

PROVERBS IN TENSION

Folk wisdom has produced many sayings that give advice on how to live. However, sometimes one saying may say the exact opposite of another. Read through the following list of proverbs and check off the one in each set that you are more likely to live by.



- 1a. Look before you leap.
- 1b. He who hesitates is lost.
- 2a. Absence makes the heart grow fonder.
- 2b. Out of sight, out of mind.
- 3a. You're never too old to learn.
- 3b. You can't teach an old dog new tricks.
- 4a. A word to the wise is sufficient.
- 4b. Talk is cheap.
- 5a. It's better to be safe than sorry.
- 5b. Nothing ventured, nothing gained.
- 6a. Many hands make light work.
- 6b. Too many cooks spoil the broth.

Turn to a friend and tell of a time when you followed one of these proverbs. Explain why it did or didn't work out. Discuss how both the "a" and "b" of one of these sets can be true according to the context of an application.

FEARFUL MIXTURE

Proverbs 1:7 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." But what exactly is the fear of the Lord? According to Thomas Watson (1620–1686) in his book *The Great Gain of Godliness*, it is a "divine fear, which is the reverencing and adoring of God's holiness." But the idea of divine fear by itself does not fully express the concept. Read the Scriptures below and fill in the blanks with other qualities that must be mixed in with this fear.

1. Mix fear of the Lord with for the Lord according to Psalm 145:19, 20.

2. Mix fear of the Lord with having in the Lord according to Hebrews 11:7.

3. Mix fear of the Lord with showing in His love (or mercy) according to Psalm 33:18.

How does fear of the Lord plus each quality above cause you to obey Him? Jot your ideas under each of the three statements.

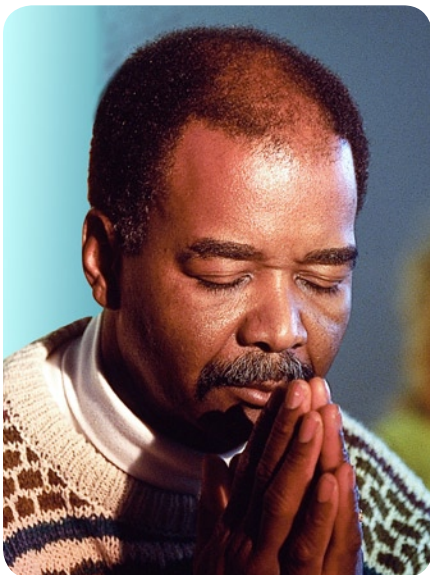
HOW TO STAY HEALTHY

Today's text from Proverbs 4:10-15, 20-27 contains specific commands for various parts of the body. On the body to the right, draw each part that is referred to. Then in the margins next to the appropriate body part, write instructions for how to live right and stay healthy.



PRAYER FOR HELP

Use paraphrases from at least three verses in today's text to complete the following phrases of a prayer for God's help in living a godly life.



Loving Heavenly Father,
Please help me to _____

so that I can avoid _____

and I can stay on the right path by _____
_____.

In Jesus' name, amen.

WORD SEARCH: RIGHTEOUS VS. WICKED

Today's text from Proverbs 15:21-33 is full of contrasts between the righteous and the wicked. It also shows God's response to both. In the word search below, find 5 each of the qualities of the righteous (horizontal), the traits of the wicked (vertical), God's response to the righteous (diagonal forward), and His response to the wicked (diagonal backward). Thus you will have 20 answers total.

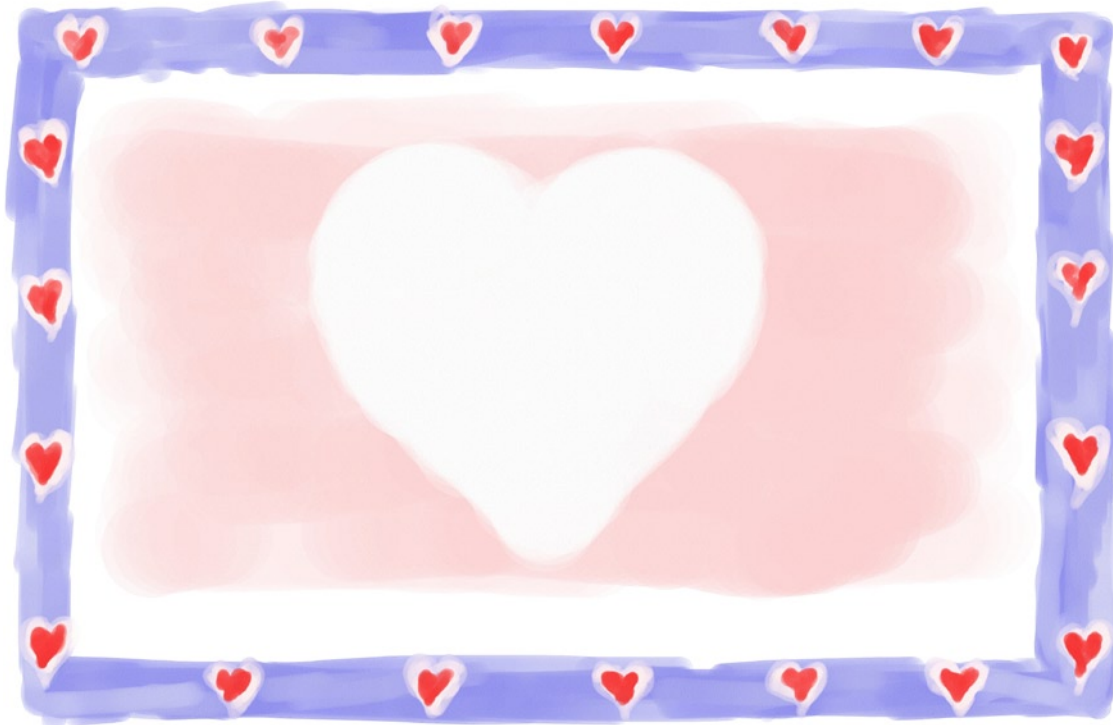
G E L B M U H C E D S F U L D
 O R W I S G O J O H A S K O E
 O S E V F R P W P R H G W I R
 L U F R E E H C A T O N B S H
 E T E D B E R W L I W V S D E
 E R U P E D A A F A R E E W A
 S H U M J Y E D R G C T D O D
 I S B L C H O D T C E D Y N S
 F I W I I V R R U S J U P U T
 E L Y V F A P S T E G O L H R
 A O E E W I F E D S R R Y M O
 T O H P Y O D W I S E P T E N
 H F U N D E R S T A N D I N G

THE 20 WORDS

CHEERFUL	DESTROYED
DETESTED	DOWNWARD
EVIL	FAILURE
FARAWAY	FOOLISH
GREEDY	HEADSTRONG
HEALTH	HUMBLE
JOY	LIFE
PROUD	PURE
SUCCESS	UNDERSTANDING
UPWARD	WISE

TAKING ADVICE TO HEART

Was there a verse in today's text that really spoke to you? Write it in the heart below. Then either alone or with a partner, work on memorizing it during the coming week.



— Student Reproducible Page for Lesson 3, "Teaching Values" (Proverbs 15:21-33, KJV) —

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WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?

Rewrite the following bad advice from “Dear Hal” so that it reflects the principles in today’s text. Write in the number of the verse(s) you used for your answer.

“Dear Hal: My best friend is really mad at me. She told me in confidence that she’s addicted to painkillers and asked me to pray for her to overcome it. All I did was tell one other person about it and ask her to pray too, but my friend found out about it and says I betrayed her trust. I was just trying to help. What should I do?”

—Friendless Francine

“Dear Francine: Why do you want to be friends with a loser like that anyway? You’re better off without her.” —Hal

“Dear Hal: I’m thinking about joining the club where the president of my company plays golf. That way I can get to know him personally and be on a first-name basis with him. That should really help my career. But my wife says we can’t afford it, and that that’s not the way to advance in the company. Who’s right?”

—Ambitious Adam

“Dear Adam: Sometimes you have to take a risk and spend some money. To play in the big leagues, it pays to be a bit pushy.” —Hal



“Dear Hal: As supervisor of the sales department, I’ve been told to lay off one of my four employees. My best salesperson is a real go-getter who outsells everyone else. However, I know she pads her expense accounts and sometimes lies to make a sale. My least productive salesperson is a very hard worker, whose great customer service and integrity are slowly building a client base. What should I do?”

—Wondering Juan

“Dear Juan: Keep the go-getter; get rid of the other one. Why keep someone who will make you look bad if sales drop off?” —Hal

“Dear Hal: I have seen an elder from the church visiting in the home of a young widow with two sons. He plays ball with the boys and takes them on outings, but I’m suspicious that he has something else up his sleeve. I’m wondering about telling his wife what I think. Should I?”

—Curious Kate

“Dear Kate: You know what they say: ‘Where’s there’s smoke, there’s fire.’ I’d talk to his wife. If there’s something going on, she deserves to know about it.” —Hal

JESUS THE LIVING PROVERB

Look at the New Testament passages below and select a proverb from Proverbs 29:16-27 (below the photo) that best serves as background.

- ___ *“He saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace” (Mark 3:4).*
- ___ *“He sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all. And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me” (Mark 9:35-37).*
- ___ *“He said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven” (Luke 10:18).*
- ___ *“I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him” (Luke 12:4, 5).*



- A. *“When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increaseth: but the righteous shall see their fall” (Proverbs 29:16).*
- B. *“A servant will not be corrected by words: for though he understand he will not answer” (Proverbs 29:19).*
- C. *“A man’s pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit” (Proverbs 29:23).*
- D. *“The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe” (Proverbs 29:25).*

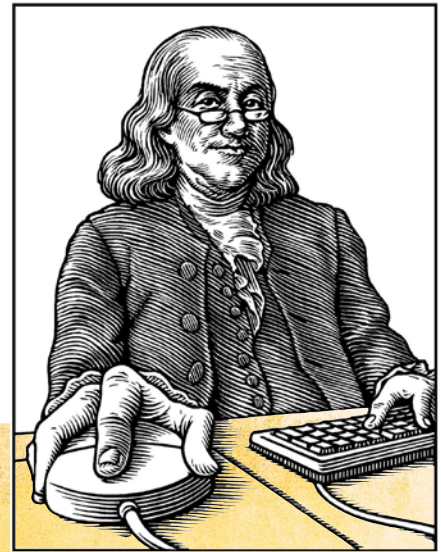
== Student Reproducible Page for Lesson 5, “Living an Ordered Life” (Proverbs 29:16-27, KJV) ==

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WISE OR WRONG?

Poor Richard's Almanack by Benjamin Franklin was a best-selling publication in the American colonies from 1732 to 1758. It was sprinkled with homespun proverbs that have become so famous that some people have mistakenly assumed they are biblical quotations.

Think about each of the following quotations, circling the word *wise* if you believe it expresses a biblical principle and *wrong* if you believe the idea is not biblical. Can you think of any Scripture that supports your answer?



Wise / Wrong: 1. Well done is better than well said.

Wise / Wrong: 2. A good example is the best sermon.

Wise / Wrong: 3. God helps them that help themselves.

Wise / Wrong: 4. An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.

Wise / Wrong: 5. In this world nothing is certain but death and taxes.

Wise / Wrong: 6. Search others for their virtues, thyself for thy vices.

Wise / Wrong: 7. He that lieth down with dogs shall rise up with fleas.

MY LEGACY

If you could leave behind just one wise statement that your descendants will remember and pass on, what would that be? Write it in the box provided. How do you think you could make sure your children and grandchildren will remember and value this statement?



THE BUCKET LIST

The Bucket List was a 2007 film about two terminally ill men who go on a road trip to fulfill a wish list of things to do before they “kick the bucket.” What’s on your bucket list? Jot some ideas below.



Honesty check: Does your list deal primarily with pleasures of this world, such as vacations to exotic locations? Or does your list deal primarily with spiritual issues, such as reading through the entire Bible?

Now examine the following “bucket lists” in the Bible: Genesis 27:1-4; 45:28; 49:29-33; 50:24-26; Judges 16:26-31; 1 Samuel 31:4; 1 Kings 2:1-9; Proverbs 30:7-9; 2 Timothy 4. Which do you find useful or edifying in constructing your own bucket list? Why? Jot your ideas below.



WEAK OR STRONG?

The apostle Paul observed that God often chooses to use the weak rather than the strong (1 Corinthians 1:27). As showcases of God’s power, our weaknesses are, in a sense, strengths (2 Corinthians 12:10). Below is a list of some of the signs of aging alluded to in today’s text. Imagine how God might be able to find a way to use each of these things as a strength in someone’s life (in terms of helping him or her develop a spiritual quality, be suitable for a specific ministry, etc.). Jot your ideas.

- Trembling arms and legs
- Stooped posture
- Loss of teeth
- Poor eyesight, hearing
- Fear of going out
- Gray hair

THE SPICE OF LIFE!

Search this puzzle for six spices mentioned in Song of Solomon 4:14, 15. As you do, think about how you can look for what is good and valuable in others this week.

F K Y T J H Z G M C Q L
 B Q E D H P R D W A G K
 S X V I Y N A R C L U F
 O D B J S I K A Y A X T
 M V R E C I N N A M O N
 I W Z B L O H E H U L W
 A X P T R J F K O S C M
 Q E B F I Y L I G P E X
 J S F E R I H P M A C W
 O A D T N V R S I Q L U
 S K R A E M C P X I H Y



SPICES:

cinnamon	spikenard	calamus
saffron	camphire	myrrh



ISN'T SHE LOVELY?

Lavish poetic imagery is used to describe the shepherdess in today's text. Read the text carefully and, based on the description, draw a picture of this woman in the frame. What do you think, is she beautiful or bizarre?

How can we use art and poetic descriptions as aids for Bible study, worship, expressing love and appreciation, etc.? Jot your ideas below.

BLESSED AM I

Disciples who are living now in the kingdom of heaven certainly should sense the rich blessings of that position! Complete one or more of these affirmations of personal blessing.

“Blessed am I when I _____,
for I know that _____!”

“Blessed am I when I _____,
for I know that _____!”

“Blessed am I when I _____,
for I know that _____!”

“Blessed am I when I _____,
for I know that _____!”



BLESSED I WILL BE

The apostle John summarizes our future blessing well in 1 John 3:2. Find that text and copy it here, but change every *we* (plural) to *I* (singular). Cut and post this statement of blessing where you will see it often this week.

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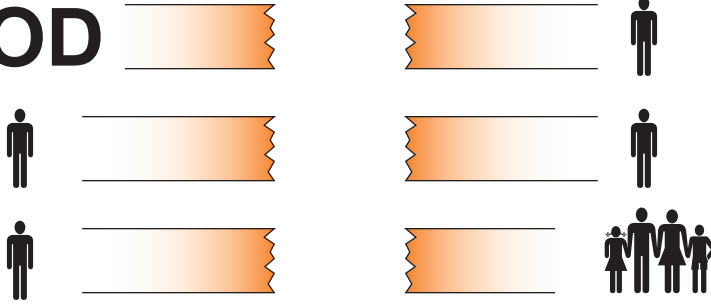
== Student Reproducible Page for Lesson 9, “Seeking True Happiness” (Matthew 5:1-12, KJV) ==

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IF IT'S BROKEN, FIX IT!

Relationships that are broken need to be fixed. This is true of relationships between people and God and relationships between people. The “kingdom person” should want relationships to be fixed. For each of the broken relationships symbolized below, write in “the fix” across the gap—fixes that are based on today’s study in Matthew 5:17-26.

GOD



“WELL, I THOUGHT . . .”

Much of Jesus’ teaching in the sermon recorded in Matthew 5–7 is designed to correct faulty thinking. Over and over Jesus says, “You have heard . . . , but . . . !” Write Jesus’ correction for each of these faulty thoughts.

Well, I thought I could get to Heaven by being good.

Well, I thought going to court was the best solution.

Well, I thought words were just words—you know: “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never harm me.”

Well, I thought Jesus made all the Old Testament null and void.



Well, I thought worship and giving were more important than human relationships.

HAIR PULLS

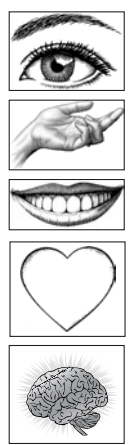
R F
O E
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G R
I I
V B
U E
N T
I E
S O
N S

The picture Jesus paints of His child in today's text is not one of childishness but of mature love and self-control. If you draw zigzag lines from the top letter of each column to the letter opposite and one down each time you will find the two words that are the "either-or" of today's study. The one is a picture of human childishness, the other, of godly maturity. Write the two words in the blanks.



PATTERN OF PERFECTION

Evaluations of ideas and methods are often made using established standards in the various fields of science, manufacturing, cooking, etc. For human thought and behavior, Jesus says that only God has the established standard—the pattern of perfection. Jesus challenges us to be perfect as God is. With that challenge in mind, complete each of the following statements.



- The Father's eyes always look _____, but my eyes often look _____.
 - The Father's hands always reach _____, but my hands often reach _____.
 - The Father's voice always speaks _____, but my voice often speaks _____.
 - The Father's heart always moves with _____, but my heart often moves _____.
 - The Father's mind is always filled with _____, but my mind is often filled with _____.
- Of the five areas above, I most need to do better with my _____, and to make improvements I plan to _____.

BAD DOCTRINE AND BAD PRAYER

Bad doctrine makes for bad prayers! Which verses of today's text make the ideas below faulty?

- A. "If I pray often and loud, God will be impressed."
- B. "If I pray well in public, God can't help but notice."
- C. "The more I pray about a matter, the better the results will be."
- D. "Prayer is more about seeking God's blessing than it is about seeking God's will."
- E. "I like to get to the point quickly, so I jump right into my requests."



A PRAYER CHART FOR TODAY

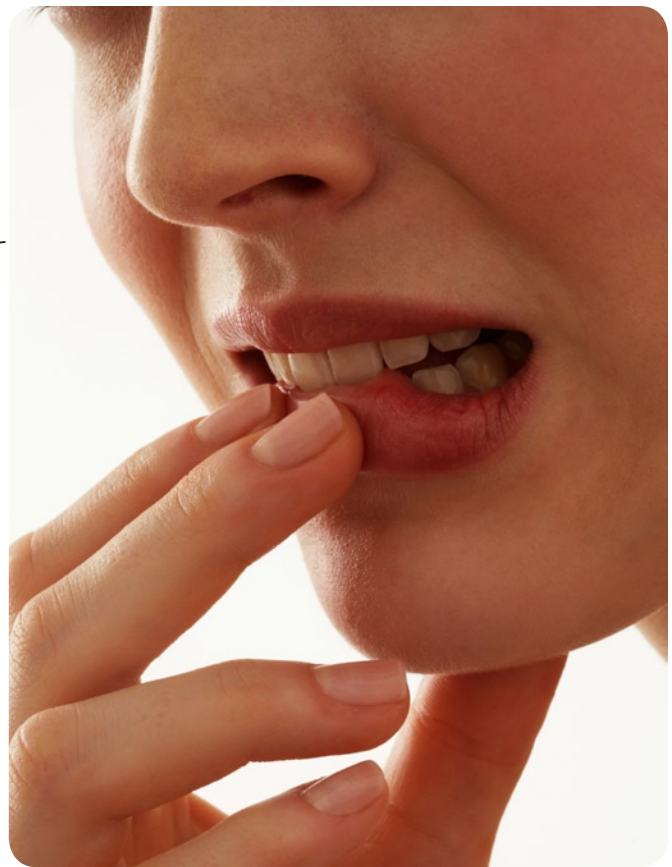
Jesus' model for a prayer and His other comments emphasize *today*, the things necessary for *today*. Ponder the elements listed below from the verses noted, and write in matters you need to include in your prayers today, every day!

Jesus' Sample	Prayer Element	My Thoughts
Matthew 6:9b	Worship	_____
Matthew 6:10	Kingdom Concern	_____
Matthew 6:11	Physical Well-being	_____
Matthew 6:12, 14, 15	Forgiveness	_____
Matthew 6:13	Spiritual Warfare	_____

WHY WORRY?

Worry comes when one loses confidence in God's goodness and grace. If you "eliminate worry" in the letter square to the right, you will have a simple condensation of today's text in Matthew 6:25-34. Cross out the letters *W-O-R-R-Y* in **that sequence** as you proceed through the square, left to right, top to bottom.

W S O R E R Y W E
 K O R H R Y I S W
 O R K R I Y W N O
 G R D R Y O W O M
 R F R I Y W O R R
 R S Y W T H O E R
 W R Y I W O L L R
 P R R Y W O O R V
 R I Y W D O R E R



The remaining letters reveal an important truth; write the truth here:

_____ ;
 _____ !

Do you believe that?
 Will you live as if you do?

FOOLISHNESS OF WORRY

Jesus discourages worry because it is fruitless and foolish. *Who can change the future by worrying?* is His challenge in Matthew 6:27. How many of the things below have you caught yourself worrying about recently? Put check marks where applicable.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> the state of the economy | <input type="checkbox"/> safety in travel | <input type="checkbox"/> your retirement savings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> the health of a loved one | <input type="checkbox"/> personal health | <input type="checkbox"/> unemployment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> shifting political winds | <input type="checkbox"/> the weather | <input type="checkbox"/> the state of your church |
| <input type="checkbox"/> neighborhood crime | <input type="checkbox"/> growing old | <input type="checkbox"/> car problems |

Now go back and put a second check mark by each one that your anxiety and fretting altered or kept from happening. Do you feel a little foolish?

Lesson 1 Fearful Mixture

1. love; 2. faith; 3. hope.

Lesson 3 Word Search



Lesson 4 What Would You Say?

Friendless Francine → Proverbs 25:9, 10
 Ambitious Adam → Proverbs 25:6, 7a
 Wondering Juan → Proverbs 25:4, 5
 Curious Kate → Proverbs 25:7b, 8

Lesson 5 Jesus the Living Proverb

Luke 10:18 → Proverbs 29:16
 Luke 12:4-5 → Proverbs 29:25
 Mark 3:4 → Proverbs 29:19
 Mark 9:35-37 → Proverbs 29:23

Lesson 6 Wise or Wrong?

Suggested answers:
 1. Wise (Matthew 21:28-32; James 2:18)
 2. Wise (1 Peter 2:12; 3:1, 2)
 3. Wrong (Romans 5:8; Ephesians 2:8-10)
 4. Wrong (1 Corinthians 8:1)
 5. Wrong (1 Corinthians 15:51)
 6. Wise (Matthew 7:1-5; Philippians 2:3)
 7. Wise (1 Corinthians 15:33)

Lesson 8 The Spice of Life



Lesson 11 Hair Pulls

The two words are *retribution* and *forgiveness*.

Lesson 12 Bad Doctrine and Bad Prayer

Scriptures to consider:

- A-Matthew 6:7
- B-Matthew 6:5, 6
- C-Matthew 6:7
- D-Matthew 6:10
- E-Matthew 6:9

Lesson 13 Why Worry?

Message is *Seek His kingdom first; He will provide.*