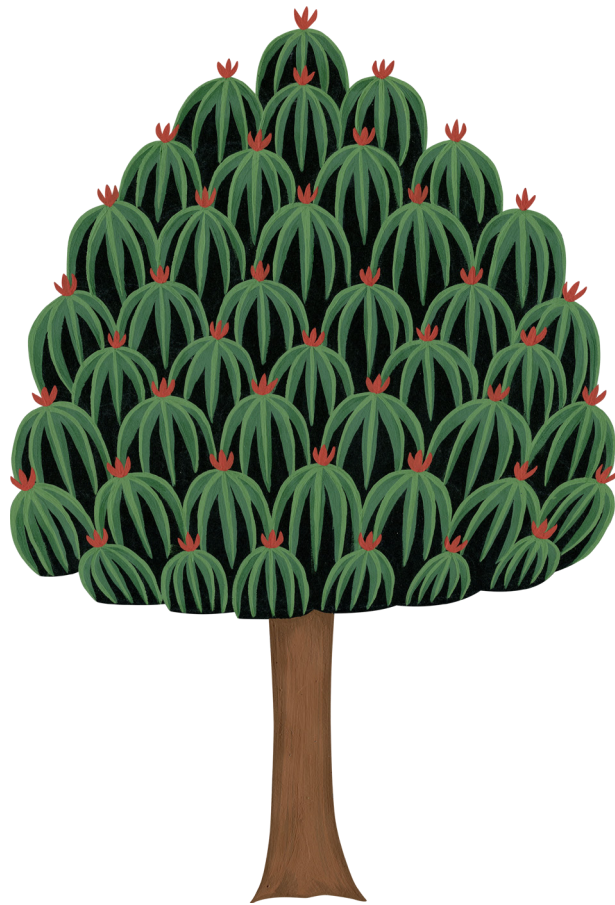
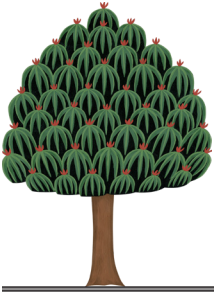


# Proverbs

SAYINGS OF THE WISE





# Proverbs

## SAYINGS OF THE WISE

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Finish the sentence:

The early bird gets the \_\_\_\_\_.

Great minds think \_\_\_\_\_.

What happens in \_\_\_\_\_ stays in \_\_\_\_\_.

Sayings pervade our everyday lives, and most of them we say without thinking. Many we don't know where they came from, nor understand what we are actually saying. Some have even been taken out of context, becoming a shortened catchphrase out of a longer adage. It goes like this: somebody gives some advice, then, before long, we are playing the "telephone game" and the original saying has been completely diluted down, or changed to something entirely different, and the true meaning is lost.

This is an interesting saying that I have never understood. "Starve a cold, feed a fever." Or is it, "Starve a fever, feed a cold?" Whatever it is, apparently, there is a longer version: "If you starve a cold, then you'll have to feed a fever." Yet, even that has probably been misquoted from the original version of, "If you fast during a cold, you'll be sick even longer, so eat!" Basically, "Eat and drink, or things will get worse" is my summary. Nevertheless, we hold on to quick sayings, to try to provide us with quick wisdom, to lessen the impact of a lengthier situation that we are attempting to rationalize, whether it's true or not.

I went to college for five and a half years (over 20 years ago). I remember very little of everything I tried to cram into my feeble memory banks, but I will never forget one saying from my economics professor, out at Shasta College. I don't even remember what it was relating to—probably the pricing and probability of selling widgets vs. supply and demand, and avoiding declaring bankruptcy...or something of that nature. Nevertheless, it goes like this: "If you're digging yourself into a hole, stop digging, and get out."

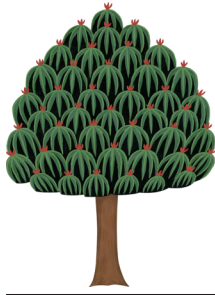
Now that may be corn pun, redneck, folk wisdom, but this simple little proverb has helped me, many a time, over the years. It has given me the courage, when it's just going nowhere but down, to say, "No, I'm done. Cut your losses, and get outta Dodge, before it's too late."

This week, I encourage you to have a heightened sense of the words you say and those that are spoken around you. Look for those interesting little sayings that are in response to a situation, that just come to the tip of your tongue, without thinking. Then, I dare you to look up its history, especially if you don't understand what it's even saying. You may be surprised, you may be encouraged, and you may have some trivia to throw around the next time you say it, or hear it.

### **IS IT A SAYING, OR A PROVERB?**

I have given you the challenge of being aware of common little sayings being said throughout the day. Did you hear any? Did you say any?

Here's mine! We were planning to go somewhere and we were running a little behind, so I said, "We need to



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get our skates on.” Have you heard that one? For our family, it was handed down to my mom, from another friend, then to me. It was a saying that was learned. And, yes, I looked it up on Google. It is a common saying, and it actually meant what we thought: we need to hurry up and not delay. The implied wisdom is that we will be keeping the other party involved waiting, which is impolite.

Which leads to our topic of discussion. When does a **saying** become a **proverb**? Again, I Googled this, and I am not the first person to ask. Here is a well-rounded excerpt from an article entitled, “Saying vs Proverbs,” on [www.differencebetween.com](http://www.differencebetween.com):

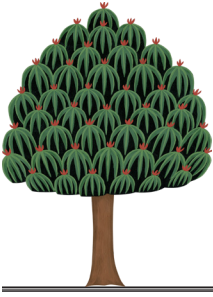
A **saying** is a familiar expression that is often repeated. Also referred to as an **adage**, a **saying** is something that was said in the past and has become popular to be often repeated in the daily life of common people. A **proverb** is a *type of saying* that contains a piece of advice or simply contains truth or any other universal value. A **proverb** can say a lot more than a thousand words. Morality, truth, wisdom, friendship, loyalty, etc. are the values that are glorified with the use of these proverbs. *All proverbs are basically sayings, but not all sayings are proverbs.*

I referred to the saying, “What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas.” It is now a common saying in our culture, developed almost 20 years ago for a travel marketing campaign. But can we honestly say there’s any moral truth in it? I would say not. In fact, quite the opposite, as it promotes covering up things that you don’t want to be known.

Many sayings that are prevalent in our culture today may seem to provide wisdom, though they often fall short of doing so. Our best collection of wisdom quotes is found in the Proverbs. Today we begin looking at the section of Proverbs known as “The Sayings of the Wise,” as curated by King Solomon.

First, let’s research a few details from the resume of the author, King Solomon.

1. Who were Solomon’s parents? (2 Samuel 12:24)
2. Who promised Solomon would someday be king? (1 Chronicles 28:4-7; 1 Chronicles 29:1)
3. Who tried to steal Solomon’s monarchy? (1 Kings 1:11)
4. How many wives and concubines did he have? (1 Kings 11:3)
5. How many kids did he have listed in the Bible? (1 Kings 11:43, 1 Kings 4:11, 1 Kings 4:15) Do you think those were his only children?



# Proverbs

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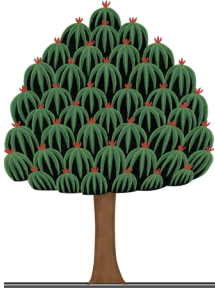
6. How long did Solomon reign over Israel? (1 Kings 11:42)
  
7. Did Solomon always and only follow the God of Israel? (1 Kings 11:2-4, Nehemiah 13:26)
  
8. What 3 books of the Bible are attributed to Solomon's authorship?
  
9. Knowing these facts, do you feel we can/should trust the wise sayings that Solomon writes in Proverbs 22-24? Was he truly a man of experience and wisdom? Why or why not?

### WHERE DOES WISDOM COME FROM?

King Solomon was a man who lived life with a completely messed up family. He was the second son of a marriage that only came about after his parents lived a life of lies, adultery, premeditated murder, and the death of a child. One of his half-brothers planned to kill their father and tried to take the throne. One of his other half-brothers also tried to steal the monarchy away from Solomon, before their father had even passed away. Solomon himself had 700 wives and 300 concubines and who knows how many kids.

He was the richest man on the planet. He directed the building of a magnificent Temple and royal palace. He was a powerful king who ruled for forty years over Israel, leading it through its Golden Age of peace and prosperity. He was a gifted writer who eloquently tells his young romantic love story in Song of Solomon, writes his life lessons as a powerful ruler in Proverbs and he gives an even more experienced, aged, and philosophical view on life in Ecclesiastes.

If we base wisdom on experience, we could very well say he had a very well-rounded life and should maybe be listened to. Solomon is officially dubbed the wisest man to ever walk the earth (besides Jesus). Solomon's father, King David, spoke of his wisdom in 1 Kings 2:9. Solomon was then wise enough to ask God for wisdom above all else, and God granted it to him in 2 Chronicles 1:6-12. The Bible also tells us of how great his wisdom was in 1 Kings 4:29-34. We trust that what Solomon is saying to us in the Proverbs is God-inspired and truly wise.



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### THE SAYINGS OF THE WISE: PROVERBS 22:17-24:34

Solomon opens this section of Proverbs with a promise, to give us words of wisdom, knowledge, and truth.

*17 Incline your ear and hear the **words** of the **wise**,  
 And apply your heart to my **knowledge**;  
 18 For it is a pleasant thing if you keep them within you;  
 Let them all be fixed upon your lips,  
 19 So that your **trust** may be in the LORD;  
 I have instructed you today, even you.  
 20 Have I not written to you excellent things  
 Of counsels and knowledge,  
 21 That I may make you know the certainty of the words of truth,  
 That you may answer words of truth  
 To those who send to you? (Proverbs 22:17-21)*

Solomon then proceeds, starting with Proverbs 22:22, to lay out a very lengthy discourse of thirty-seven wise sayings.

**READING:** Go ahead and grab your Bible, and read straight through all thirty-seven sayings, from Proverbs 22:22-24:34. Your Bible will help you identify each individual saying by extra space in between groups of verses. Chapter 22 has 5, chapter 23 has 15, and chapter 24 has 17.

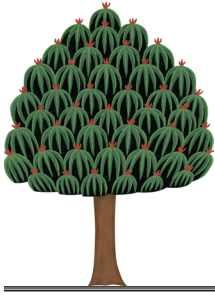
10. Now skim through again and find three or four major topics you could group most of them under.

### FINDING A SAYING OF MEANING AND IMPORTANCE

11. In your reading did you notice any sayings that seem to be repeated/related? (Example: Proverbs 22:28, 23:10-11)

12. What is the longest saying about? (Proverbs 23:29-35)

13. Write the shortest saying. (Proverbs 24:26)



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14. Out of all of them, is there one that is jumping out at you specifically that the Holy Spirit wants you to pay attention to with a little more fervency? Which verse or verses?

Write it out:

Now, sleep on it. Tomorrow morning, ask the LORD, first thing when you wake, how you can be more aware of this wise saying throughout your day, in both your thoughts and actions.

### **PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER**

The three chapters we have focused on seem to cover the basics of everyday life. Sleeping, eating/drinking, working/work ethic, and dealing with people. Several of the sayings in this collection seem to be a bit cryptic, and some so plainly obvious. They are not an exhaustive collection of life wisdom—we have the entire Bible for that.

As we wrap up our week, I do want us to focus on three of the sayings that seem to echo each other. Read them now:

- Proverbs 23:12
- Proverbs 23:23
- Proverbs 22:17

15. What is the underlying theme of all three? Summarize in your own words, what they mean to you and what you will do to be more available to hearing and learning wisdom.

*Dear Sister, today and going forward, I pray you will open your heart, mind, and soul, listening earnestly for, and hearing with understanding, words of knowledge and wisdom, always seeking the truth that the LORD will provide when you seek Him.*

*Sincerely, Your Sister in the Lord*