



Praying Through the Proverbs

Praying through the Proverbs is a weekly devotional that focuses on the book of Proverbs. The purpose of this study is to help you grow in wisdom before God and man. Each week you will receive a devotional from the text of Proverbs. The devotional will consist of a basic explanation of the text along with applications from the text. You will also receive Scripture prayers to help you pray the truth into your heart, mind, and life. If you would like to receive this devotional, please send your e-mail address to praythruproverbs@yahoo.com.

Proverbs 1:1-6

Proverbs 1:1-6 is an invitation to wisdom. Solomon, the inspired author of Proverbs (1:1), starts this book by declaring his purpose. The purpose of this book is to give you the ability to live a godly life in a fallen world. It shows you how to live out your faith in all aspects of life. It reveals the practical side of your faith in God. Through this book, God is inviting you to pursue the wisdom that will enable you to live for Him in this world. He calls you to seek the wisdom that will help you live as a Christian in every area of life.

Your invitation to wisdom begins with a description of this desperately needed characteristic. Living a godly life in a fallen world requires three things: *wisdom*, *instruction*, and *perceiving the words of understanding*. The word “wisdom in verse 2 refers to skill. It is the skill in making wise choices that please God. The word “instruction” in verse 2 can also be translated “discipline”. This word refers to diligence and correction. The person who wants to make wise choices must be diligent to learn from God. He or she must also be willing to receive correction from the Holy Spirit. The word “perceive” in verse 2 can also be translated “discern”. This refers to the ability to make proper moral distinctions. It is the capacity to understand the Word of God and apply it to one’s life (1:6). It is the ability to discern the difference between good and evil speech, actions, and attitudes. Wisdom then consists of skill in making wise choices, discipline to hear and heed God’s Word and Spirit, and the ability to discern what is evil and good in God’s sight. These qualities will equip you to live a godly life in a lost and foolish world.

Your invitation to wisdom continues with an explanation of how wisdom will affect you. The believer will “*receive the instruction of wisdom*” (Verse 3). This means that the believer will have the ability and discipline to discriminate between what is right and wrong, wholesome or damaging, important or unimportant, wise or foolish. The believer will also exhibit the following actions (Verse 5):

- ◆ “justice”-Love for and obedience to God’s Word
- ◆ “judgment”-Making proper and fitting judgments
- ◆ “equity”-Do what is right and fair to and among others

Wisdom will have a practical influence on your life. It will lead you to discern between foolish and wise actions, speech, and attitudes. It will equip you to obey God, make wise choices, and do what is right and fair to others.

Your invitation to wisdom also offers a declaration of who needs wisdom. The “simple” and “young man” have need of wisdom (Verse 5). The “simple” person is gullible (14:15), easily enticed (9:4, 16), and falls into traps (22:3). Wisdom will create “prudence” in this person’s life. This word is also translated “shrewdness”. It is the ability to foresee evil and prepare for it. The young man who pursues wisdom will gain “knowledge” and “discretion”. Wisdom will produce the ability to make wise plans and to perceive the best course of action for gaining a goal.

Yet, these are not the only ones who need to pursue wisdom. The “wise man” and the “man of understanding” need to seek wisdom. A believer does not arrive at the place where he or she no longer needs to pursue God’s wisdom. Gaining



wisdom does not guarantee a holy life that pleases God (1 Kings 11:9-10). A believer must continually strive to grow in wisdom so that he or she can live a life that honors and pleases God.

The following is a prayer that you can use to pray for wisdom. You can use this prayer or develop your own from it. But in the next week, plead with God for wisdom. For the next week, focus on praying these verses, asking the Holy Spirit to work in your life. Cry out to Him and tell Him you are answering His invitation for wisdom.

“Holy Father, You are the all-wise and all knowing God. As Romans 11:33 declares the depth of the riches of Your wisdom are unsearchable and past finding out. I exalt You and praise You because You are the only wise God. Father, I lack wisdom. My sinfulness leads me to make unwise and foolish choices concerning attitudes, speech, and actions.

For these reasons, I am desperately seeking You for wisdom. I plead that You would grant me skill in making wise choices that please You. Create this skill in my life. I ask that You would enable me to pursue wisdom and be ready to change as the Spirit convicts me. Do not allow me to think that I no longer need Your Word and Spirit. Deliver me from an unwillingness to change. I pray that You would grant me the ability to distinguish the difference between good and evil speech, actions, and attitudes. Do not allow me to be fooled in these matters.

I plead that this wisdom would be manifested in my life. Let me distinguish between what is right and wrong. In this lost world, the line between right and wrong has been blurred. Let me see clearly, what is right and wrong in Your sight. Grant me the qualities of judgment, justice, and equity. Let these things be evident in my life.

O God, I need You and Your wisdom. Thank You for the work that You have done in my life. Yet, I need greater understanding and discernment. I pray that I would grow in prudence, knowledge, and discretion. I ask that I would increase in understanding and that I will attain wise counsels. Amen.”

As you pray these verses, ask the Holy Spirit the following question, “In what area of my life do I need wisdom most?” As the Holy Spirit reveals this to you, write this down and begin to plead for God’s wisdom to be applied to this area of your life.

Proverbs 1:7

In Proverbs 1:1-6, Solomon extends an invitation to you to pursue wisdom. He invites you to pursue this by revealing its benefits to you. He shows you that wisdom will enable you to please God and live a godly life in a fallen world.

In Proverbs 1:7, Solomon explains about the starting point for wisdom. When you accept the invitation to wisdom, you need to know where to start. In this verse, Solomon tells you where to start pursuing wisdom. He states that the “beginning” or starting point for wisdom is the fear of the Lord. This is the first step to receiving wisdom from God. Without the fear of the Lord, a person will never gain wisdom. There can be no real search for wisdom without this.

What is the “fear” of the Lord? This does not mean that one lives in terror of God. It is not a cowering fear. However, neither is it lip service about awe for God. Too many times, people want to say that fear is simply awe for God. The fear of the Lord is a trembling reverence before God. It is a stunning awareness of His greatness that causes one to tremble and worship at the same time.

The fear of the Lord consists of three parts:

- ◆ An acknowledgment of His holy character. It is realizing that God is the great and glorious God. It is the startling realization that He is the only wise and holy God. It is the recognition that He and He alone is God who is sovereign over all.
- ◆ A submission to His authority. Because He is so great and glorious, He should be submitted to without reservation. When you acknowledge His holy character, it moves you to accept His will. You realize that He and He alone has the right and the ability to teach us how to live. As you realize this, you order your life according to His wisdom and will.
- ◆ An understanding of His will. The fear of the Lord makes you teachable. You acknowledge how great God is. You are submitted to Him and His will. When you trust Him, you are willing to learn and obey from Him.

When a person fears the Lord, he or she is ready to pursue wisdom.

Solomon then declares that the fool will never be wise. He “despises” wisdom and instruction. The word “despise” means to hold in contempt and to view as worthless. The fool does not see the need for skill in making wise



choices. He has contempt for the discipline to hear and change as God instructs. He believes that these things are worthless. He hates these things because he is filled with pride and does not value them. He believes that his opinion is the only one worth believing. Because of this, he will never be wise and will suffer the consequences both temporally and eternally.

Prayer:

“Loving Father, God of heaven and earth:

I bow before You in humble submission. You are a great and awesome God. You are the high and holy One who inhabits eternity. There is none like you in all of heaven and earth or time and eternity. You have no equals and no rivals. You alone are God.

I plead with You to increase my fear of You. I have accepted Your invitation to wisdom. I want to be wise. Deepen my fear of You so that I can pursue this wisdom. Grant me a greater understanding of Your holy character. Enable me to be more submissive to Your will in all the areas of my life. Make me teachable and willing to change as Your Holy Spirit convicts me.

Deliver me from being a fool. I desire wisdom and instruction; I do not despise it. I love it and want it with all my heart. Save me from being filled with pride. Rescue me from being wise in my own eyes.

Lord, I love You. You are my God and I will worship You forever. Amen.

Proverbs 1:8-9

These verses reveal that wisdom starts at home. Verses 8 and 9 teach the importance of a godly home with wise parents. Wisdom places great importance on the role of the family unit and ultimate value on parental instruction. Solomon speaks as a father to his son. He begins with the phrase “my son”. This is a term of affection and love. He combines this with discipline. He does this by adding, “hear the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother.” The parents are to provide loving and disciplined instruction for the children. This is where a child is to begin learning the fear of the Lord and receives a foundation for wisdom.

The son is called on to obey the wisdom of the parents. If he will do this, he will receive definite blessings. Obeying his father and mother’s teachings would provide him with a graceful ornament on his head and chains around his neck (verse 9). Many people in the Middle East wore beautiful ornaments on the head, as well as ornamental necklaces (Genesis 41:42). Parents gave these as gifts to their children and a great deal of sentiment was attached to them. Solomon compares loving obedience to the wisdom of the parents to these adornments. Just as these things made the person attractive and beautiful, obedience to one’s parents would create an attractive and dignified life. By following parental advice, children and young people could grow, mature, and eventually achieve the maximum that life can offer in the adult years.

A parent or one who is going to be a parent one day can use the following prayer. It can also be used to intercede for parents.

“Heavenly Father, You have created the family. The home is Your plan. You have ordained it as the place where the foundation for wisdom and the fear of the Lord is laid in the lives of children. I plead that You would make me wise. Grant me instruction and discipline so that I can teach my child. I pray that You would grant my child a willing and submissive spirit. Bless them with a desire for wisdom and transform their life into that which is beautiful and attractive in Your sight. Amen.”

Proverbs 1:10-19

The Word of God declares, “The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate” (Proverbs 8:13). Hating evil begins by refusing to compromise with evil in any form. Wisdom calls for a person to resist the persuasion to do what is evil. This passage speaks primarily to the young person, yet its truth can be applied to anyone.

Verse 10: In this verse, the young person is warned about the enticement to sin. When tempted to do evil, the young person is to resist. The wisest thing to do with temptation is to refuse it. Even the thought of doing evil must be opposed. Solomon says not to even “consent” to evil. Sin is born in the mind. A person falls to temptation when he or she begins to



entertain the idea of evil in the mind. Every sinful thought and temptation to evil must be immediately refused. There can be no compromise with sinful thoughts.

Verse 11: Wisdom's warning against compromise stands true no matter who is involved. It does not matter how many people are going along with the evil. The temptation mentioned in the text is that of committing robbery and murder. This was a common temptation in Solomon's day. It does not matter if they say, "Come with us," it does not stop robbery and murder from being a sin against God and others. The crowd's approval of a sin does not make it right in the sight of God.

Verses 12-14: In these verses, you can see that the temptation to do evil is always coupled with the promise of success. The young person is told that if he goes along with this evil that they will easily take care of their victims (**verse 12**). They will have no trouble robbing and murdering people. Not only will it be easy, it will also be profitable (**verse 13**). It will be an easy way to make a great deal of money. For this reason, the young person is invited to join in the evil. Temptation always comes with a promise of success. Temptation promises that the person will receive what he or she desires if only that person will yield. This is what makes temptation so deadly.

Verses 15-16: Wisdom teaches a person to not compromise with evil. The writer pleads with the young person not to yield in any way with evil. He declares that the young person "not to walk in the way with them". He even exhorts them to keep their feet from the evil person's path. He or she is to have the opposite attitude of verse 11. If a person compromises even a little, he or she will soon be headed down the same path as the evil person (verse 16). A person's conscience becomes less sensitive to sin as he or she yields to sin. This is why the writer pleads that the young people keep their foot from the path of evil.

Verses 17-19: These verses teach that sin blinds a person to the consequences of sin. Solomon declares that a bird will not go near a net. The bird knows that it will be caught and destroyed. Yet, people are blinded to the consequences of sin. They do not realize that it will wound and destroy them. Sin destroys. Wisdom teaches a person that there are consequences to sin. A wise person remembers the destructive power of sin (verse 19).

"Father, I plead in the name of Jesus that I will not follow the crowd. Deliver me from being molded and shaped by the words, ideas, or actions of wicked people. Enable me to stand strong for Your Son Jesus Christ. Cause me to realize that temptation, though it promises much, will wound and destroy me. Deliver me from compromise in any form. Amen."

You can also use this text to intercede for young people. These verses speak primarily to young people. Young people face a variety of temptations today and need intercession so that they can stand strong.

The following are ways that you can apply this passage in your prayer life. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you pray and apply this passage of Scripture to your life. Pray this passage in behalf of others.

Praise Pointers:

- Praise God for His wisdom that enables you to overcome lies and temptations.
- Praise God that He powerfully works to preserve you from evil.
- Praise God that He loves you enough to warn you about sin.

Confession Pointers:

- Compromise with evil
- Listening to the lies of the world
- Yielding to the pressure of others to compromise or sin

Thanksgiving Pointers:

- Thank Him that He delivers you from sin as you depend on Him.
- Thank Him for the wisdom that enables you to overcome the lies and sin of the world.
- Thank Him for His love that warns you, protects you, and guides as you live in a sinful, fallen world.

Supplication Pointers:

- Pray that He would enable you to overcome the lies of the world.
- Pray that He would cause you to hate compromise in any form.

Listening Pointers:

- Lord, in what ways have I compromised?



-Lord, what lies of the world am I believing and living?

-Lord, how much am I affected by the pressure and influence of others rather than Your Holy Spirit and Your Word?

Proverbs 1:20-33

These verses provide us with “The Great Invitation”. “The Great Invitation” is to fear God and surrender to Him. It is the invitation to follow in the paths of His wisdom and the knowledge of Him. In these verses, wisdom is pictured as a woman crying out. The picture of Lady Wisdom crying out in the streets is a personification—a literary device to make wisdom come alive for us. It is used to help us understand wisdom and to receive it.

Verses 20-21: In these verses, wisdom is pictured as a woman crying out in public places. These places are centers for daily activity. The verbs in the text all point to an excited and passionate call. Solomon wants us to understand that wisdom has nothing to hide (contrast this with verses 10-19). The invitation to do evil is made secretly and privately. But, wisdom’s invitation is made publicly. The call to fear God and receive His wisdom is made open and publicly. It is to be received by all persons.

Verse 22: Three types of people are called to fear God and receive His wisdom. They are:

“The simple ones”-This refers to the naïve person, the simpleton. This is the “ignorant ungodly”;

“Scorners”-This refers to the defiant and cynical free thinker. This person has continued in ignorance and sin to the point that it has made him or her question truth;

“Fool”-This refers to the hardened and morally insensitive sinner. The fool is one who has continued in sin to the point that it has hardened and settled his or her heart in rebellion toward God and His wisdom.

All three types of people are called on to forsake their simplicity, their scorning, and their rejection of God and His wisdom.

Verse 23: Wisdom cries out to these types of people to repent and fear God. If they will, they can receive wisdom and blessing from God. The point of this verse is that wisdom can be easily embraced if a person will respond to God. No matter what the condition of a person, if he or she will turn to God in surrender, that person can receive wisdom and power from God. He will grant His free and full salvation to that person.

Verses 24-25: In this verse, Solomon states that there are grave consequences to rejecting God and His wisdom. The rejection of wisdom is a purposeful decision. Solomon declares that a person who rejects God does so by refusing Him and disregarding His call to salvation and wisdom. He adds that the sinner must disdain His counsel and have nothing to do with His rebuke. Rejecting God and His wisdom is a willful choice to reject the truth and choose one’s own way of life.

Verses 26-27: The laughing and mocking of God is a righteous response of God. God laughs and mocks because of the absurdity of choosing a foolish way of life and being unprepared for judgment. God had called these individuals openly and freely. Yet, they chose their way of life over Him and His wisdom. They were unprepared for eternity even though God had warned them. The righteous response of God is to laugh and mock because they refused Him and despised His wisdom. They chose their way, supposing it to be superior to God’s. These individuals must also deal with the calamity that comes from rejecting God and His wisdom. Verse 27 describes the awful fate of those who reject God and choose their own way.

Verse 28: When a person rejects God and His wisdom, that person will reach a point of no return. God is merciful and compassionate. He extends His call to fear and surrender to Him. Yet, when a person lives in continual rejection of that call, there will come a time when that person will no longer have the opportunity to respond. The opportunity to fear God and receive His wisdom will pass. This verse points to the utter necessity of responding to God when He calls.

Verse 29-30: This verse gives us insight into why the opportunity to hear and respond to God passes. It is a grievous thing to fail to respond to God’s call. Yet, rejecting God’s wisdom for one’s own way adds the greater condemnation. Solomon declares that the eternally condemned hate the knowledge of the Lord and would not choose the fear of the Lord. They didn’t simply ignore God and His wisdom. Their response was one of active rejection and hatred. He goes on to say that they would have none of His counsel and despised His every rebuke. It is one thing to ignore God and His wisdom. It is a greater evil to actively reject and hate these things in preference to one’s own wisdom and way.



Verse 31-32: Because of their hatred and active rejection of the truth, sinners will eat the fruit of their own way. They will have to live with the consequences of their foolish choice. The consequences will be both temporal dissatisfaction and eternal suffering. This is the Old Testament's declaration that you reap what you sow. The unfortunate thing is that the sinner does not even recognize the seriousness of his or her choice. The word "fancies" in the last part of this verse refers to a willful carelessness because of prosperity. The temporary prosperity of those who reject God causes them to become careless about their soul and their standing before God. Because of this carelessness, the simple turns away from wisdom and the fool is complacent about fearing God and submitting to Him.

Verse 33: In the final verse of this section, Solomon declares the benefits of wisdom. The one who fears God and submits to His wisdom will experience a true and lasting peace. The word "listens" in the text means more than simply hearing. It means to hear and obey. The one who hears and obeys God experiences the security that God gives. This does not mean that the believer is free from trials and adversity. Yet, it means that he or she can have a calm confidence, a peace that passes understanding in the midst of them. Because of this, the believer is safe and secure.

"Father, You are a merciful and compassionate God. You extend Your call to salvation to all men. You call people openly and passionately to surrender to Your Son and receive Your wisdom. You are a wise and generous God. You deserve all praise, glory, and honor.

Father, when You called, I responded. When you stretched out Your hand to me, I surrendered to Your Son Jesus Christ. I received Your counsel and accepted Your rebuke. Because of this, pour out Your Spirit on me. Make Your words known to me. Teach me wisdom.

I have listened to You. I commit myself to listen to You for the rest of my life. Because of this, cause me to dwell safely and securely. Deliver me from the fear of calamity. Amen."

Praise Pointers:

- Praise God for being a merciful God who calls all people to fear Him and to be in relationship with Him.
- Praise God for being a patient and long-suffering God.
- Praise God for being a God who secures you and delivers you from the fear of evil.

Confession Pointers:

From this text, examine your heart and life through its truth. Ask the Holy Spirit to deal with you concerning these things.

- A slowness to respond to God's call or leading.
- An unconcern for those who reject Jesus Christ.
- A stubbornness to receive God's wisdom over your own.

Thanksgiving Pointers:

- Thank God for being so merciful and compassionate to you.
- Thank God for being patient and long-suffering toward you.
- Thank God for having the opportunity to hear the gospel and to surrender to Him through His Son.

Supplication Pointers:

- Ask God to enable you to rejoice in His mercy and compassion toward You.
- Ask God to help you respond to His leadings in your life.
- Pray that God will deliver you from fear of anything or anybody in your life and to increase your sense of His protection and security over your life.

Listening Pointers:

- "Father, in what ways have I chosen my own wisdom over Yours?"
- "Father, in what areas am I slow or stubborn to respond to Your leadings?"

This text also provides us with tremendous insight on how to pray for the lost. From this text, you can develop the following prayer requests for those who need Jesus Christ:



- (1) Pray that God would encounter this person wherever he or she goes with witnesses and evidence for Jesus Christ and His gospel (**vv.20-21**).
- (2) Plead that this person will not be content to live in sin and reject Jesus Christ. Ask God to give this person a holy dissatisfaction (**v.22**).
- (3) Pray that this person will immediately respond to the Holy Spirit's conviction (**vv.23-25**).
- (4) Ask that this person will know and understand that God is righteous and holy. Pray that he or she will see that the rejection of Christ will bring the righteous wrath of God on him or her (**v.26**).
- (5) Plead that this person will know and understand the seriousness of rejecting Christ both now and for eternity (**v.27**).
- (6) Ask that this person will know and understand the danger of delaying one's surrender to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (**v.28**).
- (7) Pray that the Holy Spirit will prepare this person's heart so that he or she will receive the gospel and not reject it (**vv.29-30**).
- (8) Ask that this person would not be complacent about his or her need to surrender to Jesus Christ. Pray that anything that is causing this person to be complacent about spiritual things would be removed (**vv.31-32**).
- (9) Pray that this person will surrender to God through Christ and yield to God's wisdom (**vv.33**).