



# It's Personal.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge,  
but fools despise wisdom and instruction."

Proverbs 1:7 (New King James).

Compiled and Written by  
the Men's Ministry of  
Liberty Baptist Church



# IT'S PERSONAL.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction." Proverbs 1:7  
(New King James version)



LIBERTY BAPTIST CHURCH  
CHELSEA, ALABAMA  
Printed February 2009.  
Copyright 2009. All Rights Reserved.

## IT'S PERSONAL

***“As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.”***  
**— Proverbs 27:17**

Welcome to Liberty Baptist Church and our 2009 Wild Game Supper. The foundation for this gathering of men is built on two words: *It's Personal*.

Our men's ministry is built on individual, personal relationships, on men telling other men about God's promise of salvation. Proverbs 27:17 describes our duty. “As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.”

God's Great Commission directs our men's ministry. It is found in Matthew 28:19-20: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

In this ministry we face great risk. Satan's attacks are brutal and he attacks without rest. One writer describes our battle with evil. “If you're at all serious about Jesus Christ, you can be sure your enemy is serious about you.”

But God gives us a defense against evil. It is we, our community of Godly brothers.

You may recall this line: “We few, we happy few, we band of brothers; For he today that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother.”

Look into the eyes of the men around you. We are *brothers* in a bloody war with evil. God's Word is our weapon.

Godly men are a powerful force. We men defeat evil—we show evidence of strong faith in God—in the everyday things we do. We show our faith when we carry a hammer and a saw to a neighbor's storm-damaged home. We build God's kingdom in the cold dawn of a duck blind, a shotgun at the ready and a Bible in our hands.

As God's Spirit takes hold in us, we step out into the world and embark, without fear, on God's great journey. As one, our strong faith resists evil.

*Lord, Give us strength to sharpen our faith and our witness, one to another. Let this work begin here, tonight, in this company of men. Challenge us to join Your holy fellowship, mold us into a Godly band of brothers, equipped to carry Your message of salvation to every corner of Your creation.*

## RUSH IT AND MISS IT

By Dr. Tim Cox, Pastor of Liberty Baptist Church

At 7:10 a.m. just as that early sunlight was beginning to fill the woods, I caught a glimpse of deer grazing in the woods. My heart began to race as I spotted a rack buck following two doe.



This is “the” moment prized by any deer hunter.

I had traveled to south Alabama to hunt in the early days of the rut. The weather was perfect. I had set my stand up next to a bedding area of small pines and a browsing area in the woods. Deer traveled this path throughout the day.

This morning was clear and cold. The air was still. From my stand I could see the buck was a “shooter.” I eased around to get set up for a shot.

The deer was coming right to me. At 75 yards I had a head-on shot. I decided to wait. Then all at once everything changed. While the doe kept feeding toward me, the buck made a left hook.

I began to panic, looking for an opening in the woods for a shot. He stopped behind a bush and I got set up on him. As soon as he stepped from behind that bush I saw I would have a broad side shot at 30 yards. But his next step was a blur. I didn’t get the shot off. Worse, the buck was heading away. I snapped a quick shot off in his direction. With a few bounds, that buck was gone, unharmed

I spent the rest of the trip thinking if only I had waited. That buck would have more than likely presented itself again for a good shot. But I didn’t—I rushed the shot and missed the buck. Why didn’t I wait?

We’ve all heard this advice: “*Don’t rush!*” That morning I very much appreciated the wisdom in those words. When we rush we miss the enjoyment of the journey. We become careless. We become irritable when divine appointments (some may call them distractions) slow our walk. Life becomes wearisome and unfulfilled.

So with the wisdom found in Proverbs. As you read these daily devotions from Proverbs, don’t rush. You might miss the wisdom God has planted here. Set aside 15 minutes to stop, pray, and read. The meaning of these proverbs may not be immediately obvious. But if you invest time, you will be rewarded with spiritual growth. Your walk with God will be close.

We know that if you “*rush it, you will miss it.*” Whether deer hunting or reading God’s Word, don’t rush it. Don’t miss the pleasure of the journey.

# A GUIDE TO THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

The Book of Proverbs is about godly wisdom, how to get it and how to use it. It's about priorities and principles for daily living. It tells you, not how to make a living, but how to be skillful in the lost art of making a life.

## Theme: Wisdom

- The words **“wise”** or **“wisdom”** are used at least 125 times because the aim of the book is to help us acquire and apply God's wisdom to the decisions and activities of daily life.
- Knowledge alone is not enough. We need “Wisdom”—the ability to use knowledge in our daily life.
- Those who are wise have the competence to grasp the meaning of a situation and understand what to do and how to do it in the right way at the right time.
- Biblical wisdom begins with a right relationship with the Lord.
- Wisdom is not something theoretical; it's something *practical*. It gives order and purpose to life, it gives discernment in making decisions, and it provides a sense of fulfillment in life to the glory of God.

## Author:

- King Solomon (Spoke some 3,000 proverbs, most of which are not included in this book—Chapters 1-24)
- The Men of Hezekiah (Group of scholars in King Hezekiah's day—700 B.C.)—Chapters 25-29
- Agur the Son of Jakeh—Chapters 30-31 and King Lemuel

## Title:

- The word “Proverb” means “to be like,” thus, Proverbs is a book of comparisons between common, concrete images and life's most profound truths.
- Proverbs are simple, moral statements (or illustrations) that highlight and teach fundamental realities about life.

## Structure:

- Chapters 1-9—Wisdom and Folly personified as two women
- Chapters 10-15—Series of contrasts between the life of wisdom and the life of folly
- Chapters 16-31—Variety of Proverbs that give us counsel about many important areas of life

## Key Verse: Proverbs 1:7

- There are at least 18 references to **“the fear of the Lord”** in Proverbs
- To fear the Lord means to respect God for who He is; to listen carefully to what He says; and to obey His Word, knowing that our disobedience displeases Him, breaks our fellowship with Him, and invites His chastening.
- If we want to live wisely, we must begin with commitment to Jesus Christ, who is **“the wisdom of God”**—**1 Cor. 1:30**.

# It's Personal.

## A 31-Day Devotional to the Book of Proverbs

On the following pages are devotionals inspired by scripture—and prayer—found in the 31 chapters of the book of Proverbs. Each devotion is based on one chapter. We suggest you read every chapter and the corresponding devotion. At the end of these 31 days of study, you will find God has made you a stronger husband, a stronger father, and a strong spiritual man.

## WHO'S THERE? GOD.

By Ray Franklin

**“Because I have called and you refused; I have stretched out my hand and no one regarded.” — Proverbs 1:24**

According to Webster's Dictionary, a proverb is a wise saying that usually needs thought or interpretation. How true is that about the book of Proverbs.

An entire book of the Bible is dedicated to wise thoughts and advice on Godly living. I found Proverbs 1:24 to be cut and dry. Wisdom's hand is out-stretched, yet we refuse to take hold and live Godly lives.

Refuse? Knowing all that God offers us and wants to give us, why would we refuse?

God is a God of Love. He is our Creator and longs for us to take His out-stretched hand, even with our sins.

I accepted God's call at the age of 29. On September 8, 2003, I came to know I had a decision to make. Before that day, I was miserable. I knew I would spend eternity in hell. Instead, on that day, I chose to accept God's out-stretched hand. It was my best friend, Danny Mann, who led me to Christ. I look back and realize it could have been the last time God would have knocked on the door of my heart. That's because God is a just God.

**“Calamity...terror...destruction...distress and anguish”** are all terms used to describe the severe troubles of divine judgment. When sinners who have rejected wisdom (the Person of Jesus Christ) call on God in the day of judgment, they will realize it's too late. The invitation is over and the day of reckoning begins. The penalty of sin will be paid, either by you or by Jesus on your behalf.

Is God knocking? Before “terror comes like a storm and your destruction comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you” (v 27) will you receive the Lord Jesus Christ and wisdom's call for Godly living?

Refuse God? Accept God?

*Lord, thank You for stretching out Your hand. I pray that those who do not know You will open the door and accept Your call. Amen.*

## CRY FOR UNDERSTANDING

By Mike Taunton

**“And if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding.” — Proverbs 2:3**

It was the middle of the rut. A nice buck walked out 100 yards in front of me. I had taken a nice eight-point two days before that wasn't quite nice enough to mount. This buck was.

I had set up about 125 yards from a food plot and I was watching a trail that had been traveled by a small buck earlier in the year. But this buck came out and was traveling in a direction from which I was not expecting.

I set up for a left-handed shot. The buck was walking left to right. But as I looked through my scope I couldn't find him. I pulled my gun down and dialed down the power on my scope. I grunted at him and he came closer. I put my gun on him again, but the result was the same. I could plainly see the buck with my eyes. He was only 40 yards in front of me. But I could not find him through my scope.

The buck went on his way and it took me thirty minutes to calm down enough to be able to negotiate my climber back down the tree. I hunted that buck for the rest of the season but never saw him again.

Sometimes we pick up our Bible and we read a certain passage, we see it and read it but we don't get it. We even use study Bible's to help. But as with the buck, we cannot see what God is saying.

Proverbs 2 tells us to ask him for wisdom and understanding. God wants us to pray to Him for understanding of His Word.

Proverbs 2: 5-6 reassures us: “then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find knowledge of God. For the Lord Gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.”

*God help me to understand what Your Word is saying to me today.  
Amen.*

## BLESSED BY WISDOM

By Jeff Picklesimer

**“Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding.” — Proverbs 3: 13**

While reading the third chapter of Proverbs, I was reminded that we are not only are to keep God’s commandments in our hearts, but we are to have God’s word as our “Life Map.”

The first verses of Proverbs challenge us to never let love and faithfulness leave us. Here’s what verse 3 tells us: “bind [love and faith]... around your neck, write them on the table of your heart.”

Read on to verse 13: “Blessed is the man who finds wisdom...who gains understanding.” This is followed in verses 19 and 20 with one of Solomon’s key messages “By wisdom the Lord laid the earth’s foundation, by understanding he set the heavens in place; by his knowledge the deeps were divided, and the clouds let drop the dew.”

What a picture Solomon painted! When we do what we’ve been taught to do, we discover peace and joy in our lives. We will prosper from this knowledge.

In verses 25 and 26, we’re reminded God is always in control. “Have no fear of sudden disaster or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked, for the Lord will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being snared.”

Solomon carries this thought into verses 32, 33: “The Lord detests a perverse man, but takes the upright into his confidence. The Lord’s curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the home of the righteous. He mocks proud mockers, but gives grace to the humble.”

Among God’s blessings are the promises of safety and His grace. Keeping our eyes constantly on the Word of God keeps our feet from slipping.

*Go to the Lord with Thanksgiving for the guidance and direction that He gives us daily. Pray for continual knowledge, understanding, and wisdom that we need to stay on the path of righteousness. Thank Him for all things especially the blessings and watch care that He provides. Give Him the Glory and Honor He deserves.*

## WISE MEN RESIST PEER PRESSURE

By Todd Shoemaker

**“Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of evil. Avoid it, do not travel on it; Turn away from it and pass on. For they do not sleep unless they have done evil; And their sleep is taken away unless they make someone fall.” — Proverbs 4: 14-16**

Peer pressure follows us through every stage of life. Among teenagers peer pressure is generally obvious and powerful. But even adults—while often more subtle—exert peer pressure on others.

Regardless of your age, the people around you influence your thoughts, the choices you make, and the life you lead.

The verses above tell us that lost people are driven to do evil things, and even worse, they want to drag other people down with them. That brings to mind the old phrase “misery loves company.” Verse 19 adds, “The way of the wicked is like darkness; They do not know what makes them stumble.”

As people do bad things in life, those actions will cause them to suffer various consequences. This verse says that they will not even realize why their lives are in shambles or in constant turmoil.

Have you ever known someone who seems to be on a self-destructive journey? Unless that person chooses to become wise and gain understanding and turn to the Lord, the self-destruction will continue, taking them in a downward spiral.

Proverbs instructs us to avoid this destructive journey and even those on it. A wise man will avoid this destructive peer pressure and will surround himself with good people who wish to live a life following God's will.

*Father, give me the knowledge to know good from evil and give me the wisdom to seek out Godly people to follow as role models. Amen.*

## DOWNFALL BY ADULTERY

By Joe Frost

**“For the lips of an immoral woman drip honey, And her mouth is smoother than oil; But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, Sharp as a two-edged sword.” — Proverbs 5:3-4**

Proverbs is a neat book of short teachings. Its chapters and verses are compact enough as to not be overwhelming, but they have deep meaning.

The obvious lesson in chapter 5 is God's command to avoid adulterous relationships. Solomon, the author of Proverbs, warns of the adulterous woman, what to look for, and how to avoid her (verses 3-8).

As I read this chapter, I began to think about Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived. His own story ends quite sadly (I Kings 11). His downfall was women. He had 700 wives and the Bible says they led him astray. He fell into the very trap he warns us about.

Even the wisest man can be seduced and led away from God. We must be vigilant that this does not happen to us. We must love the Lord our God with all our heart. We must love our wives wholly. And in that love, we must resist the temptation of an adulteress relationship.

*Father God, I humbly come before You, a sinner saved by grace, a gift from You, by faith. And not because of anything I've done. I thank You that You provided a way for me to be able to communicate with You by providing a blood sacrifice to cover my sin and hold me blameless in Your sight. Lord, I pray for mercy and protection for all who have read this devotion. Please give us wisdom to discern wrong relationships and strength to flee the situation like Joseph from Potiphar's wife. That we would be blameless in Your sight. Please help us as spiritual leaders in our homes, to be true men of God. Help us to be the husbands we should be and the fathers and teachers You would have us to be. Protect us from evil, guide and direct our steps, and help us to be in the very center of Your perfect will. All praise and honor and glory be Yours in Heaven and on earth. We love You, God, and we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

## THE TRUE SPICE OF LIFE

By Tony Picklesimer

**“Can a man take fire to his bosom, And his clothes not be burned?  
Can one walk on hot coals, And his feet not be seared?”  
— Proverbs 6:27–28**

I love the outdoors. I am an avid hunter. The whitetail deer season is my favorite season. There are so many things to love about it. There is the time spent with family and friends and of course, there is the great outdoors.

My favorite time is morning. I am known around my hunting camp as the early riser. It is my intent, when I go to the woods, to be there before daylight. There is something special about sunrise in the woods.

To hear the woods “wake up” is a special time. It represents renewal. It is God giving all his creation, giving all of us, a new start. Every morning begins pure...clean.

Similarly, we start our lives pure and clean. But in short order, our humanity kicks in. With it comes sin. Sin is bred into us. Sin is our nature. With sin comes judgment and death by the hand of a righteous God. As God is without sin, he cannot even look upon it. Without Him, we are lost and without hope.

We need a Savior.

Jesus Christ was born and lived on this earth and died and was resurrected with one purpose in mind. That was to pay the price for our sin and sinful nature. Through his shed blood, we find again our purity and we receive forgiveness from God.

Jesus is our Savior.

We have a calling from God to live a pure and holy life. It starts with a clean heart, fashioned to filter what we see and hear.

Remember, we can't scoop the fire and walk on the coals without being burned.

Let purity be your spice of life.

*Father, teach me today to keep my mind and heart pure. Make me more like Your Son Jesus. Amen.*

## SNAGGED BY A NOOSE

By Richard Tinnell

**“All at once he followed her like an ox going to the slaughter, like a deer stepping into a noose.” — Proverbs 7:22**

We face constant temptation; anything to draw us away from God’s wisdom.

In Proverbs 7 the devil is likened to a seductress. Just as is with such a woman, Satan’s ways are subtle, often sensuous and appealing to our eyes. He lurks in the places we hang out, waiting to drag us down into the pit of sin.

You may be in search of Godly wisdom, but instead find yourself sidetracked in doing things you shouldn’t. Like an animal being led to slaughter...a deer stepping into a trap, you walk into Satan’s ambush where you are soon consumed by sin.

One of the most obvious places we find the temptress—or Satan—is right where she lives, in the business of pornography. Satan uses pornography to appeal to our senses, to our weaknesses in the face of seduction and temptation.

How does it happen? Unfortunately, the answer is all too easy. You may be working through an on-line Bible study. But minutes later you find yourself lead off into every kind of sexual content.

God will gladly guide you through His door of wisdom. But along that walk, Satan all too quickly lays a trap for you.

Do you follow the enticement of Satan, to be lead dumbly to slaughter?

Or, do you allow God to lead you to wisdom and salvation?

You have a choice. Don’t ignore the commands of God’s Word for Godly living.

*Dear God, I know that Satan has brought many strong men down and I ask You to help me stay focused on You and Your wisdom. Help me to take these words seriously. Amen.*

## FEAR THE LORD?

By Matt Adams

**“To fear the LORD is to hate evil...” — Proverbs 8:13a**

Bobby Dodd, Georgia Tech's athletic director from 1950 until 1976, tells of the coach who, with his team leading 7 to 6 in the last minute of play, carefully instructed his quarterback not to pass under any condition. But when the ball was carried within the opponent's ten-yard line, the quarterback was overcome by temptation. He passed and the ball was intercepted by the rival's fleetest back, who broke into an open field and raced toward the end zone. He was speeding past midfield when suddenly, out of nowhere, the quarterback who had passed the ball overtook him and brought him down.

After the game, the losing coach remarked to his barely victorious counterpart, “I'll never understand how your boy overtook my fastest back.” “Well, I'll tell you,” came the reply. “Your back was running for a touchdown—my boy was running for fear of his life.”

To FEAR THE LORD means to have an appropriate awe and respect for God's holiness. If we are to fear the Lord, we must cultivate reverence for Him and for who He is.

“But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy” (1 Peter 1:15-16).

The only way to be “HOLY” is to be “WHOLLY” His!

To FEAR THE LORD means to hate evil as God hates it. You cannot love God without having the fear of God in you.

You cannot love Him without obeying His Word. And you do not truly fear God unless you love and obey Him. John Wesley said, “Give me a hundred men who fear nothing but sin, and desire nothing but God, and I will shake the world. I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen; and such alone will overthrow the kingdom of Satan and build up the Kingdom of God on earth.”

*Father, I am completely Yours. Use me to impact this world for You.*

## THE INVITATION

By Scott Roddy

**“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” — Proverbs 9:10**

In chapter 9 of Proverbs, Solomon offers a lesson about life. Here, it is a story about invitations from two women to dinner. One woman represents wisdom, the other a foolish and immoral life.

The wise woman has prepared a fulfilling meal. The dinner offered by the foolish woman consists of stolen water and bread. But the foolish woman also appeals to the invited guest's worldly desires.

The guest must choose between the two—the first brings wisdom and a fulfilled life or the second, which provides fleshly satisfaction. Which one do you chose?

This proverb speaks to situations we face. As hunters, we are a small portion of the population. More, many people don't understand why we hunt. We can avoid some of the negative stereotypes when we avoid foolish and unwise behavior, such as trespassing, poaching, spotlighting and baiting. These are actions not tolerated by most sportsmen, but it takes only a few incidences to hurt the credibility of all.

The same is true about the modern church. There are many unchurched among us. In their eyes, the credibility of our church is damaged when even just a few members pursue foolish things. As Christians it is essential that we choose a wise path. Romans 12:2 states that we should "...not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

The renewing of your mind comes from wisdom and understanding of God. We must respect God and put him first in our lives. And, we must spend time in God's word if we are to know him and his will for us.

*Dear Lord thank you for the table that you have prepared for me and for providing for all my needs. Help me today to choose wisely my paths and words that I may be an example of your love and mercy to those that I will meet. Continue to transform my mind as your word helps me to know you and your will. Amen.*

## WHAT IS YOUR FORTRESS?

By Jeremy Pennington

### “A Rich Man’s Wealth is his Fortress...” — Proverbs 10:15

With the decline in the economy, how has your “fortress” fared?

Everything seems great if you have money in the bank. With a steady job, you feel invincible. But when the economy falters, it may all change. Perhaps, even in a single day your financial fortress collapses.

More than money can disrupt our lives. Bad news from the doctor can tear down your fortress of health. A car accident can destroy your fortress of family. In the blink of an eye our circumstances can change. We find that our human fortresses cannot stand up to the assaults life launches at us.

So, the question is this: What is your fortress? God’s Word tells us how to build a fortress of faith. We find this in God’s Word: “The grass withers, and the flower fades, but the Word of God lives forever.” There is comfort in that. It means that no matter what, God offer us a path to a fortress that doesn’t collapse. Jesus also told us that he would never leave nor forsake us.

Doesn’t it make sense to have faith in God’s Word, something that will never change? Doesn’t it make sense to build a spiritual fortress that will not be breeched with bad news, a car wreck, or even the loss of a job?

What is your fortress?

*Father, I thank you for being in control of everything. Help me realize that my fortress needs to be you and you alone. Forgive me for not always realizing that truth. Thank you for never changing. Thank you for your Word. Thank you for being there no matter the circumstances. In the mighty name of Jesus I pray. Amen.*

## PROFIT AND LOSS

By Jason Glas

**“Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death”. — Proverbs 11: 4**

When you hear the words “bulls,” “bears,” and the “SEC,” you quickly discover people are not discussing sports teams or a collegiate conference, but the pandemonium on Wall Street and Pennsylvania Avenue.

As 401(k) and investment accounts diminish, many come to see a new reality that their treasure is not in the U.S. Treasury and their security is not in securities.

Proverbs 11:28 offers a warning: “He who trusts in his riches will fall.” In God’s economy true prosperity is attained through generosity (v25).

Greed and corruption is not an activity reserved for Wall Street or government. Nor is it found only in certain economic classes. Instead, it is an epidemic. Our culture lives by an unfortunate motto, “He who dies with the most toys wins.”

God desires justice and equity (v3). That is attained through righteousness. Righteousness is our integrity (v3,5), the use of our words (v9), and how we honor privileged information (v13). It also deals with our money, not just how we acquired it, but how we dispose of it. Remember in v4, Solomon warns that riches ultimately do not profit.

It is unrighteous to gain wealth through unjust means (v18) and to withhold what is justly due God (v24).

Greed is ultimately a trap (v6). Solomon reminds us that no one mourns for the unrighteous man at his funeral (v10). When the greedy man dies, his wealth will perish along with him (v7). A good friend of mine says, “I’ve never seen a U-Haul behind a hearse.”

In the end result, you’ll want to ask yourself “What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?”

*Heavenly Father, help me live today storing up treasures in the real profit column. You are the owner of all that I have. Teach me to use it for Your glory today.*

## THE GOOD, THE BAD...AND SALVATION

By Dan Miller

**“In the way of righteousness there is life; along that path is immortality.” — Proverbs 12:28**

A thin line divides good from bad. I know it well.

At Christmas, my home was a fine example of electrical imagination. I draped lights from every peak and valley. At one spot, a lower roof was separated from higher roof by about the length of the 6-foot ladder I wedged into the space. As a set of temporary stairs, that ladder worked...until the time it didn't. The fall hurt. But not as much as the second fall five minutes later after I had tried it again. One moment I'm hanging lights. Good. The next, I'm hanging from a gutter. Bad.

I once managed outside displays of farm-related equipment. One featured a pair of fully equipped Toyota Tundras worth \$120,000. I found a fine place to display these trucks—fine that is, on dry days. As I found out, the location was prone to flash floods on wet days. That slight difference occurred to me as I slogged through a flash flood to move those nearly swamped trucks. Dry is good. Floods are bad.

Driving around in a new speed boat many years back, I watched a skier swing around by a dock, let go of the ski rope and come to a stop, sitting right on top of that that dock. Cool! I soon had my wife swing me around by that dock. I let go of my rope. I saw that dock coming, I saw that dock slide under my partially seated body and saw that dock pass by as I slammed into a row of aluminum boats. There was no good here, it hurt and it was bad.

We all have experienced that slight divide between good and bad. As the Bible says, the pathway of good is narrow. But the bad is easy. The difference between good and bad is literally the difference between heaven and hell.

God's Word talks about the narrow line between heaven and hell. In Matthew 7:14, Jesus says "...narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it." Deuteronomy 30:15 offers this choice: "...I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction."

The Bible shows how to stay on that narrow path of the good, on that promised path to immortality. Here's how David put it: "My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him." (Psalm 62:1)

*Oh Lord, guide us along the narrow path of faith and hope. Put your Spirit in our hearts, as we choose daily between the good news of your salvation and the eternal death offered by the ways of this world.*

## GUARD YOUR MOUTH

By Mike May

**“The one who guards his mouth preserves his life; the one who opens wide his lips comes to ruin.” — Proverbs 13:3**

We are all familiar with the childhood rhyme “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” It is a catchy, little phrase. But it is a saying without truth.

The Bible speaks often about the harm poorly chosen words cause. In the book of Proverbs, in only the first 13 chapters (there are 31 chapters in Proverbs), there are 20 references to the mouth, lips or tongue. It is a small sampling of the references found in both the Old and New Testaments about the power of the word.

We have all been victims of harmful words, but have also been the ones inflicting harm with our mouths. James 3:5-12 warns of this. In verses 9-10 we read: “With [our tongues] we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men...Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing.”

Think back on the some of the words you've used. There are words that put others down, that hurt those we love, profanity that reveals our anger, crude talk that ruins our witness. Then, we turn around and praise our God from the same mouth.

We must guard what we say.

Keeping “guard” over our mouths is not easy. David was aware of this when he prayed in Psalm 19:14, “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight...” Paul tells us in Ephesians 4: 29 to “Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good... that it may give grace to those who hear.”

The only way to guard our mouths and preserve our lives is to give God control, to let Him be the guard.

*“Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips.” (Psalm 141:3)*

## NEVER IN DOUBT

By David Black

**“There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.” — Proverbs 14: 12**

The following quote comes to mind more often than I like: “I have been often wrong, but never in doubt.”

With God's guidance, Solomon wrote verse 12 in the midst of a series of *proverbs* comparing righteous and wicked lives. He might have known we would be reading this book of the Bible, agreeing with everything he has written, but still not realizing we are headed in the wrong direction.

We can read Scripture. We can even memorize Scripture. But if we find it does not change us, we need to know that something is wrong.

Several years ago, I completed a study called “*Experiencing God.*” I remember one thing from the class more than any other. That is this: We need to be walking with God every day, with every step. If we do this, we will never be in doubt that we are in a right relationship with God.

As I get older, time goes by quicker. Several days can pass and I will not have spent time with God. We should see the problem here. We live busy lives. We think we are doing the right things and we may well be headed in the right direction for a time. But without God's daily adjustment, we may well find we've stumbled onto a path of destruction.

Even today, the Solomon's Proverbs apply to our daily lives. If we ask God to help us understand them and apply them, they will change our lives.

*Dear Father, give me wisdom, knowledge, understanding and discretion, so the path I travel will be something you can use. Amen.*

## WISE OR FOOLISH TONGUE

By Charles Robison

**“A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, And a word spoken in due season, how good it is!” — Proverbs 15:23**

Isn't it amazing how much emphasis God puts on what we say in the Bible? Throughout Proverbs we find God talking repeatedly about how simple words can cause the spirit to soar or bring the soul crashing to earth.

You might notice how angry people become if you say something that hits them the wrong way. Know too, that when you encounter someone who never offers an encouraging word, something likely has happened in their life that has left them bitter.

Yet, you well know how even simple words of encouragement brighten your day.

In Proverbs 15, God talks about how a soft answer or word prevents anger. God goes on to say that the healing tongue is like “a tree of life.” We are free to choose the words we use. But God commands us to speak words of life and encouragement.

Proverbs 15:23 celebrates well-chosen words. The verse encourages us to look for moments when wise words create not only joy in the people around you, but in you as well.

Ask God to reveal someone who needs an encouraging word. Be bold enough to share it with them. You will see a “tree of life” grow tall in your life.

*God please put someone in my path this week who needs a word of encouragement, words that glorify you. God help me accept your instruction and correction as I study your Word. Use me to earn the respect of others so I can share the life-changing message of Jesus with all those I come in contact with. Amen*

## PRESS ON THROUGH THE STORM

By Anonymous

**“Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.” — Proverbs 16:3**

If you claim to be a follower of Jesus, then God calls on you to live like it. So many of us live as though God is not a part of everything we do. We tend to be the center of our own lives, believing all along we can go it alone without Christ. Of course, that's wrong. Proverbs 16:3 tells us to commit all things to Christ and God will lead our lives.

Our Christ-like goal is shown to us in God's word. We must forget what we have done and press on toward the goal to win the prize of salvation for which God has called us. It is so important to know where we have been, where we are now, and where we are yet still to go. But remember God tends to us as we move into stormy times in our lives, through that storm and finally, by His grace, out of the storm.

As a follower of Christ I know God has a plan for me and each one of you. In our daily prayer life we should ask God to help us discover His plan for our lives. God is all knowing and He is ever present. He sends His Holy Spirit into our hearts once we have accepted Him as our savior.

God created us for a special purpose. He has given each one of us the Holy Spirit as a deposit on what lies ahead.

Our hope in God gives us great courage and patience to endure the storms that come our way.

We should face life and death with the assurance that we have eternal life in heaven with God.

*God, I come to you in Jesus name praying that as men of Christ, bearing the name of Christians we would live like it. I pray for all the men and boys that attended the Wild Game Supper that we would work together, Father and son. For we are God's fellow workers, you are God's field, God's building. Forgive us our sins, and change us daily to be more like you. In Christ's name, Amen.*

## HOW ABOUT YOUR HEART?

By Ken Ray

**“A merry heart does good like a medicine, but a broken spirit drieth the bones or makes one sick.” — Proverbs 17:22**

All of us are aware that sometimes our physical bodies become sick. Most often some type of medicine is prescribed to help us become healthy again. Living daily with a merry heart will not only do us good but it will have a positive affect on those around us.

God has said that you and I are more precious than silver or gold. When intense heat is applied to silver or gold, the dross or impurities rise to the top and are lifted out by the refiner. Silver and gold become more and more valuable as the impurities are removed.

When God comes into our lives, he cleans out the impurities by purifying our hearts. Proverbs 17:3 reminds us of this: “silver and gold are purified by fire, but God purifies the heart.” Only God can give a merry heart!

So now, my friend, I leave you with this thought from a great old gospel song:

*People often see you as you are outside, Jesus really knows you for he sees inside. How about your heart? Is it right with God? That's the thing that counts today.*

## KEEP YOUR BROTHER CLOSE

By Dan Miller

**“A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.” — Proverbs 18:24**

Who is your brother? Who is the one you can call on in an instant for help, for assurance, to share good news, to hunt with, to chew over a good joke?

Proverbs 18:24 tells us that of the many friends we have, there is one brother—*one man*—who we can count on above all others. And, God expects great things of brothers. In John 15:13, Jesus said this: “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”

My close brother is my brother. We grew up in a home of difficult circumstances. Some of the things my father did to me, I in turn did to my younger brother. They weren't pleasant. They hurt him and as I discovered years later, those actions made my own pain only greater. Punching my little brother did nothing to change my father's behavior toward me. In fact, it made it worse.

Into our adult years, we patched things up. We talked about our family. We confirmed some of each other's memories, foggy moments that happened in our youth. Truth be told, both of us would rather have never remembered them. We were better men once we talked them through.

Still, our relationship was not complete. My brother would, from time to time, bring up the things I had done. Sometimes, he camouflaged them inside a joke. We would laugh, but I should not have.

One day, I was in Chicago on business. I invited him to breakfast. Over eggs, hash browns and sausage, I apologized for everything. I described in detail what I was apologizing for. Then I did something I had never done before. I hugged him and I told him I loved him. For he and I a lot of junk fell away.

I have friends, but I have no closer friend than my brother. We share truly funny stories about our families. When I call him and say, “Do you have a minute?” he always does. When he needs a minute, I always have one to spare.

*Oh God, lets us pray the very words for our brothers that Jonathan spoke to his great friend David, who was on the run from Jonathan's father, King Saul, “Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the Lord.” Help us make it so with our great brothers. Amen.*

## ARE YOU LISTENING?

By Greg Wood

**“Listen to counsel and receive instruction, that you may be wise in your latter days”— Proverbs 19:20**

Hearing and listening are totally different things.

There are times when I “hear” the noises or even voices around me, but I couldn’t tell you the conversation or even the words of a song playing on the radio. As a father, there are times that I know my children “hear” me speak, but their actions indicate they did not “listen” to what I was saying.

“Hearing” is an ability to discern audible sounds. “Listening,” however, means to pay attention, to take note, or to comprehend. The New Testament, in James 1:22 tells us to “be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.” The “doing” of the Word reveals that I have not only heard, but I have also listened to what God was saying. And, as a result, I apply that to my life in the form of obedience.

As a bow hunter, I not only “hear” the many sounds of nature in the woods, but I also “listen” for specific types of sounds. I can discern the difference between the wind blowing, a squirrel jumping, and a deer walking. I know because I have listened intently through the years and watched carefully what was going on around me. So today when I “hear” the sound, I begin to “listen” carefully to discern the source of the sound.

The same is true with God’s Word and acquiring wisdom. God’s Word is the source of wisdom. We must not simply “hear” the Word, but we also need to “listen” and allow God’s Word to impact our lives.

When we “listen” to the counsel of God’s Word, we grow wise in our latter days.

Proverbs 19:27 reveals this truth about listening: “Cease listening to instruction, my son, And you will stray from the words of knowledge.”

*Father God, please help me to listen and live in your wisdom. Guard me against laziness and help me discipline myself daily to the study of Your Word. Amen.*

## CONDUCT YOURSELF AS THE WISE

By David NeSmith

**“Most men will proclaim each his own goodness, But who can find a faithful man? The righteous man walks in his integrity; His children are blessed after him.” —Proverbs 20:6-7**

As do many of the Proverbs, Proverbs 20 provides guidance for our conduct. This passage shows us how to conduct ourselves from a personal and a business standpoint. Within Proverbs 20, we are called to refrain from actions that will harm us and to embrace those actions that will produce God-like character.

As a manager (king) or even a steward of the jobs, talents, and material possessions we have been blessed with, we are to defeat the evil in front of us, to seek wise counsel when making decisions, and to uphold our positions with righteousness. We will be preserved by God's loyalty and truth.

God does not want us engaging in shady business practices. We should not mistreat or take advantage of someone in our transactions.

We should work with diligence and vigor to feed our families and ourselves. Laziness is not an option. As a young man, my deeds distinguish me if they are pure. Strength provides me with glory. As an older man my gray hair, my experience brings me honor.

Any fool can quarrel, but we can find honor by avoiding arguments and strife. We can forge plans within ourselves, but we need to find understanding of God's will to bring them about. No plan should be undertaken without seeking God's will.

*God, remind us that a trustworthy and righteous man walks in his integrity. Let me be found trustworthy and help me pass the integrity you demand onto other generations. Amen.*

## WHICH WAY?

By Lee Mann

**“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, But the Lord weighs the hearts.” — Proverbs 21:2**

“I did nothing wrong.”

“It is their fault.”

Have you noticed that nobody does anything wrong any more. Nobody is responsible. There is always a justifiable reason and explanation of why they are innocent.

But God expects you take responsibility. He does not judge your words. He does judge your heart.

Read Luke 16:15: “And He (Jesus) said to them (religious leaders), ‘You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.’”

You’ll find a similar line of thought in Jeremiah 17:9-10 “The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to every man according to his ways...”

The following illustrates where our actions come from:

**Actions < thoughts < emotions < mind < will < the king of your heart**

In each man’s mind, he is his *own* king. He’ll rationalize and justify doing all kinds of sinful, wrong things and then, find ways to *make it* right in his own eyes. He may even declare he has peace within himself, despite wrong actions.

Our natural tendency is to assume that we are living right. But God is “weighing,” our hearts.

It may be that you’ve been living your life without seeking God through His Word. It may be that you’ve become so busy, you’re just “going through the motions” when it comes to your relationship with Christ.

*God, help me forsake my wicked ways and my unrighteous thoughts. Help me trust in You with all my heart and lean not on my own understanding. Help me to acknowledge You in all my ways and You direct my paths. Amen.*

## WHERE IS YOUR TREASURE?

By Shane Harmon

**“The rich rule over the poor, And the borrower is servant to the lender.” — Proverbs 22:7**

A better title might be, “What do you treasure?”

Proverbs 22 offers wisdom in how we are to use our wealth. It tells us how God defines real wealth in our lives. He demands we take on Christ-like characters in our financial dealings, such as honesty, integrity, generosity, and humility.

But it is best to let these proverbs from chapter 22 speak directly to you.

“A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, Loving favor rather than silver and gold.” (v1)

“The rich and the poor have this in common, The Lord is the maker of them all.” (v2)

“The rich rules over the poor, And the borrower is servant to the lender.” (v7)

“He who has a generous eye will be blessed, For he gives of his bread to the poor.” (v9)

“He who oppresses the poor to increase his riches, And he who gives to the rich, will surely come to poverty.” (v16)

“Do not rob the poor because he is poor, Nor oppress the afflicted at the gate; For the Lord will plead their cause, And plunder the soul of those who plunder them.” (vv22-23)

“Do not be one of those who shakes hands in a pledge, One of those who is surety for debts; If you have nothing with which to pay, Why should he take away your bed from under you?” (vv26-27)

“Do not remove the ancient landmark which your fathers have set. Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings; He will not stand before unknown men.” (vv28-29)

What's the bottom line? God calls on us to examine our attitude toward money. And, as in everything, we must remember God demands generosity. For us, He is in charge, he will provide.

*Lord, if there be any way in me that is not pleasing to You change me and make me the man You want me to be. Bless me that I may be a blessing. Amen.*

## BE NOT ENVIOUS

By Phil Fogle

**“Do not let your heart envy sinners, But be zealous for the fear of the Lord all the day.” — Proverbs 23:17**

Have you known someone who has gained power, prestige or money by doing things that were not right? We all do and we wonder why they have prospered. We have been taught that if we do the right thing and work hard, we will be rewarded for our efforts. But we watch as others either get the promotion, the bonus, or the extra raise knowing that it was achieved by ill-gotten gain.

God does not want us to waste time envying them. Rather, he tells us to be “...zealous for the fear of the Lord...”

Zealous means to be ardently active, devoted or diligent. We are to be consumed with seeking the Lord and His wisdom that we should not have time to be envious of others. Matthew 6:33 says to “seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added unto you.”

We should seek God after we have envious thoughts. We are to seek Him when we awake and all through the day. When our mind is focused on knowing God, we will not be worried with the gains of those around us.

But why should we not be envious of sinners? Proverbs 23:18 gives us the answer: “For surely there is a hereafter, and your hope will not be cut off.”

If there was ever a doubt about life after death, this verse erases it. The sinner will only be rewarded here on earth. But those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ “will not be cut off,” but live with Him forever.

In a society of instant gratification, it is difficult to stay focused on future rewards. But God promises eternal riches and rewards for those who seek after His Son.

*Let us be zealous in searching and seeking the Lord on a daily basis. He is waiting to impart His wisdom whenever we ask. And our Lord Jesus will be waiting to reward us when we see Him face to face! Amen.*

## SET A DEEP FOOTING FOR A SOLID FOUNDATION

By Alan Smith

**“Through wisdom a house is built, And by understanding it is established...” — Proverbs 24:3**

Solomon nails down good advice about how **“a house is built.”**

**“Wisdom”** and **“understanding”** set a deep footing for a solid foundation. The word **“house”** can refer to a physical structure, a family, or even a dynasty. Thus, our life is indeed one big building project. We will do well to build our lives on the wisdom of God’s Word.

God’s wisdom enables us to live with good moral convictions. His wisdom allows us to value others and use discernment in our relationships. The wisdom of God teaches us to live our lives to please Him.

Knowledge is strength, but strength is not always knowledge. As you live your life, live it as if you were on the receiving end. Always do your best to express your love for God as well as your love for others.

Never allow someone to falter in character or judgment if you know better.

Always fear the Lord because he watches our actions and our decisions.

Laziness is a sign of weakness. In a relationship with the Lord it has no place.

Wisdom, knowledge and understanding create the footing under a solid foundation.

So, how’s your building project?

*Heavenly Father, help me to build my life and my family to bring you honor and glory. Amen.*

## THE RULE OF THE GOLDEN APPLE

By Al Schukoske

**“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.”  
— Proverbs 25:11**

This chapter opens a new series of Solomon's Proverbs. They were copied by the men of Hezekiah about 280 years after the death of Solomon.

As one student of the scriptures said, “We may consider them as of equal authority with the rest, else such men could not have united them to the sacred book.”

Here are two key verses in Chapter 25. In verse 11 we read: “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.” In verse 28, Solomon offers this caution: “Like a city that has burst out of its confining walls, is a man who cannot control his temper.”

These verses emphasize the importance of what we say, and how we say it.

Verse 11 helps us to see how important it is to speak kindly and properly as we relate to fellow Christians as well as those we try to bring to the Lord. “Fitly spoken” refers to speaking after careful thought and in a way that we are led by the Lord to speak. In other words, seek God's guidance through the Holy Spirit before we speak out of turn. Ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in addressing issues that upset or disappoint us. Turn them all over to the Lord before we lash out.

Verse 28 is explained by another verse in Proverbs. Proverbs 15:1 says this: “A soft answer turns away anger.”

We choose between soft answers and an angry temper every day. Will we live and interact with others in a loving, kind, spiritual manner? Or, will we lose control in the face of upsetting developments at work or home? The second choice tears apart relationships that mean most to us. But a Christ-like response strengthens our witness and builds new relationships.

*Lord, you have given us the spiritual tools to hold our temper, to show a strong witness and to bring the lost into your protective arms. Help us use them to glorify you. Amen.*

## A PIT OF IMPATIENCE

By Dan Miller

**“If a man digs a pit, he will fall into it; if a man rolls a stone, it will roll back on him.” — Proverbs 26:27**

The nights are cold out in the sagebrush desert of the Yakima Firing Center, an Army training area east of Washington state's Cascade Mountains. I was there one night, shivering with the guys in my artillery unit.

My job was to ensure that each of the six guns' crews could talk by phone to one another and they back to the officers controlling our mission. Key to our communication was a 6x6-inch switch box stuck into the ground out in front of the guns.

That box was the curse of my Army life. When it developed electrical shorts, which was often, every phone fell silent. On this night that box, which had shorted again, stood between me and a sleeping bag.

The fix was usually quick, although never permanent. But that night was different. All six guns were loaded. The guns' crews awaited only one, whispered word—"fire"—to send their rounds out into the desert night. On this night, it was a bad idea to be working out in front of those loaded guns.

But it was late. My impatience was loaded and my anger was shorted. I snatched my pliers and screwdriver and crept out to the box in front of the loaded guns. At that moment, I heard that word...“fire.”

I dove to the ground as six artillery shells screamed over my head. I bounced on the ground as the concussion from the guns hit me. It felt like my eardrums had burst. As I picked myself up off the ground, I realized I couldn't hear the officer yelling at me. I couldn't hear him for several hours.

There are many times I find myself in that condition with God. At the very moment God is trying to tell me something in my trials, I am deaf with impatience and anger. My anger digs a pit in front of me and I fall in. Like rolling a stone up a hill, my stubborn impatience inevitably rolls back over me.

God uses the fire of great trials to purify our faith. It is in times of trial that we should be listening. When we hold our anger and impatience, God is able to show us a way around our pit of despair. And, those stones? God's grace—the undeserved love he has for us—crushes them into pebbles.

*Lord, remind us that it is with large measures of Christian patience that we hear your voice, understand your direction, strengthen our faith and spread your word through our witness. Amen.*

## MAN TO MAN

By John McCormac

**“As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.” — Proverbs 27:17**

At times each of us struggles to walk the good walk. By ourselves we are weak; with God we are strong.

Similarly, God commands men to support one another...“as iron sharpens iron.” As a daily quiet time—with Bible study and prayer—helps us grow in our walk with Christ, a positive relationship with a believing brother helps us in our Christian walk.

God empowers us to grow in our brotherly relationships. This happens with Christian encouragement, through theological discussions, in mutual character building, with accountability, by deliberately setting God-like goals and through strong bonds of brotherhood. Through these deep bonds, we live stronger lives for Christ and impact His kingdom in a mighty way.

Recently, difficult events entered my life. The economy forced us to release staff from my business. Over the course of three weeks, I also lost both a five-year old niece and a father-in-law.

The stress was hard to bear. Were it not for a faith in Christ, as well as a few good men who are strong believers, my reaction may have been negative. These men empathized with me about business, encouraged me as I traveled to funerals, and stood by me when emotions prevented me from speaking the words of thanks.

These men helped me through difficult moments. These men knew when to smile. They offered hugs. They expressed care. That is “iron sharpening iron.” These men enabled me to exhibit a Christ-like walk.

*Dear Father, in Your sovereignty, please open the door to development of a relationship with a strong Christian man who can be an accountability partner for me. Help me to be a source of encouragement to other men as well. Strengthen our walk with You, and in all of this, Lord, bless our relationship so the result is that You are glorified. Amen.*

## GUILTY AND FREE

By Horace Higginbotham

**“The wicked man flees although no one pursues him; but the just man, like a lion, feels sure of himself.” — Proverbs 28:1**

When you're not free from sin, something gnaws at your insides. It's called a guilt complex. We all have guilt complexes. Like me...

I started drinking as a teenager. All my mentors were drinkers and more, they were successful business people. It was part of life, my life. Drinking never bothered me because I didn't let it interfere with my business life.

I had been going to church for about six years, never feeling any guilt, just shifting blame for my problems. That didn't last. I came to the point where I knew I could no longer shift the blame.

One Sunday my wife and I attended a Baptist church. It was September 10, 1995. During that service, Pastor Johnny Hunt spoke about alcohol. It was then where I met God head-on. He revealed His power in a personal way. I went into that service having been drunk the night before. When I left, I was totally sober. I have not had a drink since.

However, from that moment on I found I had no true enjoyment, no confidence, no courage. But I did fear judgment. “Sin makes men cowards,” said Matthew Henry, a well-known 1700s biblical scholar.

On October 22, 1995, I got enough courage to introduce myself to Pastor Johnny. I told him I was a good person. I also told him I was going to hell. I just wanted to let him know what he had done for me. But I knew this was a fad.

Johnny agreed that it was a fad. But it could become more than that, he said, if I would put faith and trust in God.

That scared me. I had never trusted anyone. But the pastor explained that God would take all the blame and give me a new life free of doubt, of fear and of guilt. I needed to confess my sins, repent of them and trust in God.

I confessed and repented and trusted. God has delivered me. Now, I know a God, the Almighty, in whom I can put full trust. I am not a recovering alcoholic. I am a delivered alcoholic.

*Heavenly Father, thank you for setting me free. Thank you for the assurance of a clear conscience through my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. May my story help someone else to be set free in Christ. Amen.*

## HARD TO BE HUMBLE

(When I'm so good!)

By Dan Miller

**“A man’s pride will bring him low, But the humble in spirit will retain honor.” — Proverbs 29:23**

I've long enjoyed the wit of the TV program M\*A\*S\*H. One episode I especially remember. The always-snobby Major Charles Emerson Winchester III was discovered delivering Christmas treats to an orphanage. He pleaded that his gifts remain anonymous. His act, he explained, was a continuation of a family tradition to show humility, to honor the giving message of “Christ”-mas without notice.

The dictionary defines the word humble as modest, meek, unassuming, mild, quiet, gentle, submissive, kind, gracious, honorable. From time to time, I have put those words into action.

Why, there was the time when I...

Oh, and one day, I...

There was a cold day, when I saw this man and I...

Man, if this humility thing isn't hard! When I do something good, I want credit. I want people to know the great things I have done. “I” is my favorite letter of the alphabet.

Of course, God tells us to put away our “I” and our “me” and, of course our “my.” He has a lot to say about humbleness. In Proverbs 29:23 he calls the humble honorable. Proverbs 15: 33 puts humility before honor. Proverbs 22:4 promises that through humility and service, the Lord blesses us with riches, honor and life.

Zephaniah tells us to seek humility. Titus reminds us to show humility to all men.

And finally, Peter. He tells us to clothed with humility. For “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” (1 Peter 5:5)

There is a tough lesson here, I think. We do our greatest acts of kindness when no one knows about it. These are the small kindnesses we do in honor of God who rewards humility, honor, graciousness and gentleness.

*Lord, remind me to be humble before you, to temper my sense of pride and be modest in my actions. Our reward for humility is found in your grace. Amen.*

## OUR WISDOM AND OUR STRENGTH

By Justin White

**“Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. Do not add to His words, Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.” — Proverbs 30:5-6**

God’s word is our wisdom, our strength. It is the source that God has graciously given to us to communicate His message and His will.

Jesus himself demonstrated how important God’s word is in Luke 4:4, as he quoted scripture when, after 40 days of fasting, the devil challenged him to turn a stone into bread. Quoting Deuteronomy 8:3 Jesus said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.” This showed that Jesus was both knowledgeable of God’s word and was not willing to operate outside God’s word.

Here are scriptures that support Proverbs 30.

Psalms 12:6 — “The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.”

Psalms 18:30 — “As for God, His way is perfect; the word of the Lord is proven; He is a Shield to all who trust in Him.”

Deuteronomy 4:2 — “You shall not add to the word which I commanded you, nor take from it..”

We see evidence in our lives that our relationship with God is anchored in our hearts. That is when we are knowledgeable of God’s word through daily study and a quiet time. When we follow His direction. When we mount strong stands based on His word. When we do not operate independently of God’s word.

*Father God, thank you for Your Word that is applicable for all people at all times in all circumstances. Thank You that Your Word is truth, and that it speaks truth into our lives. Please give me strength to meet with You everyday to read and study Your Word. I pray that your Holy Spirit would intercede as I study your word, and that it would convict me of areas that need correcting in my life. I pray also that it would give me direction for my life, so that I would be lined up with your will for me. Guide me now, through Your Word, that I may live my life for you and bring Honor and Glory to your name. Amen.”*

## AN EXCELLENT WIFE

By Jamie Alexander

**“Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.” – Proverbs 31:30**

Proverbs 31 focuses on the subject of an excellent wife. Many men seek superficial characteristics when choosing a wife—looks, accomplishments, style, success, money, or education. These attributes are fleeting. They are not the solid foundation on which God intends for a marriage to be built.

God instructs men to look for women who are trustworthy, kind, compassionate, generous and most of all, God-fearing. A God-fearing wife bases her love for her husband on spiritual principles that grow only more solid with time.

Proverbs 31:10 reminds us that such a woman is worth more than jewels. She is devoted to her God, her husband, and her household.

This passage offers much more than guidance for seeking a wife.

Men who are already married: Pray for your wife. Pray that she will aspire to become a woman described here. Encourage her to persevere.

Men with daughters and sons: Pray that you will have the wisdom to raise your daughters to become Godly women. Urge your sons to follow God's instruction as he seeks his own wife.

Men who are married and planning to start a family: Begin praying for your sons and daughters now.

Don't underestimate the impact of Proverbs 31. Here are words that will pay dividends not only over a lifetime, but also over generations.

*My prayer is that we all raise our children in the light of God's expectations; that we know that the actions of their mother will always be before their eyes. Her charge is to be a living example of tender guidance, wise counsel, loving discipline, a holy example and unending, unselfish giving. Amen.*

## WHAT IS MEN'S MINISTRY AT LIBERTY BAPTIST CHURCH?

We are directed by God to be Christian leaders in our families, in our communities, and in our churches. We are God-sent warriors, commanded to spread His Word.

As individuals, we will fail. The challenges, the temptations and our own shortcomings defeat us at every turn.

But as Jesus teaches, and as the early Christian church showed, we are strongest when we stand in fellowship with one another—and that fellowship stands with Christ.

More, our bond and direction, anchored in God's grace and message of salvation, serves to show our sons the Holy strength that will flow into them when they faithfully serve God's purposes. And, it is in our sons that the hope of our Christian fellowship is bound.

This then is our prayer:

God, bless faithful men gathered around your name. Make ours a faithful fellowship of reborn Christians; with brave desire to spread your promise of judgment for unfaithfulness, but also your good news of eternal life in the message of Christ Jesus.

We ask you to lay your protective hands over our sons. We remember that you hold children with special favor; that you have charged us with teaching them your ways—to bring them up in the knowledge that Christ's death and resurrection paid for their sins in full. Remind your church here that it is preparing faithful ambassadors who, even through adversity, will remain strong in their faith, powerful in their mission, thoughtful in their prayer and humble in their spirit. Let our sons learn from their fathers what indeed, we have learned from our Father.

Finally, place your protective hands over us, all. We know that while those dark nights of temptation and struggle are long, hope rises with your Son. And, hope in you will not disappoint us.

*"...whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does." John 5:19-20*

## **GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION**

Jesus Christ was with God the Father before the world was created. He became human and lived among humanity as Jesus of Nazareth.

He came to show us what God the Father is like. He lived a sinless life, showing us how to live; and He died upon a cross to pay for our sins. God raised Him from the dead.

Jesus is the source of eternal life. Jesus wants to be the doorway to new life for you.

In the Bible He was called the Lamb of God" (John 1:29). In the Old Testament, sacrifices were made for the sins of the people. Jesus became the sacrificial lamb offered for your sin.

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). He is waiting for you now.

Admit to God that you are a sinner. Repent, turning away from your sin. (See Acts 3:19, Rom. 3:23; 6:23.)

By faith receive Jesus Christ as God's Son and accept Jesus' gift of forgiveness from sin. He took the penalty for your sin by dying on the cross. (See John 3:16.)

Confess your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. (See Rom. 10:9-10, 13; I John 1:9.)

You may pray a prayer similar to this as you call on God to save you: "Dear God, I know that You love. I confess my sin and need of salvation. I turn away from my sin and place my faith in Jesus as my Savior and Lord. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen."

After you have received Jesus Christ into your life, tell a pastor or another Christian about your decision.

Show others your faith in Christ by asking for baptism by immersion in your local church as a public expression of your faith.

“I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.—Philippians 3:10-12

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ ST \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I am a guest of \_\_\_\_\_

I currently attend \_\_\_\_\_ church.

I made a decision to follow Christ.

I desire to receive information about Liberty Baptist Church.

I desire a personal contact from Liberty Baptist Church.

Prayer Request/Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## WHO IS LIBERTY BAPTIST?

Liberty Baptist is guided by our purpose: Loving God, Loving Others.

Ours is a community of Christians who have worshipped in Chelsea for 162 years. Under the perfect direction of God, our work begins here. But from these grounds, He uses us and our resources to spread the Gospel around the world.

Our invitation is genuine. If you desire a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and God is moving you to a relationship with Liberty Baptist, know that we are a church committed first, to showing you how to find a love relationship with God; and second, to forming a fellowship with your family.

Here's a thought that guides us: "When the child of God looks into the Word of God, He sees the Son of God, and the Spirit of God transforms him into the image of God, for the glory of God."

Thank you for visiting Liberty. God has brought us many blessings. We'd like to share them with you.

### **THE MINISTRY TEAM OF LIBERTY BAPTIST**

Dr. Tim Cox, Pastor, 678-3523

Rev. Alan Kuykendall, Interim Associate Pastor, 678-7081

Rev. Mike May, Minister of Music, 678-0989

Rev. Leon Burdette, Minister of Education/Evangelism, 678-9928

Rev. Matt Adams, Student Minister, 678-5708

Mrs. Laura Cain, Director of Preschool and Children, 678-7595

Mrs. Becky King, Preschool Associate, 678-9804

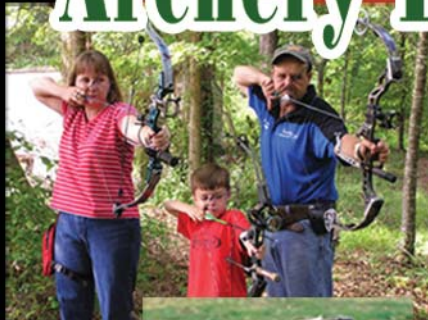
Mrs. Kristie Bradberry, Mother's Day Out Director, 678-6414

Each staff member can be reached by e-mail by typing first and last name immediately followed by @lbcchelsea.com.

*"We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ."—1 John 1:3*

LIBERTY BAPTIST, CHELSEA, AL

# Archery Tournament



**MAY 2, 2009**

**Howard Hill Archery  
Range in Wilsonville**

**REGISTRATION 8am-9am**

**TOURNAMENT 10am**  
(Shotgun Start)

**\$10 Adults**

**\$5 Children**



**Kid's Ranges • Twenty 3-D Targets**

**Novice Class • NASP Class**

**BHA Rules Apply**

Each "round" consists of 20 3-D McKenzie targets.

Bowhunter of Alabama Tournament rules apply with a Novice class for any shooter that has never shot in a 3D tournament (30 yards max).

There will be a range set up for any child who does not have a bow at no charge. Genesis bows from Archery in the Schools will be available.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Phil Carter 602-4733**

**Tim Carter 678-8775**

Liberty Baptist Church • 11050 Chelsea Rd., Chelsea, AL 35043  
205.678.9928 • [www.lbcchelsea.com](http://www.lbcchelsea.com)

# **LIBERTY BAPTIST SERVICE TIMES AND SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES**

## **SUNDAY WORSHIP**

9:15 a.m., 10:45 a.m., and 6:00 p.m.  
10:45 a.m. – Preschool, Children, & Preteen

## **SUNDAY SCHOOL**

8:00 a.m. – Adult Sunday School only; (no Youth, Children, or Preschool during the 8:00am time)  
9:15 a.m. – Adults, All Youth, Preteen, Children, Preschool  
10:45 a.m. – Adults

## **DISCIPLESHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

Adults: Visit our website ([lbcchelsea.com](http://lbcchelsea.com)) for current studies  
Youth: Sunday at 5:00 p.m. & Wednesday 5:45 p.m.  
Preschool and Children: Wednesday Evenings

## **FAMILY MEAL**

Wednesday from 5:00 to 6:15 p.m. (during school year)

## **MUSIC MINISTRY**

Celebration Choir: Wednesday 7:30 p.m.  
Celebration Singers: Sunday 4:00 p.m.  
Celebration Band: Sunday 4:00 p.m.  
Ladies Ensemble: Monday 7:00 p.m.  
Youth: Sunday 4:00 p.m.  
Preteen & Children's Choirs: Wednesday 6:00 p.m.  
Preschool Music: Wednesday 6:30 p.m.

## **MISSION ACTIVITIES**

Women On Mission: 1st Thursday of each month 10:00 a.m.  
Preschool– Mission Friends: Wednesday 6:30 p.m.  
Children– Girls in Action & Royal Ambassadors: Wednesday 6:45 p.m.  
Widows' Might: 3rd Thursday of each month 9:00 a.m.

## **DRAMA**

Youth Drama Rehearsal: Wednesday 5:30 p.m.

## **WEDNESDAY WORSHIP & BIBLE STUDY**

Adult Bible Study & Prayer 6:30 p.m.  
Youth Worship 6:30 p.m.