



PART SIX – “BE TEACHABLE”  
By Pastor Harry Bicknell  
*Proverbs 19:20*

I. “Be Teachable” as a Key Theme of Proverbs

“Listen to advice and accept discipline, and at the end you will be counted among the wise.” – Proverbs 19:20

“let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance—” Proverbs 1:5

“Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching.” – Proverbs 1:8

“The wise in heart accept commands, but a chattering fool comes to ruin.” – Proverbs 10:8

“The way of fools seems right to them, but the wise listen to advice.” – Proverbs 12:15

“Where there is strife, there is pride, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.” – Proverbs 13:10

“Whoever heeds life-giving correction will be at home among the wise.” – Proverbs 15:31

“Plans are established by seeking advice; so if you wage war, obtain guidance.” – Proverbs 20:18

“Listen to advice and accept discipline, and at the end you will be counted among the wise.” – Proverbs 19:20

- 1. This Proverb Calls Us to Listen Carefully to Advice  
“Every one of us needs someone to whom we can regularly say, ‘How can I improve?’” – Ray Ortlund<sup>1</sup>
- 2. This Proverb Instructs Us to Accept Discipline (Correction and Instruction)

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<sup>1</sup>Ortlund, Ray. (31 March 2012). Proverbs: Wisdom That Works. Crossway.

### 3. Being Open to Advice and Discipline is the Path to Wisdom

"Listen to advice and accept discipline, and **at the end you will be counted among the wise.**" – Proverbs 19:20

#### Wisdom is:

A. 'Skill in the art of living.'

B. Living a life aligned with how God created us to be.'

*"But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere."*

James 3:17

"All of the characteristics of 'wisdom from above' are ways of being that build community."

– Pastor Ben Froese<sup>2</sup>

My definition of wisdom is: 'Wisdom is living a virtuous life that enables you to help build healthy communities.'

### II. Questions to Help Us Become More Teachable

Question One: What keeps us from being a teachable person?

Pride: Thinking we are better than others - being a 'know it all.'

"Now the trouble about trying to make yourself stupider than you really are is that you very often succeed. Uncle Andrew did." – C.S. Lewis<sup>3</sup>

Question Two: What would help us to become more teachable?

Ask God for humility that would lead you to a teachable attitude.

#### Humility

• The humble are not self-seeking but aimed at the good of the other.

"...the essence of gospel-humility is not... thinking less of... [yourself]..., it is thinking of ... [yourself]... less."<sup>4</sup>

• The humble don't dominate the conversation or feel the need to draw everything back to themselves.

• The humble pay close attention to others, listen well, seek the good of those around them.

• The humble aim to serve those around them, not to be served.

• The humble aren't in competition with others. They can publicly praise and honour their peers and have a sense of humour about themselves.

• The humble are looking for God's name to be seen as great, not their own.<sup>5</sup>

Question 3: Who should we listen to?

Parents - especially as children, teens, and young adults

Close friends

"When counseled by a friend you have the opportunity to learn more that's important to you and helpful to your ministry in a few minutes that you could learn in a week of reading books."<sup>6</sup>

A friend once stated, "I don't know how people manage life and make good decisions without good friends."

Above all, listen to Jesus

"This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him."  
Luke 9:35

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep." John 10:11

### NOTES

<sup>2</sup> Froese, B. (08 June 2025). Not All Wisdom is Equal. Sermon

<sup>3</sup> Lewis, C.S. (02 May 1955). The Magician's Nephew. The Bodley Head.

<sup>4</sup> Keller, Timothy J. (28 March 2012). The Freedom of Self-Forgetfulness. 10Publishing.

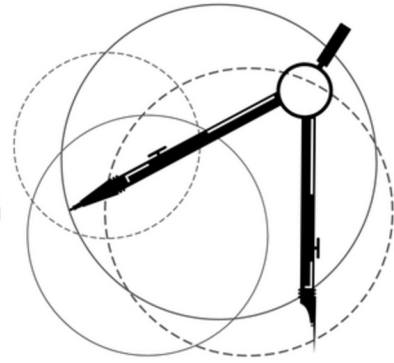
<sup>5</sup> This section adapted from, Fields, D. (15 June 2025). The Humility at the Heart of Wisdom. Sermon.

<sup>6</sup> Licolzi, P.R.

# PROVERBS

SKILL IN THE ART OF LIVING

## Discussion



### Reflection

Spend some time reading and 'mulling over' Proverbs 19:20:

*"Listen to advice and accept discipline, and at the end you will be counted among the wise."*

You might also want to read Proverbs 1:5; 8; 10:8; 12:15; 13:10; 15:31; 20:18.

1. What is some of the best advice you have ever received?
2. What is some of the most helpful discipline, correction, or instruction you have ever received?
3. What keeps you, or people more generally, from being open to advice and correction?
4. Being teachable (open to advice and correction) is a big theme throughout the Proverbs. Why do you think God inspired so many verses on this theme in this ancient book of Proverbs?
5. What are some of truths/beliefs that have helped you to be open to advice and correction?
6. What in particular is God teaching you over these past weeks?

### Prayer

Take some time to thank God for those who have spoken truth into your life and have corrected you when you needed it most. Thank Jesus for the many things He has been impressing upon your heart. Ask God to grow a humble, teachable spirit within you.

## APPENDIX: HOW TO USE PROVERBS

This summer, our hope as a church is to steep ourselves in the wisdom of Proverbs. But this book invites a different approach than most others. The Book of Proverbs isn't meant to be speed-read—it's a book to sit with, to meditate on, to 'chew the cud,' as the rabbis would say.

- Chapters 1–9 serve as the introduction. They give us the book's purpose, a guiding epigraph (1:7), and ten speeches from a father to a son about wisdom. This section works well with a 'chapter-a-day' reading rhythm.
- Chapters 10–30 contain collections of short, poetic couplets. These proverbs are often loosely connected but are mostly designed to stand alone—ideal for slow, focused meditation and memorization.

### GENERAL GOALS FOR READING THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

<b>Go Slow</b>	Stop when something grabs your attention. Sit with it. If it takes three years to get through the book, that's perfectly fine.
<b>Memorize Individual Proverbs</b>	These sayings are written poetically so we can remember and apply them. Like the phrase "fail to plan and you plan to fail"—it sticks because of the way it's worded.
<b>Read in Multiple Translations/Versions</b>	English versions vary in how they handle the poetry. When meditating on a proverb, read it in several translations. While the King James Version isn't always clearest elsewhere, it often preserves the poetic force of Proverbs well, thanks to its translators' classical training.
<b>Be Biased Toward Action</b>	Proverbs are meant to be lived. The goal of meditation is obedience. If all you do this summer is live out one proverb, that's a win.

### STRATEGIES FOR INTERNALIZING PROVERBS

<b>Rewrite Proverbs in a Journal.</b>	Use a general journal or a dedicated wisdom notebook. Rewriting helps with memorization and makes the proverb more personally accessible. You might even blend a few translations into a version that sticks best for you.
<b>Put Them in Front of Your Eyes</b>	Use sticky notes or other visible reminders. Place proverbs on your fridge, your desk, your mirror—anywhere you'll see them often.
<b>Practice Lectio Divina (Sacred Reading)</b>	<p><b>Read:</b> Slowly read a chapter or section of Proverbs several times. Look for a verse that 'leaps off the page.'</p> <p><b>Meditate:</b> Reflect on that proverb. What is it saying? Have you seen this truth in your life? Why might God be highlighting it now?</p> <p><b>Pray:</b> Talk to God about what you're noticing. Ask for wisdom and strength to live it out.</p> <p><b>Contemplate:</b> Spend a few quiet moments in God's presence, letting the proverb stick to your soul.</p>