

# THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

## PROVERBS 25-28

Over the years mankind's knowledge has grown astronomically.

If history's greatest intellectuals returned to Earth today – people like Aristotle, Augustine, Galileo, and Newton they probably couldn't pass a High School Equivalency exam. The body of knowledge has increased.

Yet is this world a better place to live? *Probably not* – today, problems abound! In fact, modern scientific knowledge threatens to wipe us out.

That's why our greatest need is not more knowledge, but wisdom. We need the ability to take facts and use them to our benefit, not detriment.

Knowledge is always expanding, but wisdom cannot be improved upon.

Real wisdom stands the test of time. It doesn't become obsolete or out-dated. God's wisdom is relevant and needed by every new generation.

Chapter 25 begins with an editorial comment added to the Proverbs 250 years after Solomon wrote them. **“These also are proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied...”**

Two-and-a-half centuries after Solomon's death, his wisdom had not tarnished or become old-fashioned. Young men were still seeking his insights and writing down his pearls of wisdom. Solomon's wisdom was God's wisdom – and

God's wisdom is always in demand!

Verse 2 tells us, "It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter." The knowledge of God is so vast a subject. God can never be fully comprehended by the mind of man.

Isaiah 55 tells us His ways and thoughts are higher than ours. It's the infinity and mystery of God that add to His glory in the eyes of mortals.

Yet there're truths about God He has made known. And it's the glory of man to seek and ascertain God's revelation. St. Gregory said, "I love God because I know Him. I adore God because I cannot comprehend Him."

A relationship with God is a mixture of the known and unknowable.

Verse 3 "As the heavens for height and the earth for depth, so the heart of kings is unsearchable..." It is both President Obama's blessing and his blight to be privy to classified information that his constituency lacks.

And when he has to act on information only known to him he becomes open to everyone else's criticism. *If they only knew the whole story!*

This is a pastor's dilemma. He has "behind the scenes" information you don't possess. That's why a congregation bent on judging him can easily misinterpret his actions. Wisdom gives leaders the benefit of the doubt.

Always remember, "There's more to it than what meets the eye."

“Take away the dross from silver, and it will go to the silversmith for jewelry. Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne will be established in righteousness.” Just as impurities will ruin the value of a piece of silver, an evil counselor or assistant will bring down a leader.

“Do not exalt yourself in the presence of the king, and do not stand in the place of the great; for it is better that he say to you, “Come up here,” than that you should be put lower in the presence of the prince, whom your eyes have seen.”

Perhaps this was inspiration for Jesus’ parable in Luke 14. God likes to turn the tables! He sends *the haughty to the rear of the line*, and he sends *the humble to the head of the class*.

Remember the advice Jeremiah gave to his servant Baruch, Jeremiah 45:5, “Do you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek them...” Notice, ambition is not a sin. God wants you to seek “great things” – just not “for yourself...” Be ambitious for the *fame of God* and *salvation of others*.

In one of his plays, William Shakespeare wrote, “Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambitions, by that sin fell the angels; how can man then, the image of his Maker, hope to profit by it?”

Verse 8 “Do not go hastily to court; for what will you do in the end, when your neighbor has put you to shame?” What if you rush to court and lose?

“Debate your case with your neighbor, and do not disclose the secret to another; lest he who hears it expose your shame, and your reputation be ruined.” It’s always best to

come to an agreement and settle out of court.

Verse 11 “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.”

The *right word* said the *right way* at the *right time* has a dynamic impact for good. Choose your words wisely. Be strategic. Words are powerful.

“Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold is a wise rebuker to an obedient ear.” A rebuke received is like a beautiful piece of jewelry.

The one who rebukes shows the courage to love, and the one who receives demonstrates the courage to listen. It’s a thing of beauty!

“Like the cold of snow in time of harvest is a faithful messenger to those who send him, for he refreshes the soul of his masters.” Harvest time in Israel was hot. Once the crop was in the barns, often Galilean farmers would retreat to the snowcapped peaks of Mount Hermon to cool off.

Solomon himself had a summer palace in the shadows of Hermon. In 1969 the Israelis opened a ski resort on Mount Hermon. It’s there today.

A faithful messenger, or Bible teacher, is like a blast of cold on a sweltering hot day. He refreshes the sender and the recipients.

“Whoever falsely boasts of giving is like clouds and wind without rain.”

In light of all that God has done for us, any bragging about

what we've done for God is nothing but hot air – it's like clouds without rain!

Verse 15 “By long forbearance a ruler is persuaded, and a gentle tongue breaks a bone.” Perseverance can be very persuasive – especially when it's coupled with gentleness and politeness.

Here's the verse I am applying personally to a current struggle...

I'm sure the Barrow County Commission would love to see Calvary 316 just go away – drop their request for a zoning resolution. But we're going to persevere with “a gentle tongue” – and hopefully we'll prevail.

You sabotage your persistence by getting pushy and demanding.

In so many arenas of life a polite perseverance is the key. A radish seed takes three days to grow into a radish, while a wildflower seed takes two years to germinate, two years to sprout, then two years flower. Do you want to be an ugly radish, or a beautiful wildflower?

“Two frogs fell into a can of cream, or so I've heard it told. The sides of the can were shiny and steep - the cream was deep and cold. "Oh, what's the use?" croaked number one. "Tis fate, no help's around. Good-bye, my friend! Good-bye, sad world!" And weeping still, he drowned.

But number two, made of sterner stuff, dog-paddled in surprise. All the while he wiped his creamy face, and dried his creamy eyes... "I'll swim awhile at least," he said, or so I've

heard he said; "It really wouldn't help the world, if one more frog were dead."

An hour or two he kicked and swam, not once he stopped to mutter, but kicked and kicked and swam and kicked, then hopped out, via butter!"

Verse 16 "Have you found honey? Eat only as much as you need, lest you be filled with it and vomit." Don't overdose on honey... Here's the lesson: most everything is good in moderation. Don't be a glutton.

"Seldom set foot in your neighbor's house, lest he become weary of you and hate you." Don't wear out your welcome. When you notice your host has brushed his teeth and changed into his pajamas, it's probably time to head it home. "Short term visits make for long term friends."

Verse 18 "A man who bears false witness (or lies) against his neighbor is like a club, a sword, and a sharp arrow. Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a bad tooth and a foot out of joint." You might get by with a rotten tooth for a while, but eventually it'll become painful.

"Like one who takes away a garment in cold weather, and like vinegar on soda, is one who sings songs to a heavy heart." Don't try to sugarcoat someone's sorrow. When someone's hurting they don't need glib words, and callous cries to "*cheer up.*" We should weep with those who weep

Verse 21 "If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; for so you will heap coals of fire on his head, and the LORD will reward you." Be

nice to an enemy while he's trying to be hostile to you and it's like heaping hot coals on his head.

You torture your enemy, and gain God's favor, simultaneously.

**“The north wind brings forth rain, and a backbiting tongue an angry countenance.”** Verse 24 **“It is better to dwell in a corner of a housetop, than in a house shared with a contentious woman.”** Instead of the housetop some men choose to escape an obnoxious wife in their garage, or shop, or office, or bowling alley, or ballpark, or lake.

I'm just going to tell you the truth... *to her who has ears to hear...*

Ladies, if you're husband lives in the corner of the housetop rather than pester him and complain to him that he's never home, you might want to ask yourself what you're doing to drive him away. Trust me if he was appreciated and respected at home he'd probably rush to be there.

**“As cold water to a weary soul, so is good news from a far country.”**

The word **“Gospel”** means **“good news”** – yet why is it when we think of sharing Jesus with friends, or strangers, we assume we'll be rejected?

What thirsty person is going to turn down a glass of cold water?

Once I picked up a hitchhiker not far from where he wanted me to take him. He was in my car – maybe 5 minutes – just long enough for me to explain the basic truths of salvation. As



he was getting out of the car I asked him if he wanted to give his life to Jesus... He said, yes he did.

This was too easy. I must've left something out. I asked him, if he was sure... I told him he needed to believe in Jesus with all his heart. Finally, I asked him again, *“Now, do you really want to give your life to Jesus?”*

I'll never forget his answer. He said, *“Well, hell yea!”* He was ready. Remember verse 25, *“As cold water to a weary soul, so is good news from a far country.”* Jesus is just what your friend is waiting on...

*“A righteous man who falters before the wicked is like a murky spring and a polluted well.”* When we stumble and compromise our faith we muddy the water for the non-Christians looking at our lives.

Hypocrisy becomes a huge turn-off to an unbelieving world. Verse 27 *“It is not good to eat much honey; so to seek one's own glory is not glory.”* It's disgraceful for someone to live for their own fame.

Verse 28 *“Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls.”* The man who lacks self-discipline - who cannot control himself - will be controlled by other people or other things.

The enemy will run wild in his life. Satan will ruin all that's good and wholesome. An undisciplined man has no protection against evil influences. He's like a crippled deer among hungry bobcats.

Proverbs 26, *“As snow in summer and rain in harvest, so*



**honor is not fitting for a fool.**” It doesn’t snow in the summertime. It just doesn’t happen. And neither does a fool gain honor.

**“Like a flitting sparrow, like a flying swallow, so a curse without cause shall not alight.”** An occultist – a voodoo practitioner - can curse a Christian until they’re blue in the face and the curse won’t stick.

It’s powerless. It won’t land on a believer. God will prevent it from coming to pass. God protects His people from satanic curses.

**“A whip for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, and a rod for the fool's back.”** A fool can’t be reasoned out of his foolishness. He’s punished.

**“Do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you also be like him. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes.”** In other words, there’s a right way and a wrong way to answer a fool...

Avoid circular, or silly, or hypothetical arguments. Don’t deal in the abstract. Get practical and biblical - and you expose his foolishness.

When the Pharisees came to Jesus in the Temple, and tried to trick Him with hypothetical questions, Jesus answered them with Scripture.

Verse 6 **“He who sends a message by the hand of a fool cuts off his own feet and drinks violence.”** Choose a fool to represent you and you shoot yourself in the foot. You

undermine your own message.

“Like the legs of the lame that hang limp is a proverb in the mouth of fools.” Nobody will listen to a wise word spoken from the lips of a fool.

The message has no legs. It won't go anywhere. It lays limp.

“Like one who binds a stone in a sling is he who gives honor to a fool.

Like a thorn that goes into the hand of a drunkard is a proverb in the mouth of fools. The great God who formed everything gives the fool his hire and the transgressor his wages. As a dog returns to his own vomit, so a fool repeats his folly. This verse gets quoted in 2 Peter 2:22.

Verse 12 “Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.” A wise man who only sees himself from his own perspective – through his own eyes – is worse off than a foolish man.

He lacks any objectivity. He never learns from his own mistakes.

Verse 13 “The lazy man says, “There is a lion in the road! A fierce lion is in the streets!” He makes up excuses to not to go to work.

“As a door turns on its hinges, so does the lazy man on his bed.” He hears the alarm and just rolls over. “The lazy man buries his hand in the bowl; it wearies him to bring it back to his mouth.” He's so lazy he sits in front of a full bowl, but can't bring his hand to his mouth to eat his food.

“The lazy man is wiser in his own eyes than 7 men who can

answer sensibly.” He’s so proud he thinks he knows more than seven men.

Verse 17 “He who passes by and meddles in a quarrel not his own is like one who takes a dog by the ears.” Once I was driving down Memorial Dr. and saw a man beating on a woman in the front seat of his car. She was hanging out the passenger’s door and he was just wailing on her.

I pulled over, got out, walked up to the car, and started yelling at him to stop. Before long a group of guys were on the scene doing the same. We were able to distract the violent man so the girl could escape to safety.

But I’ll never forget what happened next. While we were trying to settle the fellow down, suddenly, the girl reappears out of nowhere and wallops him with her purse. Just belts him. Of course, that started it all over again. Thankfully, that’s when the police showed up.

I’m not saying you shouldn’t get involved in these kinds of squabbles. Just be careful. Sometimes, it’s like grabbing a pit bull by both ears.

“Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows, and death, is the man who deceives his neighbor, and says, “I was only joking!” Renaming a hurtful statement “a joke” doesn’t negate the damage that it does.

Verse 20 “Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; and where there is no talebearer (gossip), strife ceases. As charcoal is to burning coals, and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife.” A gossip is like lighter fluid.

He starts trouble that can burn down a church.

“The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, and they go down into the inmost body. Fervent lips with a wicked heart are like earthenware covered with silver dross.” Here’s what he’s saying, smooth talk from an evil heart is like paper plates painted silver. It’s a cover up.

“He who hates, disguises it with his lips, and lays up deceit within himself; when he speaks kindly, do not believe him, for there are seven abominations in his heart; though his hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness will be revealed before the assembly. Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, and he who rolls a stone will have it roll back on him.

A lying tongue hates those who are crushed by it, and a flattering mouth works ruin.” Beware of the person who can’t hold his tongue.

Chapter 27 “Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth.” This was probably James’ inspiration for 4:13-16.

James tells us not to be so sure of our plans. He writes, “Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.’”

No one is guaranteed tomorrow. Life is full of the unexpected.

In 1962 Billy Graham woke up in Seattle hotel room with a strange burden on his heart to pray for Marilyn Monroe and her salvation.

The next day he had an aide call her agent and asked to arrange a meeting. Billy Graham was told it would be at least

two weeks. But two weeks later the world was shocked by the news of Marilyn's suicide.

This is why Paul writes to the church at Corinth, in 2 Corinthians 6:2, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

There are no guarantees any of us will be around tomorrow.

Did you hear about the meeting between the devil and his demons? Too many people were being converted. This had to be stopped.

One demon suggested they tell everyone the Bible couldn't be trusted. The devil answered, "No, there's too much evidence to the contrary."

Another demon said let's tell them there's no heaven and hell. The devil said, "That will never work. The finality of life is ingrained in their souls."

Finally, a demon spoke up, "*Let's just tell them there's no hurry.*" It sounded good. This is now Satan's chief strategy. Just put it off until tomorrow. The Bible warns us, none of us are promised tomorrow.

"Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips. A stone is heavy and sand is weighty, but a fool's wrath is heavier than both of them. Wrath is cruel and anger a torrent, but who is able to stand before jealousy? Open rebuke is better than love carefully concealed." If you love someone don't just assume he knows - tell him!

Verse 6 "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses

of an enemy are deceitful.” True friends tell you the truth, even when it hurts. He or she is willing to risk your feelings in order to spare you a serious mistake.

“A satisfied soul loathes the honeycomb, but to a hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.” A man who’s full is selective. He might even turn down the sweets. But a hungry person eats whatever is available.

Here’s a profound spiritual lesson. Fill up on the joy and peace, and goodness of God and it’s easier to say “no” to the sweets of this world.

It’s the empty person who’s most vulnerable to sinful temptation.

“Like a bird that wanders from its nest is a man who wanders from his place.” In 1Corinthians 7 Paul says remain where you’re called. When we wander away from our job, our church, our calling we get into trouble.

“Ointment and perfume delight the heart, and the sweetness of a man's friend gives delight by hearty counsel. Do not forsake your own friend or your father's friend, nor go to your brother's house in the day of your calamity; better is a neighbor nearby than a brother far away.”

Even in the Facebook age physical proximity is vital in friendships. On-line relationships don’t provide the touch we need. Friends on webcams can’t watch our kids or hold our hand. We need some nearby friends.

Verse 11 “My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, that I may answer him who reproaches me. A prudent man

foresees evil and hides himself; the simple pass on and are punished. Take the garment of him who is surety for a stranger, and hold it in pledge when he is surety for a seductress.” If you make loan to a suspect person require collateral.

Verse 14 “He who blesses his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it will be counted a curse to him.” I can roll over at 5 AM and tell Kathy she’s beautiful, she’s wonderful, I love her so much – words she normally loves to hear – but at 5 AM she’ll bark at me to shut up!

We all love words of encouragement... especially after 8:00 AM.

“A continual dripping on a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike...” Here’s another contentious woman passage. This is the fifth and counting. Bitter, argumentative women are a blight on the family.

I read this during the Manly Revolution series, but I thought it would be appropriate here. Here are the Top Ten T-shirts worn by contentious women. These are T-shirts you don’t want to see your wife wearing...

10) Don't tick me off! I'm running out of places to hide the bodies.

9) Next mood swing: 6 minutes.

8) I hate everybody, and you're next.

7) Guys have feelings too, but like... who cares?

6) I used to be schizophrenic, but we're okay now.

5) Warning: I have an attitude and I know how to use it.

4) Do NOT start with me. You will NOT win.



- 3) All stressed out and no one to choke.
- 2) I'm one of those bad things that happen to good people.
- 1) I'm out of estrogen and I have a gun.

And what does Solomon say about a contentious woman?  
“Whoever restrains her restrains the wind, and grasps oil with his right hand.”

It's easier to corral a hurricane – or hold olive oil in your hand – than it is to contain a woman with a chip on her shoulder. Ladies, forgive, love, submit. For the sake of your marriage and family lose your attitude!

Verse 17 “As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.” When fellow believers get to together, and interact, and rub shoulders with each other, they knock off each other's sharp edges.

They sharpen each other's conviction. They encourage and challenge each other. The world we live in takes away our edge. We become dull and blunt spiritually. We need to be sharpened over and over again.

Verse 18 “Whoever keeps the fig tree will eat its fruit; so he who waits on his master will be honored.” Patience and loyalty toward an employer can pay off. Get antsy and jump ship and you'll never be honored.

“As in water face reflects face, so a man's heart reveals the man.” Like a reflection in the lake - the contents of the heart reflect the true person.

Verse 20 “Hell and Destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.” 1 John 2:16 outlines our fallen world’s value system...

Here’s the first and last in the list – “the lust of the flesh” and “the pride of life.” But stuck in the middle is “the lust of the eyes...” or **curiosity**.

It’s the desire to peek. You just want to see for yourself, but here’s the yearning that heads down the slippery slope. Before you know it you’re sucked in - trapped. We need to corral our eyes and tame our curiosity.

Verse 21 “The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, and a man is valued by what others say of him.” What about your reputation?

“Though you grind a fool in a mortar with a pestle along with crushed grain, yet his foolishness will not depart from him. Be diligent to know the state of your flocks, and attend to your herds; for riches are not forever, nor does a crown endure to all generations.” Don’t grow slack – or take for granted the stewardship of our resources. God holds each of us accountable. From time to time we need to take an inventory.

“When the hay is removed, and the tender grass shows itself, and the herbs of the mountains are gathered in, the lambs will provide your clothing, and the goats the price of a field; you shall have enough goats’ milk for your food, for the food of your household, and the nourishment of your maidservants.” But this abundance would’ve never occurred if you hadn’t been concerned and followed-up on the state of your flocks.

Chapter 28 “The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion.” The wicked man is always looking over his shoulder. He’s dominated by a guilty conscience. He squirms and fidgets.

Once, a newspaper reporter sent a letter to ten of the most prominent men in London, which read, “Quick. All is uncovered. Leave immediately.” Within 24 hours all 10 men had packed up and evacuated the city. The wicked are always on the run. The righteous have nothing to run from.

Whereas, a person whose sin is forgiven and who stands in the righteousness of Jesus is “bold as a lion.” He’s brave, confident.

William Wilberforce was a champion of anti-slavery laws in the British Parliament. Historians say he was small and frail in appearance. Once an observer described him as, “a shrimp who, as he was speaking, grew into a whale.” When you are on God’s side, you will grow “bold as a lion.”

Verse 2, “Because of the transgression of a land, many are its princes; but by a man of understanding and knowledge right will be prolonged.”

Generally speaking, sin breeds an unstable government. It takes righteous men to hold the reigns of power for extended periods.

“A poor man who oppresses the poor is like a driving rain which leaves no food.” It’s poor on poor crime. Poor men fight with other poor men.

Verse 4 “Those who forsake the law praise the wicked, but such as keep the law contend with them. Evil men do not

understand justice, but those who seek the LORD understand all. Better is the poor who walks in his integrity than one perverse in his ways, though he be rich.”

Verse 7 “Whoever keeps the law is a discerning son, but a companion of gluttons shames his father. One who increases his possessions by usury and extortion gathers it for him who will pity the poor.”

“Usury” is “interest.” Here God is warning the company’s that charge exorbitant interest rates. If you grow wealthy on the backs of poor men, God may just take away your wealth and give it back to the poor.

Verse 9 “One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.” God only promises to answer the prayers of those who walk in His righteousness. 1 Peter 3:12 holds true, “For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

“Whoever causes the upright to go astray in an evil way, he himself will fall into his own pit; but the blameless will inherit good. The rich man is wise in his own eyes, but the poor who has understanding searches him out.” A poor man with wisdom seeks the advice of a rich man.

Verse 12 “When the righteous rejoice, there is great glory; but when the wicked arise, men hide themselves. He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.”

When we sin we respond in one of two ways – we conceal

or **confess**. Man's first tendency is to cover-up. When Adam and Eve sinned they sewed together the first fruit of the looms – leaf briefs – underbrush underwear. But it didn't last long. God called them to confess.

When David sinned with Bathsheba he too plotted a massive cover-up that included the sin of murder. For a whole year he concealed his sin.

On the outside David all was fine with the king, but on the inside he was miserable – a tortured man. He prayed in Psalm 32, “When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer...” David's guilt haunted him day and night.

The only one way to be free from the guilt of sin is confession. 1John 1:9, “If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” You either *conceal* or *confess*.

Verse 14 tells us “Happy is the man who is always reverent, but he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity.” Stay teachable and reachable.

“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 with bloodshed (he's got blood on his hands... he's guilty of violence) will flee into a pit; let no one help him. Whoever walks blamelessly will be saved, but he who is perverse in his ways will suddenly fall.” A life of sin is like walking on ice.

Life gets slippery. It's hard to paws. Life can get unbearable.

Verse 19 "He who tills his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows frivolity will have poverty enough! A faithful man will abound with blessings, but he who hastens to be rich will not go unpunished." God may make a man rich, but our goal should be faithfulness – not riches.

Remember Matthew 6:33, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

Verse 21 "To show partiality is not good, because for a piece of bread a man will transgress." It doesn't take much for some people to sell out.

"A man with an evil eye hastens after riches, and does not consider that poverty will come upon him. He who rebukes a man will find more favor afterward than he who flatters with the tongue." A rebuke is honest.

"Whoever robs his father or his mother, and says, "It is no transgression," the same is companion to a destroyer.

Verse 25 "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. He who gives to the poor will not lack, but he who hides his eyes will have many curses. When the wicked arise, men hide themselves; but when they perish, the righteous increase."