

Proverbs 1 - 9

The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel: For learning about wisdom and instruction, for understanding words of insight, for gaining instruction in wise dealing, righteousness, justice, and equity; to teach shrewdness to the simple, knowledge and prudence to the young-- Let the

5 wise also hear and gain in learning, and the discerning acquire skill, to understand a proverb and a figure, the words of the wise and their riddles.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. Hear, my child, your father's instruction, and do not reject your mother's teaching; for they are a fair garland for your head, and

10 pendants for your neck. My child, if sinners entice you, do not consent. If they say, "Come with us, let us lie in wait for blood; let us wantonly ambush the innocent; like Sheol let us swallow them alive and whole, like those who go down to the Pit. We shall find all kinds of costly things; we shall fill our houses with booty. Throw in your lot among us; we will all

15 have one purse"-- my child, do not walk in their way, keep your foot from their paths; for their feet run to evil, and they hurry to shed blood. For in vain is the net baited while the bird is looking on; yet they lie in wait--to kill themselves! and set an ambush--for their own lives! Such is the end of all who are greedy for gain; it takes away the life of its possessors. Wisdom

20 cries out in the street; in the squares she raises her voice. At the busiest

corner she cries out; at the entrance of the city gates she speaks: "How long,
O simple ones, will you love being simple? How long will scoffers delight
in their scoffing and fools hate knowledge? Give heed to my reproof; I will
pour out my thoughts to you; I will make my words known to you. Because
5 I have called and you refused, have stretched out my hand and no one
heeded, and because you have ignored all my counsel and would have none
of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when panic
strikes you, when panic strikes you like a storm, and your calamity comes
like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you. Then they will
10 call upon me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently, but will
not find me. Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of
the LORD, would have none of my counsel, and despised all my reproof,
therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way and be sated with their own
devices. For waywardness kills the simple, and the complacency of fools
15 destroys them; but those who listen to me will be secure and will live at
ease, without dread of disaster." :My child, if you accept my words and
treasure up my commandments within you, making your ear attentive to
wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; if you indeed cry out for
insight, and raise your voice for understanding; if you seek it like silver, and
20 search for it as for hidden treasures-- then you will understand the fear of

the LORD and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding; he stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk blamelessly, guarding the paths of justice and preserving the way of his faithful ones. Then you will

5 understand righteousness and justice and equity, every good path; for wisdom will come into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; prudence will watch over you; and understanding will guard you. It will save you from the way of evil, from those who speak perversely, who forsake the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness, who rejoice in doing

10 evil and delight in the perverseness of evil; those whose paths are crooked, and who are devious in their ways. You will be saved from the loose woman, from the adulteress with her smooth words, who forsakes the partner of her youth and forgets her sacred covenant; for her way leads down to death, and her paths to the shades; those who go to her never come back,

15 nor do they regain the paths of life. Therefore walk in the way of the good, and keep to the paths of the just. For the upright will abide in the land, and the innocent will remain in it; but the wicked will be cut off from the land, and the treacherous will be rooted out of it. ¹My child, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments; for length of days and

20 years of life and abundant welfare they will give you. Do not let loyalty and

faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the
tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good repute in the sight of
God and of people. Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely
on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make
5 straight your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and
turn away from evil. It will be a healing for your flesh and a refreshment
for your body. Honor the LORD with your substance and with the first fruits
of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats
will be bursting with wine. My child, do not despise the LORD'S discipline or
10 be weary of his reproof, for the LORD reproves the one he loves, as a father
the son in whom he delights. Happy are those who find wisdom, and those
who get understanding, for her income is better than silver, and her revenue
better than gold. She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire
can compare with her. Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are
15 riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are
peace. She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold
her fast are called happy. The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; by
understanding he established the heavens; by his knowledge the deeps broke
open, and the clouds drop down the dew. My child, do not let these escape
20 from your sight: keep sound wisdom and prudence, and they will be life for

your soul and adornment for your neck. Then you will walk on your way
securely and your foot will not stumble. If you sit down, you will not be
afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. Do not be afraid of
sudden panic, or of the storm that strikes the wicked; for the LORD will be
5 your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught. Do not withhold
good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it. Do
not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come again, tomorrow I will give it"--
when you have it with you. Do not plan harm against your neighbor who
lives trustingly beside you. Do not quarrel with anyone without cause, when
10 no harm has been done to you. Do not envy the violent and do not choose
any of their ways; for the perverse are an abomination to the LORD, but the
upright are in his confidence. The LORD'S curse is on the house of the
wicked, but he blesses the abode of the righteous. Toward the scorers he is
scornful, but to the humble he shows favor. The wise will inherit honor, but
15 stubborn fools, disgrace. Listen, children, to a father's instruction, and be
attentive, that you may gain insight; for I give you good precepts: do not
forsake my teaching. When I was a son with my father, tender, and my
mother's favorite, he taught me, and said to me, "Let your heart hold fast
my words; keep my commandments, and live. Get wisdom; get insight: do
20 not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth. Do not forsake her,

and she will keep you; love her, and she will guard you. The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever else you get, get insight. Prize her highly, and she will exalt you; she will honor you if you embrace her. She will place on your head a fair garland; she will bestow on you a

5 beautiful crown." Hear, my child, and accept my words, that the years of your life may be many. I have taught you the way of wisdom; I have led you in the paths of uprightness. When you walk, your step will not be hampered; and if you run, you will not stumble. Keep hold of instruction; do not let go; guard her, for she is your life. Do not enter the path of the

10 wicked, and do not walk in the way of evildoers. Avoid it; do not go on it; turn away from it and pass on. For they cannot sleep unless they have done wrong; they are robbed of sleep unless they have made someone stumble. For they eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence. But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and

15 brighter until full day. The way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know what they stumble over. My child, be attentive to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them escape from your sight; keep them within your heart. For they are life to those who find them, and healing to all their flesh. Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow

20 the springs of life. Put away from you crooked speech, and put devious talk

far from you. Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you. Keep straight the path of your feet, and all your ways will be sure. Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil. My child, be attentive to my wisdom; incline your ear to my understanding, so that you may hold on to prudence, and your lips may guard knowledge. For the lips of a loose woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil; but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps follow the path to Sheol. She does not keep straight to the path of life; her ways wander, and she does not know it. And now, my child, listen to me, and do not depart from the words of my mouth. Keep your way far from her, and do not go near the door of her house; or you will give your honor to others, and your years to the merciless, and strangers will take their fill of your wealth, and your labors will go to the house of an alien; and at the end of your life you will groan, when your flesh and body are consumed, and you say, "Oh, how I hated discipline, and my heart despised reproof! I did not listen to the voice of my teachers or incline my ear to my instructors. Now I am at the point of utter ruin in the public assembly." Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well. Should your springs be scattered abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be for yourself alone, and

not for sharing with strangers. Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe. May her breasts satisfy you at all times; may you be intoxicated always by her love. Why should you be intoxicated, my son, by another woman and embrace the bosom of an adulteress? For human ways are under the eyes of the LORD, and he examines all their paths. The iniquities of the wicked ensnare them, and they are caught in the toils of their sin. They die for lack of discipline, and because of their great folly they are lost. My child, if you have given your pledge to your neighbor, if you have bound yourself to another, you are snared by the utterance of your lips, caught by the words of your mouth. So do this, my child, and save yourself, for you have come into your neighbor's power: go, hurry, and plead with your neighbor. Give your eyes no sleep and your eyelids no slumber; save yourself like a gazelle from the hunter, like a bird from the hand of the fowler. Go to the ant, you lazybones; consider its ways, and be wise. Without having any chief or officer or ruler, it prepares its food in summer, and gathers its sustenance in harvest. How long will you lie there, O lazybones? When will you rise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want, like an armed warrior. A scoundrel and a villain goes around with crooked speech, winking the eyes, shuffling the feet,

pointing the fingers, with perverted mind devising evil, continually sowing discord; on such a one calamity will descend suddenly; in a moment, damage beyond repair. There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed

5 innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that hurry to run to evil, a lying witness who testifies falsely, and one who sows discord in a family. My child, keep your father's commandment, and do not forsake your mother's teaching. Bind them upon your heart always; tie them around your neck. When you walk, they will lead you; when you lie down, they will

10 watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk with you. For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life, to preserve you from the wife of another, from the smooth tongue of the adulteress. Do not desire her beauty in your heart, and do not let her capture you with her eyelashes; for a prostitute's fee

15 is only a loaf of bread, but the wife of another stalks a man's very life. Can fire be carried in the bosom without burning one's clothes? Or can one walk on hot coals without scorching the feet? So is he who sleeps with his neighbor's wife; no one who touches her will go unpunished. Thieves are not despised who steal only to satisfy their appetite when they are hungry. Yet if

20 they are caught, they will pay sevenfold; they will forfeit all the goods of

their house. But he who commits adultery has no sense; he who does it
destroys himself. He will get wounds and dishonor, and his disgrace will not
be wiped away. For jealousy arouses a husband's fury, and he shows no
restraint when he takes revenge. He will accept no compensation, and refuses
5 a bribe no matter how great. My child, keep my words and store up my
commandments with you; keep my commandments and live, keep my
teachings as the apple of your eye; bind them on your fingers, write them on
the tablet of your heart. Say to wisdom, "You are my sister," and call
insight your intimate friend, that they may keep you from the loose woman,
10 from the adulteress with her smooth words. For at the window of my house
I looked out through my lattice, and I saw among the simple ones, I
observed among the youths, a young man without sense, passing along the
street near her corner, taking the road to her house in the twilight, in the
evening, at the time of night and darkness. Then a woman comes toward
15 him, decked out like a prostitute, wily of heart. She is loud and wayward;
her feet do not stay at home; now in the street, now in the squares, and at
every corner she lies in wait. She seizes him and kisses him, and with
impudent face she says to him: "I had to offer sacrifices, and today I have
paid my vows; so now I have come out to meet you, to seek you eagerly,
20 and I have found you! I have decked my couch with coverings, colored

spreads of Egyptian linen; I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and
cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love until morning; let us delight
ourselves with love. For my husband is not at home; he has gone on a long
journey. He took a bag of money with him; he will not come home until
5 full moon." With much seductive speech she persuades him; with her smooth
talk she compels him. Right away he follows her, and goes like an ox to the
slaughter, or bounds like a stag toward the trap until an arrow pierces its
entrails. He is like a bird rushing into a snare, not knowing that it will cost
him his life. And now, my children, listen to me, and be attentive to the
10 words of my mouth. Do not let your hearts turn aside to her ways; do not
stray into her paths. for many are those she has laid low, and numerous are
her victims. Her house is the way to Sheol, going down to the chambers of
death. ¹Does not wisdom call, and does not understanding raise her voice?
On the heights, beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand; beside
15 the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries out:
"To you, O people, I call, and my cry is to all that live. O simple ones,
learn prudence; acquire intelligence, you who lack it. Hear, for I will speak
noble things, and from my lips will come what is right; for my mouth will
utter truth; wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my
20 mouth are righteous; there is nothing twisted or crooked in them. They are

all straight to one who understands and right to those who find knowledge.

Take my instruction instead of silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold;
for wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare
with her. I, wisdom, live with prudence, and I attain knowledge and

5 discretion. The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and
the way of evil and perverted speech I hate. I have good advice and sound
wisdom; I have insight, I have strength. By me kings reign, and rulers decree
what is just; by me rulers rule, and nobles, all who govern rightly. I love
those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me. Riches and

10 honor are with me, enduring wealth and prosperity. My fruit is better than
gold, even fine gold, and my yield than choice silver. I walk in the way of
righteousness, along the paths of justice, endowing with wealth those who
love me, and filling their treasuries. The LORD created me at the beginning
of his work, the first of his acts of long ago. Ages ago I was set up, at the

15 first, before the beginning of the earth. When there were no depths I was
brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. Before the
mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth-- when he
had not yet made earth and fields, or the world's first bits of soil. When he
established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of

20 the deep, when he made firm the skies above, when he established the

fountains of the deep, when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the
waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the
foundations of the earth, then I was beside him, like a master worker; and I
was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited
5 world and delighting in the human race. And now, my children, listen to me:
happy are those who keep my ways. Hear instruction and be wise, and do
not neglect it. Happy is the one who listens to me, watching daily at my
gates, waiting beside my doors. For whoever finds me finds life and obtains
favor from the LORD; but those who miss me injure themselves; all who hate
10 me love death." ¶Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn her seven
pillars. She has slaughtered her animals, she has mixed her wine, she has
also set her table. She has sent out her servant-girls, she calls from the
highest places in the town, "You that are simple, turn in here!" To those
without sense she says, "Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I
15 have mixed. Lay aside immaturity, and live, and walk in the way of insight."
Whoever corrects a scoffer wins abuse; whoever rebukes the wicked gets
hurt. A scoffer who is rebuked will only hate you; the wise, when rebuked,
will love you. Give instruction to the wise, and they will become wiser still;
teach the righteous and they will gain in learning. The fear of the LORD is
20 the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. For

by me your days will be multiplied, and years will be added to your life. If
you are wise, you are wise for yourself; if you scoff, you alone will bear it.
The foolish woman is loud; she is ignorant and knows nothing. She sits at
the door of her house, on a seat at the high places of the town, calling to
5 those who pass by, who are going straight on their way, "You who are
simple, turn in here!" And to those without sense she says, "Stolen water is
sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." But they do not know that the
dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of Sheol.*

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