

Proverbs

BEREAN STANDARD BIBLE

Chapter 1

THE BEGINNING OF KNOWLEDGE

¹These are the proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel, ²for gaining wisdom and discipline, for comprehending words of insight, ³and for receiving instruction in wise living and in righteousness, justice, and equity. ⁴To impart prudence to the simple and knowledge and discretion to the young, ⁵let the wise listen and gain instruction, and the discerning acquire wise counsel ⁶by understanding the proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise. ⁷The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

THE ENTICEMENT OF SIN

⁸Listen, my son, to your father's instruction, and do not forsake the teaching of your mother. ⁹For they are a garland of grace on your head and a pendant around your neck. ¹⁰My son, if sinners entice you, do not yield to them. ¹¹If they say, "Come along, let us lie in wait for blood, let us ambush the innocent without cause, ¹²let us swallow them alive like Sheol, and whole like those descending into the Pit. ¹³We will find all manner of precious goods; we will fill our houses with plunder. ¹⁴Throw in your lot with us; let us all share one purse"— ¹⁵my son, do not walk the road with them or set foot upon their path. ¹⁶For their feet run to evil, and they are swift to shed blood. ¹⁷How futile it is to spread the net where any bird can see it! ¹⁸But they lie in wait for their own blood; they ambush their own lives. ¹⁹Such is the fate of all who are greedy, whose unjust gain takes the lives of its possessors.

WISDOM CALLS ALOUD

²⁰Wisdom calls out in the street, she lifts her voice in the square; ²¹in the main concourse she cries aloud, at the city gates she makes her speech: ²²"How long, O simple ones, will you love your simple ways? How long will scoffers delight in their scorn and fools hate knowledge? ²³If you had repented at my rebuke, then surely I would have poured out my spirit on you; I would have made my words known to you. ²⁴Because you refused my call, and no one took my outstretched hand, ²⁵because you neglected all my counsel, and wanted none of my correction, ²⁶in turn I will mock your calamity; I will sneer when terror strikes you, ²⁷when your dread comes like a storm, and your destruction like a

whirlwind, when distress and anguish overwhelm you. ²⁸Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; they will earnestly seek me, but will not find me. ²⁹For they hated knowledge and chose not to fear the LORD. ³⁰They accepted none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof. ³¹So they will eat the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. ³²For the waywardness of the simple will slay them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them. ³³But whoever listens to me will dwell in safety, secure from the fear of evil."

Chapter 2

THE BENEFITS OF WISDOM

¹My son, if you accept my words and hide my commandments within you, ²if you incline your ear to wisdom and direct your heart to understanding, ³if you truly call out to insight and lift your voice to understanding, ⁴if you seek it like silver and search it out like hidden treasure, ⁵then you will discern the fear of the LORD and discover the knowledge of God. ⁶For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding. ⁷He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk with integrity, ⁸to guard the paths of justice and protect the way of His saints. ⁹Then you will discern righteousness and justice and equity—every good path. ¹⁰For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will delight your soul. ¹¹Discretion will watch over you, and understanding will guard you, ¹²to deliver you from the way of evil, from the man who speaks perversity, ¹³from those who leave the straight paths to walk in the ways of darkness, ¹⁴from those who enjoy doing evil and rejoice in the twist-edness of evil, ¹⁵whose paths are crooked and whose ways are devious. ¹⁶It will rescue you from the forbidden woman, from the stranger with seductive words ¹⁷who abandons the partner of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God. ¹⁸For her house sinks down to death, and her tracks to the departed spirits. ¹⁹None who go to her return or negotiate the paths of life. ²⁰So you will follow in the ways of the good, and keep to the paths of the righteous. ²¹For the upright will inhabit the land, and the blameless will remain in it; ²²but the wicked will be cut off from the land, and the unfaithful will be uprooted.

Chapter 3

TRUST IN THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART

¹My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments; ²for they will add length to your days, years and peace to your life. ³Never let loving devotion or faithfulness leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. ⁴Then you will find favor and high regard in the sight of God and man. ⁵Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. ⁷Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and turn away from evil. ⁸This will bring healing to your body and refreshment to your bones. ⁹Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your crops; ¹⁰then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine. ¹¹My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD, and do not loathe His rebuke; ¹²for the LORD disciplines the one He loves, as does a father the son in whom he delights.

THE BLESSINGS OF WISDOM

¹³Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who acquires understanding, ¹⁴for she is more profitable than silver, and her gain is better than fine gold. ¹⁵She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire compares with her. ¹⁶Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. ¹⁷All her ways are pleasant, and all her paths are peaceful. ¹⁸She is a tree of life to those who embrace her, and those who lay hold of her are blessed. ¹⁹The LORD founded the earth by wisdom and established the heavens by understanding. ²⁰By His knowledge the watery depths were broken open, and the clouds dripped with dew. ²¹My son, do not lose sight of this: Preserve sound judgment and discernment. ²²They will be life to your soul and adornment to your neck. ²³Then you will go on your way in safety, and your foot will not stumble. ²⁴When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you rest, your sleep will be sweet. ²⁵Do not fear sudden danger or the ruin that overtakes the wicked, ²⁶for the LORD will be your confidence and will keep your foot from the snare. ²⁷Do not withhold good from the deserving when it is within your power to act. ²⁸Do not tell your neighbor, “Come back tomorrow and I will provide”—when you already have the means. ²⁹Do not devise evil against your neighbor, for he trustfully dwells beside you. ³⁰Do not accuse a man without cause, when he has done you no harm. ³¹Do not envy a violent man or choose any of his ways; ³²for the LORD detests the perverse, but He is a friend to the upright. ³³The curse of the LORD is on the house of the wicked, but He blesses the

home of the righteous. ³⁴He mocks the mockers, but gives grace to the humble. ³⁵The wise will inherit honor, but fools are held up to shame.

Chapter 4

A FATHER’S INSTRUCTION

¹Listen, my sons, to a father’s instruction; pay attention and gain understanding. ²For I give you sound teaching; do not abandon my directive. ³When I was a son to my father, tender and the only child of my mother, ⁴he taught me and said, “Let your heart lay hold of my words; keep my commands and you will live. ⁵Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or turn from them. ⁶Do not forsake wisdom, and she will preserve you; love her, and she will guard you. ⁷Wisdom is supreme; so acquire wisdom. And whatever you may acquire, gain understanding. ⁸Prize her, and she will exalt you; if you embrace her, she will honor you. ⁹She will set a garland of grace on your head; she will present you with a crown of beauty.” ¹⁰Listen, my son, and receive my words, and the years of your life will be many. ¹¹I will guide you in the way of wisdom; I will lead you on straight paths. ¹²When you walk, your steps will not be impeded; when you run, you will not stumble. ¹³Hold on to instruction; do not let go. Guard it, for it is your life. ¹⁴Do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evildoers. ¹⁵Avoid it; do not travel on it. Turn from it and pass on by. ¹⁶For they cannot sleep unless they do evil; they are deprived of slumber until they make someone fall. ¹⁷For they eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence. ¹⁸The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining brighter and brighter until midday. ¹⁹But the way of the wicked is like the darkest gloom; they do not know what makes them stumble. ²⁰My son, pay attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. ²¹Do not lose sight of them; keep them within your heart. ²²For they are life to those who find them, and health to the whole body. ²³Guard your heart with all diligence, for from it flow springs of life. ²⁴Put away deception from your mouth; keep your lips from perverse speech. ²⁵Let your eyes look forward; fix your gaze straight ahead. ²⁶Make a level path for your feet, and all your ways will be sure. ²⁷Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your feet away from evil.

Chapter 5

AVOIDING IMMORALITY

¹My son, pay attention to my wisdom; incline your ear to my insight, ²that you may maintain discretion and your

lips may preserve knowledge. ³Though the lips of the forbidden woman drip honey and her speech is smoother than oil, ⁴in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a double-edged sword. ⁵Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to Sheol. ⁶She does not consider the path of life; she does not know that her ways are unstable. ⁷So now, my sons, listen to me, and do not turn aside from the words of my mouth. ⁸Keep your path far from her; do not go near the door of her house, ⁹lest you concede your vigor to others, and your years to one who is cruel; ¹⁰lest strangers feast on your wealth, and your labors enrich the house of a foreigner. ¹¹At the end of your life you will groan when your flesh and your body are spent, ¹²and you will say, “How I hated discipline, and my heart despised reproof! ¹³I did not listen to the voice of my teachers or incline my ear to my mentors. ¹⁴I am on the brink of utter ruin in the midst of the whole assembly.” ¹⁵Drink water from your own cistern, and running water from your own well. ¹⁶Why should your springs flow in the streets, your streams of water in the public squares? ¹⁷Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers. ¹⁸May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth: ¹⁹A loving doe, a graceful fawn—may her breasts satisfy you always; may you be captivated by her love forever. ²⁰Why be captivated, my son, by an adulteress, or embrace the bosom of a stranger? ²¹For a man’s ways are before the eyes of the LORD, and the LORD examines all his paths. ²²The iniquities of a wicked man entrap him; the cords of his sin entangle him. ²³He dies for lack of discipline, led astray by his own great folly.

Chapter 6

WARNINGS AGAINST FOOLISHNESS

¹My son, if you have put up security for your neighbor, if you have struck hands in pledge with a stranger, ²if you have been trapped by the words of your lips, ensnared by the words of your mouth, ³then do this, my son, to free yourself, for you have fallen into your neighbor’s hands: Go, humble yourself, and press your plea with your neighbor. ⁴Allow no sleep to your eyes or slumber to your eyelids. ⁵Free yourself, like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, like a bird from the snare of the fowler. ⁶Walk in the manner of the ant, O slacker; observe its ways and become wise. ⁷Without a commander, without an overseer or ruler, ⁸it prepares its provisions in summer; it gathers its food at harvest. ⁹How long will you lie there, O slacker? When will you get up from your sleep? ¹⁰A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, ¹¹and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and need like a

bandit. ¹²A worthless person, a wicked man, walks with a perverse mouth, ¹³winking his eyes, speaking with his feet, and pointing with his fingers. ¹⁴With deceit in his heart he devises evil; he continually sows discord. ¹⁵Therefore calamity will come upon him suddenly; in an instant he will be shattered beyond recovery. ¹⁶There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to Him: ¹⁷haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, ¹⁸a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that run swiftly to evil, ¹⁹a false witness who gives false testimony, and one who stirs up discord among brothers.

WARNINGS AGAINST ADULTERY

²⁰My son, keep your father’s commandment, and do not forsake your mother’s teaching. ²¹Bind them always upon your heart; tie them around your neck. ²²When you walk, they will guide you; when you lie down, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you. ²³For this commandment is a lamp, this teaching is a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way to life, ²⁴to keep you from the evil woman, from the smooth tongue of the adulteress. ²⁵Do not lust in your heart for her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes. ²⁶For the levy of the prostitute is poverty, and the adulteress preys upon your very life. ²⁷Can a man embrace fire and his clothes not be burned? ²⁸Can a man walk on hot coals without scorching his feet? ²⁹So is he who sleeps with another man’s wife; no one who touches her will go unpunished. ³⁰Men do not despise the thief if he steals to satisfy his hunger. ³¹Yet if caught, he must pay sevenfold; he must give up all the wealth of his house. ³²He who commits adultery lacks judgment; whoever does so destroys himself. ³³Wounds and dishonor will befall him, and his reproach will never be wiped away. ³⁴For jealousy enrages a husband, and he will show no mercy in the day of vengeance. ³⁵He will not be appeased by any ransom, or persuaded by lavish gifts.

Chapter 7

WARNINGS ABOUT THE ADULTERESS

¹My son, keep my words and treasure my commandments within you. ²Keep my commandments and live; guard my teachings as the apple of your eye. ³Tie them to your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart. ⁴Say to wisdom, “You are my sister,” and call understanding your kinsman, ⁵that they may keep you from the adulteress, from the stranger with seductive words. ⁶For at the window of my house I looked through the lattice. ⁷I saw among the simple, I noticed among the youths, a young man lacking judgment, ⁸crossing the street near her corner, strolling

down the road to her house, ⁹at twilight, as the day was fading into the dark of the night. ¹⁰Then a woman came out to meet him, with the attire of a harlot and cunning of heart. ¹¹She is loud and defiant; her feet do not remain at home. ¹²Now in the street, now in the squares, she lurks at every corner. ¹³She seizes him and kisses him; she brazenly says to him: ¹⁴“I have made my peace offerings; today I have paid my vows. ¹⁵So I came out to meet you; I sought you, and I have found you. ¹⁶I have decked my bed with coverings, with colored linen from Egypt. ¹⁷I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, with aloes, and with cinnamon. ¹⁸Come, let us take our fill of love till morning. Let us delight in loving caresses! ¹⁹For my husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey. ²⁰He took with him a bag of money and will not return till the moon is full.” ²¹With her great persuasion she entices him; with her flattering lips she lures him. ²²He follows her on impulse, like an ox going to the slaughter, like a deer bounding into a trap, ²³until an arrow pierces his liver, like a bird darting into a snare—not knowing it will cost him his life. ²⁴Now, my sons, listen to me, and attend to the words of my mouth. ²⁵Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways; do not stray into her paths. ²⁶For she has brought many down to death; her slain are many in number. ²⁷Her house is the road to Sheol, descending to the chambers of death.

Chapter 8

THE EXCELLENCE OF WISDOM

¹Does not wisdom call out, and understanding raise her voice? ²On the heights overlooking the road, at the cross-roads she takes her stand. ³Beside the gates to the city, at the entrances she cries out: ⁴“To you, O men, I call out, and my cry is to the sons of men. ⁵O simple ones, learn to be shrewd; O fools, gain understanding. ⁶Listen, for I speak of noble things, and the opening of my lips will reveal right. ⁷For my mouth will speak the truth, and wickedness is detestable to my lips. ⁸All the words of my mouth are righteous; none are crooked or perverse. ⁹They are all plain to the discerning, and upright to those who find knowledge. ¹⁰Receive my instruction instead of silver, and knowledge rather than pure gold. ¹¹For wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire compares with her. ¹²I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence, and I find knowledge and discretion. ¹³To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate arrogant pride, evil conduct, and perverse speech. ¹⁴Counsel and sound judgment are mine; I have insight and strength. ¹⁵By me kings reign, and rulers enact just laws; ¹⁶By me princes rule, and all nobles who govern justly. ¹⁷I love those who love me, and those who seek me early shall find me.

¹⁸With me are riches and honor, enduring wealth and righteousness. ¹⁹My fruit is better than gold, pure gold, and my harvest surpasses choice silver. ²⁰I walk in the way of righteousness, along the paths of justice, ²¹bestowing wealth on those who love me and making their treasures full. ²²The LORD created me as His first course, before His works of old. ²³From everlasting I was established, from the beginning, before the earth began. ²⁴When there were no watery depths, I was brought forth, when no springs were overflowing with water. ²⁵Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, I was brought forth, ²⁶before He made the land or fields, or any of the dust of the earth. ²⁷I was there when He established the heavens, when He inscribed a circle on the face of the deep, ²⁸when He established the clouds above, when the fountains of the deep gushed forth, ²⁹when He set a boundary for the sea, so that the waters would not surpass His command, when He marked out the foundations of the earth. ³⁰Then I was a skilled craftsman at His side, and His delight day by day, rejoicing always in His presence. ³¹I was rejoicing in His whole world, delighting together in the sons of men. ³²Now therefore, my sons, listen to me, for blessed are those who keep my ways. ³³Listen to instruction and be wise; do not ignore it. ³⁴Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at the posts of my doorway. ³⁵For whoever finds me finds life and obtains the favor of the LORD. ³⁶But he who fails to find me harms himself; all who hate me love death.”

Chapter 9

THE WAY OF WISDOM

¹Wisdom has built her house; she has carved out her seven pillars. ²She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine; she has also set her table. ³She has sent out her maid-servants; she calls out from the heights of the city. ⁴“Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!” she says to him who lacks judgment. ⁵“Come, eat my bread and drink the wine I have mixed. ⁶Leave your folly behind, and you will live; walk in the way of understanding.” ⁷He who corrects a mocker brings shame on himself; he who rebukes a wicked man taints himself. ⁸Do not rebuke a mocker, or he will hate you; rebuke a wise man, and he will love you. ⁹Instruct a wise man, and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man, and he will increase his learning. ¹⁰The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. ¹¹For through wisdom your days will be multiplied, and years will be added to your life. ¹²If you are wise, you are wise to your own advantage; but if you scoff, you alone will bear the consequences.

THE WAY OF FOLLY

¹³The woman named Folly is loud; she is naive and knows nothing. ¹⁴She sits at the door of her house, on a seat in the heights of the city, ¹⁵calling out to those who pass by, who make their paths straight. ¹⁶“Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!” she says to him who lacks judgment. ¹⁷“Stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is tasty!” ¹⁸But they do not know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of Sheol.

Chapter 10**SOLOMON’S PROVERBS: THE WISE SON**

¹The proverbs of Solomon: A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son grief to his mother. ²Ill-gotten treasures profit nothing, but righteousness brings deliverance from death. ³The LORD does not let the righteous go hungry, but He denies the craving of the wicked. ⁴Idle hands make one poor, but diligent hands bring wealth. ⁵He who gathers in summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son. ⁶Blessings are on the head of the righteous, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence. ⁷The memory of the righteous is a blessing, but the name of the wicked will rot. ⁸A wise heart will receive commandments, but foolish lips will come to ruin. ⁹He who walks in integrity walks securely, but he who perverts his ways will be found out. ¹⁰He who winks the eye causes grief, and foolish lips will come to ruin. ¹¹The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence. ¹²Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers all transgressions. ¹³Wisdom is found on the lips of the discerning, but a rod is for the back of him who lacks judgment. ¹⁴The wise store up knowledge, but the mouth of the fool invites destruction. ¹⁵The wealth of the rich man is his fortified city, but poverty is the ruin of the poor. ¹⁶The labor of the righteous leads to life, but the gain of the wicked brings punishment. ¹⁷Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life, but he who ignores reproof goes astray. ¹⁸The one who conceals hatred has lying lips, and whoever spreads slander is a fool. ¹⁹When words are many, sin is unavoidable, but he who restrains his lips is wise. ²⁰The tongue of the righteous is choice silver, but the heart of the wicked has little worth. ²¹The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of judgment. ²²The blessing of the LORD enriches, and He adds no sorrow to it. ²³The fool delights in shameful conduct, but a man of understanding has wisdom. ²⁴What the wicked man dreads will overtake him, but the desire of the righteous will be granted. ²⁵When the whirlwind passes, the wicked are no more, but the righteous are secure forever. ²⁶Like vinegar to the teeth

and smoke to the eyes, so is the slacker to those who send him. ²⁷The fear of the LORD prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be cut short. ²⁸The hope of the righteous is joy, but the expectations of the wicked will perish. ²⁹The way of the LORD is a refuge to the upright, but destruction awaits those who do evil. ³⁰The righteous will never be shaken, but the wicked will not inhabit the land. ³¹The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom, but a perverse tongue will be cut out. ³²The lips of the righteous know what is fitting, but the mouth of the wicked is perverse.

Chapter 11**DISHONEST SCALES**

¹Dishonest scales are an abomination to the LORD, but an accurate weight is His delight. ²When pride comes, disgrace follows, but with humility comes wisdom. ³The integrity of the upright guides them, but the perversity of the faithless destroys them. ⁴Riches are worthless in the day of wrath, but righteousness brings deliverance from death. ⁵The righteousness of the blameless directs their path, but the wicked fall by their own wickedness. ⁶The righteousness of the upright delivers them, but the faithless are trapped by their own desires. ⁷When the wicked man dies, his hope perishes, and the hope of his strength vanishes. ⁸The righteous man is delivered from trouble; in his place the wicked man goes in. ⁹With his mouth the ungodly man destroys his neighbor, but through knowledge the righteous are rescued. ¹⁰When the righteous thrive, the city rejoices, and when the wicked perish, there are shouts of joy. ¹¹By the blessing of the upright a city is built up, but by the mouth of the wicked it is torn down. ¹²Whoever shows contempt for his neighbor lacks judgment, but a man of understanding remains silent. ¹³A gossip reveals a secret, but a trustworthy person keeps a confidence. ¹⁴For lack of guidance, a nation falls, but with many counselors comes deliverance. ¹⁵He who puts up security for a stranger will surely suffer, but the one who hates indebtedness is secure. ¹⁶A gracious woman attains honor, but ruthless men gain only wealth. ¹⁷A kind man benefits himself, but a cruel man brings trouble on himself. ¹⁸The wicked man earns an empty wage, but he who sows righteousness reaps a true reward. ¹⁹Genuine righteousness leads to life, but the pursuit of evil brings death. ²⁰The perverse in heart are an abomination to the LORD, but the blameless in their walk are His delight. ²¹Be assured that the wicked will not go unpunished, but the offspring of the righteous will escape. ²²Like a gold ring in a pig’s snout is a beautiful woman who lacks discretion. ²³The desire of the righteous leads only to good, but the hope of the wicked brings wrath. ²⁴One gives freely,

yet gains even more; another withholds what is right, only to become poor. ²⁵A generous soul will prosper, and he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed. ²⁶The people will curse the hoarder of grain, but blessing will crown the one who sells it. ²⁷He who searches out good finds favor, but evil will come to him who seeks it. ²⁸He who trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will thrive like foliage. ²⁹He who brings trouble on his house will inherit the wind, and the fool will be servant to the wise of heart. ³⁰The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise. ³¹If the righteous receive their due on earth, how much more the ungodly and the sinner!

Chapter 12

LOVING DISCIPLINE AND KNOWLEDGE

¹Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid. ²The good man obtains favor from the LORD, but the LORD condemns a man who devises evil. ³A man cannot be established through wickedness, but the righteous cannot be uprooted. ⁴A wife of noble character is her husband's crown, but she who causes shame is like decay in his bones. ⁵The plans of the righteous are just, but the counsel of the wicked leads to deceit. ⁶The words of the wicked lie in wait for blood, but the speech of the upright rescues them. ⁷The wicked are overthrown and perish, but the house of the righteous will stand. ⁸A man is praised according to his wisdom, but a twisted mind is despised. ⁹Better to be lightly esteemed yet have a servant, than to be self-important but lack food. ¹⁰A righteous man regards the life of his animal, but the tender mercies of the wicked are only cruelty. ¹¹The one who works his land will have plenty of food, but whoever chases fantasies lacks judgment. ¹²The wicked desire the plunder of evil men, but the root of the righteous flourishes. ¹³An evil man is trapped by his rebellious speech, but a righteous man escapes from trouble. ¹⁴By fruitful speech a man is filled with good things, and the work of his hands returns to him. ¹⁵The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to counsel. ¹⁶A fool's anger is known at once, but a prudent man overlooks an insult. ¹⁷He who speaks the truth declares what is right, but a false witness speaks deceit. ¹⁸Speaking rashly is like a piercing sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. ¹⁹Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment. ²⁰Deceit is in the hearts of those who devise evil, but the counselors of peace have joy. ²¹No harm befalls the righteous, but the wicked are filled with trouble. ²²Lying lips are detestable to the LORD, but those who deal faithfully are His delight. ²³A shrewd man keeps his knowledge to him-

self, but a foolish heart proclaims its folly. ²⁴The hand of the diligent will rule, but laziness ends in forced labor. ²⁵Anxiety weighs down the heart of a man, but a good word cheers it up. ²⁶A righteous man is cautious in friendship, but the ways of the wicked lead them astray. ²⁷A lazy man does not roast his game, but a diligent man prizes his possession. ²⁸There is life in the path of righteousness, but another path leads to death.

Chapter 13

A FATHER'S DISCIPLINE

¹A wise son heeds his father's discipline, but a mocker does not listen to rebuke. ²From the fruit of his lips a man enjoys good things, but the desire of the faithless is violence. ³He who guards his mouth protects his life, but the one who opens his lips invites his own ruin. ⁴The slacker craves yet has nothing, but the soul of the diligent is fully satisfied. ⁵The righteous hate falsehood, but the wicked bring shame and disgrace. ⁶Righteousness guards the man of integrity, but wickedness undermines the sinner. ⁷One pretends to be rich, but has nothing; another pretends to be poor, yet has great wealth. ⁸Riches may ransom a man's life, but a poor man hears no threat. ⁹The light of the righteous shines brightly, but the lamp of the wicked is extinguished. ¹⁰Arrogance leads only to strife, but wisdom is with the well-advised. ¹¹Dishonest wealth will dwindle, but what is earned through hard work will be multiplied. ¹²Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but desire fulfilled is a tree of life. ¹³He who despises instruction will pay the penalty, but the one who respects a command will be rewarded. ¹⁴The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, turning one from the snares of death. ¹⁵Good understanding wins favor, but the way of the faithless is difficult. ¹⁶Every prudent man acts with knowledge, but a fool displays his folly. ¹⁷A wicked messenger falls into trouble, but a faithful envoy brings healing. ¹⁸Poverty and shame come to him who ignores discipline, but whoever heeds correction is honored. ¹⁹Desire fulfilled is sweet to the soul, but turning from evil is detestable to fools. ²⁰He who walks with the wise will become wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed. ²¹Disaster pursues sinners, but prosperity is the reward of the righteous. ²²A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, but the sinner's wealth is passed to the righteous. ²³Abundant food is in the fallow ground of the poor, but without justice it is swept away. ²⁴He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently. ²⁵A righteous man eats to his heart's content, but the stomach of the wicked is empty.

Chapter 14

THE WISE WOMAN

¹Every wise woman builds her house, but a foolish one tears it down with her own hands. ²He who walks in uprightness fears the LORD, but the one who is devious in his ways despises Him. ³The proud speech of a fool brings a rod to his back, but the lips of the wise protect them. ⁴Where there are no oxen, the manger is empty, but an abundant harvest comes through the strength of the ox. ⁵An honest witness does not deceive, but a dishonest witness pours forth lies. ⁶A mocker seeks wisdom and finds none, but knowledge comes easily to the discerning. ⁷Stay away from a foolish man; you will gain no knowledge from his speech. ⁸The wisdom of the prudent is to discern his way, but the folly of fools deceives them. ⁹Fools mock the making of amends, but goodwill is found among the upright. ¹⁰The heart knows its own bitterness, and no stranger shares in its joy. ¹¹The house of the wicked will be destroyed, but the tent of the upright will flourish. ¹²There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death. ¹³Even in laughter the heart may ache, and joy may end in sorrow. ¹⁴The backslider in heart receives the fill of his own ways, but a good man is rewarded for his ways. ¹⁵The simple man believes every word, but the prudent man watches his steps. ¹⁶A wise man fears and turns from evil, but a fool is careless and reckless. ¹⁷A quick-tempered man acts foolishly, and a devious man is hated. ¹⁸The simple inherit folly, but the prudent are crowned with knowledge. ¹⁹The evil bow before the good, and the wicked at the gates of the righteous. ²⁰The poor man is hated even by his neighbor, but many are those who love the rich. ²¹He who despises his neighbor sins, but blessed is he who shows kindness to the poor. ²²Do not those who contrive evil go astray? But those who plan goodness find loving devotion and faithfulness. ²³There is profit in all labor, but mere talk leads only to poverty. ²⁴The crown of the wise is their wealth, but the effort of fools is folly. ²⁵A truthful witness saves lives, but one who utters lies is deceitful. ²⁶He who fears the LORD is secure in confidence, and his children shall have a place of refuge. ²⁷The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, turning a man from the snares of death. ²⁸A large population is a king's splendor, but a lack of subjects is a prince's ruin. ²⁹A patient man has great understanding, but a quick-tempered man promotes folly. ³⁰A tranquil heart is life to the body, but envy rots the bones. ³¹Whoever oppresses the poor taunts their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors Him. ³²The wicked man is thrown down by his own sin, but the righteous man has a refuge even in death. ³³Wisdom rests in the heart of the

discerning; even among fools she is known. ³⁴Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people. ³⁵A king delights in a wise servant, but his anger falls on the shameful.

Chapter 15

A GENTLE ANSWER TURNS AWAY WRATH

¹A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. ²The tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouth of the fool spouts folly. ³The eyes of the LORD are in every place, observing the evil and the good. ⁴A soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit. ⁵A fool rejects his father's discipline, but whoever heeds correction is prudent. ⁶The house of the righteous has great treasure, but the income of the wicked is trouble. ⁷The lips of the wise spread knowledge, but not so the hearts of fools. ⁸The sacrifice of the wicked is detestable to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright is His delight. ⁹The LORD detests the way of the wicked, but He loves those who pursue righteousness. ¹⁰Discipline is harsh for him who leaves the path; he who hates correction will die. ¹¹Sheol and Abaddon lie open before the LORD—how much more the hearts of men! ¹²A mocker does not love to be reproved, nor will he consult the wise. ¹³A joyful heart makes a cheerful countenance, but sorrow of the heart crushes the spirit. ¹⁴A discerning heart seeks knowledge, but the mouth of a fool feeds on folly. ¹⁵All the days of the oppressed are bad, but a cheerful heart has a continual feast. ¹⁶Better a little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure with turmoil. ¹⁷Better a dish of vegetables where there is love than a fattened ox with hatred. ¹⁸A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger calms dispute. ¹⁹The way of the slacker is like a hedge of thorns, but the path of the upright is a highway. ²⁰A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish man despises his mother. ²¹Folly is joy to one who lacks judgment, but a man of understanding walks a straight path. ²²Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed. ²³A man takes joy in a fitting reply—and how good is a timely word! ²⁴The path of life leads upward for the wise, that he may avoid going down to Sheol. ²⁵The LORD tears down the house of the proud, but He protects the boundaries of the widow. ²⁶The LORD detests the thoughts of the wicked, but the words of the pure are pleasant to Him. ²⁷He who is greedy for unjust gain brings trouble on his household, but he who hates bribes will live. ²⁸The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked blurts out evil. ²⁹The LORD is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous. ³⁰The light of the eyes cheers

the heart, and good news nourishes the bones. ³¹He who listens to life-giving reproof will dwell among the wise. ³²He who ignores discipline despises himself, but whoever heeds correction gains understanding. ³³The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom, and humility comes before honor.

Chapter 16

THE REPLY OF THE TONGUE IS FROM THE LORD

¹The plans of the heart belong to man, but the reply of the tongue is from the LORD. ²All a man's ways are pure in his own eyes, but his motives are weighed out by the LORD. ³Commit your works to the LORD and your plans will be achieved. ⁴The LORD has made everything for His purpose—even the wicked for the day of disaster. ⁵Everyone who is proud in heart is detestable to the LORD; be assured that he will not go unpunished. ⁶By loving devotion and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for, and by the fear of the LORD one turns aside from evil. ⁷When a man's ways please the LORD, He makes even the man's enemies live at peace with him. ⁸Better a little with righteousness than great gain with injustice. ⁹A man's heart plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps. ¹⁰A divine verdict is on the lips of a king; his mouth must not betray justice. ¹¹Honest scales and balances are from the LORD; all the weights in the bag are His concern. ¹²Wicked behavior is detestable for kings, for a throne is established through righteousness. ¹³Righteous lips are a king's delight, and he who speaks honestly is beloved. ¹⁴The wrath of a king is a messenger of death, but a wise man will pacify it. ¹⁵When a king's face brightens, there is life; his favor is like a rain cloud in spring. ¹⁶How much better to acquire wisdom than gold! To gain understanding is more desirable than silver. ¹⁷The highway of the upright leads away from evil; he who guards his way protects his life. ¹⁸Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. ¹⁹It is better to be lowly in spirit among the humble than to divide the spoil with the proud. ²⁰Whoever heeds instruction will find success, and blessed is he who trusts in the LORD. ²¹The wise in heart are called discerning, and pleasant speech promotes instruction. ²²Understanding is a fountain of life to its possessor, but the discipline of fools is folly. ²³The heart of the wise man instructs his mouth and adds persuasiveness to his lips. ²⁴Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. ²⁵There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death. ²⁶A worker's appetite works for him because his hunger drives him onward. ²⁷A worthless man digs up evil, and his speech is like a scorching fire. ²⁸A perverse man spreads dissension, and

a gossip divides close friends. ²⁹A violent man entices his neighbor and leads him down a path that is not good. ³⁰He who winks his eye devises perversity; he who purses his lips is bent on evil. ³¹Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is attained along the path of righteousness. ³²He who is slow to anger is better than a warrior, and he who controls his temper is greater than one who captures a city. ³³The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.

Chapter 17

BETTER A DRY MORSEL IN QUIETNESS

¹Better a dry morsel in quietness than a house full of feasting with strife. ²A wise servant will rule over a disgraceful son and share his inheritance as one of the brothers. ³A crucible for silver and a furnace for gold, but the LORD is the tester of hearts. ⁴A wicked man listens to evil lips; a liar gives ear to a destructive tongue. ⁵He who mocks the poor insults their Maker; whoever gloats over calamity will not go unpunished. ⁶Grandchildren are the crown of the aged, and the glory of a son is his father. ⁷Eloquent words are unfit for a fool; how much worse are lying lips to a ruler! ⁸A bribe is a charm to its giver; wherever he turns, he succeeds. ⁹Whoever conceals an offense promotes love, but he who brings it up separates friends. ¹⁰A rebuke cuts into a man of discernment deeper than a hundred lashes cut into a fool. ¹¹An evil man seeks only rebellion; a cruel messenger will be sent against him. ¹²It is better to meet a bear robbed of her cubs than a fool in his folly. ¹³If anyone returns evil for good, evil will never leave his house. ¹⁴To start a quarrel is to release a flood; so abandon the dispute before it breaks out. ¹⁵Acquitting the guilty and condemning the righteous—both are detestable to the LORD. ¹⁶Why should the fool have money in his hand with no intention of buying wisdom? ¹⁷A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. ¹⁸A man lacking judgment strikes hands in pledge and puts up security for his neighbor. ¹⁹He who loves transgression loves strife; he who builds his gate high invites destruction. ²⁰The one with a perverse heart finds no good, and he whose tongue is deceitful falls into trouble. ²¹A man fathers a fool to his own grief; the father of a fool has no joy. ²²A joyful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit dries up the bones. ²³A wicked man takes a covert bribe to subvert the course of justice. ²⁴Wisdom is the focus of the discerning, but the eyes of a fool wander to the ends of the earth. ²⁵A foolish son brings grief to his father and bitterness to her who bore him. ²⁶It is surely not good to punish the innocent or to flog a noble for his honesty. ²⁷A man of knowledge restrains his words, and a man of understanding maintains a

calm spirit. ²⁸Even a fool is considered wise if he keeps silent, and discerning when he holds his tongue.

Chapter 18

THE SELFISHNESS OF THE UNFRIENDLY

¹He who isolates himself pursues selfish desires; he rebels against all sound judgment. ²A fool does not delight in understanding, but only in airing his opinions. ³With a wicked man comes contempt as well, and shame is accompanied by disgrace. ⁴The words of a man's mouth are deep waters; the fountain of wisdom is a bubbling brook. ⁵Showing partiality to the wicked is not good, nor is depriving the innocent of justice. ⁶A fool's lips bring him strife, and his mouth invites a beating. ⁷A fool's mouth is his ruin, and his lips are a snare to his soul. ⁸The words of a gossip are like choice morsels that go down into the inmost being. ⁹Whoever is slothful in his work is brother to him who destroys. ¹⁰The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe. ¹¹A rich man's wealth is his fortified city; it is like a high wall in his imagination. ¹²Before his downfall a man's heart is proud, but humility comes before honor. ¹³He who answers a matter before he hears it—this is folly and disgrace to him. ¹⁴The spirit of a man can endure his sickness, but who can survive a broken spirit? ¹⁵The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks it out. ¹⁶A man's gift opens doors for him, and brings him before great men. ¹⁷The first to state his case seems right until another comes and cross-examines him. ¹⁸Casting the lot ends quarrels and separates strong opponents. ¹⁹An offended brother is harder to win than a fortified city, and disputes are like the bars of a castle. ²⁰From the fruit of his mouth a man's belly is filled; with the harvest from his lips he is satisfied. ²¹Life and death are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit. ²²He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD. ²³The poor man pleads for mercy, but the rich man answers harshly. ²⁴A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who stays closer than a brother.

Chapter 19

THE MAN OF INTEGRITY

¹Better a poor man who walks with integrity than a fool whose lips are perverse. ²Even zeal is no good without knowledge, and he who hurries his footsteps misses the mark. ³A man's own folly subverts his way, yet his heart rages against the LORD. ⁴Wealth attracts many friends, but a poor man is deserted by his friend. ⁵A false witness will

not go unpunished, and one who utters lies will not escape. ⁶Many seek the favor of the prince, and everyone is a friend of the gift giver. ⁷All the brothers of a poor man hate him—how much more do his friends avoid him! He may pursue them with pleading, but they are nowhere to be found. ⁸He who acquires wisdom loves himself; one who safeguards understanding will find success. ⁹A false witness will not go unpunished, and one who pours out lies will perish. ¹⁰Luxury is unseemly for a fool—how much worse for a slave to rule over princes! ¹¹A man's insight gives him patience, and his virtue is to overlook an offense. ¹²A king's rage is like the roar of a lion, but his favor is like dew on the grass. ¹³A foolish son is his father's ruin, and a quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping. ¹⁴Houses and wealth are inherited from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the LORD. ¹⁵Laziness brings on deep sleep, and an idle soul will suffer hunger. ¹⁶He who keeps a commandment preserves his soul, but he who is careless in his ways will die. ¹⁷Kindness to the poor is a loan to the LORD, and He will repay the lender. ¹⁸Discipline your son, for in that there is hope; do not be party to his death. ¹⁹A man of great anger must pay the penalty; if you rescue him, you will have to do so again. ²⁰Listen to counsel and accept discipline, that you may be wise the rest of your days. ²¹Many plans are in a man's heart, but the purpose of the LORD will prevail. ²²The desire of a man is loving devotion; better to be poor than a liar. ²³The fear of the LORD leads to life, that one may rest content, without visitation from harm. ²⁴The slacker buries his hand in the dish; he will not even bring it back to his mouth. ²⁵Strike a mocker, and the simple will beware; rebuke the discerning man, and he will gain knowledge. ²⁶He who assaults his father or evicts his mother is a son who brings shame and disgrace. ²⁷If you cease to hear instruction, my son, you will stray from the words of knowledge. ²⁸A corrupt witness mocks justice, and a wicked mouth swallows iniquity. ²⁹Judgments are prepared for mockers, and beatings for the backs of fools.

Chapter 20

WINE IS A MOCKER

¹Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by them is not wise. ²The terror of a king is like the roar of a lion; whoever provokes him forfeits his own life. ³It is honorable for a man to resolve a dispute, but any fool will quarrel. ⁴The slacker does not plow in season; at harvest time he looks, but nothing is there. ⁵The intentions of a man's heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out. ⁶Many a man proclaims his loving devotion, but who can find a trustworthy man? ⁷The right-

eous man walks with integrity; blessed are his children after him. ⁸A king who sits on a throne to judge sifts out all evil with his eyes. ⁹Who can say, “I have kept my heart pure; I am cleansed from my sin”? ¹⁰Differing weights and unequal measures—both are detestable to the LORD. ¹¹Even a young man is known by his actions—whether his conduct is pure and upright. ¹²Ears that hear and eyes that see—the LORD has made them both. ¹³Do not love sleep, or you will grow poor; open your eyes, and you will have plenty of food. ¹⁴“Worthless, worthless!” says the buyer, but on the way out, he gloats. ¹⁵There is an abundance of gold and rubies, but lips of knowledge are a rare treasure. ¹⁶Take the garment of the one who posts security for a stranger; get collateral if it is for a foreigner. ¹⁷Food gained by fraud is sweet to a man, but later his mouth is full of gravel. ¹⁸Set plans by consultation, and wage war under sound guidance. ¹⁹He who reveals secrets is a constant gossip; avoid the one who babbles with his lips. ²⁰Whoever curses his father or mother, his lamp will be extinguished in deepest darkness. ²¹An inheritance gained quickly will not be blessed in the end. ²²Do not say, “I will avenge this evil!” Wait on the LORD, and He will save you. ²³Unequal weights are detestable to the LORD, and dishonest scales are no good. ²⁴A man’s steps are from the LORD, so how can anyone understand his own way? ²⁵It is a trap for a man to dedicate something rashly, only later to reconsider his vows. ²⁶A wise king separates out the wicked and drives the threshing wheel over them. ²⁷The spirit of a man is the lamp of the LORD, searching out his inmost being. ²⁸Loving devotion and faithfulness preserve a king; by these he maintains his throne. ²⁹The glory of young men is their strength, and gray hair is the splendor of the old. ³⁰Lashes and wounds scour evil, and beatings cleanse the inmost parts.

Chapter 21

THE KING’S HEART

¹The king’s heart is a waterway in the hand of the LORD; He directs it where He pleases. ²All a man’s ways seem right to him, but the LORD weighs the heart. ³To do righteousness and justice is more desirable to the LORD than sacrifice. ⁴Haughty eyes and a proud heart—the guides of the wicked—are sin. ⁵The plans of the diligent bring plenty, as surely as haste leads to poverty. ⁶Making a fortune by a lying tongue is a vanishing mist, a deadly pursuit. ⁷The violence of the wicked will sweep them away because they refuse to do what is just. ⁸The way of a guilty man is crooked, but the conduct of the innocent is upright. ⁹Better to live on a corner of the roof than to share a house with a

quarrelsome wife. ¹⁰The soul of the wicked man craves evil; his neighbor finds no favor in his eyes. ¹¹When a mocker is punished, the simple gain wisdom; and when a wise man is instructed, he acquires knowledge. ¹²The Righteous One considers the house of the wicked and brings the wicked to ruin. ¹³Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too shall cry out and receive no answer. ¹⁴A gift in secret soothes anger, and a covert bribe pacifies great wrath. ¹⁵Justice executed is a joy to the righteous, but a terror to the workers of iniquity. ¹⁶The man who strays from the path of understanding will rest in the assembly of the dead. ¹⁷He who loves pleasure will become poor; the one who loves wine and oil will never be rich. ¹⁸The wicked become a ransom for the righteous, and the faithless for the upright. ¹⁹Better to live in the desert than with a contentious and ill-tempered wife. ²⁰Precious treasures and oil are in the dwelling of the wise, but a foolish man consumes them. ²¹He who pursues righteousness and loving devotion finds life, righteousness, and honor. ²²A wise man scales the city of the mighty and pulls down the stronghold in which they trust. ²³He who guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from distress. ²⁴Mocker is the name of the proud and arrogant man—of him who acts with excessive pride. ²⁵The craving of the slacker kills him because his hands refuse to work. ²⁶All day long he covets more, but the righteous give without restraint. ²⁷The sacrifice of the wicked is detestable—how much more so when brought with ill intent! ²⁸A lying witness will perish, but the man who listens to truth will speak forever. ²⁹A wicked man hardens his face, but the upright man makes his way sure. ³⁰There is no wisdom, no understanding, no counsel that can prevail against the LORD. ³¹A horse is prepared for the day of battle, but victory is of the LORD.

Chapter 22

A GOOD NAME

¹A good name is more desirable than great riches; favor is better than silver and gold. ²The rich and the poor have this in common: The LORD is Maker of them all. ³The prudent see danger and take cover, but the simple keep going and suffer the consequences. ⁴The rewards of humility and the fear of the LORD are wealth and honor and life. ⁵Thorns and snares lie on the path of the perverse; he who guards his soul stays far from them. ⁶Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. ⁷The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is slave to the lender. ⁸He who sows injustice will reap disaster, and the rod of his fury will be destroyed. ⁹A generous man will be blessed, for he shares his bread with the poor.

¹⁰Drive out the mocker, and conflict will depart; even quarreling and insults will cease. ¹¹He who loves a pure heart and gracious lips will have the king for a friend. ¹²The LORD's eyes keep watch over knowledge, but He frustrates the words of the faithless. ¹³The slacker says, "There is a lion outside! I will be slain in the streets!" ¹⁴The mouth of an adulteress is a deep pit; he who is under the wrath of the LORD will fall into it. ¹⁵Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him. ¹⁶Oppressing the poor to enrich oneself or giving gifts to the rich will surely lead to poverty.

SAYING 1

¹⁷Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise—apply your mind to my knowledge—¹⁸for it is pleasing when you keep them within you and they are constantly on your lips. ¹⁹So that your trust may be in the LORD, I instruct you today—yes, you. ²⁰Have I not written for you thirty sayings about counsel and knowledge, ²¹to show you true and reliable words, that you may soundly answer those who sent you?

SAYING 2

²²Do not rob a poor man because he is poor, and do not crush the afflicted at the gate, ²³for the LORD will take up their case and will plunder those who rob them.

SAYING 3

²⁴Do not make friends with an angry man, and do not associate with a hot-tempered man, ²⁵or you may learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare.

SAYING 4

²⁶Do not be one who gives pledges, who puts up security for debts. ²⁷If you have nothing with which to pay, why should your bed be taken from under you?

SAYING 5

²⁸Do not move an ancient boundary stone which your fathers have placed.

SAYING 6

²⁹Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will be stationed in the presence of kings; he will not stand before obscure men.

Chapter 23

SAYING 7

¹When you sit down to dine with a ruler, consider carefully what is set before you, ²and put a knife to your throat if you

possess a great appetite. ³Do not crave his delicacies, for that food is deceptive.

SAYING 8

⁴Do not wear yourself out to get rich; be wise enough to restrain yourself. ⁵When you glance at wealth, it disappears, for it makes wings for itself and flies like an eagle to the sky.

SAYING 9

⁶Do not eat the bread of a stingy man, and do not crave his delicacies; ⁷for he is keeping track, inwardly counting the cost. "Eat and drink," he says to you, but his heart is not with you. ⁸You will vomit up what little you have eaten and waste your pleasant words.

SAYING 10

⁹Do not speak to a fool, for he will despise the wisdom of your words.

SAYING 11

¹⁰Do not move an ancient boundary stone or encroach on the fields of the fatherless, ¹¹for their Redeemer is strong; He will take up their case against you.

SAYING 12

¹²Apply your heart to instruction and your ears to words of knowledge.

SAYING 13

¹³Do not withhold discipline from a child; although you strike him with a rod, he will not die. ¹⁴Strike him with a rod, and you will deliver his soul from Sheol.

SAYING 14

¹⁵My son, if your heart is wise, my own heart will indeed rejoice. ¹⁶My inmost being will rejoice when your lips speak what is right.

SAYING 15

¹⁷Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always continue in the fear of the LORD. ¹⁸For surely there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off.

SAYING 16

¹⁹Listen, my son, and be wise, and guide your heart on the right course. ²⁰Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat. ²¹For the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and drowsiness will clothe them in rags.

SAYING 17

²²Listen to your father who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old. ²³Invest in truth and

never sell it—in wisdom and instruction and understanding. ²⁴The father of a righteous man will greatly rejoice, and he who fathers a wise son will delight in him. ²⁵May your father and mother be glad, and may she who gave you birth rejoice!

SAYING 18

²⁶My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes delight in my ways. ²⁷For a prostitute is a deep pit, and an adulteress is a narrow well. ²⁸Like a robber she lies in wait and multiplies the faithless among men.

SAYING 19

²⁹Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has needless wounds? Who has bloodshot eyes? ³⁰Those who linger over wine, who go to taste mixed drinks. ³¹Do not gaze at wine while it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly. ³²In the end it bites like a snake and stings like a viper. ³³Your eyes will see strange things, and your mind will utter perversities. ³⁴You will be like one sleeping on the high seas or lying on the top of a mast: ³⁵“They struck me, but I feel no pain! They beat me, but I did not know it! When can I wake up to search for another drink?”

Chapter 24

SAYING 20

¹Do not envy wicked men or desire their company; ²for their hearts devise violence, and their lips declare trouble.

SAYING 21

³By wisdom a house is built and by understanding it is established; ⁴through knowledge its rooms are filled with every precious and beautiful treasure.

SAYING 22

⁵A wise man is strong, and a man of knowledge enhances his strength. ⁶Only with sound guidance should you wage war, and victory lies in a multitude of counselors.

SAYING 23

⁷Wisdom is too high for a fool; he does not open his mouth in the meeting place.

SAYING 24

⁸He who plots evil will be called a schemer. ⁹A foolish scheme is sin, and a mocker is detestable to men.

SAYING 25

¹⁰If you faint in the day of distress, how small is your strength! ¹¹Rescue those being led away to death, and restrain those stumbling toward the slaughter. ¹²If you say,

“Behold, we did not know about this,” does not He who weighs hearts consider it? Does not the One who guards your life know? Will He not repay a man according to his deeds?

SAYING 26

¹³Eat honey, my son, for it is good, and the honeycomb is sweet to your taste. ¹⁴Know therefore that wisdom is sweet to your soul. If you find it, there is a future for you, and your hope will never be cut off.

SAYING 27

¹⁵Do not lie in wait, O wicked man, near the dwelling of the righteous; do not destroy his resting place. ¹⁶For though a righteous man may fall seven times, he still gets up; but the wicked stumble in bad times.

SAYING 28

¹⁷Do not gloat when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart rejoice when he stumbles, ¹⁸or the LORD will see and disapprove, and turn His wrath away from him.

SAYING 29

¹⁹Do not fret over evildoers, and do not be envious of the wicked. ²⁰For the evil man has no future; the lamp of the wicked will be extinguished.

SAYING 30

²¹My son, fear the LORD and the king, and do not associate with the rebellious. ²²For they will bring sudden destruction. Who knows what ruin they can bring?

FURTHER SAYINGS OF THE WISE

²³These also are sayings of the wise: To show partiality in judgment is not good. ²⁴Whoever tells the guilty, “You are innocent”—peoples will curse him, and nations will denounce him; ²⁵but it will go well with those who convict the guilty, and rich blessing will come upon them. ²⁶An honest answer given is like a kiss on the lips. ²⁷Complete your outdoor work and prepare your field; after that, you may build your house. ²⁸Do not testify against your neighbor without cause, and do not deceive with your lips. ²⁹Do not say, “I will do to him as he has done to me; I will repay the man according to his work.” ³⁰I went past the field of a slacker and by the vineyard of a man lacking judgment. ³¹Thorns had grown up everywhere, thistles had covered the ground, and the stone wall was broken down. ³²I observed and took it to heart; I looked and received instruction: ³³A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, ³⁴and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and need like a bandit.

Chapter 25

MORE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON

¹These are additional proverbs of Solomon, which were copied by the men of Hezekiah king of Judah: ²It is the glory of God to conceal a matter and the glory of kings to search it out. ³As the heavens are high and the earth is deep, so the hearts of kings cannot be searched. ⁴Remove the dross from the silver, and a vessel for a silversmith will come forth. ⁵Remove the wicked from the king's presence, and his throne will be established in righteousness. ⁶Do not exalt yourself in the presence of the king, and do not stand in the place of great men; ⁷for it is better to be told, "Come up here!" than to be demoted in the presence of the prince. Even what you have seen with your own eyes, ⁸do not bring hastily to court. Otherwise, what will you do in the end when your neighbor puts you to shame? ⁹Argue your case with your neighbor without betraying another's confidence, ¹⁰lest he who hears you bring shame upon you, and your infamy never go away. ¹¹A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver. ¹²Like an earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold is a wise man's rebuke to a listening ear. ¹³Like the cold of snow in the time of harvest is a trustworthy messenger to those who send him; he refreshes the soul of his masters. ¹⁴Like clouds and wind without rain is the man who boasts of gifts never given. ¹⁵Through patience a ruler can be persuaded, and a gentle tongue can break a bone. ¹⁶If you find honey, eat just what you need, lest you have too much and vomit it up. ¹⁷Seldom set foot in your neighbor's house, lest he grow weary and hate you. ¹⁸Like a club or sword or sharp arrow is a man who bears false witness against his neighbor. ¹⁹Like a broken tooth or a foot out of joint is confidence in a faithless man in time of trouble. ²⁰Like one who removes a garment on a cold day or vinegar poured on a wound is one who sings songs to a heavy heart. ²¹If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat, and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. ²²For in so doing, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the LORD will reward you. ²³As the north wind brings forth rain, so a backbiting tongue brings angry looks. ²⁴Better to live on a corner of the roof than to share a house with a quarrelsome wife. ²⁵Like cold water to a weary soul is good news from a distant land. ²⁶Like a muddied spring or a polluted well is a righteous man who gives way to the wicked. ²⁷It is not good to eat too much honey or to search out one's own glory. ²⁸Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who does not control his temper.

Chapter 26

SIMILITUDES AND INSTRUCTIONS

¹Like snow in summer and rain at harvest, honor does not befit a fool. ²Like a fluttering sparrow or darting swallow, an undeserved curse does not come to rest. ³A whip for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, and a rod for the backs of fools! ⁴Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you yourself will be like him. ⁵Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he become wise in his own eyes. ⁶Like cutting off one's own feet or drinking violence is the sending of a message by the hand of a fool. ⁷Like lame legs hanging limp is a proverb in the mouth of a fool. ⁸Like binding a stone into a sling is the giving of honor to a fool. ⁹Like a thorn that goes into the hand of a drunkard is a proverb in the mouth of a fool. ¹⁰Like an archer who wounds at random is he who hires a fool or passerby. ¹¹As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly. ¹²Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him. ¹³The slacker says, "A lion is in the road! A fierce lion roams the public square!" ¹⁴As a door turns on its hinges, so the slacker turns on his bed. ¹⁵The slacker buries his hand in the dish; it wearies him to bring it back to his mouth. ¹⁶The slacker is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who answer discreetly. ¹⁷Like one who grabs a dog by the ears is a passerby who meddles in a quarrel not his own. ¹⁸Like a madman shooting firebrands and deadly arrows, ¹⁹so is the man who deceives his neighbor and says, "I was only joking!" ²⁰Without wood, a fire goes out; without gossip, a conflict ceases. ²¹Like charcoal for embers and wood for fire, so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife. ²²The words of a gossip are like choice morsels that go down into the inmost being. ²³Like glaze covering an earthen vessel are burning lips and a wicked heart. ²⁴A hateful man disguises himself with his speech, but he lays up deceit in his heart. ²⁵When he speaks graciously, do not believe him, for seven abominations fill his heart. ²⁶Though his hatred is concealed by deception, his wickedness will be exposed in the assembly. ²⁷He who digs a pit will fall into it, and he who rolls a stone will have it roll back on him. ²⁸A lying tongue hates those it crushes, and a flattering mouth causes ruin.

Chapter 27

DO NOT BOAST ABOUT TOMORROW

¹Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring. ²Let another praise you, and not your own mouth—a stranger, and not your own lips. ³A stone is heavy and sand is a burden, but aggravation from a fool

outweighs them both. ⁴Wrath is cruel and anger is like a flood, but who can withstand jealousy? ⁵Better an open rebuke than love that is concealed. ⁶The wounds of a friend are faithful, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful. ⁷The soul that is full loathes honey, but to a hungry soul, any bitter thing is sweet. ⁸Like a bird that strays from its nest is a man who wanders from his home. ⁹Oil and incense bring joy to the heart, and the counsel of a friend is sweetness to the soul. ¹⁰Do not forsake your friend or your father's friend, and do not go to your brother's house in the day of your calamity; better a neighbor nearby than a brother far away. ¹¹Be wise, my son, and bring joy to my heart, so that I can answer him who taunts me. ¹²The prudent see danger and take cover, but the simple keep going and pay the penalty. ¹³Take the garment of him who posts security for a stranger; get collateral if it is for a foreigner. ¹⁴If one blesses his neighbor with a loud voice early in the morning, it will be counted to him as a curse. ¹⁵A constant dripping on a rainy day and a contentious woman are alike—¹⁶restraining her is like holding back the wind or grasping oil with one's right hand. ¹⁷As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. ¹⁸Whoever tends a fig tree will eat its fruit, and he who looks after his master will be honored. ¹⁹As water reflects the face, so the heart reflects the true man. ²⁰Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied; so the eyes of man are never satisfied. ²¹A crucible for silver and a furnace for gold, but a man is tested by the praise accorded him. ²²Though you grind a fool like grain with mortar and a pestle, yet his folly will not depart from him. ²³Be sure to know the state of your flocks, and pay close attention to your herds; ²⁴for riches are not forever, nor does a crown endure to every generation. ²⁵When hay is removed and new growth appears and the grass from the hills is gathered, ²⁶the lambs will provide you with clothing, and the goats with the price of a field. ²⁷You will have plenty of goats' milk to feed you—food for your household and nourishment for your maidservants.

Chapter 28

THE BOLDNESS OF THE RIGHTEOUS

¹The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion. ²A land in rebellion has many rulers, but a man of understanding and knowledge maintains order. ³A destitute leader who oppresses the poor is like a driving rain that leaves no food. ⁴Those who forsake the law praise the wicked, but those who keep the law resist them. ⁵Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the LORD comprehend fully. ⁶Better a poor man who walks with integrity than a rich man whose ways are per-

verse. ⁷A discerning son keeps the law, but a companion of gluttons disgraces his father. ⁸He who increases his wealth by interest and usury lays it up for one who is kind to the poor. ⁹Whoever turns his ear away from hearing the law, even his prayer is detestable. ¹⁰He who leads the upright along the path of evil will fall into his own pit, but the blameless will inherit what is good. ¹¹A rich man is wise in his own eyes, but a poor man with discernment sees through him. ¹²When the righteous triumph, there is great glory, but when the wicked rise, men hide themselves. ¹³He who conceals his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them will find mercy. ¹⁴Blessed is the man who is always reverent, but he who hardens his heart falls into trouble. ¹⁵Like a roaring lion or a charging bear is a wicked ruler over a helpless people. ¹⁶A leader who lacks judgment is also a great oppressor, but he who hates dishonest profit will prolong his days. ¹⁷A man burdened by bloodguilt will flee into the Pit; let no one support him. ¹⁸He who walks with integrity will be kept safe, but whoever is perverse in his ways will suddenly fall. ¹⁹The one who works his land will have plenty of food, but whoever chases fantasies will have his fill of poverty. ²⁰A faithful man will abound with blessings, but one eager to be rich will not go unpunished. ²¹To show partiality is not good, yet a man will do wrong for a piece of bread. ²²A stingy man hastens after wealth and does not know that poverty awaits him. ²³He who rebukes a man will later find more favor than one who flatters with his tongue. ²⁴He who robs his father or mother, saying, "It is not wrong," is a companion to the man who destroys. ²⁵A greedy man stirs up strife, but he who trusts in the LORD will prosper. ²⁶He who trusts in himself is a fool, but one who walks in wisdom will be safe. ²⁷Whoever gives to the poor will not be in need, but he who hides his eyes will receive many curses. ²⁸When the wicked come to power, people hide themselves; but when they perish, the righteous flourish.

Chapter 29

THE FLOURISHING OF THE RIGHTEOUS

¹A man who remains stiff-necked after much reproof will suddenly be shattered beyond recovery. ²When the righteous flourish, the people rejoice, but when the wicked rule, the people groan. ³A man who loves wisdom brings joy to his father, but a companion of prostitutes squanders his wealth. ⁴By justice a king brings stability to the land, but a man who exacts tribute demolishes it. ⁵A man who flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his feet. ⁶An evil man is caught by his own sin, but a righteous one sings and rejoices. ⁷The righteous consider the cause of the poor, but the

wicked have no regard for such concerns. ⁸Mockers inflame a city, but the wise turn away anger. ⁹If a wise man goes to court with a fool, there will be raving and laughing with no resolution. ¹⁰Men of bloodshed hate a blameless man, but the upright care for his life. ¹¹A fool vents all his anger, but a wise man holds it back. ¹²If a ruler listens to lies, all his officials will be wicked. ¹³The poor man and the oppressor have this in common: The LORD gives light to the eyes of both. ¹⁴A king who judges the poor with fairness—his throne will be established forever. ¹⁵A rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother. ¹⁶When the wicked thrive, rebellion increases; but the righteous will see their downfall. ¹⁷Discipline your son, and he will give you rest; he will bring delight to your soul. ¹⁸Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the Law. ¹⁹A servant cannot be corrected by words alone; though he understands, he will not respond. ²⁰Do you see a man who speaks in haste? There is more hope for a fool than for him. ²¹A servant pampered from his youth will bring grief in the end. ²²An angry man stirs up dissension, and a hot-tempered man abounds in transgression. ²³A man's pride will bring him low, but a humble spirit will obtain honor. ²⁴A partner to a thief hates his own soul; he receives the oath but does not testify. ²⁵The fear of man is a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is set securely on high. ²⁶Many seek the ruler's favor, but a man receives justice from the LORD. ²⁷An unjust man is detestable to the righteous, and one whose way is upright is detestable to the wicked.

Chapter 30

THE WORDS OF AGUR

¹These are the words of Agur son of Jakeh—the burden that this man declared to Ithiel: “I am weary, O God, and worn out. ²Surely I am the most ignorant of men, and I lack the understanding of a man. ³I have not learned wisdom, and I have no knowledge of the Holy One. ⁴Who has ascended to heaven and come down? Who has gathered the wind in His hands? Who has bound up the waters in His cloak? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is the name of His Son—surely you know! ⁵Every word of God is flawless; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. ⁶Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you and prove you a liar. ⁷Two things I ask of You—do not refuse me before I die: ⁸Keep falsehood and deceitful words far from me. Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the bread that is my portion. ⁹Otherwise, I may have too much and deny You, saying, ‘Who is the LORD?’ Or I may become poor and steal, profaning the

name of my God. ¹⁰Do not slander a servant to his master, or he will curse you, and you will bear the guilt. ¹¹There is a generation of those who curse their fathers and do not bless their mothers. ¹²There is a generation of those who are pure in their own eyes and yet unwashed of their filth. ¹³There is a generation—how haughty are their eyes and pretentious are their glances— ¹⁴there is a generation whose teeth are swords and whose jaws are knives, devouring the oppressed from the earth and the needy from among men. ¹⁵The leech has two daughters: Give and Give. There are three things that are never satisfied, four that never say, ‘Enough!’: ¹⁶Sheol, the barren womb, land never satisfied with water, and fire that never says, ‘Enough!’ ¹⁷As for the eye that mocks a father and scorns obedience to a mother, may the ravens of the valley pluck it out and young vultures devour it. ¹⁸There are three things too wonderful for me, four that I cannot understand: ¹⁹the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a snake on a rock, the way of a ship at sea, and the way of a man with a maiden. ²⁰This is the way of an adulteress: She eats and wipes her mouth and says, ‘I have done nothing wrong.’ ²¹Under three things the earth trembles, under four it cannot bear up: ²²a servant who becomes king, a fool who is filled with food, ²³an unloved woman who marries, and a maidservant who supplants her mistress. ²⁴Four things on earth are small, yet they are exceedingly wise: ²⁵The ants are creatures of little strength, yet they store up their food in the summer; ²⁶the rock badgers are creatures of little power, yet they make their homes in the rocks; ²⁷the locusts have no king, yet they all advance in formation; ²⁸and the lizard can be caught in one's hands, yet it is found in the palaces of kings. ²⁹There are three things that are stately in their stride, and four that are impressive in their walk: ³⁰a lion, mighty among beasts, refusing to retreat before anything; ³¹a strutting rooster; a he-goat; and a king with his army around him. ³²If you have foolishly exalted yourself or if you have plotted evil, put your hand over your mouth. ³³For as the churning of milk yields butter, and the twisting of the nose draws blood, so the stirring of anger brings forth strife.”

Chapter 31

THE SAYINGS FOR KING LEMUEL

¹These are the words of King Lemuel—the burden that his mother taught him: ²What shall I say, O my son? What, O son of my womb? What, O son of my vows? ³Do not spend your strength on women or your vigor on those who ruin kings. ⁴It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, or for rulers to crave strong drink, ⁵lest they drink and forget what is decreed, depriving all the op-

pressed of justice. ⁶Give strong drink to one who is perishing, and wine to the bitter in soul. ⁷Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more. ⁸Open your mouth for those with no voice, for the cause of all the dispossessed. ⁹Open your mouth, judge righteously, and defend the cause of the poor and needy.

THE VIRTUES OF A NOBLE WOMAN

¹⁰A wife of noble character, who can find? She is far more precious than rubies. ¹¹The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he lacks nothing of value. ¹²She brings him good and not harm all the days of her life. ¹³She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands. ¹⁴She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar. ¹⁵She rises while it is still night to provide food for her household and portions for her maidservants. ¹⁶She appraises a field and buys it; from her earnings she plants a vineyard. ¹⁷She girds herself with strength and shows that her arms are strong. ¹⁸She sees that her gain is good, and her lamp is not extinguished

at night. ¹⁹She stretches out her hands to the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers. ²⁰She opens her arms to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy. ²¹When it snows, she has no fear for her household, for they are all clothed in scarlet. ²²She makes coverings for her bed; her clothing is fine linen and purple. ²³Her husband is known at the city gates, where he sits among the elders of the land. ²⁴She makes linen garments and sells them; she delivers sashes to the merchants. ²⁵Strength and honor are her clothing, and she can laugh at the days to come. ²⁶She opens her mouth with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue. ²⁷She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. ²⁸Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband praises her as well: ²⁹“Many daughters have done noble things, but you surpass them all!” ³⁰Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. ³¹Give her the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her at the gates.