t say, “It’s none of my business.” The Lord knows everything. And he knows why you do things. The Lord watches you. He knows. And the Lord will reward you for the things you do.

— 26 —

13*My son, eat honey. It is good. Honey from the honeycomb* is sweet. 14*In the same way, wisdom is good for your soul. If you have wisdom, then you will have hope, and your hope will never end.

— 27 —

15*Don’t be like a thief that wants to steal from a good person or take away his home. 16*If a good man falls seven times, he will always stand again. But evil people will always be defeated by trouble.

— 28 —

17*Don’t be happy when your enemy has troubles. Don’t be happy when he falls. 18*If you do, the Lord will see this, and the Lord will not be happy with you. Then the Lord might help your enemy.

— 29 —

19*Don’t let evil people cause you worry. And don’t be jealous of evil people. 20*Those evil people have no hope. Their light will become dark.

21*Son, respect the Lord and the king. And don’t join with the people that are against them. 22*Why? Because men like that can quickly be destroyed. You don’t know how much trouble God and the king can make for their enemies.

More Wise Sayings

23*These are the words of wise men:

A judge must be fair. He must not support a person simply because he knows him. 24*People will turn against a judge that tells a guilty person that he can go free. Even people from other nations will say bad things against that judge. 25*But if a judge punishes a guilty person, then all the people will be happy with him.

26*An honest answer is something that makes all people happy—it is like a kiss on the lips.

27*Don’t build your house before you plant your fields. Make sure that you are prepared to grow food before you build a place to live.

28*Don’t speak against someone without a good reason. And don’t tell lies.

29*Don’t say, “He hurt me, so I will do the same to him. I will punish him for the things he did to me.”

30*I walked past a field that belonged to a lazy man. I walked by a field of grapes that belonged to a person who was not wise. 31*Weeds were growing everywhere in those fields. Worthless plants were growing on the ground. And the wall around the fields was broken and falling down. 32*I looked at this and I thought about it. Then I learned a lesson from these things: 33*a little sleep, a little rest, folding your arms, and taking a nap. 34*These things will make you poor very quickly. You will have nothing, as if a thief broke in and took everything away.

More Wise Sayings from Solomon

25*These are some more wise sayings of Solomon. These words were copied by servants of Hezekiah, king of Judah:

1*God has the right to hide things that he does not want us to know about. But a king is honored for the things he says.
3The sky is high above and the ground is under us. It is the same with the minds of kings. We can’t understand them.

4If you take the worthless things from silver and make it pure, then a worker can make beautiful things. 5In the same way, if you take evil advisers away from a king, then goodness will make his kingdom strong.

6Don’t brag about yourself before a king. Don’t say that you are a famous person. 7It is much better for the king to invite you himself. But if you invite yourself, then you might be embarrassed in front of other people.

8Don’t be too quick to tell a judge about something you saw. If another person proves that you are wrong, then you will be embarrassed.

9If you and another person can’t agree, then decide among yourselves what to do. And don’t tell about another person’s secret. 10If you do, then you will be ashamed. And you will never lose that bad name.

11Saying the right thing at the right time is like a golden apple in a silver setting.

12If a wise person gives you a warning, it is worth more than gold rings or jewelry made from the finest gold.

13A messenger that can be trusted is worth much to the people who send him. He is like cool water during the hot days of harvest.

14People who promise to give gifts, but never give them, are like clouds and wind that bring no rain.

15Patient talk can make any person change his thinking, even a ruler. Gentle talk is very powerful.

16Honey is good, but don’t eat too much of it. If you do, then you will be sick. 17In the same way, don’t go into your neighbor’s home too often. If you do, then he will begin to hate you.

18A person who does not tell the truth is dangerous. He is like a club, or a sword, or a sharp arrow. 19Never depend on a liar during times of trouble. That person is like a hurting tooth or a crippled foot. [He hurts you when you need him most.]

20Singing happy songs to a sad person is like taking away his clothes when he is cold. It is like mixing soda and vinegar.

21If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat. If your enemy is thirsty, give him water to drink. 22If you do this, then you will make him ashamed. It is like putting burning coals on his head. And the Lord will reward you because you were good to your enemy.

23The wind that blows from the north brings rain. And in the same way, gossip brings anger.

24It is better to live in a small corner of the attic than to share the house with a woman that is always arguing.

25Good news from a faraway place is like a cool drink of water when you are hot and thirsty.

26If a good person becomes weak and follows an evil person, it is the same as good water that has become dirty.

27If you eat too much honey it is not good for you. In the same way, don’t try to get too much honor for yourself.

28A person that can’t control himself is like a city without walls to protect it.

Wise Sayings About Fools

Snow shouldn’t fall in the summer. And rain shouldn’t fall during harvest time. In the same way, people should not honor a fool.

2Don’t worry if a person asks for bad things to happen to you. If you did nothing wrong, nothing bad will happen. That person’s words are like birds that fly past you and never stop.

3You have to whip a horse. You have to put a bridle on a mule. And you have to beat a fool.

4Here is a difficult situation: If a fool asks a stupid question, then don’t give him a stupid answer or you, too, will look like a fool. But if a fool asks a stupid question, then you should give him a stupid answer or he will think he is very smart.

5Never let a fool carry your message. If you do, it will be like cutting off your own feet. You are asking for trouble.

6When a fool tries to say something wise, it is like a crippled person trying to walk.

attic A small room above the main rooms of a house. Literally, “roof.” The roofs of houses in ancient Israel were flat and were often used as extra rooms.
8 Showing honor to a fool is as bad as tying a rock in a sling.*
9 When a fool tries to say something wise, it is the same as a drunk person trying to pick a thorn out of his hand.
10 Hiring a fool or some stranger passing by is dangerous—you don’t know who might get hurt.
11 A dog eats food. Then he gets sick and vomits. Then the dog eats that food again. It is the same with a foolish person. He does the same foolish things again and again.
12 A person who thinks he is wise when he is not is worse than a fool.

Wise Sayings About Lazy People

13 A lazy person says, “I can’t leave my house. There is a lion in the street.”
14 A lazy person is like a door. All he does is turn in his bed like a door turns on its hinges. He never goes anywhere.
15 A lazy person is too lazy to lift his food from his plate to his mouth.
16 A lazy person thinks he is very wise. He thinks he is smarter than seven men that can give good reasons for their ideas.
17 It is dangerous to become part of an argument between two people. It is the same as walking along the street and grabbing a dog by the ears.
18–19 A man who tricks another person and then says that he was only joking, is like a crazy person that shoots flaming arrows into the air and accidentally kills someone.
20 If a fire has no wood, then the fire will become cold. In the same way, an argument without gossip is finished.
21 Charcoal keeps the coals burning. And wood keeps the fire burning. In the same way, people who make trouble keep arguments alive.
22 People love gossip. It is like eating good food.
23 Good words that hide an evil plan is like silver paint over a cheap, clay pot. An evil person makes himself look good by the things he says. But he hides his evil plans in his heart. The things he says might seem good. But don’t trust him. His heart is full of evil ideas. He hides his evil plans with nice words. But he is mean. And in the end all people will see the evil things that he does.
24 If a person tries to trap another person, then he will trap himself. If a person tries to roll a stone over another person, he will be crushed himself.
25 The person that tells lies hates the people he hurts. And if a person says things he does not mean, he is only hurting himself.
26 Never brag about what will happen in the future. You don’t know what will happen tomorrow.
27 Never praise yourself. Let other people do it. A stone is heavy, and sand is hard to carry. But the trouble caused by an angry fool is much harder to bear.
28 Anger is cruel and mean. It causes destruction. But jealousy is much worse.
29 Open criticism is better than hidden love.
30 A friend might hurt you sometimes, but he does not want to do this. An enemy is different. Even when an enemy is kind to you, he wants to hurt you.
31 If you are not hungry, then you will not eat even honey. But if you are hungry, you will eat anything—even if it tastes bad.
32 A man away from home is like a bird away from its nest.
33 Perfume and sweet-smelling things make you feel happy. And a kind word from a friend is more welcome than life-saving advice.
34 Don’t forget your friends and your father’s friends. And if you have trouble, don’t go far away to your brother’s house for help. It is better to ask a neighbor that is near you than to go far away to your brother.
35 My son, be wise. This will make me happy. Then I will be able to answer any person that criticizes me.
36 Wise people see trouble coming and get out of its way. But a fool goes straight to the trouble and suffers because of it.
37 You will lose your shirt if you make yourself responsible for another man’s debts.
38 Don’t wake up your neighbor early in the morning with a shout of, “Good morning!” He will treat it like a curse, not a blessing.
39 A wife that always wants to argue is like water that never stops dripping on a rainy day.
Trying to stop that woman is like trying to stop the wind. It is like trying to grab oil with your hand.

People use pieces of iron to sharpen iron knives. In the same way, people learn from other people, making each other sharp.

A person who cares for fig trees will be able to eat their fruit. In the same way, a person who cares for his master will be rewarded. His master will care for him.

When a person looks into the water he can see his own face. In the same way, a man’s heart shows what the man is really like.

People are just like the grave. That place of death and destruction always wants more than it already has.

People use fire to make gold and silver pure. In the same way, a man is tested by the praise people give him.

You can grind a fool to powder, and still you will not force the foolishness out of him.

Watch your sheep and goats carefully. Be sure you care for them the best you can.

Wealth doesn’t last forever. Even nations don’t last forever.

Cut the hay, and new grass will grow. Then you can gather the plants growing on the hills.

Then there will be plenty of goat milk for you and your family and enough to keep servant girls healthy.

Evil people are afraid of everything. But a good person is as brave as a lion.

A country filled with people that break the law will have many bad rulers that rule only a short time. But a wise ruler will rule a long time in a country where people understand the need to obey the law.

If a ruler makes trouble for poor people, he is like a hard rain that destroys the crops.

You are for evil people if you refuse to obey the law. But if you obey the law, then you are against them.

Evil people don’t understand fairness. But people who love the Lord understand it.

It is better to be poor but honest than to be rich and evil.

A person who obeys the law is smart. But the person who becomes friends with worthless people brings shame to his father.

If you get rich by cheating poor people and charging them high interest rates, then you will lose your wealth. It will go to another person who is kind to them.

If a person refuses to listen to God’s teachings, then God will refuse to hear his prayers.

A bad person might make plans to hurt a good person. But the bad person will fall into his own trap. And good things will happen to the good person.

Rich people always think they are wise. But a poor person that is wise can see the truth.

When good people become leaders, everyone is happy. But when an evil person is elected, all people go and hide.

A person that hides his sins will not be successful. But a person that confesses his sins and stops doing wrong will receive mercy.

If a person always respects the Lord, then that person will be blessed. But if a person is stubborn and refuses to respect the Lord, then he will have trouble.

When an evil person rules over weak people, he is like an angry lion or a bear that is ready to fight.

If a ruler is not wise, he will hurt the people under him. But the ruler that is honest and hates cheating will rule for a long time.

If a person is guilty of killing another person, then that person will never have peace. Don’t support that person.

If a person is living right, then he will be safe. But if a person is evil, then he will lose his power.

A person that works hard will have plenty to eat. But a person that wastes his time with dreams will always be poor.

God will bless the person who follows him. But a person who is only trying to get rich will be punished.

A judge must be fair. He must not support a person simply because of who that person is. But some judges will change their decisions for only the smallest payment.

A selfish person only wants to get rich. That person does not realize that he is very close to being poor.

If you help someone by telling him he is doing wrong, then later he will be happy with
you. That is much better than always saying only nice things to people.

24 A person might steal from his father and mother. That person might say, “I did nothing wrong.” But that person is as bad as a man who comes in and smashes everything in the house.

25 A selfish person causes trouble. But the person who trusts in the Lord will be rewarded.

26 If a person trusts in himself, then he is a fool. But if a person is wise, then he will escape disaster.

27 If a person gives to poor people, then he will have everything he needs. But if a person refuses to help poor people, then he will have much trouble.

28 If an evil person is elected to rule, then all the people hide. But when that evil person is defeated, then good people rule again.

29 If a person is stubborn and becomes more angry every time people tell him that he is doing wrong, then that person will be destroyed. There is no hope.

2When the ruler is a good person, then all the people are happy. But when an evil person rules, then all the people complain.

3 If a person loves wisdom, then his father is very happy. But if a person wastes his money on prostitutes,* then he will lose his wealth.

4 If a king is fair, then the nation will be strong. But if a king is selfish and people must pay him to do things for them, then the nation will be weak.

5 If a person tries to get what he wants by saying nice things to people, then he is only setting a trap for himself.

6 Evil people are defeated by their own sin. But a good person can sing and be happy.

7 Good people want to do the right thing for poor people. But evil people don’t care.

8 People who think they are better than other people can cause much trouble. They can put whole cities into confusion. But people who are wise make peace.

9 If a wise person tries to settle a problem with a fool, then the fool will argue and say stupid things. And the two people will never agree.

10 Murderers always hate honest people. Those evil people want to kill good, honest people.*

11 A foolish person becomes angry easily. But a wise person is patient and controls himself.

12 If a ruler listens to lies, then all his officials will be evil.

13 In one way a poor person and the person who steals from the poor are the same: The Lord made them both.

14 If a king is fair to poor people he will rule for a long time.

15 Spankings and teachings are good for children. If parents let a child do whatever he wants, then he will bring shame to his mother.

16 If evil people are ruling the nation, then sin will be everywhere. But good people will win in the end.

17 Punish your son when he is wrong, then you will always be proud of him. He will never make you ashamed.

18 If a nation is not guided by God, then that nation will not have peace. But the nation that obeys God’s law will be happy.

19 A servant won’t learn a lesson if you only talk to him. That servant may understand your words but he won’t obey.

20 If a person speaks without thinking, there is no hope for him. There is more hope for a fool than for the person who speaks without thinking.

21 If you always give your servant everything he wants, then in the end he will not be a good servant.

22 An angry person causes trouble. And the person who becomes angry easily is guilty of many sins.

23 If a person thinks he is better than other people, then that will destroy him. But if a person is humble, then other people will respect him.

24 Two thieves that work together are enemies. One thief will threaten the other one, so if he is forced to tell the truth in court, he will be too afraid to speak.

25 Fear is like a trap. But if you trust in the Lord, you will be safe.
26Many people want to be the friends of a ruler. But the Lord is the One that judges people fairly.
27Good people hate those people who are not honest. And evil people hate people who are honest.

Wise Sayings of Agur Son of Jakeh

These are the wise sayings of Agur son of Jakeh. This is his message to Ithiel and Ucal:* 30

2I am the worst person on earth. I am not able to understand like I should. 3I have not learned to be wise. And I know nothing about God.
4No person has ever learned about the things from heaven. No person has ever caught the wind in his hand. No person has ever held water in a piece of cloth. No person can ever really know the limits of the earth. If any person can do these things, who is he? Where is his family?
5Every word that God says is perfect. God is a safe place for people who go to him. 6So, don’t try to change the things God says. If you do, he will punish you and prove that you tell lies.

7Lord, I ask you to do two things for me before I die. 8Don’t let me tell lies. And don’t make me too rich or too poor—only give me the things I need each day. 9If I have more than I need, then I will think I don’t need you. But if I am poor then I might steal. Then I will bring shame to the name of God.
10Never say bad things against a servant to his master. If you do, the master will not believe you. He will think you are guilty.
11Some people speak against their fathers. And they don’t show respect for their mothers.
12Some people think they are good but they are really very bad.
13Some people think they are very good. They think they are much better than other people.
14There are people whose teeth are like swords. Their jaws are like knives. They use their time to take everything they can from poor people.

15Some people want to take everything they can get. All they say is, “Give me, give me, give me.” There are three things that are never satisfied—really four things that never have enough: 16The place of death, a woman with no children, dry ground that needs rain, and a hot fire that can’t be stopped.
17Any person who makes fun of his father or refuses to obey his mother will be punished. It will be as bad for him as if his eyes were eaten by vultures and wild birds.
18There are three things that are hard for me to understand—really four things that I don’t understand: 19An eagle flying in the sky, a snake moving on a rock, a ship moving across the ocean, and a man in love with a woman.
20A woman who is not faithful to her husband acts like she has done nothing wrong. She eats, takes a bath, and says she has done nothing wrong.
21There are three things that make trouble on the earth—really four that the earth can’t bear: 22A servant that becomes a king, a foolish person that has everything he needs, 23a woman who is full of hate but still finds a husband, and a servant girl that becomes ruler over the woman she serves.
24There are four things on the earth that are small but very wise:
25 Ants are small and weak, but they save their food all summer;
26 a badger is a small animal, but it is able to make its home in the rocks;
27 locusts have no king, but they are able to work together;
28 lizards are small enough to catch with your hands but you can find them living in kings’ homes.
29There are three things that act important when they walk. In fact, there are four:
30 A lion (He is the warrior of the animal kingdom. He runs from nothing.);
31 a rooster walking proudly;* a goat; and a king among his people.

This is his message to Ithiel and Ucal Or “This man said, ‘I am too weak. I am too weak, but I will succeed!’”

a rooster walking proudly Or possibly, “a greyhound” or “a warhorse.”
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32 If you are foolish enough to become proud and make plans against other people, then stop and think about what you are doing.

33 If a person churns milk, he makes butter. If a person hits another person’s nose, then blood will come. In the same way, if you make people angry you will cause trouble.

Wise Sayings of King Lemuel

31 These are the wise sayings of King Lemuel. His mother taught him these things.

2 You are my son. The son that I love. You are the son that I prayed to have.  3 Don’t waste your strength on women. Women destroy kings, so don’t waste yourself on them. 4 Lemuel, it is not wise for kings to drink wine. It is not wise for rulers to want beer. 5 They may drink too much and forget what the law says. Then they might take away all the rights of poor people. 6 Give beer to the poor people. Give wine to those people who are in trouble. 7 Let them drink and forget that they are poor. Let them forget all their troubles.

8 If a person can’t help himself, then you should help him. 9 Speak up for a person who can’t speak! Help people who are in trouble! 10 Stand up for the things you know are right. And judge all people fairly. Protect the rights of poor people and people that need help.

The Perfect Wife

10 It is very hard to find “the perfect woman.”*
But she is worth much more than jewels.
11 Her husband depends on her.
He will never be poor.
12 She does good for her husband all her life.
She never causes him trouble.
13 She is always gathering wool and flax
and gladly making things with her hands.
14 She is like a ship from a faraway place.
She brings food home from everywhere.
15 She wakes very early in the morning.
She cooks food for her family
and gives the servants their share.
16 She looks at land and buys it.
She uses money she has earned
and plants a vineyard.
17 She works very hard.
She is strong and able to do all her work.
18 When she trades the things she has made,
she always earns a profit.
And she works until late at night.
19 She makes her own thread
and weaves her own cloth.
20 She always gives to poor people
and helps people that need it.
21 She doesn’t worry about her family
when it snows.
She has given them all good, warm clothes.
22 She makes sheets and spreads for the beds.
And she wears clothes of fine linen.
23 People respect her husband.
He is one of the leaders of the land.
24 She is a very good businesswoman.
She makes clothes and belts,
and sells them to businessmen.
25 She is praised* and people respect her.
She looks to the future with confidence.
26 She speaks with wisdom.
She teaches people to be loving
and kind.
27 She is never lazy.
She takes care of the things in her house.
28 Her children say good things about her.
Her husband brags about her and says,
29 “There are many good women.
But you are the best.”
30 Grace and beauty can fool you.
But a woman who respects the Lord
should be praised.
31 Give her the reward she deserves.
Praise her in public
for the things she has done.

churn(s)  To stir cream for a long time until it becomes butter.

Verses 10-31  In Hebrew, each verse of this poem starts with the next letter of the alphabet, so this poem shows all the good qualities of a woman, “from A to Z”.

the perfect woman  Or, “a noble woman.”

She is praised  Or, “She is strong.”
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