

## 2018 Daily Household Bible Readings for January Proverbs

### January 22-29

#### January 22<sup>nd</sup> Read Deuteronomy 6:1-9      Characteristics of the Wise : They Build Upon the Foundation of the One True God, the SHEMA (1)

This passage is one of the most noted Old Testament passages for Jewish people. It is called The SHEMA. It is key to all which makes the covenant people of the Lord who they were and are. Recall that I said earlier there are two key texts which are the bedrock upon which the proverbs on the family are based. The one we looked at already was the Fifth Commandment in Exodus 20 and the other is Deuteronomy 6.

1. The 4<sup>th</sup> verse begins with a call to “listen or to hear” and in Hebrew this is the word **SHEMA**. YES, you need to know about this Hebrew word!
2. This became a traditional Jewish prayer used in the morning and evening and the first prayer a Jewish child was taught.
3. It does of course state that the Lord is one and that believers do not serve a multiplicity of gods, but...
4. ....It is also saying more than this. It is about one’s loyalty and open identity to the one true living God who has a special relationship with His people and the people with Him. “Rather, the Shema is a pledge of allegiance to the Lord God of Israel that excludes allegiance to any other gods.” (TM)
5. *Q. Do we as believers today see ourselves as a different and separated people from the world? Did the SHEMA encapsulate this fundamental perspective for Jewish people?*
6. If you know the story of the name **Yehudi Menuhin** the noted violinist you may want to rehearse that story. It is fascinating how he was given his name: Yehudi—Jew.

**Prayer:** Paraphrase I Peter 2:9 in prayer today about who the people of the Lord are and our need for forgiveness in losing sight of this. Next praise the Lord for who He is. Finally pray that we will hear the Lord speak through His Word the scriptures.

#### January 23<sup>rd</sup> Read Deuteronomy 6:1-9      Characteristics of the Wise : The heart is to be given to the Lord in love      SHEMA (2)

We are going to spend three days on the SHEMA, Deut 6: 4-8. Day one we discussed about allegiance and identification with the One True Lord who we are in covenant relations with. We are a different people as we follow the true Lord. Next, the SHEMA centres in upon our love for God.

1. **Verse 5** is the summary of the first table of the ten commandments, the love for the Lord. Ferguson wrote: “The heart is the central core and drive of my life intellectually

(it involves my mind), affectionately (it shapes my soul), and totally (it provides the energy for my living).” This is a total love! There can be no room for other heart idols.

2. Jesus speaks about this repeatedly and it is also foundational to understanding the basis by which the book of Proverbs operates.
3. LOVE verse five, proceeds COMMANDS, in verse six. Obedience flows best out of love.
4. **Q.** *Heart symbolises the central core of one’s life. Is it possible to catch glimpses of a person’s heart affections?*

**Prayer:** *Paraphrase Exodus 20:1-11 as a prayer today. Begin by praising the Lord for redeeming grace 20: 1-2.*

**January 24<sup>rd</sup> Read Deuteronomy 6:1-9      Characteristics of the Wise : They Teach at Table, on the Path, and as they Shop....      SHEMA (3)**

In part three on the SMEMA we focus upon **verses six to nine**. The theme here is teaching children the ways of the Lord.

1. Note, **verse six** begins with reiterating the emphasis that it is about teaching the commands of God so that they are upon one’s heart. It is to reach the innermost being a person and not just be some kind of surface religion.
2. Then look at where teaching takes place: **Q** *Name all the places in **verse seven** where teaching children occurs? .....*
3. **Verses eight and nine** are symbols of ways to keep remembering things! In other words, we are prone to forget. Tell to story of how some people used to tie a string on a finger when they needed to remember something. **Q.** How can we help one another remember things?
4. **The overarching idea here is that parents are teaching their children the ways of the Lord, active involvement. This is the foundation stone to understanding Proverbs.**

**Prayer:** *Pray today for believing parents in your congregation,.....*

*Pray today for special children’s ministries that you are familiar with...pray specifically naming them.....*

**January 25<sup>th</sup> Read Proverbs 17:1-14      Characteristics of the Wise : They understand the limits of family**

Now that we have explored the SHEMA of Deut. 6 we can return to Proverbs. Today we find a curious proverb one which also shows “The Limits of Family”. Timothy Keller says about **Proverbs 17:2** (Re-read Proverbs 17:2) “Traditional societies are far more family oriented than modern ones, but they can make an idol of it. Often in those settings unqualified but blood-related people are chosen for leadership. Proverbs, for all its high regard for the importance of family, still puts individual worth ahead of pedigree...In this text, the wise head of an estate will recognize that one of his employees is much better at running his enterprise than his son, and so will elevate the servant and even make him as heir...So

character and ability outweigh blood and family ties. This principle works itself out in the New Testament where we see it is never race and social standing but faith in Jesus Christ alone that brings you an inheritance in God's family...Privilege and insider status mean much to the world but nothing to God."

**Q.** "Where have you seen things go wrong when pedigree was put before worth and merit?....."

**Prayer:** "Lord, centuries before the famous words that the 'content of our character' is more crucial than racial and family ties, your Word said the same. Do not let us be blinded by family loyalty and love to the flaws and shortcomings of our kin." Amen

### **January 26<sup>th</sup> Read Proverbs 6:1-11                      Characteristics of the Wise : They understand Laziness**

We begin with perhaps the most famous of all the Old Testament proverbs about laziness and work, **Proverbs 6: 6-11**.

1. Again God speaks in pictures that we can all relate to, the worker ants and also the picture of a sleeping person. Two powerful pictures in this extended proverb. **Q** *Do you see the two distinct pictures? Rehearse what you see in each picture. At the end of the second picture there may even be a third picture being used.*
2. **Q.** What is a sluggard?
3. **Read I Thessalonians 5: 16; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-10**
4. Laziness is a scourge upon being human and made in the image of God. What a waste of the gifts that one has been given. The Christian is called to redeem the time and to make the most of every opportunity.

**Prayer:** "Lord, give me the wisdom to seek skilfulness, but not be taken with my own cleverness. Give me the discernment to perceive excellence, but not be enamoured of pedigree and credentials. And with this wisdom, make me a better worker, to your glory and to the good of my neighbour." Amen (TK)

### **January 27<sup>th</sup> Read Proverbs 26:1-16                      Characteristics of the Wise : They know Silliness when they meet it**

Today we look at the second most famous proverb group dealing with laziness, **26:13-16**. The goal here is to show the total foolishness of adopting the lazy lifestyle.

1. Even in Bible times people understood the silliness of what this man was saying! The lions did not come into the cities. This is the first picture of foolishness. The lazy man makes excuses which do not even make sense for his laziness.
2. The second picture is a door turning on its hinges—just swinging back and forth and going no-where!

3. Picture three is about the lazy one who falls asleep while eating—he would just like to sleep constantly and it is not because of illness!
4. Picture four, the lazy man has a totally inflated view of his own correctness—he is smarter than seven wise men sitting as very learned successful people.
5. Applications: Beware of fooling yourself with false ideas. Ruin is just around the corner. Repent and wake up before it is too late. This is the warning call of the Lord.  
**Prayer:** *Lord, we thank you for the blessing of work--blessings which bring daily provision and occupy our time well. Father, we pray for the witness of our labours to the wider world all for your glory. Lord, have mercy upon us when we have allowed ourselves to indulge our time with little or no regard.....Amen*

**January 28<sup>th</sup> Read Proverbs 14:1-26                      The Wise Know --'A Mighty Fortress is our God'**

Today is the Lord's Day once again and our focus is primarily upon one proverb—**Proverbs 14:26.**

1. The *mark* of God's children is reverent fear and faith in The Lord.
2. This faith *leads* to confidence and peace. God's children know that He is their Father and they have great confidence in His will and provisions.
3. This proverb has a link to **Psalm 46: 1** -- Martin Luther's great Psalm of confidence.

*Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott,  
 ein gute Wehr und Waffen.  
 Er hilft uns frei aus aller Not,  
 die uns jetzt hat betroffen.  
 Der alt böse Feind  
 mit Ernst er's jetzt meint,  
 groß Macht und viel List  
 sein grausam Rüstung ist,  
 auf Erd ist nicht seins gleichen.*

A mighty fortress is our God,  
 A bulwark never failing:  
 Our helper He, amid the flood  
 Of mortal ills prevailing.  
 For still our ancient foe  
 Doth seek to work his woe;  
 His craft and power are great,  
 And armed with cruel hate,  
 On earth is not his equal.

**Prayer:** *Paraphrase Psalm 46 today as a prayer.*

