A photograph of a lighthouse on a cliffside. The lighthouse is white with a red top and has a bright light emanating from it, creating a lens flare effect. The cliff is rocky and has some buildings on top. The ocean is blue with white waves crashing against the rocks. The sky is a clear blue.

The House of **WISDOM**

30 Days of Morning Light and
Inspiration From the Book of Proverbs

BRYAN HUDSON

House of Wisdom

30 Days of Inspiration From Proverbs

By Bryan Hudson, Th.B., B.S., M.S.

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Indianapolis, Indiana USA

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The House of Wisdom

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Introduction

How to Use *House of Wisdom* *30-Day Devotional*

Proverbs 24:3-4 *Through wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; By knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches.*

Welcome to this “House of Wisdom” devotional based on the book of Proverbs!

The book of Proverbs is a compilation of wise sayings, general truths, fundamental principles, or rules of conduct. The Hebrew word translated "proverb" is also translated "oracle" and "parable." Most proverbs are short, compact statements that express truths about human behavior using contrasts or direct comparisons. Many proverbs describe the consequences of a particular action or character trait. (Read a full summary on the Book of Proverbs here:

<http://www.biblestudytools.com/proverbs>)

The opening chapter of Proverbs explains the purpose of this book written mostly by Solomon: *“Their purpose is to teach people wisdom and discipline, to help them understand the insights of the wise. Their purpose is to teach people to live disciplined and successful lives, to help them do what is right, just, and fair. These proverbs will give insight to the simple, knowledge and discernment to the young.”* (Prov. 1:2-4 NLT)

In a world that has lost sight of principles and unchanging foundations, Proverbs offers a steady view of life, structure for living, and a path to life, prosperity and security—like being in a house. Jesus, through His life and resurrection, has become our wisdom:

1 Corinthian's 1:30 *But because of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who from God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption.*

Christ provides wisdom. We only need to discover how wisdom works and apply it to our lives. ***Let's go into the "House of Wisdom" designed by God!***

How to use this devotional:

Following each reading and prayer time, do the following exercises:

1. Respond to Reflection Question.
2. Write down any insights you gain from the scripture reading and commentary.
3. Write down any action items or things you need to do based on what you will read.

NOTE: *This version of the manuscript will be edited. Scripture readings and commentary from Proverbs are not in numerical order.*

~ Bryan Hudson

DAY 1 No Excuses

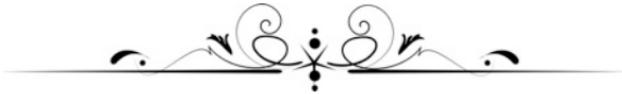
Proverbs 1:20, *Wisdom shouts in the streets. She cries out in the public square. 21 She calls to the crowds along the main street, to those gathered in front of the city gate: 22 “How long, you simpletons, will you insist on being simpleminded? How long will you mockers relish your mocking? How long will you fools hate knowledge. 23 Come and listen to my counsel. I’ll share my heart with you and make you wise.*

Throughout the Book of Proverbs wisdom is “personified” or given a personality to gain attention. God uses a woman to personify wisdom probably because we are all naturally more attentive to the voice of a woman, such as our mother. A female’s voice is also more penetrating than a male’s voice. This is the reason why a female voice is used in advanced airplanes to alert pilots.

Wisdom from God is always available so there is no excuse for being “simple-minded,” which Webster’s Dictionary defines as, “Having or showing a lack of good sense or judgment.” Your answer, solution, insight and strategy is never far away. You only need to slow down long enough to listen and learn

Most of the trouble and traps in life actually **count on** people acting without good sense and judgment, as if something essential will be missed if not acting immediately.

“Come and listen...I’ll share my heart...” We are not born with wisdom in our physical DNA. It has to be received as spiritual DNA from Christ. Then, like singing talent, it has to be developed through instruction and action. Relationship with God and wise people is the best path for growing in wisdom and understanding.



Key insight I gained today:

Today’s action item based on insight:



The High Cost of Complacency

Proverbs 1:32-33, *For simpletons turn away from me—to death. Fools are destroyed by their own complacency. But all who listen to me will live in peace, untroubled by fear of harm.*

Proverbs is full of contrasts and comparisons. Sometimes the best way to learn is to read about the consequences of bad choices by others. In this, it is best to learn bad lessons “vicariously” or through the life example of others. Making big mistakes and blunders is a very painful way to learn, if people learn at all. In fact, “experience” is not the best teacher. The wisdom of God is the best teacher.

One of the greatest enemies of progress of complacency. Here’s the definition: “A feeling of quiet pleasure or security, often while unaware of some potential danger.”

Feelings alone cannot be trusted anymore than looking at bright sunshine through a window. Conditions outside the window may actually be dangerous, such as a bitter cold day. Complacency can be as self-destructive as drug abuse and smoking cigarettes. Ignoring wisdom while embracing foolishness is a recipe for destruction.

On the positive and proactive side, listening to wisdom and instruction come with a guarantee of ultimately living in peace and freedom from the fear of bad outcomes.

Who do you listen to?



Key insight I gained today:

Today's action item based on insight:



You'll Get What You Chase

Proverbs 2:2, *Tune your ears to wisdom, and concentrate on understanding* 3 *Cry out for insight, and ask for understanding* 4 *Search for them as you would for silver; seek them like hidden treasures.* 5 *Then you will understand what it means to fear the Lord, and you will gain knowledge of God.*

In the realm of education (in which I earned a Masters of Science degree), we know there is both *active* and *passive* learning. Passive learning is like watching television or listening to some talk, with no engagement from the listening. Active learning engages the physical senses of the learner and uses something called “authentic context,” which provides instruction that relates to context, or world, of the learner.

The Spirit of God who inspired Solomon to write this part of Proverbs knows all about learning. This is why language was used that related to the readers. Searching “as you would for silver” or “hidden treasures” is more compelling than just “searching.”

On another level, gaining wisdom and understanding is actually **more valuable** to your life than owning silver and earthly treasures. It is ironic that in our world and culture, making money is considered the greatest objective in life and spiritual matters do not rate very high.

When Jesus said that no one can serve two masters (Matt 6:24), He was talking about God and money/earthly possessions. Material gain and wisdom are not mutually exclusive, but they must not be equally valued.

The greater point to the text is this: What is your level of intensity and desire for God's wisdom and understanding? The writer is saying that when people pursue wisdom and understanding like that pursue money and stuff, they will understand the fear of God and gain divine knowledge.

Reflection Question: What do you pursue more than wisdom and understanding from God? How can you correct that imbalance?



Key insight I gained today:

Today's action item based on insight:

DAY 4 : Why Options and Choices Seem to be Difficult

Proverbs 2:10 *For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will fill you with joy. 11 Wise choices will watch over you. Understanding will keep you safe.*

Sometimes people struggle with options and choices. They have difficulty deciding which way to go. This is especially true when options and choices appear to be mostly good. We've heard the saying, "Everything that seems good is not necessarily good for you." What people consider "good" is usually driven by what friends and popular culture embrace. If everybody seems to be driving a white car, then a white car would seem to be the good option.

Because God's wisdom and understanding are "holy," it is not subject to the whims of people or popular culture. The best definition of the word "holy" is "other than." The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is the ultimate being (one God) existing as "Other Than"—absolutely nothing and no one can compare. Believers in Christ are called a "holy nation" (1 Peter 2:9).

As partakers of holy wisdom and understanding from God, options and choices are narrowed by excluding everything that motivates people who lack wisdom, un-

derstanding, and divine purpose. When we operate on God's resources, we experience true joy. Within that domain, you can only take the best option and make the correct choice.

Reflection Question: Which options or choices would be easier if you excluded every prideful, worldly, or marketing influence?



Key insight I gained today:

Today's action item based on insight:



How to Give to God

Proverbs 3:9, Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the best part of everything you produce. 10 Then he will fill your barns with grain, and your vats will overflow with good wine.

This is one of our favorite Scriptures to motivate people to give money to the Lord through our ministries and local churches. It is appropriate for that purpose, but there is much more to it.

It is actually a Scripture that addresses the **quality** of our giving that leads to the quality of our harvest of blessings. Jesus said it this way, “Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” (Luke 6:38)

These Scriptures seem to focus only on the amount given, but the quality of giving is more important than the amount. For example, if a person is complaining while giving a large amount, it is neither the “best part” nor a “good measure.” While the church that receives the offering will be happy about it, the giver may not actually receive much of a return. In other words, that

unwilling giver might receive “wine” (some provision), but not receive “good wine” (maximum or strategic provision).

A person who cannot give a larger amount of money (or some other kind of offering), yet offers the “best part” and “good measure” taps into the resources of God’s kingdom and grace in a special way. For example, the best part of a financial offering after being paid would be **before** taxes and bills, not what is left **after taxes** and bills. This dynamic cannot be easily explained, but it is easily proven by those who practice it!

The key words in this text are “Honor the Lord.” The word HONOR literally means “a valuing.” The picture is one of something valuable, precious or weighty, such as gold. Other definitions include: appreciation, esteem, favorable regard, respect.”

Much more that what you give to the Lord is the value, esteem, respect, you have towards God when giving it. Anyone you honor will notice it. God does not need honor from us, but because He is honorable, you can only receive blessing from giving Him your “best part” and “good measure.”



Key insight I gained today:

6 : Benefits of Guarding Your Heart and Focusing Forward

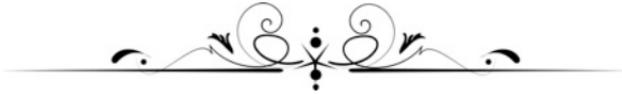
Proverbs 4:18 *The way of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, which shines ever brighter until the full light of day. 19 But the way of the wicked is like total darkness. They have no idea what they are stumbling over...23 Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life...25 Look straight ahead, and fix your eyes on what lies before you. 26 Mark out a straight path for your feet; stay on the safe path. 27 Don't get sidetracked; keep your feet from following evil.*

Everything in your life follows the condition of your heart. Emotions, thoughts, and decisions all flow from the heart. People who are sad and bitter consistently make bad decisions because “painful disappointment” (which the definition of bitterness), shape their thoughts. People who are confused often think others are confused, but its nothing more than distorted perception resulting from their own confusion. When dealing with negative people, remember these words; “Your perception is not my reality.”

On the positive side, a heart that is guarded by the grace of God empowers people and produces the following benefits:

1. A bright path, which “feels” like optimism and positive outlook about self and others

2. A brighter path day by day, setbacks not withstanding
3. A clearer course for your life going forward
4. A straight or stable path or foundation
5. Ability to stay your course and not get sidetracked or distracted





Raising Hope and Removing Fear

Proverbs 10:24 *The fears of the wicked will be fulfilled; the hopes of the godly will be granted.*

Fear and hope are strangely related. A lot of the negative things that happen to people are often attributed to fate, to the devil, to other people, and even to God.

While there is certainly no such thing as “mind over matter,” there is the reality of “mind over self.”

Hopes and fears move us to action both extrinsically (outward) and intrinsically (inward). Hope and fear also motivate us consciously and unconsciously.

Hope and fear are related because both are based in expectation. Hope expects a good outcome. Fear expects danger and harm. People who live in fear will take unusual measures to guard against imagined threats and dangers. People who have hope will take measures to secure their dreams and bring to pass what they see in their hearts and minds.

Our Scripture

refers to the fears of the “wicked.” Is it possible for the godly to have fear? The answer is yes, and the godly won’t experience better outcomes if operating in fear.



Key insight I gained today:

Today's action item based on insight:



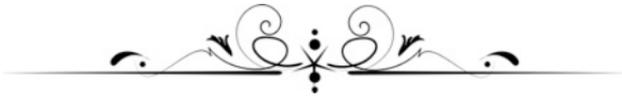
Wisdom has friends

Proverbs 8:12 *“I, Wisdom, live together with good judgment. I know where to discover knowledge and discernment. 13 All who fear the Lord will hate evil. Therefore, I hate pride and arrogance, corruption and perverse speech. 14 Common sense and success belong to me. Insight and strength are mine. 15 Because of me, kings reign, and rulers make just decrees. 16 Rulers lead with my help, and nobles make righteous judgments. 17 I love all who love me. Those who search will surely find me. 18 I have riches and honor, as well as enduring wealth and justice. 19 My gifts are better than gold, even the purest gold, my wages better than sterling silver! 20 I walk in righteousness, in paths of justice. 21 Those who love me inherit wealth. I will fill their treasuries.”*

Wisdom is not a singular virtue. Like a bountiful garden, the wisdom of God is filled with many virtues and benefits. Wisdom has many good “friends.”

Here, as in many other passages in Proverbs, wisdom is personified. Wisdom is speaking directly to the reader and clearing defining her assets. Giving wisdom a personality is God’s way of making the message both powerful and personal. Here’s listing of wisdom’s friends from this passage:

1. Good judgment: Everyone has judgment. What is needed in “good” judgment.
2. Knowledge & discernment
3. Common sense
4. Success
5. Insight
6. Strength
7. Leadership ability
8. Riches
9. Enduring wealth
10. Honor
11. Justice
12. Wages (Paydays!)



Key insight I gained today:

Today's action item based on insight:

DAY 9 : Is Your Cart in Front of Your Horse?

Proverbs 24:27 *Do your planning and prepare your fields before building your house.*

Ambition is a powerful emotion and motivator. Ambition defined: An earnest desire for some type of achievement or distinction, as power, honor, fame, or wealth, and the willingness to strive for its attainment.

Wanting to build and live in a very nice house is an ambition. It is something to dream about and tell others. We all have ambitions, but ambition without purpose and vision can only lead to arrogance.

We use phrases like “putting the cart before the horse” or “major on majors” to express something similar to our Scripture text. I remember asking God about some property I wanted to consider buying. It was as if God said to me, “What about it?”

I wanted God to give me a “yea” or “nay” on buying it. He wanted me to do what Proverbs 24:27 said. Ultimately, raw ambition is little more than a form of dreamy laziness. Former Federal Reserve Chairman

Alan Greenspan once used the phrase, “Irrational exuberance” to describe investor attitudes.

Let hope and ambition sketch an outline of where you want to go, but spend your time planning, exercising wisdom, and doing preparation.

1. What is something you feel ambitious about that needs better planning to make happen?



Key insight I gained today:

Today's action item based on insight

10

Wisdom for the Broken Vineyard

Proverbs 24: 30, *I walked by the field of a lazy person, the vineyard of one with no common sense.*



31 I saw that it was overgrown with nettles. It was covered with weeds, and its walls were broken down. 32 Then, as I looked and thought about it, I learned this lesson:

33 A little extra sleep, a little more slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest— 34 then poverty will pounce on you like a bandit; scarcity will attack you like an armed robber.

If we needed motivation to push aside any temptation to allow laziness or neglect to seep into our lives, this Scripture will drive it out! There is something to be said for neatness, order, and maintaining things that we own.

A lot of what goes wrong in life, including some forms of poverty, have nothing to do with circumstances out of our control. It is interesting that the writer used a vineyard (a grapevine farm) as an example. Jesus used a vineyard for his teaching in John 15:1 “*I am the true grapevine, and my Fa-*



ther is the gardener.”

The Proverb’s writer could not have chosen a more difficult plant to use for an object lesson. Vines and vineyards are very difficult to grow and manage. Vines will naturally grow all over the ground, up the sides of walls, around the trunks of trees, and become entirely unmanageable. Grapevines **MUST** be managed by a vine-dresser to guide and provide structure for the vine.



Our lives are more like vineyards than evergreen trees, which require very little maintenance. The bad condition of the vineyard described in our Scripture text was not years in the making. Giving the aggressive growth patterns of

grapevines, and of our lives, chaos can follow after a few months of neglect.

Wisdom operates through diligence, maintenance, and a plan for improvement.



Reflection Question: Is there anything broken or out of order in your life that diligence could change in a matter of weeks?

Key insight I gained today:

Today’s action item based on insight:



Come Into the House of Wisdom

Proverbs 9:1 *Wisdom has built her house; she has carved its seven columns. 2 She has prepared a great banquet, mixed the wines, and set the table. 3 She has sent her servants to invite everyone to come. She calls out from the heights overlooking the city. 4 “Come in with me,” she urges the simple. To those who lack good judgment, she says, 5 “Come, eat my food, and drink the wine I have mixed. 6 Leave your simple ways behind, and begin to live; learn to use good judgment.”*

Wisdom has a house. Live in it.

When we abide outside the **House of Wisdom**, we can find ourselves being easily persuaded and enticed by people, places and powers that see our vulnerability. Wisdom provides a unique perspective on circumstances and people. Without wisdom’s perspective, we do not fully see what we are dealing with. God’s house of wisdom is also designed to help those “who lack *good* judgment.” Everyone has judgment. We can look at things we form an opinion about it. The problem is that our judgment is only as good as our level of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge.

Outside of the House of Wisdom, things that are bad for you might actually look good. Outside the house of wisdom, we are mostly impressed by the first, shiniest,

loudest, person or thing we see. A lot of the failed marriages, bad relationships, and unhealthy entanglements, began as meetings, “romantic” dates or even promiscuous activity outside the House of Wisdom.

There’s always room in the House of Wisdom and we never to “grown” to go in!

Proverbs 9:6 *“Leave your simple ways behind, and begin to live; learn to use good judgment.”*



Key insight I gained today:

Today’s action item based on insight:

DAY 12

The Value of Wisdom

Proverbs 9:7 Anyone who rebukes a mocker will get an insult in return. Anyone who corrects the wicked will get hurt. 8 So don't bother correcting mockers; they will only hate you. But correct the wise, and they will love you. 9 Instruct the wise, and they will be even wiser. Teach the righteous, and they will learn even more. Fear of the Lord is the foundation of wisdom. Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment. 11 Wisdom will multiply your days and add years to your life. 12 If you become wise, you will be the one to benefit. If you scorn wisdom, you will be the one to suffer.

Wisdom and understanding are most appreciated by those who embrace it. People who mock the things of God will likely not accept correction. Such persons need prayer and the saving message of the Gospel of Christ. We would like to think that we can help or "cure" anyone. But the fact remains that the Holy Spirit must help a person become receptive—something the Lord is quite expert at doing!

Wisdom is a virtue best shared among believers in Christ. The "righteous" are people who will honor God and rejoice in His ways. According to Ephesians 4:15-16, the body of Christ "edifies itself" in love. That is, we build each other up, not for selfish reasons, but to make

us more effective, and his church, in reaching our generation for the Kingdom of God.

Verse nine says, "*Fear of the Lord is the foundation of wisdom.*" Foundations are vitally important to buildings, especially tall ones. Laying a good foundation is the beginning to any successful building project. The "building project" of our lives requires understanding and living out the principle of the fear of the Lord. I define the fear of the Lord as "A deep desire to please and never displease the Lord."

Upon the firm foundation of godly fear comes "good judgment" (make wise decisions and choices), long life, and other benefits as God's purpose for our lives may determine.



Key insight I gained today:

Today's action item based on insight:

DAY 13 : How to Have Clarity of Thought

Proverbs 16:3 *Commit your works to the Lord, And your thoughts will be established.*

Clarity of thought follows committing your works and plans to the Lord. Good works brings good thoughts, because you were created by God to do good works. (Eph. 2:10)

Sometimes, being unclear in your thinking is an indication that you are on the wrong track.



Key insight I gained today:

Today's action item based on insight:

14

The Path Principle

Proverbs 7:6, *While I was at the window of my house, looking through the curtain, 7 I saw some naive young men, and one in particular who lacked common sense. 8 He was crossing the street near the house of an immoral woman, strolling down the path by her house...21 So she seduced him with her pretty speech and enticed him with her flattery. 22 He followed her at once, like an ox going to the slaughter. He was like a stag caught in a trap, 23 awaiting the arrow that would pierce its heart. He was like a bird flying into a snare, little knowing it would cost him his life.*

Solomon used various methods to communicate the same message of gaining understanding and wisdom. Chapter Seven uses a first person narrative to describe someone he saw out of his window. He says, *"I saw a naive young man, and one in particular who lacked common sense."*

What made this young man naive? The definition of naive is, "showing a lack of experience, wisdom, or judgment." He also lacked common sense. Why did Solomon to regard this young man in this manner? This young man was walking down a path that led past the dwelling of a well known immoral woman. This is called "The Path Principle," a term I first heard used by Pastor Andy Stanley.

Your path determines your destination. Your intentions and wishes do not determine your destination more than the path that has been chosen. The young man in the story did not know his day would end in sin and destruction because he was seemingly unaware of where his path led.

The message of the story is to recognize the necessity of choosing our paths well. For example, hanging out with people who are up to no good is not just "hanging out," it's a path! Spending time studying the Bible is not just reading. It's a path. Again, since every path has a destination, experiencing prosperity God's way begins with understanding our activities as paths leading to good or bad outcomes.



Key insight I gained today:

Today's action item based on insight:

15

The Clean Fear of the Lord

Proverbs 24:21 *Fear the LORD and the king, my son, and do not join with the rebellious, 22 for those two will send sudden destruction upon them, and who knows what calamities they can bring?*

In a world filled with rebellion, respecting and responding properly to higher authority opens the door to greater personal authority. Rebellion is defined as: Resistance to or defiance of authority, control, or tradition.

Proverbs 9:10, (NLT) *Fear of the LORD is the foundation of wisdom. Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment.*

There is “good” fear and “bad” fear. Bad fear is feeling a sense of terror or doom. This kind of fear is expectation of danger and harm. Most fears are imagined, but some are real. The only good thing about bad fear is that you are motivated to take action to avoid danger. Driving in snow and ice produces a healthy kind of fear that keeps you alert and cautious.

On the other hand, the fear of the Lord is “good.” David said in Psalms 19:9, *“The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever.”*

Good fear is a dread of displeasing the Lord. It is a mindset that says, “I want to please God and now allow my actions to bring Him displeasure.” Honor and godly fear are foundational to living a victorious life. Authority flows in a line, or what the military call a “chain of command.”

Those who function in the fear of God place a high value on having a right relationship with God and people with whom we relate. They are “clean” or “pure,” not only because foul things are removed. They are clean/pure because it has been decided.



Key insight I gained today:

Today's action item based on insight:

About the Author



Rev. Bryan Hudson has a multifaceted ministry and professional expertise focused on inspiring and empowering people to know God and achieve the best in their lives. Bryan's training has enabled him to merge ministry with media: Th.B. (Theology), B.S. (Media Arts & Science), M.S. (Education: Instructional Systems Technology).

As a writer, educator, producer, and Bible teacher, Bryan communicates insights on important issues and technologies to deliver solutions to people in need as well as equip leaders to effectively serve their organizations and communities.

He is the founder and senior pastor of *New Covenant Church & Ministries* in Indianapolis, Indiana. Bryan also directs *Vision Communications*, a progressive multimedia firm that creates cutting-edge traditional media and new media. He has conducted summer multimedia training workshops for young men and women to equip and inspire them to use new media in positive ways.

As a instructional designer and former adjunct professor, Bryan Hudson developed and taught a 300-level course at *Crossroads Bible College* in Indianapolis, *New Media for Urban Ministry*.

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