

AT HOME IN THE BOOK OF
Proverbs
LIVING DAILY IN THE WISDOM OF GOD

Kristie Gant

SAMPLE PAGES:

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Will You Join Me?

(Introductory page and Lesson One)

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About the Study

Every once in a while, I wake up in the middle of a very dark night and decide to get a drink from my kitchen. As I go, I don't turn on any lights. I don't walk slowly or put my arms out to feel my way.

Yet, I don't stumble. I know the way from my bed to the kitchen. I know that I must go around the living room chair and past my small desk. I know which cupboard to open and which shelf has cups on it. I don't stumble because it is my home. I have studied its layout, learned all about its unique features, and spent much time in it.

The same is true with the Word of God. The more a believer learns its layout, discovers its truths, and simply spends time in it, the more familiar, comfortable, usable and beloved it becomes.

I designed this course with the above in mind. As you study, my prayer is that you will, indeed, become more "at home" in the Word.

At Home in the Book of Proverbs is an eleven-week¹ inductive-style Bible study course. Through numerous study methods, you will discover for yourself many essential truths about the wisdom of God!

This study will equip you to be progressively more "at home" in the book of Proverbs by becoming familiar with its layout, contents and major themes. However, it is not simply an overview. Each lesson examines Scripture in depth. Study methods include cross-referencing, reasoning from the Scriptures, word studies, listing, comparing and contrasting, and more. An evaluation activity after every two lessons will help you retain what you have learned.

Quotations throughout the course come from the New King James Version of the Bible. Using another translation, such as the English Standard Version, New American Standard or New International Version, to answer questions should pose no problems. Paraphrases will be more difficult to use for study.

The course includes the following features:

"Laying the Foundation"

These five pages set the foundation for the course as a whole, and should be read before beginning the weekly lessons. In a class setting, the leader may cover this section at the initial meeting. If you join a class late or miss its initial meeting, read "Laying the Foundation" and then jump to the lesson the class is currently completing. You may complete missed lessons after you finish the class.

Memorization activities and helps

Each week, you will memorize a verse related to the lesson's topic. The verse appears in its entirety opposite the first page of Day One. Complete the fill-in-the-blank verse each day. Try to complete the blanks more and more by memory as each week goes on. At the bottom of each main verse page is "Now where do I find that verse?" This contains a memory jogger that will help you recall the chapter where the verse is located. (As with most things in a home, if we can remember the general area where we left something, we can usually find it!)

¹ You may opt to increase the overall length of this course in order to allow for shorter homework assignments or to fit different church or group calendars. For example: the course takes twelve weeks if you allow a week to complete the *Introductory Assignment*, and Lesson Eight is easily transformed into a two-week or three-week study if you have class members complete all activities (rather than choosing three). In addition, any or all lessons may be divided into two parts. (The ☞ icon in the margin designates the dividing point.) For additional length-of-study options see the Leader's Guide available at: www.inpraiseministries.com.

Daily list of necessary materials

If you study “on the go,” you may wish to check the cover page of each lesson before you leave home. It lists the materials (other than this book and a pencil) that you will need to have with you for each day’s study.

Topical or sectional lessons

Even though this is an in-depth study, almost every lesson can stand alone. This means that you are able to join a class already in session and not feel left behind; miss a class because of illness or vacation and not be pressed to complete twice as much work before being able to fully rejoin the class; and complete (or assign to class members or disciples) lessons out of sequence in order to meet pressing spiritual needs or concerns.

Shorter study options

Most daily lessons require approximately 30-40 minutes of study time. For those with a more limited study time, longer assignments often contain optional questions and/or boldface and non-boldface passages to consider. In these instances, skipping the optional questions and completing only the boldface items will provide a good overview of essential truths. For additional study options, see the footnote on the previous page.

Calls to prayer

Throughout the study, there are encouragements to respond to God’s Word in a time of prayer. Often, the study suggests topics for this time, but you may choose to change or add to them. After your time of prayer, the study asks you to initial a box in order to hold you accountable not to bypass this essential element of study. You may, of course, write out your prayers if you wish.

“Tests” after every even-numbered lesson

Each “Make Yourself at Home!” page contains twenty questions that will help you determine the amount of content you are retaining and also challenge you to consider how you might use the Scriptures in everyday life.

Children’s pages

Each lesson has corresponding songs, activities, stories and questions to involve children from birth through age twelve in your study. There are also survey questions designed to initiate thinking and open up communication with teens. All of these are located near the back of the book in the section entitled, “Will You Join Me?”

Application questions

Of course, the most important part of any study is application and a changed life! Each lesson contains straightforward, honest, frank questions designed to, lovingly, cut to the heart. I pray that you will come away from every lesson with:

A greater love for, and knowledge of, the LORD our God.

A sense of being more “at home” in His Word.

A new (or renewed) desire to serve the LORD in truth and with purity and passion.

A greater ability to apply God’s principles and wisdom to every aspect of life and discipling relationships.

An increased concern for passing God’s truth on to the next generation.

May the LORD bless your study!

Kristie

Wisdom Speaks

*An overview of the book of Proverbs
and
Chapters One through Three*

Tools needed for each day's study:

- Day One** Bible.
- Day Two** Bible.
- Day Three** Bible, English dictionary or Old Testament word study tools. (*Optional: commentary.*)
- Day Four** Bible.
- Day Five** Bible.

*For the LORD gives wisdom;
From His mouth come
knowledge and understanding;*

Proverbs 2:6

Now where was that verse?

This verse mentions **two** things that come from the mouth of the LORD—and it is located in chapter **two**.

Lesson One

Day One _____
today's day/date

“For _____ LORD _____ wisdom;
_____ His _____ come
knowledge and _____;”
Proverbs ____:6

The author of Hebrews writes, “. . . you have forgotten the exhortation **which speaks to you as to sons**,”¹ and then quotes from the book of Proverbs. Though Proverbs was written approximately 1,000 years before Hebrews, its words of wisdom still spoke to readers in New Testament times — and it continues to speak to each successive generation. It is a book of timeless, practical wisdom for every aspect of daily life.

“Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven.”

Psalm 119:89

1. The book of Proverbs consists of five collections of writings. Record the author(s) of each group.

Proverbs 1:1

Proverbs 22:17²

Proverbs 25:1

Proverbs 30:1

Proverbs 31:1

2. According to Proverbs 22:17-21, why should people hear and heed the words of such wise men?

3. What is the most important thing to remember about the words of Solomon, Agur, and others quoted in the book of Proverbs? (2 Peter 1:19-21)

¹ Hebrews 12:5, emphasis mine.

² The “wise” may refer to Solomon or to other men, whose sayings Solomon (or another) compiled.

4. Second Timothy 3:15-17 lists several purposes for which all of God’s Word is effectual. Write these in the left-hand column below. In the right-hand column, list *at least* five purposes specific to the book of Proverbs.

Purposes of God’s Word

2 Timothy 3:15-17

3:15

3:16

3:16

3:16

3:16

3:17

3:17

Purposes of Proverbs

Proverbs 1:1-6

5. In what ways are these lists similar?

6. Since Solomon was the human author of most of the proverbs, end your study time today by reading 1 Kings 3:5-15 and 4:29-34 to get some background on this wise man. (*Optional*) Record several key points below. Be sure to include 1 Kings 3:12 in your notes.

Did You Know?

Solomon had two names. (2 Samuel 12:24-25)

The name Solomon means “peaceful” and contains the same root word as “Jerusalem.”

The name Jedidiah means “beloved of the LORD.”

Why two names? “‘Solomon’ should be understood ‘as a throne name which David . . . conferred upon his son Jedidiah . . . so as to suggest his (future) appointment as king in (Jeru)salem’”³

³ Frank E. Gaebelien, ed., *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* Vol. 3, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992) 949.

Day Two _____
today's day/date

*“For _____ wisdom;
_____ His _____ come
knowledge and _____;”*
Proverbs ____:6

Now it's time to really get to know the “floor plan” of Proverbs. As you look at the book, you will notice a shift in style between chapters nine and ten. In general, the first nine chapters are arranged by topic; the last 22 chapters are more a collection of short statements. Take three or four minutes to familiarize yourself with the form of the last 22 chapters (Chapters 10 – 31) and then begin with Question #1 below.

1. Read through the first four chapters of Proverbs. As you do, record words or phrases that are repeated over and over. Choose two or three that seem to occur most often and write them in the box below.

2. I hope you saw the word “wisdom” repeated many times. In fact, the words “wise” and “wisdom” occur approximately twenty times in the first four chapters. According to God’s Word, there are two types of wisdom. Record how these two categories of wisdom are defined from the following passages and then, in sentence or list form, sum up your findings in the box below.

a. **1 Corinthians 1:20-21**

b. **1 Corinthians 2:4-7**

c. **James 3:13-17**

Summary: Two types of wisdom

3. With the two types of wisdom in mind (God’s wisdom versus worldly/sensual/demonic wisdom), read Proverbs 8:1-6 and 9:13-18 out loud. (You will look further at Chapters 8 and 9 in Lesson Two.)

a. Does God hide His wisdom, making it hard to find or know? Explain.

b. Is the world’s wisdom (foolishness/folly) hidden and silent, or is it bold and loud? Explain.

c. Given that both types of wisdom cry aloud, how can someone know which voice to heed?

4. At this point in your study, what verse or thought stands out most to you? Why?

Day Three _____
today's day/date

“For _____ wisdom;
_____ His _____ come
_____ and _____;”
Proverbs _____:

Today’s study begins a multi-day, chapter-by-chapter overview of Proverbs 1 through 9. These short studies are each different, and they should help you become more familiar with the book. They will be useful in personal meditation and in discipling others. Because these first two weeks of study are an overview, the truths in them are fairly general. Beginning with Lesson Three, the studies are more detailed and are by theme rather than by chapter.

The overview of chapter one focuses only on the first seven verses and involves word studies. (Lesson Six covers the rest of chapter one.) Word studies are like windows in a house: they let in a lot of light! In order to fully understand God’s message, we need to understand the words He chose to use. Proverbs was originally written in Hebrew, and because translations have limitations, knowing the complete definition of one or more Hebrew words helps to uncover unique shades of meaning in the original text.

1. As you saw in Day One, the first six verses of Proverbs give its purpose. The seventh verse reveals its theme. Review Proverbs 1:1-7 by reading it aloud.

2. Consulting an Old Testament (Hebrew) word study reference, look up the definitions of the following words. Strong's numbers are in brackets.⁴ *Note:* If you do not have access to Hebrew word study tools, record appropriate definitions from an English dictionary.

a. 1:2, 3, 7 instruction [Strong's #4148]

b. 1:2 perceive [Strong's #995]

c. 1:5 hear [Strong's #8085]

d. (*Optional*) Define a word of your choice from Proverbs 1:1-7.

3. One purpose of Proverbs is that “*a wise man will hear and increase learning;*” however, not all are wise. Proverbs 1:22 mentions three kinds of people that lack wisdom.

a. Note what you learn about each type of person. (*Optional*) Record definitions from a Hebrew word study reference.

1) simple ones [Strong's #6612]

2) scorners/mockers/scoffers [Strong's #3887]

3) fools [Strong's #3684]

b. Using Proverbs 1:4-5, 1:22, 8:5 and 9:4, which of the four groups (wise, simple, scorners or fools) do you think the book of Proverbs is *primarily* trying to reach? Why?

4. Now, re-read Proverbs 1:1-7. Using terms and insights from the questions above, explain the purpose(s) of Proverbs.

⁴ Strong's numbering system allows someone to define Hebrew and Greek words by number rather than by spelling. This system is found in most editions of *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* and other study tools such as *The Complete Word Study Old Testament* and *The Complete Word Study New Testament*. Words to define are NKJV. ESV, and other versions, may differ in their translation. For help on how to do a word study, see Appendix F.

5. (Optional) Spend remaining study time seeing what your commentaries have to say about Proverbs 1:1-7. Record the most helpful insight.

6. Now, on your knees if possible, spend time in prayer. Share with God your thoughts about wisdom and your hopes for this study. Be sure to thank Him for His Word (in this case, particularly for the book of Proverbs) and ask Him, in the weeks ahead, to do even more than you can now anticipate. When done, initial the box as an “Amen” to your prayer.



Day Four _____
today's day/date

| |
|--|
| <p><i>“For _____;</i> <i>_____ His _____</i> <i>_____.”</i> Proverbs ____:____</p> |
|--|

Proverbs chapter two is one long sentence in the original manuscript.⁵ While we might call it a run-on sentence, it is really the heart of a father calling his son to a life of wisdom — a call that we *all* need to hear and heed! After beginning with prayer, enjoy discovering three remarkable lists within the 22 verses of chapter two — and if time permits, complete the optional assignment at the end of each section.

1. Using Proverbs 2:1-5:

a. Look for the “if’s” and “then” in order to complete the following list.

Conditions for finding the knowledge of God
Proverbs 2:1-5

b. In one sentence, sum up what you have learned from this list.

c. (Optional) Record any New Testament verses relevant to this list. (One possibility: Matthew 7:7-11.)

⁵ Tremper Longman III, *Proverbs*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006) 118.

2. The next list is in verses 6-9.

a. Looking for the words “LORD” and “He,” complete the list:

The LORD's work on behalf of those seeking wisdom
Proverbs 2:6-9

b. (Optional) Record any verses outside of Proverbs that relate to this list. (For instance, Colossians 2:2-3.)

3. The final list for today's study is in verses 10-22.

a. Complete the list:

Results of having received wisdom and knowledge
Proverbs 2:10-22

b. Write a short sentence to sum up what you learned from this list.

c. (Optional) Record any other verses or biblical accounts (stories) that illustrate the principles set forth in this list. (For instance, Esther.)

4. Which of the following statements describes you? (Check all that apply.)

_____ I am meeting the conditions for finding the knowledge of God.

_____ I want to know God's wisdom. I am beginning to seek it and to ask God to give it.

_____ Wisdom and knowledge have become so pleasant to my soul that I keep, more often than not, to the paths of righteousness.

_____ None of the above. (If none of these statements describe you, why not?)

Day Five _____
today's day/date

| |
|----------------------------------|
| “ _____ ; _____ ;” _____ ; |
|----------------------------------|

Commands in Scripture are one of my favorite things to look for. They just tell me what I should do in a straightforward manner—and it is usually easy for me to look at my life and ask, “Am I living in light of this command?” Chapter three is full of commands from a father to his son. Read them as loving commands from your heavenly Father to you.

1. Chapter three reveals things that should characterize the life of a believer. You will discover one characteristic of a true Christian each time you find a command. Read through the chapter looking for commands. When you find one, record both the command and the accompanying characteristic on the following chart (page 11). The first six are completed for you. ***If time is limited***, you may paraphrase or complete only the right-hand column.

2. Read down the right-hand column of your chart and sincerely ask yourself whether these characteristics describe your life. Are you living in accord with the Father’s will? If not, why not? Where are you in disobedience? What is your prayer to the LORD? (*Again, after praying, initial the box as the “Amen” to your prayer.*)

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

3. (*Optional*) Consult a trusted commentary for additional insights on chapters two and three. (You will spend more time on chapter one in an upcoming lesson.) In the space below, record the thought you find most helpful.

4. Say your memory verse aloud.

a. Did you refer to this verse in any conversations or correspondence this week? If so, when and how?

b. Whether or not Proverbs 2:6 was a part of your recent communications, God may provide future opportunities to share these words with those you know or disciple. Record one or two possible situations in which you might refer to this verse. (*Optional*) Go one step further and record specific words you might say in those situations. If you’d like an example to get you started, see *Isabel’s Dilemma* on page 171 for one idea.

Chapter Three

Commands:

- 3:1 *Do not forget my law
Let your heart keep my commands*
- 3:3 *Let not mercy and truth forsake you;
Bind them around your neck,
Write them on the tablet of your heart,*
- 3:5 *Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
Lean not on your own understanding;*
- 3:6 *In all your ways acknowledge Him . . .*
- 3:7 *Do not be wise in your own eyes;
Fear the LORD and depart from evil.*
- 3:9 *Honor the LORD with your possessions,
And with the firstfruits of all your increase;*
- 3:11

*A believer's life is to be
characterized by:*

Obedience

Mercy, truth

Trust, dependence upon God

Awareness of God, dependence

Humility, fear of the LORD, purity

Giving

Will You Join Me?

Involving Children in the Pursuit of Wisdom

As you make yourself at home in God's Word, you will want to invite others, especially your children and grandchildren, to share in what you are learning. The following resources will help you in this endeavor.

Memory Verse Song: You may sing these songs to infants and/or teach them to younger children. If you have both older and younger children, the older ones might enjoy teaching the younger ones and participating in the "together time."

If you are not familiar with a tune, try asking a friend or putting the words to any tune that fits. Some tunes are fairly standardized (almost everyone sings "Jesus Loves Me" in the same way) while others vary a little. If the lyrics seem to have too many or too few syllables, be creative. After working with them for a short time, you should be able to make the songs very "singable"!

Children's Activity: These activities are designed for children ages 4-9; however, you may adapt them for older children. Of course, depending on the maturity and interests of your children, they may find some activities more appealing than others. Many are also appropriate for a children's Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, etc.

"Real Life" Story and Discussion Questions: These are written with 8-12 year old children in mind. Like the songs, they relate to each week's memory verse. Each story demonstrates one aspect of the wisdom that Proverbs holds for children, helping them to see that Scripture is relevant to the everyday issues they face. The questions should help children to think about spiritual things, learn to turn to God's Word for answers, and build stronger relationships with their parents through discussion. Although the memory verse is not written at the beginning of each story, be sure to quote it or read it before you start the story!

Teen Survey Question: This is an opportunity for your teen to open up and let you see into his or her life and thoughts. Far too many families have lost closeness and communication by the time a child reaches the teen years. What should be an exciting and rewarding time as a son or daughter moves from childhood to adulthood too often becomes a time of fear, distrust and diminishing communication between family members.

Please note. . .

These survey questions are not to be an opening for a teaching/lecturing/ "fixing my child" time. As you complete each "survey," your one goal should be to gain insight into your child's heart, life and circumstances. Ecclesiastes 3 says that there is a time for everything. The survey is a time to listen. Your main response should be something like, "Oh, I think I see what you're saying." or "I really appreciate your openness. Do you have any other thoughts about this?" or "Thank you for taking the time to help me with my lesson."

Lesson One

The LORD Gives Wisdom

To the tune of, "Take Me Out to the Ball Game"

For the LORD gives us wisdom,
For the LORD makes us wise,
And from His mouth come two things we need:
These are His knowledge and understanding. . .

So it's ask, ask, ask for His wisdom;
This we never should doubt.
He will give, give, give it to us
As we search it out!

Make a Proverbs Coloring Book

Draw and color the main idea of one or more proverbs. You may choose to do one per day for seven days or to continue this project throughout the course.

Materials: Three-ring binder or three-prong folder.
White paper with verses written at the top or bottom.
Black pencil with crayons or colored pencils.

Cover: *Proverbs in Pictures*
by _____ child's name _____

Additional thoughts: Record the date each page is completed.
Discuss the meaning of the verse(s) with children before they begin working.
Display each work of art for a short time before returning it to the book.
Use verses that can be easily illustrated and that correspond to your study.

| | | |
|--|----------------|---------|
| Keeping in mind the age and interests of your child, these are some verses you may wish to use: | Proverbs 1:8-9 | 4:14-15 |
| | 2:6-7 | 4:18-19 |
| | 3:3 | 4:23 |
| | 3:9 | 6:6 |
| | 3:13-15 | 7:1-3 |
| | 3:27 | 8:1-4 |
| | | 8:19 |
| | | |

Note: When drawing, wisdom can be indicated with a **W** on a piece of clothing or on an object.

For example, for Proverbs 3:3, a child could draw himself with long chains of mercy and truth around his neck . . . or he could draw some lines inside a heart and write the words "mercy" and "truth" on the "tablet." The picture itself is not as important as hearing and understanding the verse. Be sure to discuss the verse's meaning and its real-life applications with your child!

Isabel's Dilemma

Isabel walked home slowly after school. She saw that her mom was pulling weeds in the front yard, so she walked over, sat down near the flower bed, and began to make designs in the dirt with her finger.

“What’s wrong, Isabel?” her mother asked. “You’re usually so talkative after a whole day at school.”

“I don’t know what to do. Today, Karen told me that her parents are going to get a divorce,” Isabel began. “She was really sad, and I was sad for her. I told her I was sorry, but since I didn’t know what else to do, I just said that I had to go home and that I would see her next week. Then I left.” Isabel paused. “Walking home, I felt like I had hurt her, too. But I didn’t know what to say. I’m so confused. I feel like I need. . . .”

“Wisdom?” her mom asked.

“Yeah, I guess so. Can you give me some wisdom about how to help Karen?”

“I can, but the Bible says that the LORD is the One who gives us wisdom — it is from His mouth that we get knowledge and understanding. Although it is good for you to ask other people for godly counsel, the best place to go is to God’s Word. After dinner, would you like to look with me at some Bible verses about how to encourage someone who is going through a hard time?”

“Yeah, I think I’d like that. Maybe I’ll go inside and pray for wisdom, too. And I’ll pray that Karen and her family can look to God for help.”

“I think that sounds like a wise idea already,” Isabel’s mom said. “I’ll be praying for them, too.”

- ◆ Isabel had trouble knowing how to help a friend whose parents were going through a divorce. Have you ever wanted to help or encourage a friend who was going through a tough time, but you didn’t know what to say? If so, what was the situation?
- ◆ Which do you think is better: to say something to help someone (even if you don’t know whether it is right) or to say nothing? Can you think of another option? If so, what is it?
- ◆ Name some of the people who can help you find God’s wisdom in the Bible?
- ◆ Is God’s wisdom different from other kinds of wisdom? How does it differ?
- ◆ Pray now for a friend or family that you know who are going through some tough times.

Teen Survey Questions

We learned this week that the LORD gives wisdom and that those who find and live by God’s wisdom will generally live a longer and safer life. (Proverbs 2:7-11; 3:2)

Is living a long life something we should desire? Why or why not?

Do you think people want to live a longer life?

If they wouldn’t, why not?

If they would, would they be likely to do anything to get it — or would they just take it if it comes and not worry if it doesn’t? Why?