

# Proverbs

## IGNATIUS CATHOLIC STUDY BIBLE QUESTIONS

### Welcome

*“You are approaching the ‘word of God’. But for thousands of years, ... the Word of God has been approaching you.”*

The following guide is provided to enhance your reading of the Book of Proverbs using the *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible*. If you are new to this resource or to reading the Bible, we recommend you read the general Introduction before you begin. It explains what it means that Scripture is the Word of God as well as how we understand and interpret it as Catholics. It also introduces the special features of the Study Bible and tells how they can enrich your reading and study. Additionally, the *Introduction to the Psalms and Wisdom Literature* will provide valuable context for your reading.

A simple rhythm of prayer followed by reading and reflection is offered below to guide you through the book one chapter at a time. Questions draw attention to key footnotes and word studies to lead you into a deeper understanding of what you read and then prompt you to consider how to apply what you have learned. For a deeper dive, take advantage of additional features as you go: not just the other footnotes but also cross-references to Scripture and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* that are provided above the footnotes as well as any maps, charts, or essays that are not touched on in the questions.

Don't miss these helpful icons as you read! They highlight footnotes that pertain to the Church's criteria for interpreting Scripture (see CCC 112–14):



### Be attentive to the content and unity of Scripture

Notes marked with a Bible icon connect Old Testament passages and New Testament mysteries, fostering appreciation for God's unified plan.



### Read Scripture in light of the Church's living tradition

This icon marks notes drawn from the Holy Spirit's guidance of Church teaching and the spiritual senses of scripture. Here you'll find official teaching as well as interpretations from Fathers, Doctors, and saints of the Church.



### Be attentive to the “analogy of faith”

Explore notes marked with an icon of keys to learn how the mysteries of faith, revealed in Scripture and defined by the Church, clarify and connect with one another in a unified, coherent way.

May God bless you as you read his word!

of God,\* did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,<sup>7</sup> but emptied himself,<sup>†</sup> taking the form of a servant,<sup>‡</sup> being born in the likeness of men.<sup>§</sup> And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.<sup>¶</sup> Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name,<sup>||</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,<sup>|||</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

**Shinin**  
12 Therefore, obeyed, so now much more in salvation with f work in you, bo pleasure.  
14 Do all th tioning,<sup>15</sup> that y children of God crooked and per

2:9–11: Rom 10:9; 14:9; Eph 1:20–21. 2:13: 1 Cor 15:10. 2

**2:7 emptied himself:** The Greek verb *kenōō* means “empty out” or “render void”. The idea is, not that Christ divested himself of divinity when he united himself with humanity, but that he restricted his rightful exercise of certain divine abilities during his earthly life and accepted certain limitations of the human condition. In effect, the Son of God made himself poor in order to make us rich with his grace (2 Cor 8:9) (CCC 472). • Christ emptied himself by compressing the glory of his Godhead within our smallness. What he always was remained perfect and incomprehensible, but what he assumed was in proportion to the measure of our nature (St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Apollinarius*).

**2:8 death on a cross:** The ultimate indignity. Death by crucifixion was the most awful and degrading form of criminal execution in the ancient world. The Romans reserved it for slaves and insurrectionists. See note on Mk 15:24.

**2:9 exalted him:** By raising him from the dead, enthroning him in heaven, and clothing his humanity with divine glory. A similar destiny awaits all who humble themselves as Jesus did (3:21; Lk 14:11).

**2:10 every knee should bow:** An allusion to the divine oath in Is 45:23. • Yahweh swore that all peoples, to the very end of the earth, would acknowledge his Lordship and bow before him in homage. Paul moves Christ into the center of this prophecy as the divine Lord destined to be revered by all. **heaven ... earth ... under the earth:** The three principal realms in the world view of ancient Israel (Ex 20:4). Homage will come from all creatures great and small—the angels and saints above, the family of man and beasts spread over the earth, and the dead and the demons of the underworld.

serious that we pur sense of awe at sen the prospect of sinn Encouragement con readers that God's g desire (intention) at 21; CCC 308) (CC “work”, he address and trembling”, he good deeds were th not boast of your g within you (St. Augu 2:15 pervers • Deuterono poetic lawsuit that and ingratitude du

*A Thing to Harpagmos (G in the Greek O Occurrences of “robbery”. Its considerable de the leading vi (1) Some, like*

## Prepare

Read the Introduction to Proverbs, paying particular attention to the *Themes and Characteristics* of the book and the *Christian Perspective* on it. What one thing stands out to you, that you would like to remember?

Read the Outline of Proverbs to get an overview of the book. What are its major divisions?

## Pray

Use the following questions to guide your reading of Proverbs, going at a pace that is comfortable to you. Before you begin each new section, pray simply for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit:

*Come, Holy Spirit, open my heart to hear and receive these words as what they truly are, the Word of God. Enlighten my understanding and give me grace to put what I read into practice in my life. Amen.*

## Read and Reflect

Read and reflect on Proverbs as follows:

- Pray before you read
- Read a section of biblical text by itself
- Read the text again, referring to the notes that accompany the text
- For deeper understanding and to aid in applying what you read, answer the questions that follow. The references at the top of each numbered question correspond to particular notes.

At the end of each chapter, review what you have written and linger where you feel drawn, asking the Lord to speak to your heart and into your life. What do you hear? Respond in prayer and ask his help to live what you hear in your attitudes and actions this week.

## Chapter 1



### For Understanding

#### Word Study: *Proverb*.

- What kinds of literary forms does the Hebrew word *mashal* encompass?
- What negative connotation does it sometimes have?
- What does it most commonly denote?
- As observations, on what are proverbs based?

#### Proverbs 1:7

- What does Proverbs teach about the fear of the Lord?
- In practical terms, what does fear of the Lord mean?

## *Proverbs*

- According to St. John Chrysostom, where does sin have its beginning?
  
- What kinds of fear does St. Bede describe in his *Commentary on Proverbs*?

### **Proverbs 1:8**

- Where was the primary setting for moral and religious instruction in biblical Israel?
  
- When does direct evidence for Jewish schools materialize in Palestine?
  
- What other societies present fathers instructing their sons in proper behavior?

### **Proverbs 1:15**

- As an overarching metaphor in Proverbs, for what does “the way” stand?
  
- How many roads may one travel in life, and where do they lead?



## For Application

### **Proverbs 1:7b–8**

- When you were a child, how receptive were you to the formation and instruction of your parents or those who educated you?
- What were the main areas of resistance?
- How do you regard their instruction now?

### **Proverbs 1:11–16**

- When you were an adolescent, what influence did your peers have on your behavior, whether for good or ill?
- What influence did you have on the behavior of your peers?
- How did your peer relationships help or harm your faith in God?

### **Proverbs 1:19**

- Have you ever stolen anything, either openly or secretly?

## *Proverbs*

- If you have stolen repeatedly, what were your motives?
  
- How do things gained that way take away the lives of their possessors, according to the proverb?

### **Proverbs 1:29–32**

- How deadly are the consequences of a serious sin, such as a sin against the fifth, sixth, seventh, or eighth commandment?
  
- How is the sinner killed by his sin, even if he remains physically alive?

#### **Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

## Chapter 2



### For Understanding

#### **Proverbs 2:1–22**

- On what are these verses a discourse?
- Once possessed, what will wisdom give young men?

#### **Proverbs 2:6**

- To whom is wisdom given?
- What, therefore, is essential in its pursuit besides study, reflection, and learning?
- Who provides living proof of this?

#### **Proverbs 2:16**

- Who is the “loose woman” here?
- What does she betray?

- Why is it crucial to avoid her?

### **Proverbs 2:17**

- What was marriage considered to be in ancient Israel?
  
- What does adultery violate in addition to the covenant with one's spouse?



### **For Application**

### **Proverbs 2:3**

- When you pray for wisdom, how do you recognize its arrival?
  
- Why is it better to pray for wisdom regularly than only at those moments when you especially need it?

### **Proverbs 2:5–15**

- Over the course of your life, has an “instinct” for right behavior ever preserved you from situations or people that might have proven dangerous even though you did not recognize the danger at the time?

- Did you gain wisdom as a result?

### **Proverbs 2:7–8**

- Read these verses carefully. What do they tell you about the character of the person who attains wisdom?

### **Proverbs 2:20–22**

- In an age when it seems that the wicked inherit the land and the treacherous gain all the wealth, what needs to change in the culture for the truth of these verses to become apparent?

#### **Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

## Chapter 3



### For Understanding

#### **Proverbs 3:1–35**

- What are the four main units of this chapter?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What does each section propose?

#### **Proverbs 3:5**

- What does wisdom urge one to recognize?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What does the biblical notion of wisdom include?

#### **Proverbs 3:11–12**

- How is divine discipline experienced as a form of fatherly training?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- For what purpose does the book of Hebrews quote these verses?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What is the aim of such painful ordeals?

### **Proverbs 3:18**

- What does Proverbs intend to depict by evoking memories of the tree of life from Genesis 2:9?
- In effect, what do those who find wisdom receive?
- How does Origen of Alexandria apply the image of the tree of life to the Eucharist?

### **Proverbs 3:34**

- To whom is the Lord's favor shown in answered prayer?
- According to St. Jerome, why is pride evil and not "a trifling sin"?



### **For Application**

### **Proverbs 3:5–7**

- What does Proverbs typically call the person who is wise in his own eyes?
- If you have expertise in a certain area, is it possible both to use it and to trust in the Lord with all your heart at the same time?

**Proverbs 3:9–10**

- Read the note for these verses. What percentage of your income do you contribute to the Church?
  
- Have you tried tithing—that is, giving 10 percent of your income? If not, why not? If so, what has been the fruit?

**Proverbs 3:11–12**

- How has the discipline of the Lord shown itself in your life?
  
- What have you learned about yourself and your relationship with the Lord from it?
  
- Have you sought his discipline or tried to avoid it?

**Proverbs 3:27–28**

- Related to the issue of tithing is that of almsgiving. Do you regularly give alms, particularly when someone in your parish community needs help that you can provide?
  
- In addition to donations of money, what other types of aid are you in a position to give?

## **Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

## **Chapter 4**



### **For Understanding**

#### **Proverbs 4:6–9**

- How is wisdom personified in these verses? What is she doing?

#### **Proverbs 4:18**

- What increases over time for the righteous?

### **Proverbs 4:20–27**

- For what is the father appealing in these verses?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- How are his words reinforced in a tangible way?

### **Proverbs 4:27**

- From what is the young man cautioned not to swerve?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Using similar language, what do other biblical exhortations urge readers to observe?



### **For Application**

### **Proverbs 4:1–4**

- Describe your relationship with your father, guardian, or mentor. What kinds of things did he try to teach you?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Regardless of a child's gender, how important is a father figure in his life? Why?

### **Proverbs 4:14–15**

- In your environment, what does “the path of the wicked” look like? For example, do you face an environment where experimentation with drugs, casual sex, aggressive partying, gang activity, and the like are prevalent?
- What enticements to this type of behavior present themselves to you?
- How do you avoid them?

### **Proverbs 4:19**

- If “the path of the wicked” is so much fun, why is *night* the time to take it?
- Why is daytime used to describe the “path of the righteous”?

### **Proverbs 4:24**

- Read CCC 2482–2487, about lying. Why is “crooked speech” and “devious talk” so harmful?
- Whom does it harm?

## **Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

## **Chapter 5**



### **For Understanding**

#### **Proverbs 5:1–23**

- With what are the dangers of adultery contrasted?
- What does involvement with a “loose woman” bring?
- What does fidelity to one’s wife bring?

- With what does the chapter combine practical advice?

### **Proverbs 5:15–18**

- For what is the *well* or *fountain* a poetic image?
- How does this image apply to the protection of one's wife?
- What does part of this protection involve?

### **Proverbs 5:19**

- What can fanning the flames of marital love do to a marriage?

### **Proverbs 5:21**

- If the prospect of shame and remorse are not enough to dissuade the young man from an adulterous affair, what will?



## For Application

### **Proverbs 5:8**

- What, besides direct personal contact, are some of the ways of going “near the house” of the “loose woman”? For example, what are some of the pornographic temptations that surround you?
- How do you avoid them?
- If you have children, how do you protect them?

### **Proverbs 5:11–12**

- How likely is the threat of falling victim to a sexually transmitted disease to deter someone from sexual promiscuity or infidelity?
- Once sexual integrity has been lost, what can be done to restore it?

### **Proverbs 5:18–19**

- In your experience, why do spouses who have been married some years become dissatisfied with each other and begin to think of straying?

- If love in a marriage becomes stale, how can it be rejuvenated?

### **Proverbs 5:23**

- Is marital infidelity merely a lack of discipline?
  
- How should a spouse exercise sexual self-control when temptations against fidelity arise?

#### **Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

## Chapter 6



### For Understanding

#### **Proverbs 6:1–35**

- What are young men urged to avoid in this chapter?

#### **Proverbs 6:6**

- Why should the young man pay attention to a tiny insect like the ant?
- According to St. Basil, how does wise Solomon praise labor?
- What will he who gave us the ability to work require?

#### **Proverbs 6:16–19**

- What kind of proverb is here, and what does it do?
- What does this proverb catalogue?

- With what are most of these sins associated?

### **Proverbs 6:30**

- How are thievery and adultery associated in the biblical world?
  
- What is the difference in terms of making amends?



### **For Application**

### **Proverbs 6:1–5**

- If you co-sign on a loan, what happens if the primary borrower defaults?
  
- What kinds of precautions should you take before agreeing to co-sign?

### **Proverbs 6:10–11**

- If a relative or acquaintance repeatedly asks you for money or other support, how do you determine whether the requests arise from laziness instead of a genuine need?
  
- What are some charitable ways you can stop supporting a person who should be supporting himself?

### Proverbs 6:16–19

- What do these seven abominable attitudes have in common?
  
- What kind of person do they describe?
  
- How many of them do you see in yourself?

### Proverbs 6:25

- Compare Deut 5:21 with Mt 5:27–28. When does appreciation for the beauty of another’s spouse become “adultery in the heart”?
  
- If *fighting* an adulterous desire is not an appropriate way to handle temptation, what is?

#### **Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

## Chapter 7



### For Understanding

#### Proverbs 7:1–27

- Against what do these verses warn?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What does the father recount here?

#### Proverbs 7:2

- What is the “apple” of the eye?

#### Proverbs 7:4

- For whom is the epithet “my sister” sometimes used?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Who should the most intimate companion in life be?

#### Proverbs 7:14

- What might be the meaning of the harlot’s statement about offering sacrifices?

## *Proverbs*

- Either way, how does she try to appear and why?



### **For Application**

#### **Proverbs 7:1–5**

- How can the eager pursuit of divine wisdom be an effective deterrent against sexual temptation?
  
- How might it help you when you face such temptation?

#### **Proverbs 7:6–9**

- How might one, consciously or not, actually *court* sexual temptation?

#### **Proverbs 7:10**

- Read the definition of modesty in CCC 2521. How do today's clothing fashions accord with that definition?
  
- How might clothing that is itself reasonably modest be worn so as to suggest an immodest attitude?

## **Proverbs 7:13–27**

- Seduction, especially sexual seduction, probes for weak points in a person’s character, such as a need to be found attractive or a desire for power or adventure. What are some weak points where an effort to seduce might attract you?
  
- How should you protect yourself?

### **Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

## **Chapter 8**



### **For Understanding**

## **Proverbs 8:1–36**

- How does the woman Wisdom portray herself in these verses?

## *Proverbs*

- To whom is she appealing, and what is she urging?
- In addition to her gifts, what other mention is made about her origin?
- How does the Church's tradition read these wisdom speeches in Proverbs?

### **Proverbs 8:22–31**

- Before the world and history came into being, where was Wisdom?
- How is she related to God?
- What is her role in creation?
- For what revelation does her personification in the OT prepare in the NT, and how does it relate to Jesus?
- According to St. Bede, why does the Lord possess Wisdom at the beginning of his ways?

### **Proverbs 8:22**

- What description of Wisdom suggests the alternative translation of the Lord “begetting” Wisdom?
- How is the Greek LXX wording reflected in Revelation?
- According to St. Ambrose, how is this verse a prophecy of the Incarnation?

### **Proverbs 8:24**

- What does Wisdom mean by saying that she was “brought forth” when there were no depths?



### **For Application**

### **Proverbs 8:7**

- Since Wisdom deals with practical *decisions*, what kind of *truth* does the mouth of Wisdom utter?
- How is this kind of truth opposed to wickedness?

### **Proverbs 8:12**

- Read CCC 1806 on the cardinal virtue of prudence. What is “practical reason”?

## *Proverbs*

- According to the Catechism, how does the prudent person determine and direct his conduct?

### **Proverbs 8:13**

- What does “hatred” mean in this verse?
  
- Is it an intense dislike for or a rejection of evil?

### **Proverbs 8:14**

- Read CCC 1808 on the cardinal virtue of fortitude. Given the growing opposition to Christian moral teaching in our society, how necessary is this virtue for you?
  
- How might you grow in moral fortitude?

#### **Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

## Chapter 9



### For Understanding

#### Proverbs 9:1–18

- How does this chapter begin and end?
- How is the contrast between Wisdom and Folly brought out?
- What do their two banquets represent?

#### Proverbs 9:1

- What are two ways to understand the metaphor of Wisdom's house?
- According to St. Augustine, what sort of house has Wisdom built, and how has she set her table?

#### Proverbs 9:2

- Why does Wisdom mix her wine?
- Of what does her banquet consist?

### **Proverbs 9:17**

- To what might the image of stolen water refer, and, in this case, what might be in view?
  
- With what prospect is the seductress luring the foolish man?



### **For Application**

### **Proverbs 9:1–6**

- Compare these verses with Jn 7:37–39. How should accepting the invitation of Wisdom to her banquet slake the kind of thirst about which Jesus is talking?

### **Proverbs 9:10**

- About what kind of knowledge does this verse talk?
  
- How does one come to know the Holy One?

### **Proverbs 9:13–17**

- Since both Wisdom and Folly in this chapter have their attractions and make similar appeals to the fool, to what does each appeal in order to win him over?

## **Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

## **Chapter 10**



### **For Understanding**

#### **Proverbs 10:1—22:16**

- Of what does this second main collection of wisdom instructions consist?
- What does the number of sayings match?
- How are the several clusters of sayings in this section grouped?

## *Proverbs*

- With what topics do they deal, and what do they imply about wisdom and foolishness?

### **Essay: *Wisdom Literature in the Bible.***

- Which books are included in the wisdom writings of the Old Testament?
- Expressed in didactic poetry, with what do they deal?
- What are some of the historical reasons for the existence of wisdom literature?
- What may be the evangelical reasons for the existence of wisdom literature?
- How do these considerations account for Solomon's inspiration of the wisdom tradition in Israel?

### **Proverbs 10:12**

- What can a spirit of charity and mercy absorb?

## *Proverbs*

- For what is the notion of “covering” sins and offenses an idiom?
- Where does a paraphrase of this verse appear in the New Testament?

### **Proverbs 10:19**

- What is meant by the warning against “many words”?
- What characterizes the speech of the wise man?



### **For Application**

### **Proverbs 10:1**

- If you are a parent, what are some signs of emotional or moral maturity that you expect to see as your children grow?
- What character traits do you encourage in them?

### **Proverbs 10:4–5**

- How do you encourage children to mature in doing work consistently well?

## *Proverbs*

- How do you assign chores, and how do you discipline children in regard to their performance?

### **Proverbs 10:10**

- What is the difference between a stern disciplinarian and a strict one?
  
- As someone who must occasionally discipline others through correction, which of these types are you?
  
- How do you think your corrections are received?

### **Proverbs 10:18**

- Read CCC 2477–79 and 2484. How would you evaluate the justice and charity of critical remarks you make about other people?
  
- Even when criticisms are justified, are you able to maintain charity in speech about others?
  
- How is it possible to accomplish this?

## **Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

## **Chapter 11**



### **For Understanding**

#### **Proverbs 11:1**

- What is a “false balance”?
  
- How was it frequently used by sellers?
  
- What does Scripture demand, and what does it condemn?

### **Proverbs 11:4**

- What is the “day of wrath”?

### **Proverbs 11:22**

- What is the point of the proverb about a gold nose ring?
  
- What lesson about reading and memorizing Scripture does St. John Cassian derive from this proverb?

### **Proverbs 11:30**

- What does the “tree of life” symbolize here?
  
- What influence does it have?
  
- According to St. Hippolytus, who is the tree of life, and what does he bring forth?



### **For Application**

### **Proverbs 11:1**

- In a competitive business environment like ours, what challenges do Christian entrepreneurs face in conducting their business affairs honestly?

## *Proverbs*

- What are some of the Christian goals of running a business?

### **Proverbs 11:13**

- When you have been entrusted with a secret, how well do you keep it?
  
- According to CCC 2491, when should a professional secret be kept, and when would it become necessary to reveal it?

### **Proverbs 11:24–25**

- On what basis do you determine how much to contribute to your parish's financial needs?
  
- How do you regard your responsibility to support the Church financially?
  
- If finances are a concern, how else do you contribute (e.g., by volunteering)?

### **Proverbs 11:30**

- Read the note for this verse. How might your pursuit of holiness be an encouragement to others?

- By the same token, how might your failure to pursue it impede others' pursuit of holiness?

### **Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

## **Chapter 12**



### **For Understanding**

#### **Proverbs 12:1**

- To what does “discipline” refer here?
  
- In this connection, what is the difference between how the wise and the foolish man receive correction?

**Proverbs 12:10**

- How does the wise man treat animals?
  
- How does that treatment differ from the treatment given by the wicked?

**Proverbs 12:23**

- What does prudence recognize about silence?
  
- How does imprudence display itself?

**Proverbs 12:27**

- Whom does this proverb appear to rebuke?



**For Application**

**Proverbs 12:4**

- How does a good marriage serve as a witness to an age that either denigrates or despises traditional marriage?

## *Proverbs*

- How can the honor and respect of spouses for each other contribute to that witness, especially to their children?

### **Proverbs 12:10**

- Read CCC 2416–18. How does the attitude toward animals expressed in the Catechism compare or contrast with current attitudes toward animals, animal rights, and particularly toward pets?

### **Proverbs 12:16**

- How do you respond to an insult (real or imagined), especially from a family member?
  
- What is your responsibility to forgive?
  
- When is it important to forbear an insult in order to keep the lines of communication open, and when might it be prudent to cut communication off?

### **Proverbs 12:25**

- How have friends or considerate strangers helped you deal with your anxieties by their verbal or practical encouragement?
  
- Have you ever tried to encourage others who are anxious (e.g., by helping a mother anxious about the care of her first baby or a neighbor just dismissed from his job)?

## **Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

## **Chapter 13**



### **For Understanding**

#### **Proverbs 13:3**

- How does the wise man guard his mouth?
  
- Who is the one who “opens wide his lips”?

#### **Proverbs 13:11**

- What is the literal translation of riches “hastily gotten”?

## *Proverbs*

- To what does it presumably refer?
  
- What are the benefits of diligence and industry?

### **Proverbs 13:20**

- What is this proverb about?
  
- What does the saying imply?

### **Proverbs 13:24**

- What does it mean to “spare the rod”?
  
- Why is neglect of a child’s formation a grave disservice?
  
- What is the rod of discipline said to do elsewhere in Proverbs?
  
- How do parents who lovingly discipline their children imitate God?



## For Application

### Proverbs 13:4

- How might this proverb apply to the problem of urban crime; for example, when someone with no money commits a crime to obtain a pair of designer sunglasses or shoes?
  
- How might “the diligent” prevent such crime?

### Proverbs 13:11

- What is the wisdom of prudent investing instead of relying on lotteries or gambling for wealth, even if one were to strike it rich?
  
- What are some of the dangers in gambling, both for the gambler, his family, and the society at large?

### Proverbs 13:20

- Of all the companions with whom you have associated in your life, which are the ones who were most beneficial and which were the most harmful?
  
- What did you learn about yourself from your association with those in each group?

**Proverbs 13:24**

- What was the approach to corporal punishment taken by your parents?
  
- If you are a parent or guardian of minors, what is your approach to it?
  
- What should be the purpose of corporal punishment, and how can it be administered in a loving way?

**Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

## Chapter 14



### For Understanding

#### **Proverbs 14:1**

- To whom does “Wisdom” in this proverb refer?
- Whom does the saying appear to praise?

#### **Proverbs 14:12**

- To what fact does this proverb point?
- What effect does sin have on the intellect in this case?

#### **Proverbs 14:17**

- To what are persons who have quick tempers prone?
- What does the wise man do, and why?
- Why does St. Ambrose suggest becoming angry with oneself when easily roused?

### **Proverbs 14:34**

- On what does the welfare of a nation depend?
  
- How does Israel stand as a premier example of this in the Bible?



### **For Application**

### **Proverbs 14:2**

- What kinds of activity (such as credit card purchases) do you tend to hide from those nearest to you, such as a spouse or superior?
  
- What does devious behavior ultimately do to those relationships?
  
- What does it do to your relationship with the Lord?

### **Proverbs 14:4**

- What moral responsibility do you have for maintaining your personal resources, such as automobiles or other equipment or property, and for whose benefit?

## *Proverbs*

- What is your moral responsibility for handling the resources belonging to others, such as your employer, that are provided for your use?

### **Proverbs 14:12**

- Read the note for this verse. Have you ever been aware of deceiving yourself about the rightness of a course of action?
- How did you convince yourself to take that course?
- What were the consequences?
- What did you learn about yourself?

### **Proverbs 14:29–30**

- How would you describe your temper? For example, are you quickly or slowly aroused and quick or slow to calm down?
- How do you treat others when you become angry?
- How quick are you to ask forgiveness if your temper gets out of hand?

## **Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

## **Chapter 15**



### **For Understanding**

#### **Proverbs 15:6**

- How does God sometimes favor the upright?
- What ancient theory underlies this idea?
- What will additional revelation in the OT and the NT show?

**Proverbs 15:8**

- To what does the Lord expect our worship to be joined?
  
- What does Scripture insist about the liturgical and ethical aspects of life?
  
- What type of man is the wise man?

**Proverbs 15:11**

- To what do Sheol and Abaddon refer?
  
- If the realm of deceased souls is visible to the Lord, toward what does the proverb reason from that fact?

**Proverbs 15:24**

- In what way might a prolonged life be one of the blessings of wise conduct?
  
- Once belief in an afterlife had clearly formed in Israel's theology, what did sayings like this suggest?



## For Application

### **Proverbs 15:1**

- In a heated argument, what is the most effective way to calm tensions?
- If someone pushes you with accusations or sarcasm, how can you pull back so as to disarm his attack?
- Have you ever tried such tactics in the past?

### **Proverbs 15:3, 11**

- How is your conduct affected by the knowledge that God sees your every move, hears your thoughts, and knows your intentions?
- Have you ever tried to hide your thoughts from him or avoid his eyes (e.g., as depicted on a statue or a painting) so that he would not see what you were doing?

### **Proverbs 15:13**

- Read 2 Cor 3:7–18. How might an experience of the closeness of God change one's countenance?
- What truth lies behind the idea that one's face begins eventually to resemble the image upon which he continually gazes?

**Proverbs 15:33**

- How is humility related to fear of the Lord?
  
- As one grows in fear of the Lord, properly understood, how does one's view of himself change?

**Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

**Chapter 16**



**For Understanding**

**Proverbs 16:1**

- To what mystery does this proverb seem to refer?

### **Proverbs 16:6**

- To what do the terms “loyalty” and “faithfulness” refer here?
  
- If good works do not absolve the eternal guilt of our sins, how do they “atone for iniquity”?
  
- How does St. Cyprian apply the act of almsgiving to persons polluted after the grace of baptism?

### **Proverbs 16:9**

- What two things does Scripture affirm here?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What is the theological mystery about how the two operate together?

### **Proverbs 16:32**

- What do the wise know how to control, and what virtue do they know how to exercise?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- How does St. Gregory the Great interpret this proverb?

### **Proverbs 16:33**

- To what does “the lot” perhaps allude here?
  
- What were Urim and Thummim, and how were they used?



### **For Application**

### **Proverbs 16:2**

- How easy is it for you to rationalize the purity of your motives?
  
- How often do you ask the Holy Spirit to purify them—even to convict you of sin so you can repent where needed?

### **Proverbs 16:3**

- As you commit your way to the Lord, how does your planning change direction?
  
- Compare your answer with the proverb in verse 9.

### **Proverbs 16:18**

- Have there been occasions when you presumed you knew what God’s will in a situation was?

## *Proverbs*

- Though in theory you may have been correct, what was the actual outcome?
  
- What did you learn about yourself from it?

### **Proverbs 16:32**

- Read the note for this verse. How do you understand the virtue of meekness?
  
- Assuming that one definition of it is “the attitude of a person who refuses to defend himself” (or of one who chooses God for his defender), how close do you come to that standard?

#### **Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

## Chapter 17



### For Understanding

#### **Proverbs 17:3**

- How does the Lord test the genuineness of our faith?
- What does a comparison between trials and the smelting of metals suggest?
- What else do we learn in Proverbs about what God does with the human heart?

#### **Proverbs 17:5**

- Why is callous disdain for the needy an offense against God?
- How does this proverb differ from the one in 14:31?
- By contrast, what is honored by the Lord?

#### **Proverbs 17:14**

- What are readers advised to do in a quarrel?

## *Proverbs*

- How should one act if locked in a disagreement with another?

### **Proverbs 17:24**

- What does the proverb mean by saying that the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth?
  
- Where is the fool's attention directed?



### **For Application**

### **Proverbs 17:3**

- Certain sufferings are trials of character and the genuineness of one's spiritual life. Can *all* trials be used this way?
  
- When trials come, how do you typically respond to them?
  
- What would it take for you to respond in a better spirit?

### **Proverbs 17:6**

- In what way is one's father the glory of his child?

## *Proverbs*

- What has your relationship with your father been like?
  
- If you do not relate well to your father, how can you relate well with your Heavenly Father?

### **Proverbs 17:17**

- What is one quality of a true friend?
  
- Do you have friends like that?
  
- How have you been a friend to others who are going through difficult times?

### **Proverbs 17:22**

- This proverb talks about a spirit that is *habitually* cheerful or downcast. If you are habitually depressed, what have you done to get help?
  
- What is the difference between psychological depression and spiritual dryness?
  
- What are some remedies for the latter?

## **Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

## **Chapter 18**



### **For Understanding**

#### **Proverbs 18:8**

- Why is the spreading of rumors and gossip a dangerous activity?

#### **Proverbs 18:10–11**

- What contrast is implied in the juxtaposition of these two verses about the Lord and about wealth?
  
- What does the proverb say about the value of riches?

### **Proverbs 18:13**

- What mark of a fool is described here?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What should one do instead?

### **Proverbs 18:22**

- What about marriage is being affirmed here?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What is the husband being called to do?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- On a theological level, to what is the value of “finding a wife” compared, and what does one obtain in both cases?



### **For Application**

### **Proverbs 18:2**

- Have you ever engaged in a conversation about spiritual things?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What marks the skill of a good conversationalist, especially in such matters?

## *Proverbs*

- On what should sound opinions about spiritual things be based?

### **Proverbs 18:4**

- Whom do you know who seems to have a good understanding of spiritual matters?
- What advantage do you take of that person's understanding?
- What opportunities do you have to share your own?

### **Proverbs 18:14**

- What ministries of spiritual healing are available in your parish?
- Have you ever taken advantage of them?
- Have you ever been able to help those whose spirits seem to be broken by death, illness, or misfortune?

### **Proverbs 18:22**

- Discussing the role of the woman as a “helpmate” in marriage, CCC 1605 says that she “represents God from whom comes our help”. How often have you seen husbands treat their wives that way?

- How would marriages change if both spouses treated each other as a representative of God?

### **Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

## **Chapter 19**



### **For Understanding**

#### **Proverbs 19:4**

- How is poverty a burden twice over?
  
- What does wisdom counsel us to do?

**Proverbs 19:5**

- Of what is giving false testimony a violation?
  
- If dishonesty like this goes undetected by others, what will the Lord do?

**Proverbs 19:17**

- How does one who is kind to the poor lend to the Lord?
  
- How does the Lord promise to reward our works of mercy?
  
- How does St. Cyril of Alexandria explain the reward of lending to the Lord?

**Proverbs 19:24**

- How does this proverb poke fun at laziness?
  
- On what custom is it based?



## For Application

### **Proverbs 19:3**

- Have you ever become angry at God?
- What were the circumstances?
- How did you resolve your anger?
- If you are still angry at God, what are you doing to reconcile with him?

### **Proverbs 19:13**

- What kind of damage does frequent or continual bickering do to a marriage?
- What does it say about the relationship between spouses?
- What does it teach the children?

### **Proverbs 19:17**

- What does it mean for the Church to exercise a “preferential option for the poor”?
  
- As a member of the Church, how do you exercise such a preferential option?

### **Proverbs 19:21**

- The Catechism, in paragraphs 303–14, discusses the workings of divine Providence, especially in situations of great physical and moral evil (e.g., natural disasters, wholesale massacres). What trust do you place in God’s Providence for yourself? for others affected by such evils?

#### **Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

## Chapter 20



### For Understanding

#### **Proverbs 20:9**

- What does this rhetorical question mean to imply?
  
- What does only God have the power to do?

#### **Proverbs 20:10**

- To what do the “weights” and the “measures” in this verse refer?
  
- How might sellers cheat the buyer of grain?

#### **Proverbs 20:22**

- May one exact personal revenge?
  
- What should people do with their (non-criminal) grievances?

### **Proverbs 20:25**

- How could money or valuables be dedicated to the Lord's sanctuary?
  
- Because items set apart for religious service became holy, what would have been preferable to making a vow and then changing one's mind?

### **Proverbs 20:30**

- To what do the blows that cleanse away evil refer?
  
- To what two forms of discipline is this principle applicable?
  
- How should the term "wounding" be taken?



### **For Application**

### **Proverbs 20:1**

- Have you had any experience of your own with alcoholism or other forms of substance abuse?
  
- How has it affected yourself and your family?

## *Proverbs*

- What kinds of treatment were available, and how effective have they been?
- How can intercessory prayer help?

### **Proverbs 20:9**

- How difficult is it for you to prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation?
- What makes it so hard to identify sins to confess?
- What does that difficulty reveal about one's relationship with God?

### **Proverbs 20:20**

- What is the difference between an expletive spoken in anger and a curse?
- If someone truly intends to ask God to bring harm to another, how is God likely to respond?

### **Proverbs 20:22**

- In paragraph 2302, the Catechism describes anger as a desire for revenge. Why does Jesus teach that anyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to divine judgment (see Mt 5:22)?

## *Proverbs*

- If vengeance belongs to God, who will repay (Rom 12:19)?
  
- What kind of vengeance does God ultimately desire the sinner to receive?

### **Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

## **Chapter 21**



### **For Understanding**

#### **Proverbs 21:1**

- What does the stream of water in the king's heart symbolize?

## *Proverbs*

- What does it suggest about the political life of nations and their rulers?

### **Proverbs 21:13**

- For what is giving help to the poor and underprivileged a condition for receiving?
- What can the merciless expect?
- How does St. Cyril of Alexandria view almsgiving and charity?

### **Proverbs 21:18**

- What is the application of this saying?
- How might the Exodus event illustrate its meaning?

### **Proverbs 21:22**

- What does the wise man's scaling of the stronghold of the mighty represent?
- How can those who are wise accomplish such a feat?

- In general terms, what is the lesson here?



### **For Application**

#### **Proverbs 21:1**

- Read the note for this verse. How willing are you to acknowledge that the will of God is being worked out through the political life of our nation?
  
- Where do you see that will most active?
  
- Where do you see the need for intercessory prayer?

#### **Proverbs 12:3**

- Because sacrifice is directed to the Lord and righteousness and justice are directed to the neighbor, what does this proverb say about God's priorities?
  
- What should it say about your own?

**Proverbs 12:23**

- How is it best to keep peace in a Christian community when issues arise where legitimate disagreement is possible?
- When should one avoid confrontation, and when should one seek it?
- How does one maintain love in the face of disagreement?

**Proverbs 12:26**

- Why do some people steal when they have the means to pay?
- What change of heart is needed for the covetous?

**Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

## Chapter 22



### For Understanding

#### Proverbs 22:7

- Against what does this observational proverb warn?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- In the biblical world, what could happen to a debtor until the balance of a loan was paid off?

#### Proverbs 22:17—24:34

- What have scholars detected about this section of Proverbs?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What is the *Instruction of Amenemope*?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- How may it have influenced this section of Proverbs?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Why is it no surprise that Israel should appropriate insights from other Near Eastern cultures?

### Word Study: *Thirty Sayings*.

- What does the Hebrew adverb *shalishium* mean?
- Because of its unusual form and possible relationship to an Egyptian work that is divided into 30 sections, to what do many scholars propose the word should be changed? Why?
- How does the Greek Septuagint translate the word?
- Despite arguments in favor of emending the text, about what do scholars disagree?

### Proverbs 22:22

- What is the importance of the gate of a walled town?



### For Application

### Proverbs 22:6

- If you are a parent who has trained a child in the faith, how do you respond when the child departs from it?



- How do you “evangelize yourself”?

### **Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

## **Chapter 23**



### **For Understanding**

#### **Proverbs 23:2**

- Why does this proverb recommend that a man given to appetite put a knife to his throat?
  
- What does the virtue of temperance promote in this case?

**Proverbs 23:13**

- When it comes to physical discipline of children, what does Proverbs neither advocate nor endorse?
  
- What is in view here and elsewhere in the book?

**Proverbs 23:29–35**

- What do these verses vividly depict?
  
- What are among its painful consequences?
  
- What happens when the drunkard recovers from his intoxication?

**Proverbs 23:31**

- Why should the alcoholic not *look* at wine?
  
- How does the Greek Septuagint translate this verse?
  
- According to St. Caesarius of Arles, what happens when you become friends with someone who is displeasing to God?



## For Application

### **Proverbs 23:1–3**

- How often have you been in the company of important or influential people?
- How did you conduct yourself?
- Why, if you do not know them well, is it necessary to guard your conduct and your speech in their presence?

### **Proverbs 23:13**

- The administration of corporal punishment is a subject of controversy these days. What is your philosophy?
- How do you best train a child to recognize wrongdoing, repent of it, and seek forgiveness?

### **Proverbs 23:17**

- Read CCC 2538–40. In what ways do you envy the good fortune of others?
- Of all the capital sins, why is envy singled out as “diabolical” (CCC 2539)?

- How can one struggle against it?

### **Proverbs 23:29–35**

- To what are you addicted?
  
- What have been the consequences for you and for your relationship with God?
  
- What resources (including prayer) are available for you to use in order to become free of the addiction?
  
- How serious have you been in taking advantage of them?

#### **Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

## Chapter 24



### For Understanding

#### **Proverbs 24:3**

- Of what is a home under construction a concrete image?
- In Hebrew, to what can the term for “house” also refer?
- According to St. John Chrysostom, for what do the house and its storerooms stand?

#### **Proverbs 24:11**

- What is this proverb a call to do?
- As implied in 24:12, when should this be done?
- If it is not done, what kind of sin is it?

#### **Proverbs 24:23**

- Of what is showing favoritism in the courtroom a violation?

## *Proverbs*

- According to what standard are human judges expected to act?
- In this regard, what two things does the Mosaic Law forbid?

### **Proverbs 24:28–29**

- What two things does this proverb prohibit?
- How, according to Scripture, can we restrain the impulse to exact revenge?



### **For Application**

### **Proverbs 24:11–12**

- Have you ever been aware of a wrong being done (such as spousal or child abuse) but either ignored it or claimed to know nothing about it?
- What type of sin might this be?

### **Proverbs 24:16**

- How often have you failed to overcome a significant temptation to sin?

## *Proverbs*

- Despite occasional failure, how often have you resumed the battle?
- How have you dealt with the temptation to give up?
- What have you done to give the problem over to the Lord?

### **Proverbs 24:17–18**

- Why would the Lord be displeased at your pleasure over the fall of an enemy?
- What attitude should you take at the fall of an enemy? (Compare your answer with Mt 5:44–45.)

### **Proverbs 24:23**

- How might a parent or an employer show partiality in judging a child or an employee?
- What kind of example does this set for the person judged and for others who are aware of the partiality?

## **Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

## **Chapter 25**



### **For Understanding**

#### **Proverbs 25:1**

- Who, presumably, are the “men of Hezekiah”?
  
- What did promoting the teachings of Solomon have to do with King Hezekiah?

#### **Proverbs 25:2**

- How does this proverb say the glory of God is manifested?

- How is the glory of kings manifested?

### **Proverbs 25:14**

- Of what are clouds and wind without rain symbolic?
  
- How does the NT use this imagery?

### **Proverbs 25:21–22**

- What does this proverb promote?
  
- To what might the “coals of fire” refer?
  
- Either way, what actions are discouraged here?
  
- In what context does Paul quote this saying in Romans 12:20?



## For Application

### **Proverbs 25:7b–10**

- What is your opinion of lawsuits brought by one Christian against another?
- How would you respond to St. Paul's statement in 1 Cor 6:1–7 that Christians ought to allow themselves to be cheated rather than bring suit against another Christian in a civil court?

### **Proverbs 25:14**

- Have you ever promised, either explicitly or implicitly, something you failed to deliver?
- How significant was the promise?
- What if any were the moral implications of the promise?

### **Proverbs 25:21–22**

- Read the note for this verse. What does Jesus say (e.g., in Mt 5:44) about our attitude toward enemies?
- What does the Lord's Prayer imply about it?

- How have you fulfilled these injunctions?

### **Proverbs 25:27**

- According to CCC 2480, flattery can be a mortal or a venial sin, depending on the circumstances. What circumstances does the Catechism mention?
  
- When is it right to compliment others?

#### **Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

## Chapter 26



### For Understanding

#### Proverbs 26:4–5

- Though these two proverbs appear contradictory on the surface, to what do they apply?
- In certain contexts, how do the wise do well to avoid conversations with fools?
- In other contexts, such as when fools appear intelligent and sophisticated, what should the wise do?
- What does each saying aim to do?

#### Proverbs 26:7

- Though the fool may be able to recite a proverb, why does it give him no benefit?

#### Proverbs 26:11

- How is the fool's behavior comparable to that of a dog returning to its vomit?
- What does 2 Pet 2:22 describe by quoting this proverb?

**Proverbs 26:12**

- What temptation faces those who cultivate wisdom?
  
- What virtue is essential to the biblical concept of wisdom?



**For Application**

**Proverbs 26:4**

- When you find a conversation turning toward criticism of someone else, what should be your response?
  
- What do the cardinal virtues have to do with engaging in criticism of others?

**Proverbs 26:5**

- When you find a conversation turning toward criticism of someone else and you believe that the speakers are wrong, what should be your response?
  
- Again, how do you apply the cardinal virtues in this situation?

**Proverbs 26:11.**

- When does foolish behavior (such as viewing pornography) turn into an addiction?
  
- What are some loving ways to deal with someone who is addicted to self-destructive behavior?

**Proverbs 26:18–19.**

- What is rationalization?
  
- When you are caught in a lie or in dishonest behavior, how do you tend to explain your conduct?
  
- What does a tendency to rationalize say about one's character?

**Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

## Chapter 27



### For Understanding

#### Proverbs 27:1–27

- Why are several proverbs in this chapter grouped in pairs?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What about the final verses?

#### Proverbs 27:5

- When is an open rebuke a sign of true affection?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What is meant by “hidden love” here?

#### Proverbs 27:6

- Why are words of correction or rebuke described as the wounds of a friend?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- How are kisses potentially deceptive signs of affection?

### **Proverbs 27:23–27**

- How does the practical wisdom in these verses benefit the herdsman with his flock?



### **For Application**

### **Proverbs 27:5**

- If fraternal correction is supposed to be part of the Christian life, why do so few Christians practice it?
  
- If we turn from evil out of a fear of others' anger, what does that say about ourselves? (Refer to CCC 1828–29.)

### **Proverbs 27:8**

- Read the note for this verse. What are some of the moral and spiritual dangers that young people face when they first leave home, e.g., for college?
  
- How can you prepare them?

### **Proverbs 27:10**

- If you need help, especially long-term help, on whom would you rely for it—your family or your friends?

- What resources do you have if you need care?

### **Proverbs 27:17**

- What are your friendships like?
  
- What are their strengths and limitations?
  
- How do they improve or hinder your relationship with the Lord (even if they are not particularly religious)?

#### **Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

## Chapter 28



### For Understanding

#### Proverbs 28:4

- How do interpreters differ over the precise meaning of “the law” in the context of this verse?
- In what two ways is legal language regularly used in Proverbs?

#### Proverbs 28:8

- How does the Mosaic Law regard collecting interest on assistance loans?
- When was usury permitted for an Israelite?
- To what does “increase” (in addition to interest) most likely refer?
- What does the proverb seem to say that God will do with ill-gotten wealth?

#### Proverbs 28:9

- What can render prayer ineffective?

- How does St. Bede recommend that one pray?

### **Proverbs 28:13**

- What can harboring unconfessed sin do to a person?
  
- What is the ordinary way of receiving God's forgiveness?
  
- In OT times, what were two ways in which this might take place?



### **For Application**

### **Proverbs 28:5**

- How does seeking the Lord increase one's understanding of justice?
  
- By calling St. Joseph a "just man" (Mt 1:19), what is Scripture saying about his relationship with the Lord?
  
- What would it say about yours?

**Proverbs 28:8**

- What do you think Solomon would say about the modern practice of buying on credit and accumulating enormous debts?
  
- What is your own level of financial indebtedness, and what do you think God wants you to do about your own borrowing habits?

**Proverbs 28:9**

- Although one's conscience can make mistakes, when can a person be held morally responsible for a mistaken judgment of conscience?
  
- How serious is the obligation to form one's conscience?

**Proverbs 28:13**

- When you go to confession, how often do you find yourself confessing the same sins over and over again?
  
- If they are venial sins, how seriously do you take them?
  
- What have you done to correct habitual patterns of sin?

## **Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

## **Chapter 29**



### **For Understanding**

#### **Proverbs 29:3**

- How is a father dishonored twice over by an undisciplined son?
  
- Which parable of Jesus describes this situation?

#### **Proverbs 29:20**

- To what is one who is quick to speak susceptible?

- By contrast, what does one who is wise do?

### **Proverbs 29:24**

- In biblical times, on whom could a curse be called down?
  
- What did remaining silent mean if one had knowledge about a crime?



### **For Application**

### **Proverbs 29:3**

- How should Christian parents respond when they learn that one or more of their children have not only left the faith but have adopted ways of life opposed to the principles by which they were raised?
  
- What should such parents do with their own grief?
  
- How should they relate to their dissenting children?

### **Proverbs 29:10**

- What stories of Christian martyrs have you read?

## *Proverbs*

- What effect do such stories have on your faith?
- Do you see yourself as a Christian witness in today's social and political environment?
- If so, in what way?

### **Proverbs 29:11**

- What most typically makes you angry, and how do you express anger?
- How do you try to control your anger?
- What does it mean to be angry without sinning (see Eph 4:26)?

### **Proverbs 29:18**

- If prophecy is not merely foretelling the future, what is it?
- On whose behalf does the prophet speak?

- Why does St. Paul recommend that Christians seek the spiritual gift of prophecy (1 Cor 14:1ff.)?

### **Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

## **Chapter 30**



### **For Understanding**

#### **Proverbs 30:1**

- Who is Agur?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- How is he like Job?

## *Proverbs*

- Where is Massa, and after whom was that location named?
- How does the RSV understand the names Ithiel and Ucal?
- What makes some scholars believe that the text has suffered corruption?

### **Proverbs 30:4**

- What does the rhetorical question about ascending into heaven imply?
- Who can make the claim of having done it?
- Who is meant by the reference to “his son’s name”?
- What hint can Christian readers rightly detect about God?

### **Proverbs 30:9**

- What can times of plenty make us do?

- How does theft profane the name of God?

### **Proverbs 30:15–33**

- How do these numerical proverbs work?

### **Proverbs 30:21–23**

- How does each of the four intolerable things in these verses turn the world upside down?



### **For Application**

### **Proverbs 30:2–3**

- If it is true that one who thinks he has acquired the virtue of humility has just lost it, how does one learn humility?
  
- What can the realization that one never completely grows up do to advance one's relationship with the Lord?

### **Proverbs 30:5**

- Paragraphs 109–14 of the Catechism provide principles for interpreting Scripture. How might these principles help you apply the word of God profitably to your life?

### Proverbs 30:8b–9a

- Why is prosperity dangerous to a living faith in God?
  
- Why are suffering and persecution often good for it?

#### Reflect

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

## Chapter 31



### For Understanding

#### Proverbs 31:1

- Who is Lemuel?

## *Proverbs*

- What people neighboring Israel were renowned for their wisdom in biblical times?
- From whom do the admonitions of Proverbs 31 come, and to whom are they addressed?
- About what does she caution him, what does she encourage him to do, and about what does she counsel him?

### **Proverbs 31:10–31**

- What does this epilogue to Proverbs praise?
- What kind of poem is this, and how does it work?
- Why would Hebrew writers create poems in this alphabetic format?
- As it unfolds the virtues of the praiseworthy wife (echoing several lines earlier in the book), at what does it hint regarding her?

### Word Study: *The Good Wife*.

- Although translating *'eshet hayil* as “a woman of worth” or “a good wife” is not inaccurate, what does the word *hayil* generally convey?
- Where is the term often found?
- Given the military usage, how might one best render the expression in Proverbs 31:10?
- Which of her strengths are singled out for mention?
- What kind of character does she actually show?

### Proverbs 31:10

- To what is finding an excellent wife comparable?
- According to St. Caesarius of Arles, who is the “worthy wife”?

**Proverbs 31:30**

- How is charm deceitful, and how are good looks vain?
- Should the husband disregard the physical attractiveness of his wife?
- What kind of wife is the good wife?
- What is the preeminent virtue of the wise?



**For Application**

**Proverbs 31:2–3**

- What cautions did your parents give you about relations with the opposite sex?
- About what were they concerned?
- What do daughters learn about men from their fathers, and what do sons learn about women from their mothers?

- What *should* they be learning from them?

### **Proverbs 31:10**

- In an era of soaring divorce, for what should one look in a prospective spouse?
  
- Even if divorce is part of the family history, how does one prevent it from determining the direction of one's own marriage?

### **Proverbs 31:11**

- How vital to a marriage is trust between the spouses?
  
- In what areas is trust likely to become an issue?
  
- If trust is once violated, how can it be repaired?
  
- How important is forgiveness for the spouse who has been wronged?

### **Proverbs 31:28–29**

- What benefits accrue to a marriage when a husband honors his wife?

- How are modest displays of affection between spouses beneficial to the children?

## **Reflect**

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:



## **Review and Respond**

To complete your study of Proverbs, prayerfully read it straight through, focusing on the biblical text alone. What stands out to you?

Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart. What is your response to him?