

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."

Read: Proverbs 8

Key Verses: Proverbs 8:34–36

Reflect:

There's an old saying that knowledge is power. It's true that knowledge can be powerful, but without application it's powerless. Many times, we knowingly make the wrong choice. We understand why a certain decision should be made, yet we choose to go against it. We have the ability to be wise, but disregard it.

Why do we continue to turn from wisdom when it only brings injury?

When we are obedient and daily seek wisdom, we find life. Proverbs 8 tells us about the blessings of wisdom. What wisdom is and what it isn't.

True wisdom is a daily understanding that Jesus is everything and without Him we have nothing. It's a daily pursuit to grow in the likeness of Christ. It's accepting accountability, laying down pride, seeking truth, and growing in spiritual maturity. It's making the right decision even when it's hard. It's daily picking up your cross and following Jesus and putting the knowledge of who you are in Him to action. (Luke 9:23)

Matthew 7:7 tells us, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." What a blessing to know that if we ask for and seek wisdom, our God will make it available. It is simply up to us to take it and use it.

Prayer:

"Lord, help us seek wisdom daily. Help us to not only grow in wisdom but help us be obedient and apply it in every area of our lives."

Read: Proverbs 9**Key Verses:** Proverbs 9:7–9**Reflect:**

The book of Proverbs continually contrasts the ways of wise men compared to the ways of fools. One of the many differences between the two is the way in which they respond to correction. Wise men and women learn from the people who teach and correct them, fools respond with anger, defensiveness, and even violence when corrected (vv.7-9).

If someone in your life corrects or reproves you, how do you respond? With love and thankfulness? Or with anger and defensiveness. Wisdom says to learn from those who correct you.

Do not run from reproof and correction, run towards it. Find people who will love you enough to correct you when you're living outside of God's will, and you will grow up in wisdom and love because of this. Consider asking someone you trust this week, "is there anything you see in my life that is disobedient to God or unloving to my friends, family, and neighbors?"

Prayer:

"God, help me to respond to correction and reproof with love and thankfulness. Please open my heart to receive correction so that I may grow up in wisdom and Christ-likeness. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Read: Proverbs 10**Key Verses:** Proverbs 10:14, 21**Reflect:**

According to Proverbs, we're only as wise as we have come to grasp the power of words. In Proverbs 10, we see that words are powerful. The writer devoted 11 of his 32 fatherly sayings to the powerful effects of words. When pieced together along with sayings from later chapters, two effects of our words become clear.

First off, words can kill: "the mouth of a fool brings ruin near." I'm sure you've heard the old adage: "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." Yet, how often have you spoken words that damaged, possibly destroyed, a relationship? In these times, that person may not have died physically, but something inside of them likely did. Perhaps it was their perspective of God, willingness to trust, or even the ability to show and receive love. The fact is, sticks and stones may break our bones, but words can cut much deeper. So, pause and ask yourself this question: how am I bringing "ruin near" with the words I choose to speak?

Secondly, words can give life: "the lips of the righteous feed many." In a sense, words are like food for us; we need them to live. And just as our words possess the power to devastate, they possess an equal power to give life. When being tempted with worthless words by the Devil, Jesus countered his foolishness by asserting that "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4) Said another way, our souls receive life as we hear, believe, and speak, good and powerful words that come from God. Are you aware of the great power that words — given by God and spoken through you — have in bringing life to those around you?

Prayer:

"God, help me see the gravity and weight of my words. Rid my mouth of worthless words and guide my words so that they are reflective of You and glorifying to You. Amen."

Read: Proverbs 11**Key Verses: Proverbs 11:2–8****Reflect:**

We are faced with choices on a daily basis. Every choice has consequences, either good or bad. Some decisions are simple with marginal consequences, like picking what to wear or eat on any given day. Other choices can carry much more importance, like who you marry, where you work, or the friends you pick to do life with. Compile all the choices we make, and it will reveal whether we are considered to be wise or foolish. In Galatians 6:7, Paul sums it up best: “Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.”

King Solomon writes Proverbs 11 to warn the reader of both the positive and negative consequences of their choices. Choosing pride over humility leads to disgrace (v.2); righteousness always outweighs earthly riches (v.4); giving in to lust will make you captive to it (v.6); wickedness leads you straight to trouble (v.8). This chapter is loaded with scenarios on how your choices will determine the path your life will take. King Solomon knew these things because he saw them play out in his own life and those around him. He is trying to save his son from the grief that comes from consistently making poor choices.

Choices always bring consequences: either good or bad. Whether we make wise choices or foolish choices is up to us.

Prayer:

“Lord, help me rely on you to make the choices that you will see as pleasing in your eyes, and that will bring joy in my life instead of regret. Let every decision that I make be filtered through the great commandment Jesus gave us in Luke 10:27, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”