

2018 Daily Household Bible Readings for January Proverbs

INTRODUCTION for the month: Proverbs is my January theme each year. In 2018 I am reading and studying with Tim Keller from his new book, *God's Wisdom for Navigating Life*. So I may distil some of what I have learnt from my reading in brief from that source, or I will just make my own comment, or outline the text myself. My approach is to thematically follow the proverbial idea during the month of January. I will keep my comments to a minimum and try to give either an outline or key idea to ponder and discuss, as well as some pointers for prayer. JCW

January 1st Read Proverbs 1:1-7

TODAY vs 1 Question *What is a proverb?* Answer: A short saying to convey truth vividly and must be read as general principles not as absolute promises. Good to keep this definition straight as one reads this book. Review it often and it will keep you on a clear interpretative path for Proverbs.

Vs 2, 3 & 4 Q *Why learn proverbs?* A Because we should desire as believers to grow in wisdom. Application: It is NOT just a book of rules but helps us go beyond rules to helping us to grow in discernment in making decisions and developing our character.

Q What is discernment? **Jesus was full of wisdom---Mark 6:2** *So may we become like our Lord.*

Prayer: *Lord, our world seems divided between black or white and those who see everything as gray. Deliver me from both legalism and relativism—neither is wise. Give me the humility and discernment that is necessary for a wise heart. Amen. (TK).....*

January 2nd Read Proverbs 1: 1-19 All of Life is about Two Roads—the Road of True Faith and Reverence in the Lord, or the Road of Unbelief (Theme verse 6b)

Vs.6 is the KEY to life's road **and** here is the key for the whole book—two roads. A vital faith relationship with the Lord and this is fulfilled in the NT with a faith in God's Son, Jesus! Are you on this road of true faith?

Q *List the various kinds of faith which are mentioned in the Bible.* Hint—saving faith vs. temporary faith, insincere faith, shallow faith, federal faith, etc

Vs. 8—33 is now a series of illustrations about the TWO ROADS before all.

Q *List some of the illustrations showing the contrast of the two roads.*

Now PRAY *for people starting the road of saving faith; pray for those on the wrong road and heading towards a backslidden state; pray for those who have rejected the true faith.*

January 3rd Read I Chronicles 12: 22-40 Finding Men with Biblical Wisdom: The Men of Issachar

There was great turmoil in the land of Israel. There was great conflict with Saul's reign and David was blessed to have men gather around him for battle and to lead the kingdom. Many different men are brought to help David but verse 32 speaks of the MEN of WISDOM from Issachar.

Today our reading is a story or illustration of men who possess wisdom. Recall wisdom is knowledge, discernment, and understanding. Wise people of faith live between two worlds as John Stott so aptly spoke. We can take the Bible and apply it to the cultural context in which we live—living between two worlds! We live with the Bible and the reality of our news on TV or on the internet and we wisely see how the Word applies to us today and also where the attack lines very well might be and the stresses that this generation of Christians is facing.

Q. Can you think of any Christians who have a reputation for wisdom? Then maybe they are like the men of Issachar. They could discern to make decisions, and they were known as men of character.

Prayer: Focus on seeking wisdom to relate the Bible to today and see that God's Word is ever contemporary as the human condition is constant.

January 4th Read Proverbs 1: 7,22 & 6:6-15 Foolish People of all Kinds

Start with Verse 7 & 22 in Chapter one then go to chapter six. This is the theme of the wrong road to take—the way of fools.

Next, let us start to identify the different kind of fools that Proverbs introduces us to.

- i) **Verse 22 chapter one**, speaks of fools that you can never tell anything to—they know it all—no humble spirit. Fools! REPENT
- ii) **6:6-11** some fools never anticipate tomorrow—they are excuse driven, they lack self-motivation and wait for threats over them. They are fools! REPENT
- iii) **In 6:12-15** there is the fool who is conflict driven and cannot get along with anyone. Fools! REPENT

Q. Can you restate these three particular kinds of fools?

Prayer: *Lord have mercy upon our foolishness—cover us with your mercy. Thank you for these warnings! We see ourselves in your Word....*

January 5th Read Matthew 7: 15-29

Foolish People According to Jesus

Sermons must always make a concluding statement, application, or challenge and that is what Jesus ends His famous Sermon on the Mount with. He is warning people who have heard this sermon. He is challenging them to take the right way and not be fools. The application could not be any clearer.

Verses 24-27 show how parables and proverbs are first cousins. Proverbs tend to be shorter but still they are vivid, parables usually are a little longer. Next these verses show the great unity of the Bible. Do you see it with what we have been reading from Proverbs?

Q What are the two roads that Jesus sets forth here in verses 24-27? A the road of the wise and the road of the fool.

Q Who are wise people? A They listen and accept the Word of the Lord, because this is the truth we need for our lives.

Q Who are the fools? A.....Fools are content to listen and do nothing with what they hear! (JCR)

Prayer: *Pray for people to be open to the truth of the Bible and the words of eternal life from Jesus. Pray for the ministry of the Holy Spirit.*

Pray that those who maybe give a show of listening but really do not listen and do not accept the Word will come to conviction of the futility and foolishness of rejecting Christ's words.

January 6th Read Proverbs 3:1-8 The Identifying Characteristics of Wise People: Faith and Submission

Proverbs chapter three has often been said to show several characteristics or identifying marks of wise people. Once you grasp these in chapter three then you are ready to read the other chapters as you will see these and more characteristics jumping out at you!

The First Characteristic is Faith, verse 5a. Sincere trust is resting in the Lord's grace nothing else. Everything else does not compare. This is the bedrock of Christian wisdom. To know the Lord through His Son and to rest in Him alone.

From this comes other characteristics of wisdom seeking believers. Start to list them as you read the chapter.

The Second Characteristic is Submission to the Scripture. Verse 5b. Yes, it can be hard to submit to God's Word as there will be sometimes real conflict and turmoil of our soul to say "yes" to the authority of Scripture and to submit.

Q Has anyone experienced this conflict in their life?

Next, listen to what Tim Keller writes to encourage us to grow beyond trite bible texting:

“The Bible can guide you in all ways, even when there is not a specific verse for every life situation. As you immerse yourself in the Bible’s story of a personal God who made us and saved us for a relationship with him, it makes every part of life...look different than if you didn’t believe the story....Are you seeking to understand the Bible’s main themes and ‘big picture’ story rather than merely seeking inspiration from individual verses?” (TK)

Q Do we see the big threads that run through scripture bringing its unity? If so, then list some of these. This is a very helpful exercise.

Pray yourself or have someone else paraphrase as a prayer Psalm 119: 1-8, 18
Paraphrasing scripture can be a wonderful way to grow in prayer.

January 7th Read Proverbs 3: 1-10 More Identifying Characteristics of Wise People: Generosity

Verses 9-10 is the focus of another characteristic of wise people of God.

Q What is generosity? **A** Yes, not mean, tight! Yes, starting with the opposite is a good way to answer the question. It is an attitude of wisely knowing that money hoarded or things hoarded will not bring eternal happiness.

Q What famous New Testament verse speaks about money? Got it-- _____

Keller said: “Inordinate love of money and confidence in its power blind us, and the best way to break money’s power over us is through giving lots of it away.”

Discuss Firstfruits: This was giving to God and the poor the first even when it was not fully certain of all that was yet to come. Wow! Sounds like faith.

This is a great discussion text about really seeing if we are wise about possessions and money as the Lord sees things: *stewards of possessions and money, giving properly to the Lord’ work, planned and consistently. This needs to be openly discussed in a home. Always recall one proverb does not say everything on a subject! So be careful.*

Verse ten is a general principle but not an absolute promise, otherwise you think you control God’s providence! I love telling my classes about the refugee entrepreneurs who went to Geneva under Calvin. They worked, made money, provided jobs, traded, manufacturers and GAVE generously. They were wise people of the Lord.

Prayer: *Help us to be really cheerful when we give and give in faith and deliberately. Heal us of idolatry of goods and money if this is a problem. Help us to be honest before the Lord about this. Money is a gripper.*

