

Read: Proverbs 1**Key Verse:** Proverbs 1:7**Reflect:**

The world may define wisdom as the gaining of knowledge and experiences, but the book of Proverbs reminds us that the beginning of wisdom and knowledge starts with a healthy fear of God (v.7). Fearing God means we have a Biblical reverence for who He is, and what He has done. God has created all things, He knows all things, He sees all things, and He is worthy of our worship.

Fearing the Lord does not mean we're scared to relate to Him. In fact, a fear of God leads us into a relationship with Him. A Biblical fear of God is not like the fear you may have for an intimidating teacher, parent, boss, or professor. Rather, it is an appreciation that God is both holy and good, and an understanding that His commands are for our good, not our harm.

What comes to your mind when you think about God? Is He all-powerful to you? Is He holy? Is He loving? Is He approachable? Acquiring wisdom and knowledge begins with knowing God and responding in awe. Ultimately, the surest way to grow in your understanding of God's character is to continue to study His word on a daily basis.

Prayer:

"God, please help me grow in my understanding and appreciation of your character. I want to grow up in knowledge and wisdom by first having an understanding of who You are. I acknowledge You as creator and sustainer of all things, and I thank You for allowing me to walk with You in a personal relationship."

Read: Proverbs 2**Key Verses:** Proverbs 2:6–7**Reflect:**

As we read in Proverbs 1, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. With this truth in mind, how do we continue to grow up in wisdom?

Proverbs 2:6 explains that “the Lord gives wisdom” and “from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.” Though the world may offer wisdom in many different places, ultimately wisdom comes from God alone, and He gives it to those who practice obedience. If we want to continue to grow in wisdom, we must first make it a priority to hear from God. The Bible is the primary way that God speaks to His people. Therefore, growing in wisdom should always include spending time in His Word both privately and corporately in order to hear from Him. The more we prioritize reading the Bible, the more God will bestow wisdom upon us.

Have you made the decision to follow Jesus, and thus began your journey of wisdom? Do you make it a priority to spend personal time in God’s Word on a consistent basis? How often do you apply God’s Word to your life? What do you do to ensure that you live a life of integrity? What are some areas in your life that you fail to be upright? Where do you seek out wisdom instead of seeking it from God?

Prayer:

“God, thank you for loving me, even though I have never deserved it. I pray that I would begin to live a life of wisdom by fearing You and continue a life of wisdom by hearing from You and walking in integrity. Show me some specific ways that I can better walk in integrity in my everyday life. As I read Your word, open my eyes that I may behold wisdom that comes from You. I pray this in Jesus’ name, Amen.”

Read: Proverbs 3**Key Verses: Proverbs 3:5–6****Reflect:**

Trust is an interesting concept, especially when we are asked to place it in someone else. In this excerpt from Proverbs 3, we're instructed to trust the Lord with all (not some) of our heart. This requires us to release the reins of life and trust God. Often, this is easier said than done. We want to know what is going on, when things are going to happen, and who is going to be there when it does. However, God doesn't always reveal these things; His ways are astronomically higher than our own. When the Bible references the heart, it is not referring to our emotions, but the center of our being. We cannot trust our emotions because they so frequently change. We often find it easy to place our trust in the Lord during mountaintop moments, those times when everything is right; but when we find ourselves in the valley, that is where our trust falters. We will not always understand the suffering of this life, but when we cannot trace the hand of God, we must trust His character.

Finally, we must acknowledge Him in all of our ways (v6). This is a discipline that we must consistently exercise. As you actively acknowledge Him, you will begin to know Him more. You could never truly trust someone you do not know; therefore, the more you acknowledge Him, the more you know Him. The more you know Him, the more you trust Him. It is when you trust God with all of your heart, lean not on your understanding, and acknowledge Him in all of your ways that you find rest in the promise of a straight path.

Prayer:

“God, by your all-sufficient grace, teach me to trust in You with all of my heart. Too often, I lean on my understanding. I do not want to deceive myself any longer. Posture my heart in such a way that I acknowledge You in all my ways. Even when I cannot trace Your hand, I will trust Your character. Thank you for your mercy, Your faithfulness, and Your steadfast love. Amen.”

Read: Proverbs 4

Key Verse: Proverbs 4:23

Reflect:

If you've ever played a game of chess, you know how important it is to protect the King, even at the expense of some of your other pieces. Imagine making a move that seems to put you in a good position; but in doing that, you neglect your most crucial piece leaving it vulnerable. Unfortunately, this is the approach many of us take when it comes to guarding our hearts.

As Christians, we are called to be diligent to guard our hearts. Simply put, what you put in is also what you pour out. If your heart is continuously being filled with the things of this world, your heart will also produce the things of this world. However, if you focus your heart on Jesus Christ, His desires become your desires, and the life you live will point back to Him.

Application:

1. Humbly pray to God and ask Him to reveal to you the things you are letting into your heart that have the power to lead your life in the wrong direction.
2. Seek to find ways to fill your heart with the goodness of Christ and allow Him to empower you to live the life you are called to live.

Read: Proverbs 5**Key Verses:** Proverbs 5:1–6**Reflect:**

Let's put things bluntly: sin can be attractive. It promises happiness and fulfillment. Solomon admits this when he says, "For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil" (v 3). Unfortunately, sin can never deliver on the promises it makes. Solomon makes that clear when he goes on to say, "But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword" (v 4).

Unlike sin, God's promises never fail. They never lack anything. So, consider what Jesus said in John 10:10, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." The life sin offers may be enticing and appealing, but the life Jesus offers is everlasting and abundant.

With this in mind, we must train ourselves to believe and pursue God's truth and the abundant life that Jesus has for each of us. Paul told Timothy, "Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness" (1 Timothy 4:7). A lack of discipline will ultimately lead to our destruction (Proverbs 5:23).

Prayer:

"Holy Spirit, empower me to believe Jesus with my whole heart. Help me discipline myself to walk away from the attraction that sin offers. Help me pursue God and His ways with my entire life, for His glory."

Read: Proverbs 6**Key Verses:** Proverbs 6:16–19**Reflect:**

Proverbs 6 discusses six initial things which ultimately culminate into the abomination of “sowing discord among brothers.” It’s clear that God is displeased with those who consistently create division and conflict among friends, family, and neighbors. Ultimately, pride, deceit, and unjust behavior will create division and discord.

Daryl Davis is an African American blues musician who began befriending and engaging KKK members in order to prove that they could not hate him if they got to know him. Over the course of many years, 200 KKK members left the Klan and turned in their robes to Daryl because he chose to attempt to bridge the gap rather than harbor bitterness, hate, and discord. We may not always get the same results as Daryl when we take steps toward unification and love, but the Bible is clear that as Christ followers, one of the ways we follow Jesus is by loving our enemies and living peaceably with those around us.

Do you make a habit of engaging in unnecessary conflict? Do you find yourself involved in gossip, slander, and division? Do you struggle to love those who disagree with you? As Christ followers, we’re called to love and pray for those who persecute us. Who is in your life that you need to apologize to, or make amends with? Who do you need to pray for? Who do you need to make peace with?

Prayer:

“God, thank you for loving me while I was your enemy. I ask that those in my life who don’t know you would see your love through the way I interact with others. I pray this in Jesus’ name, Amen.”

Read: Proverbs 7

Key Verses: Proverbs 7:18, 26–27

Reflect:

The book of Proverbs lays a daily decision at our feet: to follow the way of the world, or to follow the way of Jesus. Proverbs teaches us that God set the world to work in such a way that following Jesus leads to blessings, but rejecting God’s way leads to chaos and brokenness.

In Proverbs 7, Solomon warns his son of the temptress, a woman who will come to deceive him and lead him away from God’s good path. She’ll promise Solomon’s son a good time and “delight” (v. 18), but all she’ll really deliver is pain and remorse (v. 26-27).

The world will promise you that sin will lead to happiness, but that’s a lie! Only God’s way brings true fulfillment and joy.

Prayer:

“God, help me see that Your way is better. Help me trust that Your plan for me is better than the world’s empty promises.”