

2018 Daily Household Bible Readings for January Proverbs

January 15-21

January 15th Read Proverbs 27: 1-17 Characteristics of the Wise : They Seek out Others in the Lord

We might be drawn to verses 15 & 16 as they are so striking BUT I want us to focus on **verse 17**. We are back to a continuation of what we began on January 12th. This is a constant refrain throughout the Book of Proverbs—the wise seek out wise counsel, but today we take it in a broader perspective and application beyond mere wise wisdom and advise. ***There is a deep principle imbedded in this verse: Wise people know the benefits and blessings of fellowship with other believers, of seeking their counsel, of being mentored by the wise, and of seeking their friendship.***

1. ***The Lord speaks in pictures!*** *A knife is a knife but some knives are sharper than others! Some knives are dull and some grow dull, whereas others become sharper!*
Q. Do you like using a dull knife for peeling potatoes?
2. ***The Application of the picture:*** *The sharper the knife, the more effective the tool. So follow this with the logical question. **Q. How do Christians become dull and less effective?***
3. David and Jonathan are an excellent example for this verse and theme.
4. Read also: Psalm 133:1; Malachi 3:16 and Acts 2:42

Prayer: *Lord, help us to see the richness of what Christian fellowship is meant to be. We thank you when we experience such. We now ask for forgiveness when we have withheld ourselves from extending fellowship and so impoverished the Body.....*

January 16th Read Proverbs 3: 1-12; 6:20 Characteristics of the Wise: They Instruct their Children

Yes, one of the most predominant themes in the book of Proverbs concerns the home of believers.

1. Begin with an exercise. Read or have others read out: **1:6; 2:1; 3:1; 4:1; 5:1; 6:1; 6:20; 7:1**. The **pattern** is very obvious in the first section of the book of Proverbs.
2. **Q. Now what about the content of what the wise teach their children?** Basically you can categorise it as two-fold: The Call to faith in the true Lord *and* the mandate to live morally, and wisely in the way of righteousness. BOTH are held together as essential components. See 3: 4 which in the context is parental instruction and challenge to their children to trust in the Lord AND to abide in the wise instruction of the Lord and His ways of morality.

“The modern view is that parents should mainly be supportive and allow their children to do self-discovery. Proverbs teaches that the ultimate goal of parenting is neither mere control nor affirmation but to teach their children to become wise and righteous.” (TK)

Q. What do you think of this quotation?

Prayer: *“Lord, our societies are filled with many powerful influences so antithetical to the teachings of your Word. More than ever, parents need to be teachers of their children, but how can they ever compete with social media? We need your wisdom and the Spirit’s work in our children’s hearts.” Amen (TK)*

January 17th, Read Proverbs 22:1-16 Characteristics of the Wise:

They know what human nature is really like

Today I want us to hone-in upon verse 15. There are two parts to this proverb: **One**, about human nature from God’s perspective (verse15a). **Two**, about the boundaries which all humans need (verse 15b).

Yes, even children are not as innocent as we might think. We are all sinners with self-centredness and we often are unaware of just how we are affecting others for bad. The Bible is realistic and so should parents be. Also there must be consequences of punishment—“real consequences with real teeth in it. If sin and folly are in every child’s heart, it will take more than words to root them out.” (TK)

Q. Do you think this verse is counter-cultural to much thinking today both about human nature and raising children?

Prayer: *“ Lord, our children are infinitely precious image bearers and hereditary sinners. In our churches help us to raise our children with both truths about them solidly in view, with love and firmness, with truth and tears.” Now we pray by name for our children,..... or grown children who are now parents..... for grandchildren.....*

January 18th, Read Exodus 20: 1-17 Characteristics of the Wise:

They Have a Solid Foundation: The Fifth Commandment

It is easy to read the many proverbs on the home and family and forget that they come as the result of the Ten Commandments, and specifically the Fifth Commandment. So now we will begin a study of the first underlying Old Testament scripture which undergirds much of the book of Proverbs on this theme.

1. The Fifth Commandment **verse 12** does speak of the duties and attitude of children to parents in that one word **HONOUR**.
2. It is interesting that the Fifth Commandment says that children must *honour* their parents. This is a different word from “obey”. This would not be a correct translation to substitute the word “obey” for honour. I once recall reading that in a paraphrase. True there are aspects of children obeying their parents here but it is larger than this.

3. Timothy Keller wrote: "It does not say 'love' or 'admire' your parents because some of us have foolish or even evil parents.....There is only one thing you should do for all kinds of parents no matter what they are like and how old you are— honor and respect them. Don't *despise, curse, or mock* them, but bless them."
4. **Q.** Discuss what ways that you can show **honour** to parents and grandparents?

Prayer: *"Father, many have mixed feelings about their parents. But help us look over our shoulders to you, our true Father, who gives us the love we need, and has given us our parents to serve us in so many ways. In light of these truths, show us how to honor them."*
Amen (TK)

January 19th Read Ephesians 6:1-4; Proverbs 20:1-7 Characteristics of the Wise: They Model for Their Children

1. Yesterday we focused upon children called to honour their parents BUT today we start to look at the other side namely the calling of the parents. It should begin with being an example towards their children, or modelling wise living.
2. This is what Paul was driving at in **Ephesians 6: 4**, again in the context of challenging children to honour parents but Paul was also challenging both children and parents! The old phrase "**do as I do**" is powerful. Paul understood that parents must model an example of wise living or else it will lead to exasperation by the children!
3. So compare this with **Proverbs 20: 6**. Here we learn about the righteous character of the parent as setting forth an example. In other words as we read the Fifth Commandment parents are examples to their children and that must not be forgotten.
4. Consistency is a powerful instrument in the home. Hypocrisy and harsh language by parents can undermine much good in a home.
5. Repentance and apology are also necessary by parents in the home and in all of life. They are essential to developing healthy honour not just commanded honour.

Prayer: *Lord, we need your grace to repent of our inconsistencies as parents and uncles and aunts and grandparents. Lord, draw the children to you and bless them.....*

January 20th Read Proverbs 22: 1-16 Characteristics of the Wise: They Train Their Children

Active instruction and modelling is the great implication undergirding the Fifth Commandment. Yesterday we mentioned modelling. Today we focus upon active training or teaching with clear words of direction.

1. The most famous proverbs about wise parents instruct and train their children Proverbs 22:6. As with most proverbs it has two parts, duty and blessing, or part A and part B. **Q.** *Do you see the two parts in the proverb? This is often the way Hebrew poetry is framed.*
2. Recall the basic interpretative principle for Proverbs—general principles which are ordinarily the case but not always hard-and-fast promises in all cases.
3. Keller wrote: “ So according to Proverbs there are three factors that determine the way a child grows up—the hearts they are born with (‘nature’), the quality of the parenting they receive (‘nurture’), and their own choices. The three interact in complex ways that no one can control except God himself (cf. 21:1). A parent’s final but most powerful resource, then, is prayer to the God who opens hearts.”
Q. *Name these three factors which Keller summarises. Discuss your role as training or nurturing.*

Prayer: *“Lord, we can feel either too responsible for our children’s choices—or too little. We know you put us as parents and adults in their lives to point to you, but their hearts are in your hands, not ours. Give us more consistency, godly lives for their sake, and help us to entrust our children to you.” Lord, also we pray today for training children in the fear of the Lord, the commands of God, and in guiding them wisely to know and think with your Word as the way to evaluate right from wrong.....Amen*

January 21th Read Proverbs 29:3; Luke 15:11-33

The Prodigal Son

Often a parallel has been found between this proverb and the parable called the prodigal son. However, there is a difference, the parable also stresses repentance and that the prodigal comes home or returns to the wisdom of the Lord. Both the proverb and the parable remind us that children do sometimes take the wrong road in life and turn to the road of foolishness. This is what happened to the younger son who took the foolish road and squandered his life.

Praise the Lord today for those who have gone the wrong road and have met the True Friend of Sinners the Lord Jesus Christ. Also spend today in **intercession**.

Prayer: *“Lord, we know of prodigal sons or daughters, either our own or a friend’s whose foolish paths are breaking hearts. Give us a resolve to pray extraordinarily for them. Then use our prayers in our lives and theirs. Get glory for yourself and joy for us by bringing them home—not just into our families but into yours.” Amen (TK)*