

Business and the Bible

Business and the Bible is a series of devotional articles examining the book of *Proverbs* for Bible-based business advice. *All verses simply referenced "1:12," "5:6," etc., are found in Proverbs. Verses are from and copyrighted to KJV or NKJV Bible versions, unless otherwise stated.*

This study guide is *especially dedicated* to all Christian work at home moms, and young women starting an online business in order to stay home when the time for motherhood comes. However, you'll likely find it useful no matter who you are. **Even if you don't consider yourself a Christian, you'll probably find *much insight* in Solomon's proverbs.**

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By the grace of God

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Introduction

Proverbs is credited to *King Solomon*. It is said to be a mixture of sayings that he simply wrote down in his own inspired words (varying in Chapters 10-24 – *Easton*), verifiable originals gathered from Solomons collections (25-29 – *Easton*), and supplemented texts from other contributors (namely, Agur and king Lemuel). Considering Solomon "**spoke three thousand proverbs (Kings 4:32)**," these must be the *cream of the crop*.

In reviewing Proverbs, I found a tremendous amount of wisdom and knowledge that can be applied to business conduct. Thinking about the online (and offline) business community as I read on brought *many errors* to light, (**Proverbs 24:16 For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief...**) some *my own*, some I have only witnessed. A few of Proverbs warnings came unexpected, and the problems they reflect run rampant in online circles!

Proverbs is required reading for all business-minded Christians, best read before they make destructive or unproductive and wasteful mistakes.

Below is a series of articles related to common themes found in Proverbs.

While reading, ask yourself these questions:

Concerning work, how have I grieved God in the past?

|
(by my wrongdoing)

What *did* God want me to do in that situation?

What am I doing right now that may be against God and His Word?

What does God ask me to do now?

Proverbs 1:5-6

*He that is wise will hear, and will increase learning;
and the intelligent will gain wise counsels:
to understand a proverb and an allegory,
the words of the wise and their enigmas.*

Business Integrity

Proverbs 1:19

*So are the paths of every one that is greedy of gain:
it taketh away the life of its possessors.*

R: Greed is bad. This certainly sounds like a given, even from the average Joe's *ethical* standpoint. However, we've all seen Christians taken over by greed. They even seek it out!

For every famous Christian leader who has been revealed to have real issues with greed, there are probably hundreds if not thousands of us not so famous Christians struggling with the same issues. Some of those famous Christian leaders have created followers after their own images, to go after "*wealth*" as an idol (putting more value on money than on God and spiritual things.) Many followers of these men end up being even *worse off in their idolatry* than their teachers!

It appears worldliness and all its vices have crept into Christians lives to a degree not seen in other recent generations. It is even preached at the pulpit in some churches.

Unfortunately, harboring such a vice can create a nasty black hole in a persons moral values, Christian or not. Greed leads to corruption, and everything else in business that is void of integrity. It is as if a person, fueled by greed, blinds themselves spiritually and morally. They start digging a pit for themselves. Maybe they think they'll hide their *winnings* in that pit? Instead they will fall into it and will be buried alive as the dirt walls crumble around them.

Enter the world of online businesses: Internet scams, spam, withholding information, sly MLM, junk products sold at massive prices, trying to *destroy* the competition, *faking* clicks, exaggerating about success to lure in new customers, and so on. The possibilities for ill-gotten gain are endless. *The ways to corrupt your business dealings are endless.* There are even plenty of people out there that'll tell you exactly how to go about these corrupt dealings.

A lot of uninformed people come online and commit Internet no-no's, like something as simple as guestbook spam. However, most of the examples in the paragraph above are fairly easy to determine as wrong using *simple ethics*. For us, it is not so much a matter of *ethics*, but of *sin*. Sin may temporarily get a man what his flesh desires, like money, or an ego boost, but in the end it will only lead to his destruction.

For a Christian, following Christ and having our work be under Gods authority can keep us from being dedicated to *our own wants*. In effect, it will keep us from being dedicated to our own spiritual, and likely our own business', *destruction*.

Our goal should be to *work for and in honor of God, with Biblical integrity*. Not in desperation to earn more and more money. Not fueled by greed. Not into corruption.

Proverbs 10:2

***Treasures of wickedness profit nothing;
but righteousness delivereth from death.***

Lately, the world had its first spam related conviction. Eventually online business will be just as regulated as offline business. For non-Christians *and the corrupted among us*, temptation *won't be as great* when *man's law* rules the Internet, and jail time or great fines are being handed down. Most of mankind understand the law and punishment system of society, and most try to avoid getting caught up in that system.

For some reason men, even those claiming to be Christians, fear the police and government while having no due fear and respect of God, the Ultimate Authority and Most Just Judge. So many Christians are stuck in the here and now, and make excuses and allowances for sin. It won't stand up in the just court that is God's, even if you get away with it here and now.

We SHOULD already be guided by the Greater Law: God's! We shouldn't make excuses for sin, using human reasoning to make it seem like *no big deal*, with *no major consequences*. We should work with integrity now, even as many in the world think they can get away with so much online (even offline!)

Proverbs 10:9
He that walketh in integrity walketh securely;
but he that perverteth his ways shall be known.

You can be sure those who have used *wicked* means to make a profit online will have their dirty deeds catch up with them. If not now via man's law, later, when God judges mankind. That is, if they haven't already pleaded forgiveness and grace through Christ.

If Christ is our focus we won't be slaves to money or corruption.

L: The original Hebrew text of many Biblical words is far more descriptive as to what the writer was trying to say than what the translators decided to use.

Here are examples of Hebrew words that Solomon spoke throughout this study:

Greedy – batsa' (baw-tsah'): covet, covetous, plunder, gain greedily.

Life – nephesh (new'-fesh): vitality

Gain in and of itself is not the problem. The problem arises when we covet and have a greedy attitude. My husband uses the term "*keeping up with the Jones's*," meaning, "*when so and so gets a new whatever, we have to have one too.*"

Our whole focus then becomes getting a *flesh driven* fix. Instead, we should be finding ways to give to others. And when we really want something, we should take it to the Father and allow Him to decide. He loves us and knows what is best for us MUCH more than we do. When we lay our wants at His feet, we can be assured that He will only do what's best for us—even if it is not what we may want.

Unfortunately, the consequence of allowing our flesh to rule leads to a life filled with lethargy, sluggishness, apathy, or lifelessness. You see, we will never find happiness with *money or stuff*. The only way to find the kind of joy and fulfillment that God has for us is to live a life

submitted to Him. Although we may not always get what we want, we will definitely be more spiritually fulfilled and content. More than we could ever have imagined! We will also have a peace that no amount of money could ever buy!

More References

*Pr 1:11-19, 10:16, 11:1, 11:3,
11:5-6, 11:18, 12:3, 14:22, 15:3,
15:6, 16:11, 19:1, 20:10, 21:15,
24:20, 28:8*

Wisdom Over Wealth

Proverbs 3:13-14

*Blessed is the man that findeth wisdom,
and the man that getteth understanding.
For the gain thereof is better than the gain of silver,
and her revenue than fine gold.*

R: It is mainstream to be obsessed with earthly riches. Many of us who go to work on our own do so simply to earn an income to meet our family's needs or to *supplement* a spouse's income. For some, going into business is believed to be a means to *immense wealth*.

Proverbs 23:4a

Weary not thyself to become rich....

When we focus our business energies on God's will and priorities for our lives, offering a useful service, doing our job well, maintaining business relationships and being responsible with our resources, we can have a positive, successful career.

When we focus on *money, money, money*, the business may dwindle down to a “*me want*” show that no one will watch. Yes, some will get *their* money, but at what cost? Their families? *Their souls*? Will they use it to further God's kingdom like Abraham, spreading out their wealth selflessly? Or will they use it for their own “*wants*” agenda, like Solomon did for a time when he let go of prudence (ignored his better judgment and God's wisdom) and ended up having his heart turn away from God?

If God means for anyone to be wealthy, then hard work and integrity will get them there, and they will spend it in His honor. When a righteous man has money, buying Bibles for those in foreign countries will not be beaten out by amassing collections of watches and jewelry. The focus should never be on *getting rich and hoarding junk*. The focus should be on pleasing God and serving others.

Does the idea of only having your simplest needs met for the rest of your life, void of a second home or yacht, upset you? What about selling everything you own, if God asked you to? Does it make you feel ill? Then you're simply *not* focusing on Him. Instead, your heart is set on worldly things. *Worthless things that won't last forever*. Repent and put your focus back on God and His Kingdom.

Prayer of Proverbs 30:8
Remove far from me vanity and lies;

***give me neither poverty nor riches;
feed me with the bread of my daily need...***

L: In *1 Kings 3:1-15* Solomon had an opportunity to ask God for anything he wished. God would give it to him. What's amazing about this is he *didn't ask for riches!* He asked for *wisdom, understanding, and a hearing heart.*

God was so pleased that He didn't just give Solomon wisdom, but He made him the wisest man who ever lived. That's not all...God also gave Solomon honor and an incredible amount of wealth!

You see, if we set our minds on God and gaining His wisdom to live an obedient and upright life, He will bless us with the rest. It may not be earthly blessings like thousands of horses or cars, but we will be blessed with *very good things.*

The Word tells us in Psalm 37:4 that *if we delight ourselves in the Lord, He will give us the desires and secret petitions of our hearts.*

The reason He can do this is because, if we are wise and walking with Him, we will not ask for blessings out of greed and lust. We will ask for and with wisdom, and we will be close enough to God and wise enough to handle any type and volume of wealth that He blesses us with.

More References
Pr 3:13-26, 4:5-13, 8:10-11,
8:19, 11:4, 11:28, 15:16,
15:17, 16:8, 16:16, 20:15

Not Withholding Good

Proverbs 3:27

***Withhold not good from them to whom it is due,
when it is in the power of thy hand to do it.***

R: Hoarding greedily, spending money carelessly, or just turning a blind eye to those in need are all frowned upon in the Bible. In fact, a selfish attitude disgusts God. Yet most of us turn away when we see a beggar on the corner, despite the wad of cash in our purse or wallet.

Sharing what God gives us is part of our *faith*. We should continually grow in fruitfulness throughout our lives, in what we share. That goes for our money, our time, our work, and even sharing our hope in Christ with those who will hear. There is no need to compartmentalize or limit what we give back to God. Our born again, spiritual *giving* nature should only grow as we grow in our relationship with God and in how we relate to others.

Yet there are Christians who won't give a penny or a hand if it doesn't benefit themselves in some way. There are Christians so scared of financial problems that they become common day Scrooges.

Proverbs 3:9-10

***Honour Jehovah with thy substance,
and with the first-fruits of all thine increase;
so shall thy barns be filled with plenty,
and thy vats shall overflow with new wine.***

Believing God will take care of your needs is a matter of faith, and faith is something that grows. We aren't born again with a *perfect* faith. We work for it; *He works in us*. Our faith gets stronger and stronger. We know and trust more and more that He will provide for us, as he provides for small animals and birds and even the lilies of the field. He will care for our needs and bless us. We should share the blessings He gives us, whatever form they come in.

How sad would it be if a *would-be* Christian never learned to be charitable to others in need? Our giving is a testament not only to God's pure kingdom, but to Christ's own sacrifice.

Be ready to not only be blessed by God, but to bless others *through Him, using you for some of His greatest work!*

May your focus be on sharing, on relationships (your family in Christ) and spiritual things, which last forever, and not on wealth and material possessions.

***Worth repeating... Prayer of Proverbs 30:8
Remove far from me vanity and lies;
give me neither poverty nor riches;
feed me with the bread of my daily need...***

L: It is very easy to get caught up in all of our “*stuff*” and forget Who gave it to us. God does not give His children wealth so we can have fancy cars and daily pedicures. He gives us wealth to further His Kingdom and His purposes.

Don't get me wrong, there is nothing wrong with having nice things. The problem arises when we begin to *love* those *things* and feel we *can't live without them*. We become so obsessed with making sure we can maintain our material status that we fail to see the person in worn, second-hand clothes sitting next to us at church every Sunday.

The bottom line...love God and His purposes more than your material possessions. Our material possessions should be of no value in comparison to our walk with God and the eternal treasures He'll give us if we ask. Love people and their needs more than a manicure or new tech toy. Open your eyes and allow yourself to see the needs of those with less than you. Give sacrificially. *Give the way Jesus gave for you!*

*More References
Pr 3:28, 11:24, 11:25-26, 14:31,
15:8, 19:17, 21:13, 25:14, 28:27*

“A Master of Intrigues”

Proverbs 4:14-16

*Enter not into the path of the wicked,
and go not in the way of evil men:*

avoid it, pass not by it; turn from it, and pass away.

*For they sleep not except they have done mischief,
and their sleep is taken away unless they have caused some to fall.*

R: Whether done in an obvious campaign to ruin someone's reputation, or done behind closed doors with snide remarks meant to discourage someone until they give up, God hates (6:16-19) this kind of behavior.

Fortunately, I have only seen a few minor examples when it comes to *online* businesses - the occasional talebearer, harassment, or technical attack.

Proverbs 17:20

*He that hath a perverse heart findeth no good;
and he that shifteth about with his tongue falleth into evil.*

If a Christian has the temptation to hurt someone in any way, obviously some serious self examination needs to take place. Destroying a lamb is to serving the devil as loving each other is to serving Christ. Seeking to do harm, or wishing for someone's ruin is a symptom of a **“*perverse heart.*”**

For anyone struggling with very negative emotions, such as rage or jealousy, that take you down the path to committing violent acts that hurt others (whether physical, verbal, or typed!), you must repent and seek God and any help He'll lead you to.

For those experiencing the abuse, remember that *God will defend you* and *He is there for you.* You will be blessed. **You are always safe in His arms.**

L: We will begin with a couple of the original Hebrew words and meanings:

Except - bad (bad): separation, apart, alone.

Taken - gazal (gaw-zal'): pluck off, strip, rob, consume, spoil, take away by force,

tear.

Our business should bring *glory to the Father*. When we choose to take our business down a road that is filled with wickedness (i.e. cutting corners, not reporting all of our taxes, lying, cheating, taking business lunches in inappropriate places, etc.) we have stepped out of the will of God (the narrow path) and onto the wide “***path of the wicked.***”

This only brings separation from God. We drift away from what God has planned for our lives and businesses. We will lose our peace and even sleep. It will be taken away! That is a scary thought. I don't ever want to build a business that is not grounded on the Rock. The Rock of our Savior Jesus Christ! The peace that comes with that!

The next time you are tempted to do wrong in business, remember Who it is that has blessed you with talent and success in the first place. Do not turn from His righteous path. For if you walk strong in faith and do not grow weary, He WILL bless you more than you could ever imagine. You won't get far on your own.

More References

*Pr 3:29, 4:14-19, 6:16-19, 11:9,
12:21, 12:26, 16:27, 16:27-30,
17:5, 17:13, 17:26, 19:5, 20:17,
21:10, 22:8, 25:9-10, 25:18, 26:18-29*

Choosing Business Associates

Proverbs 14:7

***Go from the presence of a foolish man,
in whom thou perceivest not the lips of knowledge.***

R: You take on the attributes of the people you associate with. It's a Biblical fact and can be attested to by parents of teens everywhere. Mimicry is human nature. Obviously, if we associate with business people who lack integrity, we set ourselves up for disaster.

Another bad practice often overlooked is dealing exclusively with people in the "same boat" - people who are just starting out or going nowhere fast. Doing so is like setting yourself up for ruin by proxy.

The mix of people just starting out can be caustic (*no offense meant to them*). We've all been in this mix. Certainly, *there are newbies who will be successful*, but as of now, not many of them have developed the tools that will get them there. More frequently, people just starting out can be a bad influence, especially if they think they *know it all* and have the right stuff to be instant successes. Among the gems, you'll find an even larger sour mix of the foolish, the proud, the vain, the flatterers, those that lack integrity, the angry, and the lazy. Those types probably make up the majority of beginners because the *myth of the Internet gold rush* attracts millions.

Proverbs 19:27

*Cease,
my son,*

to hear the instruction which causeth to stray from the words of knowledge.

You'll usually get bad advice from people just starting out, if any advice at all. After four years of steady progress, I've received bad "*advice*" on occasion from people who haven't been successful in the least. In my case, they were just trying to discourage me because the loss of my site would be their gain - or at least they thought so.

Many fools think they know it all, even after years of failure, and *boy*, they want to tell you how to do the same! That is precisely why they haven't gotten off the ground! I wouldn't be surprised if those at the very "top" of Internet business, like Google, get the occasional "this is

what you should do” letter from a guy who hasn't learned anything, but thinks he knows everything. On the same note, those successful businesses *never stop learning*- from people who know what they are talking about!

This doesn't mean you must dump all of your current online buddies. *Just add to them!* It is better to include online friends and business partners from all stages of business development in your circle. If you can't find many who will personally associate with you, you can still learn from many of those that came before you through their articles, books, interviews, etc.

Fortunately for some, if not all business niches, this is easy. There are various forums for different businesses attended by a great mix of people. Some groups have even set up business related mentorship programs, like *Mom Masterminds* or the upcoming *Our Christian Family Network*.

L: We need to be smart in business. When we seek the council of others we need to make sure that they have done their homework, and that we do ours. You can take that “*Berean*” attitude to work! Just because someone seems to know what they are talking about does not make it so.

Another thing that we must always keep in mind when seeking advice is to make sure the advice given does not compromise our Christian walk. We are called to represent our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We must keep our business doings and lives upright. We must never even dip our toes into murky water.

If we are wise and honor God in our business, He will guide us into success. We will be fruitful. *Proverbs 3:6 (amplified) says, In all your ways know, recognize, and acknowledge Him, and He will direct and make straight and plain your paths.*

Who better than God to lead us in life *and* business?

More Reference
Pr 17:4, 20:19, 22:24-25,
22:26, 24:1-2, 28:10, 29:9

Ants vs. Slugs

Proverbs 24:30-34

*I went by the field of a sluggard,
and by the vineyard of a man void of understanding;
and lo, it was all grown over with thistles, and nettles had covered the face thereof,
and its stone wall was broken down.*

*Then I looked, I took it to heart; I saw, I received instruction:
--A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest!
So shall thy poverty come as a roving plunderer,
and thy penury as an armed man.*

R: Laziness. You'll get what you give in business. No work done, no pay.

A lazy businessman is called **brother of the destroyer** (18:9), perhaps because he destroys his spirit and any chance at success. No one can start a business without actually doing any work, even if many Internet scams and MLM pyramids claim so. Real businesses always take an enormous effort in the beginning. Start ups can take a toll on the entire family. Eventually things settle down, but work is still an every week day matter. Sometimes it requires an entrepreneur to always be on call.

Proverbs 26:16

A sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men that answer discreetly.

Laziness is tied to various undesirable traits in Proverbs, such as vanity and foolishness. Perhaps foolishness begets laziness, and then vanity arises in an attempt to cover up the lack of results (i.e. "I can slack off as long as no one notices! *Alas, I have my own business!* I'm such an *fab* entrepreneur!").

Proverbs 12:9

*Better is he that is lightly esteemed, and hath a servant,
than he that honoureth himself, and lacketh bread.*

I recall reading a post on the *CWBN on Ryze* eons ago that warned about taking advice from

just anyone, because you never know how successful someone online truly is. Success can be faked online, much more easily than in real life. You can't peer in an online stores window to see if they have any customers browsing the aisles.

Be sure to put into action what you've envisioned for a business. Do your research, learn and learn some more, and ACT! Otherwise you may end up deluding others, and eventually yourself.

L: There is another verse that goes well with this one...

Proverbs 6:6-11 (Amplified Translation)

Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider her ways and be wise!

Which, having no chief, overseer, or ruler,

Provides her food in the summer and gathers her supplies in the harvest.

How long will you sleep, O sluggard? When will you arise out of your sleep?

Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to lie down and sleep

-- So will your poverty come like a robber or one who travels (with slowly but surely approaching steps) and your want like an armed man (making you helpless).

It takes more than a positive attitude to have a successful business. It takes a lot of hard work and determination over a long period of time. If we do not put forth the effort, we cannot expect a good harvest. No amount of praying and believing will change that. Even the ant has to prepare for the winter, so that she will eat. We must also work hard and not grow weary in doing good. The Lord will bless our hard work with abundant success.

Ephesians 5:14-16 (Amplified Translation)

Therefore He says, Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead,

and Christ shall shine (make day dawn) upon you and give you light.

Look carefully then how you walk! Live purposefully and worthily and accurately, not as the unwise and witless, but as wise (sensible, intelligent people),

Making the very most of the time *(buying up each opportunity), because the days are evil.*

We must live our lives *on purpose*. We must make a choice to be steadfast and work hard. Not just in business, but in all areas of our lives. Then and only then will we have joy and peace and true prosperity. The kind that no amount of money can create!

*More References Pr 6:6 (the famous ant proverb),
6:9-11, 10:5, 10:26, 12:24, 12:27,
13:4, 13:7, 13:11, 15:19, 19:15-16,
19:24, 20:4, 20:13, 21:17, 21:25-26, 28:19-20*

Bad Attitude(s)

R: Here is a simple list with verses showing attitudes to avoid or grow out of, in life and in business:

Know it All

Proverbs 16:18 Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

All Talk and No Walk

Proverbs 14:23 In all labour there is profit; but the talk of the lips tendeth only to want.

More, more more!

Proverbs 15:27 He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live.

Going on half the story

Proverbs 18:13 He that giveth answer before he heareth, it is folly and shame unto him.

You wanna mess with me?!

Proverbs 20:3 It is an honour for a man to cease from strife; but every fool rusheth into it.

I want what they have!

Proverbs 23:17 Let not thy heart envy sinners, but be thou in the fear of Jehovah all the day;

Discouragement at failure

Proverbs 24:16 For the righteous falleth seven times, and riseth up again; but the wicked stumble into disaster.

Paranoia and envy

Proverbs 24:19 Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, and be not envious of the wicked:

Rushing in

Proverbs 24:27 Prepare thy work without, and put thy field in order, and afterwards build thy house.

Futuristic illusions of grandeur

Proverbs 27:1 Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day will bring forth.

Tooting ones own horn

Proverbs 27:2 Let another praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.

Flattery

Proverbs 27:14 He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be reckoned a curse to him.

Imitating infallibility

Proverbs 28:13 He that covereth his transgressions shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy.

This list could top 100, even 1,000 PAGES if I went on, so I'll simply urge you to keep in God's word and remember to consider how each verse applies to your entire life, including the business side. Stay in the Word, reading your Bible daily. Study Proverbs often. Oh, and did I mention "*Read your Bible?*"

Next we have some specifics from Lara:

Know it All

Only God knows all. When we are filled with arrogance and think that we are the infallible experts at something, we are setting ourselves up for failure. We must NEVER forget Who has given us knowledge and Who should be given all of the glory.

As soon as we forget this and *puff* ourselves up, we are basically announcing that we do not need God. *We can handle it* and *we know what's what*; those are huge lies from the enemy. We know NOTHING. We are but dust. Without the grace and favor of God we would have nothing.

Acknowledge God, and *never* put the spotlight on yourself.

More, more more!

If all we think about is money and material items we would like to own, we are becoming greedy and self-centered people. We must learn to be thankful for what we have.

Paul mastered this character quality. Listen to what he said in *Philippians 4:11b, 12, for*
I have learned how to be content
(satisfied to the point where I am not disturbed or disquieted)
in whatever state I am.

I know how to be abased and live humbly in straitened circumstances, and I know also how to enjoy plenty and live in abundance. I have learned in any and all circumstances the secret of facing every situation, *whether well-fed or going hungry*, whether having sufficiency and enough to spare or going without and being in want.

This is what we should be greedy for! **Contentment**. When we live this way it gives God the opportunity to bless us way more than we could EVER work for!

Going on half the story

We must take the time to hear the whole story. If we do not, then we will not have the wisdom

to handle the situation. When we don't listen in fairness we are being prideful and wrongly thinking that we "know" offhand how to handle everything, or every tale, that comes our way.

There will be times when we will have a quick answer through the Spirit. And there will also be times when we will need to give the effort to listen to all angles and then, *prayerfully*, make decisions.

I want what they have

My husband calls this, "*keeping up with the Jones's.*" Contentment is the only way to overcome this. And the only way to gain true contentment is to have a thankful heart. Take the time every day to remember all of the reasons you have to be thankful. Then praise the Lord for them!

We ALL have things to be thankful for. Yes, even you! Be thankful that you have eyes to read this, ears to hear a bird singing, a mouth to speak, hands and feet, your child(ren), your spouse, a roof over your head, food to eat, you are a child of the King of Kings, and I could go on forever with all that we have to be thankful for.

When you start seeing all that you really have, you will realize that what God has blessed you with is more than enough. And then you will see the real treasures!

All Talk and No Walk

Hypocrisy is one of the Church's biggest faults. We love to blame everything on the devil. Unfortunately, he is not our only threat. We are a threat to ourselves. "We" meaning *our flesh*.

We "talk" a good game. We tell others how to be a "*good Christian,*" and what is right and wrong. But when push comes to shove, many times we become the spitting image of the very things we speak so passionately against!

Jesus had more disgust for the hypocrites in His day than the prostitutes! Let us be careful and keep our flesh in its place. Let us not assume that we "have it all together." Let us wear humility and represent our Savior properly and truthfully. Let us squash hypocrisy in the Church once and for all. And then, maybe we will see an increased desire of the lost to know our God!

You Wanna Mess With Me?!

I believe that strife is one of the most damaging problems in the Church. When we harbor anger and bitterness for others, we are crippling our effectiveness as a Body. We will never have any of the wonderful blessings that God has for us if we allow strife to sneak into our hearts.

When you are faced with a possible disagreement or a wrong has been done to you, it is an opportunity for growth. It is an opportunity to give up what you want for another's sake, forgive and forget, allow another to receive the honor, and die to self.

Think of it this way, Jesus humbly laid down His life. He was completely shamed and dishonored. He was spit on and ridiculed- willingly! And what did His Father, our Father, give Him? He gave Him a seat at His right hand, and the Name above all names.

Let go of strife, anger, and the need to be right. And when you do, God Himself will bless your socks off!

Discouragement at failure

God chose us before we were in our mother's womb. He knew everything about us before we were a thought in our parents' minds. We are His beloved children. And when we fail, we have the assurance of His loving hands to help lift us up. We cannot receive this wonderful help unless we get up. When we fall or fail, we must not give up. We must GET up!

We must remember Whose we are and the power that is given to us to succeed. We are the children of God. *No weapon formed against us shall prosper.* We have the power of the Holy Spirit guiding us.

So, the next time you fail, remember who you are in Christ,
and GET UP!

Paranoia and envy

We have nothing to fear from those who hate us in this world. They have *no authority or ability to permanently hurt us* unless we ourselves *allow* them to.

Jesus did not leave us without a defense. He left us the Holy Spirit and His Word. When you are faced with evil and the trouble in this world, pick up your sword (the Word) and fight. The Word is not powerful unless it is spoken.

God Himself used words to create all things. Words are to be spoken. And the Word of God is a weapon that no foe can withstand if it is USED!

Rushing in

Before we make important decisions, we need to make sure that we are asking God for His plans. He knows what is best for us, much better than we do. When we jump in to something blindly, we are risking our peace of mind. However, when we ask God to be at the helm, we can be assured of keeping our peace. He will NEVER steer us wrong.

We need to keep God at the center of every area of our lives. He should be included in every task from grocery shopping to what we will be making for dinner. This may sound radical to some, but really it's not. We want to know God and have all the "fringe benefits" that come with being His heirs. Yet, we never take the time to know Him on a deep and personal level.

He wants our childlike love and friendship more than anything. He wants to be our All in All. And when we get to a place where we really delight in Him, all of the benefits are just a bonus!

Futuristic illusions of grandeur

It's always good to have a plan, goals, and a good attitude. The problems start when we get full of our selves and all the "*things*" that we want. All we think about is *more success, more stuff, more, more, more!*

No one cannot predict tomorrow. Tomorrow is unknown to us and comes with no guarantees that *our own* plans will come to fruit. If we put all of our hopes and dreams into tomorrow, we will miss out on all of the glory of today!

Tooting one's own *horn*

Meekness goes a long way with God. He is unimpressed when we become *full of ourselves*. When we do this, we are forgetting Who gives us blessings and success. It does not come from what "*we*" can do. "*We*" can do nothing without the grace of our Beloved Father. Every good thing comes from God and God alone. Every talent, success, increase, and goodness - it all comes from God.

As soon as we get that into our hearts and minds, we will gain the fruit of meekness and lose that dreaded *horn!*

Flattery

It's one thing to compliment someone. It's quite another to flatter someone for our own gain.

Christians need to be authentic and sincere. If we are not, then we are giving our Savior a bad name. It is part of our calling to live lives that bring glory to the Name of Jesus- not shame!

Imitating infallibility

When you make a mistake, own it. Admit that you were wrong and ask for forgiveness. We are allowing pride to enter our hearts when we think or act like we are never wrong.

We are ALL imperfect and we ALL make mistakes. Admitting them makes us better. Denying them is sin and fills us with the deadly seed of pride.

Make Amends

Proverbs 10:12

Hatred stirreth up strifes; but love covereth all transgressions.

R: Being slow to anger and forgiving others (seventy times seven or more if need be!) are both major Christian virtues. However, it is very easy to slip into *defense mode* when we feel our livelihood is under attack. Our tongue can take command. Everything can spiral out of control.

Proverbs 18:19

*A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city;
and contentions are as the bars of a palace.*

Two out of three people (my estimation) won't react kindly to a riled up reply, even if you don't think you cut into them. If you wrote it out of anger, the anger probably crept in. "**A soft answer turneth away fury**" (15:1) applies in most cases. You must carefully guard your tongue, or *fingers* in this age. Remember it is best to diffuse a situation out of love, not react out of emotional pain.

Sometimes no answer is best, when you're dealing with a stranger who is obviously unreasonable and just trying to cause trouble for you or discourage you. I learned that the hard way. There will probably be people along the way who just want to mess with your head with vile sayings and curses, especially if you wear your faith on your sleeve.

If you have any contact with customers or web site visitors, you are going to deal various stirrings now and then, in business. You'll probably need to remind yourself to stay cool and

level headed, especially the first *dozen or so* times. Walk away. Cool down. Ask the Lord for guidance.

Remember:

Proverbs 11:8 The righteous is delivered out of trouble...

Lara makes a brilliant point below...

L: In *Matthew 5:21-22*, Jesus compares hate to *murder*. He takes hatred that seriously and so should we. As Christians we should be striving to walk in love on a regular basis. Yes, there may be times when we fail. However, our lives should consistently be lived out in love and forgiveness.

Jesus set a higher standard while He was here. Even adultery was no longer committed just through action. It only takes a lustful thought. Our *minds and hearts* are what God is watching. It's one thing to make a mistake. It's another to live in sin of the mind and heart.

Making amends can be very difficult. Especially when we think "we" are in the right. If we choose to remember what Jesus has said we will have a better chance at success. We can always react out of the Spirit, of love.

(James also compares hate to murder in James 4:1-2a)

I certainly do not want to commit murder. Do you?

More References
Pr 10:19, 11:13, 12:16, 14:21, 14:29,
15:1, 15:18, 16:6, 17:9, 17:14,
17:17-19, 17:22, 18:18, 19:11,
20:22, 21:14, 25:21-22, 29:22

Continually LEARN From Wise Mentors

Proverbs 13:18
Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction;
but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured.

R: Only a fool thinks he knows everything. Believe me, *I know*- being a “*know it all*” runs in my family.

Even *the wisest know that they simply don't know it all*. The only exception to this rule is God Himself.

Those who continue to receive instruction throughout their lives will grow in ways that make them look back every year and say, “oh my, how far I've come! I can't wait to see where God takes me this year!”

Continual growth in all ways, including your work, is only possible with the help of others. We need others' knowledge, advice, counsel, and encouragement.

Proverbs 15:22
Without counsel purposes are disappointed;
but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.

A variety of learning actions exist: reading articles, reading professional publications, growing in Christ, staying in the Word, listening to interviews, observing others, learning prudence,

finding help, going back to school, asking questions, and finding a mentor are some examples.

*Proverbs 12:15
The way of a fool is right in his own eyes;
but he that is wise hearkeneth unto counsel.*

Some people resist “being told what to do,” or considering that someone else may have a better, even workable, idea. That doesn't mean you have to take every suggestion ever given to you- not at all. It does mean you should kindly consider them.

If someone goes out of their way to correct a mistake, pride can construe it into a personal attack. It is often pride (and the resulting ignorance) that prevents some from even getting their businesses a hay penny's width off the ground.

Have you noticed? Most if not all of these devotions have mentioned pride as an underlying problem. Pride from within is what coaxed Satan to fall. I guess it should be no surprise that pride makes man fall to pieces as well.

L: We must always be willing to learn. If you are blessed enough to have found even one Christ loving business mentor, become a walking sponge.

While we are on this earth we will never “*know it all.*” We need to continually set our minds to learn all that there is about our craft. We need to ask questions and receive constructive criticism with a *willing heart.*

If we ever get to a place where we feel that we do not need advice, that is when we really need to do a self checkup. We may be running into pride. And only failure can result.

There is also a benefit to a humble heart and willingness to learn. We will be honored. The original Hebrew word for honored is kabad (kaw-bad') or kabed (kaw-bade') and it means *abounding with, glorify, make glorious, very great, prevail, and be rich.*

That sounds like a no-brainer to me.

God is such a wonderful Parent. He is always finding ways to reward us for obedient behavior. If we would just humble ourselves and be willing to learn and receive instruction in ALL areas of our lives, we would have not only a lot more peace, we would also have all that we are promised. We would prevail and God would bless us with His riches.

*More References
Pr 6:23, 9:7-10, 10:8,
10:14, 10:17, 11:2, 11:14, 12:1,
13:1, 13:10, 13:20, 14:3, 14:6,
15:5, 15:10, 15:12, 15:25,
16:20-23, 17:10, 18:1, 19:8,
22:17-18, 23:12, 27:17, 29:1*

Be Prudent

Proverbs 4:20-27

*My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.
Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thy heart.
For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.
Keep thy heart more than anything that is guarded; for out of it are the issues of life.
Put away from thee perverseness of mouth, and corrupt lips put far from thee.
Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.
Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be well-ordered.
Turn not to the right hand nor to the left; remove thy foot from evil.*

R: Prudence is all about figuring out the right course of action (our guide ultimately being the Bible!), and doing it. Know the *godly (often the hardest) path* and take it! It can be as difficult as figuring out the solution to a complex problem and seeing it through despite difficulties, or as simple as putting effort in to what you do each and every day.

Proverbs 13:16

*Every prudent man acteth with knowledge;
but the foolish layeth open his folly.*

Some of us are pretty stubborn when God's will isn't exactly matching our own desires, so we stall or act of our own will, even when we should know better.

I wouldn't be surprised if every person who reads this can think of one or more ways they've gotten ahead of themselves in online business. Surely all of us can recall times when we didn't show prudence, and made unwise choices in hopes of fast results. Even being adults! We've all probably said to ourselves, "*You live, you learn!*"

*Proverbs 8:12
I wisdom dwell with prudence,
and find the knowledge which cometh of reflection.*

Prudence develops as we grow in wisdom, submission to God, and patience. The former can't exist without the latter. To grow in prudence, we must continue to learn how God wants us to live. In other words, we need to make *reading the Bible* and *prayer* top priorities. From there it is a matter of remaining faithful to the Lord and doing His will. "***Commit thy works unto Jehovah***" (16:3) and you'll see His blessing as your work is fruitful.

L: God's Word has everything that we need to live righteous lives, be good parents, have peace of mind, joy, and abundance, be content, and run a profitable and successful business. Everything we have learned so far shows us that. Now, we must put into practice all that we have learned on a daily basis.

When we come to a cross road, stumble upon a difficult situation, or lose our focus, we must turn to God and His Word. That is where we will find our answers. If we humble ourselves to Him and submit to His authority and direction, we will have it all. We will lack nothing. It will take our entire lives to accomplish this, and when we get to Heaven we will get the final adjustments made. However, if we let Him take the wheel now, we will enjoy the journey and finish the race in glory!

*More References
Pr 8:5, 13:19, 14:8, 14:12,
14:15, 14:16, 14:18, 15:21,
15:28, 15:31-32, 16:17, 16:25,
19:2, 21:2-3, 21:5, 21:7, 22:3*

Summary

There are probably tens of thousands of gems of wisdom to gleam from the Bible. We have only touched upon the smallest of fractions in this guide. We cannot imagine the full amount of wisdom belonging to God. It would probably take millions of Bible-sized books to cover it all.

The ultimate matter in life is to *lead a life guided by the Word and the Holy Spirit*, a life in submission and *pleasing to God*, our Creator. We should *embrace His plan for us*, not mock or rebel against His plan. Today most of the world chooses to mock God, and call His plan a farce. They make their own plans and exalt themselves, or gods and idols of their own creation. God SAID this would happen in the Bible.

Maybe, while you read this guide, you spotted a lot of areas where you've sinned in business. Maybe you've had bad results because of it. Maybe you've felt guilty. Did you know God has a plan of forgiveness *for you*?

Have you lied in business? Hurt someone else who was just trying to make a sale? Done something despite feeling in your *conscience* that it is wrong? This is sin. You've probably run into sin, face forward, willfully choosing that path before. Are you a Christian? You've probably fallen into sin since, reacted on the turn of a dime and immediately regretted what you've said or done. Both situations call for *repentance*. That means praying to God about how messed up your life has been, and how you've been messing it up, and asking for His forgiveness. It helps to know what He considers "a mess." The ten commandments is a good

outline of that. However, even thinking hatefully or lustfully, or greed-- all the "thinking" those ten commandments represent, is also sin. God's Law can help you examine yourself for flaws - flaws that can be changed - so that you live right.

After repenting, He asks you to sin no more. He wants you to live a life guided by His Word (the Bible) and His Spirit (which will never contradict the Bible!).

One day we will have to face judgment for all we've done on earth. Those of us who have *murdered with hateful words*, lied, lived *greedily*, etc., *which is EVERYONE* if we're honest, will be *justifiably* judged. We're all guilty of breaking God's Law. We are supposed to act in love, always. However, we've ALL acted in HATE on many occasions.

The punishment for breaking God's Law, for acting in hate? "Hell," separation from God, "the second death."

The Good News: God wants us to come back into His family. The basis of the Law and His plan is LOVE. HE created each of us, but Satan snatched us away and we became more like devils than like God. We became children of the world and its lusts, not God. That is why the earth is so full of pain. We're lost. God wants to adopt us back into His family. He wants His chosen back. It pains Him to lose any of us to evil. It pains Him when we break His Law, act out of hate, and store up punishment for ourselves. It pains Him, the state WE'VE brought the world to. Then some try to blame Him for our problems and sin!? We taint our hearts and souls daily.

For this He sent one like the Son of Man, **Jesus Christ, God in the flesh**, to show us the way back to our Father. To BE our way, the only WAY, back to God. Jesus showed us our *need for grace*, **to repent** and submit our lives to God's will.

Jesus showed us that *eternal things matter more than our day to day lives*, and that *what we should do today* is store up not only spiritual blessings for eternity, but *family* (when we share our hope in Christ AND friends, family and once strangers seek God *as a result*), for eternity. Our life on earth is but a *blink*, we are but a *passing wind*. **Eternity is where it's at.**

Jesus, God in the flesh, lived here on earth (you may have heard of Mary, the virgin birth, even the historical accounts of Jesus by ancient historians such as Josephus.) JESUS **never** once sinned. He was *pure*, even in the face of temptation. Pure like the sacrifices throughout the Bible that God would find acceptable. **His plan was always to offer a full part of Himself as the only truly pure sacrifice ever, to pay the price for our sins and demonstrate grace in a way that makes it pitiful for us to yet turn away from His Truth.** This is like watching your friend about to be hit by a bus, after he spat on you and called you names, yet you jump forward willingly and shove him out of harm's way. You choose to be hit by the bus yourself, saving your friend, but losing your life. Jesus, GOD, gave His life for us.

Many people believe in God. Surely the One who made DNA (and imagine what DNA might be made of?!), the universe, and the laws of said universe, would *have a plan* for His creation? Yes! **His plan is very detailed. What we need to know about it is in The Bible, and no other source.** He didn't want us to be confused, so He gave us His plan in the Bible. We won't be confused if we are grounded in His Word, the Bible.

We can accept His ultimate plan, repent of our sins and fallen nature- **Christ having paid the price for us**. We can open our hearts to His Holy Spirit, to change us from the inside out. We can lead lives led by the Word (The Bible)- pleasing to God, **OR**

We can invent our own plans and fables (like heavens built on lust, or a godless science and society), keep sinning and living decadently (partying in excess, sex outside of marriage, etc.), live like there is no tomorrow and no judgment-- live a lie- a life in rebellion and hatred toward God- **and pay, ourselves, later**.

The end result for those that seek and follow God through Christ is eternal life, full of GREAT and godly things, instead of judgment and hell. We really don't deserve this grace, having willingly turned from God. Yet, He has offered grace that we may return to Him. So that we can change from fallen to righteous. From tainted to pure in heart. This is only made possible by Christ's dying on the cross, a gesture we can't begin to measure.

Days after Christ died on the cross for our sins, He rose again. He went up to Heaven. He will be back soon. He'll come out of the sky in view of the whole world. Then He'll take those of us who have clung to Him back into Heaven and to the home He has built for us, where there will be *no pain, no hate, and only blessings for eternity*. Those who live a life in submission to God's will, in the Spirit, will be able to hold their heads high when Christ returns. That could be only years away! Days! He is coming. Those who have rejected Him? The feeling that would warrant is too frightening for words. There won't be an excuse in the world for having rejected God for our own lusts and inventions.

If we cling to Him, and to the cross (His grace), we will be saved.

More Important Information:

Who Is Jesus?

<http://www.christian-mommies.com/who-is-jesus/>

Are You a Good Person? Will you *get into* Heaven?

<http://www.christian-mommies.com/good/>

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