

A Proverb a Day

Presented by Mary Lowman
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Day One

There is a book in the Bible full of wisdom for our everyday lives, and that is the book of Proverbs. I'm going to share a proverb a day, which will show you the way! We'll look at four different proverbs and see the wisdom for us. I encourage you to make Proverbs a daily reading habit. There are 31 chapters, so it's easy to read the chapter that corresponds to the day of the month. I've been doing that for several years and find the practical advice most beneficial in my life.

Let's look at Proverbs 22:10. It says, *drive out the mocker and out goes strife; quarrels and insults are ended*. Another translation reads, *drive out the scoffer and contention will go out. Even strife and dishonor will cease*.

Have you ever worked with a person who was a mocker and a scoffer? That's the person who makes fun of others, who ridicules people and organizations, who is arrogant and causes problems seemingly on purpose. When there's a mocker in the group, the work environment can be miserable and having a unified team is almost impossible.

This proverb says by getting rid of a mocker, you get rid of strife. If you are in a management position, it's good to remember there are times when the best thing you can do is to let an employee go. Now, I hope that doesn't sound cruel, but a person who is intent on offending others—and some people are—can have detrimental effects on an organization.

Of course, as Christians, we still must care about people regardless of how unlovable they are. And though we can never change people, the Holy Spirit can, so we shouldn't give up praying for them. But that doesn't mean we allow them to ruin the working environment for everyone else. Remember, the workplace is not a rehab center or a counseling office. We want to help people, when possible, but you don't hire people to reform or change them; you hire them to do a job.

Solomon said, in his wisdom, you're better off to drive out the mocker and the scoffer, for by so doing, the strife and dishonor will stop, people will be able to work productively together, and everyone will benefit, including the person who is the troublemaker. Allowing him or her to continue to get by with that inappropriate behavior doesn't help the individual.

Day Two

I'm sharing a Proverb a day, which will show you the way. Listen to this passage from Proverbs 6:

Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provision in summer and gathers its food at harvest (Proverbs 6:6-8).

In the margin of my Bible by this verse I have written "self-motivated." The ant is a self-motivated creature. Without anyone standing over all those ants and telling them what to do, they perform their jobs diligently and are prepared for what lies ahead.

Self-motivation is a key factor in our business world today. Have you ever worked with someone who was just trying to get by with as little as possible. They don't look beyond their noses to see what else could be done. They take no initiative and are not willing to go any extra miles.

A Christian in the workplace should be like the ant: self-motivated, willing to dig in and get the work done without prompting or constant supervision. Does your manager trust you? Can she or he be assured you diligently will do your job whether anyone's watching or not? Certainly, a Christian should produce that kind of reputation.

Your witness in the world will only be effective if there is a difference in the way you work. If you have the "it's not my job" attitude, drag your feet and do only what you're told to do, gripe and complain about doing anything above and beyond your job description, how will your coworkers and management know Christ makes a difference in your life? They won't, and your verbal witness, if there is one, will fall on deaf ears.

If you are a Christ-follower, you have a power far beyond yourself to motivate you. You have God's Holy Spirit dwelling within you to give you the strength you need to be self-motivated. And when you are motivated to do what's right, you will have an outstanding testimony because you do your work right whether anyone's watching or not. You do it to the best of your ability, and you're willing to go the extra mile.

Go to the ant and consider its ways. We can learn wisdom and self-motivation from those tiny ants.

Day Three

I'm looking at a Proverb a day to show us the way, because the book of Proverbs is wonderfully applicable to the situations we face in our everyday lives.

[If] you have been trapped by what you said, ensnared by the words of your mouth. So do this... Go and humble yourself... Allow no sleep to your eyes... Free yourself, like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, like a bird from the snare of the fowler (Proverbs 6:2-5).

How many times have you wanted to crawl under a table because you said something you wished you hadn't? Perhaps they were words spoken in anger or haste, or words of gossip, or judgmental words. Unkind, untruthful, harsh, unnecessary words that inflicted harm of some kind.

What do you do? You can't unsay them; you can't delete them; you can't erase them. Those words hang there in your memory and the memory of others. What can you do?

Solomon says to go and humble yourself to the person your words harmed; go, confess to them, and do it immediately. Apologize and do all you can to free yourself from the damage of those words.

I know that's not easy to do, but it's a lot easier than not doing it! Once in a hotel on a business trip, I accused a hotel employee of neglecting to follow my instructions. I was certain I had given those instructions. Nicely, but directly, I said, "I'm sure it's your fault; please correct it."

A few minutes later I came to realize I was the one who was wrong, not him. It was embarrassing; I wanted to run away. But I forced myself to go to the phone, call the young man and apologize to him. Even a simple apology like that wasn't easy, but once I did it, I felt so free. And I could tell it made a big difference to him. He kept saying, "That's so nice of you to call. Thank you." It wasn't nice of me; it was just the right thing to do.

If you've offended someone with words, don't procrastinate. Go right now and apologize. That's good advice from Proverbs.

Day Four

In a lawsuit the first to speak seems right, until someone comes forward and cross-examines.
(Proverbs 18:17).

I'm looking at a proverb a day to show us the way. This proverb is very good advice for us.

What it teaches us is to withhold judgment and opinions until we've heard both sides to any story. We shouldn't be gullible, and we shouldn't jump to conclusions.

This is a particularly difficult area for me. I am very impulsive and very much an over reactor. And every time I do that, I regret it. I am by God's grace focusing prayer and attention in my life on learning to wait until I hear both sides of any story, to make sure I've got my facts straight, to remember there may be something here I just don't know yet.

I remember coming into the office on a very busy day to find a message that irritated me at once. With only partial information, I thought this other person was doing something way out of line, and I overreacted. I went to the phone and started calling her, to get things straightened out. Thankfully, she was not in, and I didn't get to speak with her at that time.

When she returned my call and explained the situation, I realized the message had not been complete, and if I had talked with her earlier, I would have overreacted and probably hurt her feelings. God protected me that time and reminded me how much I need to learn not to overreact.

Wise Solomon warned us the first person to present their case can sound very convincing because we haven't heard the other side of the story. We need to listen to people but not be too quick to agree or disagree with them until we've sorted the facts out and know what we're dealing with. This is good advice for managers and employees alike.

I want to encourage you to go to the Proverbs daily for guidance. There are 31 chapters, so you can read the one that corresponds to the day of the month. I've been doing that for several years, and many times God has used the Proverbs to give me clear guidance, especially on job-related issues.

Day Five

This is a very special day for me personally. I'm recording program number 10,000. Each program is 3 minutes long so that's 30,000 minutes this Monday to Friday daily has been broadcast on many stations. I am humbled to see how God has allowed us to continue the purpose for which I began this program in 1984—to equip, encourage and empower women in the workplace to see their calling as God's ambassador wherever their career takes them.

Having had a long-time corporate career myself, I understood the need for more resources based on God's Word to help us navigate the many challenges of living out our faith on our jobs, particularly in secular environments. I remember recording the first programs, and believe me, I was as green as it gets. I had stepped out on faith, believing this kind of program was needed, and trusted God as I walked through each open door.

We began on one station in Chicago, and honestly that was the limit of my vision at the time. I never dreamed God would make it possible to reach many other cities and even other countries through radio and now the internet.

I am pausing today to say thanks and to celebrate God's faithfulness. Thanks that God can use anybody, even a woman with few qualifications and virtually no experience. Thanks that so many others have come around me through the years, helping me, teaching me, and encouraging me. Thanks to so many thousands of listeners who have supported this ministry.

I would encourage you to take seriously any passion God has laid on your heart and ask God what the next step is. It will be a step of faith, and you probably won't be really qualified, but when he calls you, he will open the doors and empower you to flourish by his grace.

One verse comes to mind: *The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it* (1 Thessalonians 5:24).

I testify that God is faithful, and what he calls you to do, he will equip you to do—for his glory and your good.