

2019 Through the Bible Reading: *Bible Study Support*

The Book of Proverbs	
Background (Who, what, why, when)	<p>Proverbs is a collection of wise sayings, predominantly written by King Solomon, in order to convey moral truths. Although it is believed that the authorship began early in Solomon’s reign (see Proverbs 1:1), it is likely that there were multiple contributors over a long period of time. Proverbs 25:1 indicates: “There are more proverbs of Solomon, compiled by the men of Hezekiah king of Judah.” Hezekiah ruled 200 years after Solomon.</p> <p>When reading through Proverbs, it is important to understand that this is not a work of just wise sayings handed down from generation to generation. The foundation of this wisdom originated from Solomon’s answered petition for wisdom and discernment from God. “God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore” (1 Kings 4:29 NIV).</p> <p>At first glance, Proverbs might appear to be a random collection of precepts on moral conduct; however, the many poems, questions and couplets are purposeful in their intent to impart common sense and warnings, so that one may know what it looks like to walk closely with God.</p> <p>The teachings from Proverbs were originally meant for the Israelites in order that they would understand how to live godly lives through the repetition of wise thoughts. However, this divine wisdom is also meant to be exercised today as they cover a wide range of applicable topics including youth and discipline; self-control; resisting temptation; family life; business; marriage; money; immorality, etc.</p>
Interesting Facts about Proverbs	<p>Although Proverbs is often attributed to Solomon, there are two other authors listed in Proverbs – Agur (see Prov. 30:1) and King Lemuel (see 31:1). These two are not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible.</p> <p>In addition to Proverbs, Solomon also conveyed written wisdom in Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs. These three books, along with Job, are considered the poetry and wisdom books of the Bible.</p> <p>Proverbs is not meant to teach doctrine, but to direct the reader towards behavior that pursues a more intimate walk with God. The word <i>proverb</i> originated from a Hebrew word, <i>mashal</i>, that means “to rule or govern.” If one follows God’s wisdom in the way they conduct their life, the result will be a closer relationship with Him.</p>
Reasonable Defense for Proverbs	<p>God wants people to be wise and portrays both the foolish, as well as the wise, throughout Proverbs. The bottom-line is that when we choose God’s way, He gives us wisdom. God’s Word provides a blueprint of how we are to live and conduct ourselves around others, so that they may see Jesus in us. Others will look to us as disciples of Christ if we show consistent discipline and emulate high moral standards as indicated in the Book of Proverbs.</p>
Memory Verse	<p><i>“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6 NKJV).</i></p>
Practical Application to memory verse	<p>True worship comes from pleasing and glorifying God. God doesn’t leave us on our own to figure out how to do this. He provides instruction and wisdom through His Living Word. As sinners, it is difficult for us to consistently conduct ourselves in a way that will lead to a close, intimate walk with God. In Proverbs 3:5, we are specifically told not to rely on our own ways, “...lean not on your own understanding.” That is because our understanding is flawed and it is imperative that we “Trust in the Lord” with every fiber of our beings. If we depend on God, study His Word, and seek and ask wisdom from Him, He will guide us and “direct our paths.” It</p>

	<p>doesn't say He might guide us, it states, "He <u>shall</u> direct your paths." Why not ask Him for His divine wisdom right now and commit to studying His Word?</p>
<p>Life Application from Biblical Themes in Proverbs</p>	<p>Proverbs provides divine wisdom and moral instruction applicable to our daily lives. Reading, mediating and journaling on Proverbs will give you insight into true wisdom; how to cultivate healthy relationships; how to talk to others; how to work, and how to succeed at life. Who doesn't want that kind of wisdom? Proverbs shows a contrast between the foolish, wicked person and that of the wise who seeks to know and love God (Prov. 14:8). It also tells us to use self-control when we speak, and to speak in truth, because what we say is a true indicator of our inner selves and our attitude towards others (Proverbs10:14). Eternal success is not measured based on things of this world, such as fame and money, so we should strive to use our time, resources and talents wisely because a successful relationship with God counts for eternity, <i>"Choose my instruction instead of silver, knowledge rather than choice gold, for wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her"</i> (Prov. 8:10-11 NIV).</p>