



ST. JAMES CHURCH

# FAMILY DEVOTION PACK 2: PROVERBS



# BEFORE YOU START, READ THIS!



Welcome to the second pack of St James Family Devotions! If you missed pack one, it would be a good idea to read the first page before you get started here. It gives you plenty of tips for how to have a family devotion and what your expectations should be. This pack focuses on the Old Testament book of Proverbs. It's not a part of the Bible that everyone feels that familiar with. Below is a brief guide to bring you up to speed so you can feel confident as you read with your family.

The book of Proverbs forms part of the wisdom literature of the Bible. Scripture tells us that God created the world according to His good design, and discerning that design is the job of wisdom. In other words, wisdom is how you live well in God's world according to His Word. The order that God has built into His creation has been warped by sin, but not totally destroyed. And that means, even though life gets messy and complicated, God's blueprint remains. The person who lives according to this blueprint is wise, the person who doesn't is a fool.

Proverbs is a collection of hundreds of pithy sayings. The first 9 chapters are an extended discussion on wisdom itself, written as a father giving counsel to his son. Wisdom and folly are personified as two women engaged in a competition. Both call out to the simple. Our challenge is to make sure we listen to the right one!

Proverbs reads quite differently to other parts of the Bible. They are an invitation to observe and reflect on life, both the way it is, as well as the way it should be. They are not absolute promises or inflexible laws, but observations from experience. Some will come right out and tell you how to live the wise life, others will expect you to look critically at how the world works and draw conclusions. Proverbs will often leave things unresolved, expecting you to go back and apply wisdom to find the way forward. This makes them fantastic for family devotions!

## QUICK TIPS

- Proverbs is the only book of the Bible where the context of individual verses doesn't matter that much. From the start of Ch 10 each proverb stands alone, usually not connected to the one before or after it (with a few exceptions!).
- Proverbs are written in Hebrew poetry, which is a little different from the poetry we are used to. The first phrase of the proverb stands in relation to the second phrase. It may be a contrast (15:1), a consequence or conclusion (17:14) or the interplay between them might help develop the idea (16:32). With older kids it can be fun to figure out what the relationship between the two lines are and how it draws us to the point.

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- Rather than rushing to find ‘the right answer’, spend time discussing the implications of the proverb. Is this how life really is? Why do you think life is like that? Have you experienced the truth of this proverb in your own life? How would someone be helped if they put this verse into practice? How would their life be worse if they ignored this verse?
- Make sure you pick up on the picture language of the proverbs. For example, Pr 12:18 says ‘The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.’ Make the most of that image! Talk about what it is like to be ‘stabbed in the back’ by someone’s reckless words, and how good it is to have someone ‘soothe you’ with words that heal. Ask your kids what the words of the wise are like if they are opposite of reckless. Let the younger kids draw what the proverb describes!

We have tried to offer a few questions that you can use to get the conversation going. If your family are not feeling very talkative, these questions will probably come in handy! But don’t be bound to what’s on the page. Feel free to adjust them for the ages of your kids or come up with your own. Remember, your job is not to give all the answers, but to ask good questions so that others can discover the Bible for themselves.

At the start of the book of Proverbs the writer encourages his child, ‘Listen my son to your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching. They are a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck’ (Pr 1:8-9). We pray that parents and children alike will grow in their faith by learning God’s wisdom together.

**Enjoy!**

# ANGER



## READ

Proverbs 29:22  
& 22:24-25

## SHARE TOGETHER

When was the last time you got angry and lost your temper? Did it make things better or worse?

## DISCOVER TOGETHER

What are some of the 'many sins' we can fall into when we are angry?

How do you feel when those around you get angry? How do you usually respond?

Read Eph Ch 4:26-27. What are the three things Paul tells us we must not do when we get angry?



## PRAY TOGETHER

What is one thing you have learnt from these Proverbs about anger? Thank God for that special Word, confess your sin, and ask that He will help you change in that area.

# BEAUTY



## READ

Proverbs 11:22 &  
31:30

### SHARE TOGETHER

What are some of the messages portrayed in the media about beauty? (Think about social media, advertising and movies). How do these messages affect us?

### DISCOVER TOGETHER

Have you ever seen a picture of a pig wearing jewelry? That's pretty absurd (excuse the pun!). According to Pr 11:22 what is one thing that makes a person unattractive? What do you think the writer of this proverb is saying about outer and inner beauty?

What does Pr 31:30 remind us about outward beauty? What does it mean to 'fear the Lord' and why is that something to be praised?

If you trust the wisdom of these proverbs, how will this change the way you look at other people (and yourself)?

In 1 Peter 3:4 Paul is talking to married women, but the principle applies to us all. What kind of beauty does God value the most?



### PRAY TOGETHER

Thank God that He loves you for you and not how you look. Ask Him to help you have the right perspective about beauty so that you invest in what really matters which is living for Him.

# ENVY



## READ

Proverbs 14:30 &  
24:1-2

## SHARE TOGETHER

Imagine everyone in your class got 100% for a test, but you were the only one who failed? How would you feel about the other kids in the class?

## DISCOVER TOGETHER

What is envy? See if your family can come up with a definition and an example. <sup>1</sup>

Pr 14:30 says envy rots your bones. What do you think this means? Can you think of some examples where this has happened? (In a movie, at school, or even in yourself?)

Pr 24:1-2 tells us that sometimes we want things that are really not good for us! Can you think of a time you have been envious of something that turned out to be bad for you?

Sometimes we don't think envy is such a big deal. Turn to Matt Ch 27:15-18. Does this help change your mind? Why? <sup>2</sup>



## PRAY TOGETHER

Thank Jesus that He died on the cross so that our envy can be forgiven. Ask Him for that forgiveness now. Also pray that He would give you a heart that is content and happy with what God has given you.

<sup>1</sup> *Envy is the pain caused by our neighbour's prosperity. Or to put it more simply, envy is when you get bitter because someone is enjoying something you don't have.*

<sup>2</sup> *Envy was one of the sins that put Jesus on the cross. And left unchecked envy will make you drive Jesus away too. But the good news is, Jesus didn't only die on the cross because of envy, He died on the cross for envy.*

# FIGHTS AND QUARRELS



**READ**

Proverbs 17:14  
& 17:19

## SHARE TOGETHER

What are the 3 things that you and your family argue and quarrel about the most? Why do you think that these things cause so much of the conflict?

## DISCOVER TOGETHER

In these proverbs, the writer gives us two pictures describing what a quarrel is like and the effect it has. Why are these illustrations so fitting?

In 17:19 it says that to love a quarrel is to love sin. Do you agree? Why or why not?

Skip to James 4:1-2. Where does James say that all quarrels begin?



## PRAY TOGETHER

Since James tells us that fights start from within our own selfish hearts, ask God to forgive you for the quarrels that you have caused, especially those within your own family. Ask Him that you would also be quick to forgive others when they sin against you.

# FRIENDSHIPS



## READ

Proverbs 27:5-6  
& 27:9

### SHARE TOGETHER

What is the most important quality that you look for in a friend?

### DISCOVER TOGETHER

What does these proverbs tell us is an important part of a good friendship?

In Ch 27:6, what do you think the 'wounds' of a friend are? Why can they be trusted?

What's the temptation we can fall into when our friends are truthful with us? How can James 1 v 19 help us with that?

But this is not only a quality to look for in a friend. It's also a quality we should have so that we too can be a good friend to others. Check out Ephesians 4 v 15. What must we remember when we put this quality into practice?



### PRAY TOGETHER

Ask God to help you not to become defensive when your friend tells you the not-so-great things about yourself. Rather listen to, and be thankful for, an honest friend. Ask God to help you be a friend who won't be afraid to speak the truth but to always do so with love.



# LAZINESS



**READ**

Proverbs 6:6-11

## **SHARE TOGETHER**

What's the difference between having a lazy Saturday morning (which is good) and being lazy and slack in your work? (which is bad)

## **DISCOVER TOGETHER**

According to Ch 6:6-8, what lesson should a lazy person learn from the ant?

How does a lazy person excuse their behavior in Ch 6:10? And what is likely to happen to them if they do? (Ch 6:11)

In what situations do you sometime act like the sluggard? (Keep in mind laziness can look like doing nothing, or it can look like being very busy but never achieving anything important!)

Have these verses helped you to make a change? How?



## **PRAY TOGETHER**

Ask God that He can help you to be diligent (which is the opposite of laziness). Discuss as a family where you think you waste the most time and make the most excuses. Pray for each based on what you shared.

# LISTENING TO A REBUKE



## READ

Proverbs 25:12  
& 29:1

## SHARE TOGETHER

When was the last time someone corrected you for making a mistake? How did you take it?

## DISCOVER TOGETHER

What does the word rebuke mean? Does it sound like something that is good for you?

Pr 25:12 says that a rebuke is like pure gold! What are the two things that are needed for a rebuke to be something that will help you grow?

Read Pr 29:1. What does it mean to be stiff necked? Why is that so dangerous?



## PRAY TOGETHER

Pray that your family won't be harsh in their criticisms, or go to the other extreme, and ignore each other's sins. Ask God that you would be a family that gives wise correction to each other and that you are always quick to listen before you speak.

# SELF CONTROL



## READ

Proverbs 16:32  
& 25:28

## SHARE TOGETHER

What is one thing that you find really hard to say 'no' to?

## DISCOVER TOGETHER

What point is Ch 16:32 trying to make? Do you agree? What are the advantages of being self controlled?

According to 25:28 a lack of self control makes you weak and vulnerable. Can you think of a time recently you have discovered this for yourself? Looking back, what would you have done differently?

Read Titus Ch 2:11-13. Where must we go if we want to learn self control?



## PRAY TOGETHER

Share one area with your family that you find difficult to exercise self control. Ask them to pray for you this week.

# WEALTH



## READ

Proverbs 18:11  
& 11:4

## SHARE TOGETHER

If you had R50 million, what would you do with it?

## DISCOVER TOGETHER

Pr 18:11 tells us that people imagine their wealth is like a tall wall that keeps them safe. But is it wise to think like this? Why or why not?

According to Pr 11:4, what is one thing that money cannot save you from? What is the only thing that will have real value on that day?

Have these verses changed the way you think about money? How?



## PRAY TOGETHER

Thank God that He provides for you and your family, and that you can bless others by being generous with that money. But also ask God that He would not let you trust or love money, because it can not save. Pray that you can hold being right with God as your greatest treasure.