

LIFE:
THE SECRET
INSTRUCTION
MANUAL

LIFE: THE SECRET INSTRUCTION MANUAL

First published by Alexander Coppen 2024 in the United States Of America.

Copyright © 2024 by Alexander Coppen

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise without written permission from the publisher. It is illegal to copy this book, post it to a website, or distribute it by any other means without permission.

Alexander Coppen asserts the moral right to be identified as the author of this work.

Citation(s):

Coppen, A. (2024). Life: The secret instruction manual. ISBN 979-8-99-165530-9.

Coppen, Alexander. Life: The Secret Instruction Manual. 2024. ISBN 979-8-99-165530-9.

The author may be contacted via email at ac@devilslane.com for enquiries or corrections. If you are an ordained minister involved in Christian apologetics for an established church, you may request an electronic copy of this book for free.

FIRST EDITION

ISBN: 979-8-99-165530-9 (print)

ISBN: 979-8-99-165531-6 (electronic)

Library of Congress Control Number: 2024921731

For Zair, Ollie, James.

So you can have the missing instruction manual I didn't. Or perhaps the wisdom I simply refused to pay attention to, when I could have.

Proverbs are always platitudes until
you have personally experienced the
truth of them.

—ALDOUS HUXLEY

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	v
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	viii
I What Life Is	
Meet Lady Wisdom	3
Make Your Choice	6
Logic + Reason = Fear Of God	8
Who God Is	12
What Wisdom Is	15
What Character Is	19
What To Live For	21
II Types Of People	
Simple People	29
Sarcastic People	31
Lazy People	33
Stupid People	35
Evil People	39
Godly People	43

III Strategy

Emotional Health	49
Speech	52
Good Faith	56
Anger & Conflict	60

IV Dangers

Pleasures	67
Drinking	70
Sexuality	72
Adultery	74

V Relationships

Choosing Friends	79
The Girls To Avoid & Reject	82
The Girl You Marry	86
Marriage	89
Home & Family	91
Parenting & Children	93

VI Prospering

The Art Of Success	99
Business & The Workplace	105
Wealth & Riches	109
Financial Debt	115
Poverty & Ruin	116
Hacks & Workarounds	120

VII Governing

Justice	125
Leadership	127

VIII 10 Minute Guides

Help For Right Now	133
Emergency Surgery This Week	136
10-Point Long-Term Operational Strategy	139
Climbing Out Of Ruin	147

IX Handling Common Situations

Making New Friends	157
Being Seduced By Lust Or Flattery	159
Defusing A Quarrel Or Rivalry	160
Doing Someone A Favour	162
Starting A Relationship	163
Starting A New Job	165
Attending A Lavish Event	167
Ending A Relationship	169
When Your Heart Gets Broken	171
Signing A Contract	173
Unexpected Fame Or Success	175
Receiving Correction	178
Starting A Business	180
Starting With Savings & Wealth	182
Hiring Someone	184
Being Tempted With A Shortcut	186
When A Relative Dies	188

After Making A Tragic Mistake	190
Becoming A Father	192
Taking A Calculated Risk	193
Dealing With Abusive Family	195
Fighting In Court	197
Facing Up To Alcoholism	199
Processing Your Anger	201
Being Falsely Accused Or Betrayed	204
Undertaking Leadership	206

X Filling The Gaps

What You Should Have Been Taught	211
When You Don't Know Anything	226
How Poor Kids From Nowhere Learn To Speak With Kings	233

Preface

Nobody knows exactly when the Book of Proverbs was written. Estimates range from the tenth to the fourth century BC¹²³. King Solomon, the second child of King David and Bathsheba, was regarded as the wealthiest and wisest man in the world through his forty year reign during 970–931 BC, and authored over three thousand “parallel” comparison sayings (aka “proverbs”) during his lifetime⁴⁵. It is believed he had seven hundred wives, three hundred concubines, two daughters (*Taphath*, *Basmath*), and a son (*Basmath*). Israel gained its highest splendour and wealth during his tenure⁶.

Solomon was particularly esteemed across ancient kingdoms for his extraordinary wisdom and insight. His infamous judgment between two women laying claim to the same infant (1 Kings 3:16–28) is given as a profound illustration of his

¹ Dell, K. J. (2006). *The Book of Proverbs in Social and Theological Context*. Cambridge University Press.

² Fox, M. V. (2009). *Proverbs 1-9: A new translation with introduction and commentary*. Yale University Press.

³ McKane, W. (1970). *Proverbs: A new approach*. SCM Press.

⁴ Longman III, T. (2002). *How to Read Proverbs*. InterVarsity Press.

⁵ Crenshaw, J. L. (2010). *Old Testament wisdom: An introduction* (3rd ed.). Westminster John Knox Press.

⁶ Keil, C. F., & Delitzsch, F. (1996). *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Vol. 3). Hendrickson Publishers.

discernment and prudence.

The Book of Proverbs has three other identified authors than Solomon. Firstly “The Wise” (22:17-24:22, 24:23-34); secondly, “Agur son of Jakeh” (30:1-33); and lastly, “King Lemuel” (31:1-9)⁷. It is formed of thirty-one chapters, or “collections”, typically containing around thirty individual observations. In total, the book has nine hundred and fifteen verses.

It is written to a young man, whose identity or age is not known. He is only referred to as “my son”. However, it most likely the audience was generalised to many or most young men⁸.

Its purpose was for this young man, or these young men, to know wisdom and instruction (1:2); receive teaching in wise dealing, righteousness, justice and equity (1:3); help the simple gain prudence and the youth gain knowledge and discretion (1:4); increase learning and to acquire skill in understanding (1:5); understand proverbs, parables, wise sayings, and riddles (1:6); and to learn the fear of the Lord (1:7).

As it is a book written for young men, wisdom is personified as what young men crave and chase: a beautiful woman. Conversely, temptation is also personified as a young woman⁹. Yet it contains possibly the most beautiful description of womanhood in antiquity.

Proverbs are simple statements anyone can understand.

⁷ Murphy, R. E. (1998). *Proverbs (Vol. 22)*. Thomas Nelson.

⁸ Fox, M. V. (2000). *Proverbs 1-9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Yale University Press.

⁹ Clifford, R. J. (1999). *Proverbs: A Commentary*. Westminster John Knox Press.

They contrast and compare two things, such as different types of people or comparable situations. Each verse compresses a book's worth of wisdom into one single sentence a child can grasp.

The wisdom of this book is endless, deep, and free to all. Thousands of years of emergent knowledge, available to anyone, anywhere, at any time, without any charge whatsoever. What it teaches is timeless, priceless, and profound; yet simple, practical, and easily applicable to ordinary life. There is no one whose life will not improve from merely reading it.

Why should you care what an old book says?

Times change, but human nature doesn't. What is written in the Book of Proverbs is eternal; the same problems and weaknesses occur today as they did three thousand years ago. Ours may not be an age of kings and slaves, but it is one of CEOs and wage slaves. Adultery may not get the death sentence, but people are still adulterous.

It might seem trite, but the Book of Proverbs was one of the first major attempts by humanity to write wisdom down and pass it along an inherited tradition. A way to teach and study wisdom rather than learn it by painful, repetitive experience. It lives on today, for you to immerse yourself within and become prudent. It is a gift to all generations which has borne fruit for millennia.

Acknowledgments

You will notice repetition in many paragraphs throughout this book, as you would in the Book of Proverbs. It is *deliberate*.

We learn by repetition. So much of our ordinary lives involves knowledge and behaviour which cross over, as does wisdom. As you read these chapters, you will begin to recognise blocks you have seen before; as you should recognise wisdom which is useful elsewhere in different situations.

You'll also notice the language and writing style is simple. Plain, in fact. As is noted in 10:19, the idea of obscuring our words to sound clever - or "multiplying" them - is dishonest in nature. Proverbs are basic, pithy observations which are preventative in their design, and meant to be understood by the simple so they instruct and edify.

This book is for men without fathers. Or fathers who were so distant, foolish, or indifferent they didn't care enough to impart the importance of wisdom, or bestow it like masculinity itself.

In Psalm 27, David says:

*"Although my father and my mother have forsaken me,
the LORD will take me in."*

And in Psalm 68, he explains why:

*A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God
in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families, he
leads out the prisoners with singing; but the rebellious
live in a sun-scorched land.*

I

What Life Is

We all start the same way, and there are a limited number of paths ahead of us. Who you are, and the nature of your life, is determined by which you choose. Or if you choose at all.

Meet Lady Wisdom

Out in the open she calls aloud, she *raises her voice* in the public square; on top of the wall she *cries out*, at the city gate she makes her speech. At the highest point along the way, where the paths meet, she takes her stand; beside the gate leading into the city, at the entrance, she *cries aloud*.

She has built her house; she has set up its seven pillars. She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine; she has also set her table. She has sent out her servants, and she calls from the highest point of the city,

Let all who are simple come to my house!

To those who have no sense she says,

*Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed.
Leave your simple ways and you will live; walk in the
way of insight.*

Listen, for I have trustworthy things to say; I open my lips to speak what is right. My mouth speaks what is true, for my lips hate evil. All the words of my mouth are just; none of them is crooked or perverse. To the discerning all of them are right;

they are upright to those who have found knowledge. Choose my instruction instead of silver, knowledge rather than choice gold, for wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with me.

I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence; I possess knowledge and discretion. To fear the Lord is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behaviour and perverse speech. Counsel and sound judgment are mine; I have insight, I have power.

By me kings reign and rulers issue decrees that are just; by me princes govern, and nobles—all who rule on earth. I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me. With me are riches and honor, enduring wealth and prosperity. My fruit is better than fine gold; what I yield surpasses choice silver. I walk in the way of righteousness, along the paths of justice, bestowing a rich inheritance on those who love me and making their treasuries full.

The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old; I was formed long ages ago, at the very beginning, when the world came to be. When there were no watery depths, I was given birth, when there were no springs overflowing with water; before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth, before he made the world or its fields or any of the dust of the earth.

I was there when he set the heavens in place, when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep, when he established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep when he gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep his command, and when he marked out the foundations of the earth.

Then I was constantly at his side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence, rejoicing in his

whole world and delighting in mankind.

Now then, my children, listen to me; blessed are those who keep my ways. Listen to my instruction and be wise; do not disregard it. Blessed are those who listen to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway. For those who find me find life and receive favour from the Lord. But those who fail to find me harm themselves; all who hate me love death.

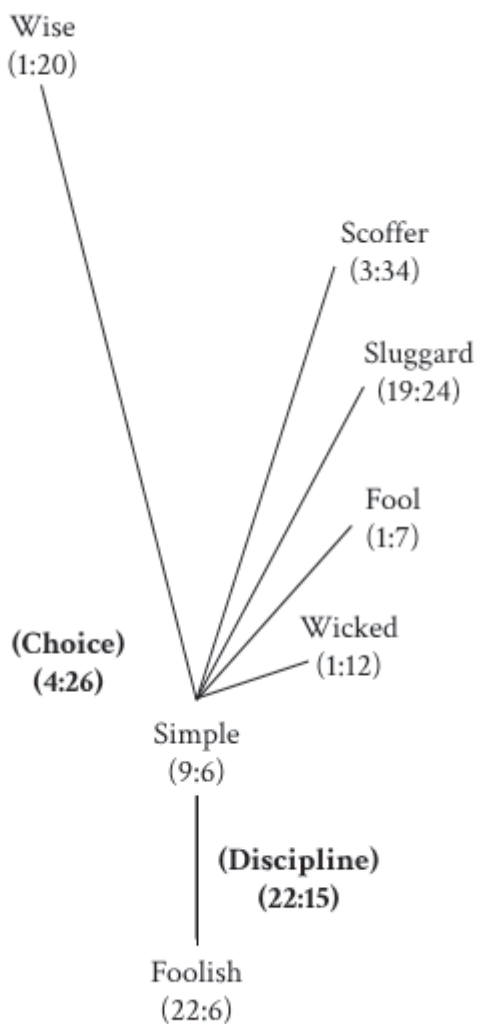
Make Your Choice

All children are born foolish (22:15). You have a choice. To spend your life trying to live well and make good decisions (4:26-27, 16:1, 20:11), or to not bother and end up in disaster due to your own lack of sense (1:32-33). God gave you senses to perceive the world around you (20:12), and your life reflects the contents of your heart as water reflects your face (27:19).

People have sets of ways they walk in, and life is a choice between these (2:9-10, 2:20, 20:24). You may see an ordinary road in front of you which seems like it seems right, but what you can't see is it leads to death (14:12, 16:25, 21:2, 21:16).

The right road ahead is straight and well-established, but all the wrong ways are crooked and go nowhere (2:13, 4:11). If you make that wise choice, you should look straight ahead and not go left or right (4:25-26), and put aside all your own notions and exclusively trust God to guide you down it (3:5-6, 16:21, 20:24, 23:19) to prosperity (28:25). Correction and instruction will be like a lamp providing light (6:23). You make the plans, and God carries you along the route He has planned for His own purpose (16:9, 19:21, 20:24).

MAKE YOUR CHOICE



Logic + Reason = Fear Of God

Belief in God is often a process rather than an event, and for some, often takes a lifetime. Different religious and philosophical can be categorised as viewpoints based on their characteristics related to the nature and attributes of divinity.

Most people start without knowledge (“a-gnosis”) or care for the spiritual realm, immersed in material concerns. They are undecided, or believe the existence of a God cannot be known or proven.

If they come to a decision, their thinking tends to be a binary choice of disbelief in any divine entity (“a-theism”), or the possibility of its existence. The natural question then emerges of whether there is a single entity (“mono-theism”) or more than one (“poly-theism”).

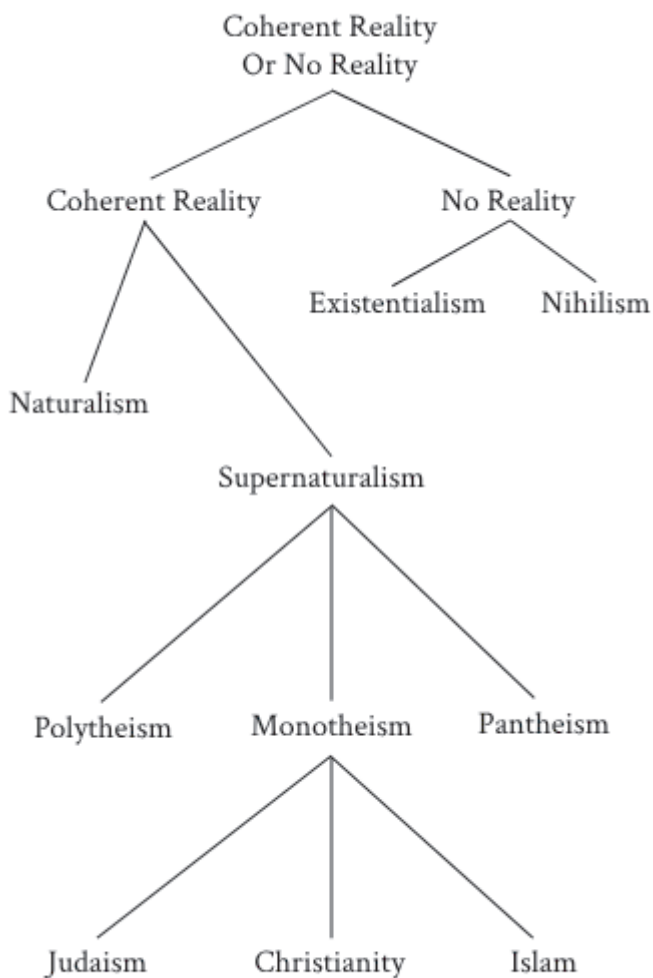
Panentheism posits a god is both transcendent and immanent, existing within and beyond the universe; Pantheism equates a god with the universe itself, with no distinction between the creator and the creation. Theism distinguishes between a god who intervenes in the world, and one who does not.



Alternatively, we can look at religious belief as a classification of metaphysical philosophy (how we think about the physical world we live in). Belief systems can be divided by whether they accept a structured and understandable reality, i.e. whether it has an intelligible purpose, or not.

When there is no understandable reality. Existence is there for its own sake. Individuals are free and responsible for determining their own development through acts of the will. Or life itself is meaningless.

The question then becomes the source of the coherence we observe that reality possesses. Everything arises from natural properties and causes which can be scientifically uncovered and supernatural or spiritual explanations are excluded, or there is an existence beyond the observable natural world, where supernatural forces and beings (e.g., gods, spirits) do exist.



Who God Is

In a world of cause and effect, God is the Uncaused First Cause. He is the omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent super-intelligence who created the 3D spacetime manifold of matter and energy everything exists within.

“El” is a word found frequently in the Bible for “god”; it forms terms such as *Eloah* (deity, singular) and *Elohim* (“gods”, plural). God has many titles which describe Him, but He also has personhood and a *name*. In Exodus 3:13-15, Moses asks God what it is. God replies His name is *YHWH* (יהוה). Ancient Hebrew does not use vowels, but it translates in English to “I AM”, or “Yahweh”, which describes His timeless nature. In Judaism, the Divine Name is replaced by *HaShem* (“the Name”, *שם*) or *Adonai* (“Lord”, *אדני*).

He is not an abstract *thing*. He is a *person*. His name is “I AM”.

He made the universe and skies (3:19, 8:27), planet Earth (3:19, 8:26, 8:29), the oceans and continents (3:20), and the clouds (3:20, 8:28). He settled the mountains and hills in place (8:25), marked out the horizon (8:27), and gave the sea its boundary (8:29). He gave us eyes and ears so we could sense and perceive the world around us (20:12), and controls the lifespan and history of all things from beginning to end; even

evil people and their deeds (16:4, 16:9).

He is to be feared (1:7, 2:5), and is the source of wisdom itself (2:6, 8:22). It's his prerogative and glory to conceal things (25:2). Nothing is beyond Him. He can see Heaven and Hell (15:9).

He is the Maker of everyone, rich or poor (22:2). He can see everything we do (5:21, 15:3, 20:27), and the contents of every person's heart (15:9, 20:27, 24:12). He weighs and measures our hearts (21:2, 24:12), and tests them (17:3, 20:27, 21:2, 24:12). He examines our internal motives (16:2, 20:27, 21:2, 24:12), and the subsequent choices we make (5:21, 20:27).

He delights in people who are trustworthy (12:22) and try to live a blameless life (11:20). He shows favour to people who are humble (3:34) or oppressed (3:34). The prayers of good people please him (15:8) and he hears them (15:29). He loves honest business with accurate measures (11:1, 16:11, 20:10), because He is completely trustworthy in all things (3:5-6).

He disciplines those He loves (3:12), and intervenes to prevent His children from being snared in traps (3:26). He takes in those who try to do the right thing and blesses their homes (3:32-33). He saves good people from hunger (10:3), acting as a shield and refuge to His children (30:5).

He hates greed and haughty eyes (6:17); lying and people who lie (6:17, 6:19, 8:13, 12:22); perverse people (3:32, 11:20); evil people (8:13); people who run to do evil (6:18); the condemnation of the innocent (17:15); the killing of the innocent (6:17); false testimony (6:18); scheming (6:18); people who stir up trouble in communities (6:19); pride (8:13, 16:5); arrogance (8:13); vile speech (8:13); cheating with dishonest scales (11:1, 20:10, 20:23); acquittal of the guilty (17:15); gifts and religious posturing from evil people (15:8, 21:27),

particularly when it's for their own advancement (21:27). People who despise God are devious (14:2).

He oppresses the evil (10:3), and distances himself from them (15:29). He mocks arrogant cynics (3:33), and He acts against proud people. He punishes them by tearing down the source of their pride: what they've built for themselves (15:25, 16:5)

His Word, and every word He speaks, is flawless (30:5). Don't try to augment it or improve it, because He'll rebuke and shame you for it (30:6). He always has the final say, even in what appears random like a roll of the dice (16:33, 21:31). No human-devised course of action can thwart Him or succeed against Him (21:30).

What Wisdom Is

Wisdom comes from God; He is the ultimate source of it (2:6, 8:22-31) and His name alone is a powerful fortified tower (18:10). You should think of wisdom as sweet honey (24:14) more profitable than silver (3:14, 4:11, 8:19, 16:16), a better investment than gold (3:14, 8:10, 8:19, 16:16), more precious than rubies (3:15, 8:11), and search for it like a hidden treasure (2:4) which is unable to compare to than anything you could think of desiring (3:15, 4:7, 8:11). God verbalises it as speech from his mouth (2:6) and keeps meticulous watch over it (22:12).

The benefits of wisdom are you live in safety, feel at ease, and don't need to worry about being harmed (1:33, 3:23). It protects and guards you (2:11, 4:6, 6:22, 9:12) to give you hope and peace (3:2, 23:18), brings you an inheritance of honour (3:35, 4:8), and is spiritually pleasant (2:10, 3:17). It will protect your physical body (3:8, 3:22, 4:22), help you sleep well at night without anxiety or nightmares (3:24), extend your life expectancy (4:10,7:2, 9:11,10:27), and make you prosperous (3:2, 19:8). You won't have to fear sudden disaster or ruin (3:25, 4:12, 23:18).

All wisdom starts with understanding who God is and how powerful He is. Understanding his position as the Creator

and author of all life, compared to yours as a simple primate who cannot change their own nature by themselves. The right response is humility: fear, respect, and reverence. (1:7, 9:10, 14:16, 22:4, 24:21). It means to hate evil, pride, arrogance, and vile speech (8:13). Just fearing Him means you are on the right track (14:2, 15:33, 16:6, 28:14) and behind the walls of a powerful fortress which will protect your family and children (14:26), turn you away from lethal traps (14:27, 19:23, 29:25), and be a fountain of life (14:27, 16:22, 19:23).

Wisdom was how God brought Creation into being (3:19-20). It is how kings reign, princes govern, nobles rule, and legislators issue decrees and laws (8:15-16). One wise person can walk through the doors of the largest fortress and pull its walls down in front of its strongest defenders (21:22).

The difference between wisdom and foolishness is the ability to accept instruction and correction. Listen to advice and respect those who are wiser than you. If you do, you will end up being one of them (19:20).

You can learn it. (1:23, 22:17-19, 23:12) It means to think about the right way to live (14:8) and the right steps to take (14:15). The first steps to start with are :

1. consistently fearing God (1:7, 14:16, 22:4, 23:17);
2. listening to your parents' teaching (1:8), and
3. avoiding any involvement with evil people (1:10-19, 14:16).

Afterwards, it's a process of never letting it out of your sight (3:21, 4:21), holding fast to it as a source of life (3:18, 4:13) and storing up commands (2:1, 4:4, 7:1, 10:8, 19:16) so wisdom lives in your heart (2:10) and you are blessed (3:18, 10:6, 29:18).

If you do, your name will be used in blessings (10:7) and you will love life (19:8).

It will start to come easily to you (14:6) as God tests and refines your heart (17:3) to produce patience (19:11). It is an endeavour which will crown you as royalty from the maturity and judgment you earn (14:18) and earn you a good reputation (16:21).

And you can teach it to others to guide them away from a ruinous life of disaster and foolishness (13:14). A person who loves wisdom always craves more wisdom (15:14) because their heart and ears crave it (18:15). They provide fantastic advice and instruction (16:23).

When people don't have Godly counsel or revealed wisdom to instruct them, they stop trying to behave virtuously and indulge hedonistically in undisciplined sin (29:18).

The consequences of not making any effort to become wise are severe: disaster striking, calamity overtaking, and being overwhelmed with distress and trouble (1:26). It's so severe it's similar to a storm or a whirlwind. (1:27).

Wisdom will only be good beforehand as prevention, and be no help or cure after the inevitable happens (1:26). That's because life is about cause and effect, and you always end up taking the consequences for your own behaviour in the same way a farmer reaps the harvest he sows (1:31, 11:31, 20:11, 22:8).

Those who don't end up angrily blaming God for their own mistakes (19:3). Your decisions and choices bear fruit over time which you will be forced to eat (1:31). If you heed instruction, you'll profit from it and be rewarded. If you ignore instruction and advice, you'll suffer for it (13:13, 13:18). You may even die (21:16).

You can try to be smart and wise all of your life, searching everywhere and calling out for it, but if you don't fear God, you'll never find it. (1:28-29).

What Character Is

Strength and vigour is the natural advantage of young men, which brings them glory (20:29). Grey hair in men is a glorious sign of a well-lived life, like a crown earned naturally from living the right way as a mark of distinction (16:31, 20:29).

Character is who you are in the dark, when nobody's looking. Nobody likes anyone with a weird, warped mind. They despise them (12:8). Don't try to deceive God or deny what you know. He guards your life and can see everything (24:12).

People aren't generally faithful or loyal, but they always claim to be. It's incredibly hard to find someone who is (20:6).

The nature of someone's character is tested by who they become once they are given fame and praise. In the same way you refine silver in a crucible and gold in a furnace, the pressure of adoration and applause tests who and what you are. (27:21). Your life will reflect your heart in the same way water reflects your face (27:19).

You won't prosper if your motives are bad, and they come from the heart (17:20). The unfaithfulness of duplicity brings ruin (11:3) because it's a trap caused by evil desires (11:6). Pride, arrogance, and haughtiness are an engine and factory for sin (21:4). When you're kind to others, you help yourself; when you're cruel to others, you hurt yourself (11:17).

Be wary and on your guard about your own hypocrisy. Some people are angry at their fathers, but don't do anything good for their mothers; others think of themselves as pure when they are covered in filth; have greedy eyes but glance dismissively at those in need. (30:11-13).

Humble people receive honour for their character and things they achieve. As pride precedes and provokes ruin, the opposite is also true: humility precedes and provokes honour. People pour honour on those who are humble about their success and lowly in spirit (15:33, 18:12, 29:23), and those who loyally defend whom they serve (27:18). Never praise yourself. Let an outsider do it for you (27:2).

What To Live For

What is purpose? What does it mean? Why should you even bother? Our ultimate purpose in life is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. Everything else is superficial or futile.

I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back'. Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth - everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.

Isaiah 43:6-7

Excellence

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.

Ecclesiastes 9:10

An archer needs a bullseye, as a violinist needs a melody. A builder wants to create a cathedral. To give everything and know you gave all you had.

Beauty

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

Ecclesiastes 3:11

There's a flower in the jungle blooming no human will ever lay eyes on. Why is it there? Why is the girl you love so enchanting and magical? Why does the orchestra bring you to tears?

Constraining Evil

When a crime is not punished quickly, people feel it is safe to do wrong.

Ecclesiastes 8:11

Without police, sentries, scouts, or courts, evil runs amok without end. Unless men confront it, it takes over.

Protectorship

Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

Psalms 82:3-4

Predators; starvation; exploitation. Natural disasters; exposure; criminality. Neglect, loneliness, and isolation. Injustice, threats, intimidation. Will you allow it or prevent it?

Adventure

See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up;
do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the
wilderness and streams in the wasteland.

Isaiah 43:19

Mountains; deserts; jungles; swamps; ice caps; tundra; oceans.
Broken dirt roads, propeller engines; forgotten languages.
Storms, dawns, and lost hope. It's out there.

Discovery

Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great
and unsearchable things you do not know.

Jeremiah 33:3

Songs need to be written. Mysteries need to be solved.
Mathematical formulae and chemical molecules need to be
uncovered. Inventions need to be created. Ancient villages
and unknown species need to be recorded.

Pioneership

Those who built on the wall, and those who carried
burdens, loaded themselves so that with one hand
they worked at construction, and with the other held
a weapon. Every one of the builders had his sword
girded at his side as he built.

Nehemiah 4:17-23

Someone has to be the first to do it and risk everything. Who else will get there and build it? Why not you?

Restoration

And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in.

Isaiah 58:120

Spring follows winter and plants regrow out of devastation. Dawn follows night. Wounds heal. The desert blooms. It's never the end. Rebuild it.

Brotherhood

Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Ecclesiastes 4:12

Men don't die for their country. They die to protect the friend next to them.

Stewardship

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

Genesis 2:15

Museums are our memory. Accounts record what we give and owe one another. What is not cared for falls into neglect and ruin.

Fatherhood

The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice; he who fathers a wise son will be glad in him.

Proverbs 23:24

Your son is your reason for all of it; giving him all you never had. History is a contract between the past, present, and future. The hardest and greatest thing you will ever do.

Rescue

Rescue those who are being led away to death! Indeed, hold back those who are staggering to the slaughter.

Proverbs 24:11

Have you ever thought of becoming a search and rescue pilot? Are you brave enough to venture into dark caves to find people trapped in there? Could you run into a burning building?

Mastery

If your sons keep my covenant and the statutes I teach them, then their sons will sit on your throne for ever and ever.

Psalms 132:12

What is the purpose of becoming excellent at something if not to be a professor to your students and show them how you did it?

Sacrifice

I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

Isaiah 6:8

Give yourself completely to something or someone. Your very life and soul. At full cost to yourself, so that they might live.

God

Here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

Everything you try to find fulfillment in will fail. Until you serve who created you, for the reason you were created.

II

Types Of People

Human beings easily fall into groups based on their character and how it causes them to behave. It's important to learn what they are, so you know who you are dealing with.

Simple People

All children are born foolish (22:15). Being *Simple* is the stage of adolescence where one is extremely immature and lacks sense; that is, the wisdom gained from life experience. The simple-minded are defined as youthful fools in their natural undeveloped state of folly: gullible, without moral direction, who are inclined to evil by default. This state can persist into late adulthood, but would be most commonly known as the *teenage* years before adult maturity.

In Ancient Hebrew, the words used are *Pethiy* and *Petayim*, which translate to “the simple”. The root word from which it is derived, *Pâthâh*, implies extreme vulnerability, literally meaning “to be opened up.”

They inherit foolishness and stupidity (14:18), which means they have not gained prudence (8:5), and their lack of sense demands discipline (10:13).

They chase fantasies instead of doing hard work (12:11), their stupidity is contagious (10:17), and they are gullible enough to believe anything (14:15). They are invited to foolishness and death by con artistry (9:14-18). They are especially vulnerable to seduction, lacking an understanding of the irreversible consequences of moral failure (7:6-7).

They see danger, but ignore it and carry on regardless when

they should hide. They end up suffering and paying the price (22:3, 27:12). They die from not growing up out of being on the wrong track (1:32).

If they're still stubborn after dozens of collapses and rebukes, there will come a day when their life simply falls apart, seemingly by surprise, and can't be repaired. There's an endpoint to the mistakes (29:1).

They can change and become wiser if they choose to listen to wise people (21:11). but they take forever to change, because they love the way they are and things they do (1:22). Stupidity brings them joy. It's pleasurable to them (15:21).

The answer to leave their ways behind and choose to walk in wisdom's ways instead (9:6). They sometimes learn to know better if they see an arrogant know-it-all cynic being severely punished (19:25, 21:11), as these people seek out the Simple in order to become their heroes.

Don't rescue them. You'll only have to do it again. Let them suffer the consequences of their actions and learn that way instead (19:19).

If you want to be wise, you need to keep the company of wise people. If your friends are *Simple*, you'll remain that way too (13:20).

At some point, the mistakes you make in your simplicity will mount up to where they are painful. You can ignore reality, but you cannot ignore the *consequences* of ignoring reality. You will be faced with a choice. The goal of loving fatherly discipline is to ensure the choice to pursue wisdom is made as early as possible.

Sarcastic People

Some people are arrogant know-it-all cynics, known as scolds, scorners, *Mockers*, or *Scoffers*. In Ancient Hebrew, the plural used is *Letsim* (*Lûwts*), which translates to “scoffers” from the verb *Lyts* (“to scoff”, or “to make mouths at”). Scorning fools utterly detests people and ideas that contradict their false thinking, and they express their scorn through derisive attitudes, behavior, and speech.

They are proud and arrogant, and live in a pattern of erupting in insolent, self-righteous fury (21:24). They find joy in looking down at others and mocking them (1:22). Many of these individuals are to be found in the bourgeois upper and upper-middle classes, in professions such as journalism.

People hate and detest them (24:9). Their insults and arguments stir up entire cities with bad feeling and conflict (29:8).

They try to find wisdom but never succeed (14:6). They resent being corrected by anyone, which means they avoid wise people (15:12). If you try to correct one, you’re asking for a barrage of insults in return (9:7). If you rebuke them, they will hate you (9:8), ignore it, and not respond (13:1).

God mocks them and their pride (3:34).

Punishments are lined up for them (19:29). If you punish

them severely in public, and it might shock and warn simple people into being more conscientious about the way they live (19:25). Get rid of them and you'll get rid of the fighting caused by their behaviour (22:10).

If you keep the company of mockers and scoffers, you'll become one of them. Avoid them (13:20).

Lazy People

Some people are lazy, slovenly gluttons, known as *Sluggards*. Or, humans with the characteristics and mobility of a garden slug. In Ancient Hebrew, the adjective used is *Atsel*, which translates to “slothful”, “indolent”, or “sluggish, lazy”. Indolent fools possess a different form of offensive pride.

Their house is overgrown with weeds and thorns from neglect, with crumbling walls falling to pieces (24:31). They lie in their bed rolling over like the hinge of a door (26:14). They make up completely ridiculous excuses not to even leave the house, like it being a life-threatening risk of a lion loose in the street outside (22:13, 26:13). Some are so lazy they won't even lift their gluttonous arm out of a plate of food to feed themselves (19:24, 26:15).

They are completely convinced of their own cleverness. So convinced, they believe they are smarter than seven wise people combined (26:16). Yet they have no sense, even if they inherit wealth or have the means to generate it (24:30).

They don't do the work they should at the normal times they should, so they go hungry despite searching for food (20:4) and miss out on luxurious things and lovely foods (12:27). Their appetite is never satisfied or fulfilled (13:4) and they are always hungry with no work to keep them busy (19:15) — which they

wouldn't do anyway (20:4). Their life is a slow, difficult, almost-impossible struggle through painful obstacles, like trying to fight through thorns (15:19). It's this 24/7 craving is what leads to their self-destructive death because of their own refusal to satiate it through hard work (21:25-26)..

Laziness is infectious (10:17) and it will make you sleep deeply (19:15, 20:13). It will make you poor (10:4, 20:13). Don't sleep too much. Definitely don't nap on the job. It will destroy any chance you have of prosperity, fast. Poverty will hit you so quickly it will be like a thief attacking you; an armed robber holding you up and stealing everything you have (6:9-11). Even taking small day-naps folding your hands over your chest means poverty will strip you like an armed robber (24:33-34).

It will end up with you doing hard unskilled work you hate because you have no other choice (12:24)

If you are slack in your work, you let down your friends and colleagues. It's destructive to others and like a form of vandalism (18:7). Sleeping when it is time to harvest is disgraceful (10:5). Lazy people are so obnoxious to employers they are like the taste of raw vinegar, or smoke in the eyes (10:26).

If you keep the company of lazy people, you'll become one of them. Avoid them (13:20).

If you're lazy, the answer is to use the ant as a model example to fix yourself. Copy what it does. It doesn't need to be told what to do by someone else and uses its own initiative. It stores up supplies during summer, so it has a huge stockpile to harvest before winter (6:6-8).

Stupid People

All children are born foolish. All humans start their existence as fools, and no-one is exempted. It is the natural state of humanity from our first moments. The job of parents is to forcibly remove it from us with the love of harsh discipline (22:15). If a child receives none, or no wisdom is learned, a person won't leave this state (22:6).

Some people are terminally stupid and reckless by character, regardless of their age. Not simply immature or lacking experience, but irrationally subjugated by their own ignorance, and persistently stubborn in their own prideful refusal to accept correction of any kind. They are known as *Fools*, or people entirely deficient in moral reasoning.

In Ancient Hebrew, different words are used. *Kisilim* (*keciyl*) is used the most, which translates to “fool” or “dullard”; someone who rejects Godly living for glorying in shameful sensual pleasures. The other word, *Evilim* (*eviyl*) tends to refer to “fool” in the sense of a person who is silly or insincere; an arrogant, impulsive back-chatter with a big mouth.

You will recognise these adult children as being extremely common on social media and reality TV. It could be said we live in a culture of Fools.

They despise the idea of being wise, and are implicitly

atheistic. They refuse to accept or follow instruction (1:7), and stubbornly hate turning away from evil (13:19). Their hearts are empty and wired wrongly in favour of it (15:7). They hate knowledge (1:22) and find no pleasure in it (18:2). Them quoting wise sayings is idiotic. It's as insightful as the useless legs of a cripple (26:7) or thorns in a drunk's hand (26:9).

They make their stupidity obvious and leave a mess everywhere (13:16). It is contagious (10:17). They feed on stupidity, slander, gossip, and trash as if it were food at a banquet (15:14).

The ultimate cause of their demise is deception: being easily deceived, and deceiving themselves (14:8). The core of the problem is self-delusion. If you deceive yourself; believing yourself to be in the right, there's more hope for a fool than you (26:12). A Fool's complacency and self-assurance ends up completely destroying their lives. Their lack of sense will physically kill them. (1:32, 8:36, 10:21). They rip their own home down with their own hands (14:1), and the inheritance they earn is shame (3:35).

They are volatile and hot-headed, yet completely confident in their stupidity (14:17). They don't hold back or restrain the full extent of their arrogant rage and lash out immediately (29:11, 14:3), flaring up in irritated anger the second they feel annoyed (12:16). They loudly blurt out all their thoughts and feelings instead of being discrete (12:23), and erupt into arguing and quarreling almost instantly (20:3).

Their greedy eyes constantly wander everywhere (17:24). When they have plenty to eat they are insufferable (30:22). They impulsively and gluttonously shove the best foods down their neck without thinking (21:20).

Their mouth is what brings them to ruin (10:14) because

they only ever speak stupidity (15:2). The things they say are so stupid they practically invite a beating and only ever bring them trouble and ruin, even killing them (18:6-7). They are unruly and loud (9:13-15), chattering away (10:8, 10:10) spreading slander (10:18). Everything they say is perverse (19:1), and they take pleasure both in evil scheming (24:9), as well as publicly broadcasting their opinions (10:23, 18:2). Speaking eloquently is unnatural to them (17:7), and their constant lies are the way they conceal their arrogant hatred (10:18).

If they're committed to their stupidity, they'll be so aggressive towards you stopping them it's like a mother bear defending her young. If you try to intervene, you'll get mauled (17:12). Their stupidity generates more stupidity. It doesn't build anything or yield a return or profit. It merely produces more and more stupidity (14:24). At which point they will repeat their own stupidity mindlessly like a dog returning to eat its own vomit (26:11).

They hate being corrected (12:1). If you correct or rebuke them, you will be met with extreme hostility (9:7-8). They ignore advice and refuse to listen to it, because they are convinced they know best (12:15). They disown and reject the discipline their parents try to apply (15:5).

If you hire one, they will injure everyone around them like an archer shooting and wounding at random (26:10). Using them to relay messages is so perilous it's like cutting off your own feet or drinking poison (26:6).

If you take them to court, they rage angrily, scoff and mock, and give no-one any peace (29:9). They mock the idea of making amends for wronging someone (14:9).

Honouring them is totally inappropriate and honour is

completely alien to them, like snow in summer or rain during harvest (26:1). It's so counter-productive it's like tying a stone into a sling (26:8). They are completely out of place in luxurious circumstances they couldn't even earn by themselves honestly (19:10).

Not responding to the extreme way they provoke you is a heavy burden like sand or a massive stone. (27:3). Don't respond to their stupidity, or you'll become just like them. Answer them simply in a way a stupid person would understand or they'll end up congratulating themselves (26:4-5). It's pointless to speak to them as they'll dismiss anything good you have to say (23:9).

Endless beatings lie in store for them as their fate (19:29) because their stupidity invites and brings them punishment (16:22). Getting told off and beaten up is as natural to them as a horse taking a whip or a donkey wearing a saddle (26:3). You can lash them a hundred times and they still won't learn (17:10).

Don't rescue them. You'll only have to do it again. Let them suffer the consequences of their actions and learn that way instead (19:19). You cannot remove their stupidity from them even by grinding them in a mortar, or treating them like grain in a pestle (27:22).

Wisdom is too much for them. When it's important or there's a crisis, they must not be allowed to speak (24:7).

If you spend time with them, you will become like them (13:20). Stay away from them at all costs. There is nothing they can teach you or help you with, nothing to learn from them (14:7).

Evil People

Some people are evil. They are *godless*, or *Wicked*. Although they are still categorised as fools, their folly is something darker: an arrogant moral abyss; a complete lack of righteousness, deriving pleasure from selfish cruelty. In Ancient Hebrew, the adverb used is *Rasha*, which translates to “morally wrong, bad, or wicked person”; whereas the noun is *Nâbâl*, translated as “stupid, wicked” or “vile person”.

It is their goal to draw as many others as possible into their evil ways. Attempts to reprove them will be futile and bring frustration to the one who tries to influence them. Only God can successfully reprove steadfastly evil fools.

The sexes express evil differently. Men abuse their strength to tyrannise and steal (1:12), whereas women abuse their sexuality to betray (2:16-17). They started well, but then chose to walk down the wrong road (2:13, 2:17, 12:26, 14:22, 28:10, 28:14) because of foolishness.

The root cause is a lack of discipline (5:23, 28:4) which leads them into a world which gets ever darker (4:19) in rebellion against God (17:11). In some circumstances, it’s because the people they followed listened to lies (29:12).

Corrupting people is easier than you imagine; they will do evil for a meal or a small gift (28:21). It can be expunged

and purged from someone's character with extremely severe punishment (20:30). Otherwise, they will inevitably gain a reputation as a schemer (24:8).

If you look for evil, you'll get it and it will invade your life (11:27). Shame and contempt always follows it (18:3). Never, never, never get involved with evil or criminal people in any way. Never, ever be tempted to accept their invitation when they seek you out. (1:10) Go out of your way to avoid them and don't allow yourself to cross paths with them (3:7, 4:14). Don't take one step in their direction. (1:15, 4:15) This is a life and death decision. (1:19).

Evil people relish doing evil and run to do it as their sustenance (1:16, 2:14, 4:17, 19:28, 21:10). They take bribes in secret to ruin justice (17:23, 29:4), which they hate (21:15). They're hungry (13:25) and restless and can't sleep until they've harmed someone and suffer insomnia (4:16). They put up a bold front (21:29), work quickly, harm others quickly (1:16), speak evil quickly (15:28, 24:2), and can't understand why they suffer disaster (4:19, 11:8, 12:21, 22:5, 24:16) because of their refusal to do what's right (21:7, 22:8) or even understand what it is (28:5).

Their words and speech are charming (26:25) but vile (2:12, 6:12, 13:5, 24:2) and overflow with concealed violence (10:6, 10:11, 12:6, 26:24-26) which can destroy entire civilisations (11:11, 29:4) and traps them (12:13). They rejoice in how perverse evil is (2:14), have empty industry which produces sin (21:4), and their heart isn't of much value (10:20, 24:2). They know they are attacking innocent people and they're devious. (1:11, 2:15, 12:20) They certainly don't care about the poor (29:7) and they really hate Godly virtuous people so much they seek to murder them (29:10, 29:27).

They try to tempt you with plans which they claim will be foolproof, pleasurable, and net you a share of what they steal. (1:12-14, 27:6). They recruit simple people who live close by and lead them astray (16:29, 21:10, 28:10); they're easy targets because they lack self-discipline and easily praise the wrong people (28:4). They signal their evil intent by winking maliciously (10:10, 16:30), clenching their lips (16:30), as well as making signs with their fingers and feet (6:13). What they take from others will overwhelm and kill them (1:19, 15:6, 21:7) and the things they do trap them like an animal locked inescapably in a snare (5:22, 21:7, 26:27, 29:6, 29:24) or lead them to fall into a deep hole (28:18).

If a good person gives in them, they're like a muddied or polluted well (25:26). If you try to correct one, you will receive abuse (9:7). Their advice is deceitful (12:4), they listen to liars (17:4), and even their kindest acts are cruel (12:10, 27:6). When they get into office or leadership, it drives ordinary people into hiding (28:12, 28:28), the population collapses into widespread sin (29:16), and they moan with misery (29:2).

Murderers, for example, are tormented by guilt and seek refuge in the relief they believe they will also die. There's no hope or remedy for them. Don't get in their way or stop them getting their wish (28:17).

Don't envy them (3:31, 23:17, 24:1, 24:19), worry over them (24:19), or show them favouritism (18:5). All people who try to gain by criminal means end up dying younger than expected (10:27, 13:9). Even just trying to. (1:19) They stir up trouble and conflict (6:14, 24:1) and have no hope in life (10:28, 11:23, 24:20). Evil is a one-way suicide mission where they are broadcasting their nature to everyone, and being the person who hunts and traps themselves (1:17-18, 11:5, 13:6,

21:18, 22:5, 28:10, 29:6, 29:24)

If you join them, you will die (1:19, 3:31, 11:19, 24:1) because their deceptive wages are sin and death (10:16, 11:18). They are always fleeing and looking over their shoulder because of their paranoia; even though no-one is chasing them (28:1).

And if somehow they survive, their destiny is to be cut off and ruined (2:22, 10:30, 11:20, 12:7, 14:11, 17:11) so their reputation rots (10:7) and they are made to bow before good people (14:19) by leaders looking to get rid of them for everyone's benefit (20:8, 20:26). They are often brought down by Godly people who notice them and resist what they are up to (21:12, 28:4) and if they corrupt good people, they will fall into their own trap (27:10).

They cannot be established (12:3) in the stronghold they want (12:12) , so the inevitable disaster which they dread catches up with them (10:24, 13:21, 14:32-33) and is always sudden, instant, and irreversible (6:15, 10:25, 24:20, 29:16). Justice against them causes everyone to celebrate with shouts of joy (11:10, 21:15, 28:28, 29:6), especially when their means of angrily harming others is neutralised (22:8).

God hates them, curses them, and their home (3:33, 10:29, 15:8-9). He rejects their self-serving religious cries to Him (21:27), exposes them (10:9, 26:26), hates their thoughts (15:26), condemns their schemes (12:2), and blocks them from having what their appetites crave (10:3, 22:12).

If you keep the company of evil people, you'll become one of them. Avoid them, because your life genuinely does depends on it (13:20).

Godly People

No-one can say they're truly good or haven't sinned (20:9). However, a minority of people deliberately set down the narrowest path to serve God and chase after wisdom, after having renounced foolishness. They are rare, and known as the *Righteous, Blameless, or Upright*.

The word used in Ancient Hebrew is *Yasar*, which translates to "straight", "vertically erect", "horizontally level or smooth", or "evenly distributed". It means to be free of blemish or corruption, and have God's stamp of approval. Their key characteristics are integrity and righteousness.

Good is defined by God's thinking and standards, not our own (3:7, 19:16). It means what is morally right, just, and fair (2:9), which Godly people understand intuitively (27:5). Seeking it will bring you favour (11:27). Those who do end up finding love and faithfulness (14:22); life, prosperity, and honour (21:21); living lives free of blame which straighten the road for their children (20:7). The end of the road leads to eternal life with God (12:28).

What righteous Godly people want ends up in their good, and the good of those around them (11:23). When good people prosper, everyone around them benefits and celebrates (11:10, 11:11, 28:12, 28:28, 29:2). Their integrity can lift

up entire countries (14:34). Their life bears wonderful fruit (11:30, 12:28) and they leave a healthy inheritance for their grandchildren (13:22).

Godly people keep secrets faithfully and are trustworthy (11:13). They think through their behaviour in detail (21:29), as well as consider and weigh what they intend to say before blurting things out (15:28). If you rebuke them, they listen and learn (19:25).

Upright people love justice and celebrate it because it sparks joy for them (21:15), particularly when the poor receive it fairly (29:7). They care for the lowest among us, like animals (12:10), and hate evil people. They make notes of them and bring them to ruin (21:12, 29:27). They are discerning about who they have as friends (12:26) and they can see through the delusions of the rich (28:11).

In the grand scheme of things, Godly mediators with integrity and patience, who are self-controlled, are more useful and effective than lethal warriors who can take a whole city (16:32). Patience itself is a product of wisdom (19:11).

Good people give and give without thinking about holding back portions for themselves (21:26, 22:9). A quick way to mimic their kindness is not to hold back help if it's within your means, and the person deserves it. If you can help, do it. (3:27).

The lives of people who love God and try to live rightly get better and better as they age (4:18, 15:24), it gains them favour from Him (12:2, 13:9, 15:8), they are as bold and confident as a lion (28:1), and they live free from punishment (11:21, 15:24). Their plans are just (12:5) and they hate what is false (13:5). Their good words save them when they get stuck (12:6) because of the good will they generate (14:9), and keep

them out of trouble (12:13, 28:18, 28:26). They run to God for rescue and shelter in every single circumstance, even their own death (14:32), and manage to get back up seven times over (24:16). He loves them (15:9) and blesses them with a lovely inheritance (28:10).

Righteousness will save your life (10:2, 11:4, 12:21, 15:24), help you thrive (11:28, 13:21, 14:11) like a healthy plant that continually provides wealthy fruit (12:12, 15:6), give you the hope of future joy (10:28), straighten your path into a highway avoiding evil (11:5, 15:19, 15:21, 16:17), and the wages of it are life (10:16, 11:19, 22:4). It will even help you save other people's lives (11:30) and let you eat as much as you want (13:25).

Living with integrity will guide and guard you (11:3, 13:6, 16:17), bring you the rescue of refuge and security (10:9, 10:29, 11:8), provide you resilience from storms (10:25, 11:5, 12:7, 24:16) so you are never uprooted (10:30, 12:3), and ensure what you desire will be granted (10:24).

Don't put your hope in men. All the hope goes when they die. Their power means nothing (11:7, 29:25). Good people who give in to evil people are like a polluted, muddy well (25:26).

It's better to do what's right, just, and fair than try to make any kind of bargain with God or undertake any theatrical performance for Him (21:3). You'll be repaid for what you give. If you're mean, you'll be repaid in full with nothing. If you're kindhearted and Godly, you'll be rewarded with that. (14:15). God orders and progresses the big picture of your short life on Earth even if you organise the day-to-day things (16:9). If He approves and intervenes in your life, even your enemies will show you greetings and favour (16:7).

III

Strategy

Once you understand what the different paths are and who people can be grouped into, the question is: how should you live? What is the best way to live?

Emotional Health

Humans are spiritual beings. Our soul is like a lamp God placed inside us which illuminates who we truly are at our deepest depth (20:27). Your heart and soul are broad and deep. It's hard to know what drives you and what you want, or what gives you a sense of meaning and purpose. If you're wise, you can understand yourself and be perceptive about others (20:5).

Everything in your life flows from your heart. Guard it. (4:23). Your life will reflect your heart in the same way water reflects your face (27:19). You won't prosper if your motives are bad, and they come from the heart (17:20).

If you fail, flounder, or collapse when it counts - when there's a storm of trouble - your weakness is an embarrassment (24:10).

The key to success in life is self-control. If you're impulsive, explosive, or otherwise lack it, you're as vulnerable as a strong fortress citadel whose walls have been broken through. Your defenses are down and you will be routed by people looking to overcome you (25:28).

Emotional health and peace of mind are a product of wisdom: it will enable you to live in safety, feel at ease, and not worry about being harmed (1:33, 3:23). It protects and guards you (2:11, 4:6, 6:22, 9:12) to give you hope and peace (3:2,

23:18), brings you an inheritance of honour (3:35, 4:8), and is spiritually pleasant (2:10, 3:17). It will protect your physical body (3:8, 3:22, 4:22), help you sleep well at night without anxiety or nightmares (3:24), extend your life expectancy (4:10,7:2, 9:11,10:27), and make you prosperous (3:2, 19:8). You won't have to fear sudden disaster or ruin (3:25, 4:12, 23:18).

If your heart is peaceful, and your life is peaceful, you'll see it in your physical appearance. You'll look healthy and display vitality (14:30) and wear a smile on your face (15:13). If you're optimistic and positive, your heart will have a constant feast (15:15). Promoting peace will bring you joy (12:20). Eat good, healthy foods and enjoy their taste (24:13). When you're kind to others, you help yourself; when you're cruel to others, you hurt yourself (11:17).

A miserable, mean heart means a miserable life 15:15). If you burn with resentment and envy, it'll feel like your bones are rotting inside you (14:30). Don't swear revenge or payback (24:29). Pride, arrogance, and haughtiness are an engine and factory for sin (21:4). Hardening your heart, or turning against God, will send you down the wrong road and you in trouble (28:14).

Everyone has their own pain and joy only they feel and experience. Yours won't be the same as others, and vice versa (14:10). The people you see laughing may well be devastated and heartbroken inside. And some days, celebrations may ironically end in tragedy (14:13).

Your emotions and spirit are intimately linked. If you're heartbroken, your spirit will feel crushed (15:13). It can feel like it's deep in your bones and they've dried up (17:23). It feels unbearable (18:14). Anxiety and worry weighs your heart