

Praying the Proverbs

A resource for believers who long to assimilate and live by God's wisdom

By Sharon Stults

During my journey as a God-follower, of all the sermons and teachings I've embraced or sometimes endured, very few of them used Proverbs as a main text. Before studying it myself, the overall impression I had of the book was that it contained lots of scolding for fools and solid advice for the wise. No stories. No history. Only small nuggets of doctrine and theology.

Frankly, I underrated the book for most of my life until I discovered it is a treasure chest of jewels. Every day we make thousands of micro and macro decisions that direct or change our path and the paths of those around us. What Biblical principles do we use to make all those choices? The Ten Commandments, Paul's teachings and the Golden Rule come to most of our minds. I wonder how many of us consider the wisdom of King Solomon, though? I know I rarely did because I wasn't familiar with it.

The book of Proverbs is advice from a father to a son on how to live as a respectful, decent human, in service to God and others. Wisdom from God's lips to Solomon's ears. How to have successful relationships of all kinds. How to prioritize your life and manage your money and so much more.

An occasional reading of a few verses in Proverbs will not grow the seeds of wisdom God placed in this book, inside of us. Studying it, like any other book of the Bible, using commentaries and study books will help a great deal. Praying through it regularly will help more. To that end, I'll share two ways to do that which I use myself and I've also gathered two ideas of others, all of which I give to you here. As King Solomon said in the eighth verse of chapter nineteen, "The one who gets wisdom, loves life." You want to love your life more? Get wisdom.

Praying Proverbs Topically

In 2020 I categorized every verse in Proverbs for myself. I created the categories based on reoccurring ideas that hit me beyond just the fundamental wisdom versus foolishness theme. There are several [online concordance resources](#) that do this for you, or you might want to do this for yourself as I did. Once you've landed on a concordance, pick a word like wife, husband or marriage for example and then scroll down the list of verses until you see the ones in Proverbs. Concordance lists are arranged in the same order that is

used for the books of the Bible. Sometimes you might need to try some synonyms or different words to find what you are looking for.

Another way you can find verses in Proverbs on a particular theme is to get your hands on a Bible with a Strong's Concordance in the back. Strong organizes verses two ways. The first is as I mentioned in the paragraph above by simply looking up a specific word. Strong will tell you every verse that contains that word in a particular translation, usually the KJV, NIV, NASB or ESV. The other way Strong categorizes verses is by topic. You can hunt alphabetically for a topic like honesty, and Strong will give you verses that may not have that exact word in them but pertain to the topic.

Whatever challenges you are facing right now, whether it concerns home and family, your work, your health, or something else, try searching under key words in a concordance to bring up some Proverbs verses on that topic. Then read the verses in different translations to add color and depth of meaning. You may need to try different words. For example, instead of looking up the word "marriage," try husband or wife. Here's some of the verses I found about marriage. If you are struggling with yours, or even if you're not, these would be good to pray either for your wife or for yourself. Lots of wry wisdom here from a man that had way too many wives.

14:1 The wisest of women builds her house, but folly with her own hands tears it down.

15:17 Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than fattened ox and hatred with it.

17:1 Better is a dry morsel with quiet than a house full of feasting with strife.

18:22 He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord

Let me demonstrate what I mean using Proverbs 14:1. If I were to pray this verse, it might sound something like this.

"Lord, I want to build my home and marriage, not tear it down. Show me ways I can strengthen our family relationships and my relationship with Ken. Show me any places where I might be foolish and uninformed and unintentionally or intentionally tearing my home and marriage down instead of building it up." If God brought something to my mind, I'd repent of it and renounce it right then and there. For example, I used to complain about the things I didn't like in my house but did not have the money to change. That's foolishness because all I was doing was bringing negative energy into the house and creating a bitter discontented spirit.

Get the idea of how to do this? This can be a powerful way to infuse the wisdom of Proverbs into your thinking, speech, and behavior.

Praying Proverbs Chronologically

This is in my previous blog post but will repost it here so you can keep all the ideas together in one document.

Each day I read one chapter of Proverbs, but I seldom complete the chapter. I read until a verse jumps out at me. That becomes my wisdom for that day. I'll often rework it into language that makes sense and is memorable to me. I try to memorize the original verse in one translation only and write it down in my journal. I still remember quite a few of them that stuck with me, like this favorite.

“Whoever meddles in a quarrel not his own is like one who takes a passing dog by the ears.” Proverbs 26:17.

My paraphrase, “Not my circus, not my monkeys.”

Personalizing the Proverbs

This is a great idea from the website [“Enjoying the Journey”](#) where he challenges the reader to take proverbs verse by verse and personalize them. I tried this today. Here's how it came out.

“The violence of the wicked will sweep them away, because they refuse to do what is just,” Proverbs 21:7.

My prayer: “God, I know that except for your grace, I could have been born into a wicked family where sin was the norm. I could be in danger of being swept away by my own sin right now had you not surrounded my life with so many godly people. God keep me from being unjust and unfair in the decisions I make that affect others.”

Seems like a neat idea to me. My only concern with this article is that he speaks of claiming all the promises in Proverbs. Remember, Proverbs are not promises. They are not designed to be. They are life principles which generally hold to be true. Please don't set yourself up for disappointment with God because you think he's not keeping a promise to you.

Proverbs Prayers

If you can spend a little money, I found this neat book [“Proverbs Prayers”](#) by John Mason. This brother created prayers based on specific chapters of Proverbs. Looking at the sample pages, I think the prayer in Chapter One is beautiful and right on point. I’ve never seen anything like this, where someone took the time to articulate all the themes in a Proverbs chapter and convert them to prayer. That’s no easy matter because chapters often change their subject every one or two verses.

Pray the Proverbs over your life and the lives of those you love. We might all be amazed at how that one thing could change so much.