

YOUTH



LEVEL 7

BIBLE

LESSONS



LESSON 11



Proverbs for Today

Solomon Shares Wisdom

PROVERBS FOR TODAY

Nobody likes problems. But they seem to happen often in our lives. You may have several problems right now that are of concern to you.

Maybe they involve classmates or friends. How are you getting along with them? Are you perhaps being urged to try drugs, to smoke or to abuse alcohol? Is someone trying to get you to play around with sex? Are you feeling pressure to do things you don't think you ought to do? Are you shunned, made fun of or called names?

How well do you get along with members of your family? How is your health, your money situation, your grade average?

These and other concerns like them can be big problems! But you don't have to be weighed down by them. There are steps you can take to avoid or solve the troubles in life. There are certain principles that truly work. They are ageless. They worked thousands of years ago; they will work thousands of years from now.

You can find a collection of them in the book of Proverbs in your Bible. The Proverbs are there for you! They are there to make your life happier. All you have to do is use them.

WHAT IS A PROVERB?

A proverb is a brief saying or observation about a subject. It says in a few words what could fill many pages. A proverb is a simple,

ABOUT OUR COVER . . .

King Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived. People from all nations came to hear his wisdom.

Illustration by Ken Tunell

catchy phrase that contains such a depth of wisdom on a subject, people repeat it often to sum up a situation.

Various kinds of proverbs are found in different countries. For example, there are Irish proverbs and Russian proverbs. Almost all the cultures of the world have their own proverbs.

Some of the proverbs found around the world contain good advice and truth. Some do not. Recognizing truth from error takes experience. It also requires a good understanding and knowledge of truth. Most importantly, God reveals spiritual truth.

You can be sure the wisdom in the book of Proverbs is right. It is based on God's standard. It is an inspired part of His Word, the Bible.

Proverbs are observations to think about, warnings of situations to avoid, comments on how to live life happily.

PROVERBS ARE FOR EVERYONE

The book of Proverbs is for you if: 1) you need help making better friends, 2) you need help knowing the right things to say at the right time, 3) you want to succeed in life, 4) you have trouble getting along with some people in authority, 5) you want peace of mind.

The book of Proverbs is for every person at every age, but is mainly aimed at young people (Proverbs 2:1; 3:1, 11, 21; 4:1). It comments on so many subjects, it is impossible to cover all of them in this lesson. It gives teaching that a young person needs before facing the world as an adult. It gives wisdom for a happy life as a young person, and a happy life as one grows older.

Let's take a look at a few examples of how the proverbs can work in your life.

Have you noticed how speaking calmly and softly to someone who is angry helps to solve the problem? (Proverbs 15:1) _____

Do you know someone who likes to borrow things, but forgets to return them? (Summarize Proverbs 6:1-5; 20:16; 27:13.) _____

Have you ever flipped a coin to decide which team will play first? Doing so usually brings about a decision faster than just talking about it. (Proverbs 18:18) _____

Have you wondered why some rich people are not happy? (Proverbs 15:16) _____

Everyone wants friends. Do you know how you can have them? (Proverbs 18:24) _____

If you have ever wondered about situations like these, the book of Proverbs is for you.

Wise King Solomon wrote or collected most of the Proverbs. But he was not wise by accident. Wisdom is a gift from God. When Solomon received the throne of Israel from his father David, Solomon asked God for wisdom. Write out I Kings 3:9 on the lines below.

What does God say about someone who asks

Him for wisdom? (James 1:5) _____

God was pleased when Solomon asked for wisdom. What did God tell Solomon? (Summarize I Kings 3:12-13.) _____

In your own words, describe how people reacted to Solomon's wisdom. (I Kings 4:29-31, 34) _____

How many proverbs did Solomon speak? (verse 32) _____

Solomon made a collection of proverbs. His wisdom grew because of this habit. "_____ men _____ up _____". (Proverbs 10:14).

The book of Proverbs contains wisdom about many subjects. It is a real treasure chest of knowledge on how best to live life.

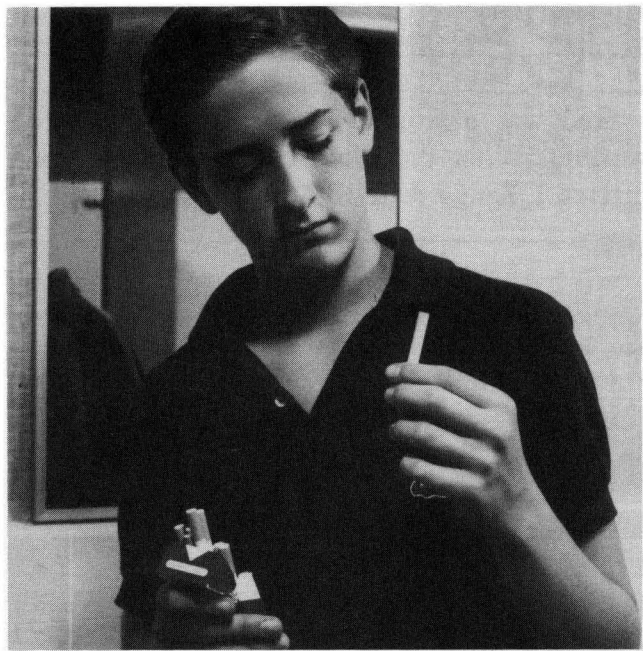
THE PURPOSE OF PROVERBS

For the book of Proverbs to be useful to you, you must read the proverbs not just once, but often. Memorize many of the proverbs so you can quickly know what is the best course of action in each situation you face.

The book of Proverbs gives wisdom to the simple. It contains advice God wants all young people (and adults) to have.

How does God define the purpose of the Proverbs? (Proverbs 1:2-4) _____

What does God say is the beginning of knowledge? (verse 7) _____



The next time someone offers you a cigarette, or pressures you to get drunk or do something else that you know is wrong, think about all the bad side effects. Even though doing these things may seem fun at the time, you can end up hurting your health or ruining your chances for a happy future.

Solomon was interested in the "fear of the Lord." How does he define it?

"The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate" (Proverbs 8:13).

What will the "fear of the Lord" help us do? (Proverbs 16:6) _____

There are three basic things God gives to people who want to succeed in life, to those who try to obey Him. What are these three basic things? (Proverbs 2:6) _____

UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOU READ

Before you begin to study the book of Proverbs, you should realize that you will not understand every proverb right away. No one does.

This is often true when reading the *Authorized* or *King James Version* of the Bible. You will find that one of the newer translations of the Bible into more modern English, such as



the *New King James Bible*, will be helpful for reading Proverbs.

The reason for this is that some of the English words used in the 1500s and 1600s, when the *Authorized Version* was produced, are seldom used today in the same way. For example, in reading Proverbs 16:31, you might wonder about the meaning of "hoary head." A more modern translation of the Bible makes the proverb clearer by showing that it is talking about a "silver-haired head," like grandmothers and grandfathers have.

In other books of the Bible, when you come

to an unclear word or verse, you can often figure out the meaning by reading the verses before and after it. But in the book of Proverbs, where so many verses stand by themselves, the verses before and after often give no clues as to the meaning.

So if you can, have at least one modern translation of the Bible handy when you study Proverbs. And remember, don't be discouraged if you don't understand some of them even with a modern translation. Read those you do understand and think about them. And don't forget to ask your parents for help.

You will also find many proverbs that are addressed to "my son" or that talk about men. That doesn't mean women and girls are left out. Such proverbs may have been written down by a man for his son, but they apply to all people at all times.

YOUR HOPES AND DREAMS

The Bible uses the words "sinner" and "wicked" to refer to people who do not understand God's truth at this time. Most of them are just sincere people. They don't know they are sinners or wicked. Some day they all will have the chance to learn God's truth. But right now they are just doing what seems right to them.

You no doubt have friends or classmates like this. What does God say is the end result of what by nature seems right to people? "There is a way which seemeth _____ unto a man, but the end thereof _____" (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25).

This presents a problem for you. Certain things may seem right to your friends that you know are wrong. Your friends do things you can't do because you know better. They play sports on the Sabbath. They observe certain customs of the world, like Christmas, Easter, birthdays and so forth. And, sad to say, some of them may get into trouble by breaking the laws of God and man.

They think that they are only having fun. But that's because they don't know that true fun plus eternal life come from obeying God.

Notice what Proverbs 23:17 says: "Let not thine heart _____: but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long."

Why? The next verse explains. Read it and put the words "a reward" in place of "an end." That's the way this verse should read. It's talking about the reward you will receive for living God's way.

Verse 18 goes on to say, "And thine expectation shall not be cut off" (Proverbs 23:18). Your expectation is what you hope for in life—happiness, success, peace of mind, health. List any other hopes you have for your future on the lines below. _____

The expectations of your classmates who are breaking God's laws will usually not happen. They will not attain many of their hopes. For instance, those who are trying drugs, alcohol and sex are hurting their chances of having health, happiness, a good marriage and so much more. All for pleasures that only last for a moment.

Does it seem worth it to you? Read Proverbs 24:1, 14, 19-20 and write your answer on the lines below. _____

WE REAP WHAT WE SOW

Many who do wrong think they will get away with it. They think they will escape the results. But will they?

"Whoso diggeth a pit _____: and he that rolleth a stone, _____" (Proverbs 26:27).

In all things there is *cause and effect*. Breaking God's laws breaks you. Notice what Proverbs says about cause and effect.

"Therefore shall they _____ of the _____ of their own _____, and be _____ with their _____ devices" (Proverbs 1:31).

“His own _____ shall take the _____ himself, and he shall be _____ with the _____ of his _____. He shall _____ without _____; and in the _____ of his folly he shall go _____” (Proverbs 5:22-23).

“The _____ of the _____ tendeth to _____: the _____ of the _____ to _____” (Proverbs 10:16).

“Evil pursueth _____: but to the _____ good shall be _____” (Proverbs 13:21).

The last half of Proverbs 11:27 is clear in the *New King James*: “Trouble will come to him who seeks evil.”

Why is it impossible to escape the results of doing wrong? Why is it that a person can't break God's law in secret and hope to get away with it?

“The _____ of the LORD _____ beholding _____ and _____” (Proverbs 15:3).

God truly does reward people according to what they do. After all, God is the One who designed cause and effect. What does Proverbs 11:19 state is the result of righteousness? _____. What is the result of wrongdoing? _____.

Think about how so many of the things people do for pleasure backfire or boomerang on them. They have bad side effects. People enjoy smoking and they damage their health. They enjoy taking drugs or getting drunk and they hurt their health, their minds and their finances. They enjoy the wrong use of sex and they open themselves up to sexual diseases, unwanted pregnancies and bad marriages. They like listening to loud music and they damage their hearing. They want to take part in illegal activities and they end up with a police record or jail sentence.

The wrong way of the world seems right. But breaking God's laws sooner or later has bad results.

But how does God's way differ?

“The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich

[rich in more ways than only money—rich in happiness, rich in health, rich in success], and _____” (Proverbs 10:22).

That's right. There is no backfiring, no bad side effects, no bad backlash from finding pleasure God's way. Ever! That is real enjoyment.

PEER PRESSURE

“Oh, come on! Don't be chicken!” some of your friends or classmates may say to you. They want you to do what they do. They will present all kinds of tempting arguments. What does Proverbs 1:10 warn? “My son, if _____ thee, _____ thou _____.”

Don't let yourself be talked into doing what you know is wrong. Firmly tell them it doesn't fit into your plans. Walk away from the temptation. Don't hang around where you can be talked into something you shouldn't do.

Many have made the mistake of thinking they could linger next to temptation. They thought they could hang around where the “action” is and not get involved. They were wrong. They got “burned.” Read Proverbs 6:27-28 and, following its pattern, write your own proverb about getting “burned.” _____

Notice the advice in Proverbs 4:14-15: “_____ into the path of the wicked, and _____ in the way of evil men. _____ it, _____ it, _____ from it, and _____.”

Be firm. Keep you eyes set on your goal of a happy future and refuse to be talked into the cheap substitute of temporary and harmful thrills.

“Let thine eyes _____, and let thine eyelids _____ Ponder [think about] _____, and let all thy ways _____ Turn not

THE WAY TO WISDOM

THE GAME WITH PROVERBS

RULES The object of the game is to begin at the space marked FEAR OF GOD, and move to the space marked WISDOM. Players are to collect PROVERB POINTS along the way. The game may be played with one or more players.

Each player puts a playing piece (a coin, button or other marker) on the space marked FEAR OF GOD. Then place a marker on the *first circle* of the TURNKEEPER at the bottom of the page.

The small numbers on the edge of each space tell you the number of spaces to move your playing piece (in a straight line). The large numbers tell you which scripture to look up in the book of Proverbs. The number value of each word or phrase is in the PROVERB POINTS box above.

To begin the game, decide who will

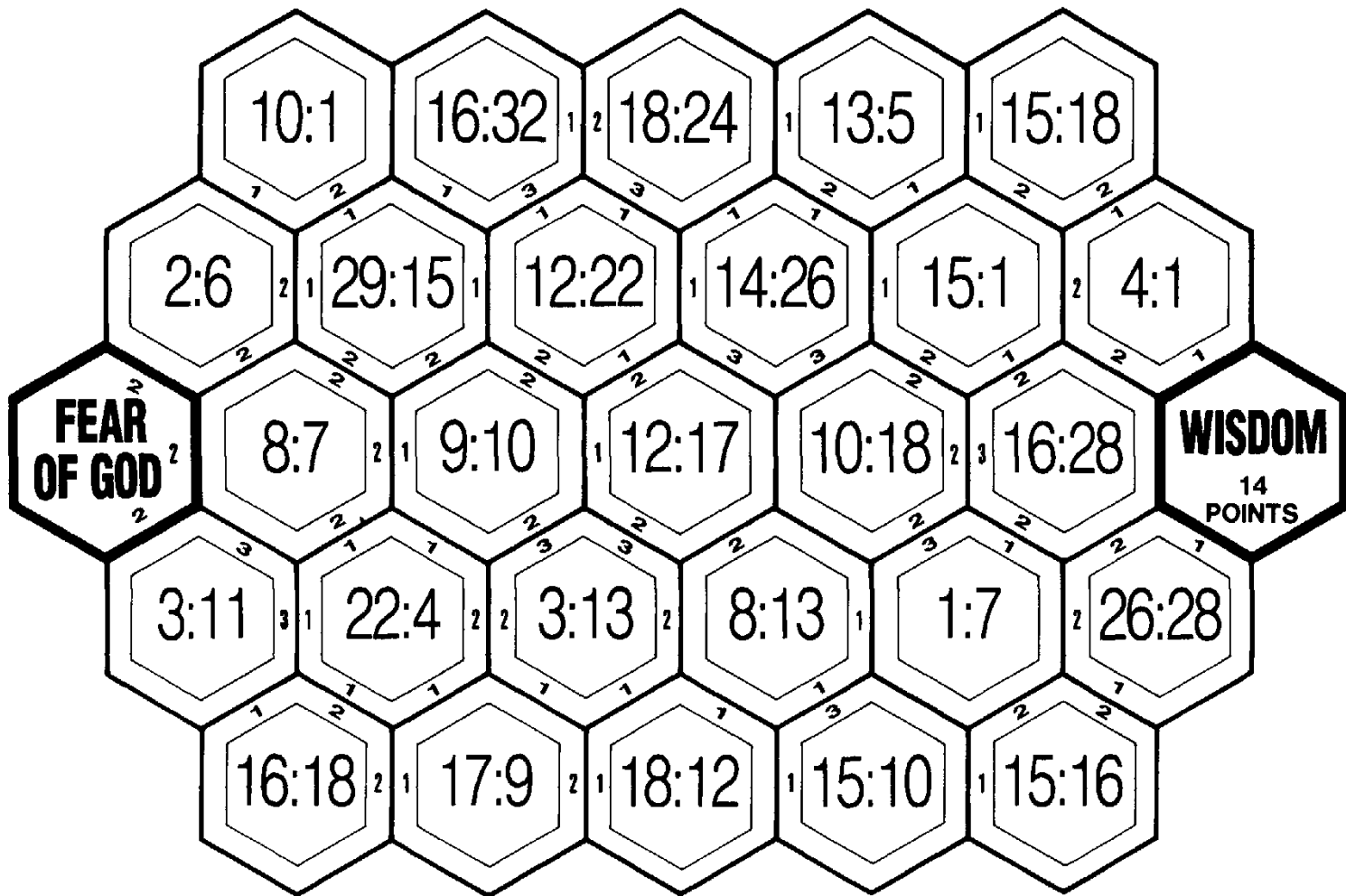
take the first turn. The first player then moves his playing piece. When he lands on a space, he must look up the scripture shown in the space. After looking up the scripture, he next finds the words or phrases from the scripture in the PROVERB POINTS box, and writes the number of points on a separate piece of paper. Then the player to his left takes his turn, and so on until everyone has moved and looked up a scripture. (There are 12 turns in all.) There may be more than one word or phrase in the scripture. A player scores points for each word or phrase. The turn ends when everyone has moved and looked up their scripture.

Now move the marker on the TURNKEEPER one circle to the right. This begins the next turn.

The game ends when a player or players reach the space marked WISDOM

(worth 14 points), or when 12 turns have been completed. If the game ends when a player or players reach the WISDOM space on a turn, the player with the most PROVERB POINTS wins. If all players do not reach the WISDOM space by the 12th turn, each player adds up his PROVERB POINTS. The player with the highest score is the winner.

Proverb Points	TRUTH	2
FEAR OF THE LORD	3	PRIDE 1
WISDOM	3	LYING 1
CORRECTION	1	ANGER 1
HUMILITY	2	MOTHER 2
FRIENDS	2	FATHER 2



TURN KEEPER



_____ nor
_____: remove thy foot from
_____” (verses 25-27).

You can avoid awkward situations where peer pressure is involved by being alert and seeing them ahead of time. Sometimes you can be sure that a party at so-and-so's house will include alcohol and sex. Don't think, "I'll go, but I won't give into the pressure to do anything wrong." You are better off not going.

“A prudent man _____
_____, and hideth himself: but the simple
_____, and are _____”
(Proverbs 22:3; 27:12).

Don't worry about what others may say about you or any names they may call you. Isn't that better than having your name forever marred with a bad reputation? After all, which one of your "friends" will be there to help you if you end up with some disease, or unwanted pregnancy or worse?

On the other hand, a person who obeys God has the promise of real help when it is needed. "The name of the _____ is a strong tower: the _____ runneth into it, _____
_____” (Proverbs 18:10).

WHAT IS A FOOL?

Proverbs mentions several terms often, for example: *wise man*, *simple man* and *strange woman*. One of the terms often mentioned is *fool*. Fool is not just a cruel name to call a person. Sometimes the term fool is a good description. To understand many verses, you need to know what a fool is.

Some evil actions are easy to see. Surely all of us would realize that killing someone is wrong. But some of us may be fooled into thinking that hating someone is all right.

Has anyone ever played a trick on you and when you "fell" for it, he or she laughed and said you were "fooled"?

A person who has been tricked by Satan is a fool. People can also make fools of themselves by deceiving themselves. Here are a few of the many verses

in the book of Proverbs that describe fools.

“How long, ye _____ ones, will ye
_____ simplicity? and fools _____ knowl-
edge?” (Proverbs 1:22.)

“Shame shall be the _____ of
_____” (Proverbs 3:35).

“The way of a _____ is _____ in his own
eyes” (Proverbs 12:15).

“Fools make a _____ at sin” (Proverbs
14:9).

“A _____ despiseth his _____ in-
struction” (Proverbs 15:5).

“A fool's _____ enter into
_____, and his _____
calleth for _____” (Proverbs 18:6).

WHAT TO SAY, WHEN AND HOW

God also gives us priceless truths about using our tongue (mouth). It is important to know when to speak and what to say.

“He that uttereth a _____, is a
_____” (Proverbs 10:18).

“In the _____ of words there
wanteth not _____” (verse 19).

“An hypocrite with his _____ de-
stroyeth his _____” (Proverbs
11:9).

“A man of _____
holdeth his _____” (verse 12).

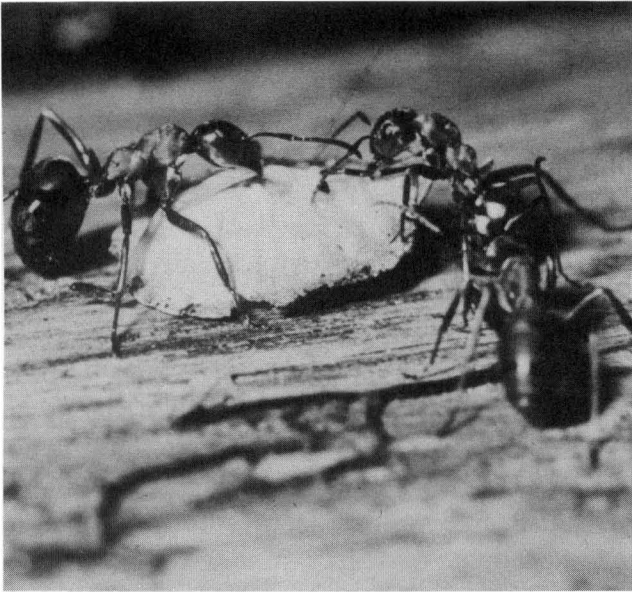
“He that _____ his _____
keepeth his _____: but he that openeth wide
his _____ shall have
_____” (Proverbs 13:3).

“The heart of the _____ stud-
ieth to _____: but the _____ of
the _____ poureth out _____
things” (Proverbs 15:28).

“Even a _____, when he _____
his _____, is counted _____: and
he that _____ his _____
is esteemed a _____ of
_____” (Proverbs
17:28).

WORK—THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

One major aspect of life that affects a per-



Peter Arnold, Inc.

Solomon tells us to observe the diligent ant. The right attitude toward work helps a person succeed.

son's success or failure is the right attitude toward work. As a young person you can, with the help of the book of Proverbs, build good attitudes and work habits early in life. Diligence is a key to success.

"Go to the _____, thou _____; consider her _____, and be _____: Which having no _____, _____, or _____, Provideth her _____ in the _____, and _____ her _____ in the _____" (Proverbs 6:6-8).

"As _____ to the _____, and as _____ to the _____, so is the _____ to them that send him" (Proverbs 10:26).

"The _____ of the _____ desireth, and hath _____" (Proverbs 13:4).

"In all _____ there is _____" (Proverbs 14:23).

"The way of the _____ man is as an hedge of thorns: but the _____ of the _____ is made plain" (Proverbs 15:19).

TRUE RICHES

To most people, riches are a measure of success in life. In the book of Proverbs, God tells us how He defines true riches.

"He becometh _____ that dealeth with a _____ hand: but the _____ of the _____ maketh _____" (Proverbs 10:4).

"He that _____ in his _____ shall _____" (Proverbs 11:28).

"Wealth gotten by _____ shall be _____: but he that gathereth by _____ shall _____" (Proverbs 13:11).

"Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth _____" (verse 18).

"Much food is in the tillage of the _____: but there is that is _____ for want of _____" (verse 23).

"Where no oxen are, the _____ is clean: but much _____ is by the _____ of the _____" (Proverbs 14:4).

"In all _____ there is _____: but the talk of the _____ tendeth only to _____ [poverty]" (verse 23).

"He that is _____ of _____ troubleth his own house" (Proverbs 15:27).

"Better is a _____ with _____ than great _____ without _____" (Proverbs 16:8).

"How much _____ is it to get _____ than _____!" (Proverbs 16:16.)

THE BENEFITS OF CORRECTION

You may think you have received a lot of correction. Many of us do not realize the value of correction. Some of us always think it is bad. The book of Proverbs has much to say about this subject.

"My son, _____ not the _____ of the Lord; neither be

_____ of his _____” (Proverbs 3:11).

“He that hateth reproof is _____” (Proverbs 12:1).

“A scorner heareth not _____” (Proverbs 13:1).

“_____ is _____ unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth _____ shall _____” (Proverbs 15:10).

“A reproof entereth more into a _____ man than an hundred _____ into a _____” (Proverbs 17:10). This Proverb tells you how to be corrected lightly. If you *hear* a reproof, you may not have to *feel* greater correction later!

“As an _____ of gold, so is a wise _____ upon an _____ ear” (Proverbs 25:12).

Many of the Proverbs are like a loving parent speaking to a child. Proverbs written in this way reveal a caring parent who wants his son or daughter to enjoy all the good things life has to offer. The parent wants the child to avoid the pitfalls.

It makes no sense for us to make the same mistakes our parents made. We can avoid these mistakes by heeding wise advice from God and our parents.

A person can either learn by his or her own experiences or by the experiences of others. Why should a person have to try actions that have useless, painful and unsuccessful results? Listening is a short-cut to success. We can set the right goal and go straight to it!

Success found early in life can be enjoyed longer than success found late in life.

Listening to the advice of our parents, teachers and ministers in God’s Church is a main way to avoid making costly mistakes. And listening to God’s advice makes the best sense!

“My son, _____ my _____, and _____ up my _____ with thee. Keep my _____, and _____” (Proverbs 7:1-2).

WISDOM VERSUS THE “STRANGE WOMAN”

In Proverbs, Solomon personifies (gives human traits to) wisdom (Proverbs 7:4).

What does Solomon say that wisdom and understanding will do for you?

“That _____ may keep _____ from the _____, from the _____ which _____ with her _____” (verse 5).

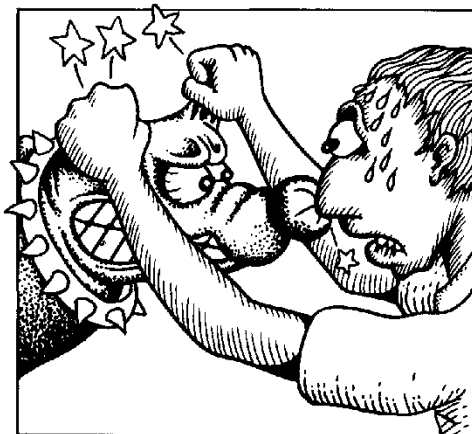
Who is this “strange woman”? She is a person (or a way of life) that will flatter you and lead you to much trouble.

The strange woman is most effective with young people who lack understanding. She promises great pleasure—whatever a person could want. With smooth talk and flattery she gets her way (verses 7, 21).



Illustrations by Monte Wolverton

The book of Proverbs comments on so many subjects. If you want to know whether to become involved in other people’s quarrels, how to get along with family and friends or how to best help others, then the book of Proverbs is for you. Read Proverbs 26:17 for King Solomon’s wise advice on how to stay out of trouble!



If a person doesn't use wisdom, the wrong way of life will become too tempting to resist. The "strange woman" is a temptress who seeks your life—to destroy it.

Many people have thought they were too strong to be hurt by her, but "she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her" (verse 26).

A VIRTUOUS WOMAN

The last chapter of the book of Proverbs contains a section that describes a virtuous woman. *Virtuous* means having good character traits and obeying God. This woman is intelligent, busy, kind and generous.

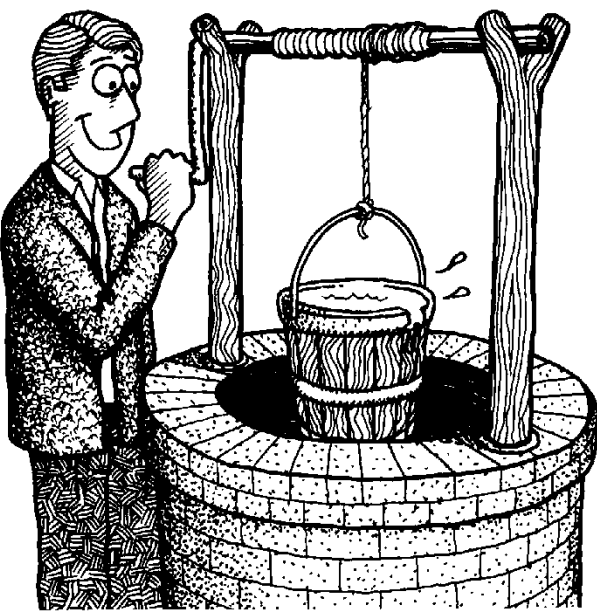
All of us would be blessed to have such a woman as a mother. As you mature, you might like to use this description as a goal. Young girls can strive to become virtuous women. Young men can know what traits to look for in a wife.

The virtuous woman is not virtuous by accident. It takes years of effort and training to become such a woman.

She is so rare and valuable that "her _____ [value] is _____ above _____" (Proverbs 31:10).

Even priceless rubies do not compare with her value.

A man or woman becomes virtuous through years of right education. This education includes the book of Proverbs. Remember the three basic principles of Proverbs are knowledge, understanding and wisdom.



A virtuous person knows what is right, understands the cause and effect of that knowledge and has the wisdom to use it.

If we look at each trait of the virtuous woman, we find she has learned to see and use the treasure of Proverbs.

She has good work habits (verses 13, 15, 19, 27). She is generous and helpful (verse 20). She has learned to wisely use her tongue (verse 26). She is one who fears God (verse 30).

You have a chance to become as virtuous a person as this woman. She reaps the fruit of the "good" she has sown (verse 31).

USING THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

There are 31 chapters in the book of Proverbs. If you read one chapter every day, by the end of a month, you will have studied the entire book. You will be amazed at the changes you will see in your life when you are familiar with these verses.

Learn and understand one proverb each day. Try to use it during the day. You might be surprised to find that your proverb of the day is just the one you need!

Also study the Proverbs in modern translations. This will help you understand some of the harder verses.

Start breaking the Proverbs down by subjects. Following this lesson's example, you can easily find other subjects of interest. You can use a concordance to look up all the verses that comment on a subject. Then, from other parts of the Bible, you can add other scriptures that relate.

One way to make Proverbs easier to use is to mark different subjects with colored pencils or symbols in your Bible. For example, by all the verses that talk about "riches," you may want to use the symbol for money. By verses that deal with the "tongue," you can draw closed lips. Think about the subject and be creative.

The Proverbs can keep you from big trouble. They can give you wise advice for most situations. They can help you live a happy and fulfilling life. Make them a part of your life (Proverbs 16:20).

FOUNDER: HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG (1892-1986)

PASTOR GENERAL: JOSEPH W. TKACH

Published by the Worldwide Church of God and produced in cooperation with Imperial Schools.
Copyright © 1987. All rights reserved.

BIBLE MEMORY

Malachi 4:5-6

ANSWERS FROM PROVERBS

Many questions about how to get along with other people can be answered from the book of Proverbs. Match the correct proverb from the list below with the following question.

-
- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| 1. Should we be glad when someone we don't like gets into serious trouble? | <input type="text"/> |
| 2. Should we become involved in an argument that doesn't concern us? | <input type="text"/> |
| 3. Can we settle problems by telling a person the bad remarks someone else said about him or her? | <input type="text"/> |
| 4. Is it wise to brag? | <input type="text"/> |
| 5. Should we seek excess praise from others? | <input type="text"/> |
| 6. If you quarrel with someone, should you tell other people to get them on your side? | <input type="text"/> |
| 7. Is lying about your friends harmful to your relationships? | <input type="text"/> |
| 8. Should we help poor people who ask us for help? | <input type="text"/> |
| 9. Is it all right to cheat? | <input type="text"/> |
| 10. Is it better to be strong and able to win fights, or to control your temper and avoid them? | <input type="text"/> |
-

Proverbs 20:10

Proverbs 16:32

Proverbs 27:1

Proverbs 17:5; 24:17

Proverbs 26:17

Proverbs 26:28

Proverbs 21:13

Proverbs 25:18

Proverbs 26:20

Proverbs 25:9