

Read: Proverbs 22**Key Verses:** Proverbs 22:10–11**Reflect:**

The Proverbs are filled with sayings about taming our tongue. One of the many traits of a wise person is one who speaks boldly, graciously, and at the proper time. In our two key verses, the author compares and contrasts a “scoffer” to one who is pure in speech. A scoffer is one who mocks, slanders or treats something with contempt. Think of the parent or friend who yells so much at the referees or the opposing team during a sporting event that they are asked to leave the game — this is a scoffer. God’s will for His people is to be filled with gracious, courteous, and pleasant speech.

Do the things you say give grace to those who hear? When you engage in conflict, do you do so graciously? Do you talk down to people? Do you offer more criticisms than encouragement? These are some of the questions we should wrestle with as we reflect on whether or not our words glorify God.

Prayer:

“God, when your Son was scoffed at, He did not retaliate. When Jesus spoke, He spoke with grace and truth. I ask that you empower me to use my speech to lift people up, to give grace to those who hear me, and to handle conflict in a direct but loving manner. Forgive me for the times that I criticize rather than encourage. Allow me to be gracious, as you have been gracious to me. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

Read: Proverbs 23**Key Verse: Proverbs 23:19****Reflect:**

Happiness is one thing that we all want in life. Who doesn't want to be happy? No one gets up one day and says to themselves, "I want to be miserable and I am going to make decisions today that will bring pain and misery into my life." Yet all the time we see people making decisions that bring pain and misery into their life. Sometimes we look in the mirror and realize that we are doing that to ourselves. This lack of good judgment is what we would consider being foolish.

The opposite of foolishness is wisdom. Wisdom is when we make decisions based on a good judgment formed by knowledge and experience. This is what God desperately wants for us. He longs for His people to have wisdom because he knows wise decisions will bring joy and happiness to their lives. Proverbs 23 is filled with this simple truth: "God is pleased with those who make wise decisions." In verse 19 it says, "Hear, my son, and be wise, and direct your heart in the way."

By listening and hearing the Father's instructions, the son was considered wise and by desiring to live "in the way" of the father the son continues to live with wisdom.

God wants us to live according to His Will and wants us to make wise choices because He knows that ultimately will bring us true joy and happiness. God created us, and He obviously knows what brings us happiness. The reason God created us was to bring Him glory and to make His name known among all of the earth. When we listen to God's calling, read His Word, and apply it to our lives we can then make wise decisions.

Prayer:

"Holy Spirit, help me read Your Words, and listen to Your direction so that I might make wise decisions that will please You and save me from pain and regret. Help me be a light for You by living in Your wisdom daily."

Read: Proverbs 24**Key Verses:** Proverbs 24:17–18**Reflect:**

We all know what it feels like to be wronged by someone and to desire to get even with them. We're born with a God-given sense of justice. The book of Proverbs tells us that being quick to anger and unforgiving is foolish, while being patient and quick to forgive is wise. It's easy to think that we aren't wrathful because we don't beat somebody up or give them a piece of our mind, but the Bible teaches differently. Wrath can play itself out in other ways. Maybe it looks like giving someone the cold shoulder or being happy when something goes wrong for someone who's wronged you (Proverbs 17:9). When we refuse to let things go, we're showing that we don't trust God to make things right.

So how then should we live? The apostle Peter shows us in 1 Peter 2:21-23, "For this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was there deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to Him who judges justly."

So how can we forgive? How can we let go of the grudge that we have been harboring for so long? We do as Jesus did and we continue to entrust ourselves to the one who judges justly. Jesus was a great example. The same people that beat him, stripped him and nailed him to that cross, he looked at them and said: "Father forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Proverbs 24:17-18 serves as a warning as well that if we don't entrust ourselves to the one who judges justly that we will be the ones to experience God's wrath for the day of judgment.

Prayer:

"God, please give me the heart to forgive. Help me to not hold grudges and to follow the example of your son, Jesus. In Your name, I pray, Amen."

Read: Proverbs 25**Key Verses: Proverbs 25:11****Reflect:**

Today's culture is completely saturated with social media posts and advertisements. It's common for us to read other peoples' opinions about subjects like politics, breaking news, and the newest and best products. If we aren't careful, we get sucked into the mentality that our opinion of others and the world around us should be shouted from the rooftop no matter who hears it or how it's perceived.

God's word says in Proverbs 25:11, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver." The picture of an "apple of gold" portrays value and the fragrance of the word that is spoken. The "setting of silver" is describing the backdrop or the scene in which the word is spoken. In this passage, both the word that needs to be said and the setting in which it is said are important. In many ways, this is describing the perfect storm in which wisdom is to be shared. The best way for this to be accomplished is for us to be both saturated in scripture (truth) and walking in step with the Spirit (timing). Commenting on a post may be the perfect moment to express your thought, but your "setting of silver" may be better received with a genuine face to face interaction.

When Jesus interacted with the woman at the well in John 4, in no way did He avoid the topic of her sin, but He showed compassion toward her as He shared truth. The setting was right, and a word fitly spoken allowed the woman to see her need for redemption and her perspective was won over by Christ's love. Today, let us be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and let Christ's love guide our thoughts and words towards those around us.

Prayer:

"Lord thank you for your compassion toward us through Your Son. Help me today to walk in the Spirit and be filled with Your word so that I can be an instrument to share your truth with those around me. Give me the wisdom to know when to speak up and give me moments to share your love."

Read: Proverbs 26**Key Verse:** Proverbs 26:1–11**Reflect:**

A fool is defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary as “a person who acts unwisely or imprudently; a person who lacks judgment or sense”. Proverbs 26 is compiled of many characteristics of fools. Those who gossip, lie, are quick-tempered, resist help from others, are sexually immoral, deceive those around them, and the list goes on. It is clear that this passage defines a fool as someone who “disregards God’s Word”. Can you relate to this passage? I believe we all can. No matter our age or background, we’ve all experienced moments of foolishness...moments where we disregarded God’s Word in order to gain our own satisfaction. Moments where we deliberately ran towards sin instead of running away. Maybe you’re there now.

Be encouraged! Our God is a God of grace and redemption. He can take your junk and make something beautiful out of it! All it takes is a humble heart that is willing to turn from sin and submit to His Word above all else. Instead of running to foolishness, bask in His forgiveness!

Prayer:

“God, please allow me to humble my heart so that I may follow your will for my life instead of me trying to make my own way. Help me run away from sin and run into your open arms. Thank you for showing us love and forgiveness when we don’t deserve it. I love you. Amen.”