

Language: English

Book: Proverbs

Proverbs

Chapter 1

- ¹ The proverbs of Solomon son of David, the king of Israel.
- ² These proverbs are to teach wisdom and instruction,
to teach words of insight,
- ³ that you may receive instruction in prudent behavior,
righteousness, justice, and uprightness.
- ⁴ These proverbs are also to give wisdom to the naive,
and to give knowledge and discretion to the youth.
- ⁵ Let wise people listen and increase their learning,
and let discerning people get wise counsel,
- ⁶ to understand proverbs, parables,
and words of wise people and their riddles.
- ⁷ The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge—
fools despise wisdom and instruction.
- ⁸ My son, hear the instruction of your father
and do not abandon the rules of your mother;
- ⁹ they will be a graceful wreath for your head
and pendants hanging from your neck.
- ¹⁰ My son, if sinners try to entice you into their sin,
do not go with them.
- ¹¹ If they say, "Come with us,
let us lie in wait for blood,
let us hide and attack innocent people for no reason;
- ¹² let us swallow them up alive, like Sheol takes away those who are healthy,
and make them like those who go down into the pit;
- ¹³ we will find all kinds of valuable things;
we will fill our houses with plunder;
- ¹⁴ throw in your lot with us,
and we will all have one purse together"—
- ¹⁵ my son, do not walk down that path with them;
do not let your foot touch where they walk;
- ¹⁶ their feet run to evil
and they hurry to shed blood.
- ¹⁷ For it is useless to spread the net
in the sight of any bird.
- ¹⁸ These men lie in wait for their own blood—
they set an ambush for their own lives.
- ¹⁹ So are the ways of everyone who gains profit by violence;
unjust gain takes away the lives of those who hold on to it.
- ²⁰ Wisdom cries aloud in the street,
she raises her voice in the open places;
- ²¹ at the head of the noisy streets she cries out,
at the entrance of the city gates she speaks her sayings,

- 22 "How long, you naive people, will you love being naive?
How long, you mockers, will you delight in mockery,
and how long, you fools, will you hate knowledge?
- 23 Turn at my correction;
I will pour out my spirit to you;
I will make my words known to you.
- 24 I have called, and you have refused to listen;
I reached out with my hand, but there was no one who paid attention.
- 25 But you have ignored all my instruction
and paid no attention to my correction.
- 26 I will laugh at your calamity,
I will mock you when the terror comes—
- 27 when your fearful dread comes like a storm
and disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind,
when distress and anguish come upon you.
- 28 Then they will call upon me, and I will not answer;
they will diligently seek me, but they will not find me.
- 29 Because they hate knowledge
and did not choose the fear of Yahweh,
- 30 they would not follow my instruction,
and they despised all my correction.
- 31 They will eat the fruit of their ways,
and with the fruit of their schemes they will be filled.
- 32 For the naive are killed when they turn away,
and the indifference of fools will destroy them.
- 33 But whoever listens to me will dwell in safety
and will rest secure with no fear of disaster."

Proverbs 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The first chapter of proverbs begins with a type of introduction in verses 1-7. It mentions Solomon, son of David. Verse 7 contains a foundational verse for the whole book. It defines wisdom.

Special concepts in this chapter

Parallelism

Proverbs are often written without any surrounding context and in two lines of text. Each line will have a certain relationship to the other line.

Proverbs 1:1

General Information:

Verses 2-33 are poetry.

Proverbs 1:2

to teach wisdom and instruction

This can be reworded so that the abstract nouns "wisdom" and "instruction" can be stated as adjectives or verbs. Alternate translation: "to teach you how to be wise and to instruct you about how to live moral lives"

to teach words of insight

"to help you understand wise teachings"

Proverbs 1:3

that you may receive

Here "you" refers to the readers. If it is more natural in your language you can state it as an inclusive "we." Alternate translation: "that we may receive"

may receive instruction in prudent behavior

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "behavior" is stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "may receive instruction in how to live prudently"

Proverbs 1:4

are also to give wisdom to the naive

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "wisdom" can be stated as the adjective "wise." This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "also teach to those who are naive how to be wise"

naive

inexperienced or immature

to give knowledge and discretion to the youth

The abstract nouns "knowledge" and "discretion" can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: "and to teach to the youth what he needs to know and how to discern the right thing to do"

the youth

"every young person" or "young people"

discretion

knowing what should be done in a particular situation

Proverbs 1:5

Let wise people listen and increase their learning

"Let those who are wise pay attention and learn even more"

let discerning people get wise counsel

"let people who have understanding learn from these proverbs how to make good decisions"

Proverbs 1:6

riddles

sayings that one can understand only after thinking about them

Proverbs 1:7

General Information:

A father teaches his child.

Yahweh

This is the name of God that he revealed to his people in the Old Testament. See the translationWord page about Yahweh concerning how to translate this.

fools despise wisdom and instruction

"those who do not value what is wise and instructive are fools"

Proverbs 1:8

do not abandon

"do not ignore" or "do not reject"

Proverbs 1:9

they will be a graceful wreath for your head and pendants hanging from your neck

The rules and instructions that parents teach their children are so valuable and important that they are spoken of as if they were a beautiful wreath or pendant that a person wears. Alternate translation: "they will make you wise just as wearing a wreath on your head or a pendant around your neck makes you beautiful"

wreath

an woven circle made of leaves or flowers

pendants

jewelry that is worn around the neck

Proverbs 1:10

try to entice you into their sin

"try to persuade you to sin as they do"

do not go with them

"refuse to go them" or "do not listen to them"

Proverbs 1:11

If they say

Here the speaker gives an example of what sinners may try to entice someone to do.

lie in wait

"hide and wait for the right time"

Proverbs 1:12

General Information:

Verses 12-14 end the imagined statement of the sinners who are trying to entice others to sin.

let us swallow them up alive, like Sheol takes away those who are healthy

The sinners speak of murdering innocent people as if they were Sheol and they would take a living and healthy person down to the place where dead people go.

let us swallow ... like Sheol takes away

This speaks of the grave as if it were a person that swallows humans and takes them down to the place of the dead.

like Sheol takes away those who are healthy

The wicked expect to destroy their victims in the same way Sheol, the place of the dead, takes away even healthy people.

those who go down into the pit

These words could be 1) a literal reference to travelers who fall into a deep hole where no one will ever find them or 2) a euphemism for people who die and enter Sheol, the place of the dead.

Proverbs 1:13

we will find

The word "find" is a euphemism or metonym for "get" or "seize" by violence.

Proverbs 1:14

throw in your lot with us

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "join us"

we will all have one purse together

Here "purse" represents everything that they steal. Alternate translation: "we will equally share everything that we steal"

purse

a bag for carrying money

Proverbs 1:15

General Information

This is the continuation of the sentence that started in 1:11 with "If they say."

do not walk down that path with them; do not let your foot touch where they walk

To avoid behaving the same way as the sinners do is spoken of as if the son were to avoid walking on or even touching the paths that sinners walk on. Alternate translation: "do not go with the sinners, and do not do what they do"

Proverbs 1:16

their feet run to evil

The sinners having an eager interest in doing evil things is spoken of as if they were running to evil. Alternate translation: "they are eager to do wicked things"

their feet run

Here "feet" represents the whole person. Alternate translation: "they run"

to shed blood

Here "blood" represents a person's life. To "shed blood" means to murder someone.

Proverbs 1:17

For it is useless to spread the net in the sight of any bird

This metaphor compares the wisdom of birds who avoid traps that they see to the foolishness of sinners who get caught in traps they make for themselves.

Proverbs 1:18

These men lie in wait for their own blood—they set an ambush for their own lives

This finishes the comparison started in [Proverbs 1:17]

These men lie in wait for their own blood

To lie in wait is to hide, ready to do something wicked. Alternate translation: "It is as if they are looking for an opportunity to kill themselves" or "They themselves will be killed because they try to kill others"

their own blood

Here "blood" is a metonym for a violent death. Alternate translation: "to kill themselves violently"

they set an ambush for their own lives

Here "their own lives" is a metonym for themselves. Alternate translation: "it is as if they are the ones who are waiting to suddenly attack and kill them"

Proverbs 1:19

So are the ways of everyone

A person's fate or destiny is spoken of as if it were a road a person walks on. Alternate translation: "This is what happens to everyone"

gains profit by violence

If your language has a word for "profit" that has been gained by unjust means, you should use it here.

unjust gain takes away the lives of those who hold on to it

A person destroying themselves by trying to gain wealth through violence, theft, and deceit is spoken of as if the unjust gains will kill those who take it. Alternate translation: "it is like the unjust gains will destroy those who hold on to it"

Proverbs 1:20

General Information:

In 1:20-1:33 Wisdom is spoken of as if it were a woman speaking to the people.

Wisdom cries aloud

If your language does not allow you to treat wisdom as a woman shouting to the people in the city, you might try something like "Grandmother Wisdom cries aloud" or "Honored Miss Wisdom cries aloud" or "Wisdom is like a woman who cries aloud"

raises her voice

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "speaks with a loud voice"

in the open places

This means places where there would be a lot of people. Alternate translation: "in the markets" or "in the town squares"

Proverbs 1:21

at the head of the noisy streets

Possible meanings are 1) "head" refers to the place where busy streets intersect or 2) "head" refers to the top of a wall where people on noisy streets could see and hear wisdom speaking.

Proverbs 1:22

How long, you naive people, will you love being naive?

Wisdom uses this question to rebuke those who are not wise. Alternate translation: "You who are naive must stop loving being naive."

naive

inexperienced or immature

How long, you mockers, will you delight in mockery, and how long, you fools, will you hate knowledge?

Wisdom uses this question to rebuke the mockers and the fools. Alternate translation: "You who mock must stop delighting in mockery, and you fools must stop hating knowledge."

Proverbs 1:23

General Information:

Wisdom continues to speak.

Turn at my correction

Possible meanings are 1) "Repent when you hear me correct you" or 2) "Listen carefully to me when I correct you."

I will pour out my spirit to you

Wisdom telling the people everything she thinks about them is spoken of as if her spirit were a liquid that she would pour out.

spirit

This is a metonym for thoughts. This and the word "words" form a merism of thoughts and words, meaning that wisdom is teaching people everything she has to teach. This word does not refer to the Holy Spirit. Alternate translation: "thoughts"

I will make my words known to you

"I will tell you what I think"

Proverbs 1:24

I reached out with my hand

This phrase is an idiom that means to beckon someone or to invite a person to come. Alternate translation: "I invited you to come to me"

Proverbs 1:25

General Information:

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Proverbs 1:26

General Information:

Wisdom continues to speak, describing what happens to those who ignore her.

I will laugh

This can be stated with the word "therefore" to show that the woman wisdom laughs at them because they ignored her. Alternate translation: "Therefore I will laugh"

at your calamity

"when bad things happen to you"

Proverbs 1:27

when your fearful dread comes like a storm ... like a whirlwind ... come upon you

Terrible things happening to the people is compared to a storm hitting them and causing fear and suffering.

whirlwind

a very strong wind storm that causes damage

Proverbs 1:28

Connecting Statement:

Wisdom continues speaking.

Then they will call upon me

"Then those who ignored me will cry out to me for help"

Proverbs 1:29

Because they hate knowledge

The abstract noun "knowledge" can be stated as the verb "learn." Alternate translation: "Because they refused to learn to be wise"

did not choose the fear of Yahweh

The abstract noun "fear" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "did not fear Yahweh" or "did not honor and respect Yahweh"

Proverbs 1:30

would not follow my instruction

"would not accept my instruction" or "rejected my advice"

Proverbs 1:31

General Information:

Verse 33 ends wisdom's statement that began in Proverbs 1:22.

eat the fruit of their ways

Here a person's behavior is spoken of as if it were a way or road. Also, a person receiving the results of their behavior is spoken of as if the person were eating the fruit of their behavior. Alternate translation: "experience the consequences of their actions"

with the fruit of their schemes they will be filled

"they will eat the fruit of their schemes until they are full." A person receiving the results of their own evil plans is spoken of as eating the fruit of their schemes. Alternate translation: "they will suffer the consequences of their own evil plans"

Proverbs 1:32

naive

inexperienced or immature

are killed when they turn away

A person rejecting wisdom is spoken of as if the person physically turns away from wisdom. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "die because they refuse to learn"

the indifference of fools will destroy them

The abstract noun "indifference" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "fools will die because they do not care about what should be done"

indifference

a lack of interest about something

Proverbs 1:33

General Information:

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Chapter 2

- ¹ My son, if you receive my words
and treasure up my commandments with you,
- ² make your ears pay attention to wisdom
and incline your heart to understanding.
- ³ If you cry out for discernment
and raise your voice for understanding,
- ⁴ if you seek it like you would seek silver
and search for understanding as you would seek hidden treasures,
- ⁵ then you will understand the fear of Yahweh
and you will find the knowledge of God.
- ⁶ For Yahweh gives wisdom;
from his mouth comes knowledge and understanding.
- ⁷ He stores up sound wisdom for the upright;
he is a shield for those who walk in integrity;
- ⁸ he guards the paths of justice
and he will preserve the way of his faithful ones.
- ⁹ Then you will understand righteousness, justice, and equity,
and every good path.
- ¹⁰ For wisdom will come into your heart,
and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.
- ¹¹ Discretion will watch over you;
understanding will guard you.
- ¹² They will rescue you from the way of evil,
from those who speak perverse things,
- ¹³ who abandon the paths of uprightness
and walk in the ways of darkness.
- ¹⁴ They rejoice when they do evil
and delight in the perversities of evil.
- ¹⁵ They follow crooked paths,
and using deception they hide their tracks.
- ¹⁶ Wisdom and discretion will save you from an adulteress,
from an immoral woman and her flattering words.
- ¹⁷ She abandons the companion of her youth
and forgets the covenant of her God.
- ¹⁸ For her house sinks down to death,
and her tracks will lead you to those in the grave.
- ¹⁹ All who go to her will not return again
and they will not reach the paths of life.
- ²⁰ So you will walk in the way of good people
and follow the paths of righteous people.
- ²¹ For the upright will make a home in the land,
and those with integrity will remain in it.
- ²² But the wicked will be cut off from the land,
and the faithless will be cut off from it.

Proverbs 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 2 continues a collection of proverbs that ends in chapter nine.

Special concepts in this chapter

My Son

Occasionally, the author addresses a proverb to "my son." This is not intended to restrict the words of that proverb to only males. Instead, it is simply a form used to pass on advice as a father does to his son.

Proverbs 2:1

General Information:

A father teaches his child using poetry.

if you receive my words

"if you listen to what I am teaching you"

treasure up my commandments with you

Valuing what is commanded is spoken of as if the commandments were a treasure and the person were a safe place to store the treasure. Alternate translation: "consider my commands to be as valuable as a treasure"

Proverbs 2:2

make your ears pay attention

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "force yourself to listen carefully"

to wisdom

This abstract noun can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "to the wise things I am teaching you"

incline your heart to understanding

Here "heart" represents a person's mind. The phrase "incline your heart" is an idiom that means to commit or fully dedicate one's mind to a task. Alternate translation: "try hard to understand what is wise" or "fully dedicate yourself to understanding wise teachings"

Proverbs 2:3

raise your voice

This is an idiom that means to speak loudly or to shout.

Proverbs 2:4

if you seek it like you would seek silver and search for understanding as you would seek hidden treasures

Both phrases have the same meaning. These similes emphasize the great effort a person should make to understand what is wise. Alternate translation: "if you seek understanding with as much effort as you search for a valuable object"

you seek it ... search for understanding

Trying very hard to understand what is wise is spoken of as if understanding were an object for which a person must search.

Proverbs 2:5

you will find the knowledge of God

To succeed in knowing God is spoken of as if the knowledge of God were an object that a person finds after searching.

Proverbs 2:6

from his mouth comes knowledge and understanding

Here "mouth" represents Yahweh himself or what he says. Alternate translation: "from Yahweh comes knowledge and understanding" or "Yahweh tells us what we need to know and understand"

Proverbs 2:7

He stores up sound wisdom for the upright

Yahweh teaching wisdom to people is spoken of as if wisdom were an item that Yahweh stores and gives to people. Alternate translation: "He teaches what is truly wise to the upright"

the upright

"the person who lives rightly" or "people who live rightly"

sound

"dependable"

he is a shield for those

Yahweh being able to protect his people is spoken of as if he were a shield. Alternate translation: "God protects those"

who walk in integrity

A person behaving with integrity is spoken of as if they were walking in integrity. Alternate translation: "who behave with integrity" or "who live their lives as they should"

Proverbs 2:8

he guards the paths of justice

Possible meanings are 1) justice itself is spoken of as if it were a path. Alternate translation: "God makes sure that people act justly" or 2) a person's life is spoken of as if it were a path. Alternate translation: "God protects those who act justly"

preserve the way of his faithful ones

A person's life is spoken of as if it were a way or road. Alternate translation: "protect those who are faithful to him"

Proverbs 2:9

equity
fairness

every good path

A behavior that is wise and pleases Yahweh is spoken of as if it were a good path. Alternate translation: "ways to live that are pleasing to God"

Proverbs 2:10

wisdom will come into your heart

Here "heart" represents a person's inner being. A person becoming wise is spoken of as if wisdom would enter into a person's heart. Alternate translation: "you will gain much wisdom" or "you will learn how to be truly wise"

pleasant to your soul

Here "soul" represents the whole person. Alternate translation: "pleasing to you" or "enjoyable to you"

Proverbs 2:11

Discretion will watch over you; understanding will guard you

This speaks of "discretion" and "understanding" as if they were persons who could watch over someone else. Both statements mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: "Because you think carefully and understand what is right and wrong, you will be safe"

Discretion

the quality of being careful in actions and speech

watch over

to guard, protect or take care of someone or something

Proverbs 2:12

They will rescue you from the way of evil

"They" refers to discretion and understanding, which are spoken of as if they were persons who could rescue someone else. Alternate translation: "You will know to stay away from what is evil"

from the way of evil

Evil behaviors are spoken of as if evil were a way or path on which a person walks.

Proverbs 2:13

who abandon the paths of uprightness and walk in the ways of darkness

A person no longer doing what is right but deciding to do what is evil is spoken of as if the person stops walking on the correct path and chooses to walk down a dark path.

who abandon

The word "who" refers to the people who speak perverse things.

abandon

to leave and never return to someone or something

Proverbs 2:14

They rejoice

"They" refers to the same people as in Proverbs 2:12.

delight in the perversities of evil

This means basically the same thing as the first part of the sentence. Alternate translation: "delight in doing what they know is evil"

Proverbs 2:15

They follow crooked paths

People who lie to others are spoken of as if they walk on crooked or twisted paths. Alternate translation: "They deceive other people"

using deception they hide their tracks

People lying so that others will not find out what they did is spoken of as if they covered the tracks on a path so that no one could follow them. Alternate translation: "they lie so that no one will know what they have done"

Proverbs 2:16

General Information:

The father continues to teach his child how wisdom will protect him.

Wisdom and discretion will save you

The writer speaks of wisdom and discretion as if they were people who save the one who possesses them. Alternate translation: "If you have wisdom and discretion, you will save yourself"

Proverbs 2:17

the companion of her youth

This refers to her husband, whom she married when she was young.

the covenant of her God

This likely refers to the marriage covenant that she made with her husband in the presence of God.

Proverbs 2:18

her house sinks down to death

Possible meanings are 1) "going to her house leads to death" or 2) "the road to her house is the road to death."

her tracks will lead you

Possible meanings are 1) "the paths to her house will lead you." This refers to the tracks or path that lead to her house, or 2) this is a metaphor that speaks of her way of life as if it were a path on which she walks. Alternate translation: "her way of life will lead you"

to those in the grave

This refers to the spirits of dead people and is a metonym for the place of the dead. Alternate translation: "to the grave"

Proverbs 2:19

go to her

This is a polite way of speaking about having sexual relations. Alternate translation: "have sexual relations with her" or "lie with her"

they will not reach the paths of life

Possible meanings are 1) "they will not return to the land of the living" or 2) "they will never live a happy life again."

Proverbs 2:20

So

The writer tells the result of getting understanding and discretion.

you will walk in the way ... follow the paths

A person's conduct is spoken of as if it were walking on a path. Alternate translation: "you will live in the way ... follow the example"

Proverbs 2:21

General Information:

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Proverbs 2:22

the wicked will be cut off from the land

The writer speaks of Yahweh removing people from the land as if he were cutting the people off, like a person might cut a branch from a tree. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will remove the wicked from the land"

the wicked ... the faithless

These are nominal adjectives that can be stated as adjectives. Alternate translation: "those who are wicked ... those who are faithless" or "wicked people ... faithless people"

the faithless will be cut off from it

The writer speaks of Yahweh removing people from the land as if he were cutting the people off, like a person might cut a branch from a tree. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he will remove the faithless from it"

Chapter 3

- ¹ My son, do not forget my teaching,
and keep my commandments in your heart,
- ² for the length of your days and years of your life,
they will add peace to you.
- ³ Do not let steadfast love and faithfulness ever leave you;
tie them together about your neck;
write them on the tablet of your heart.
- ⁴ Then you will find favor and a good reputation
in the sight of God and man.
- ⁵ Trust in Yahweh with all your heart
and do not lean on your own understanding;
- ⁶ in all your ways acknowledge him
and he will make your paths straight.
- ⁷ Do not be wise in your own eyes;
fear Yahweh and turn away from evil.
- ⁸ It will be healing to your flesh
and refreshment for your bones.
- ⁹ Honor Yahweh with your wealth
and with the firstfruits of all your produce,
- ¹⁰ and your storehouses will be filled up
and your vats will be bursting, full of new wine.
- ¹¹ My son, do not despise Yahweh's instruction
and do not hate his rebuke,
- ¹² for Yahweh disciplines those he loves,
as a father deals with a son who pleases him.
- ¹³ The one who finds wisdom is blessed;
he also gets understanding.
- ¹⁴ What you gain from wisdom is better than what silver will give in return
and its profit is better than gold.
- ¹⁵ Wisdom is more precious than jewels
and nothing you desire can compare to her.
- ¹⁶ She has the length of her days in her right hand;
in her left hand are riches and honor.
- ¹⁷ Her ways are ways of pleasantness
and all her paths are peace.
- ¹⁸ She is a tree of life to those who take hold of it;
those who hold on to it are happy.
- ¹⁹ By wisdom Yahweh founded the earth;
by understanding he established the heavens.
- ²⁰ By his knowledge the depths broke open
and the clouds dropped their dew.
- ²¹ My son, do not let these depart from your eyes:
guard sound wisdom and discretion.
- ²² They will be life to your soul
and an adornment of favor to wear around your neck.
- ²³ Then you will walk on your way in safety
and your foot will not stumble;
- ²⁴ when you lie down, you will not be afraid;
when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.

- 25 Do not be afraid of sudden terror
or devastation caused by the wicked, when it comes,
- 26 for Yahweh will be on your side
and will keep your foot from being caught in a trap.
- 27 Do not withhold good from those who deserve it,
when it is in your power to act.
- 28 Do not say to your neighbor,
"Go, and come again, and tomorrow I will give it,"
when you have the money with you.
- 29 Do not make a plan to harm your neighbor—
the one who dwells in safety with you.
- 30 Do not argue with a person without a reason,
when he has done nothing to harm you.
- 31 Do not envy a violent person
or choose any of his ways.
- 32 For the devious person is an abomination to Yahweh,
but he brings the upright person into his confidence.
- 33 The curse of Yahweh is on the house of the wicked person,
but he blesses the home of righteous people.
- 34 He mocks mockers,
but he gives his favor to humble people.
- 35 Wise people inherit honor,
but fools will be lifted up in their shame.
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Proverbs 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 3 continues a collection of proverbs that ends in chapter nine.

Special concepts in this chapter

My Son

Occasionally, the author addresses a proverb to "my son." This is not intended to restrict the words of that proverb to only males. Instead, it is simply a form used to pass on advice as a father does to his son.

Wisdom is feminine

You may notice that wisdom is referenced using a feminine pronoun. This is a feature that is carried in from the Hebrew language. This may apply well in your language but if it does not, follow the conventions of your language. (See: wise)

Proverbs 3:1

General Information:

The writer speaks as a father teaching his child using poetry.

do not forget my teaching

The word "teaching" can be translated as a verb.
Alternate translation: "do not forget what I have taught you"

keep my commandments in your heart

This phrase says in positive terms what the previous phrase says in negative terms. Here the word "heart" represents the mind. The word "commandments" can be translated as a verb.
Alternate translation: "always remember what I have commanded you"

Proverbs 3:2

for the length of your days and years of your life

These two phrases share similar meanings and refer to the duration of a person's life. Alternate translation: "all your life" or "as long as you live"

Proverbs 3:3

Do not let steadfast love and faithfulness ever leave you

The writer speaks of "steadfast love" and "faithfulness" as if they were people who could leave someone. The abstract nouns "love" and "faithfulness" can be stated with the verb "love" and the adjective "faithful." Also, the negative command can be stated positively. Alternate translation: "Love God without ceasing and be faithful to him"

tie them together about your neck

The writer speaks of faithfulness and trustworthiness as if they were objects that a person could tie around the neck like a necklace. The image suggests that these are valuable things that the person displays outwardly. Alternate translation: "display them proudly like one would wear a necklace"

write them on the tablet of your heart

Here the heart represents a person's mind. The mind is spoken of as if it were a tablet upon which someone can write messages and commands. Alternate translation: "always remember them, as if you had written them permanently on a tablet"

Proverbs 3:4

in the sight of God and man

Here sight represents judgment or evaluation. Alternate translation: "in the judgment of God and man"

Proverbs 3:5

all your heart

Here the word "heart" represents the inner person. Alternate translation: "your whole being"

do not lean on your own understanding

The writer speaks of relying on one's own understanding as if "understanding" were an object on which a person can lean. Alternate translation: "do not rely on your own understanding" or "do not trust your own understanding"

Proverbs 3:6

in all your ways

The writer speaks of a person's actions as if they were paths on which the person walks. Alternate translation: "in everything you do"

he will make your paths straight

The writer speaks of Yahweh making a person's actions prosperous as if that person's actions were paths on which he walks and which Yahweh makes free of obstacles. Alternate translation: "he will give you success"

Proverbs 3:7

Do not be wise in your own eyes

The writer speaks of a person's opinion as if that person were seeing something with his eyes. Alternate translation: "Do not be wise in your own opinion"

turn away from evil

The writer speaks of not committing evil actions as if it were turning away from evil. Alternate translation: "do not commit evil"

Proverbs 3:8

It will be healing to your flesh

The word "it" refers to the instructions that the writer gives in the previous verse. The full meaning of this can be made clear. The word "flesh" represents the whole body. Alternate translation: "If you do this, it will be healing for your body"

flesh ... bones

These words form a merism that refers to the entire person through metonymy for the outer man and the inner man.

Proverbs 3:9

all your produce

"all the food you harvest"

Proverbs 3:10

your storehouses will be filled up

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "your storehouses will be full"

storehouses

buildings or rooms where food is stored

your vats will be bursting

your storage containers will be extremely full, as if ready to break open.

Proverbs 3:11

General Information:

The writer writes as a father teaching his son.

Proverbs 3:12

a son who pleases him

"a son in whom he delights." This refers to the father's affection for the son, and not to the father's

approval of the son's behavior. Alternate translation: "a son whom he loves"

Proverbs 3:13

The one who finds wisdom

The writer speaks of "wisdom" as if it were an object that one finds. Alternate translation: "The one who attains wisdom"

Proverbs 3:14

what silver will give in return

This refers to the profit that one can make from trading or investing silver.

Proverbs 3:15

General Information:

The author speaks of wisdom as if it were a woman.

more precious

"more valuable"

Proverbs 3:16

She has the length of her days in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor

The writer speak of the benefits that one gains from having wisdom as if wisdom were a woman who held these qualities in her hands and offered them to people. Alternate translation: "Wisdom gives a person length of days and riches and honor"

length of her days

This idiom refers to the duration of person's life and may imply a long life. Alternate translation: "long life"

Proverbs 3:17

Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace

The writer speaks of wisdom as if it were a woman and of the benefits that wisdom gives a person as if wisdom were leading that person along a way or a path. Alternate translation: "Wisdom will always treat you pleasantly and give you peace"

ways of pleasantness

"pleasant ways"

Proverbs 3:18

She is a tree of life to those who take hold of it

The writer speaks of wisdom as if it were a tree that bears life-giving fruit and of a person who benefits from wisdom as if that person ate of the fruit. Alternate translation: "Wisdom is like a tree that sustains the life of those who eat of its fruit"

a tree of life

"a tree that gives life" or "a tree whose fruit sustains life"

those who hold on to it

"those who hold on to its fruit"

Proverbs 3:19

Yahweh founded the earth ... established the heavens

The writer speaks of Yahweh creating the earth and the heavens as if he were laying the foundation of a building. Alternate translation: "Yahweh created the earth ... made the heavens"

Proverbs 3:20

the depths broke open

In ancient thought, water existed under the earth. This phrase refers to Yahweh causing that water to come out of the earth and make the oceans and rivers exist. Alternate translation: "he caused the rivers to flow" or "he caused the oceans to exist"

dew

water that forms on the ground at night

Proverbs 3:21

do not let these depart from your eyes ... wisdom ... discretion

The word "eyes" is a metonym for what the eyes see, and "wisdom" and "discretion" are spoken of as if they were animals able to escape or wander away. Alternate translation: "do not let these out of your sight ... wisdom ... discretion" or "never forget ... wisdom ... discretion" or "always remember ... wisdom ... discretion"

Proverbs 3:22

They will be life to your soul

Here the word "soul" represents the person. Alternate translation: "They will be life for you"

an adornment of favor to wear around your neck

The writer speaks of "sound judgment" and "discernment" as if they were objects that a person could tie around the neck like a necklace. The image suggests that these are valuable things that the person displays outwardly. Alternate translation: "a display of favor like one would adorn themselves with a necklace"

adornment of favor

Possible meanings are 1) "a favorable adornment" or 2) "an adornment that displays Yahweh's favor."

Proverbs 3:23

you will walk on your way in safety

The writer speaks of living one's life as if the person were walking along a path. Alternate translation: "you will live your life in safety"

your foot will not stumble

The word "foot" represents the whole person. The writer speaks of doing wrong as if a person stumbled over an object in his path. Alternate translation: "you will not do things that are wrong"

Proverbs 3:24

when you lie down

It is implied that a person lies down in order to sleep. The meaning of this can be made clear. Alternate translation: "when you lie down to sleep"

your sleep will be sweet

The writer speaks of sleep that is peaceful and refreshing as if it tasted sweet to the person sleeping. The word "sleep" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "your sleep will be pleasant" or "you will sleep peacefully"

Proverbs 3:25

devastation caused by the wicked, when it comes

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when the wicked cause devastation"

the wicked

This refers to wicked persons in general. This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "wicked people"

Proverbs 3:26

Yahweh will be on your side

"Yahweh will be by your side." A person standing by another person's side is an idiom that means that the one person will help and support the other. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will support and defend you"

will keep your foot from being caught in a trap

The writer speaks of a person experiencing harm from "terror" and "devastation" as if the person were caught in a trap. The word "foot" represents the whole person. Alternate translation: "will protect you from those who want to harm you"

Proverbs 3:27

Do not withhold good

"Do not withhold good things" or "Do not withhold good actions"

when it is in your power to act

"when you are able to help"

Proverbs 3:28

when you have the money with you

"when you have the money with you now." The meaning here is that the person has the money to help today, but tells his neighbor to come back tomorrow.

Proverbs 3:29

General Information:

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Proverbs 3:30

General Information:

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Proverbs 3:31

Do not ... choose any of his ways

It is implied that he is not to choose to imitate the actions of the violent person. Alternate translation: "Do not ... choose to imitate any of his ways"

Proverbs 3:32

the devious person is an abomination to Yahweh

"Yahweh strongly hates the devious person"

the devious person

the person who is dishonest or deceitful

he brings the upright person into his confidence

Yahweh shares his thoughts with the those who do right as with a close, trusted friend. Alternate translation: "Yahweh is a close friend to the upright"

Proverbs 3:33

The curse of Yahweh is on the house of the wicked person

The writer speaks of Yahweh's curse as if it were an object that he placed on top of the wicked person's house. The word "house" is a metonym for family. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has cursed the family of the wicked person"

he blesses the home of righteous people

The word "home" represents the family. Alternate translation: "he blesses the families of righteous people"

Proverbs 3:34

he gives his favor to humble people

The writer speaks of Yahweh's favor as if it were an object that he gives to people. Alternate translation: "he shows his favor to humble people" or "he is gracious to humble people"

Proverbs 3:35

Wise people inherit honor

The writer speaks of wise people obtaining a reputation of honor as if they inherited honor as a permanent possession. Alternate translation: "Wise people will obtain honor" or "Wise people will gain an honorable reputation"

fools will be lifted up in their shame

The writer speaks of Yahweh making the shame of fools evident to everyone as if Yahweh were lifting fools up for everyone to see them. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will cause everyone to see the shame of fools"

Chapter 4

- ¹ Listen, sons, to a father's instruction,
and pay attention so you will know what understanding is.
- ² I am giving you good instructions;
do not abandon my teaching.
- ³ When I was a son of my father,
the tender and only child of my mother,
- ⁴ he taught me and said to me,
"Let your heart hold fast to my words;
keep my commands and live.
- ⁵ Acquire wisdom and understanding;
do not forget and do not reject the words of my mouth;
- ⁶ do not abandon wisdom and she will watch over you;
love her and she will keep you safe.
- ⁷ Wisdom is the most important thing, so acquire wisdom
and spend all you own so you can get understanding.
- ⁸ Cherish wisdom and she will exalt you;
she will honor you when you embrace her.
- ⁹ She will put a wreath of honor on your head;
she will give you a beautiful crown."
- ¹⁰ Listen, my son, and receive my words,
and you will have many years in your life.
- ¹¹ I am teaching you in the way of wisdom;
I am leading you in upright paths.
- ¹² When you walk, no one will stand in your way
and if you run, you will not stumble.
- ¹³ Hold on to instruction, do not let it go;
guard it, for it is your life.
- ¹⁴ Do not follow the path of the wicked
and do not go along the way of those who do evil.
- ¹⁵ Avoid it, do not go on it;
turn away from it and go another way.
- ¹⁶ For they cannot sleep until they do evil
and they are robbed of sleep until they cause someone to stumble.
- ¹⁷ For they devour the bread of wickedness
and drink the wine of violence.
- ¹⁸ But the path of righteous people is like the first light that grows brighter;
it shines more and more until the fullness of the day comes.
- ¹⁹ The way of the wicked is like darkness—
they do not know what it is they stumble over.
- ²⁰ My son, pay attention to my words;
incline your ear to my sayings.
- ²¹ Do not let them turn away from your eyes;
keep them in your heart.
- ²² For my words are life to those who find them
and health to their whole body.
- ²³ Keep your heart safe and guard it with all diligence,
for from it flow the springs of life.
- ²⁴ Put crooked speech away from you
and put corrupt talk far from you.
- ²⁵ Let your eyes look straight ahead
and fix your gaze straight before you.
- ²⁶ Make a level path for your foot;
then all your ways will be established.

²⁷ Do not turn aside to the right or to the left;
turn your foot away from evil.

Proverbs 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 4 continues a collection of proverbs that ends in chapter nine.

Special concepts in this chapter

My Son

Occasionally, the author addresses a proverb to "my son." This is not intended to restrict the words of that proverb to only males. Instead, it is simply a form used to pass on advice as a father does to his son.

Wisdom is feminine

You may notice that wisdom is referenced using a feminine pronoun. This is a feature that is carried in from the Hebrew language. This may apply well in your language but if it does not, follow the conventions of your language. (See: wise)

Proverbs 4:1

General Information:

The writer speaks as a father teaching his children.

pay attention

"listen carefully"

you will know what understanding is

"you will know how to understand" or "you will gain understanding"

Proverbs 4:2

I am giving you good instructions

"What I am teaching you is good"

Proverbs 4:3

When I was a son of my father

This refers to the time when the writer was a child still living under his father's care. Alternate translation: "When I was still a boy learning from my father"

the tender and only child

Here the word "tender" refers to a young age at which the child is still weak. It forms a hendiadys with the word "only." Alternate translation: "the tender only child"

Proverbs 4:4

Let your heart hold fast to my words

Here the word "heart" represents the person's mind. The writer speaks of remembering words as if the heart were holding on tightly to them. Alternate translation: "Always remember what I am teaching you"

Proverbs 4:5

General Information:

The father continues to teach his children what his father taught him.

Acquire wisdom

"Work hard to gain for yourself wisdom" or "Get wisdom"

do not forget

"remember"

do not reject

"accept"

the words of my mouth

Here the word "mouth" represents the person who speaks. Alternate translation: "what I am saying"

Proverbs 4:6

do not abandon wisdom and she will watch over you; love her and she will keep you safe

The writer speaks of wisdom as if it were a woman who protects the person who is faithful to her.

do not abandon wisdom

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "hold tightly to wisdom" or "be faithful to wisdom"

love her

"love wisdom"

Proverbs 4:7

General Information:

The father finishes teaching his children what his father taught him.

spend all you own so you can get understanding
"value understanding more than all you own"

Proverbs 4:8

Cherish wisdom and she will exalt you

The writer speaks of wisdom as if it were a woman and of wisdom giving great honor to a person as if wisdom lifted that person to a high position. Alternate translation: "If you cherish wisdom, she will give you great honor"

Cherish

to feel or show great love for someone or something

she will honor you when you embrace her

The writer speaks of wisdom as if it were a woman and of a person valuing wisdom as if the person placed his arms around her. Alternate translation: "if you love wisdom greatly, wisdom will cause people to honor you"

Proverbs 4:9

She will put a wreath of honor on your head

The writer speaks of the honor that a person will have from gaining wisdom as if wisdom placed a wreath upon that person's head. Alternate translation: "Wisdom will be like a wreath on your head that shows your great honor"

wreath

a woven circle made of leaves or flowers

she will give you a beautiful crown

The writer speaks of the honor that a person will have from gaining wisdom as if wisdom placed a crown upon that person's head. Alternate translation: "wisdom will be like a beautiful crown on your head"

Proverbs 4:10

receive my words

"be willing to listen carefully to what I teach you"

you will have many years in your life

"you will live many years"

Proverbs 4:11

I am teaching you in the way of wisdom; I am leading you in upright paths

The writer speaks of teaching his son to live wisely as if he were leading his son along the paths where one may find wisdom. Alternate translation: "I am teaching you how to live wisely; I am explaining the right way to live"

I am teaching ... I am leading

If your language has a way of specifying that it is by his words Proverbs 4:10 and that the writer is teaching and leading, you may want to use it here.

Alternate translation: "With these words I am teaching ... with them I am leading"

Proverbs 4:12

When you walk, no one will stand in your way and if you run, you will not stumble

These two lines share similar meanings. The writer speaks of the decisions and actions that a person makes as if that person were walking or running along a path and of the person being successful as if the path were free of obstacles that might make the person stumble. Alternate translation: "When you plan something, you will succeed in doing it"

Proverbs 4:13

Hold on to instruction, do not let it go

The writer speaks of a person remembering what he has learned as if "instruction" were an object that the person can hold tightly. Alternate translation: "Continue to obey what I have taught you and never forget it"

for it is your life

The writer speaks of discipline preserving a person's life as if it were that person's life. Alternate translation: "for it will preserve your life"

Proverbs 4:14

Do not follow the path of the wicked and do not go along the way of those who do evil

The writer speaks of a person's actions as if that person were walking along a path. Alternate translation: "Do not do what wicked people do and do not join in the actions of people who do evil"

Proverbs 4:15

Avoid it

"Avoid the path of the wicked"

Proverbs 4:16

they cannot sleep until they do evil

They probably could literally sleep, but the writer uses an exaggeration to express how intensely they desire to commit evil actions.

they are robbed of sleep

The writer speaks of people being unable to sleep as if sleep were an object that someone stole from them. They probably could literally sleep, but the writer uses an exaggeration to express how intensely they desire to commit evil actions. Alternate translation: "they are unable to sleep"

until they cause someone to stumble

The writer speaks of causing harm to another person as if it were causing that person to stumble. Alternate translation: "until they harm someone"

Proverbs 4:17

they devour the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence

Possible meanings are 1) this is a metaphor in which the writer speaks of these people constantly committing wickedness and violence as if they ate and drank them like one would drink bread and wine. Alternate translation: "wickedness is like the bread that they eat and violence is like the wine that they drink" or 2) these people get their food and drink by committing wickedness and violence. Alternate translation: "they eat bread that they obtain by doing wicked things and drink wine that they obtain through violence"

devour

eat a great amount quickly

Proverbs 4:18

the path of righteous people

The writer speaks of the actions and lifestyles of righteous people as if they were a "path" or "way" upon which they walk. Alternate translation: "the lifestyle of righteous people"

the path of righteous people is like the first light that grows brighter

The writer compares the path of righteous people to the sunrise, meaning that they are safe because they have light to see where they are walking. Alternate translation: "righteous people walk along their path safely because the morning sun shines on it and grows brighter"

the first light

This refers to the dawn or sunrise.

until the fullness of the day comes

This refers to the time of day at which the sun shines the brightest. Alternate translation: "until the sun shines most brightly" or "until full daylight"

Proverbs 4:19

The way of the wicked

The writer speaks of the actions and lifestyles of wicked people as if they were a "path" or "way" upon which they walk. Alternate translation: "The lifestyle of the wicked"

The way of the wicked is like darkness

The writer compares the way of wicked people to darkness, meaning that they are always in danger because they have no light to see where they are walking. Alternate translation: "Wicked people walk dangerously along their path because they have no light to be able to see"

they do not know what it is they stumble over

The writer speaks of experiencing harm as if it were stumbling over an object in the path along

which the person walks. Alternate translation: "they do not know why they experience harm and misfortune"

Proverbs 4:20

pay attention

"listen carefully"

incline your ear to my sayings

Here the word "ear" represents the person who is listening. The writer speaks of listening attentively to someone as if it were leaning forward so that the ear is closer to the one speaking. The word "sayings" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "listen attentively to the things that I am saying"

Proverbs 4:21

Do not let them turn away from your eyes

The writer speaks of always thinking about something as if it were keeping it where one can see it. Alternate translation: "Do not stop thinking about them"

keep them in your heart

The writer speaks of remembering something as if it were keeping it within one's heart. Alternate translation: "always remember them"

Proverbs 4:22

my words are life

The writer speaks of his words preserving a person's life as if they were that person's life. Alternate translation: "my words give life" or "the things I say give life"

to those who find them

The writer speaks of fully understanding his words as if the person searches for them and finds them. Alternate translation: "to those who understand and practice them"

health to their whole body

The word "their" refers to "those who find them." The subject for this phrase can be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "my words will give health to the whole body of those who find them"

Proverbs 4:23

Keep your heart safe and guard it

Here the word "heart" represents a person's mind and thoughts. Alternate translation: "Keep your mind safe and guard your thoughts"

with all diligence

with constant and earnest effort

from it flow the springs of life

The word "it" refers to the heart, which is a metonym for the mind and thoughts. The writer speaks of a person's life as if it were a flowing spring that originates from the heart. Alternate translation: "from your thoughts comes everything you say and do" or "your thoughts determine your course of life"

Proverbs 4:24

Put crooked speech away from you and put corrupt talk far from you

The writer speaks of lying or deceitful speech as if it were crooked and of a person not using this kind of language as if it were removing it far away from oneself. Alternate translation: "Do not lie and do not speak deceitfully"

Proverbs 4:25

Let your eyes look straight ahead and fix your gaze straight before you

Here the word "eyes" represents the person who is looking. The writer speaks of a person being committed to doing the right thing as if that person were constantly looking forward without turning his head to look in another direction. Alternate translation: "Always look straight ahead and fix your gaze straight before you"

Proverbs 4:26

Make a level path for your foot

Here the word "foot" represents the person who is walking. The writer speaks of a person's actions as if he were walking along a path, and of planning those actions carefully as if it were making that path level. Alternate translation: "Make a level path to walk on" or "Prepare well what you want to do"

a level path

"a smooth path" or "an even path"

then all your ways will be established

The writer speaks of a person's actions as if the person were walking along a path and of those actions being successful as if the path were safe and secure. Alternate translation: "then everything that you do will be right"

Proverbs 4:27

Do not turn aside to the right or to the left

The directions "right" and "left" form a merism, meaning that the person is not to leave the level path in any direction. Alternate translation: "Walk straight ahead and do not leave the level path"

turn your foot away from evil

Here the word "foot" represents the person who walks. The writer speaks of not committing evil actions as if the person were walking away from evil. Alternate translation: "turn away from evil" or "stay away from evil"

Chapter 5

- ¹ My son, pay attention to my wisdom;
incline your ears to my understanding,
 - ² so you may learn about discretion
and your lips may protect knowledge.
 - ³ For the lips of an adulteress drip with honey
and her mouth is smoother than oil,
 - ⁴ but in the end she is as bitter as wormwood,
cutting like a sharp sword.
 - ⁵ Her feet go down to death;
her steps go all the way to Sheol.
 - ⁶ She gives no thought to the path of life.
Her footsteps wander;
she does not know where she is going.
 - ⁷ Now, my sons, listen to me;
do not turn away from listening to the words of my mouth.
 - ⁸ Keep your path far away from her
and do not come near the door of her house.
 - ⁹ In that way you will not give away your honor to others
or years of your life to a cruel person;
 - ¹⁰ strangers will not feast on your strength;
your labor will not go into the house of foreigners.
 - ¹¹ At the end of your life you will groan
when your flesh and your body waste away.
 - ¹² You will say, "How I hated instruction
and my heart despised correction!"
 - ¹³ I would not listen to the voice of my teachers
or incline my ear to my instructors.
 - ¹⁴ I was almost completely ruined
in the midst of the assembly,
among the gathering of the people."
 - ¹⁵ Drink water from your own cistern
and drink running water from your own well.
 - ¹⁶ Should your springs be dispersed everywhere
and your streams of water flow in the public squares?
 - ¹⁷ Let them be for yourself alone
and not for strangers with you.
 - ¹⁸ May your fountain be blessed
and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth,
 - ¹⁹ for she is a loving deer and a graceful doe.
Let her breasts satisfy you at all times;
may you be continually intoxicated by her love.
 - ²⁰ For why should you, my son, be captivated by an adulteress?
Why should you embrace the bosom of an immoral woman?
 - ²¹ Yahweh sees everything a person does
and watches all the paths he takes.
 - ²² A wicked person will be seized by his own iniquities;
the cords of his sin will hold him tight.
 - ²³ He will die because he lacks instruction;
he is led astray by his great foolishness.
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Proverbs 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 5 continues a collection of proverbs that ends in chapter nine.

Special concepts in this chapter

My Son

Occasionally, the author addresses a proverb to "my son." This is not intended to restrict the words of that proverb to only males. Instead, it is simply a form used to pass on advice as a father does to his son.

Adulteress

This chapter is unusual because it holds a theme about the adulteress and warns the young man to avoid her. An adulteress is a woman who commits adultery. (See: adultery)

Proverbs 5:1

General Information:

The writer speaks as a father teaching his children.

incline your ears

Here the word "ears" represents the person who is listening. The writer speaks of listening attentively to someone as if it were leaning forward so that the ears are closer to the one speaking. See how you translated this in [Proverbs 4:20]

Proverbs 5:2

discretion

Discretion is the quality of being careful with regard to one's actions and speech. See how you translated this in Proverbs 1:4.

your lips may protect knowledge

Here the word "lips" represents the person who speaks. The writer speaks of a person being careful only to say what is true as if the person's lips were protecting knowledge. Alternate translation: "you will speak only what is true"

Proverbs 5:3

the lips of an adulteress drip with honey

Possible meanings are 1) the word "lips" represents the words of the adulteress and the writer speaks of the attractiveness of her words as if her lips dripped with honey. Alternate translation: "the words of an adulteress are sweet, as if dripping with honey" or 2) the writer speaks of the allure of kissing the adulteress as if her lips dripped with honey. Alternate translation: "the kisses of an adulteress are sweet, as if her lips dripped with honey"

her mouth is smoother than oil

Possible meanings are 1) the word "mouth" represents the speech of the adulteress and the writer speaks of the persuasiveness of her speech as if her mouth were smoother than olive oil.

Alternate translation: "her speech is persuasive and smoother than olive oil" or 2) the writer speaks of the pleasure of kissing the adulteress as if her mouth were smoother than oil. Alternate translation: "her kisses are smoother than olive oil"

Proverbs 5:4

but in the end she is as bitter as wormwood

The writer speaks of the harm that comes from having a relationship with an adulteress as if she tasted as bitter as wormwood. Alternate translation: "but in the end, she is like bitter-tasting wormwood and will cause you harm"

wormwood

a plant that tastes bitter

cutting like a sharp sword

The writer speaks of the pain that the adulteress will cause to the one who has a relationship with her as if she were a sharp weapon that cuts the person. Alternate translation: "she wounds a person, as if she were a sharp sword"

Proverbs 5:5

Her feet go down to death

Here "her feet" represent the adulteress as she walks. The writer speaks of her conduct as if she were walking along a path. Alternate translation: "She is walking along a path that leads to death" or "Her lifestyle leads to death"

her steps go all the way to Sheol

The writer speaks of her conduct as if she were walking along a path. Alternate translation: "she walks all the way to Sheol" or "her conduct takes her all the way to Sheol"

Proverbs 5:6

She gives no thought to the path of life

The writer speaks of behavior that gives a person long life as if it were a path that leads to life. Alternate translation: "She does not think about

walking along the path that leads to life" or "She is not concerned about conduct that leads to life"

Her footsteps wander

Possible meanings are 1) "She wanders about as if she were lost" or 2) "She walks along the wrong path."

Proverbs 5:7

Now

Here the teacher shifts from warning about the adulteress to giving advice.

listen to me ... do not turn away from listening

These two phrases express the same idea to make the student pay attention.

do not turn away from listening

The writer speaks of stopping an action as if the person physically turned away from it. Alternate translation: "do not stop listening"

the words of my mouth

Here the word "mouth" represents the person who is speaking. Alternate translation: "my words" or "what I am saying"

Proverbs 5:8

Keep your path far away from her

Here the word "path" represents the person's daily conduct and circumstances. Alternate translation: "Keep yourself far away from her" or "Stay away from her"

do not come near the door of her house

Here "the door of her house" represents the house itself. It may be more appropriate to use the word "go" instead of "come" since the latter might imply that the speaker is at the door of her house. Alternate translation: "do not go near the door of her house" or "do not even go near her house"

Proverbs 5:9

In that way

"If you do this." This phrase refers to what he has just said in previous verses.

you will not give away your honor to others

Possible meanings for the word "honor" are 1) it refers to one's reputation. Alternate translation: "You will not lose your good reputation among other people" or 2) it refers to one's wealth and possessions. Alternate translation: "You will not give away your wealth to other people" or 3) it refers to strength and represents the prime years of one's life. Alternate translation: "You will not give away the best times of your life to other people"

or years of your life to a cruel person

The writer speaks of a person dying prematurely, possibly by murder, as if the years of his life were

items that he gives away to another person. The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "or give years of your life to a cruel person" or "or cause a cruel person to kill you while you are still young"

a cruel person

This may refer to the husband of the adulteress, who will deal cruelly with the person who sleeps with her.

Proverbs 5:10

strangers will not feast on your strength

The word "strength" is a metonym for the wealth for which the reader has labored with his strength, and the word "feast" is a metaphor for enjoying. Alternate translation: "strangers will not enjoy all of the wealth you labored hard for"

strangers

unknown people from the same people group or nation

your labor will not go into the house of foreigners

Here the word "labor" is a metonym for the goods and profit that a person has labored to produce, and "house" represents the person's family. Alternate translation: "the things that you have labored for will not end up belonging to the families of strangers"

foreigners

unknown people from other people groups or nations

Proverbs 5:11

your flesh and your body waste away

The words "flesh" and "body" mean basically the same thing and represent the whole person. Alternate translation: "your body wastes away" or "you waste away"

waste away

"physically wear down" or "become weak and unhealthy"

Proverbs 5:12

I hated instruction ... my heart despised correction

These two phrases express the same idea and emphasize how much this person disliked what the teacher had said.

How I hated instruction

The word "How" is an exclamation that emphasizes the strength of his hatred. The word "instruction" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "I hated it so much when someone would instruct me"

my heart despised correction

Here the word "heart" represents the person and his emotions. The word "correction" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "I despised people when they corrected me"

Proverbs 5:13

incline my ear to my instructors

Here the word "ear" represents the person who is listening. The writer speaks of listening attentively to someone as if it were leaning forward so that the ear is closer to the one speaking. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Proverbs 4:20]

Proverbs 5:14

in the midst of the assembly, among the gathering of the people

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and refer to the person's community that has gathered together either 1) to worship God or 2) to judge him for his offense.

Proverbs 5:15

water from your own cistern ... running water from your own well

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The writer speaks of a man sleeping only with his wife as if he drank water only from his own cistern or well.

running water

The writer speaks of fresh or flowing water as if the water were running. Alternate translation: "fresh water" or "flowing water"

Proverbs 5:16

General Information:

The writer speaks of adultery using metaphors about wasting the water that was so precious in Israel, where rain was rare.

Should your springs ... your streams of water flow in the public squares?

The writer asks this rhetorical question to emphasize that his son should not do these things. Alternate translation: "Your springs should not ... your streams of water should not flow in the public squares."

Should your springs ... your streams of water flow in the public squares?

Here the words "springs" and "streams of water" are likely euphemisms for male reproductive fluids. Possible meanings for these metaphorical phrases are 1) sleeping with women other than one's wife is spoken of as if it were allowing one's water to flow in the public streets or 2) having children with women other than one's wife is spoken of as if it

were allowing one's water to flow in the public streets.

Should your springs be dispersed everywhere and your ... squares?

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Should you disperse your springs ... everywhere? Should your ... squares?" or "You should not disperse your springs everywhere, and you ... squares."

public squares

Open areas in a city or town where two or more streets meet. A common place for people to meet each other and talk.

Proverbs 5:17

Let them be

The word "them" refers to the "springs" and "streams of water" and what they stand for.

not for strangers with you

"do not share them with strangers"

Proverbs 5:18

May your fountain be blessed

The writer speaks of the son's wife as if she were a fountain. Here the word "blessed" refers to the sense of joy that the man has in his wife. Alternate translation: "May you always find joy with your wife"

the wife of your youth

Possible meanings are 1) "the wife whom you married when you were young" or 2) "your young wife."

Proverbs 5:19

she is a loving deer and a graceful doe

The writer speaks of the son's wife as if she were "a loving deer and a graceful doe." Here "deer" and "doe" mean a female deer. They were symbols of beauty both in their appearance and in their movements. Alternate translation: "she is as beautiful and graceful as a deer or a doe" or "she is as beautiful and graceful as a female deer"

graceful

This word does not mean "full of grace," but "beautiful while moving."

Let her breasts satisfy you

Possible meanings are 1) the wife's breasts excite the husband's sexual desire and possibly represent the wife's entire body. Alternate translation: "Let her breasts satisfy your desires" or "Let her body satisfy your desires" or 2) this is a metaphor in which the writer speaks of the wife's breasts satisfying the husband's desires as they would satisfy the thirst of a hungry baby. Alternate

translation: "Let her breasts fill you with delight as a mother's breasts fill her child with food"

may you be continually intoxicated by her love

Intense excitement and joy from the romantic love of one's wife is spoken of as if he was drunk from that love. This can be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: "let her love control you as alcohol controls someone who is drunk"

by her love

Possible meanings are 1) "by your love for her" or 2) "by her love for you."

Proverbs 5:20

For why should you, my son, be captivated by an adulteress?

The writer asks this rhetorical question to emphasize that his son must not do this. Alternate translation: "My son, do not be captivated by an adulteress!"

be captivated by an adulteress

Intense excitement that arises from the desire for a woman is spoken of as if he were being held captive by that woman. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "allow an adulteress to captivate you" or "allow an adulteress to fascinate you"

Why should you embrace the bosom of an immoral woman?

The writer asks this rhetorical question to emphasize that his son must not do this. Alternate translation: "Do not embrace the bosom of an immoral woman!"

embrace the bosom of an immoral woman

Here the word "embrace the bosom" is probably a euphemism for handling the breasts and a synecdoche for all kinds of sexual activity. Alternate translation: "have sexual relations with an immoral woman"

bosom

chest, shoulders, and arms

an immoral woman

Possible meanings are 1) "a woman who is not your wife" or 2) "a woman who is another man's wife."

Proverbs 5:21

sees everything ... watches all the paths

These two phrases mean the same thing and emphasize that God knows everything that everyone does.

all the paths he takes

The writer speaks of a person's actions or lifestyle as if it were a path on which the person walks. Alternate translation: "everywhere he goes" or "everything he does"

Proverbs 5:22

A wicked person will be seized by his own iniquities

The writer speaks of a wicked person being unable to avoid the consequences of his iniquities as if those iniquities were people who capture the wicked person. This can be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: "A wicked person's own iniquities will seize him" or "A wicked person will be unable to avoid the consequences of his iniquities"

the cords of his sin will hold him tight

The writer speaks of a wicked person being unable to avoid the consequences of his sin as if that sin were a trap made of cords in which the person is caught. Alternate translation: "because of his sin, he will be like an animal caught in a trap"

Proverbs 5:23

he is led astray by his great foolishness

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "his great foolishness leads him astray"

by his great foolishness

"because he is very foolish"

Chapter 6

- ¹ My son, if you set aside your money as a guarantee for your neighbor's loan,
if you gave your promise for a loan of someone you do not know,
- ² then you have laid a trap for yourself by your promise
and you have been caught by the words of your mouth.
- ³ When you are caught by your words, my son,
do this and save yourself,
since you have fallen into the hand of your neighbor;
go and humble yourself
and make your case before your neighbor.
- ⁴ Give your eyes no sleep
and your eyelids no slumber.
- ⁵ Save yourself like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter,
like a bird from the hand of the fowler.
- ⁶ Look at the ant, you lazy person,
consider her ways, and be wise.
- ⁷ It has no commander,
officer, or ruler,
- ⁸ yet it prepares its food in the summer
and during the harvest it stores up what it will eat.
- ⁹ How long will you lie down, you lazy person?
When will you rise from your sleep?
- ¹⁰ "A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands to rest"—
- ¹¹ and your poverty will come like a robber
and your needs like an armed soldier.
- ¹² A worthless person—a wicked man—
lives by the crookedness of his speech,
- ¹³ winking his eyes, making signals with his feet
and pointing with his fingers.
- ¹⁴ He plots evil with perversity in his heart;
he always stirs up strife.
- ¹⁵ Therefore his disaster will overtake him in an instant;
in a moment he will be broken beyond healing.
- ¹⁶ There are six things that Yahweh hates,
seven that are an abomination to him:
 - ¹⁷ the eyes of a proud person, a tongue that lies,
hands that shed the blood of innocent people,
 - ¹⁸ a heart that invents wicked schemes,
feet that quickly run to do evil,
 - ¹⁹ a witness who breathes out lies
and one who sows discord among brothers.
- ²⁰ My son, obey the command of your father
and do not abandon the teaching of your mother.
- ²¹ Always bind them on your heart;
tie them about your neck.
- ²² When you walk, they will guide you;
when you lie down, they will watch over you;
and when you wake up, they will teach you.
- ²³ For the commands are a lamp,
and the teaching is a light;
the corrections that come by instruction
are the way of life.

- ²⁴ It keeps you from the evil woman,
from the smooth tongue of an immoral woman.
- ²⁵ Do not lust in your heart after her beauty
and do not let her capture you with her eyelashes.
- ²⁶ The price of a prostitute is the cost of a loaf of bread,
but the wife of another man hunts for a precious life.
- ²⁷ Can a man carry a fire against his chest
without burning his clothes?
- ²⁸ Can a man walk on hot coals
without scorching his feet?
- ²⁹ So is the man who goes to his neighbor's wife;
the one who touches her will not go unpunished.
- ³⁰ People do not despise a thief if he steals
to satisfy his need when he is hungry.
- ³¹ Yet if he is caught, he will pay back seven times what he stole;
he must give up everything of value in his house.
- ³² The one who commits adultery lacks sense;
the one who does it destroys himself.
- ³³ Wounds and shame are what he deserves
and his disgrace will not be blotted out.
- ³⁴ For jealousy makes a man furious;
he will show no mercy on the day of vengeance.
- ³⁵ He will accept no ransom
and he cannot be bought off,
though you offer him many gifts.
-

Proverbs 6 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 6 continues a collection of proverbs that ends in chapter nine.

Special concepts in this chapter

My Son

Occasionally, the author addresses a proverb to "my son." This is not intended to restrict the words of that proverb to only males. Instead, it is simply a form used to pass on advice as a father does to his son.

Adulteress

The latter part of this chapter comes back to the theme about the adulteress and warns the young man to avoid her. An adulteress is a woman who commits adultery. (See: adultery)

Numbers

Occasionally, the author will mention a list of six things, or seven things, that Yahweh hates. These numbers are used to draw attention to the list of things. It is not important whether there are six or seven things in the list.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

The author will use rhetorical questions to draw the reader's attention to important points.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Animals used as types

The gazelle and the ant have certain characteristics which the author uses to give wisdom. If your language does not recognize these characteristics in those animals, you could add a footnote to explain or possibly substitute another animal from your culture that would help explain the same concept. (See: wise)

Proverbs 6:1

set aside your money

Implied here is that your promise and the circumstances forced you to save up your money. Alternate translation: "had to save up some of your money"

a guarantee for your neighbor's loan

Possible meanings are 1) your neighbor may come to you to ask for a loan or 2) your neighbor wants to take out a loan from someone else, but you promise to pay the lender back if your neighbor cannot.

neighbor

This same Hebrew word can also mean "friend."

Proverbs 6:2

you have laid a trap for yourself

This is a figure of speech saying that you are going to trap yourself. Alternate translation: "you have made a trap in which you yourself are caught"

the words of your mouth

"what you said" or "what you promised to do"

Proverbs 6:3

save yourself

"protect yourself" or "help yourself out of these problems"

you have fallen into the hand of your neighbor

This is a figure of speech using the term "hand" to mean "harm." Alternate translation: "your neighbor can bring harm to you if he wants to" or "your neighbor has power over you"

neighbor

"friend"

Proverbs 6:4

Give your eyes no sleep and your eyelids no slumber

"Do not let your eyes sleep; do not let your eyelids slumber." These two phrases mean the same thing and are repeated to emphasize how important it is not to be lazy. It is also stated negatively for even more emphasis. Alternate translation: "Stay awake, and do what you can"

your eyes ... your eyelids

This is a figure of speech using parts of your face to mean your whole body. Alternate translation: "yourself ... yourself"

Proverbs 6:5

Save yourself like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter

"Escape from your neighbor like a gazelle that flees from a hunter"

gazelle

This is a big, lean animal that eats grass and that people often hunt for meat. It is famous for running away quickly.

from the hand of the hunter

The hand of the hunter refers to the hunter's control. Alternate translation: "from the control of the hunter"

like a bird from the hand of the fowler

"and escape like a bird that flies away from a bird-hunter"

Proverbs 6:6

Look at ... consider

"Study ... think about" or "carefully observe ... ponder"

ant

An ant is a small insect that lives underground or in a self-built hill. They usually live in groups of thousands, and they can lift things that are much bigger than they are.

consider her ways

This is a figure of speech using the "ways" of an ant to refer to the behavior of the ant. Alternate translation: "consider how the ant behaves"

Proverbs 6:7

commander, officer, or ruler

These three words mean basically the same thing and are used to emphasize that no one has formal authority over an individual ant.

Proverbs 6:8

it prepares its food in the summer ... during the harvest it stores up what it will eat

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and are repeated to show how responsible the ant is.

summer

Summer is the time of the year when some trees bear their fruit.

Proverbs 6:9

How long will you lie down, you lazy person? When will you rise from your sleep?

The teacher uses these questions to scold the lazy person for sleeping too much. Alternate translation:

"You should not just lie there, you lazy person. You should rise up from your sleep." or "Wake up, you lazy person! Get out of your bed!"

Proverbs 6:10

A little sleep ... of the hands to rest

These are the kinds of things that lazy people say.

A little sleep, a little slumber

Both of these statements mean the same thing. They can be stated as complete sentences. Alternate translation: "I will just sleep a little longer. Let me sleep lightly a little longer"

folding of the hands to rest

People often fold their hands while reclining in order to rest more comfortably. Alternate translation: "I will just cross my arms comfortably and rest a little"

Proverbs 6:11

and your poverty will come

This can be stated as a new sentence to make clear that this is a result of being lazy. Alternate translation: "If you continue to be lazy, your poverty will come" or "While you sleep, poverty will come"

your poverty will come like a robber

The sudden way a lazy person becomes poor is like the sudden way a robber comes and steals things. Alternate translation: "you will suddenly become poor, just as if a robber came and stole everything you have"

and your needs like an armed soldier

The sudden way a lazy person becomes in need of things is like the sudden way an armed soldier takes things from a person. This can be stated as a complete sentence. Alternate translation: "and your needs will come to you like an armed soldier" or "and you will become needy just as if an armed soldier stole all your things"

an armed soldier

"a soldier who is holding a weapon" or "a man with a weapon"

Proverbs 6:12

A worthless person—a wicked man

These two words have the same meaning and emphasize how bad this person is. Alternate translation: "A person with no value—an evil man"

lives by the crookedness of his speech

Here lies are spoken of as speech that is crooked. Alternate translation: "constantly tells lies"

Proverbs 6:13

winking his eyes, making signals with his feet and pointing with his fingers

All three of these phrases describe a way in which the evil person communicates secretly to deceive other people.

winking his eyes

If someone winks, he closes one eye very briefly as a secret signal to another person. This might be a sign of trust, of approval, or of something else.

Proverbs 6:14

He plots evil

"He plans evil" or "He prepares to do evil deeds"

he always stirs up strife

"he always causes strife" or "he is constantly looking for arguments and making them worse"

Proverbs 6:15

Therefore

"For that reason"

his disaster will overtake him

This implies that the disaster is chasing him like a person or an animal, and that it will catch him soon. Alternate translation: "his disaster will catch him"

his disaster

This refers to the disaster that will happen to him, but also the disaster that he himself caused.

in an instant; in a moment

Both mean the same thing, and one or both of them can be replaced by "suddenly" or "very quickly."

Proverbs 6:16

six things that Yahweh hates, seven that

This whole verse is a parallelism that emphasizes that God hates several things and not just one. Alternate translation: "six things that Yahwah hates; seven things that"

that are an abomination to him

"that he strongly hates." See how you translated "abomination" in Proverbs 3:32.

Proverbs 6:17

Connecting Statement:

This begins the list of things that Yahweh hates that was introduced in [Proverbs 6:16](#).

eyes ... tongue ... hands

All of these body parts refer to a whole person. You can translate each of these with "people."

shed the blood of
"kill" or "murder"

Proverbs 6:18

heart ... feet
All of these body parts refer to a whole person. You can translate each of these with "people."

wicked schemes
"evil plans"

Proverbs 6:19

breathes out lies
This figure of speech uses "breathes" to refer to lying constantly. Alternate translation: "constantly lies"

discord
See how you translated this in Proverbs 6:14.

one who sows discord
This figure of speech is using "sows" to refer to causing or bringing about discord. Alternate translation: "a person who causes discord"

Proverbs 6:20

obey the command of your father ... do not abandon the teaching of your mother
These two phrases are very similar in meaning, but the use of both "father" and "mother" explicitly includes women in the teaching process.

do not abandon the teaching of your mother
The abstract noun "teaching" can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: "Do not reject what your mother teaches you"

Proverbs 6:21

bind them on your heart; tie them about your neck
These two phrases mean basically the same thing. They describe the commands and instructions as if they are written down so that you can put it in or on your body to remind yourself.

bind them on your heart
"love them" or "think about them"

Proverbs 6:22

When you walk ... when you lie down ... when you wake up
These three phrases are used together to emphasize that the lessons are valuable all the time.

they will guide you ... they will watch over you ... they will teach you
The repetition of these phrases is to show that the lessons are valuable for all sorts of things. It also speaks of those lessons as if they were people.

Proverbs 6:23

the commands ... the teaching ... the corrections that come by instruction
These three phrases mean basically the same thing, and together they show the various types of lessons a father and a mother teach.

a lamp ... a light ... the way of life
All three of these mean basically the same thing and are repeated to emphasize the fact that the lessons make life better and easier. Alternate translation: "as useful as a lamp ... as helpful as light in the darkness ... as necessary to follow as the way of life"

the way of life
"the way that leads to life" or "the way of living that God approves of"

Proverbs 6:24

It keeps you from
Here the word "it" refers to the lessons taught by the father and mother in [Proverbs 6:20]

smooth tongue
The word "tongue" here is a metonym for the words the woman uses her tongue to speak. Alternate translation: "deceptive words"

immoral
sexually immoral

Proverbs 6:25

do not let her capture you with her eyelashes
The writer speaks of the woman's eyelashes as if they were a trap into which the young man could fall. They are a synecdoche for her beauty and a metonym for the way the woman looks at the young man to make her want her. Alternate translation: "do not allow her to gain control over you by being beautiful and by the way she looks at you"

in your heart
Here "heart" represents the mind. Alternate translation: "in your thoughts"

her beauty
"what is beautiful about her." This can also be a metonym for the woman. Alternate translation: "her"

capture you
"gain control over you"

her eyelashes

The "eyelashes" stand for the beautiful things about her body that she uses to catch a man's attention.
Alternate translation: "her beautiful eyes"

Proverbs 6:26

Connecting Statement:

The writer tells why his son should not have sexual relations with the wife of another man.

General Information:

Be sure your translation clearly communicates that having sexual relations with the wife of another man is much worse than having sexual relations with a prostitute.

The price of a prostitute is the cost of a loaf of bread, but the wife of another man hunts for a precious life
"A prostitute will be satisfied to receive enough money for a loaf of bread, but the wife of another man will be satisfied only when she has taken a precious life" or "Having sexual relations with a prostitute will cost you only as much as a loaf of bread, but having sexual relations with another man's wife will cost you your precious life"

the cost of a loaf of bread ... a precious life

Possible meanings are 1) the reader thinks that the money a prostitute takes is little and his own life is precious or 2) the prostitute is looking only for money so she can eat, while an adulterous wife gives her body hoping to receive love.

the cost of a loaf of bread

This is a metaphor for a small amount of money or something else unimportant. If your language has a common way of saying this, you may want to use it here. Alternate translation: "very small"

hunts for a precious life

The writer speaks of the woman's jealous husband wanting to kill the reader as if it were the woman herself who were trying to kill him. Alternate translation: "is giving her husband the opportunity to kill you" or "is putting you in danger"

Proverbs 6:27

Can a man carry a fire against his chest without burning his clothes?

This action would be very dangerous and would cause harm. The implied answer to the question is "no." Alternate translation: "Every man who carries a fire in his chest will burn his clothes."

without burning

"without destroying" or "and not destroy"

his clothes

His clothes stand for him as a whole person.

Proverbs 6:28

Can a man walk on hot coals without scorching his feet?

Walking on hot coals will scorch a person's feet, so the implied answer is "no." Alternate translation: "Every man who walks on hot coals will have scorched feet."

walk on hot coals

This stands for committing adultery.

walk

That is to slowly walk a long distance, without using tricks or magic.

scorching

"burning"

Proverbs 6:29

the man who goes to his neighbor's wife

This is a polite way of talking about having sexual relations. Alternate translation: "the man who has sexual relations with his neighbor's wife" or "the man who lies with his neighbor's wife"

Proverbs 6:30

despise a thief

"do not regard a thief with contempt" or "do not think a thief is evil"

Proverbs 6:31

if he is caught

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "if someone catches him"

in his house

This figure of speech is saying that everything in his house is all that he owns. Alternate translation: "that he owns"

Proverbs 6:32

The one

"The person" or "The man"

Proverbs 6:33

what he deserves

"the appropriate punishment for what he has done"

his disgrace

This figure of speech is using the term "disgrace" to refer to the feeling of him acting shamefully. Alternate translation: "the memory of his shameful act"

will not be blotted out

This figure of speech is using the negative "will not be blotted out" to refer to it always being there.

Alternate translation: "will never go away" or "will always be there"

Proverbs 6:34

furious
very angry

he will show no mercy
The "he" is the neighbor whose wife has committed adultery with another man. Alternate translation: "he will not limit the pain he will cause you" or "he will hurt you as much as he can"

on the day of vengeance
"when he takes revenge"

Proverbs 6:35

General Information:

The writer speaks as if the jealous husband has captured the one who had sexual relations with his wife.

ransom
money to buy the freedom of someone who has been captured

he cannot be bought off
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you cannot pay him enough money to change his mind"

off, though
"off. This will be true even if"

Chapter 7

- ¹ My son, keep my words
and store up my commands within yourself.
- ² Keep my commands and live,
and keep my instruction as the apple of your eye.
- ³ Tie them on your fingers;
write them on the tablet of your heart.
- ⁴ Say to wisdom, "You are my sister,"
and call understanding your kinsman,
- ⁵ in order to keep yourself from the adulterous woman,
from the immoral woman who makes her words smooth.

- ⁶ At the window of my house
I was looking out through the lattice.
- ⁷ I looked at the naive people,
and I noticed among the young men
a youth who had no sense.
- ⁸ That young man passed down the street near her corner,
and he went toward her house.
- ⁹ It was twilight, in the evening of the day,
at the time of night and darkness.

- ¹⁰ There a woman met him,
dressed like a prostitute, with a false heart.
- ¹¹ She was loud and rebellious;
her feet did not stay at home.
- ¹² Now in the streets, then in the marketplace,
and at every corner she waited in ambush.
- ¹³ So she grabbed him and kissed him,
with a strong face she said to him,

- ¹⁴ "I made my peace offering today,
I fulfilled my vows,
- ¹⁵ so I came out to meet you,
to eagerly seek your face,
and I have found you.
- ¹⁶ I have spread coverings on my bed,
colored linens from Egypt.
- ¹⁷ I have sprinkled my bed
with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.
- ¹⁸ Come, let us drink our fill of love until morning;
let us take great pleasure in acts of love.
- ¹⁹ For my husband is not at his house;
he has gone on a long journey.
- ²⁰ He took a bag of money with him;
he will come home on the day of the full moon."

- ²¹ With her great persuasiveness she turned him;
with her smooth lips she compelled him.
- ²² Suddenly he went after her
like an ox going to slaughter,
and like a fool is punished with shackles, ^[1]
- ²³ until an arrow pierces through his liver.
He was like a bird rushing into a snare.
He did not know that it would cost him his life.

- ²⁴ Now, my sons, listen to me;

- pay attention to the words of my mouth.
- 25 May your heart not turn aside onto her paths;
do not be led astray onto her paths.
- 26 She has caused many people to fall down pierced;
those she has killed are numerous.
- 27 Her house is on the paths to Sheol;
they go down to the dark bedrooms of death.

Footnotes

7:22 ^[1]The Hebrew text is difficult to understand. The ancient Greek translation has:

Proverbs 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 7 continues a collection of proverbs that ends in chapter nine.

Special concepts in this chapter

Parallelism

Proverbs are often written without any surrounding context and in two lines of text. Each line will have a certain relationship to the other line.

Many of the proverbs are stated as promises or commands, but they are intended to be advice.

My Son

Occasionally the author addresses a proverb to "my son." This is not intended to restrict the words of that proverb to only males, but is still given in the context of a father warning his son.

Adulteress

This chapter continues the theme about the adulteress and warns the young man to avoid her.

Proverbs 7:1

keep my words

Here keeping represents obeying. Alternate translation: "obey my words"

store up my commands within yourself

Here God's commands are spoken of as if they were objects that someone could put into a storeroom. Alternate translation: "memorize my commands"

Proverbs 7:2

keep my instruction

Here keeping represents obeying. Alternate translation: "obey my instructions"

as the apple of your eye

The apple of the eye is the pupil inside the eye, which people normally instinctively protect when an object flies at their face. Here "the apple of the eye" represents whatever a person values and protects the most. Alternate translation: "as your most valuable possession"

Proverbs 7:3

Tie them on your fingers

Possible meanings are 1) that the writer wanted his son to engrave certain commands from God on a ring and wear it, or 2) that the writer wanted his son to always remember God's commands, as if he always wore a certain ring.

write them on the tablet of your heart

Here the heart represents a person's mind, and remembering something well is spoken of as if the person were writing it on a stone tablet. See how you translated this in Proverbs 3:3. Alternate translation: "remember my commands well as if you were writing them in stone"

Proverbs 7:4

Say to wisdom, "You are my sister"

Here wisdom is spoken of as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "Value wisdom as you would love your sister"

call understanding your kinsman

Here the quality of understanding is spoken of as if it were a kinsman or relative. Alternate translation: "treat understanding as you would treat your kinsman"

kinsman

"relative" or "family member"

Proverbs 7:5

who makes her words smooth

Words intended to deceive are spoken of as if they were smooth objects. Alternate translation: "who praises you to deceive you" or "who flatters you with her words"

Proverbs 7:6

lattice

a covering over a window made of thin strips of wood that cross one another in a slanted pattern that forms square-shaped openings in the pattern

Proverbs 7:7

naive

inexperienced or immature

Proverbs 7:8

her corner

Here "her" refers to any female stranger, as referred to in Proverbs 7:5. She was standing at a certain corner, waiting for a suitable man to pass by. Alternate translation: "the corner where a female stranger was standing"

corner

This refers to where two roads meet.

Proverbs 7:9

twilight

the time of day when it is getting darker and about to become night

Proverbs 7:10

with a false heart

Here "heart" represents intentions or plans. Alternate translation: "she planned to deceive someone"

Proverbs 7:11

She was loud and rebellious

"She talked loudly and showed contempt for her husband"

her feet did not stay at home

The phrase "her feet" represent the woman. Alternate translation: "she did not stay at home"

Proverbs 7:12

she waited in ambush

Here the woman is spoken of as if she were preparing to physically trap a person or an animal. Also, the idea of trapping someone here represents persuading someone to commit sin. Alternate translation: "she waited to trap someone" or "she waited to find someone she could persuade to sin"

Proverbs 7:13

she

the woman who was introduced in [Proverbs 7:10](#)

grabbed him

"took hold of him firmly"

with a strong face

Here "strong" represents "stubborn." A "strong face" means a stubborn expression on a person's face. This implies that the woman is acting in a stubborn way, that she is deliberately doing what she knows is wrong. Alternate translation: "with a shameless expression on her face"

Proverbs 7:14

I fulfilled my vows

Here "vows" represents what the person promised to sacrifice to God. Alternate translation: "I made the sacrifices I promised to God"

Proverbs 7:15

seek your face

Here "face" represents the person and especially the person's presence. Alternate translation: "look for you" or "find out where you are"

Proverbs 7:16

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Proverbs 7:17

sprinkled my bed with

"scattered on my bed"

aloes

a substance from aloe plants that has a nice smell

cinnamon

This is a spice made from the bark of a tree that smells and tastes good.

Proverbs 7:18

let us drink our fill of love

Here the pleasures of romantic love are spoken of as if they were something good to drink. Alternate translation: "let us make love to each other as much as we want"

acts of love

caresses and sexual relations

Proverbs 7:19

is not at his house

"is not at home"

Proverbs 7:20

full moon

The moon is said to be full when it is a perfectly round disk, shining at its brightest.

Proverbs 7:21

her ... she ... him

The female is the married woman who wants to sleep with "him," the young man.

she turned him ... she compelled him

These two phrases form a merism that emphasizes that she was able to get him to willingly do exactly what she wanted.

she turned him

Causing him to stop doing what is right and start doing what is wrong is spoken of as if she caused him to turn off of the correct path and on to a wrong path. Alternate translation: "she persuaded him"

smooth lips

Here "lips" represents what a person says. When a person flatters someone else by saying things that are not sincere, these words are spoken of as if they were a smooth object. Alternate translation: "flattering, deceiving words"

she compelled him

This hyperbole speaks of the woman flattering the young man so that his desire was so strong he could not resist it as if she were forcing him to sin.

Proverbs 7:22

Suddenly he went after her

This seems to imply that the young man took very little time to think about what he should do. Alternate translation: "He quickly decided to go after her"

like an ox going to slaughter

The naive and unsuspecting way the young man follows the adulteress is compared to the way an animal is unaware of the danger it is in.

slaughter

This refers to killing an animal in order to eat its meat.

like a fool is punished with shackles

The Hebrew for this sentence is not clear. Many translations say, "like a deer walks into a trap."

Proverbs 7:23

like a bird rushing into a snare

The naive and unsuspecting way the young man follows the adulteress is compared to the way an animal is unaware of the danger he is in.

until an arrow pierces through his liver

This passage implies that a hunter has trapped the deer in order to shoot it with arrows. Alternate translation: "until a hunter shoots it in its most important part"

liver

Here this organ represents a very important part of the deer's body.

it would cost him his life

This is a way of saying that this person will die as a result. Alternate translation: "it would kill him" or "he would die because of it"

Proverbs 7:24

Now

This is to focus the attention of the speaker's sons on the conclusion of this lesson.

Proverbs 7:25

May your heart not turn aside onto her paths

Here "ways" means the paths that a person chooses to walk on. It represents the person's behavior, the things that he decides to do in life. Alternate translation: "Make your heart stay far away from the ways of the adulterous woman" or "Do not let your heart want to do the things that the adulterous woman does"

your heart

Here "heart" represents a person, emphasizing his desires. Alternate translation: "you"

do not be led astray onto her paths

This means the same as the sentence before it. It strengthens the first warning. Alternate translation: "do not leave the right path in order to go on her paths"

Proverbs 7:26

She has caused many people to fall down pierced

Being pierced by spears or arrows represents being killed. Alternate translation: "She has caused many people to fall dead"

Proverbs 7:27

Her house is on the paths to Sheol ... they go down

Here "paths" represents the kinds of behavior that foolish people participate in. Sheol was the name for the world of the dead.

on the paths to Sheol ... down to the dark bedrooms of death

These two phrases basically mean the same thing and are repeated to emphasize that the woman's victims will be destroyed.

the dark bedrooms of death

This expression pictures the dead as sleeping in many different rooms in Sheol.

Chapter 8

- ¹ Does not Wisdom call out?
Does not Understanding raise her voice?
- ² On the hilltops beside the road,
at the crossroads, Wisdom has taken her stand.
- ³ Before the gates at the entrance into the city,
at the entrances into the city, she cries out.
- ⁴ "It is to you, people, that I call;
my voice is for the sons of mankind.
- ⁵ You who are naive, learn wisdom;
and you who are foolish, you must get an understanding mind.
- ⁶ Listen, because I will speak of noble things,
and when my lips open I will say upright things.
- ⁷ For my mouth speaks what is trustworthy,
and wickedness is an abomination to my lips.
- ⁸ All the words of my mouth are just;
in them is nothing twisted or perverse.
- ⁹ All of them are straight for the person who understands;
my words are upright for those who find knowledge.
- ¹⁰ Acquire my instruction rather than silver;
acquire knowledge rather than choicest gold.
- ¹¹ For Wisdom is better than jewels;
no desirable thing is equal to her.
- ¹² I, Wisdom, live with Prudence,
and I possess knowledge and discretion.
- ¹³ The fear of Yahweh is to hate evil.
I hate pride and arrogance, the evil way,
and perverted speech. I hate them.
- ¹⁴ I have good advice and sound wisdom;
I am insight; strength belongs to me.
- ¹⁵ By me kings reign,
and rulers make laws that are just.
- ¹⁶ By me princes rule,
nobles, and all who judge with justice.
- ¹⁷ I love those who love me,
and those who diligently seek me, find me.
- ¹⁸ With me are riches and honor,
lasting wealth and righteousness.
- ¹⁹ My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold;
my produce is better than pure silver.
- ²⁰ I walk in the path of righteousness,
in the midst of the paths of justice.
- ²¹ As a result, I make those who love me inherit wealth;
I fill up their treasuries.
- ²² Yahweh created me at the beginning,
the first of his deeds long ago.
- ²³ In ages long ago I was established—from the first,
from the beginnings of the earth.
- ²⁴ Before there were oceans, I was given birth—
before there were springs abounding with water.
- ²⁵ Before the mountains were settled
and before the hills, I was born.
- ²⁶ I was born before Yahweh had made the earth or the fields,
or even the first dust in the world.
- ²⁷ I was there when he established the heavens,

- when he drew a circle on the surface of the deep.
- 28 I was there when he established the clouds above
and when the springs in the deep became fixed.
- 29 I was there when he made his limit for the sea,
so the waters should not spread beyond his command,
and when there was set the limit for the foundations of the dry land.
- 30 I was beside him, as a skilled craftsman;
I was his delight day after day,
always rejoicing before him.
- 31 I was rejoicing in his whole world,
and my delight was in the sons of mankind.
- 32 Now, my sons, listen to me,
for those who keep my ways will be blessed.
- 33 Listen to my instruction and be wise;
do not neglect it.
- 34 The one who listens to me will be blessed.
He will be watching every day at my doors,
waiting beside the posts of my doors.
- 35 For whoever finds me, finds life,
and he will find the favor of Yahweh.
- 36 But he who fails, harms his own life;
all who hate me love death."

Proverbs 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 8 continues a collection of proverbs that ends in chapter nine. These chapters operate more as a unit than many of the following chapters in this book.

Special concepts in this chapter

Wisdom calls out

The addressee of this chapter is broader than "my son," but is personal like the previous chapters' use of "my son." In this case, Wisdom is calling out for all to come and learn of her, in contrast to the adulteress mentioned in chapters 5-7. (See: wise)

Proverbs 8:1

General Information:

In chapter 8 wisdom is spoken of as a woman who teaches people how to be wise. Many verses in chapter 8 have parallelisms.

Does not Wisdom call out?

This question is used to remind the readers of something they should already know. Alternate translation: "Wisdom calls out"

Does not Wisdom call out?

Here wisdom is imagined as a woman. If a language does not allow this kind of metaphor, other possible translations are: 1) "Is not wisdom like a woman who calls out?" 2) "Does not a woman named Wisdom call out?"

Does not Understanding raise her voice?

Here "Understanding" means the same as "Wisdom."

raise her voice
"speak"

Proverbs 8:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Proverbs 8:3

the gates at the entrance into the city

In ancient times, cities usually had outer walls with gates in them.

she cries out

This continues to refer to Wisdom, personified as a woman.

Proverbs 8:4

General Information:

Wisdom speaks to the people in verses 4-36.

my voice is for the sons of mankind

Here "voice" represents the words that are spoken.
Alternate translation: "my words are for the sons of mankind"

the sons of mankind

This is metonymy representing all human beings.
Alternate translation: "all people"

Proverbs 8:5

naive

inexperienced or immature

learn wisdom

The abstract word "wisdom" refers to what a wise person believes and to the way in which he acts.
Alternate translation: "learn how a wise person acts" or "learn what it means to be wise"

you must get an understanding mind

"you must begin to understand things with your mind"

Proverbs 8:6

when my lips open

Here "lips" represents a person's mouth, with which he speaks. Alternate translation: "when I open my mouth to speak"

upright

proper or just

Proverbs 8:7

my mouth speaks

Here "mouth" represents a person who speaks.
Alternate translation: "I speak"

what is trustworthy

"what people should believe"

wickedness is an abomination to my lips

Here "lips" represents a person who is speaking. See how you translated "abomination" in Proverbs 3:32. Alternate translation: "wickedness is an abomination to me" or "saying wicked things would be an abomination to me"

wickedness

Here the abstract noun "wickedness" represents wicked speech.

Proverbs 8:8

the words of my mouth

The "mouth" stands for the person who is speaking.
Alternate translation: "The things I teach"

nothing twisted

Twisting a message is a metaphor for changing a true message into a false one. Alternate translation: "nothing false"

Proverbs 8:9

straight

honest and clear

my words are upright for those who find knowledge

This probably means that those who find knowledge will easily understand that the speaker's words are upright. Here "words" represent a message or teaching. Alternate translation: "those who know what is right and what is wrong consider what I teach to be right"

upright

true and honest

Proverbs 8:10

Acquire my instruction rather than silver

"You should try much harder to understand my instructions than to get silver"

choicest gold

"the best gold you could ever find"

Proverbs 8:11

For Wisdom is better than jewels; no desirable thing is equal to her

Here Wisdom, personified as a woman, is not speaking. However, it is possible to make Wisdom the speaker here as well. Alternate translation: "For I, Wisdom, am better than jewels; no desirable thing is equal to me"

desirable thing

treasuries

Proverbs 8:12

I, Wisdom, live with Prudence

Prudence is also represented here as a person.

Prudence

caution or good judgment

I possess knowledge and discretion

The abstract ideas "knowledge" and "discrete" can be expressed in other ways. Alternate translation: "I am knowledgeable and discreet" or "I know many things, and I am careful"

discretion

being careful about what we say and do; being cautious not to cause hurt or harm to others

Proverbs 8:13

pervverted speech

"wicked talk"

pervverted

turned from what is right

Proverbs 8:14

good advice

"wise suggestions"

advice

counsel that is given to help someone

sound

good, reliable

I am insight

Here Wisdom is spoken of as if she were insight. Alternate translation: "I have insight"

Proverbs 8:15

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Proverbs 8:16

nobles, and all who judge with justice

Translators can supply the missing words. Alternate translation: "and by me nobles and all who judge with justice also rule"

nobles

noblemen, leading members of important families in the nation

Proverbs 8:17

love

This refers to brotherly love or love for a friend or family member. This is natural human love between friends or relatives.

diligently

with careful and continued effort

Proverbs 8:18

With me are riches and honor

"I have riches and honor"

lasting wealth and righteousness

This explains what is meant by "riches and honor." This can be made clear with the connecting word "therefore." Alternate translation: "therefore, I will

give lasting wealth and righteousness to those who find me"

righteousness

"the ability to live in a right way"

Proverbs 8:19

My fruit

what wisdom produces or causes

my produce

the benefit or gain that wisdom causes

Proverbs 8:20

I walk in the path of righteousness

Living the right way is spoken of as walking on the right road. Alternate translation: "I live right" or "I do what is right"

in the midst of the paths of justice

This tells more of what is meant by "the path of righteousness." Alternate translation: "I do what is perfectly just" or "I only do what is just"

Proverbs 8:21

treasuries

storehouses for valuable things. Wisdom is spoken of as a woman who fills the storehouses of her followers with valuable things.

Proverbs 8:22

the first of his deeds long ago

"creating me was one of the first things he did long ago"

Proverbs 8:23

In ages long ago

"Very long ago"

ages

The word "age" refers to a general, extended period of time.

from the beginnings of the earth

The idea of beginnings can be translated in a less abstract way. Alternate translation: "from when God created the earth"

Proverbs 8:24

General Information:

Wisdom continues to speak.

Proverbs 8:25

Before the mountains were settled

"Before the bases of the mountains were put into place." This can also be put into active form.

Alternate translation: "Before God made the foundations of the mountains and put them into their proper places"

Proverbs 8:26

I was born

This is wisdom speaking about herself.

was born

"I was alive"

Proverbs 8:27

I was there

This is wisdom speaking about herself.

established

To establish something is to bring into being on a stable basis. Alternate translation: "created" or "made"

when he drew a circle on the surface of the deep

This refers to setting a limit to how far someone in a ship at sea can see all around himself. Alternate translation: "when he marked on the ocean's surface how far a person at sea can see in every direction"

the deep

"the ocean"

Proverbs 8:28

General Information:

Wisdom continues to speak.

established

brought into permanent being

when the springs in the deep became fixed

This can be put into active form. Alternate translation: "when God fixed the springs in the deep"

the springs in the deep

The ancient Hebrews thought that the ocean got its water from springs at the bottom of the sea.

Proverbs 8:29

when he made his limit for the sea

"when he created the shorelines for the oceans. The "limit for the sea" divided the oceans from the dry land.

when there was set the limit for the foundations of the dry land

The Hebrew word for "earth" also often means "land."

when there was set the limit for the foundations of the dry land

This can be put into active form. Alternate translation: "when God set the limit for the foundations of the earth"

Proverbs 8:30

I was beside him

This is still wisdom speaking. Wisdom now says she was right next to Yahweh, implying that she was his assistant in creating the world.

skilled craftsman

This is a person who has trained for years to make useful things very well, like furniture or houses.

I was his delight

"I was what made him happy." The word "delight" is an abstract noun that can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "he was happy because of me"

day after day

This is a way to express the idea of a habitual action or of a continuous condition. Alternate translation: "continually" or "the whole time"

Proverbs 8:31

his whole world

"the whole world he created" or "everything he created"

the sons of mankind

This refers to human beings in general. Alternate translation: "the people he brought into existence"

Proverbs 8:32

Now

This is to focus the attention of the children to the conclusion of this lesson.

listen to me

This is still wisdom talking about herself.

those who keep my ways

Here "my ways" represents wisdom's behavior. Alternate translation: "those who do what I teach" or "the people who follow my example"

Proverbs 8:33

do not neglect

"do not disregard" Alternate translation: "be sure to pay attention to" or "be sure to follow"

Proverbs 8:34

watching every day at my doors, waiting beside the posts of my doors

These two phrases basically mean the same thing. Wisdom is described as having a home; possible meanings of "watching" are 1) a wise person waits outside wisdom's home in the morning in order to serve her, or 2) a wise person waits outside wisdom's house for her to come and teach him.

Proverbs 8:35

finds me

This is still wisdom talking about herself.

Proverbs 8:36

hate me

This is still wisdom talking about herself.

he who fails

The complete thought is, "he who fails to find me"

his own life

Here "life" represents the person's self.

Chapter 9

- ¹ Wisdom has built her own house;
she has carved seven pillars out of rocks.
- ² She has slaughtered her animals, she has mixed her wine,
and she has set her table.
- ³ She has sent out her maids; she calls out
from the highest points of the city,
- ⁴ "Who is naive? Let him turn aside here!"
To the one lacking good sense she speaks.
- ⁵ "Come, eat my food,
and drink the wine I have mixed.
- ⁶ Leave your naive actions and live;
walk in the path of understanding.
- ⁷ Whoever disciplines a mocker receives dishonor,
and whoever rebukes a wicked person receives abuse.
- ⁸ Do not reprove a mocker, or he will hate you;
reprove a wise man, and he will love you.
- ⁹ Give to a wise person, and he will become even wiser;
teach a righteous person, and he will add to his learning.
- ¹⁰ The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom,
and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.
- ¹¹ For through me your days will be multiplied,
and years of life will be added to you.
- ¹² If you are wise, you are wise for yourself,
and if you mock, you will carry it by yourself."
- ¹³ The woman of foolishness is ignorant;
she is untaught and knows nothing.
- ¹⁴ She sits at the door of her house,
on a seat in the highest places of the town.
- ¹⁵ She is calling out to those who pass by in the streets,
to people walking straight on their way.
- ¹⁶ "Let anyone who is naive turn aside here,"
she says to those who have no sense.
- ¹⁷ "Stolen waters are sweet,
and bread of secrecy is delicious."
- ¹⁸ But he does not know that the dead are there,
that her invited guests are in the depths of Sheol.

Proverbs 9 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 9 concludes a collection of proverbs that operate as a unit about wisdom. (See: wise)

Special concepts in this chapter

Wisdom calls out

The addressee of chapters 8 and 9 is broader than "my son," but is personal like the previous chapters' use of "my son." In this case, Wisdom is calling out for all to come and learn of her.

Proverbs 9:1

General Information:

These verses begin a parable in which wisdom is imagined to be a woman who is giving good advice to people.

Wisdom has built

The writer speaks about wisdom as if it were a woman who has built her own house.

Proverbs 9:2

She has slaughtered her animals

This refers to animals whose meat will be eaten in the dinner that Wisdom will give. Alternate translation: "She has killed the animals for meat at dinner"

mixed her wine

In ancient Israel, people often mixed wine with water. Alternate translation: "prepared her wine by mixing it with water"

she has set her table

"she has prepared her table"

Proverbs 9:3

General Information:

These verses begin to give the message of Wisdom, who is personified as a woman.

She has sent out her maids

These maids went out and invited people to come to the feast that Wisdom had prepared.

her maids

Young women or girls who are in the service of a respectable, adult woman, such as Wisdom.

she calls out

"she proclaims" or "she summons" Alternate translation: "she loudly recites her invitation"

the highest points of the city

The invitation is shouted from the highest points so that it will be best heard by all the people.

Proverbs 9:4

Who is naive? Let ... the one lacking good sense

These two phrases describe the same group of people, those who need more wisdom in their lives. Here the question is addressed to all such people. Alternate translation: "Anyone who is naive, let ... anyone lacking good sense"

is naive

"is inexperienced or immature"

turn aside here

"leave his path and come into my house"

Proverbs 9:5

General Information:

These verses continue the message of Wisdom.

Come ... eat ... drink

All of these commands are plural; Wisdom is addressing many people at the same time.

the wine I have mixed

In ancient Israel, people often mixed wine with water. Alternate translation: "prepared her wine by mixing it with water"

Proverbs 9:6

Leave ... live ... walk

All of these commands are plural; Wisdom is addressing many people at the same time.

Leave your naive actions

Here naive actions are spoken of as if they were a place that a person could leave. Alternate translation: "Stop your naive behavior"

naive actions

"inexperienced, immature actions"

the path of understanding

Here the process of understanding wisdom is spoken of as if it were a path that a person could follow. Alternate translation: "the manner of living that a wise person has"

Proverbs 9:7

General Information:

These verses continue the message of Wisdom.

Whoever disciplines a mocker receives dishonor

The abstract noun "dishonor" is spoken of as if it were a solid object that one person can give to another. It can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "A mocker will dishonor anyone who disciplines him" or "Whoever disciplines a mocker can expect the mocker to dishonor him" or "Whoever disciplines a mocker can expect the mocker to insult him"

a mocker

Someone who habitually mocks people. Alternate translation: "someone who says insulting things about other people" or "someone who likes to make other people look bad"

whoever rebukes a wicked person receives abuse

The writer speaks of "abuse" here as if it were a solid object that one person could give to another. Possible meanings are 1) a wound resulting from physical abuse or 2) a metonym for the disgrace

that comes from verbal abuse. Alternate translation: "a wicked person will abuse whoever rebukes him" or "anyone who rebukes a wicked person can expect the wicked person to abuse him"

whoever rebukes
"whoever corrects"

Proverbs 9:8

Do not reprove
"Do not correct"

Proverbs 9:9

Give to a wise person, and he ... teach a righteous person, and he
These two commands actually represent conditional statements. Alternate translation: "If you give to a wise person, he ... if you teach a righteous person, he"

Give to a wise person ... teach a righteous person
These two phrases basically say the same thing.

Give to a wise person
This refers to giving instruction to a wise person.

Proverbs 9:10

General Information:
These verses finish the message of Wisdom.

The fear of Yahweh
See how you translated this phrase in Proverbs 1:7.

Proverbs 9:11

through me your days will be multiplied
This may be put into active form. Alternate translation: "I will multiply your days" or "I will cause you to live many more days"

through me
Wisdom, personified as a woman, continues to speak here.

your days will be multiplied, and years of life will be added to you
These two phrases basically mean the same thing and are used to emphasize the great benefits wisdom has.

years of life will be added to you
Wisdom speaks of years of life as if they were physical objects. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will add years of life to you" or "I will add years to your life" or "I will enable you to live longer"

Proverbs 9:12

If you are wise ... and if you mock
These two statements seem to mean that wise people gain advantages for themselves because of their wisdom, and mockers suffer because of their behavior.

you will carry it
This speaks of the consequence of one's bad behavior as if it were a heavy load that one had to carry on his back.

Proverbs 9:13

General Information:
These verses begin to describe foolishness, which is also personified as a woman.

The woman of foolishness
It is possible to translate "foolishness" as a description such as "A foolish woman." However, if a language allows wisdom to be personified, as in the previous part of this chapter, it may also allow foolishness to be personified. Alternate translation: "The woman Foolishness"

she is untaught and knows nothing
These two expressions basically mean the same thing, which is repeated to show how useless the foolish woman is. Alternate translation: "she does not know anything at all"

she is untaught
"she has not learned from experience" or "she is young and naive"

Proverbs 9:14

General Information:
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Proverbs 9:15

walking straight on their way
This seems to be an idiom for "thinking only of their own affairs" or "minding their own business."

Proverbs 9:16

is naive
"is inexperienced or immature"

turn aside here
"leave his path and come here"

she says
This is the foolish woman who was introduced in [Proverbs 9:13](#).

those who have no sense

"those who do not have wisdom" or "those who are not wise"

Proverbs 9:17

Stolen waters are sweet, and bread of secrecy is delicious

The foolish woman speaks of the pleasure of stolen waters and bread of secrecy to tell men that if they sleep with her, they will have pleasure. This can be

stated clearly in a simile: "You can enjoy me just as you enjoy water that you have stolen or bread that is secret"

Proverbs 9:18

that the dead are there

"that the men who have gone to her are now dead"

in the depths of Sheol

"Sheol" refers to the world of the dead.

Chapter 10

¹ The proverbs of Solomon.

A wise son makes his father rejoice
but a foolish son brings grief to his mother.

² Treasures accumulated by wickedness give no profit,
but doing what is right delivers from death.

³ Yahweh does not let the soul of the righteous person go hungry,
but he frustrates the cravings of the wicked.

⁴ A lazy hand causes a person to be poor,
but the hand of the diligent person gains riches.

⁵ A wise son gathers a crop in the summer,
but it is disgraceful for him to sleep during harvest.

⁶ Blessings from God are upon the head of the righteous person,
but the mouth of the wicked covers up violence.

⁷ The righteous person makes those who remember him happy,
but the name of the wicked will rot away.

⁸ The wise of heart accept commands,
but a talkative fool will come to ruin.

⁹ He who walks in integrity walks in safety,
but the one who makes his ways crooked, he will be found out.

¹⁰ He who winks the eye causes grief,
but a talkative fool will come to ruin.

¹¹ The mouth of the righteous person is a water spring of life,
but the mouth of the wicked covers up violence.

¹² Hatred stirs up conflicts,
but love covers over all transgressions.

¹³ Wisdom is found on the lips of a discerning person,
but a rod is for the back of the one who has no sense.

¹⁴ Wise men store up knowledge,
but the mouth of a fool brings destruction near.

¹⁵ The wealth of a rich man is his fortified city;
the poverty of the poor is their destruction.

¹⁶ The wage of the righteous person leads to life;
the income of the wicked leads them to sin.

¹⁷ There is a path to life for the one who follows discipline,
but the one who rejects correction is led astray.

¹⁸ Whoever conceals hatred has lying lips,
and whoever spreads slander is a fool.

¹⁹ When there are many words, transgression is not lacking,

but he who is careful in what he says is wise.

- 20** The tongue of the righteous person is pure silver;
there is little value in the heart of the wicked.
- 21** The lips of the righteous person nourish many,
but fools die because of their lack of sense.
- 22** The blessings of Yahweh bring wealth
and he adds no pain to it.
- 23** Wickedness is a game a fool plays,
but wisdom is a pleasure to a man of understanding.
- 24** The fear of the wicked person will overtake him,
but the desire of righteous people will be granted.
- 25** The wicked are like the storm that passes by, and they are no more,
but the righteous person is a foundation that lasts forever.
- 26** Like vinegar on the teeth and smoke in the eyes,
so is the lazy person to those who send him.
- 27** The fear of Yahweh prolongs life,
but the years of the wicked will be short.
- 28** The hope of righteous people is their joy,
but the hope of wicked people will perish.
- 29** The way of Yahweh is a stronghold for those who have integrity,
but it is destruction for those who behave wickedly.
- 30** The righteous person will never be overthrown,
but the wicked will not remain in the land.
- 31** Out of the mouth of the righteous person comes the fruit of wisdom,
but the perverse tongue will be cut out.
- 32** The lips of the righteous person know what gains favor,
but the mouth of the wicked, they know what is perverse.
-

Proverbs 10 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 10 starts a new section of the book, which is attributed to Solomon and is filled mainly with short, individual proverbs.

Special concepts in this chapter

Themes

There are individual proverbs that run along common themes, often using contrasting elements: wise/foolish, money, lazy/diligent, truth telling, and wicked/righteous. (See: wise, foolish and evil and righteous)

Proverbs 10:1

General Information:

Many verses in Chapter 10 are contrasting parallelisms

The proverbs of Solomon

After the introduction of Chapters 1-9, Chapter 10 begins the collection of the proverbs; short sayings that teach wisdom.

Proverbs 10:2

accumulated

acquired over time

Proverbs 10:3

Yahweh does not let the soul of the righteous person go hungry

Here "soul" refers to the person. This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh makes sure those who do what is right have food to eat"

Proverbs 10:4

A lazy hand

"Hand" represents the strength and ability of a person. Alternate translation: "A person unwilling to work"

hand of the diligent

"Hand" represents the strength and ability of a person. Alternate translation: "person who works hard"

Proverbs 10:5

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Proverbs 10:6

are upon the head

The "head" represents the whole person. Alternate translation: "are given to"

mouth of the wicked

The "mouth" represents what a person says. Alternate translation: "words the wicked speak"

covers up

hides the truth

Proverbs 10:7

name

The word "name" represents a person's reputation. Alternate translation: "memory"

Proverbs 10:8

come to ruin

"be destroyed" or "be made useless"

Proverbs 10:9

crooked

not straight; deformed; dishonest; deceitful

Proverbs 10:10

He who winks the eye

"Winking the eye" represents a secretive sign for being cruel to someone else. Alternate translation: "He who makes a signal with a gesture"

will come to ruin

will lose all the good things he now has

Proverbs 10:11

The mouth of the righteous

Here "mouth" represents what a persons says. Alternate translation: "The speech of a righteous person"

the righteous

This refers to righteous people in general. Alternate translation: "righteous people"

is a water spring of life

This person's speech is spoken of as if it preserved living animals or people, as a water spring would do in a dry land.

the mouth of the wicked covers up violence

That is, the wicked person appears to say harmless things, but plans to violent things against other people.

the mouth of the wicked

Here "mouth" represents what a persons says. Alternate translation: "the speech of a wicked person"

the wicked

This refers to wicked people in general. Alternate translation: "wicked people"

Proverbs 10:12

Hatred stirs up conflicts

Here the word "hatred" represents anyone who hates others. Alternate translation: "Anyone who hates others stirs up conflict"

stirs up conflicts

"Stirs up conflicts" is a metaphor meaning causes people to quarrel or fight. Alternate translation: "starts fights"

love covers over all transgressions

Here the word "love" represents anyone who loves others. Alternate translation: "Anyone who loves others covers all transgressions"

covers over all transgressions

"Covers over" is a metaphor meaning forgives. Alternate translation: "forgives all wrongs"

Proverbs 10:13

on the lips of a discerning person

"Lips" represents what a person says. Alternate translation: "in what a sensible person says"

a rod is for the back

"Rod" represents strong, physical punishment and "the back" represents the person who receives the punishment. Alternate translation: "a person who has no sense needs forceful punishment"

Proverbs 10:14

the mouth of a fool

"Mouth" represents what a person says. Alternate translation: "the words from a foolish person"

Proverbs 10:15

his fortified city

This represents wealth as a safe place. Alternate translation: "his safety"

their destruction

"what destroys them"

Proverbs 10:16

The wage ... the income

These terms normally refer to the money a worker earns. Here they represents the results of either doing what is right or doing what is wrong.

income

"what comes in" when a person sells his labor or something he has produced

Proverbs 10:17

There is a path to life for the one who follows discipline

"The person who obeys wise instruction will have a long and happy life"

but the one who rejects correction is led astray

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but the one who does not obey wise instruction will not have a good life"

Proverbs 10:18

has lying lips

"Lips" represent what a person says. Alternate translation: "tells lies"

Proverbs 10:19

transgression is not lacking

This phrase uses a negative to emphasize a positive idea. Alternate translation: "there is much sin"

Proverbs 10:20

The tongue of the righteous person

"Tongue" represents what a person says. Alternate translation: "Whatever a righteous person says"

is pure silver

"Silver" represents valuable sayings. Alternate translation: "is extremely valuable"

Proverbs 10:21

The lips of the righteous

"Lips" represents what a person says. Alternate translation: "The sayings of a righteous man"

nourish

cause them to develop or grow stronger

Proverbs 10:22

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Proverbs 10:23

Wickedness is a game a fool plays

A game is an activity people do for pleasure. Alternate translation: "Fools find pleasure in wickedness"

Proverbs 10:24

overtake

overcome someone

Proverbs 10:25

The wicked are like the storm

Just as storm comes and sweeps everything away so wicked people will disappear.

is a foundation that lasts forever

"Foundation" represents the base or a beginning of something that people build over. Alternate translation: "is a start for something that lasts forever"

Proverbs 10:26

Like vinegar on the teeth and smoke in the eyes, so is the lazy person to those who send him
"Vinegar" and "smoke" represent things that hurt a person's teeth and eyes. Alternate translation: "A lazy person will make those who send him wish they had not"

vinegar

a sour liquid used to flavor or preserve foods, too much of which is painful to drink

Proverbs 10:27

the years of the wicked
"Years" represent the time a person lives. Alternate translation: "the lifetime of the evil person"

Proverbs 10:28

the hope of wicked people
Here "hope" represents what a person hopes for. Alternate translation: "what wicked people hope to obtain"

Proverbs 10:29

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Proverbs 10:30

will never be overthrown
This can be stated as active and positive: Alternate translation: "will be secure"

Proverbs 10:31

Out of the mouth of the righteous person
"Mouth" represents what a person says. Alternate translation: "From the righteous man's words"

the perverse tongue will be cut out
"Tongue" represents what a person says. Alternate translation: "God will shut the mouths of people who say what is false"

Proverbs 10:32

lips of the righteous person know what gains favor
"Lips" represent what a person says. Alternate translation: "righteous person knows how to speak in a way that gains favor"

gains favor
"makes people think well of them"

mouth of the wicked
"Mouth" represents what a person says. Alternate translation: "the words of the wicked"

Chapter 11

- ¹ False scales are an abomination to Yahweh,
but he delights in a precise weight.
- ² When pride comes, then comes disgrace,
but with humility comes wisdom.
- ³ The integrity of the upright guides them,
but the crooked ways of the treacherous destroy them.
- ⁴ Wealth is worthless on the day of wrath,
but doing right delivers you from death.
- ⁵ The right conduct of a blameless person makes his way straight,
but the wicked will fall because of their own wickedness.
- ⁶ The right conduct of the upright keeps them safe,
but the treacherous are trapped by their cravings.
- ⁷ When a wicked man dies, his hope perishes
and the hope that was in his strength comes to nothing.
- ⁸ The righteous person is delivered from trouble
and it comes upon the wicked instead.
- ⁹ With his mouth the godless person destroys his neighbor,
but through knowledge righteous people are kept safe.
- ¹⁰ When righteous people prosper, a city rejoices;
when the wicked perish, there are shouts of joy.
- ¹¹ Through the blessings of the upright the city is exalted;
by the mouth of the wicked the city is thrown down.
- ¹² The man who has contempt for his friend has no sense,
but a man of understanding keeps quiet.
- ¹³ Whoever goes around slandering reveals secrets,
but the trustworthy in spirit keeps a matter covered.
- ¹⁴ Where there is no counsel, a nation falls,
but victory comes through many counselors.
- ¹⁵ Whoever guarantees a loan for a stranger will surely suffer harm,
but the one who hates giving a pledge in that kind of promise is safe.
- ¹⁶ A gracious woman gets honor,
but violent people grasp for wealth.
- ¹⁷ A merciful person benefits himself,
but one who is cruel hurts himself.
- ¹⁸ The wicked person lies to get his wages,
but one who sows what is right reaps the wages of truth.
- ¹⁹ An honest person who does what is right will live,
but the one who pursues evil will die.

- 20** Those whose hearts are perverse are an abomination to Yahweh,
but he delights in those whose ways are blameless.
- 21** Be sure of this—the wicked person will not go unpunished,
but the descendants of righteous people will be kept safe.
- 22** Like a gold ring in a pig's nose
is a beautiful woman without discretion.
- 23** The desires of righteous people result in good,
but wicked people can only hope for wrath.
- 24** There is one who scatters—he will accumulate even more;
another withholds what is just—he comes to poverty.
- 25** The generous person will prosper
and the one who gives water to others will have water for himself.
- 26** People curse the man who refuses to sell grain,
but good gifts crown the head of him who sells it.
- 27** The one who diligently seeks good is also seeking favor,
but the one who searches for evil will find it.
- 28** Those who trust in their riches will fall,
but like the leaf, righteous people will flourish.
- 29** The one who brings trouble on his own household will inherit the wind
and the fool will become a servant to the wise of heart.
- 30** The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life,
but violence takes away lives.
- 31** Behold! The righteous person is rewarded on earth;
how much more the wicked and the sinner!

Proverbs 11 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 11 continues the section of the book which is attributed to Solomon and is filled mainly with individual proverbs.

Special concepts in this chapter

Themes

There are individual proverbs that run along common themes, often using contrasting elements: wise/foolish, money, lazy/diligent, truth telling, wicked/righteous, sluggard, pride/humility, integrity/crookedness. (See: wise, foolish and evil and righteous)

Proverbs 11:1

General Information:

Many verses in Chapter 11 are contrasting parallelisms

False scales are an abomination to Yahweh

"Scales" represent measuring accurately in negotiating. See how you translated "abomination" in [Proverbs 3:32]

but he delights in a precise weight

"Precise weight" represents accuracy in negotiating. Alternate translation: "but he delights

in honest ways" or "but he is happy when people are honest"

Proverbs 11:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Proverbs 11:3

the upright

This refers to upright persons in general. This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "upright people" or "righteous people" or "honest people"

the treacherous

This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "treacherous people" or "those who are treacherous"

Proverbs 11:4

Wealth is worthless on the day of wrath

The "day of wrath" represents a specific event, such as the "day of Yahweh" or "judgment day" or "last days." Alternate translation: "A person's wealth will do him no good when God comes to judge"

Proverbs 11:5

makes his way straight

"has clear direction"

the wicked

This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "those who are wicked"

Proverbs 11:6

the treacherous

This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "those who are treacherous"

the treacherous are trapped by their cravings

"those who do evil are captured by their passions"

treacherous

ready to betray trust; traitorous; deceptive

Proverbs 11:7

the hope that was in his strength

"the confidence he has in his own power" or "the hope for what he could gain by his power"

comes to nothing

"disappears"

Proverbs 11:8

The righteous person is delivered from trouble

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God delivers from trouble the person who does what is right"

it comes

"trouble comes"

Proverbs 11:9

With his mouth the godless

"Mouth" represents what a person says. Alternate translation: "The words of the godless"

Proverbs 11:10

General Information:

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Proverbs 11:11

Through the blessings of the upright

Possible meanings are 1) The upright do good things that cause the people in the city to be prosperous or 2) God blesses the people of the city because of the actions of the upright.

the city is exalted

"City" represents the community or people group. The phrase "is exalted" can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "God exalts the people of the city" or "God makes the people in the city prosperous"

by the mouth of the wicked

"Mouth" represents what a person says. Alternate translation: "the words of evil people"

Proverbs 11:12

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Proverbs 11:13

the trustworthy in spirit

Here the word "spirit" is a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: "a trustworthy person"

keeps a matter covered

"Covered" represents keeping things concealed as much as possible. Alternate translation: "does not tell" or "does not speak about the matter"

Proverbs 11:14

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Proverbs 11:15

one who hates giving
"one who refuses to give"

Proverbs 11:16

violent people
people without pity or compassion; cruel people

grasp for wealth
"are greedy for wealth"

Proverbs 11:17

one who
"a person who"

Proverbs 11:18

sows what is right
To "sow" represents spreading out to gain more.
Alternate translation: "spreads out what is right"

reaps the wages of truth
To "reap" represents acquiring or gathering in
Alternate translation: "will surely be rewarded"

Proverbs 11:19

the one who
"the person who"

pursues evil
"chases after evil" or "seeks to do evil"

Proverbs 11:20

Those whose hearts are perverse are an abomination to Yahweh
"Yahweh strongly hates those whose hearts are perverse." See how you translated "abomination" in Proverbs 3:32.

whose hearts are perverse
"Heart" represents the feelings, attitudes and motivations of a person. Alternate translation: "who have wicked thoughts"

Proverbs 11:21

will not go unpunished
This phrase uses a negative to emphasize a positive idea. Alternate translation: "will certainly be punished"

Proverbs 11:22

Like a gold ring ... without discretion
A beautiful woman without discretion is compared to a useless and unsuitable golden ring in a pig's nose.

without discretion
"without common sense" or "who is foolish"

Proverbs 11:23

General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.

Proverbs 11:24

There is one who scatters—he will accumulate even more
This is a metaphor for a person who becomes more wealthy by being generous. Alternate translation: "Some people give freely to others and yet become more wealthy"

one who scatters
You may need to make explicit that the person scatters seeds for crops to grow. This is a metaphor for being generous. Alternate translation: "one who scatters much seed" or "one who is generous"

will accumulate even more
"will gain even more"

withholds what is just
"what he should give" or "wrongly refuses to give."
Being unjust is possibly a hyperbole for simply not being generous.

Proverbs 11:25

will prosper
"will gain more"

the one who
"the generous person who" or "anyone who"

Proverbs 11:26

the man who refuses to sell
This describes the person who hoards his wealth instead of helping those in need.

good gifts crown the head of him who sells it
"Crown" represents the reward or award for the person who is willing to sell grain. Alternate translation: "good gifts are given as a crown of honor to him who sells it" or "the person who sells it is honored with many blessings"

Proverbs 11:27

The one who diligently seeks
the one who seeks with careful and continued effort

Proverbs 11:28

will fall

This is an idiom. Here "fall" represents destruction or failure. Alternate translation: "will be destroyed" or "awaits a bad future"

like the leaf, righteous people will flourish

"Leaf" represents growth and prosperity. Alternate translation: "righteous people will prosper in the same way a healthy green leaf grows"

righteous people will flourish

This means that righteous people will thrive or prosper.

Proverbs 11:29

inherit the wind

The "wind" is a metaphor for something that cannot be grasped or has no value. Alternate translation: "inherit nothing"

Proverbs 11:30

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life

The word "fruit" here is a metonym for the tree that produces the fruit, and the tree is a metaphor for a person who does what is right. Alternate

translation: "Those who do right will bring life to themselves and others"

tree of life

See how you translated this in Proverbs 3:18.

but violence takes away lives

"but the one who kills people is violent." Some modern translations read, "and the one who wins souls is wise," that is, a wise person will convince other people to do what is right.

Proverbs 11:31

The righteous person is rewarded on earth

This can be translated using an active verb. Alternate translation: "God rewards the righteous person on earth" or "People reward the righteous person on earth"

righteous person is rewarded on earth

Some translations read, "person who is righteous on earth is rewarded."

is rewarded ... on earth

The phrase "on earth" is a metonym for the life that a person lives on earth. Alternate translation: "is rewarded ... in this life"

how much more

"even more so"

Chapter 12

- ¹ Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge,
but the one who hates correction is stupid.
- ² Yahweh gives favor to a good man,
but he condemns a man who makes evil plans.
- ³ A person cannot be established by wickedness,
but righteous people cannot be uprooted.
- ⁴ A worthy wife is her husband's crown,
but she who brings shame is like a disease that rots his bones.
- ⁵ The plans of the righteous are just,
but the advice of the wicked is deceitful.
- ⁶ The words of wicked people are an ambush waiting for bloodshed,
but the words of the upright keep them safe.
- ⁷ Wicked people are overthrown and they are gone,
but the house of the righteous person will stand.
- ⁸ A man is praised for prudent lips,
but the perverse heart is despised.
- ⁹ Better the person of low position who has a servant
than the one who honors himself but has no food.
- ¹⁰ The righteous person cares about the needs of his animal,
but even the compassion of the wicked is cruel.
- ¹¹ The one who works his land will have plenty of food,
but whoever chases after worthless projects has no sense.
- ¹² The evil person desires the plunder of the wicked,
but the righteous root endures.
- ¹³ An evil person is trapped by the transgression of his lips,
but the righteous person escapes from trouble.
- ¹⁴ From the fruit of his words a person is filled with good things,
just as the work of his hands rewards him.
- ¹⁵ The way of a fool is right in his own eyes,
but a wise man listens to advice.
- ¹⁶ A fool shows his anger at once,
but one who ignores an insult is prudent.
- ¹⁷ The one who speaks the truth says what is right,
but a false witness, deceit.
- ¹⁸ The words of one who speaks rashly are like the thrusts of a sword,
but the tongue of the wise brings healing.
- ¹⁹ Truthful lips last forever,
but a lying tongue is only for a moment.

- 20** There is deceit in the hearts of those who plan to do evil,
but joy comes to the advisors of peace.
- 21** No ill comes upon the righteous,
but the wicked are filled with distress.
- 22** Lying lips are an abomination to Yahweh,
but those who live faithfully are his delight.
- 23** A prudent man conceals his knowledge,
but the heart of fools shouts out folly.
- 24** The hand of the diligent will rule,
but lazy people will be put to forced labor.
- 25** Anxiety in the heart of a person weighs him down,
but a good word makes him glad.
- 26** The righteous person is a guide for his friend,
but the way of the wicked leads them astray.
- 27** Lazy people would not roast their own game,
but the diligent man will obtain precious wealth.
- 28** Those who walk in the right way find life
and in its path there is no death.
-

Proverbs 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 12 continues the section of the book (Chapter 10-22) which is attributed to Solomon and is filled mainly with short, individual proverbs.

Special concepts in this chapter

Themes

There are individual proverbs that run along common themes, often using contrasting elements: wise/foolish, money, lazy/diligent, truth telling, wicked/righteous, sluggard, pride/humility and integrity/crookedness. (See: wise, foolish and evil and righteous)

Proverbs 12:1

General Information:

The author uses throughout this chapter. Verses 1-15 contrast wisdom and foolishness.

Whoever

"Any person who"

the one who hates correction

"the person who does not want to be told what to do"

is stupid

"is foolish" or "is unwise"

Proverbs 12:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Proverbs 12:3

A person cannot be established by wickedness

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "No one can become safe and secure by doing what is wicked"

cannot be uprooted

"Uprooted" represents being pulled out of the ground like a plant or a tree. This cannot happen to those who do right. Alternate translation: "are as stable as a tree with deep roots"

Proverbs 12:4

A worthy wife is her husband's crown

A crown represents the greatest honor a person can receive. Alternate translation: "A good wife is a sign of great honor for her husband"

she who brings shame is like a disease that rots his bones

A disease that rots the bones represents the spoiling of a person's life. Alternate translation: "a wife's shameful acts destroy her husband's influence and happiness"

Proverbs 12:5

the righteous

This refers to righteous persons in general. This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "righteous people"

Proverbs 12:6

The words of wicked people are an ambush waiting for bloodshed

The deceitful things that wicked people say in order to harm other people are spoken of as if their words are waiting to kill someone by surprise. Alternate translation: "The deceitful things wicked people say are like a person waiting to murder someone by surprise"

the words of the upright keep them safe

"advice from the upright keeps people safe"

the upright

This refers to upright persons in general. This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "upright persons" or "righteous persons" or "honest persons"

Proverbs 12:7

Wicked people are overthrown

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People will overthrow the wicked people" or "People will remove the wicked people from power"

house

The term "house" is often used figuratively in the Bible to refer to a person's ancestors, descendants or other relatives. Alternate translation: "family" or "descendants"

Proverbs 12:8

A man is praised for prudent lips

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People will praise a man with prudent lips"

for prudent lips

The lips here are either 1) a synecdoche for the man himself. Alternate translation: "because he is prudent" Or 2) a metonym for the words he speaks. Alternate translation: "because he speaks prudently."

the perverse heart is despised

The word "heart" here is a synecdoche for the whole person. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people will despise the one who always thinks evil thoughts" or "people will despise the one who takes good things and twists them into bad"

Proverbs 12:9

the person of low position

"the person whom others despise"

the one who honors himself

"the one who boasts about himself"

Proverbs 12:10

is cruel

"causes suffering"

Proverbs 12:11

worthless projects

"worthless plans" or "worthless tasks"

Proverbs 12:12

the plunder of the wicked

"what wicked people steal." That is, what they desire is what they themselves can steal. The writer is not referring to these evil people stealing from other wicked people.

the righteous root endures

This metaphor refers to a person who acts righteously whether people are watching him or not. Alternate translation: "the righteous person endures" or "righteous people endure"

Proverbs 12:13

An evil person is trapped by the transgression of his lips

"Trapped" represents being caught in a snare or being tricked. The evil words a person says are spoken of as if the person's lips themselves were transgressing. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The wicked things an evil person says will trap him"

Proverbs 12:14

just as the work of his hands rewards him

The phrase, "the work of his hands" represents work done by physical labor. Alternate translation: "just as the good work he does rewards him"

Proverbs 12:15

in his own eyes

This phrase represents the idea he has from his own observation, imagination or memory. Alternate translation: "in his own opinion"

advice

wise suggestions

Proverbs 12:16

is prudent

"is wise" or "has good sense."

Proverbs 12:17

General Information:

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Proverbs 12:18

The words of one who speaks rashly are like the thrusts of a sword

The phrase, "thrusts of a sword" represents cruel words that hurt another. Alternate translation: "What a person says without thinking can hurt as much as if he stabbed with a sword"

the tongue of the wise

"Tongue" represents what a person says. Alternate translation: "what wise people say"

brings healing

"comforts and heals"

Proverbs 12:19

Truthful lips last forever

"Lips" represents what a person says. Alternate translation: "A truthful person endures forever"

a lying tongue is only for a moment

"Tongue" represents what a person says. Alternate translation: "the one who lies lasts only for a moment"

Proverbs 12:20

advisors

those who give recommendations as a guide to action; counselors

Proverbs 12:21

No ill comes

The negative, "No" cancels out the idea of "ill"

Proverbs 12:22

Lying lips are an abomination to Yahweh

"Yahweh strongly hates lying lips." See how you translated "abomination" in Proverbs 3:32.

Lying lips

"Lips" are either a metonym for the words a person says or a synecdoche for the person himself.

Alternate translation: "Lies" or "People who tell lies"

Proverbs 12:23

conceals his knowledge

"does not tell everything he knows"

Proverbs 12:24

The hand of the diligent

"Hand" represents what a person does—his works. Alternate translation: "Diligent people"

will be put to forced labor

"Forced labor" describes what a person must do who is not free to do what he wants. Alternate translation: "will become a slave"

Proverbs 12:25

Anxiety

uneasy feeling of fear or dread, worry

weighs him down

"Weighing down" represents the idea of putting a very heavy load on a person so he cannot move freely. This phrase means to make a person sad or depressed. Alternate translation: "causes him to become sad or depressed"

but a good word makes him glad

The abstract noun "word" can be stated as the verb "speak." Alternate translation: "but when others speak kindly to him, he is cheerful again"

Proverbs 12:26

General Information:

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Proverbs 12:27

would not roast their own game

"Game" means animals caught and killed while hunting. And "roast" is a way of cooking food.

precious wealth
"valuable treasure"

Proverbs 12:28

General Information:

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Chapter 13

- ¹ A wise son hears his father's instruction,
but a mocker will not listen to rebuke.
- ² From the fruit of his mouth a person enjoys good things,
but the appetite of the treacherous is for violence.
- ³ The one who guards his mouth protects his life,
but the one who opens wide his lips will ruin himself.
- ⁴ The appetite of the lazy person craves but gets nothing,
but the appetite of the diligent person will be richly satisfied.
- ⁵ The righteous person hates deceptive words,
but a wicked person makes himself repugnant, and he does what is shameful.
- ⁶ Righteousness protects those who are faultless in their path,
but wickedness ruins those who commit sin.
- ⁷ There is someone who enriches himself, but has nothing at all,
and there is someone who gives everything away, yet has much wealth.
- ⁸ The ransom of a rich man's life is his wealth,
but a poor person does not hear a threat.
- ⁹ The light of righteous people rejoices,
but the lamp of wicked people will be put out.
- ¹⁰ Pride only breeds conflict,
but for those who listen to good advice there is wisdom.
- ¹¹ Wealth dwindles away when there is too much vanity,
but the one who makes money by working with his hand
will make his money grow.
- ¹² When hope is postponed, it breaks the heart,
but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.
- ¹³ Whoever despises instruction brings destruction on himself,
but he who respects the commandment will be rewarded.
- ¹⁴ The teaching of a wise person is a fountain of life,
turning you away from the snares of death.
- ¹⁵ Good insight wins favor,
but the way of the treacherous is disaster. ^[1]
- ¹⁶ Prudent people act out of knowledge in every decision,
but a fool parades his folly.
- ¹⁷ A wicked messenger falls into trouble,
but a faithful envoy brings healing.
- ¹⁸ The one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame,
but honor will come to him who learns from correction.
- ¹⁹ A longing realized is sweet to the appetite,
but turning away from evil is an abomination to fools.

- 20** Walk with wise people and you will be wise,
but the companion of fools will suffer harm.
- 21** Disaster runs after sinners,
but righteous people are rewarded with good.
- 22** A good person leaves an inheritance for his grandchildren,
but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous person.
- 23** An unplowed field owned by the poor could produce much food,
but it is swept away by injustice.
- 24** The one who does not use his rod hates his son,
but one who loves his son is careful to instruct him.
- 25** The righteous person eats until he satisfies his appetite,
but the stomach of the wicked is always hungry.

Footnotes

13:15 ^[1]The ULB is following the ancient Greek translation because the Hebrew is difficult to understand. The Hebrew has:

Proverbs 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 13 continues the section of the book which is attributed to Solomon and is filled mainly with short, individual proverbs.

Special concepts in this chapter

Themes

There are individual proverbs that run along common themes, often including contrasting elements: wise/foolish, money, lazy/diligent, truth telling, wicked/righteous, sluggard, pride/humility, integrity/crookedness. (See: wise, foolish and evil and righteous)

Proverbs 13:1

A wise son hears

Here "hears" represents listening in order to do it.
Alternate translation: "A wise son obeys"

will not listen to rebuke

Here "listen" represents paying attention in order to do it. Alternate translation: "will not learn from rebuke" or "will not obey, despite rebuke"

Proverbs 13:2

From the fruit of his mouth

Here "fruit" represents what a person says.
Alternate translation: "From the words of his mouth" or "From what he says"

the appetite

the desire or liking for something

the treacherous

This nominal adjective can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "the treacherous person"

Proverbs 13:3

his mouth

Here "mouth" represents what a person says.
Alternate translation: "what he says"

opens wide his lips

Opening the lips represents speaking, and opening them wide represents speaking too often or too much. Alternate translation: "speaks a lot" or "talks too much"

Proverbs 13:4

The appetite ... the appetite

See how you translated this in Proverbs 13:2.

craves but gets nothing

"strongly desires but gets nothing"

the appetite of the diligent person will be richly satisfied

Here "appetite" represents desire. Alternate translation: "the diligent person will have a richly satisfied life" or "being diligent will make a person richly satisfied"

the diligent person

this refers to any person who works with careful and continued effort

Proverbs 13:5

repugnant

causing a strong feeling of disgust

Proverbs 13:6

Righteousness protects those

"Righteousness" represents a way of life approved by Yahweh. This quality acts like a person who protects. Alternate translation: "A way of life approved by Yahweh protects"

who are faultless in their path

Here "path" represents how a person directs his life. Alternate translation: "who are faultless in their way of living" or "who live lives of integrity"

wickedness ruins those who commit sin

Here "wickedness" represents an evil conduct of life. This quality acts like a person who ruins those who commit sin. Alternate translation: "wickedness ruins sinners' lives" or "sinners ruin their lives by committing wickedness"

Proverbs 13:7

who enriches himself

"who makes himself rich"

Proverbs 13:8

does not hear a threat

Possible meanings are 1) no one will threaten to steal from him because he has nothing anyone would want to steal or 2) he will not listen when people correct him because he has nothing to lose if they punish him. Alternate translation: "does not listen to rebuke"

Proverbs 13:9

The light of righteous people rejoices

Here the light represents the righteous person's life or good behavior, and rejoicing represents causing people to rejoice. Alternate translation: "The life of a righteous person is like a light that causes people to rejoice"

the lamp of wicked people will be put out

Here the lamp represents the life or behavior of wicked people, and "be put out" is an idiom that means that a fire is stopped. The lamp being put out represents either the person dying or the person's life not giving any joy. Alternate translation: "the lives of wicked people are like a lamp whose fire will be stopped"

Proverbs 13:10

Pride only breeds conflict

"Pride always causes conflict"

listen to

"heed" or "follow"

good advice

suggestions that are helpful and profitable

Proverbs 13:11

Wealth dwindles away

"Wealth decreases" or "Wealth slowly disappears"

working with his hand

The phrase "working with his hand" refers to physical work instead of only mental or other types of work. Many people give physical work a low value. Alternate translation: "working with physical strength"

make his money grow

Money is compared to a tree that grows. Alternate translation: "make his money increase"

Proverbs 13:12

When hope is postponed

Here "hope" represents the thing a person hopes for. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When a person hopes for something but does not receive it for a very long time"

it breaks the heart

Breaking a person's heart represents overwhelming that person with sadness. Alternate translation: "it causes intense sadness"

a longing fulfilled is a tree of life

Someone receiving what they hoped for and becoming very happy is spoken of as if the fulfillment of their hope were a tree that gives life.

Alternate translation: "a longing fulfilled is like a tree of life"

tree of life

"a tree that gives life" or "a tree whose fruit sustains life." See how you translated this in Proverbs 3:18.

Proverbs 13:13

he who respects the commandment will be rewarded

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they will reward the one who respects the command"

Proverbs 13:14

fountain of life

A fountain is a good source of water and here represents a source of life. Alternate translation: "a bountiful source of life"

snares of death

Here "snares" represent dangers that will kill. Alternate translation: "traps that lead to death"

Proverbs 13:15

but the way of the treacherous is disaster

Here a person's behavior or conduct is spoken of as if it were a way or path that a person walks. A person being ruined by their own treachery is spoken of as if they are on a way or path that never ends. Alternate translation: "but the behavior of the treacherous will cause their own destruction"

the treacherous

This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "the treacherous person"

Proverbs 13:16

a fool parades his folly

To "parade" means to display in front of everyone. Alternate translation: "a fool displays his foolishness to everyone"

Proverbs 13:17

falls into trouble

"is unreliable" or "does something evil"

a faithful envoy

"a faithful messenger" or "a faithful ambassador"

brings healing

The word "healing" here is probably a metaphor for reconciliation between the one who sends the envoy and the person to whom the envoy is sent..Alternate translation: "brings reconciliation"

Proverbs 13:18

learns from correction

The abstract noun "correction" can be stated as an action. Alternate translation: "learns when someone corrects him"

Proverbs 13:19

is sweet

"is a delight" or "brings joy"

the appetite

the desire or liking for something

turning away from evil is an abomination to fools

"fools strongly hate to turn away from evil." See how you translated "abomination" in Proverbs 3:32.

Proverbs 13:20

will suffer harm

"will experience harm" or "will be ruined"

Proverbs 13:21

Disaster runs after sinners

"Disaster" is given human characteristics like the ability to run. Alternate translation: "Sinners have trouble wherever they go"

righteous people are rewarded with good

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God rewards righteous people with good"

Proverbs 13:22

his grandchildren

"the sons of his sons" or "the children of his children" or "his descendants"

a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous person

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the one who does right will receive the wealth that a sinner has stored up"

Proverbs 13:23

An unplowed field

"A field that is not prepared for food production" or "An empty field not ready for planting"

but it is swept away by injustice

"Swept away" represents completely removing something. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but injustice takes away that food" or "but unjust people take the food away"

Proverbs 13:24

is careful to instruct him

"makes sure to instruct him"

Proverbs 13:25

he satisfies his appetite

"he has satisfied himself" or "he fulfills his desires"

the stomach of the wicked is always hungry

Here "stomach" represents the desires of a person.

Alternate translation: "the wicked person is always hungry for more"

Chapter 14

- ¹ The wise woman builds her house,
but a foolish woman tears it down with her own hands.
- ² The one who walks uprightly fears Yahweh,
but the one who is dishonest in his ways despises him.
- ³ From the mouth of a fool comes a rod for his back,
but the lips of the wise will preserve them.
- ⁴ Where there are no cattle, the feeding trough is clean,
but an abundant crop comes from the strength of an ox.
- ⁵ A faithful witness does not lie,
but a false witness breathes out lies.
- ⁶ A mocker seeks wisdom and there is none,
but knowledge comes easily to the one who is discerning.
- ⁷ Walk away from a foolish person,
for you will not find knowledge on his lips.
- ⁸ The wisdom of the prudent person is to understand his own way,
but the folly of fools is deception.
- ⁹ Fools mock when the guilt offering is sacrificed,
but among the upright favor is shared.
- ¹⁰ The heart knows its own bitterness
and no stranger shares its joy.
- ¹¹ The house of wicked people will be destroyed,
but the tent of the upright will flourish.
- ¹² There is a way that seems right to a man,
but its end only leads to death.
- ¹³ A heart can laugh but still be in pain
and joy may end up being grief.
- ¹⁴ The faithless in heart will get what his ways deserve,
but a good person will get what is his.
- ¹⁵ The one who is naive believes everything,
but the prudent man thinks about his steps.
- ¹⁶ A wise man fears and turns away from evil,
but the fool confidently dismisses a warning.
- ¹⁷ One who is quick to become angry does foolish things,
and a person who makes evil schemes is hated.
- ¹⁸ The naive inherit foolishness,
but prudent people are crowned with knowledge.
- ¹⁹ Evil people will bow down before those who are good
and those who are wicked will bow down at the gates of the righteous person.

- 20** The poor person is hated even by his own companions,
but the rich people have many friends.
- 21** The one who shows contempt for his neighbor is sinning,
but the one who shows favor to the poor is blessed.
- 22** Do not those who plot evil go astray?
But those who plan to do good will receive steadfast love and faithfulness.
- 23** With all hard work comes a profit,
but when there is only talk, it leads to poverty.
- 24** The crown of wise people is their wealth,
but the folly of fools brings them only more folly.
- 25** A truthful witness saves lives,
but he who breathes out lies brings betrayal.
- 26** In the fear of Yahweh is strong confidence;
it will be a refuge for his children.
- 27** The fear of Yahweh is a fountain of life,
so that a person may turn away from the snares of death.
- 28** The glory of a king is found in the great number of his people,
but without people the prince is ruined.
- 29** A patient person has great understanding,
but the quick-tempered person exalts folly.
- 30** A tranquil heart is life for the body,
but envy rots the bones.
- 31** The one who oppresses the poor insults his Maker,
but the one who shows favor to the needy honors him.
- 32** The wicked person is brought down by his evil actions,
but the righteous person has a refuge even in death.
- 33** Wisdom rests in the heart of the discerning,
but even among fools she lets herself be known.
- 34** Doing what is right exalts a nation,
but sin is a disgrace to any people.
- 35** The favor of the king is with the servant who acts prudently,
but his anger is for the one who acts shamefully.
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Proverbs 14 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 14 continues the section of the book which is attributed to Solomon and is filled mainly with short, individual proverbs.

Special concepts in this chapter

Themes

There are individual proverbs that run along common themes, often including contrasting elements: wise/foolish, money, lazy/diligent, truth telling, wicked/righteous, sluggard, pride/humility, integrity/crookedness. (See: wise, foolish and evil and righteous)

Proverbs 14:1

builds her house

"builds up her house" or "makes her house better"

house

Possible meanings are 1) this may refer to her actual house, that is the building she lives in or 2) this may refer to her family.

with her own hands

The woman is represented by her "hands."
Alternate translation: "by herself" or "by the way she behaves"

Proverbs 14:2

The one who ... the one who

"The person who ... the person who"

walks uprightly

"Walks" represents the conduct of life. Alternate translation: "conducts his life in a just and honest way"

despises him

"grossly disrespects him" or "shows that he hates him"

in his ways despises him

The word "his" refers to the dishonest man and "him" refers to Yahweh.

Proverbs 14:3

the mouth of ... the lips of

The mouth and the lips both refer to what a person says.

a rod for his back

The rod with which people will punish the fool by hitting him on his back for his foolish words is a metonym for the words that come out of his mouth. Alternate translation: "words that will cause people to punish him"

the wise

This word is plural. "wise men" or "wise people"

will preserve them

"will keep them from harm" or "will keep them safe"

Proverbs 14:4

the feeding trough

A "trough" is a container in which you put the food for animals.

an abundant crop

"a good harvest"

from the strength of an ox

"Strength" represents the strong work an ox can do. Alternate translation: "because of the work an ox does"

Proverbs 14:5

breathes out lies

This figure of speech uses "breathes" to refer to lying constantly. Alternate translation: "constantly lies" See how you translated this phrase in Proverbs 6:19.

Proverbs 14:6

and there is none

"and wisdom is not there" or "but he will not find wisdom"

knowledge comes easily to the one who is discerning

"the one who is discerning acquires knowledge easily"

the one who is discerning

"the one who is wise" or "a person who has understanding"

Proverbs 14:7

on his lips

The word "lips" represents what a person says. Alternate translation: "from his speech" or "with his comments"

Proverbs 14:8

the prudent

a person who has good judgment or sense

his own way

The word "way" represents the conduct of life of a person. Alternate translation: "his conduct" or "how he lives"

the folly of fools is deception

The foolishness of fools is that they think they are wise, when they are not.

Proverbs 14:9

when the guilt offering is sacrificed

"at guilt" or "at the guilt offering" The meaning behind this phrase is that fools do not apologize to God or men for the things they do wrong.

but among the upright favor is shared

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but the upright enjoy favor together" or "but God's favor is experienced together among the upright"

the upright

This refers to upright persons in general. This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "upright people" or "righteous people" or "honest people"

Proverbs 14:10

its own bitterness

"its own sorrow" or "its own sadness"

no stranger

"those who do not know him"

Proverbs 14:11

the tent

The word "tent" represents everything that happens within it. Alternate translation: "the household"

flourish

The word "flourish" means vigorous blooming of flowers and so represents anything that grows strongly. Alternate translation: "to do well and last long" or "to be healthy" or "to be very successful"

Proverbs 14:12

There is a way that seems right to a man

The word "way" represents the conduct of life a person follows. Alternate translation: "People think that the way they are living is the right way"

Proverbs 14:13

A heart can laugh

The word "heart" represents a person's feelings, attitudes and motivations. Alternate translation: "A person's feelings can show laughter"

be in pain

"experience pain" or "hurt"

Proverbs 14:14

The faithless in heart

"The person who is faithless"

what his ways deserve

The word "ways" represents a person's conduct of life. Alternate translation: "what he deserves, based on how he lived"

what is his

"what belongs to him" or "what he has a right to"

Proverbs 14:15

naive

inexperienced or immature

his steps

Here the idea of footsteps represents a person's behavior. Alternate translation: "his actions"

Proverbs 14:16

turns away from evil

Here evil is spoken of as if it were a place. Alternate translation: "avoids doing evil"

confidently dismisses

"boldly ignores"

Proverbs 14:17

is quick to become angry

"becomes angry quickly"

Proverbs 14:18

naive

inexperienced or immature

inherit foolishness

Here "inherit" represents having permanent possession of something.

foolishness

The word "foolishness" is an abstract noun that represents foolish thinking and foolish actions.

prudent people

"wise people"

are crowned with knowledge

Here knowledge is spoken of as if it were a beautiful ornament worn on one's head, such as a turban with jewels. Alternate translation: "wear knowledge as a turban"

Proverbs 14:19

bow down

This means to bend over to humbly express respect and submission toward someone.

at the gates of the righteous

The word "gates" represents an entrance to meet with another. This means the wicked will have to wait for the righteous person and beg to enter his presence. Alternate translation: "to meet with the righteous person"

Proverbs 14:20

The poor person is hated even by his own companions

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Everyone hates the poor person even his own neighbors"

Proverbs 14:21

The one ... the one

"The person ... the person"

the poor

"poor people"

Proverbs 14:22

Do not those who plot evil go astray?

The assumed answer to this question is "yes." Alternate translation: "Those who plot evil will go astray."

who plot evil

"who make evil plans" or "who make plans to do evil things"

those who plan to do good will receive steadfast love and faithfulness

The abstract nouns "love" and "faithfulness" can be stated with the verb "love" and the adjective "faithful." Alternate translation: "God will show those who plan to do what is good that he loves them without ceasing, and he will be faithful to them"

Proverbs 14:23

but when there is only talk

"but if you only talk" or "but when all a person does is talking"

Proverbs 14:24

The crown of wise people

The word "crown" represents the highest achievement possible and visible to all. Alternate translation: "The reward of wise people"

the folly of fools

See how you translated this phrase in Proverbs 14:8.

Proverbs 14:25

breathes out lies

This figure of speech uses "breathes" to refer to lying constantly. See how you translated this phrase in [Proverbs 6:19]

Proverbs 14:26

In the fear of Yahweh is strong confidence

The abstract nouns "fear" and "confidence" can be translated as verbs. Alternate translation: "The person who fears Yahweh also knows that he can trust Yahweh"

it will be a refuge for his children

The confidence that a person who fears Yahweh has is spoken of as if it were a place to which that person's children can go to be safe. Alternate translation: "his children can know that Yahweh will protect them"

Proverbs 14:27

fountain of life

A "fountain" is a bountiful source of water and represents here the source of life. Alternate translation: "source of life"

from the snares of death

A "snare" is a sort of trap used to hunt animals and represents something tricky and dangerous that will kill. Alternate translation: "from the trap that will kill"

Proverbs 14:28

the great number of his people

"how many people he rules"

the prince is ruined

"the prince has nothing and his kingdom will fall"

Proverbs 14:29

the quick-tempered

a person who is quick to become angry

Proverbs 14:30

A tranquil heart

"A peaceful mindset" or "An attitude that is at peace"

rots the bones

The word "rots" represents the decay of a person and "bones" represents the whole person. Alternate

translation: "causes a person to be unhealthy in body and spirit"

Proverbs 14:31

The one who ... the one who

"The person who ... the person who"

the poor ... the needy

"a poor person ... a needy person"

shows favor to

"is kind to" or "helps"

Proverbs 14:32

is brought down by his evil actions

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "evil actions push over" or "evil actions destroy"

Proverbs 14:33

Wisdom rests in the heart

The word "heart" represents the feelings, attitudes and motivations of a person. Alternate translation: "Wisdom is in the attitude"

the discerning

"a discerning person"

she lets herself be known

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "she makes sure people know her"

she

The word "she" refers to wisdom.

Proverbs 14:34

is a disgrace

"brings shame upon to any people" or "should cause any people to be ashamed"

Proverbs 14:35

who acts prudently

"who acts wisely" or "who makes sure bad things do not happen"

the one who

"the servant who"

Chapter 15

- ¹ A gentle answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger.
- ² The tongue of wise people compliments knowledge,
but the mouth of fools pours out folly.
- ³ The eyes of Yahweh are everywhere,
keeping watch over the evil and the good.
- ⁴ A healing tongue is a tree of life,
but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.
- ⁵ A fool has contempt for his father's instruction,
but he who learns from correction is prudent.
- ⁶ In the house of the righteous person there is great treasure,
but the earnings of the wicked person give him trouble.
- ⁷ The lips of wise people scatter knowledge about,
but not so the hearts of fools.
- ⁸ The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to Yahweh,
but the prayer of the upright is his delight.
- ⁹ The way of wicked people is an abomination to Yahweh,
but he loves the one who pursues what is right.
- ¹⁰ Harsh discipline awaits anyone who abandons the way
and he who hates correction will die.
- ¹¹ Sheol and destruction are open before Yahweh;
how much more the hearts of the sons of mankind?
- ¹² The mocker does not love the one who corrects him;
he will not go to the wise.
- ¹³ A joyful heart makes the face cheerful,
but by an injured heart the spirit is broken.
- ¹⁴ The heart of the discerning seeks knowledge,
but the mouth of fools feeds on folly.
- ¹⁵ All the days of the afflicted are miserable,
but a cheerful heart has an unending feast.
- ¹⁶ Better is little with the fear of Yahweh
than great treasure with tumult.
- ¹⁷ Better is a meal with vegetables where there is love
than a fattened calf served with hatred.
- ¹⁸ An angry man stirs up strife,
but a person who is slow to anger quiets a quarrel.
- ¹⁹ The path of the lazy person is like a place with a hedge of thorns,
but the path of the upright is a built-up highway.

- 20 A wise son brings joy to his father,
but a foolish person despises his mother.
- 21 Folly delights a person who lacks sense,
but the one who has understanding walks a straight path.
- 22 Plans go wrong where there is no advice,
but with numerous advisors they succeed.
- 23 A person finds joy when he gives a pertinent reply;
how good is a timely word!
- 24 The path of life leads upward for prudent people,
that they may turn away from Sheol beneath.
- 25 Yahweh tears down the house of the proud,
but he protects the property of the widow.
- 26 The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to Yahweh,
but pleasant words are pure.
- 27 The person who profits from unjust gain brings trouble to his family,
but the one who hates bribes will live.
- 28 The heart of the righteous person ponders before it answers,
but the mouth of wicked people pours out all its evil.
- 29 Yahweh is far away from wicked people,
but he hears the prayer of righteous people.
- 30 The light of the eyes brings joy to the heart
and good news is health to the body.
- 31 The ear that listens to life-giving rebuke
will dwell among wise people.
- 32 The one who rejects discipline despises himself,
but he who listens to correction gains understanding.
- 33 The fear of Yahweh instructs in wisdom,
and humility comes before honor.
-

Proverbs 15 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 15 continues the section of the book which is attributed to Solomon and is filled mainly with short, individual proverbs.

Special concepts in this chapter

Themes

There are individual proverbs that run along common themes, often including contrasting elements: wise/foolish, money, lazy/diligent, truth telling, wicked/righteous, sluggard, pride/humility, integrity/crookedness. (See: wise, foolish and evil and righteous)

Proverbs 15:1

A gentle answer turns away wrath

Causing a person to stop being angry is spoken of as if it were turning that person's wrath away. Alternate translation: "Answering a person gently will calm that person's wrath"

but a harsh word stirs up anger

Causing a person to become more angry is spoken of as if it were stirring up or awakening anger. Alternate translation: "but speaking harshly causes that person to become more angry"

Proverbs 15:2

The tongue of wise people compliments knowledge

Here the word "tongue" refers to the person who speaks. Alternate translation: "Wise people compliment knowledge when they speak"

compliments knowledge

Possible meanings are 1) "makes knowledge attractive" or 2) "uses knowledge correctly."

the mouth of fools pours out folly

The writer speaks of fools' mouths as if they were containers and of folly as if it were the liquid that filled them. When fools speak, their mouths pour out the liquid. The word "mouth" represents those who speak. Alternate translation: "fools are always speaking folly"

Proverbs 15:3

The eyes of Yahweh are everywhere

Here the word "eyes" represents Yahweh and emphasizes his ability to see everything. Alternate translation: "Yahweh sees everything"

the evil and the good

The words "evil" and "good" refer to people. Alternate translation: "evil people and good people"

Proverbs 15:4

A healing tongue is a tree of life

The word "tongue" refers to speech. The writer speaks of the words of a person who says things that help and encourage others as if they were a tree that provides life-giving nourishment. Alternate translation: "Kind words are like a tree that gives life"

a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit

The phrase "a deceitful tongue" refers to speech that is deceitful or hurtful. The writer speaks of a person being hurt or in despair as if that person's spirit were an object that words have crushed. Alternate translation: "deceitful speech causes a person to despair"

Proverbs 15:5

he who learns from correction

The word "correction" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "he who learns when someone corrects him"

is prudent

"is wise"

Proverbs 15:6

the earnings of the wicked person give

The word "earnings" can be translated as a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "the wealth that a wicked person earns gives"

Proverbs 15:7

The lips of wise people scatter knowledge about

The word "lips" represents what wise people say. The writer speaks of knowledge as if it were seeds that wise people scatter around when they speak. Alternate translation: "The speech of wise people spreads knowledge"

not so the hearts of fools

Possible meanings are 1) the word "hearts" is synecdoche for the fools themselves and means that they do not scatter knowledge like wise people do. Alternate translation: "fools do not scatter knowledge about" or 2) fools do not have knowledge in their hearts, with "hearts" being a metonym for the thoughts. Alternate translation: "fools do not understand knowledge"

Proverbs 15:8

The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to Yahweh

"Yahweh strongly hates the sacrifices that wicked people offer." See how you translated "abomination" in Proverbs 3:32.

the upright

"the person who lives rightly" or "people who live rightly"

is his delight

"pleases him"

Proverbs 15:9

The way of wicked people is an abomination to Yahweh

The lifestyles of wicked people are spoken of as if they are paths on which those people walk. See how you translated "abomination" in [Proverbs 3:32]

the one who pursues what is right

Being diligent to live rightly is spoken of as if it were chasing after right things. Alternate translation: "the person who strives to live rightly"

Proverbs 15:10

anyone who abandons the way

Here "the way" refers to the way of righteousness. A person who stops doing what is right is spoken of as if he has left the correct path. Alternate translation: "anyone who stops living rightly"

he who hates correction

The word "correction" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "the person who hates it when others correct him"

Proverbs 15:11

Sheol and destruction are open before Yahweh

The words "Sheol and destruction" both refer to the place of the dead. Yahweh knowing everything about the place of the dead is spoken of as if it were open before Yahweh. Alternate translation: "Yahweh knows everything about the place where dead people are"

how much more the hearts of the sons of mankind?

This rhetorical question emphasizes that since Yahweh knows everything about the place of the dead, it is more obvious that he knows everything about the hearts of men. Alternate translation: "so he certainly knows the hearts of the sons of mankind!"

the hearts of the sons of mankind

Here the word "hearts" represents the thoughts and motivations. The phrase "the sons of mankind" is an idiom for humanity. Alternate translation: "the thoughts of humans"

Proverbs 15:12

he will not go to the wise

It is implied that he will not go to the wise to seek their counsel or advice. Alternate translation: "he will not go to the wise to seek their counsel"

Proverbs 15:13

A joyful heart makes the face cheerful

Here the word "heart" represents the person. Alternate translation: "When a person is joyful, his face is cheerful"

by an injured heart the spirit is broken

The writer speaks of a person being discouraged as if that person's spirit were an object that is broken. Possible meanings are 1) The "injured heart" is spoken of as if it were a person who broke the spirit or 2) a person whose heart has been injured will also be discouraged. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "an injured heart makes a person become discouraged"

Proverbs 15:14

The heart of the discerning

Here the word "heart" represents the mind and thoughts. Alternate translation: "The mind of the discerning person" or "The discerning person"

the mouth of fools feeds on folly

Here the word "mouth" represents the person. The writer speaks of fools desiring foolish things as if they ate foolish things. Alternate translation: "foolish people desire folly as if it were the food that they eat"

Proverbs 15:15

All the days of the afflicted are miserable

"Oppressed people are miserable all of their days"

a cheerful heart has an unending feast

Here the word "heart" represents the person. The writer speaks of a cheerful person enjoying life as if that person were celebrating a feast that does not end. Alternate translation: "the cheerful person enjoys life, as if he were celebrating an unending feast"

an unending feast

"a feast that never ends"

Proverbs 15:16

with tumult

"with confusion and disorder"

Proverbs 15:17

a meal with vegetables

The vegetables represent a small meal with very little food. Alternate translation: "a small meal" or "very little food"

where there is love

The word "love" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "where people love one another"

a fatted calf served with hatred

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "a fatted calf that someone serves with hatred"

a fatted calf

This refers to a calf that has been fed a lot of food so that it will become fat. Here it represents a delicious meal or a feast. Alternate translation: "a luxurious meal" or "a feast"

with hatred

The word "hatred" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "where people hate one another"

Proverbs 15:18

stirs up strife

Causing people to disagree with each other and to be angry is spoken of as if it were stirring up strife. The abstract noun "strife" can be expressed with the verbs "argue" or "fight." Alternate translation: "causes people to argue" or "makes people want to fight"

Proverbs 15:19

The path of the lazy person ... the path of the upright

The writer speaks of a person's life as if it were a path on which the person walks. Alternate translation: "The life of the lazy person ... the life of the upright"

The path of the lazy person is like a place with a hedge of thorns

The writer compares the way the lazy person lives with trying to walk through a hedge of thorns. Both cause the person to suffer pain. Alternate translation: "Life for the lazy person is like walking through a hedge of thorns"

the path of the upright is a built-up highway

The writer speaks of the blessings that upright people experience in life as if they were walking on a smooth road.

the upright

This refers to upright persons in general. This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "upright people" or "righteous people" or "honest people"

built-up highway

This is a road that is wide, flat, smooth, and free of obstacles.

Proverbs 15:20

General Information:

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Proverbs 15:21

the one who has understanding walks a straight path

The writer speaks of a person doing the right thing as if he were walking straight ahead on a path. Alternate translation: "the person who has understanding does what is right"

Proverbs 15:22

Plans go wrong

"Plans fail"

where there is no advice

"when there is no one to give advice"

advisors

people who give recommendations as a guide to action

they succeed

"plans succeed"

Proverbs 15:23

a pertinent reply

"a fitting reply" or "an appropriate answer"

how good is a timely word

This exclamation emphasizes that a word spoken at the right time is very good. Alternate translation: "a word that a person speaks at the right time is very good"

Proverbs 15:24

The path of life leads upward ... from Sheol beneath

The writer speaks of a lifestyle that results in life as if it were a path that goes upward towards life and of a lifestyle that results in death as if it were a path that leads down to the place of the dead.

Proverbs 15:25

house

This is a synecdoche for the person's household, property, and wealth.

Proverbs 15:26

The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to Yahweh

"Yahweh strongly hates the thoughts of wicked people." See how you translated "abomination" in Proverbs 3:32.

pleasant words are pure

"kind words are pure"

Proverbs 15:27

General Information:

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Proverbs 15:28

The heart of the righteous person ponders before it answers

Here the word "heart" is a metonym for the mind and thoughts. This represents the person who thinks. Alternate translation: "The person who does right ponders what to say before he answers"

the mouth of wicked people pours out all its evil

The writer speaks of wicked people's mouths as if they were containers and speaks of evil as if it were the liquid that filled them. When wicked people speak, their mouths pour out the liquid. The word

"mouths" represents those who speak. Alternate translation: "wicked people are always saying evil things"

the mouth of wicked people pours out all its evil

It may be more natural in your language to translate all these words as either singular or plural. Alternate translation: "the mouth of the wicked person pours out all its evil" or "the mouths of wicked people pour out all their evil"

The fear of Yahweh

See how you translated this phrase in Proverbs 1:7.

humility comes before honor

This means that a person must first learn humility before Yahweh will honor him.

Proverbs 15:29

Yahweh is far away from wicked people

The writer speaks of Yahweh not listening to wicked people as if he were physically far away from them. Alternate translation: "Yahweh does not listen to wicked people" or "Yahweh does not answer wicked people"

Proverbs 15:30

The light of the eyes

The writer speaks of an expression of joy on one's face as if the person's eyes emitted light. Alternate translation: "A cheerful expression"

brings joy to the heart

The word "heart" represents the person. Possible meanings are 1) the person who has a cheerful expression becomes joyful or 2) other people become joyful when they see someone with a cheerful expression. Alternate translation: "causes a person to be joyful"

good news is health to the body

Here the word "body" represents the person. Alternate translation: "receiving good news makes a person feel good"

Proverbs 15:31

The ear that listens ... will dwell

The "ear" here is a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: "The person who listens ... will dwell"

will dwell among

"will always be welcome to be with"

Proverbs 15:32

listens to correction

The word "correction" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "listens when others correct him"

Proverbs 15:33

The fear of Yahweh instructs in wisdom

The words "fear" and "wisdom" can be translated with verbal phrases. Alternate translation: "When a person fears Yahweh, he will learn to be wise"

Chapter 16

- ¹ The plans of the heart belong to a person,
but the answer from his tongue comes from Yahweh.
- ² All of a person's ways are pure in his own eyes,
but Yahweh weighs the spirits.
- ³ Commit your works to Yahweh
and your plans will succeed.
- ⁴ Yahweh has made everything for its purpose,
even the wicked for the day of trouble.
- ⁵ Every exalted heart is an abomination to Yahweh,
but be sure of this, they will not go unpunished.
- ⁶ By steadfast love and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for
and by the fear of Yahweh people turn away from evil.
- ⁷ When a person's ways are pleasing to Yahweh,
he makes even that person's enemies to be at peace with him.
- ⁸ Better is a little with what is right,
than a large income with injustice.
- ⁹ In his heart a person plans out his way,
but Yahweh directs his steps.
- ¹⁰ Insightful decisions are on the lips of a king;
his mouth should not betray justice.
- ¹¹ Honest scales come from Yahweh;
all the weights in the bag are his work.
- ¹² Doing evil is an abomination to kings,
for a throne is established by doing what is right.
- ¹³ Righteous lips are the delight of the king,
and he loves the person who speaks upright words.
- ¹⁴ A king's wrath is a messenger of death
but a wise man will try to calm his anger.
- ¹⁵ In the light of a king's face is life
and his favor is like a cloud that brings a spring rain.
- ¹⁶ How much better it is to get wisdom than gold.
To get understanding should be chosen more than silver.
- ¹⁷ The highway of the upright turns away from evil;
the one who guards his way preserves his life.
- ¹⁸ Pride comes before destruction
and a haughty spirit before a downfall.
- ¹⁹ It is better to be of humble spirit among poor people
than to divide the plunder with proud people.
- ²⁰ Whoever contemplates what they are taught will find what is good,

and those who trust in Yahweh will be blessed.

- ²¹ The one who is wise in heart is called discerning
and sweetness of speech improves the ability to teach.
- ²² Understanding is a fountain of life to the one who has it,
but the instruction of fools is their foolishness.
- ²³ The heart of a wise person gives insight to his mouth
and adds persuasiveness to his lips.
- ²⁴ Pleasant words are a honeycomb—
sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.
- ²⁵ There is a way that seems right to a man,
but its end is the way to death.
- ²⁶ The laborer's appetite works for him;
his hunger urges him on.
- ²⁷ A worthless person digs up mischief
and his speech is like a scorching fire.
- ²⁸ A perverse person stirs up conflict
and a gossip separates close friends.
- ²⁹ A man of violence lies to his neighbor
and leads him down a path that is not good.
- ³⁰ The one who winks the eye is plotting perverse things;
those who purse the lips will bring evil to pass.
- ³¹ Gray hair is a crown of glory;
it is gained by living the right way.
- ³² It is better to be slow to anger than to be a warrior
and one who rules his spirit is stronger than one who conquers a city.
- ³³ The lots are cast into the lap,
but the decision is from Yahweh.
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Proverbs 16 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 16 continues the section of the book which is attributed to Solomon and is filled mainly with short, individual proverbs.

Special concepts in this chapter

King and royalty

Some of these proverbs mention a king. As in other cases, this is intended to apply to all rulers.

Themes

There are individual proverbs that run along common themes, often including contrasting elements: wise/foolish, money, lazy/diligent, truth telling, wicked/righteous, sluggard, pride/humility, integrity/crookedness. (See: wise, foolish and evil and righteous)

Proverbs 16:1

The plans of the heart belong to a person

Here the word "heart" represents the person's mind and thoughts. Alternate translation: "A person makes plans in his mind"

the answer from his tongue comes from Yahweh

Possible meanings are 1) Yahweh speaks his answer to a person's plans, which is a metaphor meaning that Yahweh determines the outcome of that person's plans or 2) Yahweh enables a person to speak words about the plans that he has made.

the answer from his tongue

The person is represented by his "tongue" to emphasize his speech. Alternate translation: "the answer that he speaks"

Proverbs 16:2

All of a person's ways are pure in his own eyes

The eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. The writer speaks of what a person does as if that person were walking down a path. Alternate translation: "A person thinks that everything he does is pure" or "A person judges everything he does as pure"

Yahweh weighs the spirits

Here the word "spirits" represents people's desires and motives. The writer speaks of Yahweh discerning and judging a person's desires and motives as if he were weighing that person's spirit. Alternate translation: "Yahweh judges the person's motives"

Proverbs 16:3

General Information:

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Proverbs 16:4

even the wicked for the day of trouble

The verbal phrase may be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "he has made even the wicked for the day of trouble"

Proverbs 16:5

Every exalted heart is an abomination to Yahweh

"Yahweh strongly hates every exalted heart." See how you translated "abomination" in Proverbs 3:32.

Every exalted heart

Here the word "exalted" is a metaphor for "arrogant" because the person himself exalts his heart rather than allowing God or other people to exalt it. The word "heart" represents the person. Alternate translation: "everyone who is arrogant" or "every arrogant person"

they will not go unpunished

The two negatives in this phrase strongly emphasize the positive. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will certainly punish them"

Proverbs 16:6

By steadfast love and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for

The abstract nouns "love" and "faithfulness" can be stated with the verb "love" and the adjective "faithful." This can be stated in active form.

Possible meanings are 1) Alternate translation:

"Because Yahweh loves his people without ceasing and is faithful to them, he forgives their sins" or 2)

Alternate translation: "Yahweh will forgive the sins of those who love him without ceasing and are faithful to him"

people turn away from evil

The writer speaks of people no longer doing evil things as if they were turning away from evil.

Alternate translation: "people stop doing evil things"

Proverbs 16:7

he makes

"Yahweh makes"

Proverbs 16:8

a large income

"earning a lot of money"

with injustice

"with wrongdoing"

Proverbs 16:9

In his heart a person plans out his way

Here the word "heart" represents the mind and thoughts. The writer speaks of a person's actions as if the person were walking on a path. Alternate translation: "A person plans in his mind what he will do"

Yahweh directs his steps

The writer speaks of Yahweh determining the outcome of a person's plans as if Yahweh were telling that person where to walk.

Proverbs 16:10

Insightful decisions are on the lips of a king

Here the word "lips" is a metonym for what the king says. Alternate translation: "What a king says are insightful decisions"

his mouth should not betray justice

The word "mouth" represents the king himself.
Alternate translation: "he should not speak deceitfully when he judges"

Proverbs 16:11

Honest scales come from Yahweh

Yahweh requires justice and fairness when doing business. Dishonest people used heavier or lighter weights in their scales in order to gain more when buying or selling.

all the weights in the bag are his work

Merchants carried their weights in bags. Possible meanings are 1) Yahweh has determined how much every weight must weigh or 2) Yahweh is concerned with every weight that a merchant uses.

Proverbs 16:12

Doing evil is an abomination to kings

Possible meanings are 1) kings hate evil deeds that their subjects commit or 2) Yahweh hates kings who commit evil deeds.

for a throne is established by doing what is right

Here the word "throne" represents the king's rule. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for the king establishes his reign by doing what is right"

Proverbs 16:13

Righteous lips

Here the word "lips" represents the person who speaks. Alternate translation: "A person who speaks the truth"

Proverbs 16:14

A king's wrath is a messenger of death

The writer speaks of an angry king causing someone to die as if the king's wrath were a messenger that he sends out to kill someone. Alternate translation: "An angry king can put people to death"

Proverbs 16:15

General Information:

Verse 15 contrasts with verse 14.

In the light of a king's face is life

The writer speaks of an expression of joy on the king's face as if his face emitted light. Alternate translation: "When the king is cheerful, people live"

his favor is like a cloud that brings a spring rain

The writer compares the king showing favor towards someone with a cloud that brings rain to

make crops grow. Both promise blessing to those who receive them.

Proverbs 16:16

How much better it is to get wisdom than gold

This exclamation emphasizes that having wisdom is much better than having gold. Alternate translation: "It is much better to get wisdom than to get gold"

To get understanding should be chosen more than silver

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "A person should choose to get understanding more than to get silver"

Proverbs 16:17

The highway of the upright

The writer speaks of the lifestyle of upright people as if it were a well-built road, free of obstacles. Alternate translation: "The righteous way that upright people live"

turns away from evil

The writer speaks of avoiding or no longer doing evil things as if it were turning away from evil. Alternate translation: "keeps them from doing evil"

the one who guards his way preserves his life

The word "way" here is a metaphor that speaks of a person's actions and words as if they were a road that he walks on. A person who "guards his way" is careful to make sure he does not do what his own evil thoughts or others' evil words or actions tempt him to do. Alternate translation: "the one who does not allow evil people to lead him to sin will live a long time"

Proverbs 16:18

a haughty spirit

Here the word "spirit" represents the person's attitude and temperament. Alternate translation: "an arrogant attitude"

a downfall

"ruin" or "failure"

Proverbs 16:19

to be of humble spirit

"to have a humble spirit" or "to be a humble person"

plunder

goods taken in battle

Proverbs 16:20

what they are taught

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what someone has taught them" or "what they have learned"

Proverbs 16:21

The one who is wise in heart is called discerning

This person will have a reputation of being a discerning person. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People will call the one who is wise in heart discerning" or "The one who is wise in heart will have a reputation of being a discerning person"

The one who is wise in heart

Here the heart represents the mind and thoughts. Alternate translation: "The one who is wise" or "The one who is wise in his thinking"

sweetness of speech

The writer speaks of kind or pleasant speech as if it were something that tastes sweet. Alternate translation: "kind speech" or "pleasant speech"

Proverbs 16:22

Understanding is a fountain of life

The writer speaks of "Understanding" as if it were a fountain that continuously flows with water and which sustains the life of those who drink from it. Alternate translation: "Understanding is like a fountain flowing with life-giving water"

Proverbs 16:23

The heart of a wise person gives

Here the word "heart" represents the mind and thoughts. Alternate translation: "The thoughts of a wise person gives"

gives insight to his mouth

Here the word "mouth" is a metonym for speech. Alternate translation: "makes his speech wise"

to his lips

Here the word "lips" is a metonym for speech. Alternate translation: "to what he says"

Proverbs 16:24

sweet to the soul

Possible meanings for the word "soul" are 1) it represents a person's inward desires and pleasures. Alternate translation: "sweet enough to make a person happy" or 2) it can mean "throat" and is a metonym for a person's tongue and ability to taste. Alternate translation: "sweet to a person's taste"

healing to the bones

Here the word "bones" represent a person's body. Alternate translation: "healing to the body"

Proverbs 16:25

There is a way that seems right to a man

The writer speaks of a person's conduct or behavior as if it were a road on which the person is traveling. Alternate translation: "A person thinks that the way he is living is right"

but its end is the way to death

The word "its" refers to "way" in the previous line. This "way" is the road that leads to death.

Proverbs 16:26

The laborer's appetite works for him

The writer speaks of the appetite as if it were a person who works on behalf of the laborer. This means that the person who labors is motivated by his desire to eat. Alternate translation: "The laborer works to satisfy his appetite"

his hunger urges him on

The writer speaks of "hunger" as if it were a person who urges the laborer to continue working. Alternate translation: "he keeps on working because he is hungry"

Proverbs 16:27

A worthless person digs up mischief

The writer speaks of a person trying to find ways to harm other people as if that person were digging in the ground to find something buried. Alternate translation: "A worthless person looks for mischief as if he were digging for something in the ground"

worthless

"useless" or "wicked"

mischief

trouble

his speech is like a scorching fire

The writer compares the way this person's words hurt others with the way that fire burns things. Alternate translation: "he hurts people with his words, like a fire scorches the things it touches"

Proverbs 16:28

a gossip

a person who gossips or spreads rumors

Proverbs 16:29

A man of violence lies to his neighbor

It is implied that this man lies to his neighbor in order to get his neighbor to join him in violent

actions. Alternate translation: "A man of violence entices his neighbor"

A man of violence

"A violent man" or "A man who practices violence"

leads him down a path that is not good

The writer speaks of a person's actions as if they were a road on which the person walks. Alternate translation: "gets him to do things that are not good"

a path that is not good

The writer uses an understatement to emphasize how bad this path is. Alternate translation: "a very bad path" or "a terrible path"

Proverbs 16:30

The one who winks the eye ... those who purse the lips

Both of these are facial gestures which people might use to signal their plans to others. See how you translated "winks the eye" in Proverbs 10:10.

will bring evil to pass

"will do evil things"

Proverbs 16:31

Gray hair is a crown of glory

The writer speaks of gray hair as if it were a crown. "Gray hair" is a metonym for old age. Alternate

translation: "A person who has lived long enough to have gray hair is like one who wears a glorious crown on his head"

it is gained

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "a person gains it"

Proverbs 16:32

one who rules his spirit

The writer speaks of a person being able to control his own temper and emotions as if he ruled over his spirit like a king rules his people. Alternate translation: "one who controls his temper"

Proverbs 16:33

The lots are cast into the lap

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "A person throws the lots into his lap"

the decision is from Yahweh

Possible meanings are 1) Yahweh decides how the lots will land or 2) it is not the lots, but Yahweh who determines what will happen.

Chapter 17

- ¹ It is better to have quiet with a dry morsel of bread
than a house full of feasting with strife.
- ² A wise servant will rule over a son who acts shamefully
and will share the inheritance as one of the brothers.
- ³ The crucible is for silver and the furnace is for gold,
but Yahweh tests hearts.
- ⁴ The evildoer pays attention to wicked lips;
a liar gives ear to a destructive tongue.
- ⁵ Whoever mocks the poor insults his Maker
and the one who rejoices at misfortune will not go unpunished.
- ⁶ Grandchildren are the crown of the aged
and parents bring honor to their children.
- ⁷ Eloquent speech is not suitable for a fool;
much less are lying lips suitable for a prince.
- ⁸ A bribe is like a magic stone to the one who gives it;
wherever he turns, he succeeds.
- ⁹ Whoever overlooks an offense seeks love,
but the one who repeats a matter alienates close friends.
- ¹⁰ A rebuke goes deeper into a person who has understanding
than a hundred blows go into a fool.
- ¹¹ An evil person only seeks rebellion,
so a cruel messenger will be sent against him.
- ¹² It is better to meet a bear robbed of her cubs
than to meet a fool in his foolishness.
- ¹³ When someone returns evil for good,
evil will never leave his house.
- ¹⁴ The beginning of conflict is like one who releases water everywhere,
so walk away from the dispute before it has broken out.
- ¹⁵ The person who acquits the wicked person and the person who condemns the righteous person—
both are an abomination to Yahweh.
- ¹⁶ Why should a fool pay money to learn about wisdom
when he has no sense?
- ¹⁷ A friend is loving at all times
and a brother is born for times of trouble.
- ¹⁸ A man having no sense makes binding promises
and becomes responsible for his neighbor's debts.
- ¹⁹ Whoever loves conflict loves sin;
whoever raises his door seeks destruction.

- 20** A person who has a crooked heart finds nothing that is good;
the one who has a perverse tongue falls into calamity.
- 21** Whoever is the parent of a fool brings grief to himself;
and the father of a fool has no joy.
- 22** A joyful heart is good medicine,
but a broken spirit dries up the bones.
- 23** A wicked man accepts a secret bribe
to pervert the ways of justice.
- 24** The one who has understanding sets his face toward wisdom,
but the eyes of a fool are set on the ends of the earth.
- 25** A foolish son is a grief to his father
and bitterness to the woman who bore him.
- 26** Also, it is never good to punish the righteous;
neither is it good to flog the noble for their integrity.
- 27** One who has knowledge uses few words
and he who is cool of spirit has understanding.
- 28** Even a fool is thought to be wise if he keeps silent;
when he keeps his mouth shut, he is considered to be intelligent.
-

Proverbs 17 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 17 continues the section of the book which is attributed to Solomon and is filled mainly with short, individual proverbs.

Special concepts in this chapter

Themes

There are individual proverbs that run along common themes, often including contrasting elements: wise/foolish, money, lazy/diligent, truth telling, wicked/righteous, sluggard, pride/humility, integrity/crookedness. (See: wise, foolish and evil and righteous)

Proverbs 17:1

to have quiet

Here "quiet" refers to "peace." Alternate translation: "to have peace"

than a house full of feasting with strife

The words "to have" are understood from the previous phrase. They can be repeated. Alternate translation: "than to have a house full of feasting with strife" or "than to be in a house full of feasting where there is strife"

Proverbs 17:2

General Information:

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Proverbs 17:3

The crucible is for silver and the furnace is for gold

This refers to how gold and silver are refined. A metal is refined by heating it to a high temperature so that it melts and the impurities may be removed. Alternate translation: "The crucible is used to refine silver and the furnace is used to refine gold"

crucible

a pot in which metals are melted at a very high temperature

Yahweh tests hearts

This speaks of Yahweh testing people to help them stop being evil and foolish as if their hearts were a metal that Yahweh was refining to remove everything that is impure. Alternate translation:

"Yahweh tests people's hearts" or "Yahweh refines people's hearts"

Proverbs 17:4

wicked lips

The word "lips" can be translated as either 1) a synecdoche for the person or 2) a metonym for the words that come out from those lips. Alternate translation: "a wicked person" or "wicked talk"

gives ear

This idiom means "listens."

destructive tongue

The word "tongue" can be translated as either 1) a synecdoche for the person or 2) a metonym for the words that the tongue produces. Alternate translation: "a destructive person" or "destructive talk"

Proverbs 17:5

the poor

This refers to poor people. Alternate translation: "those who are poor"

his Maker

This is a name that refers to Yahweh. This is also an abstract noun that can be written as a verb. Alternate translation: "the one who made him"

at misfortune

This refers to the misfortune of others. Alternate translation: "at others' misfortune" or "at other peoples' troubles"

will not go unpunished

This litotes emphasizes that the person will surely be punished. Alternate translation: "will certainly be punished"

Proverbs 17:6

are the crown of

This speaks of older peoples' grandchildren being a sign of honor for them as if their grandchildren were a crown. Alternate translation: "bring honor and respect to"

the aged

This refers to older people. Alternate translation: "those who are older" or "older people"

Proverbs 17:7

Eloquent speech

"Fine speech" or "Excellent speech"

much less are lying lips suitable for a prince

This describes people lying as if it were actually their "lips" that were lying. Alternate translation: "even more it is not suitable for a prince to lie"

Proverbs 17:8

A bribe is like a magic stone to the one who gives it

This speaks of a person's bribe working by comparing it to a magical stone or amulet. Alternate translation: "A bribe works like a magical stone for the one who gives it" or "A bribe works like magic for the one who is giving the bribe"

wherever he turns

Here "turning" refers to the various things the person does. Specifically, this refers to the different things the person does by bribery. Alternate translation: "in whatever he does" or "in everything he tries to do by giving bribes"

Proverbs 17:9

an offense

an action or word that has hurt him

who repeats a matter

This refers to bringing up a past situation in which a friend was hurt or offended. Alternate translation: "who repeats a past offense"

alienates close friends

"causes people to stop being close friends" or "causes close friends to stop liking each other"

Proverbs 17:10

A rebuke goes deeper into a person ... than a hundred blows go into a fool

This compares how a rebuke effects a man of understanding to how a beating effects a fool. This speaks of the effect on these people as if it could be measured by the depth that it goes into them. Alternate translation: "A rebuke has more effect on a person ... than a hundred blows have on a fool"

a person who has understanding

"a person who has good judgment." The word "understand" can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: "a person who understands"

a hundred blows go into a fool

"beating a fool a hundred times makes him change his ways"

Proverbs 17:11

seeks rebellion

The word "rebellion" can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: "seeks to rebel"

a cruel messenger will be sent against him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "a cruel messenger will come against him"

will be sent against him

To be "sent against" someone means to be sent to harm them. Alternate translation: "will be sent to harm him"

Proverbs 17:12

a bear robbed of her cubs

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "a bear who has just lost her cubs"

in his foolishness

The word "foolishness" can be expressed as an adjective. Alternate translation: "who is acting foolish"

Proverbs 17:13

evil will never leave his house

Here "evil" is spoken of as if it were a person who would not leave the man's house. Here the word "house" may be taken literally, but it is also a metonym for his family. Alternate translation: "bad things will continue to happen to him and his family" or "bad things will never stop happening to him and his family"

Proverbs 17:14

The beginning of conflict is like one who releases water everywhere

This compares how easily a conflict spreads to how spilled water flows everywhere. Alternate translation: "Starting a conflict is like pumping water and letting it run everywhere"

has broken out

"starts" or "begins"

Proverbs 17:15

acquits

justifies, declares someone not guilty

Proverbs 17:16

Why should a fool pay money to learn about wisdom when he has no sense?

This rhetorical question emphasizes that the fool should not do this. This question may be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "A fool should not pay money to learn about wisdom because he does not have any sense."

sense

Possible meanings are 1) desire to learn wisdom or 2) ability to learn wisdom.

Proverbs 17:17

a brother is born for times of trouble

One of the purposes of a brother is to be there to help his brother or sister in times of trouble. Alternate translation: "a brother is there for times of trouble"

Proverbs 17:18

no sense

"no good judgement"

binding promises

This refers to promises that must be kept and are often a burden on the person who made them.

Proverbs 17:19

whoever raises his door seeks destruction

Possible meanings are 1) this may represent that person making the entrance to their home look more lofty or fancy. Alternate translation: "the one who makes his doorway more impressive is giving others the opportunity to ruin him" or "the one who makes the entrance to his house high is trying to harm other people" Or 2) the word "door" is a metaphor for the person's mouth. Alternate translation: "the one who speaks proudly is giving others the opportunity to ruin him" or "the one who speaks proudly is trying to harm other people"

raises his door

Possible meanings are 1) literally making either the door itself or the threshold of the entrance high or 2) metaphorically making either the door itself or the house of which it is a part seem great or 3) the word "door" is a metaphor for the person's mouth, which in turn is a metonym for the words the person speaks with his mouth.

Proverbs 17:20

who has a crooked heart

The "heart" represents a person's feelings, attitudes and motivations. Alternate translation: "who is deceptive" or "who is dishonest"

has a perverse tongue

The "tongue" represents a person's speech. Alternate translation: "speaks perversely" or "speaks wickedly"

falls into calamity

"falls into trouble" To "fall into" something means to get into that situation. Alternate translation: "will have calamity"

Proverbs 17:21

General Information:

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Proverbs 17:22

A joyful heart is good medicine

This speaks of a joyful heart as being good medicine because it makes a person feel better. Alternate translation: "A joyful heart is like medicine that makes a person feel better"

A joyful heart

The "heart" represents a person's feelings, attitudes and motivations. Alternate translation: "Being joyful"

a broken spirit

Here the "spirit" represents a person's feelings and emotional state. A broken spirit refers to a poor emotional state. Alternate translation: "depression"

dries up the bones

A person's bones represent their physical health and strength. If a person's bones dry up it means that they are very sick and unhealthy. Alternate translation: "makes a person unhealthy and weak"

Proverbs 17:23

to pervert the ways of justice

"to prevent justice from being rendered" or "to pervert justice"

Proverbs 17:24

sets his face toward wisdom

This speaks of a person's focus on acting wisely as if he were looking at wisdom. Alternate translation: "focuses on acting wisely"

the eyes of a fool are

This refers to a fool by his eyes to emphasize what he is focusing on. Alternate translation: "the fool is"

the ends of the earth

This speaks of a fool's impossible dreams as if they were the ends of the earth to emphasize that they are unrealistic. Alternate translation: "strive for things that are as far from him as the ends of the earth" or "focus on impossible things"

Proverbs 17:25

A foolish son is a grief to his father

This speaks of a son causing his father grief as if the son himself were "grief." Alternate translation: "A foolish son brings grief to his father"

A foolish son ... and bitterness to the woman

This speaks of a son causing his mother bitterness as if the son himself were "bitterness." Alternate translation: "A foolish son ... and brings bitterness to the woman"

who bore him

"who gave birth to him"

bitterness

emotional pain, sorrow

Proverbs 17:26

it is never good ... neither is it good

These statements can be written in positive form. Alternate translation: "it is always wrong ... and it is evil"

to punish the righteous

"to force the righteous to give up his property."

the righteous

This is a nominal adjective that refers to any righteous person. Another possible meaning is "the innocent," anyone whom others have accused of a crime that he did not commit.

flog

whip severely

the noble

This nominal adjective refers to any noble people. Alternate translation: "noble people"

for their integrity

The word "integrity" can be expressed with the adjective "honest." Alternate translation: "because they are honest"

Proverbs 17:27

uses few words

This refers to the way he speaks. Alternate translation: "speaks with few words"

is cool of spirit

Having a cool spirit is a metaphor for being able to control anger. Alternate translation: "is able to control himself" or "is able to stay calm" or "does not become angry easily"

Proverbs 17:28

Even a fool is thought to be wise

This can be written in active form. Alternate translation: "People even think a fool is wise"

keeps his mouth shut

This means that he does not speak. Alternate translation: "does not speak"

he is considered to be intelligent

This can be written in active form. Alternate translation: "people consider him to be intelligent"

Chapter 18

- ¹ One who isolates himself seeks his own desire,
and he quarrels with all sound wisdom.
- ² A fool finds no pleasure in understanding,
but only in revealing what is in his own heart.
- ³ When a wicked person comes, contempt comes with him—
along with shame and disgrace.
- ⁴ The words of a man's mouth are deep waters;
the fountain of wisdom is a flowing stream.
- ⁵ It is not good to be partial to the wicked person,
nor to deny justice to the righteous person.
- ⁶ A fool's lips bring him conflict
and his mouth invites a beating.
- ⁷ A fool's mouth is his ruin
and he ensnares himself with his lips.
- ⁸ The words of a gossip are like delicious morsels
and they go down into the inner parts of the body.
- ⁹ Also, one who is slack in his work
is a brother to the one who destroys the most.
- ¹⁰ The name of Yahweh is a strong tower;
the righteous person runs into it and is safe.
- ¹¹ The wealth of the rich is his fortified city
and in his imagination it is like a high wall.
- ¹² Before his downfall a person's heart is proud,
but humility comes before honor.
- ¹³ One who answers before listening—
it is his folly and shame.
- ¹⁴ A person's spirit will endure sickness,
but who can bear a broken spirit?
- ¹⁵ The heart of the intelligent acquires knowledge
and the hearing of the wise seeks it out.
- ¹⁶ A man's gift may open the way
and bring him before great men.
- ¹⁷ The first to plead his case seems just
until his opponent comes and examines him.
- ¹⁸ Casting the lot settles disputes
and separates strong opponents.
- ¹⁹ An offended brother is harder to be won than a strong city,
and quarrels are like the bars of a castle.

- 20** From the fruit of his mouth one's stomach is filled;
with the harvest of his lips he is satisfied.
- 21** Death and life are controlled by the tongue,
and those who love the tongue will eat its fruit.
- 22** He who finds a wife finds a good thing
and receives favor from Yahweh.
- 23** A poor person pleads for mercy,
but a rich person answers harshly.
- 24** The one who claims many friends is brought to ruin by them,
but there is a friend who comes closer than a brother.
-

Proverbs 18 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 18 continues the section of the book which is attributed to Solomon and is filled mainly with short, individual proverbs.

Special concepts in this chapter

Themes

There are individual proverbs that run along common themes, often including contrasting elements: wise/foolish, money, lazy/diligent, truth telling, wicked/righteous, sluggard, pride/humility, integrity/crookedness. (See: wise, foolish and evil and righteous)

Proverbs 18:1

isolates himself

"keeps away from other people"

quarrels with all sound wisdom

This speaks of a person disagreeing with sound judgment as if "sound judgment" were a person he fought with. Alternate translation: "he disagrees with all sound judgment"

sound wisdom

"good judgment" or "wise choices"

Proverbs 18:2

A fool finds no pleasure in understanding, but only

"A fool does not care about understanding, but only about" This means the fool considers "understanding" the opposite of pleasure. Alternate translation: "A fool detests understanding and only finds pleasure in"

but only in revealing what is in his own heart

This means that the fool only finds pleasure in telling other people what he feels and desires in his heart. Alternate translation: "but only in telling others what is in his own heart"

what is in his own heart

The contents of a person's heart refers to the person's thoughts and feelings. Alternate translation: "what he thinks"

Proverbs 18:3

contempt comes with him—along with shame and disgrace

Here "contempt," "shame," and "disgrace" are spoken of as if they are people who accompany a wicked man. Possible meanings are 1) people show contempt towards the wicked man and cause him to feel shame and disgrace. Alternate translation: "people feel contempt for him along with shame and disgrace" or 2) the wicked man shows contempt for others and causes them to feel shame and disgrace. Alternate translation: "he shows his contempt for other people and causes them to feel shame and disgrace"

shame and disgrace

These two words have similar meaning and are used together to emphasize the "shame" felt by either the wicked man or other people.

Proverbs 18:4

The words of a man's mouth are deep waters; ... the fountain of wisdom is a flowing stream

These two lines are parallel and it is implied that the man in the first line is a wise man. Alternate translation: "The words of a wise man's mouth are deep waters; ... the fountain of wisdom is a flowing stream"

The words of a man's mouth are deep waters

This speaks of a wise man's words being profound as if they were profound and as deep as deep waters. Alternate translation: "The words of a man's mouth are as profound as deep waters" or "The words of a man's mouth are deep and profound"

a man's mouth

Here the man is referred to by his mouth to emphasize what he says. Alternate translation: "of a man"

the fountain of wisdom is a flowing stream

This speaks of the source of wisdom being plentiful as if it were a gushing spring. The gushing of the spring is spoken of as if it were a flowing stream. Alternate translation: "the source of wisdom is as plentiful as the water of a gushing spring"

Proverbs 18:5

It is not good to ... to the righteous person

These phrases can be written in positive form. Alternate translation: "It is good to treat the wicked person as he deserves, and to be just to the righteous person"

Proverbs 18:6

A fool's lips bring

Here the fool is referred to by his "lips" to emphasize what he says. Alternate translation: "what a fool says brings"

bring

"cause"

his mouth invites a beating

This speaks of the fool saying things that cause people to want to beat him as if he were inviting them to beat him. Alternate translation: "his mouth makes people want to beat him"

his mouth

Here what the fool says is referred to as his "mouth." Alternate translation: "what he says"

Proverbs 18:7

A fool's mouth ... with his lips

Both of these phrases refer to what a fool says. Alternate translation: "What a fool says ... by what he says"

is his ruin

"will ruin him"

he ensnares himself

This speaks of the man causing problems and trouble for himself as if he were trapping himself like a man traps an animal. Alternate translation: "he will cause problems for himself"

Proverbs 18:8

The words of a gossip are like delicious morsels

This speaks of the words of a gossip being desirable to listen to as if they were delicious food to eat. Alternate translation: "The words of a gossip are desirable to listen to" or

The words of a gossip

This refers to what a gossiping person says. Alternate translation: "The words that a gossiping person speaks"

morsels

small bites of food

they go down into the inner parts of the body

This speaks of the words of a gossip going into a person's mind and affecting his thoughts as if they were food that was going into his stomach. Alternate translation: "and they enter a person's mind and affect his thoughts"

Proverbs 18:9

one who is slack in his work is a brother to the one who destroys

This speaks of the one who is slack being similar to the one who destroys as if they were actually related. Alternate translation: "is closely related to" or "is very similar to"

is slack

"is lazy" or "is not interested"

the one who destroys the most

"the one who destroys everything" or "the one who is always destructive"

Proverbs 18:10

The name of Yahweh is a strong tower

This speaks of Yahweh protecting his people as if he were a strong tower in which they could take refuge. Alternate translation: "Yahweh protects like a strong tower" or "Yahweh protects his people like a strong tower"

The name of Yahweh

Here Yahweh is referred to by his name. Alternate translation: "Yahweh"

the righteous

This refers to righteous people. Alternate translation: "those who are righteous" or "righteous people"

runs into it and is safe

This speaks of people seeking safety from Yahweh and Yahweh protecting them as if he were a strong tower that they ran into for safety. Alternate translation: "run to him and they are safe" or "seek him and they are safe"

Proverbs 18:11

The wealth of the rich is his fortified city

This speaks of a rich person depending on his wealth as if his wealth were a fortified wall that protects him. Alternate translation: "The wealthy person depends on his wealth as a city depends on its fortified wall"

the rich

This refers to people who are rich. Alternate translation: "the rich person"

fortified city

a city with strong defenses like walls and towers

in his imagination it is like a high wall

This speaks of the rich person believing his wealth will keep him safe like a high wall keeps those inside a city safe. Alternate translation: "he thinks it protects him as well as a high wall"

Proverbs 18:12

Before his downfall a person's heart is proud

"First a person's heart is proud, but then comes his downfall"

downfall

This refers to a significant decline in a person's reputation or health.

a person's heart

Here a person is referred to by his heart to emphasize his thoughts and feelings. Alternate translation: "a person"

humility comes before honor

The word "humility" may be expressed as an adjective and the word "honor" may be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: "a person must be humble before he can be honored"

Proverbs 18:13

it is his folly and shame

The abstract nouns "folly" and "shame" may be expressed as adjectives. Alternate translation: "it is foolish of him, and he should be ashamed"

Proverbs 18:14

A person's spirit will endure sickness

Possible meanings are 1) the word "spirit" refers to a person's desire to stay alive. Alternate translation: "Even if a person is sick, he will still want to keep living" Or 2) the word "spirit" refers to the hope a person has that he will survive. Alternate translation: "A person who has hope will be able to survive sickness"

but who can bear a broken spirit?

This is a rhetorical question, expecting the answer that few can bear it. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "but it is very hard to bear a broken spirit."

a broken spirit

This refers to being depressed. Alternate translation: "being depressed"

Proverbs 18:15

The heart of the intelligent acquires

Here the intelligent person is referred to by his heart to emphasize his desires. Alternate translation: "The intelligent desire to acquire"

the intelligent

This refers to people who are intelligent. Alternate translation: "those who are intelligent" or "intelligent people"

acquires

"gains" or "obtains"

the hearing of the wise seeks it out

Here the wise person is referred to by his hearing to emphasize what he desires to listen to. Alternate translation: "the wise seeks to learn about it"

the wise

This refers to people who are wise. Alternate translation: "those who are wise" or "wise people"

seeks it out

Here the word "it" refers to "knowledge"

Proverbs 18:16

may open the way

Here to "open the way" means to create an opportunity. Alternate translation: "may create an opportunity for him"

bring him before

This means to be allowed to see someone. Alternate translation: "let him meet" or "let him be introduced to"

Proverbs 18:17

The first to plead his case

This refers to the person who pleads his case before his opponent pleads his case. Alternate translation: "The first person to plead his case" or "The person who pleads his case first"

examines him

asks him questions

Proverbs 18:18

Casting the lot

"Casting lots"

separates strong opponents

This refers to people who are fighting harshly over a dispute. When they are separated, they are no longer fighting over their dispute. Alternate translation: "causes opponents to stop fighting over their dispute"

Proverbs 18:19

An offended brother is harder to be won than a strong city

This speaks of the difficulty of making peace with a brother you have offended by comparing it to the difficulty of winning a war against a strong city. Alternate translation: "If you offend your brother, finding a way to have peace with him again may be harder than waging a battle to win a city"

quarrels are like the bars of a castle

This speaks of the difficulty of resolving quarrels by comparing it to the difficulty of breaking down the bars of a castle. Alternate translation: "resolving quarrels is as difficult as breaking down the bars of a castle"

castle

a fortified palace

Proverbs 18:20

From the fruit of his mouth one's stomach is filled; with the harvest of his lips he is satisfied

These two lines have the same meaning and are used together to emphasize what is said. They can be combined. Alternate translation: "A person is satisfied by the results of the good things that he says"

the fruit of his mouth

This speaks of the good things that a person says as if they were fruit that came from his mouth.

Alternate translation: "his wise speech" or "his good words"

one's stomach is filled

This speaks of a person being satisfied or content by the result of what they have said as if they had eaten and become satisfied" Alternate translation: "a person is satisfied"

the harvest of his lips

This speaks of the good things that a person says as if they were fruit that is harvested. Alternate translation: "his wise speech" or "his good words"

he is satisfied

"he is pleased"

Proverbs 18:21

Death and life are controlled by the tongue

This can be written in active form. Alternate translation: "The tongue can lead to life or death" or "What people say can lead to life or death"

by the tongue ... love the tongue

Here the "tongue" refers to speech. Alternate translation: "by what people say ... love speaking"

will eat its fruit

This speaks of a person receiving the consequence for what he says as if the consequences were fruit that he receives. Alternate translation: "will receive its consequences"

Proverbs 18:22

General Information:

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Proverbs 18:23

General Information:

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Proverbs 18:24

many friends is brought to ruin by them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "many friends—they will bring him to ruin" or "many friends—his friends will destroy him"

comes closer than

"is more faithful than" or "stays more loyal than"

Chapter 19

- ¹ Better is a poor person who walks in his integrity
than one who is perverse in speech and is a fool.
- ² Also, it is not good to have desire without knowledge
and the one who runs too fast misses the path.
- ³ A person's folly ruins his life
and his heart rages against Yahweh.
- ⁴ Wealth adds many friends,
but a poor person is separated from his friends.
- ⁵ A false witness will not go unpunished
and he who breathes out lies will not escape.
- ⁶ Many will ask for a favor from a generous person
and everyone is a friend of the one who gives gifts.
- ⁷ All the brothers of a poor man hate him;
how much more do his friends who go far away from him!
He pursues them with words,
but they are gone.
- ⁸ He who gets wisdom loves his own life;
he who keeps understanding will find what is good.
- ⁹ A false witness will not go unpunished,
but the one who breathes out lies will perish.
- ¹⁰ It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury—
much less for a slave to rule over princes.
- ¹¹ Discretion makes a person slow to anger
and it is his glory to overlook an offense.
- ¹² The wrath of the king is like the roaring of a young lion,
but his favor is like dew on the grass.
- ¹³ A foolish son is ruin to his father
and a quarreling wife is a constant dripping of water.
- ¹⁴ A house and wealth are inherited from parents,
but a prudent wife is from Yahweh.
- ¹⁵ Laziness throws a person into a deep sleep,
but the one not willing to work will go hungry.
- ¹⁶ The one who obeys the command guards his life,
but the one who despises his ways will die.
- ¹⁷ Whoever is gracious to the poor lends to Yahweh
and he will repay him for what he has done.
- ¹⁸ Discipline your son while there is hope
and do not set your desire on putting him to death.
- ¹⁹ A person with great anger must bear the penalty;
if you rescue him, you will have to do it a second time.

- 20** Listen to advice and accept instruction,
so you may become wise by the end of your life.
- 21** Many are the plans in a person's heart,
but it is the purpose of Yahweh that will stand.
- 22** Loyalty is what a person desires
and a poor person is better than a liar.
- 23** Honor for Yahweh leads people to life;
anyone who has it will rest satisfied and not afflicted by harm.
- 24** The lazy person buries his hand in the dish;
he will not even bring it back up to his mouth.
- 25** Strike a mocker, and the naive person will become prudent;
discipline one who is discerning, and he will gain knowledge.
- 26** The one who robs his father and drives his mother away
is a son who brings shame and disgrace.
- 27** If you cease to hear instruction, my son,
you will stray from the words of knowledge.
- 28** A corrupt witness mocks justice
and the mouth of the wicked swallows iniquity.
- 29** Judgments are ready for mockers
and flogging for the backs of fools.
-

Proverbs 19 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 19 continues the section of the book which is attributed to Solomon and is filled mainly with short, individual proverbs.

Special concepts in this chapter

Themes

There are individual proverbs that run along common themes, often including contrasting elements: wise/foolish, money, lazy/diligent, truth telling, wicked/righteous, sluggard, pride/humility, integrity/crookedness. (See: wise, foolish and evil and righteous)

Proverbs 19:1

Better is a poor person

"It is better to be a poor person"

who walks in his integrity

This is an idiom. Here walking refers to living.
Alternate translation: "who lives in his integrity" or "who lives an honest life"

is perverse in speech

The word "speech" may be expressed as a verb.
Alternate translation: "speaks perversely" or "speaks in an evil way"

Proverbs 19:2

to have desire without knowledge

This refers to people trying to do something without the knowledge for how to correctly do it. Alternate translation: "to work hard without knowing what you are doing"

the one who runs too fast misses the path

This speaks of a person doing something too quickly and making mistakes as if running too quickly and missing the path. Alternate translation: "the one who acts too quickly makes mistakes" or "the one who acts too quickly makes poor choices"

Proverbs 19:3

his heart rages

Here a person is referred to by his "heart" to emphasize his emotions. Alternate translation: "he rages"

Proverbs 19:4

Wealth adds many friends

This means that a person who is wealthy will have many friends because wealth attracts people. The full meaning of this can be made clear. Alternate translation: "Those who are wealthy easily find many friends"

a poor person is separated from his friends

A poor person is separated from many of his friends because of his poverty. The meaning of this can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "poverty causes a person to lose his friends"

Proverbs 19:5

A false witness will not go unpunished

The double negative here emphasizes the positive. This can be written in positive and active form. Alternate translation: "A false witness will certainly be punished" or "They will certainly punish a false witness"

he who breathes out lies will not escape

This means that he will be captured. Alternate translation: "they will capture the one who breathes out lies"

breathes out lies

This is an idiom. Here "breathes" refers to lying constantly. See how you translated this phrase in [Proverbs 6:19]

Proverbs 19:6

a generous person

someone who often gives away things

everyone is a friend

The word "everyone" is an exaggeration. Alternate translation: "it seems that everyone is a friend" or "almost everyone is a friend"

Proverbs 19:7

He pursues them with words

Using words to pursue people is a metaphor for calling out to them or pleading with them for help. Alternate translation: "He calls out to them" or "He pleads with them to help him"

how much more do his friends who go far away from him!

This phrase is an exclamation to show that this is more likely than the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "therefore his friends will certainly hate him and go far away from him!"

Proverbs 19:8

loves his own life

Here the person is referred to by his "life" to emphasize himself being alive. Alternate translation: "loves himself"

keeps understanding

"has understanding"

Proverbs 19:9

A false witness will not go unpunished

This can be written in positive and active form. See how you translated this phrase in [Proverbs 19:5]

breathes out lies

This figure of speech uses "breathes" to refer to lying constantly. See how you translated this phrase in [Proverbs 6:19]

Proverbs 19:10

It is not fitting

"It is not right"

much less for a slave

The words "it is" and "fitting" are understood from the previous phrase. They can be repeated. Alternate translation: "it is much less fitting for a slave" or "it is even worse for a slave"

Proverbs 19:11

Discretion makes a person slow to anger

"A person who has discretion is slow to become angry"

Discretion

This means to know what should be done in a particular situation. See how you translated this word in Proverbs 1:4.

it is his glory to overlook

"it will bring him glory to overlook" or "others will consider it honorable if he overlooks"

to overlook

to forget on purpose

Proverbs 19:12

The wrath of the king is like the roaring of a young lion

Here the lion's roaring refers to attacking. The wrath of a king is compared to the unpredictable

and dangerous attack of a young lion. Alternate translation: "The wrath of the king is as dangerous as the attack of a young lion"

but his favor is like dew on the grass

The favor of the king is compared to the refreshing water that appears on grass in the morning. Alternate translation: "but his favor is refreshing like dew on grass" or "but his favor is refreshing like the dew on the ground in the morning"

Proverbs 19:13

is ruin to his father
"will ruin a father"

a quarreling wife is a constant dripping of water

This speaks of an annoying wife as if she were the constant dripping of water. Alternate translation: "a quarreling wife is as annoying and distracting as a constant dripping of water"

a quarreling wife
"an arguing wife" or "a disagreeing wife"

Proverbs 19:14

A house and wealth are inherited from parents

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Children inherit a house and wealth from their parents"

prudent
See how you translated this word in Proverbs 12:23.

a prudent wife is from Yahweh
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh gives a prudent wife"

Proverbs 19:15

Laziness throws a person into a deep sleep

This speaks of how laziness causes a person to sleep a lot as if laziness forcefully throws the person into sleep. Alternate translation: "Laziness makes a person sleep a lot" or "A lazy person sleeps a lot"

go hungry
This is an idiom which means to not eat. Alternate translation: "not eat" or "be hungry"

Proverbs 19:16

the command
"the command that he was taught"

guards his life
"protects his life"

despises his ways

Possible meanings are 1) the phrase "his ways" refers to the ways of Yahweh, the way in which Yahweh commands his people to live. Alternate translation: "despises the ways of Yahweh" Or 2) the phrase "his ways" refers to the ways of "the one." Alternate translation: "does not care how he lives"

Proverbs 19:17

Whoever is gracious to the poor lends to Yahweh

Yahweh considers kindness shown to the poor to be kindness shown to him. One of the ways people are kind to the poor is by giving. Alternate translation: "The person who gives to the poor is giving to Yahweh"

the poor
This refers to poor people. Alternate translation: "those who are poor" or "poor people"

Proverbs 19:18

while there is hope

This refers to while the child is young and will still accept discipline and instruction. The full meaning of this can be made clear. Alternate translation: "while he is young" or "while he can still be taught"

and do not set your desire on putting him to death

Possible meanings are 1) this phrase describes punishing your child. Alternate translation: "but do not punish him so severely that he might die" or 2) this phrase describes what it is like if you do not punish your child. Alternate translation: "for if you do not punish him you are helping him destroy himself"

set your desire on putting him

This idiom means to be determined to cause something to happen. Alternate translation: "be determined to put him"

Proverbs 19:19

A person with great anger

This idiom refers to a person who is easily angered. Alternate translation: "A person who does not control his temper" or "A person who becomes angry quickly"

must bear the penalty

This refers to the person bearing the consequences for what happens when he gets angry. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: "must bear the consequences of his anger" or "must bear the consequences of what he does in his anger"

if you rescue him

"if you save him." This refers to rescuing him when he has acted out of his anger. The meaning of this

can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "if you rescue him after he has had an outburst"

a second time
"another time" or "again"

Proverbs 19:20

Listen to advice and accept instruction
These two phrases mean basically the same and are repeated to emphasize how important it is.

Listen to advice
This is an idiom. Here "listening" does not mean to merely listen, but to learn from the advice you are given and to follow it. Alternate translation: "Pay attention to advice" or "Follow advice"

Proverbs 19:21

in a person's heart
Here the "heart" is used to refer to the "mind" to emphasize a person's desire. Alternate translation: "in a person's mind" or "that a person desires"

the purpose of Yahweh
"Yahweh's purpose" or "Yahweh's plans"

that will stand
This idiom means to "happen." Alternate translation: "that will happen"

Proverbs 19:22

General Information:
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Proverbs 19:23

Honor for Yahweh leads people to life; anyone who has it will rest satisfied
This means that they will live a long time if they honor Yahweh. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: "Those who honor Yahweh will live a long time; anyone who honors Yahweh will rest satisfied"

anyone who has it
Here the word "it" refers to "honor for Yahweh."

rest satisfied
Here "rest" or sleep is a metaphor for living. Alternate translation: "live satisfied"

satisfied and not afflicted by harm
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "satisfied; nothing will harm him" or "satisfied; he will be safe"

Proverbs 19:24

buries his hand in the dish
"dips his hand in the dish" or "puts his hand in his plate." In the Biblical culture people usually ate with their hands as people do in many cultures today.

he will not even bring it back up to his mouth
He does not bring his hand back to his mouth because he is too lazy. Alternate translation: "but he is too lazy to bring his hand up to his mouth to feed himself"

Proverbs 19:25

Strike a mocker, and the naive person
"If you strike a mocker, the naive person"

Strike a mocker
"Punish a mocker"

naive person
"inexperienced person" or "immature person"

prudent
See how you translated this word in Proverbs 12:23.

discipline one who is discerning, and
"if you discipline one who is discerning,"

he will gain knowledge
The abstract noun "knowledge" can be stated as "know." Alternate translation: "he will know more"

Proverbs 19:26

brings shame and disgrace
Possible meanings are 1) he brings it to himself. Alternate translation: "brings shame and disgrace to himself" or 2) he brings it to his family. Alternate translation: "brings shame and disgrace to his family"

Proverbs 19:27

If you cease to hear instruction
Here "listening and obeying" is spoken of as if it were "hearing." Alternate translation: "If you stop paying attention to instruction" or "If you stop obeying instruction"

you will stray from
"you will abandon" or "you will turn your back on"

the words of knowledge
"knowledge"

Proverbs 19:28

the mouth of the wicked swallows iniquity

This speaks of how wicked people enjoy doing evil by saying that they swallow iniquity as easily as they swallow food. Alternate translation: "the wicked enjoy doing evil as much as they enjoy eating food"

the mouth of the wicked swallows

The phrase "the mouth of the wicked" represents wicked people. Alternate translation: "wicked people swallow" or "the wicked swallow"

the wicked

This refers to wicked people. Alternate translation: "the wicked person"

Proverbs 19:29

Judgments are ready for mockers and flogging for

The word "Judgments" is probably a metonym for the condemnation or punishment that will follow

the judgments. The words "judgments" and "flogging" may be expressed as verbs. Alternate translation: "Yahweh is ready to judge mockers and to flog"

Judgments are ready for

Alternate translation: "Punishment is ready for" or "Condemnation is ready for" or "Yahweh is ready to punish" or "Yahweh is ready to condemn"

flogging for the backs of fools

The words "is ready" are understood from the previous phrase and may be repeated. Alternate translation: "flogging is ready for the backs of fools" or "he is ready to flog the backs"

flogging

beating with a whip or stick

Chapter 20

- ¹ Wine is a mocker and strong drink is a brawler;
whoever is led astray by drink is not wise.
- ² The fear of a king is like the fear of a young lion that is roaring;
the one who makes him angry forfeits his life.
- ³ It is an honor for anyone to avoid conflict,
but every fool jumps into an argument.
- ⁴ The lazy person does not plow in autumn;
he seeks a crop at harvest time but will have nothing.
- ⁵ The purpose in a human heart is like deep water,
but someone with understanding will draw it out.
- ⁶ Many a person proclaims he is loyal,
but who can find one who is faithful?
- ⁷ The righteous person walks in his integrity,
and his sons who follow after him will be blessed.
- ⁸ A king who sits on the throne performing the duties of a judge
is winnowing with his eyes all the evil that is before him.
- ⁹ Who can say, "I have kept my heart pure;
I am clean from my sin"?
- ¹⁰ Differing weights and unequal measures—
both are abominations to Yahweh.
- ¹¹ Even a youth is known by his actions,
by whether his conduct is pure and upright.
- ¹² Ears that hear and eyes that see—
Yahweh made them both.
- ¹³ Do not love sleep or you will come to poverty;
open your eyes and you will have plenty to eat.
- ¹⁴ "Bad! Bad!" says the buyer,
but when he goes away he boasts.
- ¹⁵ There is gold and an abundance of costly stones,
but lips of knowledge are a precious jewel.
- ¹⁶ Take a garment of one who has put up security for a stranger,
and hold it in pledge when he puts up security for an immoral woman.
- ¹⁷ Bread gained by deceit tastes sweet,
but afterward his mouth will be full of gravel.
- ¹⁸ Plans are established by advice
and only with wise guidance should you wage war.
- ¹⁹ A slanderer reveals secrets,
and so you should not associate with people who talk too much.

- 20** If a person curses his father or his mother,
his lamp will be put out in the middle of darkness.
- 21** An inheritance gained quickly at the beginning
will not be blessed in the end.
- 22** Do not say, "I will pay you back for this wrong!"
Wait for Yahweh and he will rescue you.
- 23** Unequal weights are an abomination to Yahweh,
and deceptive scales are not good.
- 24** A person's steps are directed by Yahweh;
how then can he understand his way?
- 25** It is a snare for a person to say rashly, "This thing is holy,"
and begin to think about what it means only after making his vow.
- 26** A wise king winnows the wicked
and he turns a threshing wheel over them.
- 27** The spirit of a person is the lamp of Yahweh,
searching all his inmost parts.
- 28** Steadfast love and faithfulness preserve the king;
he makes his throne strong by love.
- 29** The glory of young men is their strength
and the splendor of old people is their gray hair.
- 30** Blows that make a wound cleanse away evil
and beatings make the innermost parts clean.
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Proverbs 20 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 20 continues the section of the book which is attributed to Solomon and is filled mainly with short, individual proverbs.

Special concepts in this chapter

Themes

There are individual proverbs that run along common themes, often including contrasting elements: wise/foolish, money, lazy/diligent, truth telling, wicked/righteous, sluggard, pride/humility, integrity/crookedness. (See: wise, foolish and evil and righteous)

Proverbs 20:1

Wine is a mocker and strong drink is a brawler

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and are combined to emphasize the danger of too much alcohol.

Wine is a mocker

Here "wine" refers to the person who is drunk with wine. Alternate translation: "A person who is drunk with wine mocks"

strong drink is a brawler

Here "strong drink" refers to a person who is drunk with strong drink. Alternate translation: "a person who is drunk with strong drink starts fights"

a brawler

a person who fights noisily, usually in a public place

whoever is led astray by drink is not wise

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whoever drinks until they can no longer think clearly"

by drink

Here "drink" refers to alcoholic drinks

is not wise

This means the opposite of "wise" which is "foolish."
Alternate translation: "is foolish"

Proverbs 20:2

The fear of a king is like the fear of a young lion that is roaring

This compares how people fear a king's wrath to how they fear a young roaring lion. Alternate translation: "The king's wrath makes people as afraid as if they were facing a young lion roaring at them"

makes him angry

"makes the king angry"

forfeits his life

This refers to being killed. "Life" here refers to physical life. Alternate translation: "will die"

Proverbs 20:3

It is an honor

"It is honorable." This means that a person will be honored.

every fool jumps into an argument

This speaks of entering an argument quickly as if the argument were something the fool physically jumped into. Alternate translation: "every fool quickly gets into an argument" or "every fool is quick to join an argument"

Proverbs 20:4

plow

to prepare land for planting

in autumn

"during the season for planting crops"

but will have nothing

This means that there will be nothing growing in his field for him to harvest. Alternate translation: "but will have nothing to harvest"

Proverbs 20:5

The purpose in a human heart is like deep water

This speaks of how difficult it is to understand the reasons for a person's actions by comparing it to the difficulty of reaching the water in a deep well. Alternate translation: "It is as difficult to understand the purpose in the human heart as it is to reach the water in a deep well" or "The purpose of in the human heart is very difficult to understand"

someone with understanding

"a person who has understanding"

will draw it out

This speaks of figuring out the purpose of the human heart as if it was water being drawn from a deep well. Alternate translation: "will cause the purpose to be known" or "will figure it out"

Proverbs 20:6

is loyal

"is faithful" or "is trustworthy"

but who can find one who is faithful?

The implicit answer is "few can find someone like that." This rhetorical question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "but few men can find a person who is faithful!" or "but it is hard to find a person who really is faithful!"

Proverbs 20:7

walks in his integrity

Here walking refers to living. See how you translated this phrase in [Proverbs 19:1]

his sons who follow after him

This simply means that they "follow after him" since they are younger than he and his children. If this phrase is awkward in your language it may be left to be implied. Alternate translation: "his sons after him" or "his sons"

Proverbs 20:8

is winnowing with his eyes all the evil that is before him

This speaks of the king judging between various types of evil as if he were separating them as a person winnows grain. Alternate translation: "sees and sorts the different kinds of evils that are brought before him"

Proverbs 20:9

Who can say, "I have kept my heart pure; I am clean from my sin"?

The implicit answer to this question is, "No one can say that." This rhetorical question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "No one can say that his heart is clean and that he is free from sin"

my heart

Here a person's "heart" refers to his thoughts and desires. Alternate translation: "my thoughts"

clean

A person who God considers spiritually acceptable is spoken of as if the person were physically clean.

I am clean from my sin

"I am without sin" or "I have not sinned"

Proverbs 20:10

General Information:

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Proverbs 20:11

Even a youth is known by his actions

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People know a young man by his actions"

whether his conduct is pure and upright

"whether his conduct is pure and upright or not"

his conduct

"his deeds" or "what he does"

pure and upright

These two words basically mean the same thing and emphasize how good this young person is. They can be combined into one word if necessary. Alternate translation: "pure"

Proverbs 20:12

General Information:

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Proverbs 20:13

come to poverty

The phrase "come to" here means to transition into a new situation; to become. Alternate translation: "become poor"

open your eyes

Here "opening one's eyes" is spoken of as "being awake." Alternate translation: "stay awake" or "be alert"

Proverbs 20:14

"Bad! Bad!" says the buyer, but when he goes away he boasts

Here a buyer is criticizing what someone is selling to get a low price from him. After he buys he boasts about the good price that he persuaded the seller to give him. The full meaning of this can be made clear. Alternate translation: "'Bad! Bad!' says the buyer criticizing the seller's wares, but after he buys he goes away he boasting about the low price that he paid"

Proverbs 20:15

lips of knowledge are a precious jewel

This speaks of the value of lips of knowledge by comparing them to a precious jewel. Alternate translation: "lips of knowledge are as valuable as an expensive jewel"

lips of knowledge

Here "words" are referred to as "lips." Alternate translation: "wise words" or "words of knowledge"

Proverbs 20:16

Take a garment of one who has put up security for a stranger

When lending money, the lender would take something from the borrower, such as a garment, as a guarantee of repayment. He would return it after the money was repaid. If the borrower was too poor, someone else could give something to the lender as a guarantee for him. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: "Take a garment as security from the one who guarantees that what a stranger has borrowed will be paid back"

puts up security

This is an idiom. It means that someone gives something to a lender as a guarantee that what was borrowed will be paid. Alternate translation: "guarantees that what has been borrowed will be paid back" or "promises to pay a loan"

hold it in pledge

This is an idiom. To "hold something in pledge" means to hold on to something that someone has given as a pledge, or promise, that he will pay a debt. Alternate translation: "hold onto his coat as a guarantee of repayment"

for an immoral woman

One Hebrew tradition and some English translations read, "for foreigners."

Proverbs 20:17

Bread gained by deceit

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Bread that someone gained by deceit"

by deceit

The word "deceit" can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: "by deceiving others"

Bread

Here "bread" refers to food in general. Alternate translation: "Food"

tastes sweet

"tastes good"

but afterward his mouth will be full of gravel

This speaks of the food tasting unpleasant as if his mouth were actually full of gravel instead of food. Alternate translation: "but afterwards it tastes like gravel in his mouth" or "but soon it tastes like sand in his mouth"

gravel

small pieces of rock

Proverbs 20:18

Plans are established by advice

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People establish plans based on advice"

Proverbs 20:19

A slanderer

Because the problem is that the person talks too much, not that what he says is false, many English translations read, "A gossip."

you should not associate with

"you should not be friends with"

Proverbs 20:20

If a person curses

This means if a someone express a desire that bad things will happen to someone else.

his lamp will be put out in the middle of darkness

This speaks of a person dying suddenly and unexpectedly as if his life were a lamp put out in the dark. Alternate translation: "his life will end as suddenly as the light of a lamp that is put out in the dark" or "he will die suddenly"

his lamp will be put out

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "his lamp will go out"

his lamp

This refers to a lamp with a burning flame. Here the lamp's flame is referred to as the lamp itself. Alternate translation: "the flame of his lamp"

Proverbs 20:21

at the beginning

This refers to a person receiving his inheritance before he is supposed to receive it. The full meaning of this statement can be made clear. Alternate translation: "before the right time"

Proverbs 20:22

I will pay you back

This means to do wrong to someone because they have done wrong to you. Alternate translation: "I will punish you"

Wait for Yahweh

This means to have faith that Yahweh will deal with the situation. Alternate translation: "Have faith in Yahweh" or "Hope in Yahweh"

Proverbs 20:23

General Information:

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Proverbs 20:24

A person's steps are directed by Yahweh

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh directs a person's steps"

A person's steps

This refers to the various things a person does. Alternate translation: "A person's actions"

how then can he understand his way?

The implicit answer is that he cannot understand it. This rhetorical question may be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "therefore, a person cannot understand his way"

understand his way

This is an idiom. The phrase "his way" refers to the person's life. Alternate translation: "understand why some things happen in his life"

Proverbs 20:25

It is a snare

This speaks of something being dangerous as if it were a trap or a snare. Alternate translation: "It is dangerous"

to say rashly

to say something quickly and without careful consideration of what it might mean

making his vow

The person has made a vow declaring that something is holy and dedicated to Yahweh. Alternate translation: "dedicating it to Yahweh" or "declaring it holy"

Proverbs 20:26

winnows the wicked

This speaks of the king separating the wicked people as if they were grain that he was winnowing. Alternate translation: "separates the wicked"

the wicked

This refers to wicked people. Alternate translation: "those who are wicked" or "the wicked people"

he turns a threshing wheel over them

This speaks of the king punishing the wicked as if he were driving a threshing wheel over them. Alternate translation: "he severely punishes them"

threshing wheel

"threshing cart." This is a tool used to crush grain and help separate it from the chaff.

Proverbs 20:27

The spirit of a person is the lamp of Yahweh, searching all his inmost parts

This speaks of a person's spirit as if it were a lamp. A person's spirit helps him to understand his inner self. Alternate translation: "Yahweh has given us a spirit to understand our deepest selves, just as a lamp makes you see in the dark"

Proverbs 20:28

Steadfast love and faithfulness preserve the king

The abstract nouns "love" and "faithfulness" can be stated with the verb "love" and the adjective "faithful." This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The king preserves himself by loving Yahweh without ceasing and by being faithful to him"

preserve the king

keep the king safe from harm

he makes his throne strong by love

Here "throne" represents the king's power to rule. The abstract noun "love" can be stated as a verb. Also, this can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he ensures that he will rule for a long time by loving others"

Proverbs 20:29

General Information:

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Proverbs 20:30

Blows that make a wound cleanse away evil and beatings make the innermost parts clean

Both statements mean the same thing and are repeated for emphasis. Using physical punishment to correct a person is spoken of as if the evil were dirt and the beatings cleansed him. Alternate translation: "Beating a person who has done wrong will correct him and cause him to be a better person"

Chapter 21

- ¹ The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of Yahweh;
he turns it wherever he pleases.
- ² Every person's way is right in his own eyes,
but it is Yahweh who weighs the hearts.
- ³ To do what is right and just
is more acceptable to Yahweh than sacrifice.
- ⁴ Haughty eyes and a proud heart—
the lamp of the wicked—are sin.
- ⁵ The plans of the diligent lead only to prosperity,
but everyone who acts too quickly comes only to poverty.
- ⁶ Acquiring treasures by a lying tongue
is a fleeting vapor and a deadly snare.
- ⁷ The violence of the wicked will drag them away,
for they refuse to do what is just.
- ⁸ The way of a guilty person is crooked,
but the one who is pure does what is right.
- ⁹ It is better to live on a corner of the roof
than in a house shared with a quarrelsome wife.
- ¹⁰ The appetite of the wicked craves evil;
his neighbor finds no favor in his eyes.
- ¹¹ When the mocker is punished, the naive become wise,
and when the wise person is instructed, he lays hold of knowledge.
- ¹² The righteous person watches the house of the wicked person;
he brings wicked people to disaster.
- ¹³ The one who shuts his ears to the cry of the poor,
he also will cry out, but he will not be answered.
- ¹⁴ A gift in secret appeases anger
and a concealed gift appeases strong wrath.
- ¹⁵ When justice is done, it brings joy to the righteous person,
but it brings terror to workers of iniquity.
- ¹⁶ The one who wanders from the way of understanding,
he will rest in the assembly of the dead.
- ¹⁷ Whoever loves pleasure will become poor;
the one who loves wine and oil will not be rich.
- ¹⁸ A wicked person is ransom for the righteous,
and the treacherous person is ransom for the upright.
- ¹⁹ It is better to live in the desert
than with a quarreling and angry wife.

- ²⁰ Desirable treasure and oil are kept in the dwelling of the wise,
but a foolish person swallows it all up.
- ²¹ The one who does right and is kind—
this person finds life, righteousness, and honor.
- ²² A wise man scales the city of the mighty ones,
and he brings down the stronghold in which they trusted.
- ²³ Whoever guards his mouth and tongue
keeps himself out of trouble.
- ²⁴ The proud and haughty person—"Mocker" is his name—
acts with arrogant pride.
- ²⁵ The desire of the lazy person kills him,
for his hands refuse to work.
- ²⁶ All day long he craves and craves more,
but the righteous person gives and does not hold back.
- ²⁷ The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination;
it is even more detestable when he brings it with evil motives.
- ²⁸ A false witness will perish,
but the one who listens will speak for all time.
- ²⁹ A wicked man makes his face hard,
but the upright is certain about his ways. ^[1]
- ³⁰ There is no wisdom, there is no understanding, and there is no advice
that can stand against Yahweh.
- ³¹ The horse is prepared for the day of battle,
but the victory belongs to Yahweh.

Footnotes

21:29 ^[1]Some ancient copies of the Hebrew text have

Proverbs 21 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 21 continues the section of the book which is attributed to Solomon and is filled mainly with short, individual proverbs.

Special concepts in this chapter

Themes

There are individual proverbs that run along common themes, often including contrasting elements: wise/foolish, money, lazy/diligent, truth telling, wicked/righteous, sluggard, pride/humility, integrity/crookedness. (See: wise, foolish and evil and righteous)

Proverbs 21:1

The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of Yahweh

The writer speaks of the king's heart as if it were an irrigation ditch in a dry area through which people direct water to plants that need it. Alternate translation: "Yahweh controls the king's heart as a man directs water for irrigation"

The king's heart

The heart is a metaphor for what a person thinks and what he wants to do. Alternate translation: "The king's thoughts and actions" or "What the king thinks and what he wants to do"

Proverbs 21:2

Every person's way is right in his own eyes

The eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. The writer speaks of what a person does as if it that person were walking down a path. Alternate translation: "Every person thinks that what he does is good" or "Every person judges what he does as good"

who weighs the hearts

The writer speaks of Yahweh deciding whether a person desires to do what is right as if Yahweh were looking at a physical object and deciding whether it is of good quality. Alternate translation: "who will judge the motives"

Proverbs 21:3

To do what is right

"To do what Yahweh thinks is right"

To do what is ... just

"To treat people the way Yahweh wants people to treat other people"

just is more acceptable to Yahweh

"just—Yahweh wants this more"

Proverbs 21:4

Haughty eyes and a proud heart

The words "eyes" and "heart" are synecdoches for a person who considers himself better than other people and wants other people to know it. Alternate translation: "People who want others to think that they are better than other people"

Haughty eyes

This is a synecdoche for a person who wants others to know that he thinks he is better than they are.

proud heart

This is a synecdoche for a person who thinks he is better than others.

the lamp of the wicked

The things that help the wicked are spoken of as a lamp. Alternate translation: "the things that help a wicked person like a lamp helps to see in the dark"

Proverbs 21:5

the diligent

This nominal adjective can be translated as a noun phrase. Alternate translation: "a diligent man" or "a man who works hard"

comes only to poverty

The abstract noun "poverty" can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "only becomes poor"

Proverbs 21:6

Acquiring treasures

"Gaining wealth" or "Getting rich"

by a lying tongue

The tongue is a metonym for what a person says. Alternate translation: "by deceitful words" or "by telling lies"

is a fleeting vapor

A fleeting vapor is a mist that quickly goes away in the morning. If someone tells lies in order to get wealth, that wealth will not last. Alternate translation: "is like a disappearing mist"

and a deadly snare

A snare is a kind of trap. If someone tells lies in order to get wealth, he puts himself in terrible danger. Alternate translation: "and is like a snare that kills"

Proverbs 21:7

The violence of the wicked will drag them away

The writer speaks as though violence were a person who could drag other people away. God will punish wicked people who harm their innocent neighbors.

violence of the wicked

The abstract noun "violence" refers to violent deeds or things people do to harm their innocent neighbors. The word "wicked" is a nominal adjective that refers to wicked people. Alternate translation: "The violent actions of wicked people"

drag them away

This phrase refers to dragging a net through water to catch fish. The wicked being destroyed by their own actions is spoken of as if their actions trapped them in a net like one would catch fish. Alternate translation: "drag them away like fish" or "destroy them as easily as one catches fish in a net"

Proverbs 21:8

The way of a guilty person is crooked

This compares the way one lives to a crooked road one may travel. This is also an idiom. Alternate translation: "The way a guilty person lives is crooked"

crooked

Here "crooked" means bent or not straight. This is a metaphor for morally wrong. Alternate translation: "wrong"

Proverbs 21:9

a corner of the roof

Houses in those days had flat roofs. Ancient Israelites spent much time on their roofs, where it was often cooler than inside the house, and sometimes people would build a shelter large enough for a person to sleep in on one corner of the roof.

quarrelsome wife

"wife who often argues and complains"

Proverbs 21:10

The appetite of the wicked craves evil

The writer speaks of a person's appetite, the physical desire for food and drink, as if it were a person who could desire something. The word "wicked" is a nominal adjective that refers to evil people, and the word "evil" is a nominal adjective that refers to evil deeds. Alternate translation: "Evil people desire to do evil deeds just as they desire to eat and drink"

craves

desires strongly

his neighbor finds no favor in his eyes

The idiom to "find favor" means to have someone approve of and act kindly towards the one who finds favor. Also, the eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents a person's thoughts and attitude towards another person. Alternate translation: "his neighbor does not receive favor from him" or "he does not act kindly towards his neighbor"

Proverbs 21:11

the naive

"those who have no experience" or "those who are not mature"

the mocker

"the person who mocks others"

when the wise person is instructed

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "when someone instructs the wise person"

lays hold of knowledge

Here knowledge is spoken of as if it were an object that someone could grasp and keep for himself.

Proverbs 21:12

The righteous

Possible meanings are 1) any righteous person or 2) "Yahweh the one who is righteous."

watches the house

"pays careful attention to the house" "looks to see what happens to the house"

he brings wicked people to disaster

Here disaster is spoken of as if it were a place that someone could be brought to. Alternate translation: "he destroys them"

Proverbs 21:13

The one who shuts his ears to the cry of the poor

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "The one who will not listen when poor people ask for help"

he will not be answered

The word "answered" is a metonym for a person hearing another person ask for help and acting to help. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "no one will do anything to help him"

Proverbs 21:14

appeases anger

"makes an angry person feel better so he is no longer angry"

Proverbs 21:15

When justice is done

The abstract noun "justice" can be translated as a noun phrase. These words can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "When rulers do what is just"

workers of iniquity

"those who do evil" or "evildoers"

Proverbs 21:16

wanders from the way of understanding

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "no longer lives wisely"

he will rest in the assembly of the dead

"he will remain in the assembly of dead spirits"

Proverbs 21:17

General Information:

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Proverbs 21:18

is ransom for

The word "ransom" is a metaphor for one person who takes the place of another person. Here the person who does what is wrong is punished instead of the person who does what is right.

the treacherous

a person who harms those who trust him by lying and otherwise dealing falsely

the upright

"the person who lives rightly" or "people who live rightly"

Proverbs 21:19

General Information:

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Proverbs 21:20

wise

This nominal adjective can be translated as a noun phrase. Alternate translation: "wise person"

swallows it all up

"uses it all for no good purpose" or "wastes it"

Proverbs 21:21

General Information:

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Proverbs 21:22

scales the city

"climbs up and over the wall that surrounds the city"

the city of the mighty ones

"a city in which mighty men are living" or "a city of mighty warriors"

he brings down

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "he destroys"

the stronghold in which they trusted

"the walls and towers around the city that they did not think anyone would be able to get past into the city, so they felt safe"

Proverbs 21:23

Whoever guards his mouth and tongue

Both "mouth" and "tongue" refer to what a person says. Alternate translation: "Whoever is careful in what he says"

Proverbs 21:24

The proud and haughty person ... acts with arrogant pride

"You can expect a proud and haughty people to act with arrogant pride"

proud and haughty

These two words mean basically the same thing and emphasize how prideful the person is.

"Mocker" is his name

The word "name" is a metonym for what people would call him. Alternate translation: "a mocker is what you should call him"

Proverbs 21:25

The desire of the lazy person kills him

The writer speaks of what a person wants as if it were a person who could kill a lazy person. Here the lazy person wants to be idle and not work. Alternate translation: "A lazy person only wants to be idle, and because of that he will die" or "A lazy person will die because he does not want to work"

his hands refuse

The hand is a synecdoche for the person. Alternate translation: "he refuses"

Proverbs 21:26

craves

desires strongly

gives and does not hold back

The phrase "does not hold back" can be stated positively, and what he gives can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "gives everything he should" or "gives generously"

Proverbs 21:27

The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination

The writer does not mention Yahweh here, as in Proverbs 15:8, but the reader should understand that it is Yahweh who detests the sacrifice of the wicked.

the wicked

The nominal adjective "wicked" can be translated as a noun phrase. Alternate translation: "the wicked person" or "wicked people"

it is even more detestable

"Yahweh detests the sacrifice even more"

Proverbs 21:28

will speak for all time

This is because people will never forget what he said.

Proverbs 21:29

makes his face hard

Possible meanings are 1) "pretends to be courageous" or 2) "will not listen to correction."

is certain about his ways

A person's actions are spoken of as if they were a path upon which the person walks. Alternate translation: "is certain about what he does" or "is confident about what he does"

Proverbs 21:30

There is no wisdom, there is no understanding, and there is no advice that

The words "there is" are repeated to emphasize the abstract nouns "wisdom," "understanding," and

"advice." Yahweh is greater than anything that anyone can know or think or say. Your language may require that you not repeat "there is no." The abstract nouns can be translated as adjectives or verbs. Alternate translation: "There is no wise person, there is no one who understands anything, and there is no one who tells others what to do who" or "There is no wisdom, understanding, or advice that"

stand against Yahweh

"defeat Yahweh" or "work against what Yahweh wants to do" or "show that he is right and Yahweh is wrong"

Proverbs 21:31

The horse is prepared for the day of battle

These words can be translated in active form.

Alternate translation: "Soldiers prepare horses for the day of battle"

the day of battle

The word "day" refers to time that may be longer or shorter than a day. Alternate translation: "when there is a battle"

Chapter 22

- ¹ A good name is to be chosen over great riches
and favor is better than silver and gold.
- ² Rich and poor people have this in common—
Yahweh is the maker of all of them.
- ³ The prudent sees trouble and hides himself,
but the naive go on and suffer because of it.
- ⁴ The reward for humility and fear of Yahweh
is riches, honor, and life.
- ⁵ Thorns and snares lie in the path of the perverse;
whoever guards his life will keep far from them.
- ⁶ Teach a child the way he should go
and when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction.
- ⁷ Rich people rule over poor people
and one who borrows is a slave to the one who lends.
- ⁸ He who sows injustice will reap trouble
and the rod of his fury will fade away.
- ⁹ The one who has a generous eye will be blessed,
for he shares his bread with the poor.
- ¹⁰ Drive away the mocker, and out goes strife;
disputes and dishonor will cease.
- ¹¹ The one who loves a pure heart and whose speech is gracious,
he will have the king for his friend.
- ¹² The eyes of Yahweh keep watch over knowledge,
but he overthrows the words of the treacherous.
- ¹³ The lazy person says, "There is a lion in the street!
I will be killed in the open places."
- ¹⁴ The mouth of an adulteress is a deep pit;
Yahweh's anger is stirred up against anyone who falls into it.
- ¹⁵ Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child,
but the rod of discipline drives it far away.
- ¹⁶ The one who oppresses poor people to increase his wealth,
or gives to rich people, will come to poverty.
- ¹⁷ Incline your ear and listen to the words of the wise
and apply your heart to my knowledge,
- ¹⁸ for it will be pleasant for you if you keep them within you,
if all of them are ready on your lips.
- ¹⁹ So your trust may be in Yahweh,
I teach them to you today—even to you.
- ²⁰ Have I not written for you thirty sayings
of instruction and knowledge,
- ²¹ to teach you truth in these trustworthy words,

so you may give trustworthy answers
to those who sent you?

²² Do not rob the poor because he is poor,
or crush the needy at the gate,

²³ for Yahweh will plead their case,
and he will rob of life those who robbed them.

²⁴ Do not make a friend of someone who is ruled by anger
and you must not go with one who rages,

²⁵ or you will learn his ways
and entangle yourself in a snare.

²⁶ Do not be one who strikes hands in making a pledge,
or who puts up security for debts.

²⁷ If you lack the means to pay,
what could stop someone from taking away your bed from under you?

²⁸ Do not remove the ancient boundary stone
that your fathers have set.

²⁹ Do you see a man skilled at his work? He will stand before kings;
he will not stand before common people.

Proverbs 22 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 22 ends the section of the book which is attributed to Solomon and is filled mainly with short, individual proverbs.

The second half of this chapter and the first half of the next chapter are attributed to the "Wise Men." The exact identity of the men is unknown.

Special concepts in this chapter

Themes

There are individual proverbs that run along common themes, often including contrasting elements: wise/foolish, money, lazy/diligent, truth telling, wicked/righteous, sluggard, pride/humility, integrity/crookedness. (See: wise, foolish and evil and righteous)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

With this new section of proverbs, the author begins to use many rhetorical questions. The obvious answers should convince the reader.

Proverbs 22:1

A good name is to be chosen over great riches
These words can be translated in active form.
Alternate translation: "A person should choose a good name rather than great riches"

A good name
"To have others think that one is a good person"

Proverbs 22:2

General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.

Proverbs 22:3

The prudent
This nominal adjective refers to any prudent person. See how you translated "prudent" in [Proverbs 12:16]

the naive

This nominal adjective refers to any naive person. To be naive is to lack experience and to not be mature.

Proverbs 22:4

General Information:

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Proverbs 22:5

Thorns and snares lie in the path of the perverse

The writer speaks of the way perverse people live as if it were a path on which the perverse will have trouble because of the natural "thorns" and man-made "snares."

snares

traps to catch animals

the perverse

This nominal adjective can be translated as a noun phrase. Alternate translation: "perverse people"

whoever guards his life

A person doing what he needs to do so he can live a long time is spoken of as if that person were keeping thieves away from a physical object. Alternate translation: "people who want to live a long time"

Proverbs 22:6

the way he should go

How a person lives is spoken of as if it were a path on which he walks. Alternate translation: "how he should live"

Proverbs 22:7

borrows ... lends

You may need to make explicit what it is that is borrowed or lent. Alternate translation: "borrows money ... lends money"

Proverbs 22:8

He who sows injustice will reap trouble

The writer speaks of a ruler or other powerful person treating those less powerful unjustly as if he were planting seeds that will give birth to plants that bring trouble. Alternate translation: "If a person treats those less powerful than he is unjustly, they will cause him trouble later on"

the rod of his fury will fade away

The word "rod" is a metonym for power over other people. Possible meanings are 1) the unjust ruler will lose the power that he had that allowed him to treat other people unjustly or 2) when the people respond to the injustice he had done by harming

him, he will have no power to stop them. Alternate translation: "he will no longer have the power that he had used to harm people"

rod of his fury

The word "rod" is a metonym for power over other people. The unjust man was harming innocent people as if he were very angry with them. Alternate translation: "the rod he had used as if he were punishing people" or "the power he used to harm others"

will fade away

The word translated "fade away" is also used of plants drying up.

Proverbs 22:9

The one who has a generous eye will be blessed

These words can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will bless the one who has a generous eye"

one who has a generous eye

The eye is a metonym for seeing what other people need, and the "generous eye" not only sees but gives what the other people need. The eye is also a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: "generous person" or "person who is willing to give things to other people"

bread

Since bread was the main food for many people in biblical times, it is often used to refer to food in general.

Proverbs 22:10

disputes and dishonor will cease

The abstract nouns "disputes" and "dishonor" can be translated as verbs. Alternate translation: "people will no longer argue with each other or say things that dishonor each other"

Proverbs 22:11

loves a pure heart

It is his own heart that the person wants to be pure. The heart is a synecdoche for the person. Alternate translation: "loves having a pure heart" or "wants to be pure"

is gracious

"is kind"

Proverbs 22:12

The eyes of Yahweh keep watch over

The eyes are a synecdoche for the person. The writer speaks as if Yahweh had physical eyes like a person. Alternate translation: "Yahweh keeps watch over" or "Yahweh guards knowledge"

keep watch over knowledge

Keeping watch is a metonym for protecting.
Alternate translation: "protect knowledge"

he overthrows

"he destroys"

the treacherous

The nominal adjective treacherous can be translated as a noun phrase. Translate "treacherous" as in [Proverbs 11:3]

Proverbs 22:13

The lazy person says

The quote that follows is a lie and an excuse for not working. If your language introduces false statements in a special way, you can use that here.

Proverbs 22:14

The mouth of an adulteress is a deep pit

The word "mouth" is a metonym for the words that come out of the mouth. The writer speaks of a person being unable to escape having people punish him for evil deeds as if that person had fallen into a hole someone had dug in the ground from which he could not escape. Alternate translation: "The words spoken by an adulteress will draw you in, and it will be as if you have fallen into a deep and dangerous pit"

an adulteress

See how you translated this in Proverbs 5:3.

Yahweh's anger is stirred up

Here "stirred up" means that his anger increased.
Alternate translation: "Yahweh is angry"

falls into it

Adultery is spoken of as if it is something that a person can fall into. Alternate translation: "sins because of the adulteress"

Proverbs 22:15

Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child

"The heart of a child is full of foolish things"

the rod of discipline

The writer speaks of a parent using any form of discipline as if that parent were hitting the child with a wooden rod.

drives it far away

The writer speaks as if foolishness were a person that another person could use a physical rod to drive away. Alternate translation: "will make a child wise"

Proverbs 22:16

to increase his wealth

"to become richer" or "to gain more money"

gives to rich people

"gives money to rich people"

will come to poverty

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "will become poor"

Proverbs 22:17

General Information:

Verse 17 begins the introduction to a new section of the Book of Proverbs.

Incline your ear and listen

Here the word "ear" represents the person who is listening. The writer speaks of listening attentively to someone as if it were leaning forward so that the ear is closer to the one speaking. See how you translated "incline your ear" in [Proverbs 4:20]

the words of the wise

"what wise people say"

apply your heart to

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "do your best to understand and remember"

my knowledge

The person speaking is probably the same as the father from [Proverbs 1:8]

Proverbs 22:18

all of them are ready on your lips

The person being ready to speak is spoken of as if it were the words that were ready. Alternate translation: "you are able to speak of them at any time"

Proverbs 22:19

today—even to you

"today. Yes, I am teaching you," The speaker is emphasizing that it is the hearer, not someone else whom he is teaching, and he is teaching the hearer because the hearer needs to learn. If it is awkward in your language to emphasize in this way, you can emphasize in another way or the words "even to you" can be left untranslated.

Proverbs 22:20

General Information:

These verses continue and end the introduction that began in [Proverbs 22:17](#).

thirty sayings

Some translations read, "excellent sayings."

Proverbs 22:21

to teach you ... who sent you?

These words end the rhetorical question that began with the words "Have I not written" in Proverbs 22:20. It can be translated as a statement. "You need to know that I have written ... to teach you ... who sent you."

to those who sent you

This implies that the hearer is or will be one whom others send to gain and bring back information.

Proverbs 22:22

General Information:

These verses begin the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

Do not rob ... or crush

If your language has a way of showing that this is the way one person would speak strongly to another, different from a general rule that people are supposed to obey, you should use it here.

the poor

This nominal adjective can be translated as a noun phrase. Alternate translation: "any poor person" or "poor people"

crush

grind into powder. This is a metaphor for "treat unjustly."

the needy

This nominal adjective can be translated as a noun phrase. Alternate translation: "any needy person" or "any person who does not have what he needs to live"

at the gate

The place where people bought and sold items and settled legal arguments is used as a metonym for business and legal activity. Alternate translation: "in court"

Proverbs 22:23

Yahweh will plead their case

The metaphor is of a lawyer defending the needy in front of a judge. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will defend the needy from those who oppress them" or "Yahweh will see that the needy receive justice"

he will rob of life those who robbed them

Yahweh is not a thief, but like a thief he will take life from those who do not choose to give it. Alternate translation: "he will destroy those who oppress poor people"

Proverbs 22:24

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

someone who is ruled by anger

someone who is unable to control his anger

rages

shows violent anger

Proverbs 22:25

you will ... entangle yourself in a snare

A person who wants to be like an angry person is like an animal taking the bait in a trap. Alternate translation: "you will be like an animal that eats bait that closes a trap and then is unable to escape"

Proverbs 22:26

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

strikes hands

A person would strike his hand against another person's hand to bind himself to do what he had agreed to do. Here the speaker warns the hearer not to strike hands as a way to promise to pay off someone's debts.

in making a pledge

"and agree to pay what someone owes to another person"

Proverbs 22:27

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Proverbs 22:28

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

ancient

very old

boundary stone

a large stone that shows where one person's land ends and another person's land begins

fathers

ancestors

Proverbs 22:29

Do you see a man skilled at his work?

This rhetorical question is actually a command.

Alternate translation: "Think of someone you know who is skilled at his work"

stand before

This represents becoming a servant of the important person. Kings and other important people will think so highly of him that they will use his services.

Chapter 23

- ¹ When you sit to eat with a ruler,
observe carefully what is before you,
- ² and put a knife to your throat
if you are a person who likes to eat a lot of food.
- ³ Do not crave his delicacies,
for it is the food of lies.
- ⁴ Do not work too hard to gain wealth;
be wise enough to know when to stop.
- ⁵ Will you let your eyes light upon it? It will be gone,
for it will surely take up wings like an eagle
and fly off to the sky.
- ⁶ Do not eat the food of one with an evil eye—
and do not crave his delicacies,
- ⁷ for he is the kind of man
who counts the price of the food.
"Eat and drink!" he says to you,
but his heart is not with you.
- ⁸ You will vomit up the little you have eaten
and you will have wasted your compliments.
- ⁹ Do not speak in the hearing of a fool,
for he will despise the wisdom of your words.
- ¹⁰ Do not move an ancient boundary stone
or encroach on the fields of orphans,
- ¹¹ for their Redeemer is strong
and he will plead their case against you.
- ¹² Apply your heart to instruction
and your ears to words of knowledge.
- ¹³ Do not withhold instruction from a child,
for if you beat him with the rod, he will not die.
- ¹⁴ It is you who must beat him with the rod
and save his soul from Sheol.
- ¹⁵ My son, if your heart is wise,
then my heart also will be glad;
- ¹⁶ my kidneys will rejoice
when your lips speak what is right.
- ¹⁷ Do not let your heart envy sinners,
but continue in the fear of Yahweh all the day.
- ¹⁸ Surely there is a future
and your hope will not be cut off.
- ¹⁹ Hear—you!—my son, and be wise
and direct your heart in the way.
- ²⁰ Do not associate with those who drink much wine,
or with gluttonous eaters of meat,
- ²¹ for the drunkard and the glutton become poor
and slumber will clothe them with rags.
- ²² Listen to your father who begot you
and do not despise your mother when she is old.

- 23 Buy the truth, but do not sell it;
buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding.
- 24 The father of the righteous person will greatly rejoice,
and he who begets a wise child will be glad in him.
- 25 Let your father and your mother be glad
and let her who bore you rejoice.
- 26 My son, give me your heart
and let your eyes observe my ways.
- 27 For a prostitute is a deep pit,
and an immoral woman is a narrow well.
- 28 She lies in wait like a robber
and she increases the number of the treacherous among humanity.
- 29 Who has woe? Who has sorrow?
Who has strife? Who has complaining?
Who has wounds for no reason? Who has bloodshot eyes?
- 30 Those who linger over wine,
those who try the mixed wine.
- 31 Do not look at the wine when it is red,
when it sparkles in the cup
and goes down smoothly.
- 32 In the last it bites like a serpent
and it stings like an adder.
- 33 Your eyes will see strange things
and your heart will utter perverse things.
- 34 You will be as one who sleeps on the high seas
or lies down on the top of a mast.
- 35 "They hit me," you will say, "but I was not hurt.
They beat me, but I did not feel it.
When will I wake up?
I will seek another drink."
-

Proverbs 23 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 23 continues the section beginning in the previous chapter of the book and is filled mainly with short, individual proverbs.

The second half of this chapter and the first half of the next chapter are attributed to general sayings.

Special concepts in this chapter

Themes

There are individual proverbs that run along common themes, often including contrasting elements: wise/foolish, money, lazy/diligent, truth telling, wicked/righteous, sluggard, pride/humility, integrity/crookedness. (See: wise, foolish and evil and righteous)

Proverbs 23:1

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

Proverbs 23:2

put a knife to your throat

Possible meanings of this exaggeration are 1) "be very careful not to eat too much" or 2) "do not eat anything at all"

Proverbs 23:3

Do not crave

"Do not strongly desire." See how you translated "craves" in Proverbs 21:9.

his delicacies

"his special and expensive food"

it is the food of lies

This is an idiom. "he is giving it to you so he can deceive you"

Proverbs 23:4

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

Do not work too hard

"Do not work so much that you are always tired"

Proverbs 23:5

light upon it

land like a bird upon the wealth

it will surely take up wings like an eagle and fly off

A person losing his wealth is spoken of as if the wealth were a bird. Alternate translation: "the wealth will disappear as quickly as an eagle can fly away"

wings like an eagle

wings like an eagle's wings

Proverbs 23:6

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

do not crave

"do not strongly desire." See how you translated "craves" in Proverbs 21:9.

his delicacies

"his special and expensive food." See how you translated this in Proverbs 23:3.

Proverbs 23:7

he is the kind of man who counts the price of the food

Some modern translations read, "eating with him is like getting hair stuck in your throat" or "giving you food is like getting hair stuck in his throat."

his heart is not with you

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "he really does not want you to enjoy the meal"

Proverbs 23:8

You will vomit up the little you have eaten

This is an exaggeration for wishing one had not eaten anything. Alternate translation: "You will wish that you had not eaten anything"

you will have wasted your compliments

Compliments are spoken of as if they were valuable objects. The abstract noun "compliments" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "he will not be happy even if you say good things about him and the food"

Proverbs 23:9

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

in the hearing of a fool

The abstract noun "hearing" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "where a fool can hear you"

Proverbs 23:10

ancient

very old. See how you translated this in Proverbs 22:28.

boundary stone

This is a large stone to show where one person's land ends and another person's land begins. See how you translated this in Proverbs 22:28.

encroach

This means to slowly take or begin to use land (or some thing) that belongs to someone else.

orphans

children whose parents are dead

Proverbs 23:11

their Redeemer

Yahweh

he will plead their case against you

The metaphor is of a lawyer defending the needy in front of a judge. Alternate translation: "he will defend the orphans against you" or "he will see that the orphans receive justice and punish you"

Proverbs 23:12

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

Apply your heart to

This is an idiom. See how you translated this in [Proverbs 22:17]

instruction

Possible meanings are 1) "what people who know what is right and what is wrong tell you" or 2) "what people say and do when they correct you."

your ears

The ellipsis can be filled in. Alternate translation: "apply your ears" or "listen carefully"

to words of knowledge

"to me when I tell you what I know"

Proverbs 23:13

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

Do not withhold instruction from a child

The abstract noun "instruction" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "Do not neglect to instruct a child" or "Do not refuse to instruct a child"

withhold

refuse to give something that one knows another person needs

beat him with the rod

These words are either 1) a metaphor for training and disciplining him even when he considers the training and discipline painful or 2) to be taken literally. Alternate translation: "discipline him"

Proverbs 23:14

rod

piece of wood

It is you who must beat him ... and save his soul

"You are the one who must beat him ... and save his soul." No one else will do it. The hearer is responsible to save the child's soul from Sheol, and the way to save him is to beat him.

save his soul from Sheol

If the hearer beats his children with the rod, they will not die young because they have done foolish or evil things. The word "soul" is a metonym for the person. Sheol is the world of the dead; going to the world of the dead is a euphemism for dying. Alternate translation: "you will keep him from the world of the dead" or "you will keep him from dying"

Proverbs 23:15

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

Proverbs 23:16

my kidneys

The "kidneys" are a metonym for the person's inner being. Alternate translation: "my inner being"

when your lips speak

"Your lips" means the whole person. Alternate translation: "when you speak"

Proverbs 23:17

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

Do not let your heart envy sinners

The word "heart" is a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: "Do not allow yourself to envy sinners" or "Make sure you do not envy sinners"

Proverbs 23:18

your hope will not be cut off

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will not allow anyone to cut off your hope" or "God will keep the promises he made to you"

Proverbs 23:19

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

Hear—you!—my son

"Listen carefully, my son." The speaker speaks an extra word to make sure the hearer is paying attention.

direct your heart in the way

Deciding to do what is right is spoken of as if one person were showing another person the correct path to follow. Alternate translation: "make sure you do what is wise"

Proverbs 23:20

gluttonous eaters of meat

Possible meanings are 1) "people who eat more meat than they need to" or 2) "meat" represents food in general. Alternate translation: "people who eat more food than they need to"

Proverbs 23:21

slumber will clothe them with rags

The word "slumber" is an exaggeration for a person spending so much time enjoying food and drink that he does not do necessary work. This activity is spoken of as if it were a parent putting clothes on a child. Alternate translation: "because they spend so much time eating and drinking, they will do no work and so will become poor"

Proverbs 23:22

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

do not despise

This can be stated positively. Alternate translation: "show respect for"

Proverbs 23:23

Buy the truth, but do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding

Another possible meaning is "Buy the truth, and do not sell wisdom, instruction, or understanding." The words "truth," "wisdom," "instruction," and "understanding" are abstract nouns that are spoken of as if they were physical items that a person can buy and sell in a market. They can be translated as verbs. Alternate translation: "Do what you need to do so you can know what is true, so you can be wise, so you can learn how to act, and so you can tell good from bad; never think of anything else as more important than these things"

Proverbs 23:24

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

The father of the righteous person will greatly rejoice, and he who begets a wise child will be glad in him

Another possible meaning is that the words "he that begets a wise child" explain who "the father of the righteous person" is. Alternate translation: "The father of the righteous person, he who begets a wise child, will greatly rejoice and will be glad in him"

will be glad in him

"will be glad because of him"

Proverbs 23:25

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Proverbs 23:26

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

give me your heart

The word "heart" is a metonym for what a person thinks and decides to do. Possible meanings are 1) "pay careful attention" or 2) "trust me completely."

let your eyes observe

The eyes are a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: "observe" or "look carefully at"

observe

Some modern translations read, "delight in."

Proverbs 23:27

prostitute ... immoral woman

There are two types of sexually immoral women. The "prostitute" is unmarried, "another man's wife" is married. Together they form a merism for any kind of sexually immoral woman.

a prostitute is a deep pit

The word "pit" is a metaphor for what happens to men who sleep with prostitutes. Alternate translation: "sleeping with a prostitute is like falling into a deep pit"

prostitute

Here the word refers to any unmarried woman who engages in sexual activity, not only those who do so for money.

deep pit ... narrow well

These are two places easy to fall into and hard to get out of, the "pit" because it is "deep" and the "well" because it is "narrow."

an immoral woman is a narrow well

Doing evil for which one will be punished is spoken of as falling into a narrow place from which one cannot escape. Alternate translation: "Sleeping with another man's wife is like falling into a narrow well"

well

a hole in the ground that people have dug to get to water

Proverbs 23:28

lies in wait

stays hidden, ready to attack when a victim approaches

the treacherous

This nominal adjective can be translated as an adjective or verb. Alternate translation:

"treacherous people" or "those who harm others by deceiving them"

Proverbs 23:29

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaining? Who has wounds for no reason? Who has bloodshot eyes?

The writer uses these questions to prepare the reader for the point he is about to make about a particular type of person. He does not expect an answer to each question. Your language may have a different way of introducing a lesson. Alternate translation: "Listen to me while I tell you what kind of person has woe, sorrow, fights, complaining, wounds for no reason, and bloodshot eyes."

bloodshot eyes

"eyes red, like the color of blood"

Proverbs 23:30

Those who linger over wine, those who try the mixed wine

These words answer the questions in verse 29 and describe people who drink too much wine.

linger over wine

spend much time drinking wine and so drink much wine

the mixed wine

Possible meanings are 1) different wines mixed together or 2) other drinks that are stronger than wine.

Proverbs 23:31

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

Proverbs 23:32

In the last

"After you drink it"

it bites like a serpent ... it stings like an adder

The word "it" refers to "the wine when it is red."

"Bites" and "stings" are metaphors for the way too much wine makes people feel. Alternate translation: "it makes you feel as bad as if a serpent had bitten you or an adder had stung you"

adder

a type of poisonous snake

Proverbs 23:33

your heart will utter perverse things

The "heart" represents the person and emphasize what he thinks and decides to do. Alternate translation: "you will think about and decide to do perverse things"

perverse things

things that God says are morally wrong and bad; things that are wicked

Proverbs 23:34

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)). It is the continuation of the description of a drunk person.

lies down on the top of a mast

The place on the mast where the person lies can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "lies down in the basket near the top of a mast"

mast

the long wooden pole to which are attached the sails of a sailing ship

Proverbs 23:35

They hit me, ... but I was not hurt. They beat me, but I did not feel it.

Because the drunk person is not thinking clearly, he is imagining that people are hitting and beating him, yet he feels no pain and cannot remember anything.

When will I wake up?

The drunk person is wondering when he will be sober again; when the effect of the wine will stop.

Chapter 24

- ¹ Do not be envious of those who are evil,
nor desire to associate with them,
- ² because their hearts plot violence
and their lips talk about trouble.
- ³ Through wisdom a house is built
and by understanding it is established.
- ⁴ By knowledge the rooms are filled
with all precious and pleasant riches.
- ⁵ A warrior of wisdom is strong,
and a man of knowledge increases his strength;
- ⁶ for with guidance you can wage your war
and with many advisors there is victory.
- ⁷ Wisdom is too high for a fool;
in the gate he does not open his mouth.
- ⁸ There is one who plans to do evil—
people call him a master of schemes.
- ⁹ A foolish plan is sin
and a mocker is an abomination to people.
- ¹⁰ If you become weak with fear in the day of trouble,
then your strength is small.
- ¹¹ Rescue those who are being taken away to death
and hold back those who are staggering to the slaughter.
- ¹² If you say, "Behold, we knew nothing about this,"
does not the one who weighs the heart understand what you are saying?
The one who guards your life, does he not know it?
Will God not give to each one what he deserves?
- ¹³ My son, eat honey because it is good,
because the drippings of the honeycomb are sweet to your taste.
- ¹⁴ Such is wisdom for your soul—
if you find it, there will be a future
and your hope will not be cut off.
- ¹⁵ Do not lie in wait like the wicked person who attacks the house of the righteous person.
Do not destroy his home!
- ¹⁶ For the righteous person falls down seven times and rises again,
but wicked people stumble at calamity.
- ¹⁷ Do not rejoice when your enemy falls
and let not your heart be glad when he stumbles,
- ¹⁸ or Yahweh will see and disapprove
and turn away his wrath from him.
- ¹⁹ Do not be angry because of evildoers,
and do not envy wicked people,
- ²⁰ for the evil person has no future
and the lamp of wicked people will go out.
- ²¹ Fear Yahweh, and fear the king, my son;
do not associate with those who rebel against them,
- ²² for suddenly their disaster will come,

and who knows the extent of the destruction that will come from both of them?

23 These also are sayings of the wise.

Partiality in judging a case at law is not good.

24 Whoever says to the wicked person, "You are a righteous person,"
will be cursed by peoples and abhorred by nations.

25 But those who discipline the wicked will have delight
and gifts of goodness will come to them.

26 The one who gives a straight answer
gives a kiss on the lips.

27 Prepare your outdoor work,
and make everything ready for yourself in the field;
after that, build your house.

28 Do not bear witness against your neighbor without cause
and do not deceive with your lips.

29 Do not say, "I will do to him what he has done to me;
I will pay him back for what he has done."

30 I went by the field of a lazy person,
past the vineyard of the man having no sense.

31 Thorns had grown up everywhere,
the ground was covered with nettles,
and its stone wall was broken down.

32 Then I saw and considered it;
I looked and received instruction.

33 A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands to rest—

34 and poverty comes marching upon you,
and your needs like an armed soldier.

Proverbs 24 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 24 continues the section beginning in the previous chapter and is mainly filled with short, individual proverbs.

The second half of this chapter finishes the section.

Special concepts in this chapter

Lazy man story

Unlike much of Proverbs, verses 30-34 tell a short story about a lazy man, which ends in a very memorable proverb.

Themes

There are individual proverbs that run along common themes, often including contrasting elements: wise/foolish, money, lazy/diligent, truth telling, wicked/righteous, sluggard, pride/humility, integrity/crookedness. (See: wise, foolish and evil and righteous)

Proverbs 24:1

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

Proverbs 24:2

their hearts

The words "their hearts" refer to the whole person. Alternate translation: "they"

their lips

The words "their lips" refer to the whole person. Alternate translation: "they"

talk about trouble

"talk about causing harm" or "talk about creating problems"

Proverbs 24:3

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

Through wisdom a house is built

The abstract noun "wisdom" can be translated as an adjective. These words can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "People need to be wise if they are to build a good house"

by understanding it is established

The abstract noun "understanding" can be translated as a verb. These words can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "People need to understand what is morally good and what is morally bad if they are to establish a house"

it is established

The word "established" means made stable and strong. The word "house" is a metonym for the family that lives in the house, and the house being physically stable and strong is a metaphor for a family that lives in peace.

Proverbs 24:4

By knowledge the rooms are filled

The abstract noun "knowledge" can be translated as a verb. These words can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "People need to know what is precious and pleasant if they are to fill their rooms"

Proverbs 24:5

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

warrior of wisdom

The abstract noun "wisdom" can be translated as "wise." Alternate translation: "wise warrior"

a man of knowledge increases his strength

The abstract nouns "knowledge" and "strength" can be translated as the verb "know" and the adjective "strong." Alternate translation: "a man who knows many things is stronger because he knows these things"

Proverbs 24:6

with guidance

The abstract noun "guidance" can be translated with a verb. Alternate translation: "if wise people guide you"

wage your war

"fight your war"

advisors

those who tell government officials what those officials should do

Proverbs 24:7

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

too high for a fool

This is an idiom. "too difficult for a fool to understand"

open his mouth

The mouth is a metonym for the words that come from the mouth. Alternate translation: "speak"

Proverbs 24:8

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

a master of schemes

one who is skillful at making evil plans. Alternate translation: "a mischievous person" or "a troublemaker"

Proverbs 24:9

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Proverbs 24:10

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

your strength is small

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "you have very little strength" or "you are certainly weak"

Proverbs 24:11

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

those who are being taken away

These words can be translated in active form by using the term "they" which could be anyone, but are probably government officials. Alternate translation: "those whom they are taking away"

taken away

Another possible meaning is "dragged away."

staggering

walking unsteadily and almost falling. This word would also describe the way a person walks when he is being dragged away.

the slaughter

The abstract noun "slaughter" can be translated as a verb. The writer speaks as if those who take them away think of them as no better than animals. If your language has a word for killing animals that would fit here, you might want to use it. Alternate translation: "where people will kill them as they would kill animals"

Proverbs 24:12

If you say, "Behold, ... this," does

The writer is answering something that the reader may wrongly be thinking. Alternate translation: "You may say, 'Behold, ... this,' but does"

Behold, we

"Listen to us! We" or "But we" or "We have done nothing wrong, because we"

does not the one who weighs the heart understand what you are saying?

The writer assumes the readers know the answer and asks this for emphasis. Alternate translation: "the one who weighs the heart understands what you are saying."

the one who

The writer expects the reader to know that "the one" is Yahweh. Alternate translation: "Yahweh, who"

weighs the heart

The word "heart" is a metonym for what a person thinks and desires. The writer speaks as if what a person thinks and desires were a physical object that a person could weigh, and weighing an object is a metaphor for looking closely at something to

see how good it is. Alternate translation: "knows how good what people really think and desire is"

The one who guards your life, does he not know it?

The writer assumes the readers know the answer and asks this for emphasis. Alternate translation: "The one who guards your life knows it."

Will God not give to each one what he deserves?

The writer assumes the readers know the answer and asks this for emphasis. Alternate translation: "God will give to each one what he deserves."

Proverbs 24:13

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

Proverbs 24:14

your hope will not be cut off

Possible meanings are 1) this is a simple passive that can be translated as in active form. Alternate translation: "no one will take your hope away" or 2) this is litotes that can be translated in positive form. Alternate translation: "your hope will surely continue"

Proverbs 24:15

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

Do not lie in wait

The words "lie in wait" are an idiom. Translate "lie in wait" as in [Proverbs 1:11]

his home

the home of the righteous person

Proverbs 24:16

General Information:

Bad things happen to righteous people, but God gives them the courage to continue doing good. God uses the bad things that happen to wicked people to discourage them.

rises again

"gets back on his feet" or "stands up again"

wicked people stumble at calamity

Possible meanings are 1) "wicked people stumble in times of calamity" or 2) "wicked people stumble because of calamity." Some modern translations understand "calamity" as the means by which the wicked people stumble. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "wicked people are brought down by calamity" or "God uses calamity to bring wicked people down"

calamity

times when bad things happen to people and their property

Proverbs 24:17

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

your enemy falls

"something bad happens to your enemy"

let not your heart be glad

This is a strong command. The word "heart" represents the person. Alternate translation: "do not allow yourself to be glad" or "stop yourself from being glad"

Proverbs 24:18

turn away his wrath from him

The words "turn away his wrath" are an idiom for no longer being angry. What Yahweh would do instead can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "stop being angry with him and be angry with you instead"

Proverbs 24:19

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

Do not be angry

Many modern translations read, "Do not fret," which is advice not to worry so much that one becomes angry.

Proverbs 24:20

the lamp of wicked people will go out

or "the lamp of wicked people will be put out" or "they will put out the lamp of wicked people"

the lamp ... go out

This is a metaphor for either 1) life. Alternate translation: "the life ... will end" Or 2) the person's accomplishments. Alternate translation: "the hard work ... come to nothing"

Proverbs 24:21

General Information:

These verses continue the "thirty sayings" ([Proverbs 22:20](#)).

Fear

a deep respect and awe for a person in authority

Proverbs 24:22

who knows the extent of the destruction that will come from both of them?

The writer asks this question to emphasize the disaster. Alternate translation: "no one knows the extent of the destruction that will come from both of them."

both of them

these words refer to Yahweh and the king

Proverbs 24:23

These also are sayings of the wise

This sentence starts a new collection of proverbs.

a case at law

a situation that is brought before a judge in which someone is accused of breaking the law

Proverbs 24:24

Whoever says to the wicked person, ... will be cursed by peoples and abhorred by nations

The word "nations" is a metonym for the people who live in the nations. These words can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "People will curse whoever says to the wicked person, ... , and the people of other nations will abhor him"

the wicked person ... a righteous person

Possible meanings are 1) people should never call any wicked person a righteous person or 2) no one should say of a person guilty of a crime that he is innocent. Alternate translation: "a person guilty of a crime ... innocent"

Proverbs 24:25

will have delight

"will be very happy"

gifts of goodness will come to them

Gifts are spoken of as if they were people who could move by themselves. The abstract noun "goodness" can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "people will give them good gifts"

gifts of goodness

"good things" or "blessings"

Proverbs 24:26

straight answer

The word "straight" here is a metaphor for either 1) "honest" or 2) "correct."

gives a kiss on the lips

A kiss was a sign of respect and devotion in that culture. Alternate translation: "shows true friendship"

Proverbs 24:27

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Proverbs 24:28

with your lips

The lips are a metonym for the words a person speaks. Alternate translation: "by what you say"

Proverbs 24:29

pay him back

This is an idiom. "take revenge against him"

Proverbs 24:30

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Proverbs 24:31

Thorns

useless plants with sharp spines

nettles

plants that are covered with stinging leaves and hairs

was broken down

"had fallen down"

Proverbs 24:32

received instruction

"learned a lesson"

Proverbs 24:33

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Proverbs 24:34

and poverty comes

This finishes a thought begun with the words "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest" [Proverbs 24:33]

poverty comes marching upon you

Some translations read, "poverty comes upon you like a robber." Poverty is spoken of as if it were a person or animal that can attack a lazy person.

your needs like an armed soldier

Needs are spoken of as if they were a person who could attack the lazy person. Alternate translation: "your needs will come to you like an armed soldier"

Chapter 25

¹ These are more proverbs of Solomon, copied by the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah.

² It is the glory of God to conceal a matter,
but the glory of kings to search it out.

³ Like the heavens are for height and the earth is for depth,
so the heart of kings is unsearchable.

⁴ Remove the dross from the silver
and a metal worker can use the silver in his craft.

⁵ Even so, remove wicked people from the presence of the king
and his throne will be established by doing what is right.

⁶ Do not honor yourself in the king's presence
and do not stand in the place designated for great people.

⁷ It is better for him to say to you, "Come up here,"
than for him to humiliate you before a nobleman.

What you have witnessed,

⁸ do not bring quickly to trial.

For what will you do in the end
when your neighbor puts you to shame?

⁹ Argue your case between you and your neighbor himself
and do not reveal another's secret,

¹⁰ or else the one who hears you will bring shame upon you
and an evil report about you that cannot be silenced.

¹¹ Apples of gold in settings of silver
is a word spoken in the right situation.

¹² A gold ring or jewelry made of fine gold
is a wise rebuke to a listening ear.

¹³ Like the cold of snow at harvest time
is a faithful messenger for those who sent him;
he brings back the life of his masters.

¹⁴ Clouds and wind without rain
is the one who boasts about a gift he does not give.

¹⁵ With patience a ruler can be persuaded
and a soft tongue can break a bone.

¹⁶ If you find honey, eat just enough—
otherwise, having too much of it, you vomit it up.

¹⁷ Do not set your foot in your neighbor's house too often;
he may become tired of you and hate you.

¹⁸ A man who bears false witness against his neighbor
is like a club used in war, or a sword, or a sharp arrow.

¹⁹ An unfaithful man in whom you trust in a time of trouble
is like a bad tooth or a foot that slips.

²⁰ Like a person who takes off a garment in cold weather,
or like vinegar poured upon carbonate of soda,

is the one who sings songs to a heavy heart.

21 If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat,
and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink,

22 for you will shovel coals of fire on his head
and Yahweh will reward you.

23 As surely as the north wind brings rain,
so a tongue that tells secrets will result in angry faces.

24 It is better to live on a corner of the roof
than in a house shared with a quarreling wife.

25 Like cold waters to one who is thirsty,
so is good news from a far country.

26 Like a fouled spring or a ruined fountain
is a righteous person tottering before wicked people.

27 It is not good to eat too much honey;
that is like searching for honor after honor. ^[1]

28 A person without self-control
is like a city breached and without walls.

Footnotes

25:27 ^[1] Many modern translations have different interpretations of this difficult verse.

Proverbs 25 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 25 begins the second section of the book (Chapter 25-29) which is attributed to Solomon.

Special concepts in this chapter

Themes

There are individual proverbs that run along common themes, often including contrasting elements: wise/foolish, money, lazy/diligent, truth telling, wicked/righteous, sluggard, pride/humility, integrity/crookedness. (See: wise, foolish and evil and righteous)

Proverbs 25:1

General Information:

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Proverbs 25:2

to conceal a matter

"to keep some things secret"

but the glory

The ellipsis can be filled in. Alternate translation:
"but it is the glory"

search it out

"search that matter out" or "search for those things
that God has concealed"

Proverbs 25:3

Like the heavens are for height and the earth is for depth, so the heart of kings is unsearchable

The hearts of kings are compared to the size of the heavens and the earth. Alternate translation: "Just as no one can measure the height of the heavens or the depth of the earth, even so no one can understand the heart of kings"

heavens

This refers to everything we see above the earth, including the sun, moon, and stars.

Proverbs 25:4

dross

the material in a metal that people do not want and they remove by heating the metal

Proverbs 25:5

his throne will be established by doing

The throne is a metonym for the power to rule. These words can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "the king will establish his throne by doing" or "he will have the power to rule because he does"

Proverbs 25:6

General Information:

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Proverbs 25:7

It is better for him to say to you, "Come up here," than

Here "up" means to move to a place at the table that is closer to the king. It is a great honor for a person to sit closer to the king. Alternate translation: "It is better for someone to invite you to sit closer to the king than"

before a nobleman

"in front of a nobleman"

Proverbs 25:8

For what will you do in the end when your neighbor puts you to shame?

This question is asked to make the reader consider the possibility that he may have misunderstood the situation. The way in which the neighbor might put the reader to shame can be stated plainly. Alternate translation: "For you will not know what to do in the end when your neighbor puts you to shame." or "For if your neighbor has an explanation, he will put you to shame, and you will have nothing to say to defend yourself."

Proverbs 25:9

your case

"your disagreement"

do not reveal another's secret

"do not share your neighbor's secret with other people"

Proverbs 25:10

an evil report about you that cannot be silenced

Here "evil report" refers to harmful things that the person will tell others. The phrase "cannot be silenced" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you will not be able to stop him from telling other people harmful things about you" or "he will tell people evil things about you and you will never have a good reputation again"

Proverbs 25:11

Apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in the right situation

The goodness of "a word spoken at the right time" is spoken of as if it were the physical beauty of "apples of gold in settings of silver." Most translations translate this metaphor as a simile and change the order of the phrases. Alternate translation: "A word spoken at the right time is beautiful like apples of gold in settings of silver"

Apples of gold in settings of silver

The ancient Israelites did not know the apples that most people know today. Possible meanings are 1) "apples" should be translated as "design." Alternate translation: "a golden design carved into a silver bowl" or 2) "apples" refers to another type of fruit with a golden color that someone has placed on a silver plate or bowl. Alternate translation: "Golden colored fruit placed in a silver bowl"

is a word spoken

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "is a message that someone speaks"

Proverbs 25:12

A gold ring or jewelry made of fine gold is a wise rebuke to a listening ear

The value and importance of "a wise rebuke" is spoken of as if it had the beauty and value of gold. Most translations translate this metaphor as a simile and change the order of the phrases. Alternate translation: "A wise rebuke to a listening ear is beautiful and valuable like a golden ring or golden jewelry"

listening ear

The ear is a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: "person who is willing to listen"

Proverbs 25:13

Like the cold of snow at harvest time is a faithful messenger

Here a faithful messenger is being compared to the cold of snow, because both are pleasant.

the cold of snow

Snow only fell on the tops of mountains, and the harvest took place in hot weather, so this is probably a metaphor for cool, fresh water from a clean stream. If your language has no word for snow, consider "cool, fresh, clean water."

snow

white flakes of ice that fall from the sky like rain

brings back the life of his masters

This means he makes his masters, who are weak and tired, to be strong and rested again.

Proverbs 25:14

Clouds and wind without rain is the one who boasts ... not give

Most translations translate this metaphor as a simile and change the order of the phrases. Rain was important to the Israelites because only small amounts of it fell, so a cloud without rain was useless and brought disappointment to the Israelites. Alternate translation: "The one who boasts ... not give is like clouds and wind without rain" or "The one who boasts ... not give is useless and a disappointment, like clouds and wind without rain"

Proverbs 25:15

With patience a ruler can be persuaded

These words can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone who is patient can persuade a ruler" or "Someone who is patient can speak to a ruler and change his mind"

a soft tongue can break a bone

The word "tongue" is a metonym for the words the person speaks using the tongue. The word "bone" is a metaphor for strong opposition. Alternate translation: "gentle speech can overcome strong opposition"

Proverbs 25:16

General Information:

Verse 16 states a general principle, and verse 17 gives one specific example. The idea of eating too much honey and then vomiting it up is a metaphor for taking too much of any good thing and regretting it later.

Proverbs 25:17

General Information:

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Proverbs 25:18

A man who bears false witness against his neighbor is like a club used in war, or a sword, or a sharp arrow

A false witness is compared to three weapons that can hurt or kill people.

Proverbs 25:19

An unfaithful man in whom you trust in a time of trouble is like a bad tooth or a foot that slips

A foolish man is compared to a part of the body that causes trouble for a person. Alternate translation: "Trusting in an unfaithful man in time of trouble will bring you pain like a bad tooth or a foot that slips"

Proverbs 25:20

carbonate of soda

This is a kind of mineral that hisses and bubbles violently when it comes into contact with acids like vinegar. Many translations translate this phrase as "a wound."

sings songs

You may need to make explicit what kind of songs the singer sings. Alternate translation: "sings happy songs"

a heavy heart

The heart is a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: "a sad person"

Proverbs 25:21

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Proverbs 25:22

shovel coals of fire on his head

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "cause him to have a guilty conscience and be ashamed of what he has done"

Proverbs 25:23

the north wind

In Israel, wind from the north often brought rain. Translators are free to substitute different kinds of wind for the same effect, for example, "a cold wind."

a tongue that tells secrets

Some modern translations read "someone who tells secrets."

result in angry faces

The face is a synecdoche for the person. Alternate translation: "makes other people so angry you can see it in their faces"

Proverbs 25:24

a corner of the roof

Houses in those days had flat roofs. Ancient Israelites spent much time on their roofs, where it was often cooler than inside the house, and sometimes people would build a shelter large enough for a person to sleep in on one corner of the roof.

a quarreling wife

a wife who often argues or complains

Proverbs 25:25

Like cold waters to one who is thirsty, so is good news from a far country

Cold water is compared to good news that is both refreshing and delightful.

Proverbs 25:26

Like a fouled spring or a ruined fountain is a righteous person tottering before wicked people

One expects a spring or fountain to have clear water, just as one expects a righteous man to stand for what he believes. A polluted spring or fountain is compared to a righteous man who falls.

tottering before wicked people

Tottering is a metaphor for either 1) refusing to fight wicked people or 2) joining in their wickedness. Alternate translation: "who allows wicked people to do wickedness" or "who starts to do what wicked people do"

tottering

Swaying and about to fall down. This is a metaphor for being unable to continue to do good. Alternate translation: "unable to stand"

before wicked people

Possible meanings are 1) "when wicked people attack him" or 2) "when wicked people urge him to do evil."

Proverbs 25:27

It is not good to eat too much honey; that is like searching for honor after honor.

Both wanting others to honor you and eating honey are good, but you can eat too much honey, and you can try too hard to have people honor you.

It is not good

This can be stated positively. Alternate translation: "It is a bad thing"

that is like searching for honor after honor

"that is like always thinking about how others should honor you." The meaning of the original language is uncertain. Some versions of the Bible translate this as "that is like speaking too many compliments to people."

Proverbs 25:28

A person without self-control is like a city breached and without walls.

Both a person without self-control and a city without walls are weak and vulnerable.

breached and without walls

"whose walls an army has knocked down and destroyed"

Chapter 26

- ¹ Like snow in summer or rain in harvest,
so a fool does not deserve honor.
- ² As the sparrow flutters and the swallow darts when they fly,
so an undeserved curse does not alight.
- ³ A whip is for the horse, a bridle is for the donkey
and a rod is for the back of fools.
- ⁴ Do not answer a fool according to his folly,
or you will become like him.
- ⁵ Answer a fool and join in on his folly,
so he will not become wise in his own eyes.
- ⁶ Whoever sends a message by the hand of a fool
cuts off his own feet and drinks violence.
- ⁷ Like the legs of a paralytic which hang down
is a proverb in the mouth of fools.
- ⁸ Like tying a stone in a sling
is giving honor to a fool.
- ⁹ Like a thorn that goes into the hand of a drunkard
is a proverb in the mouth of fools.
- ¹⁰ Like an archer who wounds all those around him
is one who hires a fool or hires anyone who passes by.
- ¹¹ As a dog returns to his own vomit,
so is a fool who repeats his folly.
- ¹² Do you see someone who is wise in his own eyes?
There is more hope for a fool than for him.
- ¹³ The lazy person says, "There is a lion on the road!
There is a lion between the open places!"
- ¹⁴ As the door turns on its hinges,
so is the lazy person upon his bed.
- ¹⁵ The lazy person puts his hand into the dish
and yet he has no strength to lift it up to his mouth.
- ¹⁶ The lazy person is wiser in his own eyes
than seven men who respond with good judgment.
- ¹⁷ Like one who takes hold of the ears of a dog
is a passerby who becomes angry at a dispute that is not his own.
- ¹⁸ Like a madman who throws
firebrands, arrows, and death
- ¹⁹ is the one who deceives his neighbor
and says, "Was I not telling a joke?"
- ²⁰ For lack of wood, the fire goes out;

and where there is no gossip, quarreling ceases.

- ²¹ As charcoal is to burning coals and wood is to fire,
so is a quarrelsome person for kindling strife.
- ²² The words of a gossip are like delicious morsels;
they go down into the inner parts of the body.
- ²³ Like the glaze overlaying an earthen vessel,
so are burning lips and an evil heart.
- ²⁴ One who hates others disguises his feelings with his lips
and he lays up deceit within himself.
- ²⁵ He will speak graciously, but do not believe him,
for there are seven abominations in his heart.
- ²⁶ Though his hatred is covered with deception,
his wickedness will be revealed in the assembly.
- ²⁷ Whoever digs a pit will fall into it
and the stone will roll back on the one who pushed it.
- ²⁸ A lying tongue hates the people it crushes
and a flattering mouth brings about ruin.

Proverbs 26 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 26 continues the second section of the book (Chapter 25-29) which is attributed to Solomon.

Special concepts in this chapter

Themes

There are individual proverbs that run along common themes, often including contrasting elements: wise/foolish, money, lazy/diligent, truth telling, wicked/righteous, sluggard, pride/humility, integrity/crookedness. Wisdom and folly are particularly prominent in this chapter. (See: wise, foolish and evil and righteous)

Proverbs 26:1

Like snow in summer or rain in harvest

Normally snow does not fall during the summer and rain does not fall during the harvest. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "Just as it would be very strange to have snow in summer or rain during the harvest"

Proverbs 26:2

so an undeserved curse does not alight

A curse that does not harm a person is spoken of as if it were a bird that does not land. Alternate translation: "so an undeserved curse does not land on its mark"

an undeserved curse

This can be stated with an active form. Alternate translation: "a curse on a person who does not deserve it"

alight

land on someone or something

Proverbs 26:3

A whip is for the horse, a bridle is for the donkey and a rod is for the back of fools

A whip, a bridle, and a rod are things that people use to make the horse, donkey, and fool do what they want.

a bridle is for the donkey

A bridle is made of straps. People put it on a donkey's head and hold one of the straps to make the donkey go the way they want it to go.

a rod is for the back of fools

In the Bible, people would hit their children or their slaves with a wooden rod in order to discipline them.

Proverbs 26:4

General Information:

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Proverbs 26:5

Answer a fool and join in on his folly

Joining in on a fool's folly when answering him represents answering him in a foolish way. Alternate translation: "Answer a fool according to his folly" or "Answer a fool foolishly"

so he will not become wise in his own eyes

The eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: "so that he will not become wise according to his judgement" or "so that he does not consider himself to be wise"

Proverbs 26:6

Whoever sends a message by the hand of a fool

Here the hand represents the fool's responsibility to deliver the message. Alternate translation: "Whoever sends a fool to deliver a message"

cuts off his own feet

Cutting off one's own feet is an exaggeration for harming one's self. Alternate translation: "harms himself like a person who cuts off his own feet and drinks violence"

drinks violence

Violence is spoken of as if it were a poisonous liquid that someone might drink. Alternate translation: "harms himself by being violent"

Proverbs 26:7

Like the legs ... is a proverb in the mouth of fools

The phrases can be reordered. Alternate translation: "A proverb in the mouth of fools is like the legs of a paralytic which hang down" or "A proverb in the mouth of fools is as useless as the legs of a paralytic which hang down"

a paralytic

a person who is unable to move or feel all or part of his body

in the mouth of fools

Here "mouth" is a metonym for speaking. Alternate translation: "in the speech of fools" or "that fools say"

Proverbs 26:8

tying a stone in a sling

In order to throw a stone very far, people put it into a sling and swing the sling so that the stone will fly from it very quickly. The result of tying a stone in a

sling can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "tying a stone in a sling so that it cannot be thrown"

giving honor to a fool

"honoring a fool"

Proverbs 26:9

Like a thorn ... is a proverb in the mouth of fools

How the two are alike can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "A proverb in the mouth of fools is as dangerous as a thorn that goes into the hand of a drunkard"

a thorn that goes into the hand of a drunkard

Possible meanings are 1) if a drunk person holds a thornbush, a thorn will prick his hand, or 2) if a drunk person is angry, he will pick up a thornbush and swing it at people. For the second meaning, the word "thorn" represents a thornbush.

in the mouth of fools

Here "mouth" is a metonym for speaking. Alternate translation: "in the speech of fools" or "that fools say"

Proverbs 26:10

hires a fool

"gives a job to a fool"

Proverbs 26:11

As a dog returns to his own vomit

"As a dog eats its own vomit"

Proverbs 26:12

Do you see someone who is wise in his own eyes?

This question is used to lead the reader to think about someone who is wise in his own eyes. The phrase "is wise in his own eyes" means "thinks he is wise," and here it implies that the person is not truly wise. Alternate translation: "Consider the person who thinks he is wise but is not."

There is more hope for a fool than for him

"A fool can become wise more easily than he can"

Proverbs 26:13

The lazy person says, "There is a lion ... between the open places!"

The lazy person lies and says that he cannot go outside and work because there is a lion on the road or between the open places.

There is a lion on the road

See how you translated this in Proverbs 22:13.

the open places

This refers to the places in town where there is a lot of room for people to walk around or where

people gather. Alternate translation: "the town plazas" or "the streets"

Proverbs 26:14

hinges

metal pieces that attach a door to something and allow it to open and close

As the door turns on its hinges, so is the lazy person upon his bed

Both the door and the lazy person move, but they do not go anywhere.

Proverbs 26:15

puts his hand into the dish

"puts his hand into the dish to get food" or "reaches for food"

he has no strength to lift it up to his mouth

This is an exaggeration for doing necessary work that would clearly do him good.

Proverbs 26:16

The lazy person is wiser in his own eyes than seven men

The phrase "his own eyes" represents his thoughts. Alternate translation: "The lazy person thinks he is wiser than seven men"

Proverbs 26:17

Like one who takes hold of the ears of a dog is a passerby who becomes angry at a dispute that is not his own

This can be reordered. Alternate translation: "A passerby who becomes angry at some other people's dispute is like a person who grabs hold of a dog's ears"

Like one who takes hold of the ears of a dog

The implied information is that the dog will get angry and bite the person. Alternate translation: "Like a person who angers a dog by grabbing its ears" or "Like a person who grabs a dog's ears and is bitten by the dog"

is a passerby who becomes angry at a dispute that is not his own

The implied information is that the passerby will start arguing, and the people who were fighting will get angry with him and hurt him.

Proverbs 26:18

throws firebrands, arrows, and death

If your language cannot have "firebrands," "arrows," and "death" as objects of "throws," you may need to supply different verbs, or you may need to treat this as a hendiadys. Alternate translation: "throws firebrands, shoots arrows, and tries to kill people" or "shoots flaming arrows that can kill people"

firebrands

burning pieces of wood

Proverbs 26:19

the one who deceives

Both the "madman" (Proverbs 26:18) and the one who deceives hurt people but do not take responsibility for it.

Was I not telling a joke?

The deceiver uses this question to imply that since he his joke was only for fun, he should not be blamed for any harm he has caused. Alternate translation: "I did nothing wrong. I was only telling a joke."

Proverbs 26:20

gossiper

a person who gossips a lot

Proverbs 26:21

As charcoal is to burning coals and wood is to fire

What charcoal does to coals and what wood does to fire can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "As charcoal helps coals burn and as wood helps fire burn"

kindling strife

To kindle something means to set it on fire. Setting strife on fire is a metaphor for causing people to fight or argue. Alternate translation: "causing people to fight" or "causing people to argue"

Proverbs 26:22

The words of a gossip are like delicious morsels

This speaks of gossip being desirable to listen to as if it were delicious food to eat. Alternate translation: "The words of a gossip are desirable to listen to" or

they go down into the inner parts of the body

This speaks of the words that a gossip says going into a person's mind and affecting his thoughts as if they were food that was going into his stomach. This sentence is equivalent to [Proverbs 18:8]

Proverbs 26:23

Like the glaze overlaying an earthen vessel, so are burning lips and an evil heart

This simile means that a person who says things to hide the evil in their heart are like a earthen vessel covered in glaze to make it look good. These phrases can be reordered. Alternate translation: "People who have burning lips and an evil heart are like an earthen vessel covered with glaze"

the glaze overlaying an earthen vessel

"the shiny glaze that covers a clay pot." A clay pot is cheap and common. So people covered it with a glaze to make it shiny and appear more expensive.

so are burning lips and an evil heart

This represents a person who has burning lips and an evil heart. Alternate translation: "so is a person who has burning lips and an evil heart" or "so is a person who says nice things but whose heart is evil"

burning lips

The word "burning" is a metaphor for "strongly emotional" and the word "lips" is a metonym for "speech." Alternate translation: "emotional speech" or "saying nice things"

an evil heart

The heart represents a person's thoughts, attitudes, desires, or feelings. Alternate translation: "evil thoughts" or "evil desires"

Proverbs 26:24

disguises his feelings with his lips

Disguising his feelings represents keeping people from knowing what his feelings are. The phrase "his lips" is a metonym for what he says. Alternate translation: "hides his feelings with what he says" or "speaks in such a way that people cannot know his true feelings"

he lays up deceit within himself

Being deceitful is spoken of as if he were storing deceit within himself. Possible meanings are that "deceit" refers to lies. Alternate translation: "he likes his many lies" or 2) deceit refers secret plans to harm people. Alternate translation: "he secretly plans to harm people"

Proverbs 26:25

but do not believe him

"but do not believe what he says"

for there are seven abominations in his heart

The number seven represents completeness. Possible meanings are 1) "abominations" refers to attitudes that God hates. Alternate translation: "for his heart is completely filled with hateful things" or 2) "abominations" refers to his hatred for people. Alternate translation: "for his heart is completely filled with hatred"

Proverbs 26:26

Though his hatred is covered with deception

This can be stated actively. Alternate translation: "Though deception covers his hatred" or "Though he covers his hatred with deception"

Though his hatred is covered with deception

Keeping people from knowing that he hates them is spoken of as covering his hatred. Alternate translation: "Though he lies to keep people from knowing that he hates them" or "Though he lies so that people will not know that he hates them"

his wickedness will be revealed in the assembly

Being exposed represents being discovered or becoming known. Alternate translation: "his wickedness will become known in the assembly" or "the assembly will discover his wickedness"

the assembly

"the community of Israel"

Proverbs 26:27

Whoever digs a pit will fall into it

It is implied that the person digs the pit as a trap so that someone will fall into it. Alternate translation: "Whoever digs a pit to trap someone will fall into it" or "If someone digs a pit in order to trap someone, the one who dug it will fall into it"

the stone will roll back on the one who pushed it

It is implied that the person pushed a large stone so that it would roll downhill and crush someone there. Alternate translation: "if someone pushed a stone so that it would roll downhill and crush someone, the stone will roll back on him instead" or "if someone made a stone roll so that it would hurt someone, the stone will crush him instead"

Proverbs 26:28

A lying tongue hates the people it crushes

The phrase "a lying tongue" represents a person who tells lies. Crushing people represents causing them trouble. Alternate translation: "A liar hates those he hurts by his lies"

a flattering mouth brings about ruin

The phrase "a flattering mouth" represents a person who flatters people. Possible meanings are 1) a person who flatters others causes trouble or 2) a person who flatters others ruins them

flattering

praising someone in a manner that is not sincere, or praising someone about things that are not true

Chapter 27

- ¹ Do not boast about tomorrow,
for you do not know what a day may bring.
- ² Let someone else praise you and not your own mouth;
a stranger and not your own lips.
- ³ Consider the heaviness of a stone and the weight of sand—
the provocation of a fool is heavier than both.
- ⁴ There is the cruelty of rage and the flood of anger,
but who is able to stand before jealousy?
- ⁵ Better is a rebuke that is clearly seen
than hidden love.
- ⁶ Faithful are the wounds caused by a friend,
but many are the kisses of an enemy.
- ⁷ A person who has eaten to the full rejects even a honeycomb,
but to the hungry person, every bitter thing is sweet.
- ⁸ Like a bird that wanders from its nest
is a man who strays from where he lives.
- ⁹ Perfume and incense make the heart rejoice,
but the sweetness of a friend comes from his sincere counsel. ^[1]
- ¹⁰ Do not abandon your friend and your friend's father,
and do not go to your brother's house on the day of your calamity.
Better is a neighbor who is nearby
than a brother who is far away.
- ¹¹ Be wise, my son, and make my heart rejoice;
then I will give back an answer to the one who mocks me.
- ¹² The prudent sees trouble and hides himself,
but the naive go on and suffer for it.
- ¹³ Take a garment of one who has put up security for a stranger,
and hold it in pledge when he puts up security for an immoral woman.
- ¹⁴ Whoever gives his neighbor a blessing with a loud voice early in the morning,
that blessing will be considered to be a curse!
- ¹⁵ A quarreling wife is like
the constant dripping on a rainy day;
- ¹⁶ restraining her is like restraining the wind,
or trying to catch oil in your right hand.
- ¹⁷ Iron sharpens iron;
in the same way, a man sharpens his friend.
- ¹⁸ The one who tends a fig tree will eat its fruit,
and the one who protects his master will be honored.
- ¹⁹ Just as water reflects a person's face,
so a person's heart reflects the person.

- 20** Just as Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied,
so a man's eyes are never satisfied.
- 21** A crucible is for silver and a furnace is for gold;
and a person is tested when he is praised.
- 22** Even if you crush a fool
with the pestle—along with the grain—
yet his foolishness will not leave him.
- 23** Be sure you know the condition of your flocks
and be concerned about your herds,
- 24** for wealth is not forever.
Does a crown endure for all generations?
- 25** You should know when the hay is gone and the new growth appears,
and the time when the grass from the hills is gathered in.
- 26** Those lambs will provide your clothing
and the goats will provide the price of the field.
- 27** There will be goats' milk for your food
—the food for your household—
and nourishment for your servant girls.

Footnotes

27:9 ^[1]Many modern translations have different interpretations of this difficult verse.

Proverbs 27 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 27 continues the second section of the book (Chapter 25-29) which is attributed to Solomon.

Special concepts in this chapter

Themes

There are individual proverbs that run along common themes, often including contrasting elements: wise/foolish, money, lazy/diligent, truth telling, wicked/righteous, sluggard, pride/humility, integrity/crookedness. (See: wise, foolish and evil and righteous)

Proverbs 27:1

Do not boast about tomorrow

This is a warning not to brag about what you expect to happen tomorrow. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "Do not speak proudly about your plans for tomorrow"

what a day may bring

Something happening on a certain day is spoken of as if the day were to bring that event. Alternate translation: "what will happen on a day" or "what will happen tomorrow"

Proverbs 27:2

and not your own mouth ... and not your own lips

Here a person is represented by his "mouth" and "lips" because those are the parts of the body used to speak. Alternate translation: "and do not let your own mouth praise you ... and do not let your own lips praise you" or "and do not praise yourself ... and do not praise yourself"

a stranger

The words "let ... praise you" are understood from the first phrase. The words can be repeated here. Alternate translation: "let a stranger praise you"

Proverbs 27:3

the provocation of a fool is heavier than both

The difficulty of being patient with a fool who provokes you is spoken of as if that difficulty were heavy. Alternate translation: "the provocation of a fool is harder to tolerate than either of them" or "It is harder to be patient when a fool provokes you than it is to be patient while carrying them"

the provocation of a fool

"the trouble caused by a fool." "Provocation" means actions or words that cause anger or irritation.

Proverbs 27:4

There is the cruelty of rage and the flood of anger, but who is able to stand before jealousy?

The abstract nouns "rage", "anger" and "jealousy" can be translated as adjectives. Alternate translation: "A raging person is cruel and an angry person is overwhelming, but who can stand before a jealous person?"

cruelty

"harshness"

the flood of anger

"the destructiveness of anger." Anger is spoken of here as if it were a powerful flood.

but who is able to stand before jealousy?

This question implies that no one can stand before jealousy. It can be reworded as a statement. Alternate translation: "but no one is able to stand before jealousy"

to stand before jealousy

Here standing represents being strong and resisting being harmed by a jealous person who attacks. Alternate translation: "to resist a jealous person" or "to remain strong when a jealous person attacks him"

Proverbs 27:5

Better is a rebuke that is clearly seen

The abstract noun "rebuke" can be expressed with the verb "rebuke." Alternate translation: "It is better to be openly rebuked"

than hidden love

"than love that is not openly shown." The abstract noun "love" can be translated as a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "than to be loved secretly"

Proverbs 27:6

Faithful are the wounds caused by a friend

"The wounds that a friend causes are trustworthy." The word "wounds" here represents the pain and sadness that a person feels when a friend rebukes or corrects him.

Faithful are the wounds caused by a friend

The trustworthiness of a friend's rebuke is spoken of as if the sadness that his rebuke causes is trustworthy. Alternate translation: "Though it causes sadness, a friend's rebuke is trustworthy"

but many are the kisses of an enemy

It can be stated clearly that the enemy's kisses are not trustworthy. Alternate translation: "but the enemy's many kisses are not trustworthy" or "but an enemy may try to deceive you by kissing you many times" or

Proverbs 27:7

A person who has eaten to the full

"A person who is satisfied" or "A person who has eaten enough to be full"

rejects even a honeycomb

A honeycomb would normally be desirable, but not to the person who has already eaten enough to be satisfied.

every bitter thing is sweet

"everything that is bitter tastes sweet"

Proverbs 27:8

Like a bird that wanders from its nest is a man who strays from where he lives

The words "wanders" and "strays" mean the same thing in this verse.

Proverbs 27:9

Perfume

The word "perfume" here means a desirable oil or ointment.

make the heart rejoice

Here "the heart" represents the feelings or emotions of a person. Alternate translation: "make a person feel joyful" or "make a person glad"

the sweetness of a friend comes from his sincere counsel

Possible meanings are 1) "sweetness" represents kindness. Alternate translation: "we recognize our friend's kindness by his counsel" or 2) "sweetness" represents what we appreciate about a person. Alternate translation: "what we appreciate about a friend is his advice"

Proverbs 27:10

your brother's house

Here the word "brother" is a general reference to relatives, such as members of the same tribe, clan, or people group.

calamity

extreme troubles and misfortune

Proverbs 27:11

make my heart rejoice

Here the "heart" represents the person's feelings or emotions. Alternate translation: "make me feel joyful" or "make me glad"

then I will give back an answer to the one who mocks me

Here "answer" does not mean to answer a question. It means to respond or to reply to someone who is mocking. How this relates to the clause before it can be made clear. Alternate translation: "then I will reply to the one who mocks me by telling him about you"

mocks

makes fun of someone, especially in a cruel way

Proverbs 27:12

The prudent sees trouble and hides himself, but the naive go on and suffer for it.

See how you translated a similar phrase in Proverbs 22:3.

The prudent

This nominal adjective refers to any prudent person. See how you translated "prudent" in [Proverbs 12:16]

the naive

This nominal adjective refers to any naive person. To be naive is to lack experience and to not be mature.

Proverbs 27:13

Take a garment of one who has put up security for a stranger

When lending money, a lender would take something from the borrower, such as a garment, as a guarantee of repayment. He would return it after the money was repaid. If the borrower was too poor, someone else could give something to the lender as a guarantee for him. See how you translated this in [Proverbs 20:16]

who has put up security

This means for someone to give something to a lender as a guarantee that what was borrowed will be paid. See how you translated this in [Proverbs 20:16]

hold it in pledge

To "hold something in pledge" means to hold on to something that someone has given as a pledge, or promise, that he will pay a debt. See how you translated this in [Proverbs 20:16]

Proverbs 27:14

Whoever gives his neighbor a blessing

"If anyone gives his neighbor a blessing"

that blessing will be considered to be a curse

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the neighbor will consider that blessing to be a curse"

Proverbs 27:15

quarreling

This means making people angry with each other or causing strong disagreements between people.

the constant dripping

The implied information is that it is rain that is constantly dripping. Alternate translation: "the constant dripping of rain"

a rainy day

"a day of continual rain"

Proverbs 27:16

restraining her is like restraining the wind, or trying to catch oil in your right hand

The implied information is that it is as difficult or useless to try and restrain her as it is to try to restrain the wind or catch oil in your hand

restraining her

"holding her back" or "keeping her under control." The implied information is that it is trying to stop her from quarreling. Alternate translation: "restraining her from quarreling"

restraining the wind

"holding back the wind" or "keeping the wind under control"

Proverbs 27:17

Iron sharpens iron; in the same way, a man sharpens his friend.

These two phrases are comparing how iron and a man can be improved. Alternate translation: "As iron can sharpen another piece of iron, so a man's character is improved by contact with his friend"

Proverbs 27:18

who tends

"who takes care of"

the one who protects his master will be honored

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "a master will honor the one who protects him"

Proverbs 27:19

a person's heart

Here this means a person's thoughts. Alternate translation: "what a person thinks"

Proverbs 27:20

Abaddon

This is a name that means "destroyer." Alternate translation: "the Destroyer"

are never satisfied

"are never filled up"

a man's eyes

Here the "eyes" represent a man's desires. Alternate translation: "a man's desires"

Proverbs 27:21

A crucible is for silver and a furnace is for gold

This refers to how gold and silver are refined. A metal is refined by heating it to a high temperature so that it melts and the impurities may be removed. See how you translated the very similar phrase in [Proverbs 17:3]

crucible

a container used for heating substances to very high temperatures

furnace

an oven that can be made extremely hot

a person is tested when he is praised

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when one praises a person, they are also testing that person"

Proverbs 27:22

Even if you crush a fool ... yet his foolishness will not leave him

This means that even if a fool is made to suffer hardship or pain

pestle

a hard tool with a rounded end, used for crushing things in a bowl

Proverbs 27:23

Be sure you know the condition of your flocks and be concerned about your herds

These two phrases have basically the same meaning and are used together for emphasis.

your flocks

"flocks of sheep"

your herds

"herds of goats"

Proverbs 27:24

Does a crown endure for all generations?

This question expects a negative answer to make the point that the reign of earthly rulers does not last forever. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "A crown does not endure for all generations"

a crown

Here "crown" is a metonym for a king's rule over his kingdom. Alternate translation: "a king's rule"

Proverbs 27:25

the new growth appears

"the new sprouts appear" or "the new grass starts to grow"

Proverbs 27:26

Connecting Statement:

Verses 26 and 27 go together with verses 23 to 25 as one proverb.

Those lambs will provide your clothing

The implied information is that the wool

the goats will provide the price of the field

The implied information is that the money received by selling the goats will be enough to buy a field. Alternate translation: "selling your goats will provide the price of the field"

Proverbs 27:27

nourishment for your servant girls

The implied information is that there will also be enough goats' milk to feed the servant girls. Alternate translation: "there will be goat's milk to nourish your servant girls"

nourishment

"food"

Chapter 28

- ¹ The wicked people run away when no one chases them,
but righteous people are as bold as a young lion.
- ² Because of the transgression of a land, it has many rulers,
but with a man of understanding and knowledge, it will last a long time.
- ³ A poor person who oppresses other poor people
is like a beating rain that leaves no food.
- ⁴ Those who abandon the law praise wicked people,
but those who keep the law fight against them.
- ⁵ Evil men do not understand justice,
but those who seek Yahweh understand everything.
- ⁶ It is better for a poor person who walks in his integrity
than for a rich person who is crooked in his ways.
- ⁷ He who keeps the law is a son who has understanding,
but one who is a companion of gluttons shames his father.
- ⁸ The one who makes his fortune by usury and interest
gathers his wealth for another who will be gracious to the poor.
- ⁹ If one turns away his ear from hearing the law,
even his prayer is an abomination.
- ¹⁰ Whoever misleads the upright into an evil way
will fall into his own pit,
but the blameless will have a good inheritance.
- ¹¹ The rich person may be wise in his own eyes,
but a poor person who has understanding will find him out.
- ¹² When the righteous triumph, there is great glory;
but when the wicked arise, people are sought out.
- ¹³ The one who hides his sins will not prosper,
but the one who confesses them and abandons them will be shown mercy.
- ¹⁴ The one who always lives with reverence is blessed,
but whoever hardens his heart will fall into trouble.
- ¹⁵ Like a roaring lion or a charging bear
is a wicked ruler over poor people.
- ¹⁶ The ruler who lacks understanding is a cruel oppressor,
but the one who hates unjust gain will prolong his days.
- ¹⁷ If a man is burdened with a person's blood,
he will be a fugitive until death
and no one will help him.
- ¹⁸ Whoever walks with integrity will be kept safe,
but the one whose way is crooked will suddenly fall.
- ¹⁹ The one who works his land will have plenty of food,
but whoever follows worthless pursuits will have plenty of poverty.

- 20** A faithful man will have great blessings,
but the one who gets rich quickly will not go unpunished.
- 21** It is not good to show partiality,
but for a piece of bread a man will do wrong.
- 22** A stingy man hurries after riches,
but he does not know that poverty will come upon him.
- 23** Whoever disciplines someone, afterward will find more favor from him
than from the one who flatters him with his tongue.
- 24** Whoever robs his father and his mother and says, "That is no sin,"
he is the companion of the one who destroys.
- 25** A greedy man stirs up conflict,
but the one who trusts in Yahweh will prosper.
- 26** One who trusts in his own heart is a fool,
but whoever walks in wisdom will be delivered.
- 27** The one who gives to the poor will lack nothing,
but whoever closes his eyes to them will receive many curses.
- 28** When the wicked arise, people hide themselves;
but when they perish, the righteous increase.
-

Proverbs 28 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 28 continues the second section of the book (Chapter 25-29) which is attributed to Solomon.

Special concepts in this chapter

Themes

There are individual proverbs that run along common themes, often including contrasting elements: wise/foolish, money, lazy/diligent, truth telling, wicked/righteous, sluggard, pride/humility, integrity/crookedness. (See: wise, foolish and evil and righteous)

Proverbs 28:1

General Information:

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Proverbs 28:2

Because of the transgression of a land

The abstract noun "transgression" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "Because of how a land transgresses"

the transgression of a land

This is a metonym for the sins of the people living in a land. Alternate translation: "the transgression of the people of a land"

with a man of understanding and knowledge

The implied information is that this man is a ruler or leader. The abstract nouns "understanding" and "knowledge" can be translated as verbs. Alternate translation: "with a man who understands and knows how to rule"

Proverbs 28:3

who oppresses

"who severely mistreats"

like a beating rain that leaves no food

The poor man who oppresses other poor people is compared to a rain that falls so hard that it leaves no crop to harvest.

beating rain

This is a metaphor for a rain coming down hard enough to cause crops to be driven down. Alternate translation: "damaging rain"

Proverbs 28:4

abandon the law

"reject God's law" or "refuse to obey the law"

those who keep the law

To "keep the law" means to do what God's law requires. Alternate translation: "those who obey God's law"

fight against them

"struggle against them." This means to strongly oppose or resist them.

Proverbs 28:5

Evil men

Here "men" means people in general. Alternate translation: "People who do evil things"

do not understand justice

The abstract noun "justice" can be expressed as an adjective. Alternate translation: "do not understand what is just"

those who seek Yahweh

Those who want to know Yahweh and please him are spoken of as if they are literally seeking to find Yahweh.

understand everything

The implied information is that those who seek Yahweh understand all about justice. Alternate translation: "completely understand what is just"

Proverbs 28:6

It is better for a poor person ... than for a rich person

"It is better to be a poor person ... than it is to be a rich person"

walks in his integrity

This represents a person living a life of integrity. The abstract noun "integrity" can be expressed as an adverb. Alternate translation: "walks honestly" or "lives honestly"

who is crooked in his ways

Rich people who are dishonest are spoken of as if they walk on crooked or twisted paths. Alternate translation: "who is not honest in what he does"

Proverbs 28:7

He who keeps the law

To "keep the law" means to do what God's law requires. Alternate translation: "He who obeys God's law"

a son who has understanding

The abstract noun "understanding" can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: "a son who understands"

of gluttons

"of people who eat too much." A "glutton" is a person who often eats and drinks excessively.

shames his father

"puts his father to shame" or "dishonors his father"

Proverbs 28:8

makes his fortune

"increases his wealth"

usury and interest

"forcing people who have borrowed money from him to pay back more than they borrowed"

interest

money that a borrower pays for the use of someone else's money

gathers his wealth

"brings his wealth together"

for another

"for another person"

Proverbs 28:9

If one

"If a person"

turns away his ear from hearing the law

This represents the whole person turning away from and rejecting God's law. Alternate translation: "turns away from hearing and obeying the law"

even his prayer is an abomination

"even his prayer is offensive to God." This can be written in active form. Alternate translation: "God detests even his prayer"

abomination

See how you translated this in Proverbs 3:32.

Proverbs 28:10

Whoever misleads the upright into an evil way

This is a metaphor for leading upright people in an evil direction. Alternate translation: "Whoever causes the upright to go in an evil direction"

Whoever misleads ... evil way will fall

"If anyone misleads ... evil way, he will fall"

the upright

This refers to upright persons in general. This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "upright people" or "righteous people" or "honest people"

will fall into his own pit

"will fall into the trap that he has dug." This is a metaphor for ending up in the same bad place as others had been led toward. Alternate translation: "will end up in the same evil place toward which he guided other people"

the blameless

This refers to blameless persons in general. This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "blameless persons"

will have a good inheritance

"will inherit what is good"

Proverbs 28:11

be wise in his own eyes

The eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: "be wise in his own thoughts" or "think he is wise"

who has understanding

The abstract noun "understanding" can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: "who understands"

will find him out

This is an idiom that means the poor person will be able to determine whether or not the rich person is really wise. Alternate translation: "will see his true nature" or "will see what he is truly like"

Proverbs 28:12

the righteous

This refers to righteous persons in general. This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "righteous people"

triumph

"succeed"

when the wicked arise

This is an idiom that means when the wicked gain power or start to rule. Alternate translation: "when the wicked rise to power"

the wicked

This refers to wicked people in general. Alternate translation: "wicked people"

people are sought out

You may need to make explicit that those who "are sought out" have hidden themselves to escape from the wicked. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they seek people out" or "they seek out the people who hide from them"

Proverbs 28:13

hides his sins

"covers his sins." This is the opposite of confessing and forsaking sins, and is spoken of as covering sins rather than bringing them into the open

will not prosper

"will not succeed" or "will not advance"

the one who confesses them and abandons them will be shown mercy

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will show mercy to the one who confesses and forsakes them"

Proverbs 28:14

The one who always lives with reverence is blessed

This can be expressed in active form. Alternate translation: "God will bless the one who always lives with reverence"

lives with reverence

The abstract noun "reverence" can be expressed as an adjective. Alternate translation: "lives a reverent life"

reverence

This refers to deeply respecting Yahweh and showing that respect by obeying him.

whoever hardens his heart

"the one who hardens his heart"

hardens his heart

This is an idiom that means to be stubborn or unwilling to obey God. Alternate translation: "refuses to obey God"

will fall into trouble

This represents ending up in misery and distress. Alternate translation: "will end up in trouble"

Proverbs 28:15

Like a roaring lion or a charging bear is a wicked ruler over poor people

Poor people who are helpless against an evil ruler are compared to people who have a lion roaring at them or a bear attacking them.

a charging bear

A bear is a large, furry, dangerous animal that walks on four legs and has sharp claws and teeth.

Proverbs 28:16

The ruler who lacks understanding

The abstract noun "understanding" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "The ruler who does not understand"

oppressor

a person who treats people harshly and makes their lives very difficult

the one who hates unjust gain

The abstract noun "unjust gain" can be translated as a verb. Possible meanings are that this person 1) hates other people's unjust gain. Alternate translation: "the one who becomes angry when other people gain dishonestly" Or 2) he would never want to be dishonest. Alternate translation: "the one who hates gaining dishonestly"

the one

This phrase can refer to 1) the "ruler" or 2) any person.

prolong his days

Possible meanings are 1) this is an idiom that means his living for more time. Alternate translation: "live longer" or 2) this is an idiom that means extending the length of his reign. Alternate translation: "rule for a longer time"

Proverbs 28:17

is burdened with a person's blood

Here "blood" is a metonym for the murder or violent death of an innocent person in which blood is shed. Alternate translation: "is guilty because he has murdered someone"

fugitive

a person who is running away to avoid being captured

until death

"until he dies." This means for the rest of his life. Alternate translation: "all of his life"

Proverbs 28:18

Whoever walks with integrity will be kept safe

This can be expressed in active form. Alternate translation: "God will keep safe anyone who walks with integrity"

Whoever

"Anyone who"

walks with integrity

This represents a person living a life of integrity. The abstract noun "integrity" can be expressed as an adverb. Alternate translation: "walks honestly" or "lives honestly"

the one whose way is crooked

A dishonest person is spoken of as if he walks on crooked or twisted paths. Alternate translation: "the one who does not live honestly"

will suddenly fall

What will happen to a dishonest person is spoken of as if he suddenly fell down. Alternate translation: "will suddenly be ruined" or "will suddenly perish"

Proverbs 28:19

works his land

This means to till, sow, and care for his crops.

whoever follows

"anyone who follows"

follows worthless pursuits

"chases after worthless projects." The person who is busy doing things that do not produce anything is spoken of as chasing after useless things.

will have plenty of poverty

The person following worthless pursuits is spoken of as getting the opposite of plenty of food. The abstract noun "poverty" can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "will be very poor"

Proverbs 28:20

the one who gets rich quickly will not go unpunished

The double negative "will not go unpunished" is used for emphasis. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will certainly punish the one who gets rich quickly"

the one who gets rich quickly

The implied information is that this person gains wealth by unfaithful or dishonest means. Alternate translation: "the one who tries to get rich quickly"

Proverbs 28:21

for a piece of bread a man will do wrong

"A piece of bread" here is an exaggeration for a very small bribe or reward. Alternate translation: "a man will sin for very little gain"

do wrong

"sin"

Proverbs 28:22

A stingy man

"A selfish man." This is a person who does not like to share his possessions or spend money.

hurries after riches

The stingy man is spoken of as if he was chasing after wealth. Alternate translation: "is greedy for riches"

poverty will come upon him

The result of being stingy is spoken of as if poverty was overtaking the stingy person. The abstract noun "poverty" can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "he will suddenly become poor"

Proverbs 28:23

Whoever disciplines someone, afterward will find more favor from him than from the one who flatters him with his tongue

This can be stated in active form, with the abstract noun "favor" being expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: "A person will favor the one who disciplines him more than he favors the person who flatters him with his tongue"

Whoever disciplines

"If a person disciplines"

disciplines

trains people to obey a set of guidelines for moral behavior

flatters him with his tongue

The tongue here represents speaking. Alternate translation: "flatters him with words"

flatters

praises someone in a manner that is not sincere, or praises someone about things that are not true

Proverbs 28:24

Whoever robs

"The one who robs"

says, "That is no sin," he

This can be expressed as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "says that it is not a sin, he"

the companion of

Possible meanings are: 1) "the friend of" or 2) an idiom that means having the same character as. Alternate translation: "the same kind of person as"

Proverbs 28:25

A greedy man

a person who selfishly wants more things, money or food than what he needs

stirs up conflict

The action of the greedy man is spoken of as if he were stirring up or awakening conflict. Alternate translation: "causes conflict"

Proverbs 28:26

One who trusts in his own heart

Depending on one's self is spoken of as trusting in one's own heart. Alternate translation: "The person who relies on himself"

whoever walks

"any person who walks"

walks in wisdom

Possible meanings are 1) this is an idiom that means to live wisely. Alternate translation: "lives wisely" or 2) this is an idiom that means to follow the teachings of wise people. Alternate translation: "follows wise teachings"

Proverbs 28:27

The one

"The person"

the poor

This refers to poor people in general. Alternate translation: "poor people"

lack nothing

This double negative is used for emphasis. Alternate translation: "have everything they need"

whoever closes his eyes to them will receive many curses

This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) they will receive many curses from the poor. Alternate translation: "the poor will give many curses to whoever closes his eyes to them" or 2) they will receive many curses from people in general. Alternate translation: "people will give many curses to whoever closes his eyes to the poor" or 3) they will receive many curses from God. Alternate translation: "God will give many curses to whoever closes his eyes to the poor"

whoever closes

"anyone who closes"

closes his eyes to

Closing the eyes represents not responding to the needs of the poor. Alternate translation: "ignores" or "chooses not to help"

Proverbs 28:28

When the wicked arise

This is an idiom that means when wicked people gain power or start to rule. Alternate translation: "When the wicked rise to power"

the wicked

This refers to wicked persons in general. This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "wicked people"

people hide themselves

This is an exaggeration for doing everything they can to avoid having wicked people harm them.
Alternate translation: "people go into hiding"

perish

Possible meanings are 1) "go away" or 2) "fall from power" or 3) "are destroyed."

the righteous

This refers to righteous persons in general. This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective.
Alternate translation: "righteous people"

increase

Possible meanings are 1) "multiply" or 2) "rise to power."

Chapter 29

- ¹ A person who has received many rebukes but who stiffens his neck
will be broken in a moment beyond healing.
- ² When righteous people increase, the people rejoice,
but when a wicked person is the ruler, the people sigh.
- ³ Whoever loves wisdom makes his father rejoice,
but he who keeps company with prostitutes destroys his wealth.
- ⁴ The king establishes the land by justice,
but the one who demands bribes throws it down.
- ⁵ A man who flatters his neighbor
is spreading a net for his feet.
- ⁶ In the sin of an evil person is a trap,
but the righteous person sings and rejoices.
- ⁷ The righteous person knows the rights of the poor;
the wicked person does not understand such knowledge.
- ⁸ Mockers set a city on fire,
but those who are wise turn away wrath.
- ⁹ When a wise person has a legal dispute with a fool,
he rages and laughs, and there will be no rest.
- ¹⁰ Men of bloodshed hate the one who is blameless
and seek the life of the upright.
- ¹¹ A fool brings forth all his spirit,
but a wise man soothes it back.
- ¹² If a ruler pays attention to lies,
all his officials will be wicked.
- ¹³ The poor person and the oppressor are similar,
for Yahweh gives light to the eyes of them both.
- ¹⁴ If a king judges the poor by the truth,
his throne will be established forever.
- ¹⁵ The rod and correction give wisdom,
but a child freed from discipline puts his mother to shame.
- ¹⁶ When wicked people are in power, transgression increases,
but righteous people will see the downfall of those wicked people.
- ¹⁷ Discipline your son and he will give you rest;
he will bring delight into your life.
- ¹⁸ Where there is no prophetic vision the people run wild,
but the one who keeps the law is blessed.
- ¹⁹ A slave will not be corrected by words,
for though he understands, there will be no response.

- 20** Do you see a man who is hasty in his words?
There is more hope for a fool than for him.
- 21** One who pampers his slave from youth,
at the end of it there will be trouble.
- 22** An angry person stirs up strife
and a master of rage commits many sins.
- 23** A person's pride brings him low,
but one who has a humble spirit will be given honor.
- 24** One who shares with a thief hates his own life;
he hears the curse and says nothing.
- 25** The fear of man makes a snare,
but the one who trusts in Yahweh will be protected.
- 26** Many are those who seek the face of the ruler,
but from Yahweh is justice for a person.
- 27** An unjust man is an abomination to righteous people,
but the one whose way is upright is an abomination to the wicked person.

Proverbs 29 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 29 concludes the second section of the book (Chapter 25-29) which is attributed to Solomon.

Special concepts in this chapter

Themes

There are individual proverbs that run along common themes, often including contrasting elements: wise/foolish, money, lazy/diligent, truth telling, wicked/righteous, sluggard, pride/humility, integrity/crookedness. (See: wise, foolish and evil and righteous)

Proverbs 29:1

who stiffens his neck

A person becoming stubborn is spoken of as if he stiffens his neck. Alternate translation: "who becomes stubborn" or "who refuses to listen"

will be broken in a moment

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will suddenly break him"

beyond healing

"and no one will be able to heal him." Sickness is a metaphor for any kind of bad situation. Alternate translation: "and no one will be able to help him"

Proverbs 29:2

the people sigh

The people let out long, loud breaths that show that they are weary and sad. Alternate translation: "the people will be weary and sad"

Proverbs 29:3

General Information:

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Proverbs 29:4

establishes the land

makes the land peaceful so the king can rule for a long time

by justice

The abstract noun "justice" can be translated as a noun phrase. Alternate translation: "by doing what is just" or "by making just laws"

Proverbs 29:5

flatters his neighbor

knowingly tells his neighbor things that are not true so that the neighbor will do what the speaker wants him to do

spreading a net for his feet

The writer compares the flattery of a person to setting that person up to being caught in a trap. Alternate translation: "setting a trap to catch that person"

Proverbs 29:6

In the sin of an evil person is a trap

When an evil person sins, it is as if he is stepping into a trap. He desires to do evil to other people, but God will use what he does to punish him.

Proverbs 29:7

General Information:

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Proverbs 29:8

set a city on fire

Here the word "city" represents the people who live in the city. Mockers causing the people to experience turmoil and possibly to become violent is spoken of as if they set the city on fire. Alternate translation: "create turmoil for the people of a city"

turn away wrath

This idiom means to cause angry people no longer to be angry. Alternate translation: "calm the wrath of angry people"

Proverbs 29:9

has a legal dispute with a fool

A "legal dispute" is where two people or groups go to a judge so he can make a decision that the government will enforce. Alternate translation: "goes to court with a fool" or "sues a fool"

he rages and laughs

The fool becomes very angry and tries to keep the wise person from speaking or the court judge from judging.

rages

This means to be loud and excited and to move with powerful movements like a strong storm. Alternate translation: "yells angrily"

there will be no rest

"they will not be able to settle the problem"

Proverbs 29:10

Men of bloodshed

"Bloodshed" here is a metonym for murder, and it describes "men." Alternate translation: "Murderous men" or "People who are happy when they commit murder"

seek the life of

This idiom means to "want to kill."

the upright

This refers to upright persons in general. This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "upright people" or "righteous people" or "honest people"

Proverbs 29:11

brings forth all his spirit

He has no self-control. He lets everyone know what he is thinking and feeling, especially when he is angry.

a wise man soothes it back

This line is not clear, but the idea is clearly that the wise man does the opposite of what the fool does: he quiets and holds back his anger and calms himself down so that he can control what he says and does.

Proverbs 29:12

pays attention

"listens." See how you translated this in Proverbs 17:4.

all his officials will be wicked

The actions of the ruler are spoken of by stating the result they will cause. Alternate translation: "it is as if he is teaching his officials to be wicked"

Proverbs 29:13

oppressor

a person who treats people harshly and makes their lives very difficult

Yahweh gives light to the eyes of them both

This idiom means "Yahweh makes both of them alive."

Proverbs 29:14

his throne

The throne is a metonym for the kingdom he rules from his throne. Alternate translation: "his kingdom"

Proverbs 29:15

The rod and correction give wisdom

The writer speaks as if a rod and correction were people who could give wisdom as a physical gift. Alternate translation: "If a parent uses the rod on his child and corrects him, the child will become wise" or "If parents discipline their child and tell him when he has done wrong, the child will learn to live wisely"

The rod

Parents in Israel used wooden rods as instruments to discipline children by striking them. Alternate translation: "discipline"

correction

When a person gives correction to another person, he tells that person that he does not approve of what that other person is doing and he expects the person to change his behavior.

Proverbs 29:16

transgression increases

The abstract noun "transgression" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "more people will transgress and their sins will become worse"

the downfall of those wicked people

The abstract noun "downfall" can be translated with the verb "fall," which is a metaphor for losing the power to rule. Alternate translation: "those wicked people fall" or "those wicked people lose their power to rule"

Proverbs 29:17

General Information:

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Proverbs 29:18

the one who keeps the law is blessed

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will bless the one who keeps the law"

Proverbs 29:19

A slave will not be corrected by words

This can be translated in active form. "You will not be able to correct a slave simply by talking to him"

Proverbs 29:20

Do you see a man who is hasty in his words?

The writer is using a question to get the reader's attention. Alternate translation: "You should notice what happens to a man who is hasty in his words."

Proverbs 29:21

who pampers his slave

"who allows his slave to avoid work and who treats his slave better than he treats other slaves"

at the end of it

"at the end of the slave's youth" or "when the slave is grown"

there will be trouble

These words translate a Hebrew word whose meaning no one knows for sure. Some understand it to mean that the slave will be weak, others that the slave will rule the household.

Proverbs 29:22

stirs up strife

Causing people to argue more is spoken of as if it were stirring up or awakening arguments. The abstract noun "strife" can be stated as "argue." See how you translated similar words in [Proverbs 15:18]

a master of rage

This idiom means "a person who becomes angry easily."

Proverbs 29:23

one who has a humble spirit will be given honor

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "men will give honor to a person who has a humble spirit" or "a person who has a humble spirit will receive honor from men" or "Yahweh will cause men to honor a person who has a humble spirit"

Proverbs 29:24

hates his own life

"becomes his own enemy"

he hears the curse and says nothing

Possible meanings are 1) people have put the "one who shares with a thief" under oath to tell the truth about what he knows about what the thief stole, and he knows he will be punished if he tells the truth. Alternate translation: "he does not dare to testify under oath" or 2) people do not know who the thief is but they call on God to curse the thief, and the "one who shares" is afraid to confess and so come out from under the curse because he is afraid of the thief. Alternate translation: "he says nothing even after people have cursed him"

Proverbs 29:25

The fear of man makes a snare

Being afraid of what other people might do is spoken of as stepping into a trap. Alternate translation: "Anyone who is afraid of what other people might do to him is like a person who has become snared in a trap"

a snare

a trap that catches animals with ropes

the one who trusts in Yahweh will be protected

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "Yahweh will protect the one who trusts in him"

Proverbs 29:26

Many are those who seek the face of the ruler

The word "face" is a metonym for the ruler listening to people telling him what they want him to do and then doing it. Alternate translation: "Many people want their ruler to pay attention to them"

from Yahweh is justice for a person

It is Yahweh, not human rulers, who will see that people treat a person justly. The abstract noun "justice" can be stated as "just." Alternate translation: "it is Yahweh who is truly just towards a person"

Proverbs 29:27

an abomination

a person whom others should hate. See how you translated this in Proverbs 3:32.

Chapter 30

¹ The words of Agur son of Jakeh—the burden.

This man declares to Ithiel,
to Ithiel and Ucal: ^[1]

² Surely I am more like an animal than any human,
and I do not have the understanding of a human being.

³ I have not learned wisdom,
nor do I have knowledge of the Holy One.

⁴ Who has gone up to heaven and come down?
Who has gathered up the wind in the hollow of his hands?
Who has wrapped up the waters in a cloak?
Who has established all the ends of the earth?
What is his name, and what is the name of his son?
Surely you know!

⁵ Every word of God is tested;
he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.

⁶ Do not add to his words,
or he will discipline you,
and you will be proved to be a liar.

⁷ Two things I ask of you;
do not withhold them from me before I die:

⁸ Put vanity and lies far away from me.
Give me neither poverty nor riches,
just let me eat the food that is my portion.

⁹ For if I have too much, I might deny you
and say, "Who is Yahweh?"
Or if I become poor, I might steal
and profane the name of my God.

¹⁰ Do not slander a slave before his master,
or he will curse you and you will be held guilty.

¹¹ There is a generation that curses their father
and does not bless their mother.

¹² There is a generation that is pure in their own eyes,
and yet they are not washed of their filth.

¹³ There is a generation whose eyes are raised up,
and how high are their eyelids lifted up!

¹⁴ There is a generation whose teeth are swords
and whose jawbones are knives,
so they may devour the poor from the earth
and the needy from among humanity.

¹⁵ The leech has two daughters:
"Give and give," they cry.

There are three things that are never satisfied,
four that never say, "Enough":

¹⁶ Sheol; the barren womb;
land that is never satisfied with water;
and the fire that never says, "Enough!"

¹⁷ The eye that mocks a father
and scorns obedience to a mother
will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley
and will be eaten by the vultures.

- 18 There are three things that are too wonderful for me,
four that I do not understand:
- 19 the way of an eagle in the sky;
the way of a snake on a rock;
the way of a ship in the heart of the sea;
and the way of a man with a young woman.
- 20 This is the way of an adulteress:
she eats and she wipes her mouth
and says, "I have not behaved wickedly."
- 21 Under three things the earth trembles,
and under four it cannot bear up:
- 22 a slave when he becomes king;
a fool when he is filled with food;
- 23 a hated woman when she marries;
and a slave girl when she takes the place of her mistress.
- 24 Four things on earth are small
and yet they are very wise:
- 25 the ants are creatures that are not strong,
but they prepare their food in the summer;
- 26 the rock badgers are not mighty creatures,
but they make their homes in the rocks.
- 27 Locusts have no king,
but all of them march in rank.
- 28 As for the lizard, you can hold it in your two hands,
yet it is found in kings' palaces.
- 29 There are three things that are stately in their stride
and four that are stately in how they walk:
- 30 a lion, strongest among wild animals—
it does not turn away from anything;
- 31 a strutting rooster; a goat;
and a king whose soldiers are beside him.
- 32 If you have been foolish, exalting yourself,
or if you have been devising evil—
put your hand over your mouth.
- 33 As churning milk makes butter
and as one's nose will produce blood if it is twisted,
so deeds done in anger produce conflict.

Footnotes

30:1 ^[1]The second line of some ancient Greek translations of the ancient Hebrew reads

Proverbs 30 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 30 is a chapter in Proverbs attributed to Agur, who is a person otherwise unknown.

Special concepts in this chapter

Agur

His full title is Agur, Son of Jakeh. Agur comes from a Hebrew word that means "gatherer" and so some scholars believe this is not a real name, but possibly a way of referring to Solomon as a gatherer of proverbs. However, it is still prudent to simply use this as a name.

Three things and four

From verses 15 through 32, the author uses a specific technique to explain some things. He says there are three things and even four and lists items that exemplify a feature like "small and yet wise." The numbering is not meant to be so literal, but as a memory device that introduces the items. (See: wise)

Themes

The sayings of Agur address several themes including the wisdom of God compared to human wisdom (30:1-6), wicked people (30:11-14), things that are never satisfied (30:15-16), things too amazing for Agur to understand (30:18-19), things that are small but wise (30:24-28), and things that walk in a strong and proud way (30:29-31).

Proverbs 30:1

Agur ... Jakeh ... Ithiel ... Ucal

These are the names of men.

Agur son of Jakeh

This is the literal son of Jakeh, not a grandchild.

the burden

This is a metaphor for a message that is very important because it comes from God. Alternate translation: "the important message"

to Ithiel, to Ithiel and Ucal

"to Ithiel—that is, to Ithiel and Ucal"

Proverbs 30:2

Surely

"Certainly" or "There is no doubt that"

I do not have the understanding of a human being

The abstract noun "understanding" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "I do not understand anything the way human beings are supposed to understand them"

Proverbs 30:3

nor do I have knowledge of the Holy One

The abstract noun "knowledge" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "nor do I really know anything about the Holy One"

Proverbs 30:4

Who has ... down? Who has ... hands? Who has ... cloak? Who has ... earth?

The writer asks these questions to get the reader thinking about how much greater Yahweh is than people. Alternate translation: "No person has ever ... down. No person has ever ... hands. No person has ever ... cloak. No person has ever ... earth." or "Who has ... down? Who has ... hands? Who has ...

cloak? Who has ... earth? No one has ever done any of these things."

heaven

where God lives

gathered up the wind in the hollow of his hands

The writer speaks of the wind as if it were something that a person could catch and hold in his hand. Alternate translation: "has caught the wind in his hands"

the hollow of his hands

the way his hands are shaped when he is scooping up, for example, water or sand. "his cupped hands"

gathered up

brought small scattered objects into a pile so they can be lifted

has established all the ends of the earth

"has set up the limits for where the earth ends" or "has marked the boundaries for the ends of the earth"

What is his name, and what is the name of his son?

The writer uses these questions to command the reader to give an answer. Alternate translation: "Tell me his name and the name of his son, if you know them."

Surely you know!

The writer uses irony to show that neither he nor the reader know any person who can do what the "who" in the earlier questions can do. Alternate translation: "I do not think you really know anyone who can do those things."

Proverbs 30:5

is tested

Words are spoken of as if they were metals that need someone to clean the bad parts out of them. Alternate translation: "is like a precious metal from

which someone has removed all the useless material"

he is a shield to those who take refuge in him

The word "shield" is a metaphor for something that protects a person. Alternate translation: "he protects those who come and ask him to protect them"

Proverbs 30:6

add to his words

say more than he has said

you will be proved to be

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "he will prove that you are"

Proverbs 30:7

General Information:

Many translations understand this to be the beginning of a prayer.

of you

"of you, Yahweh"

Proverbs 30:8

Put vanity and lies far away from me

Possible meanings are 1) "Do not allow people to speak vanity and lies to me" or 2) "Do not allow me to speak vanity and lies"

vanity

false, useless words

Give me neither poverty nor riches

The writer speaks as if "poverty" and "riches" were physical objects that someone could give to another. They are also abstract nouns that can be stated as "poor" and "rich." Alternate translation: "Do not allow me to be either very poor or very rich"

the food that is my portion

"the food that is properly mine" or "the food that you, Yahweh, have assigned to me"

Proverbs 30:9

if I have too much, I might deny you and say

This describes a situation that has not happened but is possible if the writer becomes rich.

if I become poor, I might steal and profane

This describes a situation that has not happened but is possible if the writer becomes poor.

I might steal and profane the name of my God

"I might steal things and that would cause people to think badly about God" or "I might harm God's reputation by stealing"

Proverbs 30:10

slander

speak falsely about another person with the desire to harm him

he will curse

"the servant will curse"

you will be held guilty

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "people will hold you guilty"

Proverbs 30:11

There is a generation that curses

"Some people curse" or "Stay away from people who curse"

a generation that curses ... and does not bless

"a generation of people who curse ... and do not bless"

Proverbs 30:12

There is a generation that is

"Some people are" or "Stay away from people who are." See how you translated similar words in [Proverbs 30:11](#).

is pure in their own eyes

The eyes represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. Alternate translation: "considers themselves pure" or "believes they are pure"

they are not washed of their filth

The words "washed" and "filth" speak of God forgiving people who sin as if he were washing physical filth off of the people. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has not forgiven them of their sins"

filth

This should be translated with a polite term that includes human or animal vomit and waste.

Proverbs 30:13

There is a generation whose eyes

"Some people's eyes are" or "Stay away from people whose eyes are." See how you translated similar words in [Proverbs 30:11](#).

eyes are raised up ... their eyelids lifted up

This describes people who think that they are better than other people. Their eyes show that they are proud, and the way they look at others shows that they think they are better than those other people.

Proverbs 30:14

There is a generation whose teeth are swords and whose jawbones are knives, so they may devour the poor ... and the needy

This is a metaphor for being cruel and treating poor and needy people cruelly, like an animal with sharp teeth that tears apart other animals and eats them. The sharp teeth may be a metaphor specifically for cruel words. Devouring the poor and needy may be specifically about taking poor people's possessions, leaving them even poorer.

There is a generation whose teeth

"Some people's teeth" or "Stay away from people whose teeth." See how you translated similar words in [Proverbs 30:11](#).

jawbones

the bones of the face where teeth grow

Proverbs 30:15

The leech has two daughters

This is an example of something that always wants more. Alternate translation: "Greed has two daughters"

leech

a type of worm that attaches itself to the skin and sucks blood

"Give and give" they cry

Another possible meaning is "and they are both named Give Me."

There are three things that are never satisfied, four that never say, "Enough"

This use of the numbers "three" and "four" together here is likely a poetic device. Alternate translation: "There are four things that are never satisfied, who never say, 'Enough'"

are never satisfied

This can be stated positively. Alternate translation: "always want more"

Proverbs 30:16

land that is never satisfied with water

Land that is no longer producing food because there has been no rain is spoken of as if it were a person who does not have enough water to drink.

Proverbs 30:17

The eye that mocks ... mother will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley and will be eaten by the vultures

The eye is a synecdoche for the whole person. The writer is saying that a person who mocks his parents will die alone in a wilderness and not be buried, a metaphor for dying with no friends or family to care. This can be translated in active

form. Alternate translation: "The ravens of the valley will peck out the eyes of the person who mocks ... mother, and the vultures will eat them" or "A person who mocks ... mother will die alone, and no one will mourn their death"

scorns obedience to a mother

The word "obedience" is a metonym for the mother herself. It is also an abstract noun that can be stated as "obey." Alternate translation: "considers his mother worthless and will not obey her"

ravens

large, shiny, black birds that eat plants and dead animals

vultures

any one of several large birds that eat dead animals and have small, featherless heads

Proverbs 30:18

There are three things that are ... four that I do not understand:

The use of the numbers "three" and "four" here is likely a poetic device. Alternate translation: "There are some things that are too wonderful for me that I do not understand—four of them are:"

Proverbs 30:19

in the heart of the sea

The "heart" refers to the middle. Alternate translation: "in the middle of the sea" or "on the open sea"

Proverbs 30:20

she eats and she wipes her mouth

This seems to be both a euphemism and a metaphor for committing adultery and then taking a bath.

Proverbs 30:21

Under three things the earth trembles, and under four it cannot bear up

The use of the numbers "three" and "four" here is likely a poetic device. "There are some things that make the earth tremble, that it cannot endure. Four of these are:"

Proverbs 30:22

a fool when he is filled with food

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "a fool who has had enough to eat"

Proverbs 30:23

a hated woman when she marries

That is, people rightly hated her before she married; once she marries, she will be worse than she was before she married. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "a woman

whom good people have hated when she marries"
or "an outcast woman when she marries"

takes the place of her mistress

Possible meanings are 1) the slave girl is able to rule over the wife and children or 2) the man loves the slave girl more than he loves his wife.

mistress

This is the female form of "master," so it refers to the wife of the man of the house.

Proverbs 30:24

General Information:

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Proverbs 30:25

General Information:

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Proverbs 30:26

rock badgers

an animal with small, rounded ears, short legs, and no tail

Proverbs 30:27

General Information:

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Proverbs 30:28

lizard

a small reptile that has four legs, a long, slender body, and a tail

Proverbs 30:29

There are three things that are ... four that are stately in how they walk

The use of the numbers "three" and "four" here is likely a poetic device. Alternate translation: "There are some things that walk stately. Four of these are"

stately

majestic or dignified, like a king

Proverbs 30:30

General Information:

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Proverbs 30:31

strutting rooster

an adult male chicken that walks proudly

Proverbs 30:32

General Information:

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Proverbs 30:33

churning

strongly stirring

butter

Animal milk that someone has stirred and made thick.

Chapter 31

- ¹ The words of King Lemuel—a burden his mother taught him.
- ² What, my son? What is it, son of my womb?
What do you want, son of my vows?
- ³ Do not give your strength to women,
or your ways to those who destroy kings.
- ⁴ It is not for kings, Lemuel,
it is not for kings to drink wine,
or for rulers to crave strong drink,
- ⁵ because when they drink they forget what has been decreed,
and pervert the rights of all the afflicted.
- ⁶ Give strong drink to a person who is perishing
and wine to those in bitter distress.
- ⁷ He will drink and he will forget his poverty
and he will not remember his trouble.
- ⁸ Speak for those who cannot speak,
for the causes of all who are perishing.
- ⁹ Speak out and judge by the measure of what is right
and plead the cause of poor and needy people.
- ¹⁰ Who can find a capable wife?
Her value is far more than jewels.
- ¹¹ The heart of her husband trusts in her,
and he will never be poor.
- ¹² She does good things for him and not evil
all the days of her life.
- ¹³ She searches for wool and flax
and works with the delight of her hands.
- ¹⁴ She is like the merchant ships;
she brings her food from far away.
- ¹⁵ She rises while it is night
and gives food to her household,
and she distributes portions to her female servants.
- ¹⁶ She considers a field and buys it;
with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.
- ¹⁷ She girds herself with strength
and makes her arms strong.
- ¹⁸ She knows what will make a good profit for her;
all night long her lamp is not extinguished.
- ¹⁹ She puts her hands on the spindle,
and her hands grasp the twisting thread.
- ²⁰ She reaches out with her hand to poor people;
she reaches out with her hands to needy people.
- ²¹ She is not afraid of the snow for her household,
for all her household are clothed in scarlet.
- ²² She makes coverings for her bed,
and she wears clothes of fine purple linen.
- ²³ Her husband is known at the gates,
when he sits with the elders of the land.
- ²⁴ She makes linen garments and sells them,
and she supplies sashes to the merchants.
- ²⁵ She is clothed with strength and honor,
and she laughs at the future.
- ²⁶ She opens her mouth with wisdom

- and the law of kindness is on her tongue.
 27 She watches over the ways of her household
 and does not eat the bread of idleness.
 28 Her children rise up and call her blessed,
 and her husband praises her, saying,
 29 "Many women have done well,
 but you surpassed them all."
 30 Elegance is deceptive, beauty is vain,
 but a woman who fears Yahweh, she will be praised.
 31 Give her the fruit of her hands
 and let her works praise her in the gates.

Proverbs 31 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 31 begins with 9 verses from King Lemuel. The last portion of this chapter is a poem about a godly wife. (See: godly)

King Lemuel

This person is unknown in Scripture, other than here. It is important to recognize that the words in this chapter are words of his mother addressed to him. They are formed like advice of a mother to her son.

Special concepts in this chapter

An acrostic poem

Verse 10 through 31 is tightly formed as a poem in the original language. There are 22 lines in the Hebrew language that each begin with a successive letter of the alphabet. However, each language will have a different set of letters. Therefore, it is important to realize this was a single composition with a single theme of a noble or godly wife.

Themes

King Lemuel advice to his son addresses themes of avoiding drinks with alcohol and of being fair and righteous (31:1-9). The final section about the godly wife addresses several themes, including the great value of a godly wife (30:10-12), her hard work (31:13-19), her generosity (31:20), her care for her family (31:21-23), and her dignity, wisdom, and fear of the Lord (31:25-31).

Proverbs 31:1

a burden

This phrase is a metaphor for an important message. Alternate translation: "an important message"

Proverbs 31:2

What, my son? What is it, son of my womb? What do you want, son of my vows?

Possible meanings of the rhetorical question "What" are 1) "What are you doing?" or "You should not be doing what you are doing" or 2) "What shall I tell you?" or "Listen to what I am telling you" or 3) "Do not do the things I am about to warn you against."

my son ... son of my womb ... son of my vows

The speaker wants the hearer to notice carefully and to respect the one who is talking to him.

son of my womb

The womb is a synecdoche for the person. It is best to use a polite term for the body part in which babies grow before they are born.

son of my vows

The "vows" could be 1) the mother's marriage vows or 2) a vow after she married that if God allowed her to have a child she would dedicate him to God.

Proverbs 31:3

Do not give your strength to women

"Do not work hard trying to have sex with women," either outside of marriage or with concubines.

or your ways to those who destroy kings

"or allow those who destroy kings to advise you"

your ways

Possible meanings are 1) "the way you live your life" or 2) "the work you do"

those who destroy kings

probably the immoral "women" to whom he is not to give his strength

Proverbs 31:4

Lemuel

This is the name of a man. See how you translated this in Proverbs 31:1.

Proverbs 31:5

what has been decreed

This can be translated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) "what God has decreed" or 2) "what the kings themselves have decreed"

pervert the rights of all the afflicted

"deny afflicted people their legal rights"

pervert

exchange good for evil

all the afflicted

"all those people whom others wrongfully harm"

Proverbs 31:6

and wine

The ellipsis can be filled in. Alternate translation: "and give wine"

in bitter distress

"who's souls are bitter" or "who are in misery"

Proverbs 31:7

his poverty

The abstract noun "poverty" can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "how poor he is"

his trouble

The abstract noun "trouble" can be translated as a clause. Alternate translation: "the bad things that are happening to him"

Proverbs 31:8

Speak for those who cannot speak

Speaking is a metonym for using words to defend innocent people. Alternate translation: "Defend those who cannot defend themselves"

for the causes of all who are perishing

The cause represents the person whose cause it is. Alternate translation: "so that people will treat all who are perishing justly"

for the causes

The ellipsis can be filled in. Alternate translation: "speak for the causes" or "speak out for"

Proverbs 31:9

poor and needy people

These two words have basically the same meaning and are used together for emphasis. Alternate translation: "people who are poor and cannot get the things that they need"

Proverbs 31:10

Who can find a capable wife?

The writer asks a question to show that he is beginning a new section. Alternate translation: "Not many men can find a capable wife." or "Not many men can find a wife who is able to do many things well."

Her value is far more than jewels

"She is more precious than jewels"

Proverbs 31:11

he will never be poor

This litotes can be stated positively. Alternate translation: "he will always have what he needs"

Proverbs 31:12

General Information:

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Proverbs 31:13

wool

sheep's hair that is used to make cloth

flax

a plant whose fiber is used to make linen

with the delight of her hands

Possible meanings are that the word "delight" describes 1) how she feels as she works, "gladly with her hands," or 2) how she feels about the wool and flax, "with her hands on things that she enjoys working with"

Proverbs 31:14

merchant

someone who buys and sells

Proverbs 31:15

distributes portions to her female servants

Possible meanings are 1) "gives the right amount of food to her female servants" or 2) "tells her female servants what work each of them is to do that day."

Proverbs 31:16

the fruit of her hands

The money she has earned from the work she did with wool and flax

Proverbs 31:17

She girds herself with strength

Putting on clothes is a metonym for preparing for work. Alternate translation: "She prepares herself for hard physical work"

makes her arms strong

"she strengthens her arms by doing her work"

Proverbs 31:18

all night long her lamp is not extinguished

This is probably an exaggeration: she works late into the night, but not from dusk to dawn. Alternate translation: "She burns a lamp through the night as she works"

Proverbs 31:19

spindle

a thin rod or stick with pointed ends that is used in making thread

Proverbs 31:20

reaches out with her hand to poor

The hand is a metonym for the help the woman uses her hand to give. Alternate translation: "helps poor"

reaches out with her hands to

These words translate the same words translated "puts her hands on" in Proverbs 31:19.

Proverbs 31:21

are clothed in scarlet

Here "scarlet" does not refer to the color of the cloth, but that the clothing is expensive and warm. Alternate translation: "have expensive, warm clothing"

scarlet

The color red, but with a hint of orange.

Proverbs 31:22

linen

cloth made of flax yarn

Proverbs 31:23

Her husband is known

This can be translated in active form. The verb "know" is a metonym for respect. Alternate translation: "People respect her husband"

when he sits with the elders of the land to make laws and settle arguments

Proverbs 31:24

linen

cloth made from flax yarn

sashes

long pieces of cloth worn around the waist or over one shoulder

Proverbs 31:25

She is clothed with strength and honor

Having strength and honor is spoken of as if the woman were wearing them. This can be translated in active form. The abstract nouns "strength" and "honor" can be translated by an adjective and a verb, respectively. Alternate translation: "Everyone can see that she is strong, and so they honor her"

laughs at the future

This is probably an exaggeration to show that she is not afraid. Alternate translation: "is not afraid of what will happen in the future"

Proverbs 31:26

opens her mouth with wisdom

The act of opening her mouth is a metonym for speaking. The abstract noun "wisdom" can be translated as an adverb or an adjective. Alternate translation: "she speaks wisely" or "she speaks wise words"

the law of kindness is on her tongue

The phrase "on her tongue" refers to her speaking, as the tongue is part of the mouth. The phrase "the law of kindness" refers to her teaching people to be kind. Alternate translation: "she teaches people to be kind"

Proverbs 31:27

watches over the ways of her household

The word "ways" refers to the way people live. Alternate translation: "makes sure her whole family lives in a way that pleases God"

does not eat the bread of idleness

To "eat the bread of" something means to do something. Alternate translation: "she is not idle"

idleness

doing nothing and being lazy

Proverbs 31:28

rise up and

Possible meanings are 1) literally "stand up and" or 2) as a metonym, "actively."

call her blessed

saying that good things have happened to her because she has done good things. This can be translated as a direct quote. Alternate translation: "congratulate her" or "say, 'Yay, Mom!'"

Proverbs 31:29

you surpassed

"you have done better than"

Proverbs 31:30

Elegance is deceptive

The abstract noun "elegance" can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "A gracious woman can deceive people" or "A woman with good manners could really be evil" See how you translated this in [Proverbs 11:16]

beauty is vain

The abstract noun "beauty" can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "a woman who is beautiful now will not always be beautiful"

she will be praised

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "people will praise her"

Proverbs 31:31

the fruit of her hands

The money she has earned from the work she did with wool and flax

let her works praise her in the gates

She will be praised for her works, not by her works. Those "in the gates" are the important people of the city who conduct business and legal affairs near the gates of the city. Alternate translation: "may the important people of the city praise her because of the works she has done"
