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Proverbs

Introduction

1 These words are the wise teachings of Solomon, the son of David. Solomon was the king of Israel.

²These words are written so that people can be wise and know the right things to do. These words will help people understand wise teachings. ³These words will teach people to develop their minds in the right way—people will learn the right way to be honest, fair, and good. ⁴These wise words can teach people who need to learn wisdom. These words can teach young people the things they need to know and how to use that information. ⁵Even wise people should listen to these words. They will learn more and become even wiser. And people who are skilled at solving problems will gain even more understanding. ⁶Then those people will be able to understand wise sayings and stories with hidden meanings. Those people will be able to understand the things wise men say.

⁷The first thing a person must learn is to respect and obey the Lord—that leads to true wisdom. But evil people hate discipline and true wisdom.

Solomon's Advice to His Son

⁸My son,* listen to your father when he corrects you. And don't ignore what your mother teaches you. ⁹The things your parents teach you are like a nice hat or a beautiful necklace that makes a person look even better.

My son The book of Proverbs was probably written to a teenage boy that was becoming a young man. This book teaches him how to be a responsible young man who loves and respects God.

Warning Against Joining with Bad People

¹⁰My son, some people love to do bad things—and those people will try to make you do bad things too. Don't listen to them!

¹¹Those bad people might say, "Come with us! We are going to hide and wait for someone to kill. We will attack some innocent person. ¹²We will kill that person. We will send that person to the place of death. We will destroy that person and send him to the grave. ¹³We will steal all kinds of things worth lots of money. We will fill our houses with these things. ¹⁴So come with us and help us do these things. We will all share everything we get!"

¹⁵My son, don't follow those people. Don't even take the first step along that path. ¹⁶Those bad people race to do bad things. They are in a hurry to kill someone!

¹⁷People spread out nets to catch birds. But it is useless to set the trap while the birds are watching. ¹⁸So those bad people hide themselves and wait to kill someone. But really, they will be destroyed by their own trap! ¹⁹Greedy people are always destroyed by the things they take.

The Good Woman—Wisdom

²⁰Listen! Wisdom* is trying to teach people. She (*Wisdom*) is shouting in the streets and in the market place. ²¹She is calling out on the busy street corners. She is near the city gates trying to get people to listen to her. [Wisdom says:]

Wisdom Solomon uses the picture of Wisdom and Foolishness as being two women. Both women are trying to get the attention of the young man Solomon is writing to. Wisdom is like a good woman calling the young man to be wise and obey God. Foolishness is like a bad woman calling the young man to be foolish and do many kinds of sin.

²²“You are foolish people. How long will you continue doing foolish things? How long will you make fun of wisdom? How long will you continue to hate knowledge? ²³You should have listened to my advice and teaching. I would have told you everything I knew. I would have given you all of my knowledge.

²⁴“But you refused to listen to me. I tried to help. I offered my hand—but you refused to accept my help. ²⁵You turned away and ignored all of my advice. You refused to accept my words. ²⁶So, I will laugh at your trouble. I will enjoy seeing trouble come to you! ²⁷Great trouble will come to you like a bad storm. Problems will hit you like a strong wind. Your troubles and sadness will be a very great burden on you.

²⁸“When all these things happen, you will ask for my help. But I will not help you. You will look for me, but you will not find me. ²⁹I will not help because you never wanted my knowledge. You refused to fear and respect the Lord. ³⁰You people refused to listen to my words of advice. You would not listen to me when I showed you the right way. ³¹You people lived the way you wanted to live. You followed your own advice. So now you must accept the result of your own actions!

³²“Foolish people die because they refuse to follow wisdom. They are happy to continue in their foolish ways, and this will destroy them. ³³But the person who obeys me will live safely. That person will be comfortable. He will not have to be afraid of evil.”

Listen to Wisdom

2 My son, accept these things I say. ²Remember my commands. ²Listen to wisdom, and try your best to understand. ³Cry out for wisdom, and shout for understanding. ⁴Look for wisdom like silver. Look for it like a hidden treasure. ⁵If you do these things, then you will learn to respect the Lord. You will truly learn about God.

⁶The Lord gives wisdom. Knowledge and understanding come from his mouth. ⁷He saves and protects good, honest people. ⁸He protects people who are fair to other people. He guards his holy people.

⁹So the Lord will give you his wisdom. Then you will understand the things that are good and fair and right. ¹⁰Wisdom will come into your heart, and your soul will be happy with knowledge.

¹¹Wisdom will protect you, and understanding will guard you. ¹²Wisdom and understanding will stop you from living the wrong way like evil people. Those people are evil even in the things they say. ¹³They have given up goodness and now live in darkness (*sin*). ¹⁴They are happy in doing wrong and enjoy the bad ways of evil. ¹⁵Those people can't be trusted—they lie and cheat. But your wisdom and understanding will keep you away from all these things.

¹⁶Wisdom will save you from the woman stranger. Wisdom will save you from that foreign woman who says such sweet words when she tempts you to sin with her. ¹⁷She married when she was young—but she left her husband. She forgot the marriage vows she made before God. ¹⁸And now, going with her into her house leads to death! If you follow her, she will lead you to the grave! ¹⁹She herself is like the grave—men who go into her lose their life and never return.

²⁰Wisdom will help you follow the example of good people. Wisdom will help you live the way good people live. ²¹Good honest people will be able to live on their land. Simple honest people will get to keep their land. ²²But evil people will lose their land. People who lie and cheat will be taken away from the land.

Living Right Will Add to Your Life

3 My son, don't forget my teaching. Remember the things I tell you to do. ²The things I teach you will give you a longer, happier, and more peaceful life.

³Never stop loving. Always be loyal and true. [Make these things a part of yourself]—tie them around your neck and write them on your heart. ⁴Then you will be wise and pleasing to God and people!

Trust the Lord

⁵Trust the Lord completely! Don't depend on your own knowledge. ⁶Think about God in all that you do. Then he will help you. ⁷Don't

depend on your own wisdom. But respect the Lord and stay away from evil. ⁸If you do this, then it will be like medicine for your body or a refreshing drink that makes you strong again.

Give to the Lord

⁹Honor the Lord with your wealth. Give him the best you have. ¹⁰Then you will have all you need. Your barns will be full of grain and your barrels will be flowing over with wine.

Accept the Lord's Punishment

¹¹My son, sometimes the Lord will show you that you are doing wrong. But don't be angry about this punishment. Try to learn from it. ¹²Why? Because the Lord corrects the people he loves. Yes, God is like a father [that punishes] the son he loves.

The Blessings of Wisdom

¹³The person who finds wisdom will be very happy. That person will be blessed when he begins to understand. ¹⁴The profit that comes from wisdom is better than silver. The profit from wisdom is better than fine gold! ¹⁵Wisdom is worth much more than jewels. Nothing you can want is as valuable as wisdom!

¹⁶Wisdom gives you long life, riches, and honor. ¹⁷People with wisdom live peaceful, happy lives. ¹⁸Wisdom is like the Tree of Life.* It gives full life to people that accept it. People that keep wisdom will be truly happy!

¹⁹The Lord used wisdom and understanding to make the earth and the skies. ²⁰The Lord used his knowledge to make the oceans and the clouds that produce rain.

²¹My son, don't ever let wisdom out of your sight! Guard your ability to think and plan wisely. ²²Wisdom and understanding will give you life and make it more beautiful. ²³Then you will live safely and you will not fall. ²⁴When you lie down, you will not be afraid. When you rest, your sleep will be peaceful. ^{25–26}Don't be afraid of some sudden disaster, the Lord will give you strength. And don't be afraid of what evil people can do to

you.* The Lord will protect you and keep you from being trapped.

The Wisdom of Living Right

²⁷Whenever you can, do good things for people who need help. ²⁸If your neighbor asks you for something and you have it, then give it to him right then! Don't tell him, "Come back tomorrow and get it."

²⁹Don't make plans to hurt your neighbor. You live near each other for your own safety!

³⁰Don't take another person to court without a good reason. Don't do that if he hasn't done anything wrong to you.

³¹Some people are easily angered and quickly do bad things. Don't be like that. ³²Why? Because the Lord hates evil people and he supports good, honest people.

³³The Lord is against the families of evil people. But he blesses the homes of people who live right.

³⁴If a person is proud and makes fun of other people, the Lord will punish him and make fun of him. But the Lord is kind to humble people.

³⁵Wise people live a life that brings honor. Foolish people live a life that brings shame.

The Importance of Wisdom

4 Sons, listen to your father's teachings. Pay attention so you will understand! ²Why? Because the things I teach you are important and good. So don't ever forget my teachings.

³I was young once too! I was my daddy's little boy and my mother's only son. ⁴And my father taught me these things. He said to me, "Remember the things I say. Obey my commands and you will live. ⁵Get wisdom and understanding! Don't forget my words. Always follow my teachings. ⁶Don't turn away from wisdom. Then wisdom will protect you. Love wisdom, and wisdom will keep you safe."

⁷Wisdom begins when you decide to get wisdom. So use everything you own to get wisdom! [Then you will become wise.] ⁸Love wisdom, and wisdom will make you great. Make wisdom most important, and wisdom

Tree of Life The tree whose fruit gives people the power to live forever. See Gen. 3:22 and Rev. 22:1–2.

And don't ... do to you Or, "And don't be afraid of the destruction that comes to evil people."

will bring you honor. ⁹She (*Wisdom*) is the greatest thing that can happen to you.

¹⁰Son, listen to me. Do the things I say, and you will live long. ¹¹I am teaching you about wisdom. I am leading you along the straight path. ¹²Follow this path, and your feet won't be caught [in any trap]. You can run and not stumble. [You will be safe in the things you try to do.] ¹³Always remember these lessons. Don't forget these lessons. They are your life!

¹⁴Don't follow the path evil people walk on. [Don't live like that.] Don't try to be like them. ¹⁵Stay away from evil. Don't go near it. Walk straight past it. ¹⁶Bad people can't sleep until they do something wrong. Those people can't sleep until they hurt some other person. ¹⁷Those people can't live without doing evil and hurting other people.

¹⁸Good people are like the early morning light. The sun rises and the day becomes brighter and happier. ¹⁹But bad people are like a dark night. They are lost in the darkness and they fall over things they can't see.

²⁰My son, pay attention to the things I say. Listen closely to my words. ²¹Don't let my words leave you. Remember the things I say. ²²My teaching will give life to people who listen. My words are like good health to the body.

²³The most important thing is for you to be careful in the things you think. Your thoughts control your life.

²⁴Don't bend the truth and say things that are not right. Don't tell lies. ²⁵Don't let yourself turn away from the good and wise goals that are before you. ²⁶Be very careful what you do. Live a good life. ²⁷Don't leave the straight path—the way that is good and right. But always turn away from evil.

The Wisdom of Avoiding Adultery

5 My son, listen to my wise teaching. Pay attention to my words of understanding. ²Then you will remember to live wisely and watch what you say. ³Another man's wife might be very charming; the words from her lips so sweet and inviting. ⁴But in the end, she will bring only bitterness and pain. It will be like bitter poison and a sharp sword! ⁵She is on a path leading to death. She will lead you

straight to the grave! ⁶Don't follow her! She has lost the right way and doesn't know it. Be careful! Follow the way that leads to life!

Adultery Can Ruin You

⁷Now my sons, listen to me. Don't forget the words I say. ⁸Stay away from the woman who does the sin of adultery.* Don't even go near the door of her house. ⁹If you do, then other people will get the honor you should have had. And some stranger will get all the things you worked years to get. ¹⁰People you don't know will take all your wealth. Other people will get the things you worked for. ¹¹At the end of your life, you will be sad that you ruined your health and lost everything you had. ^{12–13}Then you will say, "Why didn't I listen to my parents? Why didn't I listen to my teachers? I refused to be disciplined. I refused to be corrected. ¹⁴So now I have suffered through almost every kind of trouble people can have—and everyone knows it!"

Enjoy Your Own Wife

^{15–16}Drink only the water that flows from your own well. And don't let your water flow out into the streets. [You must have sexual relations only with your own wife. Don't become the father of children outside your own home.] ¹⁷Your children should belong only to you. You should not have to share them with people out of your own home. ¹⁸So, be happy with your own wife. Enjoy the woman you married while you were young. ¹⁹She is like a beautiful deer, a lovely fawn. Let her love satisfy you completely. Let her love intoxicate you always. ²⁰But don't go staggering into the arms of another woman!

²¹The Lord clearly sees everything you do. The Lord watches where you go. ²²The sins of an evil person will trap him. His sins will be like ropes holding him. ²³That evil person will die because he refused to be disciplined. He will be trapped by his own desires.

adultery Breaking the marriage promise by sexual sin.

Dangers of Helping a Person Get a Loan

6 My son, don't make yourself responsible for another person's debts. Don't make such deals with friends or with strangers. ²If you do, then you will be trapped. And you will have trapped yourself with your own words! ³You are under that person's power. So go to him and free yourself. Beg that person to free you from his debt. ⁴Don't even wait to rest or sleep. ⁵Escape from that trap like a deer running from a hunter. Free yourself like a bird flying out of a trap.

The Dangers of Being Lazy

⁶Lazy person, you should become like the ant. See what the ant does. Learn from the ant. ⁷The ant has no ruler, no boss, no leader. ⁸But during summer, the ant gathers all its food. The ant saves its food. And in the winter, it has plenty of food.

⁹Lazy person, how long will you lie there? When will you get up from your rest? ¹⁰The lazy person says, "I need a short nap. I will lie here for a short rest." ¹¹But he sleeps and sleeps. And he becomes poorer and poorer. Soon he will have nothing! It will be like a robber has come and stolen everything.

The Evil Person

¹²An evil and worthless person tells lies and says bad things. ¹³He winks his eye and makes signs with his hands and feet to trick people. ¹⁴That person is a troublemaker. He is always planning to do something bad. He makes trouble everywhere. ¹⁵But he will be punished. All of a sudden, disaster will strike. He will suddenly be destroyed! And there will be no one to help him!

Seven Things That the Lord Hates

- ¹⁶ The Lord hates these six, no seven, things:
- ¹⁷ eyes that show a man is proud,
- tongues that tells lies,
- hands that kill innocent people,
- ¹⁸ hearts that plan bad things to do,
- feet that run to do evil things,
- ¹⁹ a person who tells lies in court
- and says things that are not true,
- a person who starts arguments
- and causes fights between other people.

²⁰My son, remember your father's commands. And don't forget your mother's teachings. ²¹Remember their words always—tie them around your neck and keep them over your heart. ²²Their teachings will lead you wherever you go. They will watch over you while you sleep. And when you wake up, they will talk to you and guide you.

²³The commands and teachings from your parents are like a light that shows you the right way. They correct you and train you to follow the path to life. ²⁴Their teaching stops you from going to an evil woman. Their words protect you from the smooth talk of the wife that left her husband. ²⁵That woman might be beautiful. But don't let that beauty burn inside you and tempt you. Don't let her eyes capture you. ²⁶A prostitute* might cost a loaf of bread. But the wife of another man can cost you your life!

²⁷If a man spills fire on himself, his clothes will also be burned. ²⁸If a man steps on a hot coal, his feet will be burned! ²⁹It is the same with any person who sleeps with another man's wife. That person will suffer.

³⁰⁻³¹A man might be hungry and steal food to eat. If that man is caught, he must pay seven times more than he stole. It might cost him everything he owns! But other people understand—they don't lose all their respect for him.

³²But a man who does the sin of adultery is foolish. He is destroying himself—he himself causes his own destruction! ³³People will lose all their respect for him. And he will never lose that shame. ³⁴The woman's husband will become jealous. That husband will be very angry. He will do anything he can to punish the other man. ³⁵No payment—no amount of money—will be enough to stop his anger!

Wisdom Will Keep You from Adultery

7 My son, remember my words. Don't forget the commands I give you. ²Obey my commands and you will have life. Make my teaching the most important thing in your life.

prostitute A woman paid by men for sexual sin. Sometimes this also means a person who is not faithful to God and stops following him.

³Keep my commands and teachings with you always. Tie them around your fingers. Write them on your heart. ⁴Treat wisdom like a sister. Treat understanding like a part of your family.* ⁵Then they will protect you from the “other women.” They will protect you from their nice words that can lead you into sin.

⁶One day I was looking out my window ⁷at some foolish teenagers and noticed one that was especially foolish. ⁸He walked through the market place toward that bad woman’s corner and walked straight to her house. ⁹It was almost dark—the sun was setting. The night was beginning. ¹⁰The woman came out of the house to meet him. She was dressed like a prostitute.* She had plans for the young man. ¹¹She was wild and rebellious. She wasn’t going to stay at home! ¹²She walked the streets. She went everywhere looking for trouble. ¹³She grabbed the young man and kissed him. Without any shame she looked him in the eye and said, ¹⁴“I had to offer a fellowship sacrifice today. I gave what I promised to give. ¹⁵Now I have plenty of food.” So I came out to invite you to join me. I looked and looked for you. And now I found you! ¹⁶I put clean sheets on my bed. They are very beautiful sheets from Egypt. ¹⁷I put perfume on my bed. The myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon smell wonderful! ¹⁸Come, we can enjoy ourselves all night. We can make love until dawn. ¹⁹My husband is gone. He is away on a business trip. ²⁰He took enough money with him for a long trip. He won’t come home for two weeks.*”

²¹The woman used those words to tempt the young man. Her smooth words tricked him. ²²And the young man followed her to the trap. He was like a bull being led to the slaughter. He was like a deer walking into a trap, ²³with a hunter ready to put an arrow through its heart. The boy was like a bird flying into a net. He didn’t know the danger he was in.

Treat ... family Or, “Make wisdom your lover and understanding your closest relative.”

prostitute A woman paid by men for sexual sin. Sometimes this also means a person who is not faithful to God and stops following him.

He ... two weeks. Literally, “He won’t come home until the full moon.” The fellowship meal probably shows that this happened at the new moon, the first day of the Hebrew month.

²⁴Now sons, listen to me. Pay attention to the words I say. ²⁵Don’t let your heart lead you toward an evil woman—don’t follow where she wants to lead you. Don’t follow her ways. ²⁶She has caused many men to fall. She has destroyed many men. ²⁷Her house is the place of death. Her path leads straight to death!

Wisdom, the Good Woman

- 8** Listen! Wisdom and Understanding are calling for you to listen.
- ² They stand at the top of the hill by the road where the paths meet.
- ³ They are near the gates of the city. They are calling out from the open doors.
- ⁴ Wisdom says,
“Men, I call out to you.
I call out to all people.
- ⁵ If you are foolish, learn to be wise.
Foolish men, learn to understand.
- ⁶ Listen! The things I teach are important.
I tell you things that are right.
- ⁷ My words are true.
I hate evil lies.
- ⁸ The things I say are right.
There is nothing false or wrong
in my words.
- ⁹ All these sayings are clear to the person who has understanding.
The person with knowledge understands these things.
- ¹⁰ Accept my discipline.
It is worth more than silver.
It is worth more than the best gold.
- ¹¹ Wisdom is worth more than pearls.
It is worth more than anything a person can want.”

What Wisdom Does

- ¹² “I am Wisdom.
I live with good judgment.
You can find me with Knowledge and Good Planning.
- ¹³ If a person respects the Lord,
then that person will hate evil.
I (*Wisdom*) hate pride
and people who think they are better
than other people.
I hate evil ways, and a lying mouth.

14 But I give people the ability
to make good decisions
and have good judgment.
I give understanding and power!

15 Kings use me to rule.
Rulers use me to make fair laws.

16 Every good ruler on earth uses me
to rule the people under them.

17 I love people who love me.
And if people try hard to find me,
they will find me.

18 I also have riches
and honor to give.
I give true wealth and success.

19 The things I give are better than fine gold.
And my gifts are better than pure silver.

20 I lead people in the right way.
I lead them along the paths
of right judgment.

21 I give wealth to people who love me.
Yes, I fill their houses with treasures.

22 I was the first thing the Lord made,
long ago in the beginning.

23 I was made in the beginning.
I was made first, before the world.

24 I was formed before the oceans;
I was made before there was water.

25 I was born before the mountains.
I was born before the hills.

26 I was born before the Lord made the earth.
I was born before the fields.
I was born before God made the first dust
of the world.

27 I was there when the Lord
made the skies.
I was there when the Lord
drew the circle around the land
and set the limits for the ocean.

28 I was born before the Lord put the clouds
in the sky.
And I was there when the Lord put water
in the ocean.

29 I was there when the Lord set the limits
for water in the seas.
The water can't rise higher
than the Lord allows.
I was there when the Lord made
the foundations of the earth.

30 I was beside him like a skilled worker.
The Lord was happy every day
because of me.

I made him laugh and be happy
all the time.

31 The Lord was excited about the world
he made.
He was happy about the people
that he put there.

32 “Now, children, listen to me!
You can be happy too,
if you follow my ways!

33 Listen to my teachings and become wise.
Don't refuse to listen.

34 The person who listens to me
will be happy.
He watches every day at my doors.
He waits at my doorway.

35 Any person who finds me finds life.
He will get good things from the Lord!

36 But the person who sins against me
hurts himself.
All people who hate me love death!”

Wisdom and Stupidity

9 Wisdom built her house. She put the seven columns* in it. ²She (*Wisdom*) cooked meat and made wine. She put food on her table. ³And then she sent her servants to town to invite people to come up to the hill in the city and eat with her. She said, ⁴“Come, you people who need to learn.” She also invited foolish people. She said, ⁵“Come, eat the food of my wisdom. And drink the wine that I have made. ⁶Leave your old, foolish ways, and you will have life. Follow the way of understanding.”

⁷If you try to show a proud man that he is wrong, then he will only criticize you. [That man only makes fun of God's wisdom.] If you tell an evil man that he is wrong, then he will make fun of you. ⁸So, if a man thinks that he is better than other people, don't tell him that he is wrong. He will hate you for it. But if you try to help a wise man then he will respect you. ⁹If you teach a wise man, then he will become wiser. If you teach a good man, then he will learn more.

seven columns In ancient Israel, many houses had four main rooms with seven columns to support the roof. This shows Wisdom had a good house with a solid foundation.

¹⁰Respect for the Lord is the first step toward getting wisdom. Getting knowledge of the Lord is the first step toward getting understanding.

¹¹If you are wise, then your life will be longer.

¹²If you become wise, then you have become wise for your own good. But if you become proud and make fun of other people, then only you are to blame for your trouble.

¹³A foolish person is like a loud, evil woman. She does not have knowledge. ¹⁴She sits at the door of her house. She sits on her chair on the hill in the city. ¹⁵And when people walk by, she calls out to them. Those people are not interested in her, but she says, ¹⁶“Come you people who need to learn.” She also invited foolish people. ¹⁷But she (*Foolishness*) says, “If you steal water, it tastes better than your own. If you steal bread, it tastes better than the bread you cook yourself.”

¹⁸And those poor foolish people didn’t know that her house was filled only with ghosts. She (*Foolishness*) had invited them into the deepest parts of the place of death!

Solomon’s Proverbs

10 These are the proverbs (*wise sayings*) of Solomon:

A wise son makes his father happy. But a foolish son makes his mother very sad.

²If a person gets money by doing bad things, then that money is worthless. But doing good can save you from death.

³The Lord cares for good people. He gives them the food they need. But the Lord takes away the things that evil people want.

⁴A lazy person will be poor. But a person that works hard will be rich.

⁵A smart man gathers the crops at the right time. But if a person sleeps during the time of harvest and does not gather the crops, then he will be shamed.

⁶People ask God to bless a good person. Evil people might say those good things, but their words only hide the bad things they are planning.*

⁷Good people leave good memories. But evil people will soon be forgotten.

⁸A wise person obeys when someone tells him to do something. But a fool argues and brings trouble to himself.

⁹A good, honest person is safe. But a crooked person who cheats will be caught.

¹⁰A person who hides the truth causes trouble. A person who speaks openly makes peace.*

¹¹A good man’s words make life better. But the words from an evil man only shows the bad that is inside him.*

¹²Hate causes arguments. But love forgives every wrong thing people do.

¹³Wise people say things that are worth hearing. But foolish people must be punished [before they learn their lesson].

¹⁴Wise people [are quiet] and learn new things. But foolish people talk and bring trouble to themselves.

¹⁵Wealth protects the rich person. And poverty destroys a poor person.

¹⁶If a person does good, then he is rewarded. He is given life. Evil brings only punishment.

¹⁷A person who learns from his punishment can help other people live too. But a person who refuses to learn only leads people the wrong way.

¹⁸A person who hides his hate might be telling a lie. But only a fool tries to find gossip he can spread.

¹⁹A person who talks too much gets himself into trouble. A wise person learns to be quiet.

²⁰The words from a good person are like pure silver. But the thoughts from an evil person are worthless.

²¹A good person’s words will help many people. But a fool’s stupidity will kill him.

²²A blessing from the Lord will bring you true wealth. And it won’t bring troubles with it.

²³The foolish person enjoys doing wrong. But a wise person is happy with wisdom.

²⁴An evil person will be defeated by the things he fears. But a good person will get the things that he wants.

A person ... peace This is from the ancient Greek translation. The Hebrew repeats the second half of verse 8.

But the words ... inside him In Hebrew, this is like the second half of verse 6.

Evil people ... planning Or, “But violence will cover the mouth of evil people.”

²⁵Evil people are destroyed by their trouble. But good people will stand strong forever.

²⁶Never let a lazy man do something for you. He will irritate you—like vinegar in your mouth or smoke in your eyes.

²⁷If you respect the Lord, then you will live long. But evil people will lose years from their life.

²⁸The things good people hope for bring happiness. The things bad people hope for bring ruin.

²⁹The Lord protects good people. But the Lord destroys people that do wrong.

³⁰Good people will always be safe. But evil people will be forced to leave the land.

³¹Good people say wise things. But people will stop listening to a person that says things that bring trouble.

³²Good people know the right things to say. But evil people say things that bring trouble.

11 Some people use scales that don't weigh things properly. They use those scales to cheat people. The Lord hates those false scales. But accurate scales please the Lord.

²People that are proud and boast will become unimportant. But people who are humble will also become wise.

³Good, honest people are guided by honesty. But evil people destroy themselves when they cheat other people.

⁴On the day God judges people, money is worth nothing. But goodness will save people from death.

⁵If a good person is honest, then his life will be easy. But an evil person is destroyed by the bad things he does.

⁶Goodness saves the honest person. But evil people are trapped by the bad things they want.

⁷After an evil man dies, there is no hope for him. Everything he hoped for is gone—all of it is worth nothing.

⁸A good person will escape trouble, and that trouble will happen to some evil person.

⁹An evil person can hurt other people by the things he says. But good people are protected by their wisdom.

¹⁰When good people are successful, all the city is happy. When evil people are destroyed, people shout with joy.

¹¹A city becomes great when the honest people living there give it their blessing. But the things an evil person says can destroy a city.

¹²A person without good sense says bad things about his neighbors. But a wise man knows when to be quiet.

¹³Any person who tells secrets about other people can't be trusted. But a person that can be trusted does not spread gossip.

¹⁴A nation with weak leaders will fall. But many good advisers will make that nation safe.

¹⁵If you promise to pay another person's debt, then you will be sorry. You will be safe if you refuse to make those deals.

¹⁶A kind, gentle woman gains respect. Pushy men gain only money.

¹⁷A kind man will profit. But a mean man will cause trouble for himself.

¹⁸An evil man cheats people and takes their money. But a person that is fair and does right will get the real reward.

¹⁹Truly, goodness brings life. But evil people chase after evil and find death.

²⁰The Lord hates people that love to do evil. But he is happy with people that try to do right.

²¹It is true that evil people will surely be punished. And good people will be made free.

²²If a woman is beautiful but foolish, it is the same as a beautiful gold ring in a pig's nose.

²³When good people get what they want, it brings more good. But when evil people get what they want, it brings only trouble.

²⁴If a person gives freely, then he will gain even more. But if a person refuses to give, then he will become poor.

²⁵A person who gives freely will profit. If you help others, then you will gain more for yourself.

²⁶People become angry at a greedy man who refuses to sell his grain. But they are happy with a man who sells his grain to feed other people.

²⁷People respect a person who tries to do good. But a person who does evil gets nothing but trouble.

²⁸The person who trusts in his riches will fall like a dead leaf. But the good person will grow like a new green leaf.

²⁹If a person causes trouble for his family, then he will gain nothing. And in the end, the

foolish person will be forced to serve the wise person.

³⁰The things a good man does are like the Tree of Life.* A wise man gives new life to people.*

³¹If good people are rewarded on earth, then surely evil people will also get what they deserve.

12 If a person wants to be wise, then he is not angry if someone tells him when he does wrong. The person who hates to be told that he is wrong is stupid.

²The Lord is happy with a good person. But the Lord judges an evil person to be guilty.

³Evil people are never safe. But good people will be safe and secure.

⁴A husband is happy and proud with a good wife. But if a woman makes her husband ashamed, then she is like a sickness in his body.

⁵Good people are fair and honest in the things they plan to do. But don't trust the things an evil person tells you.

⁶Evil people use their words to hurt other people. But the words of a good person can save people from danger.

⁷Evil people are destroyed and there is nothing left. But people remember a good man long after he is gone.

⁸People praise a wise man. But people don't respect a stupid person.

⁹It is better to be a person who is not important but works hard than to be a person who pretends to be important but has no food.

¹⁰A good man cares for his animals. But evil people can't be kind.

¹¹The farmer that works with his land will have enough food. But the person who wastes time on worthless ideas is foolish.

¹²Evil people always want to find wrong things to do. But good people have strength that goes deep like roots.

¹³An evil person says foolish things and is trapped by his words. But a good person escapes from that kind of trouble.

¹⁴A person is rewarded because of the good things that he says. In the same way, the work he does gives him profit.

¹⁵A foolish person always thinks his own way is best. But a wise person listens to the things other people tell him.

¹⁶A foolish person is easily upset. But a smart* person quickly forgives other people if they say something wrong.

¹⁷If a person tells the truth, then he is honest in the things he says. But if a person lies, then that leads to trouble.

¹⁸If a person speaks words without thinking, then those words can hurt like a sword. But a wise person is careful with the things he says. His words can heal those hurts.

¹⁹If a person tells a lie, then those words are wasted quickly. But the truth will live forever.

²⁰Evil people always want to cause trouble. But people who work for peace will be happy.

²¹Good people will be kept safe by the Lord. But evil people will have many troubles.

²²The Lord hates people who tell lies. But the Lord is happy with people who tell the truth.

²³A smart* person doesn't tell everything he knows. But a foolish person tells everything and shows he is a fool.

²⁴People who work hard will be put in charge of other workers. But a lazy person will have to work like a slave.

²⁵Worry can take away a person's happiness. But a kind word can make a person happy.

²⁶A good man is very careful about the friends he chooses. But evil people always choose the wrong friends.

²⁷A lazy person won't go after the things he wants. But riches come to the person who works hard.

²⁸If you live right, then you will have true life. That is the way to live forever.

13 A wise son listens carefully when his father tells him what to do. But a proud person does not listen when people try to correct him.

²Good people are rewarded for the good things they say. But evil people always want to do wrong.

Tree of Life See Gen. 2:9; 3:22–24; Rev. 22:1–2.

A wise man gives new life to people Or, "A wise man takes souls."

smart Or "crafty."

³The person who is careful about the things he says will save his life. But the person who speaks without thinking will be destroyed.

⁴The lazy person wants things, but he can never get them. But people who work hard will get the things they want.

⁵Good people hate lies. Evil people will be made ashamed.

⁶Goodness protects a good, honest person. But evil defeats the person that loves to sin.

⁷Some people act like they are rich, but they have nothing. Other people act like they are poor, but they are really rich.

⁸A rich person might have to pay a ransom to save his life. But poor people never receive threats like that.

⁹A good person is like a light that shines brightly. But an evil person is like a light that becomes dark.

¹⁰People who think they are better than other people only cause trouble. But people who listen to the things other people tell them are wise.

¹¹If a person cheats to get money, then that money will soon be gone. But the person who earns his money will make it grow more and more.

¹²If there is no hope, then the heart is sad. If the thing you wish for happens, then you are filled with joy.

¹³If a person refuses to listen when other people try to help him, then he will bring trouble to himself. But the person who respects the things other people tell him, will be rewarded.

¹⁴The teachings of a wise person give life. Those words will help you in times of trouble.

¹⁵People like a person with good sense. But life is hard for a person who can't be trusted.

¹⁶A wise person always thinks before he does something. But a foolish person shows he is stupid by the things he does.

¹⁷If a messenger cannot be trusted, then there will be trouble around him. But if a person can be trusted, then there will be peace.

¹⁸If a person refuses to learn from his mistakes, then he will be poor and ashamed. But if a person listens when he is criticized or punished, then he will profit.

¹⁹If a person wants something and then gets it, he will be very happy. But stupid people only want evil, and they refuse to change.

²⁰Be friends with people who are wise, and you will become wise. But if you choose fools to be your friends, then you will have trouble.

²¹Trouble chases sinners wherever they go. But good things happen to good people.

²²A good person will have wealth to give to his children and grandchildren. And in the end, good people will get all the things that evil people have.

²³A poor man might have good land that can produce plenty of food. But he makes bad decisions and stays hungry.

²⁴If a person truly loves his children, then he will correct them when they are wrong. If you love your son, then you will be careful to teach him the right way.

²⁵Good people will have what they really need. But evil people will always be without the most important thing.

14 The wise woman uses her wisdom to make her home what it should be. But the foolish woman destroys her home by the foolish things she does.

²The person who lives right respects the Lord. But the person who is not honest hates the Lord.

³A foolish person's words cause him trouble. But the words of a wise person protect him.

⁴If there are no cows to do the work, then the barn will be empty. The people can use the strength of a cow to have a great harvest.

⁵A truthful person does not lie—he is a good witness. But a person that can't be trusted never tells the truth—he is a bad witness.

⁶People who make fun of God might look for wisdom, but they will never find it. [People who believe God] are truly wise. Knowledge comes easy to them.

⁷Don't become friends with a foolish person. There is nothing he can teach you.

⁸Smart people are wise because they think carefully about the things they do. But foolish people are fools because they think they can live by cheating.

⁹A foolish person laughs at the idea of paying for the bad things he did. But good people try very hard to get forgiveness.

¹⁰If a person is sad, he is the only one that can feel that sadness. In the same way, if a person is happy, he is the only one that can feel that joy.

¹¹The house of an evil person will be destroyed. But the home of a good person will live forever.

¹²There is a way that people think is right. But that way leads only to death.

¹³A person might be sad, even if he is laughing. And after the laughter, the sadness will still be there.

¹⁴Evil people will be fully paid (*punished*) for the wrong things they do. And good people will be fully rewarded for the good things they do.

¹⁵A fool will believe anything he hears. But a wise man thinks carefully about everything.

¹⁶A wise man respects the Lord and stays away from evil. But a foolish man does things without thinking—he is not careful.

¹⁷A person who becomes angry easily does foolish things. But a wise person is patient.

¹⁸Foolish people are punished for their foolishness. But wise people are rewarded with knowledge.

¹⁹Good people will win against evil people. Evil people will be forced to bow down to them.

²⁰A poor person has no friends, not even his neighbor. But rich people have many friends.

²¹You should not think bad things about your neighbors. If you want to be happy, be kind to those poor people.

²²Any person who plans to do evil is doing wrong. But the person that tries to do good will have friends that love and trust him.

²³If you work hard, then you will have the things you need. But if you do nothing but talk, then you will be poor.

²⁴Wise people are rewarded by wealth. But foolish people are rewarded by foolishness.

²⁵A person who tells the truth helps other people. The person who tells lies hurts other people.

²⁶The person who respects the Lord is safe and his children also live in safety.

²⁷Respect for the Lord gives true life. It saves a person from death's trap.

²⁸A large [wealthy] nation brings honor to a king, but a nation suffering famine brings shame.*

²⁹A patient person is very smart. A person who is easily angered shows that he is a fool.

³⁰If a person has peace in his mind, then his body will be healthy. But jealousy causes sickness in his body.

³¹The person that causes trouble for poor people shows that he does not respect God—God made both people. But if a person is kind to poor people, then he shows honor to God.

³²During times of trouble, evil people are defeated. But good people win a victory even during death.

³³A wise person is always thinking wise things. But a foolish person knows nothing about wisdom.

³⁴Goodness makes a nation great. But sin is a shame to any people.

³⁵A king is happy when he has wise leaders. But a king is angry with leaders that are foolish.

15 A peaceful answer causes anger to disappear. But a rough answer causes anger to grow.

²When a wise person speaks, other people want to listen. But a foolish person speaks only foolishness.

³The Lord sees what happens everywhere. The Lord watches every person—good and evil.

⁴Kind words are like a Tree of Life.* But lying words will crush a man's spirit.

⁵A foolish person refuses to listen to his father's advice. But a wise person listens closely when people try to teach him.

⁶Good people are rich in many things. But the things that an evil person has only cause him trouble.

⁷Wise people say things that give you new information. But foolish people say nothing worth hearing.

⁸The Lord hates the offerings that evil people give. But the Lord is happy to hear a good person's prayers.

shame Literally, "nothing."

Tree of Life The tree whose fruit gives people the power to live forever. See Gen. 3:22 and Rev. 22:1-2.

⁹The Lord hates the way evil people live. The Lord loves people who try to do good.

¹⁰If a person begins to live wrong, then he will be punished. And the person that hates to be corrected will be destroyed.

¹¹The Lord knows everything, even what happens in the place of death. So surely the Lord will know what happens in the hearts and minds of people.

¹²The foolish person hates to be told when he is wrong. And that person refuses to ask wise people for advice.

¹³If a person is happy, then his face will show joy. But if a person is sad in his heart, then his spirit will show that sadness.

¹⁴A wise person tries to gain more knowledge. But a foolish person only wants more foolishness.

¹⁵Some poor people are sad all the time. But for people with happiness in their hearts, life is one big party.

¹⁶It is better to be poor and respect the Lord than to be rich and have many troubles.

¹⁷It is better to eat a little in a place where there is love, than to eat a lot where there is hate.

¹⁸People that are easily angered cause trouble. But a patient person causes peace.

¹⁹A lazy person will have trouble everywhere. But life will be easy for honest people.

²⁰A wise son brings happiness to his father. But a foolish person brings shame to his mother.

²¹Doing foolish things makes a foolish person happy. But a wise person is careful to do the things that are right.

²²If a person does not get enough advice, then his plans will fail. But a person will succeed if he listens to the things wise people tell him.

²³A person is happy when he gives a good answer. And the right word at the right time is very good.

²⁴The things a wise person does leads to life here on earth* and stop him from going down to the place of death.

²⁵The Lord will destroy everything a proud person has. But the Lord protects the things that a widow has.

²⁶The Lord hates evil thoughts. But the Lord is happy with kind words.

²⁷If a person cheats to get things, then he will bring trouble to his family. But if a person is honest, then he will have no trouble.

²⁸Good people think before they answer. But evil people speak before they think, and that causes them trouble.

²⁹The Lord is far away from evil people. But he always hears the prayers of good people.

³⁰A person that smiles makes other people happy. And good news makes people feel better.

³¹A person is very wise if he listens when someone tells him that he has done wrong.

³²If a person refuses to learn, then he is only hurting himself. But the person who listens when someone tells him he is wrong, will understand more and more.

³³The person who respects the Lord is learning to be wise. A person must be humble before he can truly respect the Lord.

16 People make their plans. But it is the Lord who makes those things happen.

²A person thinks everything he does is right. But the Lord judges the real reasons people do things.

³Always turn to the Lord for help in everything you do, and you will be successful.

⁴The Lord has a plan for everything. And in the Lord's plan, evil people will be destroyed.

⁵The Lord hates every person who thinks that he is better than other people. The Lord will surely punish all those proud people.

⁶True love and loyalty will make you pure.* Respect the Lord, and you will stay far away from evil.

⁷If a person is living a good life, pleasing to the Lord, then even that person's enemies will be at peace with him.

⁸It is better to gain only a little the right way than to gain much through cheating.

here on earth Literally, "above," that is, "above the ground (grave)."

make ... pure Or, "make atonement." The Hebrew word means "to cover or erase a person's sins."

⁹A person can make plans about the things that he wants to do. But it is the Lord who decides what will happen.

¹⁰When a king speaks, his words are law. His decisions should always be fair.

¹¹The Lord wants all scales and balances to be honest. He wants all business agreements to be fair.

¹²Kings hate people who do evil. Goodness will make his kingdom stronger.

¹³Kings want to hear the truth. Kings like people who don't lie.

¹⁴When a king is angry, he can kill someone. And a wise person will try to keep the king happy.

¹⁵When the king is happy, life will be better for everyone. If the king is pleased with you, then it will be like spring rain falling from a cloud.

¹⁶Wisdom is worth much more than gold. Understanding is worth much more than silver.

¹⁷Good people live their lives trying to stay away from evil. The person who is careful with his life, is guarding his soul.

¹⁸If a person is proud, then he is in danger of destruction. If a person thinks he is better than other people, then he is in danger of defeat.

¹⁹It is better to be humble and live with poor people than to share wealth with people who think they are better than other people.

²⁰The person who listens when people try to teach him will profit. And the person who trusts in the Lord will be blessed.

²¹People will know if a person is wise. And a person that carefully chooses his words can be very persuasive.

²²Wisdom brings true life to people who have it. But fools only learn to be more foolish.

²³A wise man always thinks before he speaks. And the words he says are good and worth hearing.

²⁴Kind words are like honey. They are easy to accept and good for your health.

²⁵There is a way that seems right to people. But that way leads only to death.

²⁶A worker's appetite keeps him working. His hunger makes him work so that he can eat.

²⁷A worthless person plans bad things to do. His advice destroys like fire. ²⁸A troublemaker is always causing problems.

That person spreads gossip and causes trouble between close friends.

²⁹A troublemaker causes a lot of trouble for his friends. He will lead them in a way that is not good. ³⁰That person winks his eye while planning something destructive. He smiles while he is planning to hurt his neighbor.

³¹Gray hair is the crown of glory on people who have lived good lives.

³²It is better to be patient than to be a strong soldier. It is better to control your anger than to take control over a whole city.

³³People throw lots* to make decisions. But the decisions always come from God.

17 It is better to have only a dry piece of bread to eat in peace than to have a whole house full of food with everyone arguing.

²A smart servant will gain control over his master's foolish son. That wise servant will be treated like a son and get a share of the inheritance.

³Gold and silver are put into fire to make them pure. But the Lord is the One who makes peoples' hearts pure.

⁴An evil person listens to the evil things other people say. People who tell lies also listen to lies.

⁵Some people make fun of poor people. They laugh at people who have problems. This shows that those bad people don't respect God who made them. These bad people will be punished.

⁶Grandchildren make old people happy. And children are proud of their parents.

⁷It is not wise for a fool to speak too much. In the same way, it is not wise for a ruler to tell lies.

⁸Some people think a bribe is like a lucky charm—wherever they go, it seems to work.

⁹If you forgive a person who does wrong to you, then you can be friends. But if you continue to remember the wrong that he did, then it will hurt your friendship.

¹⁰A smart person learns from the things he does wrong. But a fool learns nothing, even after a hundred lessons.

lots Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for making decisions.

¹¹An evil person only wants to do wrong. In the end, God will send a messenger to punish him.

¹²It is very dangerous to meet a mother bear that is angry because her cubs are stolen. But that is better than to meet a fool that is busy doing his foolishness.

¹³Don't do bad things to people who do good things to you. If you do, then you will have trouble for the rest of your life.

¹⁴If you start an argument, it is like breaking a hole in a dam. So stop the argument before it becomes bigger and bigger.

¹⁵The Lord hates these two things—punishing someone that has done nothing wrong, and forgiving someone that is guilty.

¹⁶If a foolish person has money, it is wasted. Why? Because that foolish person does not use the money to become wise.

¹⁷A friend loves at all times. A true brother always supports you, even in times of trouble.

¹⁸Only a fool will promise to be responsible for another person's debts.

¹⁹A troublemaker loves to start arguments. A person that likes to brag is setting himself up for a fall. Both of them will end up in trouble.*

²⁰A crooked person will not get a good profit. A liar will get into bad trouble.

²¹A father with a foolish son will be very sad. A fool's father won't be happy.

²²Happiness is like good medicine. But sorrow is like a sickness.

²³An evil person accepts secret payment for cheating other people.

²⁴The wise man is always thinking of the best thing to do. But a foolish person is always dreaming about faraway places.

²⁵A foolish son brings sorrow to his father. And a foolish son brings sadness to the mother that gave birth to him.

²⁶It is wrong to punish a person who has done nothing wrong. It is wrong to punish leaders when they are honest.

²⁷A wise person uses words carefully. A wise person does not become angry easily.

²⁸Even a fool seems wise if he keeps quiet. People think he is wise if he doesn't say anything.

18 Some people like to do things their own way. They get upset when people give them advice.

²A foolish person doesn't want to learn from other people. That person only wants to tell his own ideas.

³People don't like an evil person. People make fun of that foolish person.

⁴The words of a wise man are like water bubbling up from a deep well—the well of wisdom!

⁵[You must be fair in judging people.] If you let guilty people go free then you are not being fair to good people.

⁶A foolish person causes himself trouble with the things he says. His words can start fights.

⁷When a foolish person talks, he ruins himself. His own words trap him.

⁸People always want to hear gossip—it is like good food going down into the stomach.

⁹A person that does sloppy work is almost as bad as a person that destroys things.

¹⁰There is much strength in the name of the Lord. It is like a strong tower. Good people can run to him and be safe.

¹¹Rich people think that their wealth will protect them. They think that it is like a strong fort.

¹²A proud person will soon be ruined. But an humble person will be honored.

¹³You should let other people finish speaking before you try to answer them. That way you won't be embarrassed and appear foolish.

¹⁴A good attitude gives a person support when he is ill, but no one can cheer up* a person with a bad attitude.

¹⁵The wise person always wants to learn more. That person listens closely for more wisdom.

¹⁶If you want to meet an important person, give him a gift. Then you can easily get to meet him.

¹⁷The first person to speak always seems right until someone comes and questions him.

A troublemaker ... in trouble This parable is hard to translate because of several word plays in Hebrew

cheer up Literally, "lift up" or "heal."

¹⁸If two powerful people are arguing, throwing lots* may be the best way to decide the argument.

¹⁹If you insult your friend, then he will be harder to win back than a city with strong walls. And arguments separate people like palace gates with strong bars across them.

²⁰The things you say affect your life. If you say good things, then good things will happen to you. But if you say bad things, then bad things will happen to you.

²¹The tongue can speak words that bring life or death. And people who love to talk must be ready to accept what it brings.

²²If you find a wife, then you have found a good thing. She shows that the Lord is happy with you.

²³A poor person will beg for help, but a rich person is rude when he answers.

²⁴Some friends are fun to be with.* But a close friend can be even better than a brother.

19 It is better to be poor and honest than to be a fool that tells lies and cheats people.

²Being excited about something is not enough. You must also know what you are doing. You should not rush into something or you will do it wrong.

³A person's own foolishness will ruin his life. But he will blame the Lord.

⁴If a person is rich, then his wealth will bring him many friends. But if a person is poor, all his friends will leave him.

⁵A person who tells a lie against another person will be punished. The person who tells lies will not be safe.

⁶Many people want to be friends with a generous person. Everyone wants to be the friend of a person who gives gifts.

⁷If a person is poor, then even his family is against him. And all of his friends turn away from him. That poor person can beg them for help. But they will not go near him.

⁸If a person really likes himself, then he will work hard to become wise. He will try hard to understand, and he will get his reward.

lots Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for making decisions.

Some friends are fun to be with Or, "Some friends can bring disaster."

⁹A lying witness must be punished! The person who tells lies will be destroyed.

¹⁰A foolish person should not be rich. That would be like a slave ruling over princes.

¹¹If a person is wise, that wisdom gives him patience. And it is wonderful when he forgives people who do wrong to him.

¹²Angry words from a king are like the roars of a lion. But compliments from him are like a gentle rain falling softly on the grass.

¹³A foolish son can bring a flood of troubles to his father. And a nagging wife is like water that won't stop dripping.

¹⁴People get houses and money from their parents. But a good wife is a gift from the Lord.

¹⁵Laziness brings sleepiness. Trying to hide [a problem] brings more problems.*

¹⁶If a person obeys the law, then he protects himself. But the person that hates to live by the law will die by the law.

¹⁷Giving money to poor people is like loaning it to the Lord. The Lord will pay you back for being kind to them.

¹⁸Teach your son and punish him when he is wrong. That is the only hope. If you refuse to do this, then you are helping him destroy himself.

¹⁹A person with a short temper must pay the price. The more you get him out of trouble, the worse he becomes.

²⁰Listen to advice and accept discipline. Then you will become wise.

²¹People get a lot of ideas, but only the Lord's plan will happen.

²²Everyone wants a true and loyal friend—it is better to be poor than a person that can't be trusted.

²³A person who respects the Lord has a good life. That person is satisfied with his life and doesn't have to worry about troubles.

²⁴Some people are too lazy to take care of themselves—they are too lazy to lift their food from their plate to their mouth!

²⁵Some people show no respect for anything—those foolish people must be punished and forced to learn their lesson. But for a wise person, it's enough just to tell them that they did wrong.

Trying ... problems Literally, "a deceptive soul brings hunger."

²⁶A person who steals from his father and chases his mother away is a disgusting, shameful person.

²⁷If you stop listening to instructions, then you will keep making stupid mistakes.

²⁸A lying witness makes justice nothing but a joke! The things evil people say bring more evil.

²⁹The person who thinks that he is better than other people will be punished. That foolish person must be punished!

20 Wine and beer make people lose control of themselves. They get loud and start to brag. They become drunk and do foolish things.

²The anger of a king is like the roar of a lion. If you make the king angry, then you could lose your life.

³Any fool can start an argument. So you should respect a person who refuses to argue.

⁴A lazy person is too lazy to plant seeds. So, at the time of harvest he looks for food and finds nothing.

⁵Good advice is like getting water from a deep well. But a wise person will try hard to learn from another person.

⁶Many people call a person "friend." But it is really hard to find a person that can really be trusted.

⁷A good person lives a good life. And his children will be blessed.

⁸When the king sits and judges people, he must look carefully to separate the evil [from the good].

⁹Can any person really say that he has always done his best? Can any person really say that he has no sin? [No!]

¹⁰The Lord hates people that cheat other people using weights and measures that are not fair.

¹¹Even a child shows that he is good or bad by the things he does. You can watch that child and know if he is honest and good.

¹²The Lord gave us eyes to see with and ears to hear with—[use them]!

¹³If you love to sleep, then you will become poor. But use your time working and you will have plenty to eat.

¹⁴The person who buys something from you always says, "It's no good! It costs too much!" Then that person goes away and tells other people that he made a good deal.

¹⁵Gold and jewels can make a man rich. But a person who knows what he is talking about is worth much, much more.

¹⁶You will lose your shirt if you make yourself responsible for another man's debts.

¹⁷If you get something by cheating, it may seem like a good thing. But in the end it will be worth nothing.

¹⁸Get good advice before you make plans. If you are starting a war, find good people to guide you.

¹⁹A person who tells gossip about other people can't be trusted. So don't be friends with a person who talks too much.

²⁰If a person curses* his father or mother, then he is like a person whose light stops shining in the darkest darkness.

²¹If your wealth was very easy to get, it will not be worth much to you.

²²If someone does something against you, don't try to punish him yourself. Wait for the Lord! In the end, he will make you the winner.

²³Some people use weights and scales that are not accurate. They use those things so they can cheat people. The Lord hates that. That does not make him happy!

²⁴The Lord decides what happens to every person. So how can any person understand what happens in his life?

²⁵Think carefully before you promise to give something to God. Later you might wish that you had not made that promise.

²⁶A wise king will decide which people are evil. And that king will punish those people.

²⁷A person's spirit is like a lamp to the Lord. The Lord is able to see into the deepest parts of a person.*

²⁸If a king is loyal and true, then he will keep his power. His true love will keep his kingdom strong.

²⁹We admire a young man for his strength. But we respect an old man for his gray hair—[it shows he lived a full life].

³⁰If we are punished, we will stop doing wrong. Pain can change a person.

curse To ask for bad things to happen to someone.

A person's spirit ... person Or, "The Lord examines a person's breath (*spirit*) and searches his deepest thoughts."

21 Farmers dig small ditches to water their fields. They change where the water goes by closing different ditches. The Lord controls a king's mind just like that. The Lord can lead the king wherever he wants him to go.

²A person thinks everything he does is right. But the Lord judges the real reasons people do things.

³Do the things that are right and fair. The Lord loves that better than sacrifices.

⁴Proud looks and proud thoughts are sins. They show a person is evil.

⁵Careful plans can lead to profit. But if you are not careful, and you do things too quickly, then you will become poor.

⁶If you cheat to become rich, then your wealth will soon be gone. And your riches will lead you to death.

⁷The bad things that evil people do will destroy them. Those people refuse to do what is right.

⁸Bad people always try to cheat other people. But good people are honest and fair.

⁹It is better to live in a small corner of the attic* than to share the house with a woman that is always arguing.

¹⁰Evil people always want to do more evil. And those people show no mercy to people around them.

¹¹Punish the person who makes fun of God and foolish people will learn a lesson. They will become wise. And then they will gain more and more knowledge.

¹²God is good. God knows what evil people are doing, and he will punish them.

¹³If a person refuses to help poor people, then there will be no help for him when he needs it.

¹⁴If a person is angry with you, give him a gift in secret. A gift that is given in secret can stop great anger.

¹⁵Fair judgment makes good people happy. But it makes evil people very afraid.

¹⁶If a person leaves the way of wisdom, then he is going toward destruction.

¹⁷If having fun is the most important thing to a person, then that person will become

poor. If that person loves wine and food, then he will never be rich.

¹⁸Evil people have to pay for all the bad things they do to good people. People who are not honest have to pay for the things they do to honest people.

¹⁹It is better to live in the desert than to live with a wife that has a short temper and loves to argue.

²⁰A wise person saves the things he needs. But a foolish person uses everything as fast as he gets it.

²¹The person that always tries to show love and kindness will have a good life, wealth, and honor.

²²A wise person can do almost anything. He can attack a city defended by strong men. And he can destroy the walls that they trusted to save them.

²³If a person is careful about the things he says, then he saves himself from trouble.

²⁴A proud person thinks he is better than other people. He shows that he is evil by the things he does.

²⁵⁻²⁶A lazy person destroys himself when he wants more and more. He destroys himself because he refuses to work for those things. But a good person can give because he has plenty.

²⁷The Lord is not happy when evil people offer him sacrifices, especially when those evil people are trying to get something from him.

²⁸A person who tells lies will be destroyed. Any person who listens to those lies will be destroyed with him.

²⁹A good person always knows that he is right. But an evil person has to pretend.

³⁰There is no person who is wise enough to make a plan that can succeed if the Lord is against it.

³¹People can prepare everything for a battle, even the horses. But they can't win unless the Lord gives them the victory.

22 It is better to be respected than to be rich. A good name is more important than silver or gold.

²Rich people and poor people are the same. The Lord made them all.

³Wise people see trouble coming and get out of its way. But foolish people go straight to the trouble and suffer because of it.

attic A small room above the main rooms of a house. Literally, "roof." The roofs of houses in ancient Israel were flat and were often used as extra rooms.

⁴Respect the Lord and be humble. Then you will have wealth, honor, and true life.

⁵Evil people are trapped by many troubles. But the person who cares for his soul stays away from trouble.

⁶Teach a child the right way to live while he is young. Then when he grows older, he will continue living that way.

⁷Poor people are slaves to rich people. The person who borrows is a servant to the person who lends.

⁸A person who spreads trouble will harvest trouble. And in the end, that person will be destroyed because of the trouble he gave other people.

⁹A person who gives freely will be blessed. He will be blessed because he shares his food with poor people.

¹⁰If a person thinks he is better than other people, force him to leave. When that person leaves, trouble will leave with him. Then arguments and bragging will end.

¹¹The king will be your friend if you love a pure heart and kind words.

¹²The Lord watches over and protects people who know him. But he destroys people who turn against him.

¹³The lazy person says, “I can’t go to work now. There is a lion outside. It might kill me.”

¹⁴The sin of adultery is like a trap. The Lord will become very angry at the person who falls into that trap.

¹⁵Children do foolish things. But if you punish them, they will learn not to do those things.

¹⁶These two things will make you poor—hurting poor people to make yourself rich, and giving gifts to rich people.

Thirty Wise Sayings

¹⁷Listen to the things that I say. I will teach you the things wise men have said. Learn from these teachings. ¹⁸It will be good for you if you remember these things. It will help you if you can say these words. ¹⁹I will teach you these things now. I want you to trust the Lord. ²⁰I have written 30 sayings for you. These are words of advice and wisdom. ²¹These words will teach you true and important things. Then you can give good answers to the one that sent you.

— 1 —

²²It is easy to steal from poor people, but don’t do it. And don’t take advantage of those poor people in court. ²³The Lord is on their side. He supports them and he will take things away from any person that takes from them.

— 2 —

²⁴Don’t be friends with a person who becomes angry easily. Don’t go near a person who becomes mad fast. ²⁵If you do, you may learn to be like him. Then you will have the same troubles he has.

— 3 —

²⁶Don’t promise to be responsible for another person’s debts. ²⁷If you can’t pay his debt, then you will lose everything you have. Why should you lose the bed you sleep on?

— 4 —

²⁸Never move an old property line that was marked long ago by your ancestors.*

— 5 —

²⁹If a person is skilled in his work, then he is good enough to serve kings. He will not have to work for people who are not important.

— 6 —

23 When you sit and eat with an important man, remember who you are with. ²Never eat too much, even if you are very hungry. ³And don’t eat too much of the fine food he serves. It might be a trick.

— 7 —

⁴Don’t ruin your health trying to become rich. If you are wise, you will be patient. ⁵Money goes very quickly, as if it grows wings and flies away like a bird.

— 8 —

⁶Don’t eat with a selfish person. And stay away from the special foods he likes. ⁷He is the kind of man who is always thinking about the cost. He might say to you, “Eat and drink.” But that is not really what he wants.

ancestors Literally, “fathers,” meaning a person’s parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

⁸And if you eat his food, then you will become sick. And you will be embarrassed.

— 9 —

⁹Don't try to teach a fool. He will make fun of your wise words.

— 10 —

¹⁰Never move an old property line. And never take land that belongs to orphans.*
¹¹The Lord will be against you. The Lord is powerful and he defends those orphans.

— 11 —

¹²Listen to your teacher and learn all you can.

— 12 —

¹³Always punish a child if it needs it. It will not hurt him to spank him. ¹⁴If you spank him, you may save his life.

— 13 —

¹⁵My son, if you become wise, then I will be very happy. ¹⁶I will be happy in my heart if I hear you say things that are right.

— 14 —

¹⁷Don't be jealous of evil people. But always try as hard as you can to respect the Lord. ¹⁸There is always hope. And that hope will never be gone.

— 15 —

¹⁹So listen, my son, and be wise. Always be careful to live the right way. ²⁰Don't be friends with people who drink too much wine and eat too much food. ²¹People who drink too much and eat too much become poor. All they do is eat, drink, sleep, and soon they have nothing.

— 16 —

²²Listen to the things your father tells you. Without your father, you would never have been born. And respect your mother, even when she is old. ²³Truth, wisdom, learning, and understanding are worth paying money for. And they are worth far too much to ever sell. ²⁴The father of a good person is very happy. If a person has a wise child, then that child brings

orphans Children whose parents are dead. Often these children have no one to care for them.

joy. ²⁵So let your father and mother be happy with you. Let your mother have joy.

— 17 —

²⁶My son, listen closely to what I am saying. Let my life be your example. ²⁷Prostitutes and bad women are a trap. They are like a deep well that you can't get out of. ²⁸A bad woman waits for you like a thief. And she causes many men to become sinners.

— 18 —

^{29–30}It will be very bad for people who drink too much wine and strong drinks. Those people have many fights and arguments. Their eyes are red and they stumble and hurt themselves. They could have avoided all those troubles!

³¹So be careful with wine. It is pretty and red. It sparkles in the cup. And it goes down so smooth when you drink it. ³²But in the end it bites like a snake.

³³Wine will cause you to see strange things. Your mind will be confused. ³⁴When you lie down, you will think you are on a rough sea. You feel like you are lying on a ship. ³⁵You will say, "They hit me but I never felt it. They beat me but I don't remember it. Now I can't wake up. I need another drink."

— 19 —

24 Don't be jealous of evil people. Don't even want to be around them. ²In their hearts they plan to do evil. All they talk about is making trouble.

— 20 —

³Good homes are built on wisdom and understanding. ⁴And knowledge fills the rooms with rare and beautiful treasures.

— 21 —

⁵Wisdom makes a man more powerful. Knowledge gives a man strength. ⁶You must make careful plans before you start a war. If you want to win, you must have many good advisers.

— 22 —

⁷Foolish people can't understand wisdom. And when people are discussing important things, the foolish person can say nothing.

— 23 —

⁸If you are always planning trouble, then people will know that you are a person who makes trouble. ⁹And they will not listen to you. ⁹The things that a foolish person plans to do are sin. People hate a person who thinks he is better than other people.

— 24 —

¹⁰If you are weak during times of trouble, then you really are weak.

— 25 —

¹¹If people are planning to kill a person, then you must try to save him. ¹²You can't say, "It's none of my business." The Lord knows everything. And he knows why you do things. The Lord watches you. He knows. And the Lord will reward you for the things you do.

— 26 —

¹³My son, eat honey. It is good. Honey from the honeycomb* is sweet. ¹⁴In the same way, wisdom is good for your soul. If you have wisdom, then you will have hope, and your hope will never end.

— 27 —

¹⁵Don't be like a thief that wants to steal from a good person or take away his home. ¹⁶If a good man falls seven times, he will always stand again. But evil people will always be defeated by trouble.

— 28 —

¹⁷Don't be happy when your enemy has troubles. Don't be happy when he falls. ¹⁸If you do, the Lord will see this, and the Lord will not be happy with you. Then the Lord might help your enemy.

— 29 —

¹⁹Don't let evil people cause you worry. And don't be jealous of evil people. ²⁰Those evil people have no hope. Their light will become dark.

honeycomb The wax nest that bees use for storing honey.

— 30 —

²¹Son, respect the Lord and the king. And don't join with the people that are against them. ²²Why? Because men like that can quickly be destroyed. You don't know how much trouble God and the king can make for their enemies.

More Wise Sayings

²³These are the words of wise men:

A judge must be fair. He must not support a person simply because he knows him. ²⁴People will turn against a judge that tells a guilty person that he can go free. Even people from other nations will say bad things against that judge. ²⁵But if a judge punishes a guilty person, then all the people will be happy with him.

²⁶An honest answer is something that makes all people happy—it is like a kiss on the lips.

²⁷Don't build your house before you plant your fields. Make sure that you are prepared to grow food before you build a place to live.

²⁸Don't speak against someone without a good reason. And don't tell lies.

²⁹Don't say, "He hurt me, so I will do the same to him. I will punish him for the things he did to me."

³⁰I walked past a field that belonged to a lazy man. I walked by a field of grapes that belonged to a person who was not wise. ³¹Weeds were growing everywhere in those fields. Worthless plants were growing on the ground. And the wall around the fields was broken and falling down. ³²I looked at this and I thought about it. Then I learned a lesson from these things: ³³a little sleep, a little rest, folding your arms, and taking a nap. ³⁴These things will make you poor very quickly. You will have nothing, as if a thief broke in and took everything away.

More Wise Sayings from Solomon

25 These are some more wise sayings of Solomon. These words were copied by servants of Hezekiah, king of Judah:

²God has the right to hide things that he does not want us to know about. But a king is honored for the things he says.

³The sky is high above and the ground is under us. It is the same with the minds of kings. We can't understand them.

⁴If you take the worthless things from silver and make it pure, then a worker can make beautiful things. ⁵In the same way, if you take evil advisers away from a king, then goodness will make his kingdom strong.

⁶Don't brag about yourself before a king. Don't say that you are a famous person. ⁷It is much better for the king to invite you himself. But if you invite yourself, then you might be embarrassed in front of other people.

⁸Don't be too quick to tell a judge about something you saw. If another person proves that you are wrong, then you will be embarrassed.

⁹If you and another person can't agree, then decide among yourselves what to do. And don't tell about another person's secret. ¹⁰If you do, then you will be ashamed. And you will never lose that bad name.

¹¹Saying the right thing at the right time is like a golden apple in a silver setting.

¹²If a wise person gives you a warning, it is worth more than gold rings or jewelry made from the finest gold.

¹³A messenger that can be trusted is worth much to the people who send him. He is like cool water during the hot days of harvest.

¹⁴People who promise to give gifts, but never give them, are like clouds and wind that bring no rain.

¹⁵Patient talk can make any person change his thinking, even a ruler. Gentle talk is very powerful.

¹⁶Honey is good, but don't eat too much of it. If you do, then you will be sick. ¹⁷In the same way, don't go into your neighbor's home too often. If you do, then he will begin to hate you.

¹⁸A person who does not tell the truth is dangerous. He is like a club, or a sword, or a sharp arrow. ¹⁹Never depend on a liar during times of trouble. That person is like a hurting tooth or a crippled foot. [He hurts you when you need him most.]

²⁰Singing happy songs to a sad person is like taking away his clothes when he is cold. It is like mixing soda and vinegar.

²¹If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat. If your enemy is thirsty, give him water to drink. ²²If you do this, then you will make him ashamed. It is like putting burning coals on his head. And the Lord will reward you because you were good to your enemy.

²³The wind that blows from the north brings rain. And in the same way, gossip brings anger.

²⁴It is better to live in a small corner of the attic* than to share the house with a woman that is always arguing.

²⁵Good news from a faraway place is like a cool drink of water when you are hot and thirsty.

²⁶If a good person becomes weak and follows an evil person, it is the same as good water that has become dirty.

²⁷If you eat too much honey it is not good for you. In the same way, don't try to get too much honor for yourself.

²⁸A person that can't control himself is like a city without walls to protect it.

Wise Sayings About Fools

26 Snow shouldn't fall in the summer. And rain shouldn't fall during harvest time. In the same way, people should not honor a fool.

²Don't worry if a person asks for bad things to happen to you. If you did nothing wrong, nothing bad will happen. That person's words are like birds that fly past you and never stop.

³You have to whip a horse. You have to put a bridle on a mule. And you have to beat a fool.

⁴[Here is a difficult situation:] If a fool asks a stupid question, then don't give him a stupid answer or you, too, will look like a fool. ⁵But if a fool asks a stupid question, then you should give him a stupid answer or he will think he is very smart.

⁶Never let a fool carry your message. If you do, it will be like cutting off your own feet. You are asking for trouble.

⁷When a fool tries to say something wise, it is like a crippled person trying to walk.

attic A small room above the main rooms of a house. Literally, "roof." The roofs of houses in ancient Israel were flat and were often used as extra rooms.

⁸Showing honor to a fool is as bad as tying a rock in a sling.*

⁹When a fool tries to say something wise, it is the same as a drunk person trying to pick a thorn out of his hand.

¹⁰Hiring a fool or some stranger passing by is dangerous—you don't know who might get hurt.

¹¹A dog eats food. Then he gets sick and vomits. Then the dog eats that food again. It is the same with a foolish person. He does the same foolish things again and again.

¹²A person who thinks he is wise when he is not is worse than a fool.

Wise Sayings About Lazy People

¹³A lazy person says, "I can't leave my house. There is a lion in the street."

¹⁴A lazy person is like a door. All he does is turn in his bed like a door turns on its hinges. He never goes anywhere.

¹⁵A lazy person is too lazy to lift his food from his plate to his mouth.

¹⁶A lazy person thinks he is very wise. He thinks he is smarter than seven men that can give good reasons for their ideas.

¹⁷It is dangerous to become part of an argument between two people. It is the same as walking along the street and grabbing a dog by the ears.

^{18–19}A man who tricks another person and then says that he was only joking, is like a crazy person that shoots flaming arrows into the air and accidentally kills someone.

²⁰If a fire has no wood, then the fire will become cold. In the same way, an argument without gossip is finished.

²¹Charcoal keeps the coals burning. And wood keeps the fire burning. In the same way, people who make trouble keep arguments alive.

²²People love gossip. It is like eating good food.

²³Good words that hide an evil plan is like silver paint over a cheap, clay pot. ²⁴An evil person makes himself look good by the things he says. But he hides his evil plans in his heart. ²⁵The things he says might seem good. But don't trust him. His heart is full of evil

ideas. ²⁶He hides his evil plans with nice words. But he is mean. And in the end all people will see the evil things that he does.

²⁷If a person tries to trap another person, then he will trap himself. If a person tries to roll a stone over another person, he will be crushed himself.

²⁸The person that tells lies hates the people he hurts. And if a person says things he does not mean, he is only hurting himself.

27 Never brag about what will happen in the future. You don't know what will happen tomorrow.

²Never praise yourself. Let other people do it.

³A stone is heavy, and sand is hard to carry. But the trouble caused by an angry fool is much harder to bear.

⁴Anger is cruel and mean. It causes destruction. But jealousy is much worse.

⁵Open criticism is better than hidden love.

⁶A friend might hurt you sometimes, but he does not want to do this. An enemy is different. Even when an enemy is kind to you, he wants to hurt you.

⁷If you are not hungry, then you will not eat even honey. But if you are hungry, you will eat anything—even if it tastes bad.

⁸A man away from home is like a bird away from its nest.

⁹Perfume and sweet-smelling things make you feel happy. And a kind word from a friend is more welcome than life-saving advice.

¹⁰Don't forget your friends and your father's friends. And if you have trouble, don't go far away to your brother's house for help. It is better to ask a neighbor that is near you than to go far away to your brother.

¹¹My son, be wise. This will make me happy. Then I will be able to answer any person that criticizes me.

¹²Wise people see trouble coming and get out of its way. But a fool goes straight to the trouble and suffers because of it.

¹³You will lose your shirt if you make yourself responsible for another man's debts.

¹⁴Don't wake up your neighbor early in the morning with a shout of, "Good morning!" He will treat it like a curse, not a blessing.

¹⁵A wife that always wants to argue is like water that never stops dripping on a rainy day.

sling A strip of leather for throwing rocks.

¹⁶Trying to stop that woman is like trying to stop the wind. It is like trying to grab oil with your hand.

¹⁷People use pieces of iron to sharpen iron knives. In the same way, people learn from other people, making each other sharp.

¹⁸A person who cares for fig trees will be able to eat their fruit. In the same way, a person who cares for his master will be rewarded. His master will care for him.

¹⁹When a person looks into the water he can see his own face. In the same way, a man's heart shows what the man is really like.

²⁰People are just like the grave. That place of death and destruction always wants more than it already has.

²¹People use fire to make gold and silver pure. In the same way, a man is tested by the praise people give him.

²²You can grind a fool to powder, and still you will not force the foolishness out of him.

²³Watch your sheep and goats carefully. Be sure you care for them the best you can.

²⁴Wealth doesn't last forever. Even nations don't last forever. ²⁵Cut the hay, and new grass will grow. Then you can gather the plants growing on the hills. ²⁶Cut the wool from your lambs and make your clothes. Sell some of your goats and buy some land. ²⁷Then there will be plenty of goat milk for you and your family and enough to keep servant girls healthy.

28 Evil people are afraid of everything. But a good person is as brave as a lion.

²A country filled with people that break the law will have many bad rulers that rule only a short time. But a wise ruler will rule a long time in a country where people understand [the need to obey the law].

³If a ruler makes trouble for poor people, he is like a hard rain that destroys the crops.

⁴You are for evil people if you refuse to obey the law. But if you obey the law, then you are against them.

⁵Evil people don't understand fairness. But people who love the Lord understand it.

⁶It is better to be poor but honest than to be rich and evil.

⁷A person who obeys the law is smart. But the person who becomes friends with worthless people brings shame to his father.

⁸If you get rich by cheating poor people and charging them high interest rates, then you will lose your wealth. It will go to another person who is kind to them.

⁹If a person refuses to listen to [God's] teachings, then [God] will refuse to hear his prayers.

¹⁰A bad person might make plans to hurt a good person. But the bad person will fall into his own trap. And good things will happen to the good person.

¹¹Rich people always think they are wise. But a poor person that is wise can see the truth.

¹²When good people become leaders, everyone is happy. But when an evil person is elected, all people go and hide.

¹³A person that hides his sins will not be successful. But a person that confesses his sins and stops doing wrong will receive mercy.

¹⁴If a person always respects the Lord, then that person will be blessed. But if a person is stubborn and refuses to respect the Lord, then he will have trouble.

¹⁵When an evil person rules over weak people, he is like an angry lion or a bear that is ready to fight.

¹⁶If a ruler is not wise, he will hurt the people under him. But the ruler that is honest and hates cheating will rule for a long time.

¹⁷If a person is guilty of killing another person, then that person will never have peace. Don't support that person.

¹⁸If a person is living right, then he will be safe. But if a person is evil, then he will lose his power.

¹⁹A person that works hard will have plenty to eat. But a person that wastes his time with dreams will always be poor.

²⁰God will bless the person who follows him. But a person who is only trying to get rich will be punished.

²¹A judge must be fair. He must not support a person simply because of who that person is. But some judges will change their decisions for only the smallest payment.

²²A selfish person only wants to get rich. That person does not realize that he is very close to being poor.

²³If you help someone by telling him he is doing wrong, then later he will be happy with

you. That is much better than always saying only nice things to people.

²⁴A person might steal from his father and mother. That person might say, “I did nothing wrong.” But that person is as bad as a man who comes in and smashes everything in the house.

²⁵A selfish person causes trouble. But the person who trusts in the Lord will be rewarded.

²⁶If a person trusts in himself, then he is a fool. But if a person is wise, then he will escape disaster.

²⁷If a person gives to poor people, then he will have everything he needs. But if a person refuses to help poor people, then he will have much trouble.

²⁸If an evil person is elected to rule, then all the people hide. But when that evil person is defeated, then good people rule again.

29 If a person is stubborn and becomes more angry every time people tell him that he is doing wrong, then that person will be destroyed. There is no hope.

²When the ruler is a good person, then all the people are happy. But when an evil person rules, then all the people complain.

³If a person loves wisdom, then his father is very happy. But if a person wastes his money on prostitutes,* then he will lose his wealth.

⁴If a king is fair, then the nation will be strong. But if a king is selfish and people must pay him to do things for them, then the nation will be weak.

⁵If a person tries to get what he wants by saying nice things to people, then he is only setting a trap for himself.

⁶Evil people are defeated by their own sin. But a good person can sing and be happy.

⁷Good people want to do the right thing for poor people. But evil people don’t care.

⁸People who think they are better than other people can cause much trouble. They can put whole cities into confusion. But people who are wise make peace.

⁹If a wise person tries to settle a problem with a fool, then the fool will argue and say stupid things. And the two people will never agree.

¹⁰Murderers always hate honest people. Those evil people want to kill good, honest people.*

¹¹A foolish person becomes angry easily. But a wise person is patient and controls himself.

¹²If a ruler listens to lies, then all his officials will be evil.

¹³In one way a poor person and the person who steals from the poor are the same: The Lord made them both.

¹⁴If a king is fair to poor people he will rule for a long time.

¹⁵Spankings and teachings are good for children. If parents let a child do whatever he wants, then he will bring shame to his mother.

¹⁶If evil people are ruling the nation, then sin will be everywhere. But good people will win in the end.

¹⁷Punish your son when he is wrong, then you will always be proud of him. He will never make you ashamed.

¹⁸If a nation is not guided by God, then that nation will not have peace. But the nation that obeys God’s law will be happy.

¹⁹A servant won’t learn a lesson if you only talk to him. That servant may understand your words but he won’t obey.

²⁰If a person speaks without thinking, there is no hope for him. There is more hope for a fool than for the person who speaks without thinking.

²¹If you always give your servant everything he wants, then in the end he will not be a good servant.

²²An angry person causes trouble. And the person who becomes angry easily is guilty of many sins.

²³If a person thinks he is better than other people, then that will destroy him. But if a person is humble, then other people will respect him.

²⁴Two thieves that work together are enemies. One thief will threaten the other one, so if he is forced to tell the truth in court, he will be too afraid to speak.

²⁵Fear is like a trap. But if you trust in the Lord, you will be safe.

prostitute(s) A woman paid by men for sexual sin. Sometimes this also means a person who is not faithful to God and stops following him.

Those evil people want to kill good, honest people Or “But a good, honest person saves his life.”

²⁶Many people want to be the friends of a ruler. But the Lord is the One that judges people fairly.

²⁷Good people hate those people who are not honest. And evil people hate people who are honest.

Wise Sayings of Agur Son of Jakeh

30 These are the wise sayings of Agur son of Jakeh. This is his message to Ithiel and Ucal:*

²I am the worst person on earth. I am not able to understand like I should. ³I have not learned to be wise. And I know nothing about God.

⁴No person has ever learned about the things from heaven. No person has ever caught the wind in his hand. No person has ever held water in a piece of cloth. No person can ever really know the limits of the earth. If any person can do these things, who is he? Where is his family?

⁵Every word that God says is perfect. God is a safe place for people who go to him. ⁶So, don't try to change the things God says. If you do, he will punish you and prove that you tell lies.

⁷Lord, I ask you to do two things for me before I die. ⁸Don't let me tell lies. And don't make me too rich or too poor—only give me the things I need each day. ⁹If I have more than I need, then I will think I don't need you. But if I am poor then I might steal. Then I will bring shame to the name of God.

¹⁰Never say bad things against a servant to his master. If you do, the master will not believe you. He will think you are guilty.

¹¹Some people speak against their fathers. And they don't show respect for their mothers.

¹²Some people think they are good but they are really very bad.

¹³Some people think they are very good. They think they are much better than other people.

¹⁴There are people whose teeth are like swords. Their jaws are like knives. They use their time to take everything they can from poor people.

¹⁵Some people want to take everything they can get. All they say is, "Give me, give me, give me." There are three things that are never satisfied—really four things that never have enough: ¹⁶The place of death, a woman with no children, dry ground that needs rain, and a hot fire that can't be stopped.

¹⁷Any person who makes fun of his father or refuses to obey his mother will be punished. It will be as bad for him as if his eyes were eaten by vultures and wild birds.

¹⁸There are three things that are hard for me to understand—really four things that I don't understand: ¹⁹An eagle flying in the sky, a snake moving on a rock, a ship moving across the ocean, and a man in love with a woman.

²⁰A woman who is not faithful to her husband acts like she has done nothing wrong. She eats, takes a bath, and says she has done nothing wrong.

²¹There are three things that make trouble on the earth—really four that the earth can't bear: ²²A servant that becomes a king, a foolish person that has everything he needs, ²³a woman who is full of hate but still finds a husband, and a servant girl that becomes ruler over the woman she serves.

²⁴There are four things on the earth that are small but very wise:

²⁵ Ants are small and weak, but they save their food all summer;

²⁶ a badger is a small animal, but it is able to make its home in the rocks;

²⁷ locusts have no king, but they are able to work together;

²⁸ lizards are small enough to catch with your hands but you can find them living in kings' homes.

²⁹There are three things that act important when they walk. In fact, there are four:

³⁰ A lion (He is the warrior of the animal kingdom. He runs from nothing.);

³¹ a rooster walking proudly,*
a goat;
and a king among his people.

This is his message to Ithiel and Ucal Or "This man said, 'I am too weak. I am too weak, but I will succeed!'"

a rooster walking proudly Or possibly, "a greyhound" or "a warhorse."

³²If you are foolish enough to become proud and make plans against other people, then stop and think about what you are doing.

³³If a person churns* milk, he makes butter. If a person hits another person’s nose, then blood will come. In the same way, if you make people angry you will cause trouble.

Wise Sayings of King Lemuel

31 These are the wise sayings of King Lemuel. His mother taught him these things.

²You are my son. The son that I love. You are the son that I prayed to have. ³Don’t waste your strength on women. Women destroy kings, so don’t waste yourself on them. ⁴Lemuel, it is not wise for kings to drink wine. It is not wise for rulers to want beer. ⁵They may drink too much and forget what the law says. Then they might take away all the rights of poor people. ⁶Give beer to the poor people. Give wine to those people who are in trouble. ⁷Let them drink and forget that they are poor. Let them forget all their troubles.

⁸If a person can’t help himself, then you should help him. Speak up for a person who can’t speak! Help people who are in trouble! ⁹Stand up for the things you know are right. And judge all people fairly. Protect the rights of poor people and people that need help.

The Perfect Wife

- 10 *It is very hard to find “the perfect woman.”*
But she is worth much more than jewels.
- 11 Her husband depends on her.
He will never be poor.
- 12 She does good for her husband all her life.
She never causes him trouble.
- 13 She is always gathering wool and flax
and gladly making things with her hands.
- 14 She is like a ship from a faraway place.
She brings food home from everywhere.

- 15 She wakes very early in the morning.
She cooks food for her family
and gives the servants their share.
- 16 She looks at land and buys it.
She uses money she has earned
and plants a vineyard.
- 17 She works very hard.
She is strong and able to do all her work.
- 18 When she trades the things she has made,
she always earns a profit.
And she works until late at night.
- 19 She makes her own thread
and weaves her own cloth.
- 20 She always gives to poor people
and helps people that need it.
- 21 She doesn’t worry about her family
when it snows.
She has given them all good, warm clothes.
- 22 She makes sheets and spreads for the beds.
And she wears clothes of fine linen.
- 23 People respect her husband.
He is one of the leaders of the land.
- 24 She is a very good businesswoman.
She makes clothes and belts,
and sells them to businessmen.
- 25 She is praised* and people respect her.
She looks to the future with confidence.
- 26 She speaks with wisdom.
She teaches people to be loving
and kind.
- 27 She is never lazy.
She takes care of the things in her house.
- 28 Her children say good things about her.
Her husband brags about her and says,
- 29 “There are many good women.
But you are the best.”
- 30 Grace and beauty can fool you.
But a woman who respects the Lord
should be praised.
- 31 Give her the reward she deserves.
Praise her in public
for the things she has done.

churn(s) To stir cream for a long time until it becomes butter.
Verses 10-31 In Hebrew, each verse of this poem starts with the next letter of the alphabet, so this poem shows all the good qualities of a woman, “from A to Z”.
the perfect woman Or, “a noble woman.”

She is praised Or, “She is strong.”