

The Book of Proverbs

30

Morning Devotions

Select a passage in God's Word. Talk with the Lord as you read the passage, then go back and find one or two verses which the Lord has impressed on your heart and meditate on them.

Morning Study

This morning we complete our study of the book of **Proverbs**, this time reading **chapters 16-31**, but before we do, let's take a quick overview of the book.

The first part of **Proverbs** – **chapters 1-9** – has literary characteristics quite distinct from the rest of **Proverbs**. The first nine chapters of the book are really a series of discourses given by a father to his sons. In these discourses, the way of folly is contrasted with the way of wisdom, and is even personified in two women – Lady Folly and Lady Wisdom. In the remaining chapters, however, wisdom is laid out in the form of discrete couplets – pithy sayings laid out in a parallel structure, each of which captures one particular truth or contrasts one truth with another. At first glance, there does not appear to be any discernible arrangement, but closer inspection reveals many patterns, some of which are not obvious in English. For example, **31:10-31** is, like **Psalms 119**, an acrostic poem, where each verse begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

The last section of **Proverbs** – a tribute to the diligent wife and mother – is a more practical echo of **Proverbs'** earlier personification of wisdom as a woman. He see not just Wisdom personified, but an actual wise woman, for she “speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue” (**31:26**). We see that, like Wisdom, she too “is worth far more than rubies” (**31:10; 3:15; 8:11**).

The last chapter of **Proverbs** also contains other motifs common to the rest of the book. In **31:30**, we read the author's closing statement:

“Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman *who fears the Lord* is to be praised.”

This theme of the fear of the Lord runs right through the book of **Proverbs** (see **1:7,29; 2:5; 3:7; 8:13; 9:10; 10:27; 14:2,16,26-27; 15:16,33; 16:6; 19:23; 22:4; 23:17; 28:14**). So with this theme in mind, let's pull up a comfortable chair and finish reading the book of **Proverbs** – **chapters 16-31**.

Memory Verse

Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Romans 12:11-12

Here are a few suggestions that may help you to memorize your memory verse:

- ➡ Ask the Lord to help you remember his Word (see [John 14:26](#)).
- ➡ Use the version of the Bible you are most familiar with. What you normally read in your Bible is what you need to be memorizing.
- ➡ Don't just memorize the contents of the verse; memorize its "address" (the verse reference) as well. You can do this by following this pattern: Step 1: **reference**; Step 2: **verse content**; Step 3: **reference**. Then repeat steps 1-3. Note that you are quoting the reference twice as many times as you quote the actual verse content. This gives the verse a clear "reference tag."
- ➡ After you have read your memory verse out aloud several times, try going through your memory verse *without* reading your computer screen.
- ➡ Look up your memory verse in your Bible. Look at its immediate context and read the verses that come before and after your memory verse.
- ➡ Print out your memory verse or jot it down on a piece of paper. Take this paper with you when you go to work or do other daily activities. Meditate on the meaning of the verse throughout the day.
- ➡ During your noon appointment with the Lord, take out your memory verse and go over it again. Talk to the Lord about what this verse means to you personally.
- ➡ In the evening (at either your evening study or your evening devotions), see if you can quote your memory verse from memory. Then, without looking at the memory verse itself, see if you can find it in your Bible.
- ➡ The next day, before you begin committing a new verse to memory, rehearse your previous day's memory verse and see if you can remember it (without cheating!).
- ➡ Finally, at the end of the week (possibly on the Sunday), collect all your week's memory verses, rehearse them and see if you can recall them without reading them. Spend a little extra time on any verses you have difficulty recalling.
- ➡ Remember: Don't just memorize a verse. Put it into practice ([James 1:22](#)). It is not being able to quote a verse from memory that counts. It is his Word *abiding* in your heart that counts ([John 15:7](#)). When you actually apply a verse consistently to your daily life, that is when you *truly* know that verse!