How to Read Proverbs

Read Proverbs with Eager Expectation
One enemy that keeps people from gaining wisdom is a bad attitude. For some people learning about wisdom is drudgery. They expect no benefits from wisdom and that is exactly what they get. Other people seek wisdom with eager expectation. They ask themselves good questions as they study. If I continually read advice and ideas from one of the wisest men in history, how is it possible that my life won’t be transformed for the better? As I read today, what amazing idea will I find that will really help me? When you read Proverbs with eager expectation it opens your heart to receive the wisdom you need.

Read Proverbs with Consistency
Proverbs has 31 chapters. You can pick the Proverb of the day based on the day of the month. For instance, if today were September 22nd read Proverbs chapter 22. Pick out your favorite verse and write it down in a journal. Write down why you think this verse is important. If you do this consistently for the next five years, Solomon’s guarantee of success in finding wisdom will become a reality for you. If you don’t read Proverbs with consistency for a period of years, it is very unlikely that it will really help you.

- Read the chapter of Proverbs for the corresponding day of the month.
- Select your favorite verse from the chapter.
- Write it down in a journal or notebook.
- Paraphrase the verse in your own words.
- Next explain why you like this verse. Why is it important or helpful to you?
- Wisdom requires developing consistent patterns of action. Write down one way you could apply the main idea of the verse with consistent action.

Read Proverbs with a Friend or Mentor
Pick one or two friends and ask them if they might be interested in reading Proverbs together. You might also consider reading Proverbs with a mentor who has more life experience. With them, make a commitment to read Proverbs and share some of the verses that stand out to you. You could also meet once a week or at another regular interval and discuss some of the ideas and insights you are learning about. Some people might prefer to do a topical study of Proverbs or do a workbook like this one together. Wisdom becomes much more powerful when it is studied together in a community of friends or with a mentor.

- Pick one or two other friends that are committed to read Proverbs together.

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• If it is helpful, consider sending each other your favorite verse for the day through email or text several times each week.

• Meet once per week or at another regular interval. When you meet, read a chapter of Proverbs together. Let each person take turns reading two or three verses out loud until you read the entire chapter.

• Have each person share their favorite verse from that chapter of Proverbs and explain why they feel it is important or meaningful.

• Also consider having each person share one area where they would like to learn or grow where they could use some wisdom.

• Consider making a “Pearl” together based on one of your favorite verses. (This is an exercise you will learn in a later section.)

Read Proverbs with Application in Mind

Wisdom requires doing something. It is a good idea to store up knowledge, but without application you will receive little benefit. Head knowledge without application is like a car without the gasoline. You must apply knowledge before it can take you from where you are to where you want to be. Wisdom is most comfortable with people who form patterns of beneficial action. These are called wise habits. It takes too much brainpower and energy to come up with something new every day. Find several Proverbs that you really like. Come up with a 5-10 minute action that you could perform with consistency, and do it every day for a month. Switch up your patterns until you find something that is both comfortable for you and highly beneficial. Ideally it should consume a relatively small amount of time and energy. Wisdom flourishes in a person’s life when there is an environment of habitual patterns of beneficial action.

Questions for Reflection:

1. Why is reading Proverbs with eager expectation important?

2. Why is reading Proverbs with consistency important?

3. Why is reading Proverbs with application in mind important?