

*This is a modern and “significant” paraphrase of chapters 1-9 of the book of Proverbs. These 9 chapters serve as an instruction to the book. Solomon collected sayings that would point toward wisdom. Wisdom is a skill. Something we need to practice to get better at. But so few of actually want to grow in this skill. These chapters serve as an instruction to make us WANT to practice wisdom. I have rewritten these nine chapters below in a modern paraphrase for myself to better grasp the heart of the writer. But also with others in mind. My hope is that this will make us want to practice wisdom together. This in no way serves as a substitute for the real thing. So I have also included chapter markers at the beginning of each chapter to help you follow the original text if you choose. It would be wise if you did.*

1 The collected sayings of a wise man. This will help you practice wisdom.

You know what personal growth is right? Wisdom will lead to justice and fairness. Personal development tips and ideas for young people. If you are wise, pay attention. Listen to what people who have gone before you have said!

Recognizing your place as a created thing, standing helpless before the one who made you - that is where wisdom begins.

Look kids, we have tried to teach you. Pay attention! The things we have taught you could make your life better.

If losers try to get you to join them - stay the heck away! Their lives will not turn out well. People who want to steal and manipulate and take the easy way, it won't work. Don't join them! They are destroying themselves. You don't want them to destroy you too.

Wisdom is out there calling loudly, “Why do you still act so foolish!!! Why do some of you enjoy causing pain? If you would just listen to me! I have tried to help, but you refuse. Fine then, I'll laugh when your life inevitably blows up in your face! I will laugh because you hated me when you had a chance to to know me. You wanted to have your cake and eat it too, now you wont get either, dummy!”

2 Kids, for real! If you would just pay attention, if you would even only *try* to find wisdom and do what makes common sense, then I promise you will understand what it is to stand as a creature before the one who made you. This is where life can begin!

Your creator gives wisdom, he maintains justice and goodness and beauty. Don't you want that? To live a life that involves truth, wisdom, beauty, and goodness?

This sort of life will protect you from all sorts of pain. Evil people and others that are headed down a dangerous path. Boys, don't forget about the woman you know you aren't supposed to mess with.

You know who I mean, the temptress. I'm talking about the type who wants to seduce you. Most of us know her from the internet. Everything about her is destructive. No one who turns toward her ever come back. She destroys lives. There are two paths available to all of us. You can live well or you can face destruction.

3. Kids, please don't forget this stuff. Pay attention, I swear it makes a difference in how you live your life!

Two things you need to understand, God is always chasing us, and he is faithful to those he loves. Now, you also love well and be a faithful person! This is help you before both God and man!

Trust God more than yourself. Look to him in all you do. Seriously, yes - all you do! I'm telling you, this is the smart thing. The more you think you know better the further you are from being happy.

Honor God with your money and all your stuff and you will have more of it.

Sometimes you will feel pain when you blow it. This may be God bringing you home where you belong. Be thankful when that happens.

The one who finds wisdom, he is so much better off than the rich guy. She has everything you need. I'm telling you, the path of wisdom is peace, joy, and life!

Wisdom is in the pillars of the earth. The arched sky points to the beauty of wisdom.

Kids, please, please don't give up on this. Wisdom will give you life, hope and peace! Then you can live a life of relative security.

When you go to bed you will rest well. You don't have to worry all the time about your mess catching up with you.

When you can do good to others - don't you dare withhold it.

Certainly never do harm to someone else on purpose.

Don't argue with people who haven't hurt you.

Don't look at people who have a lot and wish you were them. Sometimes this is ill gotten gain and don't worry, it will come back to bite them!

It doesn't matter how big his house, the wicked have a curse on it. And the wise and kind, well, God blesses that house no matter how small. Which one do you want to live in?

4 Please kids, listen to me! Pay attention to things I am saying. I am trying so hard to help you! The things I am saying will help.

When I was your age. Others taught me this same stuff. They urged me too, saying these exact things.

Now you listen, live the way I am saying. You have the tools you need. Don't go down the path of wicked and fools. They are the ruin of the earth. Their choices turn my stomach and frankly will eventually ruin them. The other path - the path that wisdom will lead you on, well that's like a well lit freeway while the path of the wicked is more like a dark back alley filled with garbage.

My words will help you to find the best path.

Oh, and your heart - watch out what and who you love.

Don't speak evil words.

Keep your eyes, your heart, and your thoughts focused on what really matters, stay on this ancient path. You will be ok.

5 Seriously kids, pay attention to this stuff. That way you will be able to be discerning and wise.

You remember that woman we were talking about? Usually from the internet? Look, she seems so great at first, but she is filled with poison. She is headed straight to destruction and she will take you with her.

Boys, listen up.

You stay far far away from her. Otherwise you will be giving yourself up to be robbed and destroyed. Your very soul will be sucked out of you. When you are laying on your deathbed an old man you will say, "I was a fool. I am ruined, my life is completely wasted. And all because I didn't listen to good sense when I had the chance."

Nope, instead you stay close to home. Keep your life simple. Why have women scattered everywhere when you can enjoy that one woman who is perfect for you? Her body is enough to give you plenty of pleasure all the days of your life. Wrap yourself up in her and enjoy, why enjoy a strange woman or someone who only wants to destroy you?

God knows all, God sees all, but it's your own choices that will wreck you.

6 Listen kids, if you have given your word to someone and you find yourself stuck, do this. Go straight to them and plead with them right away. Don't pass go, don't collect 200 dollars go as quick as you can to save yourself.

Notice the ant, he works hard to gather his food in the summer when there is time.

Don't be lazy, this will destroy you and lead you to poverty.

Some people are always being manipulative. Always trying to find an angle. That won't turn out well for them in the end. I know from experience, It will destroy them.

Here's what the God who loves justice hates: arrogance, lies, murder, manipulation, quickly choosing evil, people who lie about others, and people who try to create divisions.

Kids, listen to your elders. Love the things we have tried to teach you. These things will keep you safe. This stuff is the path to the good life. And to keep you from that wicked woman.

(I find myself talking about her a lot, perhaps it's because I know so well)

Don't let her catch you. She may not cost much, but a good wife will provide you with so much more.

Can you put a candle in your pocket and not be burned? Can you walk on hot coals and not burn your feet? That's the way it is if you try to cheat on marriage. You won't get away with it.

You may not despise a thief who steals because he is hungry, but he will still pay for it. The one who cheats on a marriage has no common sense at all and he destroys himself.

It leads to pain and shame that may not go away. And a wounded husband will never stop coming after you.

7 Kids, if you listen to what I am saying, you can live a good life. Do whatever you can to remember what I am saying to you. Love wisdom, make her a close friend. She will keep you from that seductress.

You know what I have seen? I have seen a fool going about his way and hangin out close to that woman. Flirting with disaster. She finds him and boy is she something. Sure she looks hot, but she is dangerous. She waits everywhere. She's in the Snapchat discover section, she will add you on facebook, she will follow you on instagram.

She grabs that fool who has been flirting around her door and she says "I have run all my errands, I have time for you now. My place is warm and cozy, I will make you feel like a man. Let's enjoy one another. There will be no consequences."

She persuades the fool and he goes with her like a cow heading toward the butcher block, like a fish biting a hook. He doesn't realize it will cost him everything.

Boys listen up. Don't do it. Don't fall for this nonsense. She has destroyed so many men. There are mass graves in her back yard. This is the way to death.

8 On the other hand, there is wisdom. She calls too. The seductress hides in the shadows and calls, but wisdom is everywhere. She cries aloud on the street. Her call is louder.

She says, "I am calling to everyone, fools come and find me, I will teach you what is right. I will tell you the truth. Everything I say is good and true. If you listen you will find the way of life. What I am saying to you is better than wealth. Whatever you think you want can't compare to what I am offering you.

"I live with common sense and goodness. To know your place as a creature living in the world of your creator is to hate evil. To hate lies. I have good direction and helpful advice.

"Leaders of the world use me to protect their rule. And justice in the world is because of me.

"I love those who love me and I treat them right.

"The creator birthed me early on, I have always been here, I am the oldest of the ancient things. I was here when the galaxies began spinning.

"There is light from distant star that you have never seen, but before those stars began to burn I was here waiting for you. I was here when the first mountains burst forth from the earth. When lava flows were shaping islands you want to vacation on, I was waiting. When the continents split apart and began drifting away from each other, I was waiting for you. I am ancient, I am true, I am good and I am beautiful.

"Now listen to me. If you walk with me, you will live a good life. If you find me you will find everything you need. You will find that all goes well with you.

But if you don't find me, you are only hurting yourself. If you hate me, you obviously want to die."

9 Wisdom has set up a feast. Everything is spread out before you like a banquet. She has sent messengers to call and invite all of us to the table.

They say, come and enjoy the plenty that wisdom offers. Eat and drink and live well!"

Don't even try to correct the scoffer, or the wicked. But the wise will love you for it.

Give wisdom to the wise and they will get wiser.

It all starts with recognizing your position as a creature living in the creator's world.

This will give you life. If you are wise you will listen and learn. If you want to scoff at this, you are only hurting yourself.

Folly is the opposite of wisdom. She is loud but seductive. The thing is, she knows absolutely nothing. She also calls out to people who are minding their own business.

She says "hey fools, come on in!" To the people with no common sense she says, "you can have the easy way, it's better!" But they don't realize that she has a mass grave in her back yard.

*This is the call to begin to practice the skill of wisdom. Will you take it? You can begin by reading the book of Proverbs.*