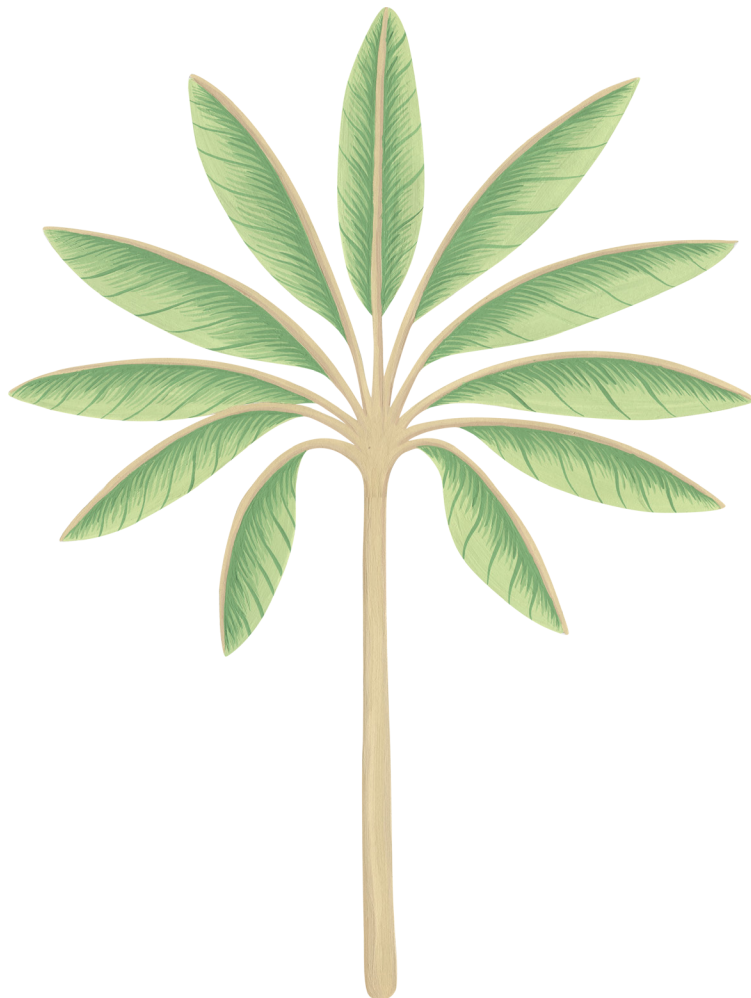


Proverbs

HEZEKIAH'S COLLECTIONS OF
SOLOMON'S PROVERBS





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As I begin to write today, I am at a loss of where to start. These five chapters in Proverbs cover so many situations and types of people: rich, poor, wise, fools, neighbors, enemies, kings, servants, friends, sluggards, evil and righteous. Most of these have been covered in earlier Proverbs. There is always a good reason to pay attention when God repeats Himself. As I asked the Lord to show me how to open this week of study, I could think of nothing, but as I stared across my backyard, it came to me. I saw bits of grass and leaves and vines “flying” over the fence. It is early in the morning and my neighbor seems to be doing a little weeding along the new fence line. Is he throwing the green waste over the fence to my yard? Yes, he is!

I'm not going to pretend that my first thoughts were, “Oh bless his heart, Lord, how can I help this dear neighbor?” My first thoughts were, “What a lazy and rude fool!” I did fuss about it a few minutes and said to the air the things I wanted to say to my neighbor before I looked down in my lap at the open Bible turned to Proverbs.

Proverbs 28:25-26: *“He who is of a proud heart stirs up strife, but he who trusts in the Lord will be prospered. He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but whoever walks wisely will be delivered.”*

Proverbs 29:11: *“A fool vents all his feelings, but a wise man holds them back.”*

Proverbs 29:23: *“A man's pride will bring him low, but the humble in spirit will retain honor.”*

Proverbs 19:11 (CSB): *“A person's insight gives him patience, and his virtue is to overlook an offense.”*

Ok, the Word of God and the wisdom of the master Solomon have saved me from venting an angry thought and kept me from stirring up strife with a neighbor and dishonoring God. Whew! How many times has His Word rescued me? Too many to count! We are challenged every day by people that run with us and against us. The enemy is constantly setting bait for us to stir up strife, say things that we shouldn't, and defend OUR position in the world—anything to keep us from doing, thinking, and saying the things that bring blessing and glory to God.

As we begin this week, God has something specific for each one of us. These proverbs meet us right where we are, and we are all in different places. My prayer is that we will enjoy His Word, be teachable, and allow this wisdom to guard our hearts and speech and improve our relationships. Begin this week by reading through Proverbs 25-29 out loud. Record your initial thoughts here, along with any themes you notice.



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OBSERVATIONS

Proverbs 25

1. Whose proverbs are these?
2. Who copied them?
3. In verses 1-7, circle all the words having to do with **kings** and **thrones**.
4. What is the glory of a king?
5. What is the posture to take before a king or leader?
6. In verses 8-20, circle all the words having to do with **neighbors**.
7. In terms of words, disputes, and conversations, what is the one instruction to do in dealing with neighbors?
8. What are the four things not to do with neighbors?
9. In verses 21-24, circle the word **enemy**.
10. What are the actions to take with an enemy?
11. In verses 25-28, circle the word **own**.
12. What is like a broken city without protective walls?

Proverbs 26

13. In verses 1-12, circle the words **fool**, **fools**, **folly**, and **foolishness**.
14. What are the characteristics of a fool?
15. In verses 13-16, circle the words **sluggard**, **slothful**, and **lazy**.
16. What are the characteristics of a sluggard?



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17. In verses 17-28, circle the words having to do with **speech, words, tongue, lips, talebearer, meddler, gossip, whisperer, etc.**

18. What happens when there is “*no gossip, no talebearer*” (verse 20)?

19. Verse 28b - “*A flattering mouth _____.*”

20. Compare Proverbs 26:23 to Proverbs 25:11-12. What is the difference in the two descriptions?

Proverbs 27

21. Circle the word **friend**. What do good friends do for each other?

22. The man/woman:

- Verse 2 *Let _____ _____ praise you, and not your own mouth; a _____ and not your own lips.*
- Verse 8 *Like a bird who wanders from its nest is a _____ _____*
- Verse 9b *And the sweetness of a _____ _____ does so by hearty counsel.*
- Verse 12 *A _____ _____ foresees evil and hides himself, the simple pass on and are punished.*
- Verse 15 *A continual dripping on a very rainy day and a _____ _____ are alike.*
- Verse 17 *As iron sharpens iron, so a _____ _____ the countenance of his friend.*
- Verse 19 *As in water face reveals face, so a _____ _____ reveals the _____*
- Verse 21b *and a _____ _____ by what others say of him.*

In verses, 23-27, underline the words **diligent** and **attend**. Some versions say *work hard, be careful, know well, or pay attention to*.

23. What are you instructed to *know well* or *pay attention to*?

24. What is the result of doing so?



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Proverbs 28

25. Proverbs 28:27 “*He who _____
will not _____, but one who turns his eyes away will receive many curses.*”

26. How many times is the word **poor** mentioned in this proverb?

27. You will need two different colored pencils for this exercise. With one color, underline all the words having to do with the **evil, hard-hearted, wicked, rebellious**, etc.

With the other colored pencil, underline all the words having to do with the **righteous, wise, upright, blameless, just**, etc.

28. If you have time, make two columns side by side. One for “the evil,” one for “the righteous.” In these columns, list the attributes, consequences, or blessings you can pick out for each. For instance:

THE RIGHTEOUS

Bold
Triumph
Blessed abundance

THE EVIL

Flee
Falls into trouble
Poverty

Proverbs 29 (This proverb continues to compare and contrast evil and good.)

29. What, in your own words, is the theme of this proverb?



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30. When the righteous (kings, leaders, rulers) lead with justice, upholding law with compassion, a society shows signs of health. Write down a word or phrase that distinguishes a righteous leader or wise person in the following verses. For instance, in verse 2, righteous leaders produce people that rejoice.

v. 3:

v. 4:

v. 7:

v. 8:

v. 10:

v. 14:

v. 18:

v. 23:

v. 25:

v. 26:

v. 27:

30. What are the benefits of correction? (Verses 1, 17, 19)

INTERPRETATION

The very first verse of Proverbs 25 tells us that these were the proverbs of King Solomon. It also says the men of King Hezekiah copied these five proverbs around 270 years after Solomon died. According to 1 Kings, Solomon wrote over 3,000 proverbs. Solomon reigned over Israel from 971 BC to 931 BC. This was the last period of time when the nation of Israel was united. After Solomon, the nation was divided in two: the north (Israel) and the South (Judah). King Hezekiah was the King of Judah. The prophets that proclaimed God's Word during the time of Hezekiah's reign were Isaiah, Micah, and Obadiah. Hezekiah's story is told in 2 Kings 16:20 - 20:21, 2 Chronicles 28:27 - 32:33, and Isaiah 36-39:8.

Both Solomon and Hezekiah were scholarly kings. Solomon has the reputation of being the wisest and wealthiest of his time. David and his son Solomon were the only kings to reign over a united kingdom of



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Israel. Although Solomon was a wise ruler, built a magnificent temple, worshiped God, and enjoyed wealth, honor, and success, he also was involved in idol worship and had foreign wives.

1 Kings 11:4 tells us, “*When Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God as was the heart of his father David.*” I wonder if those wives were the contentious ones.

Contentious is the same word used for *strife, discord, quarreling, or brawling*. It is used 23 times in Proverbs. Solomon had experience with strife.

One of the questions to ask as we interpret these proverbs is, why did King Hezekiah gather these proverbs and record them?

The kings of Israel were evil in God’s sight and worshiped idols, allowed and engaged in pagan practices, and “*had abandoned the Lord God of their ancestors.*” The Kings of Judah did as well, but there were some who followed God. Hezekiah was the son of King Ahaz, one of the worst Kings of Judah. He appeased the rival Assyrians by paying tributes of gold stripped from God’s temple. He allowed and participated in the perverted worship of many gods on the high places throughout Judah. He even sacrificed his own sons to Molech, burning them alive in the most revolting pagan practices. Against the godly words of Isaiah, he put his trust in the words of the lying Assyrians and other ungodly advisors. He made egocentric decisions, over-taxing and bringing poverty to his nation to secure his own power and reputation. His cowardly leadership forced Judah into virtual slavery to Assyria. The treasury was emptied, and he ultimately closed the temple of God. Instead of leading society, he was led by society, his fear, and his pride. Proverbs 28:14-17 describes him well:

Happy is the man who is always reverent, but he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity. Like a roaring lion and a charging bear is a wicked ruler over poor people. A ruler who lacks understanding is a great oppressor, but he who hates covetousness will prolong his days. A man burdened by bloodshed will flee into a pit; Let no one help him.

As we read the horrid details of sin and rebellion that Ahaz practiced, we realize there was a little boy, Hezekiah, who grew up in this environment. We can only imagine what fears and struggles he must have had. For instance, I wonder if he woke up some mornings to find one of his brothers missing, and gone forever, sacrificed in the night to Molech. Did he fear for his own life? With the temple closed and a terrible, ungodly father, what did he know of God? Amid evil corruption, was there a voice of truth to lead his heart another way? During the temple shutdown, two godly voices remained, Isaiah and Micah. Could young Hezekiah have heard these voices?

When Hezekiah takes the throne, the tasks he has on his heart can be brought to us by the letter R:

- Repent (bring back sin offerings)
- Re-open (the temple)
- Refine (godly counsel—Proverbs 25:4-5)
- Resolve (to trust in God vs. appease other nations)
- Relieve (the tax burden on his people)
- Restore (the temple, national treasury, holy feasts, and celebration days)



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- Revive (the hearts of the people of Judah)
- Reform (Judah's spiritual life by destroying idol worship)
- Rid (the nation of pagan practices and high places)
- Rely (on God alone for protection and provision)
- Returning (worship back to the one true God, Yahweh)

Wow, an unbelievable task to turn a whole nation back to God! He must have had poor advisors left over from an evil cabinet whispering in his ear. He must have had people-pleasers seeking to flatter him to gain for themselves. He must have had lazy employees that got away with all sorts of things under the previous leadership. Evil spies may have infiltrated the government. There were priests that had compromised the true worship and allowed evil inside the temple. He had to deal with many types of people—strangers, men who praised him, men who cursed him, his friends, and his father's friends. He needed discernment as he looked into each heart to know the true man (Proverbs 27:19).

The hearts of the people did not trust or honor him at first. Assyria would size up the new king and challenge his strength and resolve. Eventually, they'd find out they would no longer be able to push Judah where they wanted. Hezekiah had a lot to prove and a lot of unpopular decisions to make. He did it. He accomplished so much in his reign. He was not perfect, but he sought God in worship, sifted out ungodly counsel, and filled his life with prayer and counsel from the inspired words of the masters Isaiah, Micah, and Solomon. God rewarded his commitment and performed miracles, and protected, blessed, and restored Judah.

31. Read through these five proverbs again with this thought in mind: Why would this wisdom help young King Hezekiah? Write a few thoughts here.

32. How would wisdom help establish a foundation on which godly discernment could grow into godly decisions?

Let's look at another King Who rules over a difficult and divided people. This King has no need to search for wisdom, truth, and a way to govern because He is Wisdom; He is the Way and the Truth. Our King of Kings, Jesus, came to show us the Kingdom of God that reigns in love over a sinful, stubborn and diverse people. Some have lost the way and some follow closely. He offers all the "R's" King Hezekiah hoped for his nation. By His complete sacrifice, He IS Redeemer, Restorer, the Relief, the Resurrection. He is the One who shows us how to lead with love. He is THE perfect master. He can love enemies and friends, fools and



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sluggards, rich and poor, the quarrelsome and the humble. Jesus knew these Proverbs. His Words can bring us even more understanding. Compare some of these scriptures and record your thoughts.

33. Read Proverbs 25:6-7, then read Luke 14:7-14.

34. Read Proverbs 25:8-9, then read Matthew 5:23-26 and Matthew 18:15-20.

35. Read Proverbs 25:21-22, then read Matthew 5:43-48.

36. Read Proverbs 25:27, then read Matthew 23:12.

37. Read Proverbs 26:18-19, then read Matthew 5:37.

38. Read Proverbs 26:20-26, then read Matthew 15:17-20.

39. Read Proverbs 27:1, Proverbs 28:3-8, then read Luke 12:13-27.

40. Read Proverbs 27:6, 9, 17, then read John 15:12-16.

41. Read Proverbs 27:23-27, then read Luke 15:4-8.

42. Read Proverbs 28:3, 6, 8-9, 11, 13, 20, 22, 25-27, then read Revelation 3:17-22.

43. Read Proverbs 28:27, then read Luke 14:13.

44. Read Proverbs 29:3, then read Luke 15:11-32.

45. Read Proverbs 29:13, then read Matthew 5:45.

46. Read Proverbs 29:23, then read Matthew 18:3-4.

APPLICATION

Probably none of us is going to rule a nation, but as Warren Wiersbe puts it, "Everybody must practice self-controlled feelings and words. We may not all run the government, but we can manage the kingdom of our own hearts."

We can be convinced our time in history, our government, and our leaders are the most evil or the most challenging. Our neighbors and our family members are the most difficult. As Ecclesiastes 1:9 says, "There is nothing new under the sun." We cannot control who is in leadership, we cannot control un-godly policies, we cannot control our neighbors or the motives of evil minds.



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We CAN influence the world around us by the way we answer it and by the choices we make to live uncompromised to the Word and will of God, even if we suffer for it. We can model pure, undefiled, strong leadership over what we are given to manage. We can work hard and happily. We can be a voice for truth and right. We can engage in some battles and discussions and leave others alone according to the rule of God's Spirit in us. We can pray for our enemies, bless our neighbors and be good friends.

Here are just a few questions to consider as you apply Proverbs 25-29 to your own life.

Proverbs 25

47. How is your posture before your leaders? Are you focused on what they can or should be doing for you or how you are serving and praying for them?

There are some people that no one can get along with, but in handling disputes, God blesses peacemakers. Matthew 5:9, James 3:13-18.

48. How are you bringing peace into difficult situations? Are you listening to the wise "rebukers" in your life?

David Guzik explains Proverbs 25:11-12 this way: "When the one who is a wise rebuker meets an obedient ear, it is like beautiful jewelry."

49. How can you honor godly counselors?

Proverbs 26

50. Which challenges you most: foolishness, laziness, or gossip?

51. What has God asked you to do or change or pray about in these areas?



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Proverbs 27

52. What kind of a man (woman) are you? Are you contentious? What is God saying to you about a nagging or discontent spirit?

53. What is the state of your “flocks”—the condition of what God has given you to care for? Describe your heart for the lost.

Proverbs 28

In our day, the lines that define righteous living and evil have become blurred. God Himself is clearly just and righteous. He cannot be anything else.

54. Psalm 89:14 says, “*Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; mercy and truth go before Your face.*” Deep inside, justice is a concern for what happens to people—the consequences and blessings attached to their actions. When reacting to evil and injustice, is your reaction one of concern and compassion for those suffering? Is it reverent or hard-hearted? (Proverbs 28:14)

55. “*Be generous to the poor—you’ll never go hungry; shut your eyes to their needs and run a gauntlet of curses*” (Proverbs 28:27 MSG). How can you serve the “poor,” either those poor in spirit or those in material need?



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Proverbs 29

56. Earthly kings and leaders will disappoint us, worry us, and even hurt us at times. No one will always get it right and lead with perfect integrity and compassion. But Jesus will. God has corrected us, pampered us with His Word, and shown us there is safety in trusting Him above anything our world has to offer. Proverbs 29:25 says, *“The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe.”* How does knowing this help you?

57. God performed miracles for a sin-filled Judah and for Hezekiah personally as he sought God. What miracles has He done in your life, even this week, as you have sought Him in this section of Proverbs? Maybe He kept you from strife or folly or arrogance. Maybe He stirred your heart to give to someone in need. Those are miracles.

One more ‘R’: REMEMBER.

Remembrance in the Bible is often followed by an action on God’s part:

- God **remembered** Noah and dried up the flooded earth. Genesis 8:1
- God **remembered** Abraham and saved Lot. Genesis 19:29
- God **remembered** Rachel and opened her womb. Genesis 30:22
- God heard their groaning and **remembered** His covenant with Abraham. Exodus 2:24
- Jesus said, “Do this in **remembrance** of Me”—now we have communion. Luke 22:19

The thief on the cross said, *“Lord, remember me when you come into Your Kingdom.”* To which Jesus promised, *“Today you will be with Me in paradise”* (Luke 23:42-43).

58. Ask God to give you a **remembrance** of His Word to you this week: a verse to memorize, a keepsake to remind you, some action you take that you will look back on and remember why. This may take some time but when you have the answer, write it here: