

To:

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From:

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On:

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Wise Teens

31 Days Adventure of Growing in Wisdom and Character

Jacob Mburu Wainaina

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WISE TEENS

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Dedication

To Mwihaki, the wife of my youth.

You have proved to me,

That who you marry is the second most important
decision in life.

I love you.

To Jebichi, Wambui, Imora, Kwizera, and Nashipai,
our daughters, I love you all.

May you hide God's Word in your hearts,
Apply it daily for focused, fruitful and fulfilling lives.

Always be thankful.

To all teens, my passion.

You are precious. I care.

Welcome to the adventure of wise living.

Contents

A Trip Through Proverbs	
Forward.....	i
Preface.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	v
Introduction.....	ix
Reading Wise Teens is Simple.....	xi
Day 1: Wisdom for the Road Trip of Life.....	1
Day 2: Listen, Store and Do!.....	5
Day 3: Seek and Trust the Lord Only.....	11
Day 4: Keep off Bad Compay.....	15
Day 5: Stay Away from Sex Traps.....	19
Day 6: Are you Ant-like or Slug-ish?.....	23
Day 7: The Art of Seduction – Beware!.....	27
Day 8: The Most Beneficial Friend.....	31
Day 9: Heed Correction, Rebuke and Instruction..	37
Day 10: Many Words, More Sins	41
Day 11: Money! Pesa! Hela!.....	45
Day 12: The Formula of Success: Work!Work!	
Work!.....	49
Day 13: Discipline: The Good Pain.....	53
Day 14: Think, then Act! Not Act, then Think....	57

contents

Day 15: Cheering Up is Healthy.....	61
Day 16: What Makes Planning Complete?.....	65
Day 17: Drop that Quarrel!.....	69
Day 18: Pride or Humility – Which Way?.....	73
Day 19: Zeal Alone is not Enough.....	77
Day 20: Alcohol: To indulge OR abstain?.....	81
Day 21: What Software is Running You?.....	85
Day 22: Your Talent is Your Key.....	89
Day 23: Don't Chase Riches.....	93
Day 24: Sleep and Poverty are Bedmates.....	97
Day 25: Do Good to Your Enemy.....	103
Day 26: Do Not Answer a Fool.....	107
Day 27: Take Cover when you See Danger.....	111
Day 28: Confess, DO NOT Conceal.....	115
Day 29: Accept Rebuke.....	119
Day 30: The Lies that Blind; the Truth that Frees.....	123
Day 31: The Best Source of Sex Education.....	129
What Next? Do Not Conform.....	133
Wise Teen's Bible Reading Plan.....	136

Foreword

This is FRESH!

I have had many good and bad encounters with, and have heard many stories about, teens and teenage. Joy and pain are present in equal measure in this stage of life. My own experiences during that phase are still fresh. The age thirteen to nineteen seems brief, but it impacts all the following years of one's life on earth. Consequently, if anybody cares to live a purposeful life, he or she must invest well in this stage. One must find his real identity in the right place and person – in Jesus Christ.

So why is this FRESH?

I have known Jacob for many years and this devotion not only communicates his deep love for the Word of God, but it also brings out some foundational insights on its centrality in guiding every teen to a purposeful and productive life. He brings these out through serious research and sharing his life... his real life! He lives what he preaches.

This Wise Teens devotional explores my favorite book of the Bible with a qualified tour guide, Jacob Wainaina. I read the book of Proverbs in the style that he recommends every quarter of the year; it has been an enriching experience. Jacob presents various themes through the 31 chapters of Proverbs. Some may surprise you as they did to me. It was like seeing 'never seen before' footage! The themes tackled include wisdom, friends, cash, sex, and choices. These are set with wonderful tips for application and everyday implementation.

My wife and I have late-teen children. While it has been a joy bringing them up, it is impossible to ignore the helpful role that

the Word of God has played in their lives through the maze that teenage can sometimes be. If you are a parent, kindly welcome Wise Teens as your partner in this important endeavor of bringing up godly offspring.

I recommend my friend Jacob's book because it takes you into the Word of God, that which never return to back to Him void without accomplishing His purposes (Isaiah 55:11). I can guarantee that your own, or your son's or daughter's teenage years will be transformed because the Word of God taken daily becomes a lamp to your feet and a light to our path (Psalms 119:105)

Read on and enjoy!

God bless.

Munengi Mulandi (Rev)

Deputy Senior Pastor, Nairobi Baptist Church

Managing partner, Ovaa International Ltd. (Real Estate/
Hospitality, Counseling, and Career Design Consultancy)

September 2017.

Preface

This book is a product of many years of reflection. During the Christmas season of 2013, I felt strongly the need to start penning down lessons for teens from the book of Proverbs. Besides, I had gathered enough experiences out of my ten years serving with teens then. This thought was not new though. Way early in 2002, a friend of mine had planted the seed in my mind. We were still at the university. Peter told me how another friend of his had challenged him to begin reading a date-corresponding chapter in the book of Proverbs every day to become wise.

From then on, I chose to apply Peter's pass-it-on idea as much as possible. As I have traversed and dipped into the book over the years, I have drawn countless direct lessons that have sharpened and challenged me in equal measure. The wisdom poured out between the first and last chapters of the book remains timeless and priceless. I can confidently say that almost every single topic on any day-to-day life issue is addressed within the thirty-one chapters of this book.

Apart from reading it for personal nourishment, I am now convinced that this book should be read by any person who cares to live a life marked with wisdom. But even more important, I believe that every teen who wants to live a productive, progressive and prudent life needs to read and reread Proverbs. It is for this reason that the idea of writing *Wise Teen* has ruminated in me to this fruitful end.

This one-month devotional is just but an introduction for the reader to get into the rhythm of reading the Bible daily and consistently beginning with the book of Proverbs. Simply, the idea is to introduce teens into a habit of reading and indulging in the Bible to seek counsel and wisdom in all matters of life.

My prayer is that the Bible will end up becoming the most valuable and dependable source of rebuke, correction, teaching and training for righteousness to you and every teen who chooses to invest in this devotional (2 Timothy 3:16). Therefore, Wise Teens is not only meant to be a Bible-based guidance book on various teens issues but also a guide to acquiring skills for finding more help in the Bible.

Wise Teens is more of a pointer and means to the end rather than the end itself. It's like a sign-post. The considered texts are meant to serve as examples and samples of the counsel and wisdom that can be drawn and applied, first from Proverbs. After seeing the value in Proverbs, I see you not only forming the habit of reading through the book once a month but also take the next step of searching the whole counsel of God by reading the whole Bible. I challenge you to read through the Bible at least once by the age of 19 years.

Finally, I envision a time when we shall publish a year-long Wise Teens Devotional with contributions from one wise teen per day! And YES, the product of Wise Teens will be a community of wise teens scattered across the world!

By committing to read Wise Teens, you are starting a journey that will make you a teen with a positive influence. Talk of positive peer pressure. You are just about to either start off or launch deeper.

Let's go!

Acknowledgments

This book is a product of many key influencers and actors in my life so far. I wish to register my appreciation to them as follows:

God, who formed, saved, called and transforms me to serve Him on earth. Thank you for clearly telling me, in 1998, that You made me for an eternal purpose. To know and love you and make disciples.

My mother, Jebichi Wainaina. Your words of release when I told you that God was calling me to become a pastor were such a relief. I know you had 'better' expectations for your son but you let me go. Thank you for pronouncing those words of blessings.

Peter Njuguna, my campus friend. Beyond sharing a room, you challenged me to start reading a chapter of Proverbs a day. Well, here is the product. Thank you for caring to share!

Rt. Rev. Dr. George Wanjau, welcoming me to PCEA St. Andrews and sending me to serve in the youth department was the best thing you did. Then you counseled and encouraged me through till I found my call to serve among teens. I will forever be grateful.

Pst. Nathan Makau and Rev. Edward Buri. You modeled an effective youth ministry strategy before I read about it in books, Jesus-focused. I am honored to have watched you disciple teens in a simple yet deep way. I use the cues I took today. Thank you both.

The leadership, parents, and teens of PCEA St. Andrews, Nairobi. Thank you for being the best launching platform in my calling (the 2003-2008 span). Most of the lessons in this book started in those memorable meetings and fellowships.

The entire faculty of International Leadership University, Nairobi. Your commitment and approach to equipping transformational leaders was outstanding and flows on through me. Thank you for teaching me practical theological, biblical and educational skills.

Rev. Munengi Mulandi. Your lifestyle, as well as the commitment to discipleship and mentorship, has been instrumental in shaping my life. Thank you for being a blunt and faithful friend. Our journey continues.

The leadership, parents, and youth of Loresho Community Church. You helped refine my calling in teens ministry. Your warmth, encouragement, and support continue to be a big blessing my family's calling as missionaries. Thank you all!

ROCK Bridge Ministries family and friends. Serving with you as the Youth Director exposed me to new ministry perspectives and narrowed my mission. Thank you for the opportunity.

The Navigators Kenya family and our ministry partners. I am so grateful to be part of a people committed to the mission of *advancing the gospel of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom into the nations through spiritual generations living and discipling among the lost.*

Arba Publications for a professional and efficient publication process. I appreciate your noble advice and patience with me.

James Nzengu, the best illustrator I know this far! Your input speaks for itself. Thanks a bunch.

Finally, and very importantly, my wife and our daughters. Our varied times of work, laughter, tears, criticism, patience, play, prayers, all in love, make my life balanced and meaningful. You are my crucible for becoming better and wiser. Thank you all, and I love you very much.

Introduction

Solomon was young when he took over leadership as king of Israel. Besides, he came right after the greatest king of Israel, David, his father. The shoes he was stepping into were too big for him. That is why when he got the opportunity of a lifetime to ask for anything from God, he made the wisest request. In 1 Kings 3:7-9 (NIV), we read.

Now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to number. So, give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern these great people of yours?

If you ever got such an opportunity to make a request to God, would you have asked as Solomon did? I doubt I would. However, from the example of Solomon, I know better what I should ask for. I certainly would like the Lord to be pleased with my request as He was with Solomon's.

On top of being pleased with him, God made several promises to Solomon, including that of making him the wisest man who ever lived.

Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have you asked for the death of your enemies, I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. (1 Kings 3:11-12)

Kindly read 1 Kings 3:10-15 for all the promises!

Now, it is this Solomon who penned down most of the chapters in the book of Proverbs. As he put down his wise observations and inspirations, he addressed almost every topic under

the sun. Actually, in his later book, Ecclesiastes, he said that there is nothing new under the sun (1:9-10).

The magnitude and dynamics of issues facing teenagers today are as overwhelming as they are confusing. Friends and relationships, peer pressure, pride, laziness, academics, and extracurricular activities, sex and sexuality, media and celebrity influence, drugs and alcohol abuse, pornography, leisure, and entertainment are just but a few issues to mention. According to Solomon, however, they are not new at all.

Wise Teens seeks to introduce you to discover the wealth of wisdom in Proverbs on these issues and more. Beyond Proverbs, *Wise Teens* is also intended by the methodology to help you cultivate a habit of seeking wisdom in the entire Bible. The greatest prayer behind *Wise Teens*, however, is that every teen comes to know, believe, live and share the truth *in* Jesus Christ “in whom are hidden all treasures of wisdom and knowledge,” (Colossians 2:3).

Wise Teens is made up of 31 individual devotions. They are meant to be read, one a day, for a period of one month. Each devotion is based on one verse or a passage drawn from each of the 31 chapters of the book of Proverbs. A few cross-references are made though.

At the beginning of each day, a brief reflection on the relevant portion of scripture is given, followed by a section where, you, the reader is challenged to *reflect* some more and take specific *actions* to help you internalize the lesson(s) of the day.

Reading Wise Teens is Simple

Read. Reflect. Jot down. Act. Share.

Every day, you are to read a date-corresponding chapter in the book of Proverbs. For example, on 12th May, you will read Proverbs chapter twelve. You can start on any date but the best way is to begin on the first day of any month. As you READ, stay alert and underline the verse(s) that speaks to you on any real issues or challenges you may be experiencing. You will come back to them to draw the wisdom found therein.

After reading the chapter, move on to READ a corresponding devotion in *Wise Teens*. The *Wise Teens* devotional will help you sharpen the idea of drawing lessons, principles, and instructions from Proverbs by the end of the month.

As you read, in the course of the day, I challenge you to think through the verse or passage that stood out for you in the chapter. You could write it down in an index card that you could carry in your pocket. Take time to reflect on it, jot down and act on some lessons, principles or instructions that you draw from it. You will need to keep a journal for this purpose too. At the end of every day, you will have an opportunity to summarize the day's lesson in one sentence starting with the phrase '*A wise teen* _____.'

Finally, after you have read, reflected, jotted down and acted, please share the lessons and principles obtained from *Wise Teens* with your friends, and enemies. For example, you could share the lessons face-to-face, on social media or with your classmates every morning before lessons start or just before lights out in the dormitory. You can also share with siblings and parents at home. Note, what you teach you seldom forget. Besides, someone said sharing is caring.

If you keep to this Wise Teen strategy cycle, one day you might just compile your own *Wise Teens* devotional like this one! In fact, I invite you to be part of my vision of doing a whole year's *Wise Teens* devotional that will comprise contributions from as many teens across the globe. I am sure you will be glad to share your lessons and experiences with someone in need, won't you? In the meantime, use the *Wise Teens* strategy to start creating *Wise Teens* peer groups in your neighborhoods.

Finally, how about committing yourself to the discipline of reading through Wise Teens by signing the commitment here-under? It will help to keep you reminded and focused.

I _____ com-
mit that for the next 31 days I will dedicate 30 minutes every
day to read, reflect, jot down and share lessons, principles and
instruc-tions gained from Proverbs, and hence become part of
the Wise Teens community and movement. I hope to share
what I learn with

1.....

2.....and

3.....

as I read on.

Day **1**

Wisdom

**For the Road
Trip of life**



If you were asked to plan for your dream road trip, what would your choice route be? Whom would you choose to join you? Why would you pick those friends or acquaintances?

The documentary series called *Departures* is a good watch to illustrate how difficult and expensive such a task can be.

Each of us is on a road trip called life every breathing minute. While on this trip, each person is faced with decisions to make at every winding turn. There are innumerable opportunities and challenges on the road of life that need to be seized

Wisdom For The Road Trip Of Life

or overcome. How successful each of us ends up depends on how much one is prepared for the journey. The great thing is that we are not the first, and neither shall we be the last on this trip. Consequently, it is wise to keep close to the wisest in this journey.

That is why I propose the book of Proverbs. This book is filled with nuggets that can make a good recipe for a fruitful, fulfilling and fun-filled road trip of life in any age bracket. The most turbulent phase in one's lifespan is during the teen-age. While at it, one can either have constructive or destructive fun in this life.

Destructive fun is marked by destructive habits and behavior that lead to the loss of something in or within you. Constructive fun, on the other hand, is fun that results from a set or series of wise choices often from wise counsel, either from wise people or the Omniscient God through His Word. In the Bible, the book of Proverbs can be seen as the encyclopedia of wisdom as well as the best manual for wise counsel.

See for yourself what Proverbs 1:2-3 states as the purpose of the book;

The purpose of Proverbs

*For attaining wisdom and discipline;
For understanding words of insight;
For acquiring a disciplined and prudent life,
Doing what is right and just and fair;
For giving prudence to the simple,
knowledge and discretion to the young
Let the wise listen and add to their learning,
and let the discerning get guidance –
For understanding proverbs and parables,
the sayings and riddles of the wise.*

How many objective effects of reading the book of Proverbs do you see from this passage? Go on and circle all the verbs in the passage. Then, in the spaces below, state what the author of the book says are the effects he expects to see on the reader upon studying the book.

○

←

Now, do those expectations look like something you would like to invest your time in a while on these 31 days trip through Proverbs? In case you are not sure whether you want to start off, I challenge you to give it a shot or thought. I promise you, you will have nothing to lose but everything to gain on this road trip. It is wisdom discovering and gathering trip. I assure you, if you keep the right attitude, you will earn much wisdom and lose much foolishness.

Certainly, you need the wisdom, discipline, and understanding prescribed in this book for success in the diverse issues of life. So, how do you acquire, learn, live and share them out? As you take the trip through Proverbs and *Wise Teens*, you will discover many puzzle crackers.

Proverbs offers you different routes on the road trip of life. At the same time, it shines beautiful beams of light on life's different paths and scenes.

As to the routes you end up taking, the choice and onus is entirely yours.

Reflection



What are some areas in your life for which you hope to find some wisdom as you read through the Proverbs?

Action



What are you going to do to ensure that you read through the entire book of Proverbs?

	<p><i>A Wise Teen</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	
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Day 2

Listen, Store & Do!



Like any other teen, I guess you treasure many things. Your space. Your secrets. Your clothes and fashion. Your friends and cliques. Your family (a few excluded, maybe...) Your education (except if you don't have the right attitude about the purpose and importance of education). The list goes on. Every teen treasure such and many more things in varying degree and order. If you are keen, you will realize that most of the things you treasure have something to do with people, activities or events. Besides, these can be physically perceived or experienced.

King Solomon realized that his son needed to treasure some-

Listen, Store & Do!

thing extra a thing that was intangible. He says in Proverbs 2:1, 5:

“My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you....then you will understand the fear of the Lord and the knowledge of God.”

As important as what you perceive as treasure is, what else do you see Solomon mentioning in these two verses? Why are they necessary? Read the verses again and write down in the space below the things that Solomon perceives as treasure.

a) _____

b) _____

I see the following two treasures labeled wisdom:

Listening to your parent is wisdom. Yes, they may seem harsh and back-ward sometimes but they speak out of love and care. It may feel like they are intrusive and their advice a waste of time but their experience guarantees that what they are telling you is good for you. They may seem petty in pursuing details that look unimportant to you but remember you only need a very small hole to sink a big ship or crash an airbus. They may sound prejudiced in advising you against the company of a certain friend but they see farther than you do. I agree, at times you feel like they do not understand you at all. However, that is just a feeling. If you thought soberly and critically about what they were saying, though it may not sound logical at all at present, you would see the wisdom in their “blah blah blah!” Nonetheless, the choice is yours, as was the case with Solomon’s son. Remember, his father said to him “if you accept my words....” It is a choice. And choices have consequences, either bad or good.

Any experience(s) of either? Do you agree or disagree with

Solomon?

Storing up your parents' counsel is wisdom. What your mom or dad said this morning, or last night, or last weekend may not have been very palatable. In fact, it may not be what you wanted to hear at that moment or what you want to think about right now! But don't rush nor trash.

Do not delete. Keep it in your heart and let it simmer. Though you may succeed in ignoring it the first time, it will certainly prove great wisdom sometime to come. Personally, I now appreciate some advice my parents gave me when I did not want to hear it. I certainly regret ignoring some of it.

Have you been tempted to ignore your parents' advice recently? Do you want to think again?



Choosing to listen and do as advised by your parent comes with great benefits.

Solomon promised his son a few:

1. "Then you will understand what is right and just and fair – every good path," (Proverbs 2:9). Confusion will not be in your vocabulary anymore. When faced with a situation, you will know what to do!
2. "Discretion will protect you and understanding will guard you," (v.11).
3. "Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men," (v.12). There is a big temptation in the teenage years to feel and think it is

time to do what you deem fit. You are not alone in feeling too mature to consider parents' views. In fact, many times your peers will seem wiser than your parents. Unfortunately, all those who choose to swing with this unwise thinking end up at the destination called regret. You do not want to end there, do you?

Reflection



1. Can you think of any positive results you have enjoyed in your life because of heeding your parents' advice? Jot down a few.

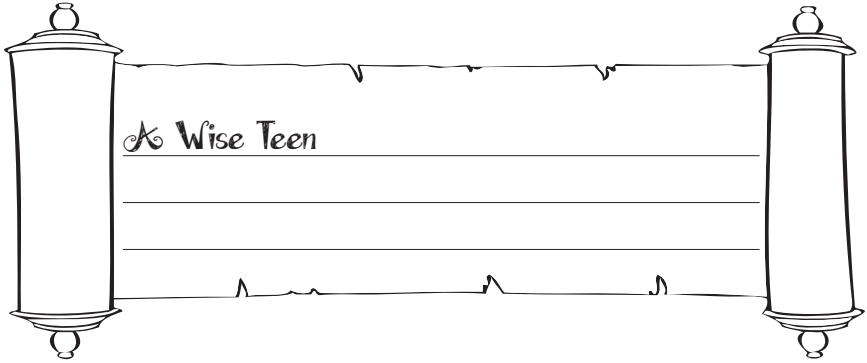
2. What consequences have you suffered or are you encountering right now as a result of ignoring your parents' counsel?

Action



1. Write down your resolve concerning how you shall handle your parents' counsel and wisdom henceforth.

2. If you are suffering any consequences as a result of ignoring your parents' advice, go share with them what you are going through, apologize for your foolishness and commit to rectifying.



A decorative scroll with ornate, fluted ends. The scroll is unrolled, revealing the text "A Wise Teen" in a cursive font. Below the text are three horizontal lines for writing.

A Wise Teen

Day 3

Seek and Trust The Lord Only



In every waking and walking second of a teen, one thing is certainly possible: you are in the process of making a decision! Right? For example, on a day while on a mid-term break, you could be thinking: “Do I go hang out with friends or help at home with chores? Do I complete my homework or check updates on my social media walls? Do I read that book or watch that movie? How can I get that permission to go for that birthday two nights away? Do I say the truth or lie about what happened yesterday when we went out with friends on that trip?”

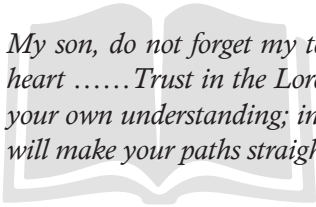
If all those are too far, what are you thinking right now?

Seek and Trust the Lord Only

Whatever the destination of your thought, a decision will be made for every situation. Then, each final decision will lead to a series of other thoughts and decisions to be made. For example, if you choose to lie in any of the situations above, you will have to craft another lie to cover the first one, then another one to cover the second, the third, the fourth and to the end. Actually, the truth is that you need a very good memory to be a good liar!

As you make each of these decisions, however, what do you base them on? What is your guiding factor? Deep inside, who tells you what to do or what not to do?

In his wisdom, Solomon advised his son to consider one base and source: the Lord.



My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heartTrust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and he will make your paths straight (Proverbs 3:1,5).

There will always be conflicts within you concerning who to trust when making a decision: “Should it be my parent, guardian, friend, sibling, teacher or classmate? Mhhh, should I trust that radio presenter, musician, Mr. Google, Wikipedia, a certain magazine or even my own understanding?” All these are good sources for sure but none can be fully trusted. Ultimately, a wise teen needs to “trust in the Lord.”

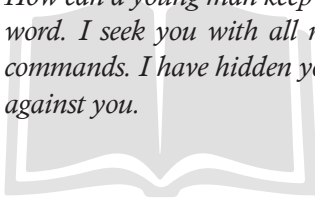
Nevertheless, why should you trust in the Lord? Well, because he created us and knows us best (see Genesis 1:26-28). What he says about us is neither speculation nor estimation; it is accurate in every detail. He is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. Nothing can be hidden from Him. We can run but never hide. We can pretend but he knows our deepest secrets (Read Psalm 139 for a full picture). So, just like we consult the manufacturer’s manual when seeking to use an appliance, we

must consider our maker's manual as our key source in every decision. That manual is called the Bible.

To make it even clearer, Solomon ensures that he states to what extent his son should trust in the Lord: *"In all your ways."* That means every waking and walking moment, Solomon's son needed to ask: "What does the Lord expect of me in this situation?" But how do you attain that level of interaction with the Lord?

I can only think of one example: David. David's strategy is found in Psalm 119:9-11. This scripture says:

How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.



The only way you can hide something in your heart is first by getting it into your heart. David states that he had committed to seeking God. When you look at the many Psalms that he penned down, you cannot doubt that seeking. For this reason, he made very many wise decisions that made him the greatest king who ever lived. However, even when he made foolish decisions like committing adultery, he knew the right thing to do so as not to lose his relationship with God. He confessed and repented of His sins (Psalm 51). Eventually, David would be labeled a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22). I guess you would not mind such a title, would you? Consider the reflection and action below.

Reflection



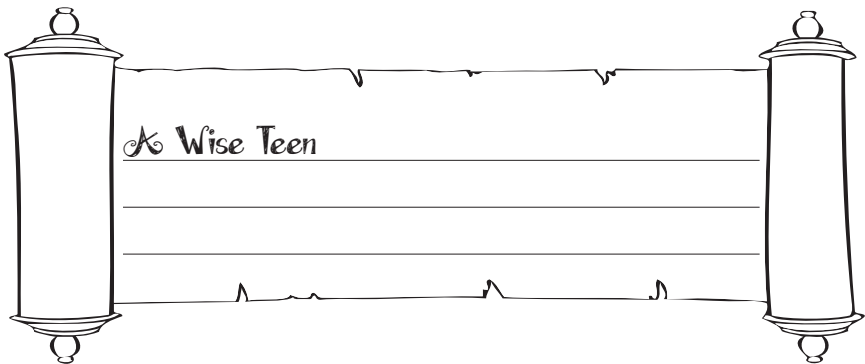
Who has been guiding you to determine how you make decisions?

Are there decisions that you regret having made because of the consequences you are now facing? Write down if any.

Action



What steps will you take to start considering trusting in the Lord in making your day-to-day decisions?



Day 4

Keep off Bad Company



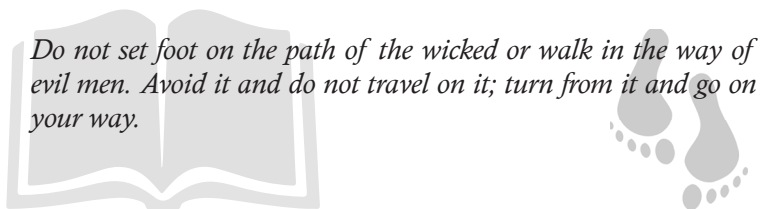
If you have ever run through a cloud of smoke, perhaps you can remember the scent you acquired as a result. I guess it was not a nice perfume to wear for the rest of the day. In fact, you may have gone back home and changed your clothes immediately. If you do not identify with that, what about that visit you paid grandpa and grandma last holiday in the village? Do you remember spending some time in the kitchen to help you cope with the chilly weather and yet the only source of heat there was wet firewood? What kind of aroma did you come out emitting? I am sorry if you do not identify with any of the two illustrations. I am sure you cannot miss a moment that left you with an undesirable smell.

Nevertheless, in any of the bad smell experiences, whether those described above or otherwise, if someone met you im-

Keep off Bad Company

mediately thereafter, chances are that they could accurately guess where you had been owing to the scent of your “perfume.” In a similar manner, when you spend time with misbehaving friends, chances are you will soon adopt their wanting behavior. Your mind will begin to be filled with their beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions. Your thoughts will soon be crafting and churning out illicit ideas. Then, before long, your mouth will follow in letting them out of the abundance of the heart (and mind) (Matthew 12:35). Your feet will walk to the wrong places. As time goes, your hands may find it easy to handle anything illicit ranging from alcohol to drugs, to sex, to cheating in exams, to pornography etc.

As such, a wise teen heeds the advice by Solomon in Proverbs 4:14. Listen to what he said;



That is as clear as it can get. What stands out for you in this verse?

The fact is that there are evil and wicked men around. If in doubt read Ephesians 5:15-17 and see the warning too! What they do is not by mistake but by choice. They may not be comfortable with what they do but they do it anyway. And just like anyone else, they do not mind the company of any unsuspecting, innocent or naïve “friends”. If you find yourself on their path by mistake, Solomon advises that you turn from it and go on your way. I do not need to define evil because you know it when you see it. Your parents taught you about it before you started thinking they do not know anything.

In the following verses, Solomon gives the reason for his advice and further guidance on what to do instead. In verses 15 and

16, he says the aim of evil men is just to do evil. Nothing less! They eat, drink and sleep evil. If you entertain their company, you will soon dance to their tune. In 1st Corinthians 15:33 Paul literally says, Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.” They are sure to win you over. Anyway, that may as well have been their mission and plan. So they will have won and you will have lost unless you wanted to join their band-wagon.

In contrast, Solomon paints the alternative route to take in verse 18:

The path of the righteous is like the rest gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day.

This is a route full of light. It not only enables you to see what you are doing clearly but also helps you to know what to do next. In other words, you are in control of what is happening both within and without you – and can accurately estimate your next move.

Reflection



1. Who do you need to drop as a friend(s) today because you know or suspect he or she or they are bad company?

2. Which relationship do you need to cultivate again because it is sure and will not bring you shame?



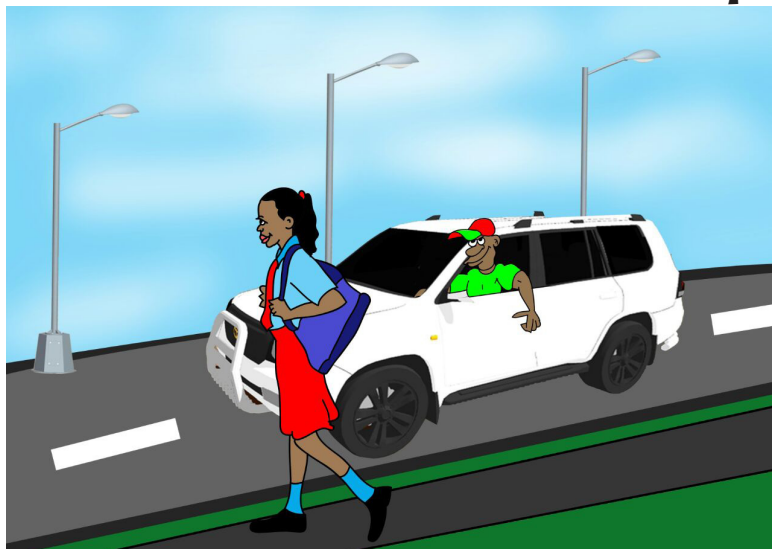
On the matter of keeping the right company, what will you:

	Doing?	When and how?
Start		
Stop		
Keep		

A Wise Teen

Day 5

Stay Away from Sex Traps

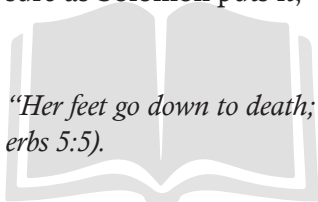


Sex education is taught from very many fronts today. Parents, teachers, and media are just but some of the sources. Each of these sources has its advantages as well as challenges. For instance, parents mean the best for you but may not be able to put things in a clear, blunt and understandable way because the topic is an uncomfortable one for many. Teachers may be well placed to explain sex matters in clearer terms but they are often pressed with the syllabus to cover. On the other hand, media offers a lot of information whether through print, electronic or internet sources, but this is often too general or liberal to be helpful to a curious teen like you. As a result, I do not blame you if you are feeling confused about issues related to sex and sexuality. However, you need not be confused.

Stay Away from Sex Traps

That is why today I propose that as a wise teen, you need to gather and sift information on this important topic from the book of Proverbs to enable you to make wise decisions during this stage when your hormones are surging and raging. Solomon must have seen the need for wisdom on the topic among his children and hence the lots of advice in Proverbs chapters 5, 6 and 7.

In chapter 5, Solomon focused on adultery. More specifically, it seems he had observed adulteresses on the loose to deceive young men. Adultery is simply defined as sexual intercourse with anyone who is not your husband or wife. An adulterous person or activity, therefore, is anyone who has intentions to lure another into adultery. In my opinion, an adulteress today is anything that leads you to sexual temptation or trap. It could be that dirty song or movie. It could be that lights-off talk in the dormitory about what happened last holiday between you and ... It could be that magazine under your pillow that no one else knows about. It could be that late night soap opera that you never miss. It could be that dirty late night radio show you listen to on your phone under the blankets. It could be that sexting you are now addicted to. It could be an addiction to some internet porn sites or some pornographic materials in a flash disk. It could be that careless flirting with boys or girls around. It could be that pornographic material that you saw on the street and are now saving some coins to buy. Whatever may have become your lure to adultery please beware the end is as sure as Solomon puts it;



“Her feet go down to death; her feet lead straight to the grave” (Proverbs 5:5).

It is fatal! It will end in death.

Solomon puts forth the best advice to enable you to stay away from the temptation of falling prey to the shameless

adulteress.

“Now then, my sons (and daughters) listen to me; do not turn from what I say. Keep to a path far from her (the adulteress), do not go near the door of her house, lest you give your best strength to others and your years to the one who is cruel, lest strangers feast on your wealth and your toil enrich another man’s house” (Proverbs 5:7-10).

Adultery is not only evil but also very costly in every sense. It drains one’s pocket and strips off one’s dignity. It wastes the mind and body and erodes self-esteem. It distracts one from focus and destroys one completely. It sucks one’s energy and destroys one’s future. That is why heeding Solomon’s advice is great wisdom for any thinking teen like you, or aren’t you? Stay away! Switch off that program that leaves you with evil thoughts! Throw away that video that contains obscene sex scenes! Quit going to that place you frequent for ‘adult movies’! All the ones who act in those movies have no good intentions whatsoever! They are adulteresses.

Reflection



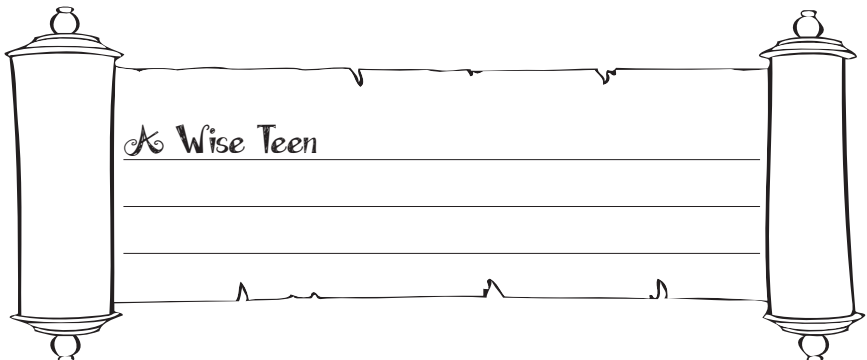
1. What one new thing have you learnt about adultery from today's lesson?

Read chapter 6 and 7 and identify more insights and advice on sex and related issues. Write down as many as you can observe.

Action



2. Is there anything that you have been doing that qualifies to be seen as entertaining an 'adulteress?' What are you going to do about it?



Day **6**

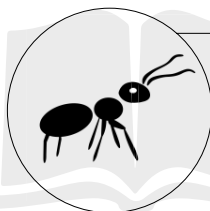
Are you Ant-like or Sluggish?



Forget Wikipedia. Nature is the greatest encyclopedia that exists, but only if you spend some time to observe its inhabitants, whether flora or fauna, living or non-living things. For instance, if you watch any wildlife documentary on the *NatGeo* television channel, you certainly learn innumerable lessons about life and living in the wild. In a similar way, Solomon must have spent some time observing the lifestyle of ants to be able to put down some wisdom from these tiny arthropods.

Are you Ant-like or Sluggish?

Proverbs 6:6-8 says:



Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, nor overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provision in summer and gathers its food at harvest.

What do you think ‘going to the ant’ means? For me, Solomon seems to be saying: “Look for one and just follow it and learn from it! If you are keen enough, you will become wise upon applying what you see an ant do and not do!” However, just in case you cannot see anything, Solomon points out one example for the sluggard (a very lazy person that is likened to a slug!).

An ant, Solomon says, has no one to tell it what to do, but it uses its “brain” well. It does not even have an authority figure to command or rule over it but it does the right thing. The ant is smart enough to know that “When I have more than enough, I need to keep some for a rainy day!” How much more of a brain do you have than an ant? Are you in the ant or slug league?

Like an ant, a wise teen maximizes on the opportunity at hand. He or she uses the gathering time in the best way possible. A wise teen is aware that time is money and does not wait for anyone. Once a second is gone, it is called past tense! By the way, the teen-age phase in one’s life is equal to the gathering stage of the ant. You are gathering in education. It is the learning season that will lead to earning someday when you finally apply the knowledge you are gaining. The opposite of earning out of learning will be yearning. You certainly do not want to end up in the yearning category, do you?

Moreover, during teenage, your relationship circles are expanding and it matters what you are gathering from different facets

of this—be it from parents, friends, teachers or God. Most often we are as good as the people we relate to. Beyond people, you also need to identify and develop your gifts and talents during this gathering stage of your life. The high energy levels need to be channeled to the right activities lest you end up in destructive habits. Your spiritual thirst and questions need be attended too by gathering reliable answers lest your faith in God begins to shake or lose meaning. This is truly a gathering phase in your life. You better be like an ant that uses its minute “brain” to gather the best. Best gathering assures best harvest!

On the other hand, you could be sluggish at the moment. A slug does so little. It moves very slowly (slower than the sloth in the movie Zootopia!). A slug has very little if any good reputation. Some of the slug-ish characteristics in a teen could be procrastinating, oversleeping, watching too much TV, obsession with movies, lots of time wasting on Facebook, WhatsApp, Tiktok Instagram and other social media platforms, noise making in class, gossiping, making excuses for everything, blaming others for personal mistakes, too much book-work without spending time in extra-curricular activities etc. Note, being slug-ish will lead you to only one destination—poverty and scarcity (v.10-11). If you are slug-ish, you better rectify early.

Reflection



What are your top five ant-like habits that you need to keep up?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

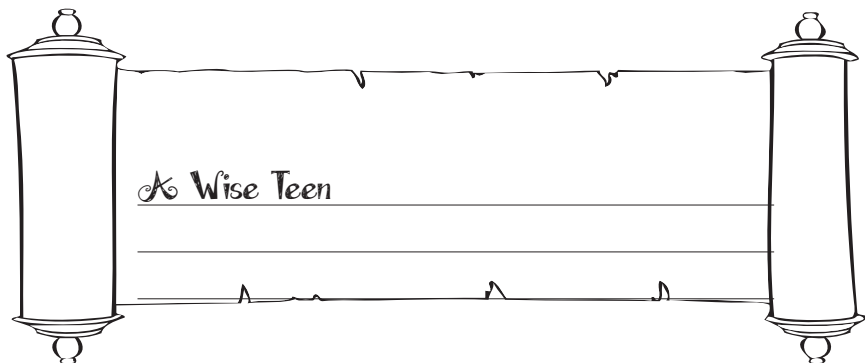
What are your top three slug-ish habits that you must drop from today?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Action

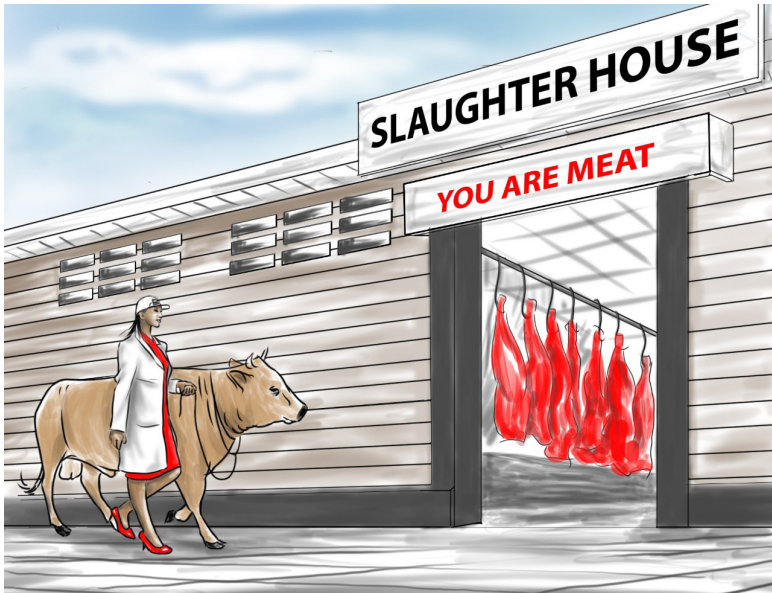


What are you going to do about your slug-ish habits? How? ____



Day 7

The Art of Seduction -Beware!



Wikipedia, the free online encyclopedia, defines seduction as “the process of deliberately enticing a person to engage in a relationship, to lead astray, to corrupt, to persuade or induce to engage in sexual behavior.” In teen circles today, there are certainly many other words that are used in place of the term seduction. Which other words do you know? Regardless of the term, you may know, the meaning is the same as that explained in Wikipedia.

Solomon describes the process of being lured into an adulterous situation or a sex affair in detail. He goes the whole length in Proverbs chapter 7 to paint a clear picture detailing the art of

The Art of Seduction -Beware!

seduction by a woman he calls an adulteress. This adulteress seems to have perfected the art of seduction on account of her past experience which makes her unbeatable in this game, hence the dedication of a whole chapter to giving “young men” (v.7) some solid warnings. This adulteress is described as a “woman dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent” (v.10) to lure the young man into “her house” that is like “a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death” (v.27). Remember, even such an important lady as Potiphar’s wife behaved almost like this. That means that an adulteress may not only be in the streets but also in posh places like the palace!



So how can you identify her art of seduction? Here are pointers from Proverbs 7. Kindly note that this chapter specifically addresses young men but the principles therein apply to ladies too.



She dresses to allure men (v.10). I am not against any mode of dressing, but the motive behind an adulterous woman or man’s dressing is only one – to lure an innocent prey into the sex-death trap! The challenge is that most who go out with such intentions do not display their mission on their foreheads. However, if you remain alert and cautious, you can single out an adulterous person because;



They are bold! (v.13). The adulterous man or woman knows their target very well. Out of experience, they are able to corner the innocent but interested and vulnerable looker. In this verse, she sees her target and wastes no time but offers what the curious, day-dreaming young man may be imagining. Hear the next step she takes: “She took hold of him and kissed him.” That is bold. But it does not stop there.



She invites him to her place (or even her palace, v.16-18). To avoid embarrassing the young man or beautiful girl further, a captivating invitation is made! The picture painted

could easily confuse any man of great wisdom because of the circumstance of the invitation. First, the young man may by this time have come to his senses and is hence praying that the earth opens up so that he can vanish and escape the embarrassment brought to bear on him. Secondly, however, the offer sounds too good to ignore. The offer and the venue of the deadly romance are irresistible to a victim whose hormones are raging. The home of the adulteress sounds like a palace but is, in reality, a “slaughterhouse.” Nonetheless, this young man is not totally blind so he asks some sober questions. Nevertheless, the adulteress has mastered her game! So she throws her best punches again with;



Cunning answers to his every objection (v.19, 20). “My husband is not at home...and will not be home till full moon.” Her words are calculated, spicy and she does not stop; she goes on.



She persuades him with smooth talk (v.21). The adulteress is determined, and the young man – by this time unable to use his brain

“follows her at once! Like an ox going to the slaughter.”

The art of seduction by an adulterous person is a perfected art, or science if you like. You cannot win it but by running away. You need to flee, literally! Do not even start the chat. Keep off ‘sponsors’ whenever and wherever, by whatever means, whether male or female. You shall know them by their seductive behavior.

Reflection



Which of the five seduction strategies described above have you observed in your neighborhood?

Action

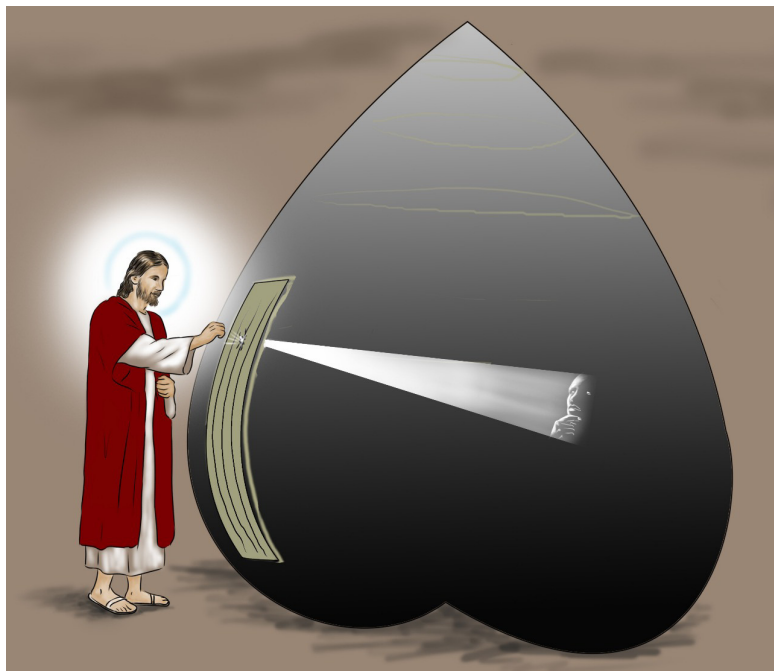


How are you going to make sure that you keep off the path of adulterers from now onwards?

	<p><i>A Wise Teen</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	
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Day 8

The Most Beneficial Friend



The importance and influence of friends in our lives cannot be underestimated. That is why it matters a lot what kinds of friends we keep. Friends have the capacity to control one's mind and emotions. Friends often end up infecting and affecting how you think and behave. They have a say into your values and morals. Therefore, friends can and do play a big role in the kind of person you are or are becoming. It's a little wonder then when Paul tells his audience at Corinth not to be misled, "Bad company corrupts good character," (1 Corinthians 15:33). In other words, no matter how good you

The Most Beneficial Fiend

are, if you entertain bad friends, your goodness will soon be replaced by some badness!

As such, the friends we choose are very important. Take a moment and think about your five closest friends right now. What qualities in them do you admire? What qualities in them do you not like? What risks do you run by continuing to associate with each of them? Where are they leading you? Do you need to take any stop, start or keep action?

In the last chapter, we learned about a nasty adulteress trap. Cunningly, the adulteress presented herself as a very good friend. Unfortunately, there are many teens that have fallen for the lie and befriended people whose influence is as destructive as that of the adulteress. If that is you by any chance, I advise you to flee like a gazelle running away from a hungry lion!

On the other hand, the good news is that there is another friend who is ever extending an invitation to the best friendship relationship. This friend has all the benefits that we desire and dream of in life.

Please read Proverbs 8: 12-21 passage below.

I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence; I possess knowledge and discretion.

To fear the Lord is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, Evil behavior and perverse speech.

Counsel and sound judgment are mine; I have understanding and power,

By me kings reign and rulers make laws that are just;

By me the princes govern, and all nobles who rule the earth.

I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me.

With me are riches and honor, enduring wealth and prosperity.

*My fruit is better than fine gold; what I yield surpasses choice silver.
I walk in the way of righteousness along the paths of justice,
Bestowing wealth on those who love me and making their treasuries
full.*

How many benefits of this friend called ‘wisdom’ can you circle in this portion alone? Please pause and circle them up. I counted at least 24 benefits! I love the fact that the qualification of becoming one who begins to enjoy these benefits is just loving and seeking this friend. Wisdom says in verse 17, “I love those who love me and those who seek me find me.” When was the last time you sought out for wisdom?

Many have debated who this wisdom is but the description he gives from v.22-31 befits only one person – Jesus Christ! Do you know what Jesus said in John 14:6? “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” Isn’t that the summary of the wisdom we seek every day? Jesus is the wisdom that every wise teen needs. His every promise is true and faithful. “Blessed is the man who listens to me...Whoever finds me finds life, and receives favor from the Lord. But whoever fails to find me harms himself; all who hate me love death” (Proverbs 8:34-36, NIV).

A wise teen chooses Jesus as His best friend because He is the friend who brings with him all promised benefits. Have you chosen Him yet? He is ready to accept you today, just as you are. No matter what kind of friends you have entertained before, He says, “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20, NIV). He is knocking at the door of your heart right now. Will you let Him into your life?

Reflection



Why should you turn your life to Jesus today, and how can you do this? Please read the following passages and see what you need to do to become His friend and follower. (John 3:16, 5:24, 10:10, 14:6, Romans 10:9-10, 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Ephesians 2:8-10.)

Action



If you choose to confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour of your life today, you can say the following prayer:

"Father, I have sinned. I have not obeyed your Word. I have tried to run my own life. I have ignored you and your will for me. I have tried to decide for myself what is right and wrong. I deserve your wrath and punishment. I am lost unless you save me.

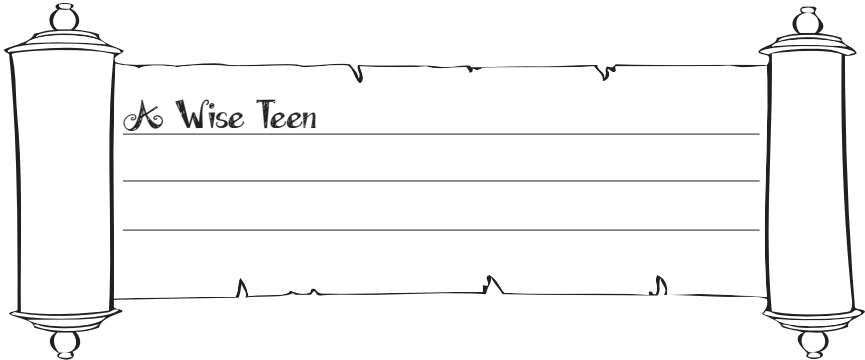
Thank you for sending your Son Jesus Christ to pay for my sin and guilt. Thank you for raising Him from the dead and giving Him authority over my life. I receive Him as my Savior and Lord.

I receive your gift of eternal life in Christ. I will turn from my sinful life to serve you. You are my creator and my redeemer. Holy Spirit, guide me as you reveal and teach me all the truth. Amen."

After making that decision, I advice you to share with someone about your new life in Jesus Christ. The least you can do when you have the greatest person on earth as your friend is to tell other people about him, isn't it? Go on and tell others about him! List here the first five people with whom you will share your experience with Jesus.

You can also share your testimony on our Facebook page called Wise Teens. See <https://www.facebook.com/Proverbs4teens/>

Finally, Jesus' friends live by the Word of God and are guided by the Holy Spirit who teaches us new stuff. Hence, read your Bible and pray every day so that you can grow. Go to a church that believes in the Bible and becomes one in their fellowship of believers.



Day 9

Heed Correction, Rebuke and Instruction



Some time ago I went to see a dentist, not because I had rolled in bed the previous night out of pain but just to get my teeth cleaned, and that for the second time. Since my gum is more prone to cavities, the dentist warned me that I risked losing my teeth earlier than usual if I did not keep this habit annually. The dentist also advised me to make sure I brushed my teeth well before sleeping and gaggled some warm salty water at night to reduce bacterial activity in my mouth, and went on to tell me exactly how to do this. As I listened to her on that last piece of advice, I wondered whether to bother with what sounded very basic – imagine being reminded that I should brush my teeth in a circular motion and in front of a mirror! Anyway, since I do not want to be toothless by the age of 60, I have since heeded most of the advice.

As I left the clinic, I thought about the real cause of the problem with my teeth. Flashing back, I remembered a time when

Heed Correction, Rebuke and Instruction

my parents owned a shop. I was a pre-teen and in primary school. Occasionally, I would be assigned to be the shop attendant, especially during the weekend. Unfortunately, in those days, biscuits and I could not coexist. So, every time I was the shopkeeper, my parents would observe that biscuits sold faster than any other item in the shop. When my strategies were discovered, I was sternly warned and the frequency of the shop attendant assignments was drastically reduced. Nevertheless, it appears that the damage had already been done and I consider that as the genesis of my teeth decay problem. Moreover, when I add to this the fact that I did not own a toothbrush nor know of any toothpaste brands until I joined high school, I can only thank God that all my teeth are still intact.

Why this story? In those days that I enjoyed the sweetness of the biscuits, it never once occurred to me that thirty years later my wanting habit would translate into a costly affair. Having learned the hard way, I cannot ignore the dentist's advice now. I certainly know better from experience and cannot risk another time!

In Proverbs 9:7-9 (NIV), I see three words that make a lot of sense in light of my interaction with the dentist – correct, rebuke and instruct.

Whoever corrects a mocker invites insult; whoever rebukes a wicked man incurs abuse. Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you;

rebuke a wise man and he will love you. Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning.

What do those words mean to you as used in this passage? How do they apply in your own experience?

In my case, I have chosen to take the dentist's correction, rebuke, and instruction seriously. I encourage you to heed what-

ever correction, rebuke or instruction you have received recently. Please listen to that precaution the teacher gave you the other day. Remember what your mother told you as you left home for school and heed it. Do not ignore your father's loud instruction not to continue with that bad company. That concerned friend of yours meant well when he cautioned you about that boyfriend or girlfriend. You must act on that conviction from the sermon you listened to a while ago and has refused to go. That driver that warned you about the alcohol in your pocket was not joking. That guard that gave you a five-minute lecture after catching you before you sneaked out of the school compound knew what he was saying. Your grandma or grandpa's words of caution about taking life more seriously were not empty. Your uncle or aunt's advice to reduce your time on social media will be sweet someday if you heed it today.



A wise teen takes heed of any correction, rebuke, and instruction. Just like heeding my dentist will make my teeth last longer, your heeding advice will surely lead to greater profit. And if you must, think of the consequences of your not heeding about thirty years from now! The price may be too huge to imagine.

Reflection



What two experiences have you gone through after heeding or not heeding instruction or correction in the past?

Action



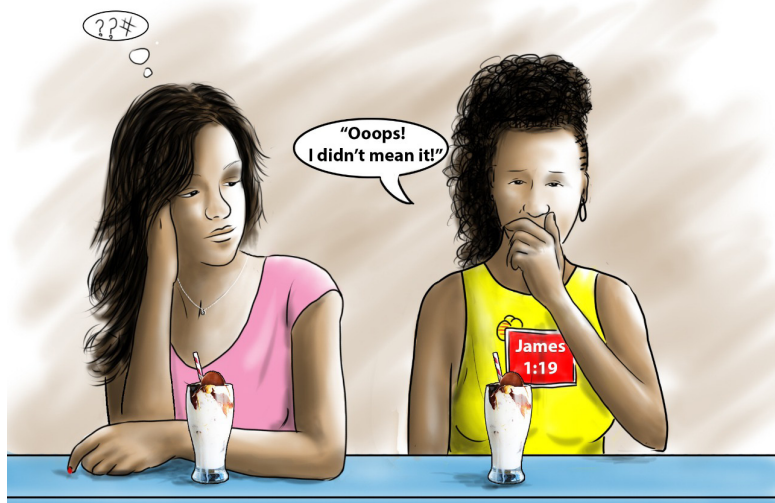
Share with a friend at least two corrections that you want to heed and ask him or her to keep you accountable. You will be glad you did one day!

A decorative scroll frame consisting of two vertical pillars on the left and right sides. Each pillar has a fluted body and a decorative finial at the top and bottom. A horizontal scroll is stretched between the pillars, with a wavy line representing the scroll's edge. The text "A Wise Teen" is written in a cursive font on the scroll, followed by three horizontal lines for additional writing.

A Wise Teen

Day 10

Many Words, More Sins



You may have heard of the argument that we have two ears and one mouth because we need to listen more and talk less. In our current world, however, where being silent almost seems a crime, the opposite is becoming the default.

When was the last time you listened more than you spoke, save in the classroom? The airwaves are crowded with FM stations and each one has a talking following. Music blares in bedrooms and in the streets. People shout for their rights and cheer their favorite teams.

Many Words, More Sins

Somehow, there is more competition to speak than to listen. That is how you ended in the noisemakers list!

Unfortunately, more often than not, when we speak more and listen less, we get into trouble. I speak from experience because I have been a victim of this circumstance more than once. To make myself look better when I stumbled, I used to impulsively use the phrase “it was a slip of the tongue” or even make the excuse that it had to do with my having a sanguine (extrovert) personality. I do not, however, like the embarrassment, shame and regret that comes with this trend, so I am working hard to change.

I have a feeling you have been there too. How many times have you found yourself in trouble because you talked more than you listened? Or you said something off or odd rather fast? When was the last time you felt like you used more words than you needed to? Or better still, who told you something recently that you think should and would have been left unsaid had he or she stopped talking earlier?

As a wise man, Solomon put down some advice for us many years ago. In Proverbs 10:19, he said:



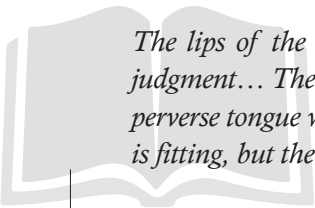
When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise.

Have you ever heard this verse before? What do you understand it to be saying? Jot down some thoughts below;

The advantage cultivated by the habit of thinking about words before you utter them is that you end up being reflective and choosy as to what to say or not to say. In my own experience, whenever I take a little longer to respond to a situation or a question my answer is more likely to be thoughtful, balanced and respectful. I have come to appreciate that is better to appear slow in thinking than to utter foolishness.

If you step into this habit too, your lips will turn out to be a channel of constructive, respectful and desirable words. With more discipline and practice, your lips will become nourishing lips rather than lacerating lips. They will begin to speak great stuff rather than awful stuff. As you continue to ration words, you will realize that those around you will start considering you wise! Would you not love to be considered wise?

Finally, let's end with some further counsel by Solomon in verses 21, 31 & 32.



The lips of the righteous nourish many, but fools die for lack of judgment... The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom, but a perverse tongue will be cut out. The lips of the righteous know what is fitting, but the mouth of the wicked only what is perverse.

You see, your words are like windows to your mind and heart. They either say you are a wise person or a fool. Your words make you appealing among friends. People long to listen to you speak when they know you are going to say some great stuff because you really think before you do so.

Reflection



Have you ever spoken too fast and been misunderstood as a result? What happened and how did you feel?

Action



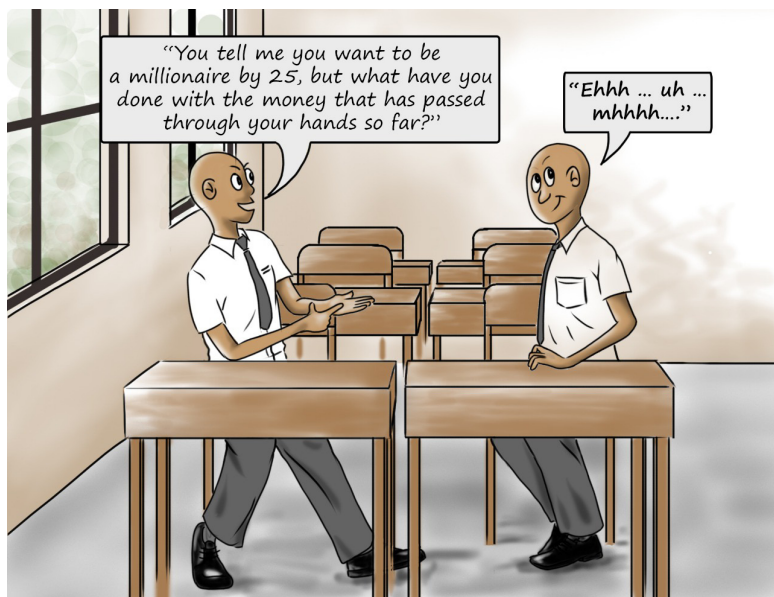
Read the verses above again and jot down a few ways that you are going to apply the wisdom in them.

A decorative scroll with two ornate columns on the left and right sides. The scroll is unrolled in the center, showing several horizontal lines for writing. The text 'A Wise Teen' is written in a cursive font on the first line.

A Wise Teen

Day **11**

Money! Pesa! Chapaa!



Money! Money! Money! What comes to mind when you hear the word money? How much do you want to have? Is money really the root of all evil? No matter your age, as long as you know what money does or can do, rarely will you feel that you have enough of it!

Money! Pesa! Chapaa!

Although thinking about money may be inevitable, it is important to have a right and godly perspective towards it. Unless we have the right perspective about money, it is possible to pursue a life full of misery because our mission may be pegged on the wrong goal of chasing money. For example, it is generally believed that the more money one earns, the better his or her life gets. Nonetheless, up to what level is that true? Besides, worldly wisdom tells us that the sole reason why we work is so as to get money. Really?

Additionally, some people teach that as long as you get money, the means by which you do so does not really matter, whether you earn exorbitant profits, cheat at weights or standards, bribe your way to riches, or even rob at gunpoint! Do you believe that? For these reasons and many more money matters, today we consider several pieces of godly wisdom from the wisest and the richest guy who ever lived, King Solomon. (You can read about how this came about in 1 Kings 3:1-15).

The following passages from Proverbs give different dimensions of wisdom on money and other resources. The resources could be possessions in terms of time, money, talents, gifts, energy, etc. We begin with some from chapter 11. Below each passage and in the space provided, jot down the lesson or principle you derive from it.

11:24-25: "One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly but comes to poverty. A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed."

22:9: "A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor."

11:26: "People curse a man who hoards grain, but blessing crowns him who is willing to sell."

17:18: "A man lacking in judgment strikes hands in pledge and puts up security for his neighbor."

22:26-27: "Do not be a man who strikes hands in pledge or puts up security for debts; if you lack the means to pay, your very bed will be snatched from under you."

17:23: "A wicked man accepts a bribe in secret to pervert the course of justice."

19:17: "He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward him for what he has done."

21:13: "If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered."

21:20: "In the house of the wise are stores of choice food and oil, but a foolish man devours all he has."

22:7: "The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is a servant to the lender."

Go on and read these other verses: 11:15; 20:16; 25:14; 27:13.

Reflection



From the passages above, which three lessons stand out for you as new wisdom regarding money? Circle and color them using a marker pen to remember!

Action



From the three lessons, you just circled and colored in the reflection section, what one thing for each are you going to do in application? Put it down here in CAPITAL LETTERS!

<i>A Wise Teen</i>

Day 12

The Formula of Success

Work! Work!
Work!



what is the relationship between these two stores?

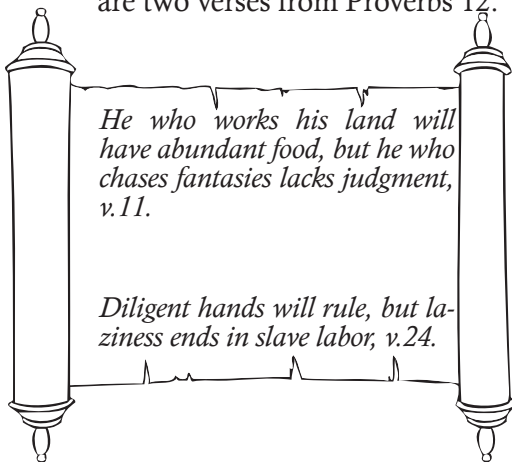
The bulk of Kenya's population depends on agriculture, whether by subsistence or large-scale farming. A majority of farmers depend on rain for their farming. As such, the onset of long rains usually marks the beginning of a busy period in our national calendar. For example, for maize farmers, a series of farming activities follow in tandem. Tilling the land, planting, weeding, top dressing, and pest control are just a few of these. At the end of the cropping season, the quality and quantity of a maize harvest are dependent on the amount of work and resources that were put in, of course,

The Formula of Success Work! Work! Work!

plus good rainfall. In other words in farming, input determines output.

In a similar manner, do you know that your daily input will determine the ultimate quality of your life? A lifestyle full of “tilling and top dressing” your mind and taking care of life’s weeds and pests will assure a healthy life. A lifestyle identified with industriousness and intentionality will end in fruitfulness. A lifestyle that takes advantage of the rainy season to do the necessary will yield great harvests.

On this idea of input determining output, Solomon shares two godly values that are key: work and diligence. In the same breath, however, he speaks of other habits to weed out. Here are two verses from Proverbs 12.



What do you see from these verses about the input and output principle? Write them here below.

Personally, I see the contrasting of a person who works his land with one who chases fantasies, and the diligent with the lazy. The input of the first category of guys is that they are currently an engaged lot. They are working. They have purposed to see and grab their opportunities and sweat out their brains and muscle as they explore them. However, the fantasy chaser and lazy team are known for their ‘do nothing constructive’ lifestyle. Their energy ends up being wasted because they only chase fantasies. At the end of the day, they may not even be able to tell exactly what made them tired! Unfortunately, as days, weeks, months and years pass, the same is repeated and

their destination is so predictable – slave labor!

A wise teen is diligent at his or her work. He or she does not waste time during his or her rainy season be it in academic work, a co-curricular activity like sports or creative arts, leadership responsibilities, social or spiritual growth. As a rule of thumb, everyone who wants to succeed must put in man or woman hours of work in whatever they envision success in. Fortunately, the earlier you start, the higher the chances of excellence and victory. Do not delay any longer.

Pick that book and start reading it today. Put on those shoes and get to the field. Start writing that essay tonight. Send that application right away. Stop eating that junk. Stop watching those movies. Stop playing video games before you finish that assignment. Stop spending endless time on social

*Stop watching those movies.
Stop playing video games
before you finish that assignment.*

media saying nothing of value. Instead, turn to something that adds to your life rather than takes away from it. Start working at it. Now is the time to work. Then keep working at it. Work! Work! Work! Diligence is really the formula of success.

Reflection



Looking at your current habits and lifestyle, what would you consider?

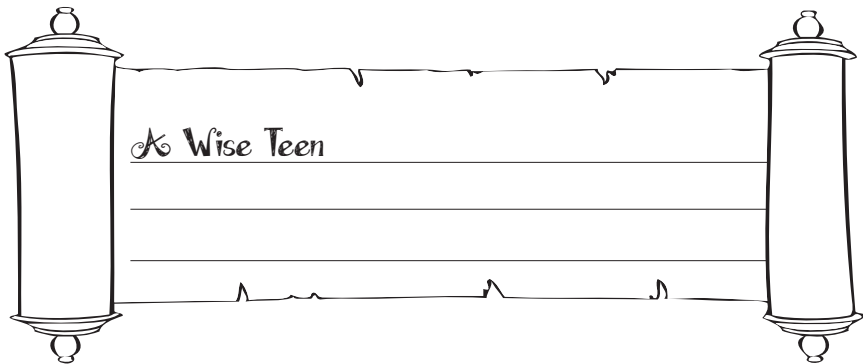
a)Excellent success inputs (diligence)

b)Chasing fantasies (laziness)

Action



List any two improvements or rectifications you need to make for the best outputs and harvest

 <p><i>A Wise Teen</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Day

13

Discipline:

The Good Pain



Some words mean different things at different stages of growth. Discipline is one such word in my experience. When I was a child, the mention of this word meant a beating. If my father mentioned it while facing my direction, I knew that sometime sooner rather than later, I would be receiving some beating. At that time discipline was equivalent to a number of strokes on my bottom. As I look back, I am very grateful that my dad delivered such discipline diligently. Some foolishness needed to be driven out of me through the rod of discipline, especially that of being a bully to my siblings.

Secondly, I was very playful, just like most village boys are.

Discipline: The Good Pain

Time to play was often in short supply. Often this little playtime would translate into the main preoccupation. Consequently, I would end up not doing all the things I was supposed to do. The definite end of this recurring cycle would be a mini-court where it was required of me to explain why I had neglected my duties. Of course, I was more often than not tongue tied since I did not have any other reason other than over-playing. After receiving a few strokes aimed at deterring my habits, I would be reminded that my duty was still waiting for me!

As painful as “discipline” was at that time in my life, I value it because it taught me that time ought to be demarcated. Before I later learned from preacher Solomon in the book of Ecclesiastes that there is a time for everything, it had been driven into me through my skin. I also came to realize that my dad was just fulfilling his biblical mandate. And in the same vein, I sometimes do the same to our daughters now. This is not foreign to any loving parent, including King Solomon who in his wisdom chose to put it down in Proverbs 13:24. He certainly must have done it too! He said:



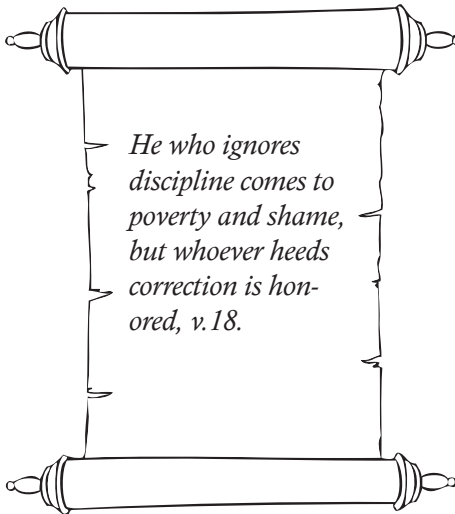
He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.

There can be no other interpretation of the word discipline here other than that of inflicting pain using a rod with the aim of emphasizing on a disobeyed instruction. As a child, you may forget what was said but not the pain. As I look back, I appreciate those painful strokes because they got me here. They taught me what discipline is at its most basic level – good pain. *A wise teen*, therefore, understands that discipline is good pain. While good pain is something no one likes, it is ultimately necessary. Being denied something you really enjoy because it is worsening your performance is good pain. Missing out on joining friends on a playfield several afternoons during the holidays

because you need to revise for your final exams is good pain. Not spending that one thousand shillings on the newest fashion in order to save is good pain. It will make you richer next year.

Spending three hours every Saturday afternoon practicing that piano does not seem as much fun as going to the mall with pals. It is good pain. Staying a little longer at school to finish that homework so that you can do some further research in the evening at home is good pain. Heeding that advice from a parent or guardian to let go of that relationship is good pain. All this good pain will translate to great gain in the long run. Someone said, “No pain, no gain.”

As you continue on this path, discipline translates to doing the right thing, at the right time, in the right way, for the right purpose, and with the right people. A wise teen also takes up discipline in this dimension. Note that all the benefits of discipline are far more valuable than the price one pays for it. But the vice versa is also true. Here is how Solomon sums it up:



*He who ignores
discipline comes to
poverty and shame,
but whoever heeds
correction is hon-
ored, v.18.*

Choosing or not choosing discipline has consequences either way. You either endure the little pain now or you will have much more pain later. As I once heard a Form 1 girl advice a Standard 8 class, you either cultivate the discipline of waking up early to read today, or you will wake up earlier to walk to work someday!

Reflection

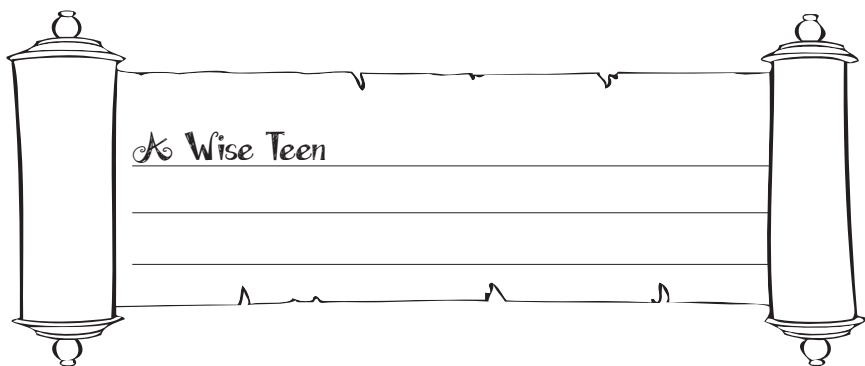


What has stood out for you from today's passages and topic on discipline?

Action

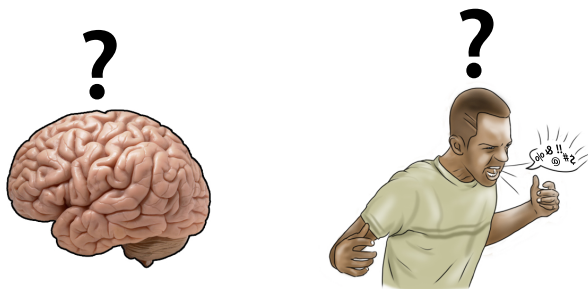


What three habits requiring discipline have you been struggling to keep and how are you going to improve?



Day 14

Think, then Act.
Don't Act, then Think!



Some time ago I was invited to speak in a youth seminar comprising teens and young adults from ten different churches. About one hundred and fifty youth from ages thirteen to twenty-eight attended. My topic of discussion was discipleship. To ensure that as many youths as possible participated, I split my session into two: discussion and presentation. During the discussion part, I was involved in one group of 15-19-year-olds. As the discussion went on, the issue of pornography popped up. Seeing an opportunity to get a good feel of the group's thinking on the topic, I posed a question seeking their opinions on whether watching porn was right or wrong.

As I expected, a few argued that there was nothing wrong with watching pornography. "What makes it wrong and yet I am not the one involved in sex?" posed one teen. "I think I am clean because the Bible only forbids fornication," another

Think, then Act. Don't Act, then Think!

fronted. The debate got heated with those against the practice urging the other team to think further. "Are you sure you are not involved? What about your eyes? Aren't they feeding your brain with what you are seeing too? And once registered in your mind, do you think it ends there?" The debate took a while.

If you were present, which side of the debate would you have supported? Why?

From the above sample teen discussion, it is clear that you are not alone, whichever side you support. Besides, as it came out in that small group, there will almost always be people who believe in the right and others in the wrong. What we believe becomes what we say and eventually what we live. However, how do we arrive at either believing or living the right or wrong?

One likely reason is mentioned by Solomon in Proverbs chapter 14:8 which says;

'The wisdom of the prudent is to give thought to their ways, but the folly of the fools is deception.'

According to this verse, what two groups of people are mentioned and how do they get their titles?

During the discussion mentioned in the beginning, these two dimensions came out very well. I challenged teenagers that

were trapped in the deception that pornography was OK, to think and engage more.

In which camp do you belong again? The ones who know porn is an outright NO or the ones that think porn is OK? Have you thought clearly about your position? Are you on the team of the wise or that of the fools?

A wise teen gives thought to his ways!

But how do you get to prudence? Look at the following verses from this very chapter that distinguish the prudent from the foolish as well as the outcome of their choices.

- *There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end, it leads to death (v.12).*
- *A simple man believes anything, but a prudent man gives thought to his steps (v.15).*
- *The simple inherit folly, but the prudent are crowned with knowledge (v.18).*
- *The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, turning a man from the snares of death (v.27).*
- *Finally, a wise teen chooses to fear the Lord for, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (9:10).*

Reflection



In what ways have you been a prudent teen?

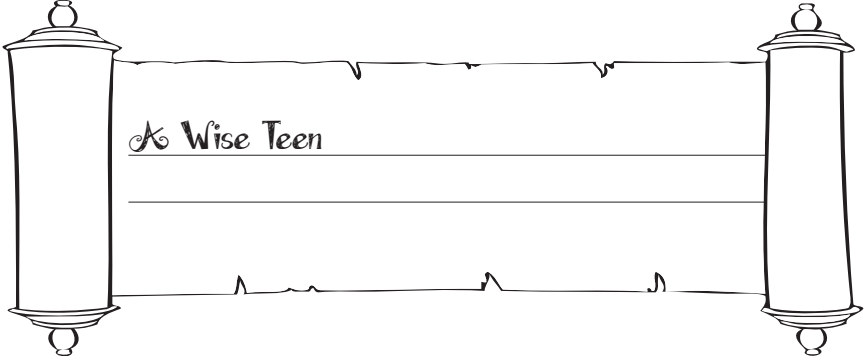
In what ways have you been a foolish teen?

Action



What will you start, keep or stop doing to be a more prudent teen?

Start	
Stop	
Keep	



A Wise Teen

Day 15 Cheering Up

is Healthy!



There is a very short song we love to sing in my home on certain occasions. The song chorus goes;

"Don't worry, be happy!"

Exactly! Just that. I think I sang this song so often at some point that our daughters learned it without my knowing. Can you guess on what occasions we mostly sing that song? If you said when things are not easy, you are right! Yes, there are many times when things just go wrong. I get broke and my girls want a date. At such times I feel frustrated. Other times, I am driving on the highway with my family and someone drives dangerously past me. I feel like chasing him and giving him a piece of my mind. What if he hit us? These roads are such a risk! Worry is inevitable in life.

Cheering Up is Healthy!

There are many situations that can easily take away our peace and bring in gloom.

Now, what do you do when bad things happen to you? How long do you allow worry to dominate your mind? How do you get going after a tough situation has come along your way? I guess you know this but I want to remind you again: whenever you are in a tough situation, there is an equal opportunity to choose either to laugh or cry over the matter.

As hard as it may be, do you know it is better to laugh than to cry in a difficult moment? Look at the following verses from Proverbs 15 in support of laughter rather than worry.



*A happy heart makes the face
cheerful, but heartache crushes the spirit
(v.13).*

*A cheerful look brings joy to the heart and
good news gives health to the bones (v.30)*

On the surface, these verses seem to support the fact that we cannot avoid being sad in difficult situations. However, a much closer look reveals some deep wisdom. Now, read them again and see if you can get the wisdom in them.

As for me, I see two lessons.



The first lesson is that happiness is not determined by what happens to us externally (revealed by the face), but by what we decide internally (in our hearts). Hence, if one's heart is happy, your face lights up! If your heart is hurting, your psyche is down (crushed spirit). When you get that poor grade in Chemistry even after working

so hard, you can choose to be happy, keep the psyche and find what went wrong, or you can choose to feel discouraged and lack any motivation to try again! Either of the choices will have consequences next term. When that relationship does not end as expected, you may choose to be happy that you learned a few things from it that you will apply in future or you may also choose to feel hurt and give up on relationships. The latter will only make you a lonely, bitter person until you come back to your senses and realize again that no man is an island!

The second lesson is that happiness is health!

In verse 30, it seems that the heart is no longer the determinant of joy but the recipient of it. The external happenings have effects on the internal condition too. For example, exercise brightens your skin, strengthens your heart and boosts your confidence. A confident posture in class communicates that you can handle the next question and makes you attractive. Your smile is a good tool that invites friends to your company and provides an atmosphere of positive interaction that may bring laughter and refreshing moments. Feeding oneself with good news from media sources like watching comedy when tired may make your heart cheerful. Watching an inspirational movie may uplift your psyche in many ways. Yes, the external happenings have effects on the condition of the heart too.

Reflection

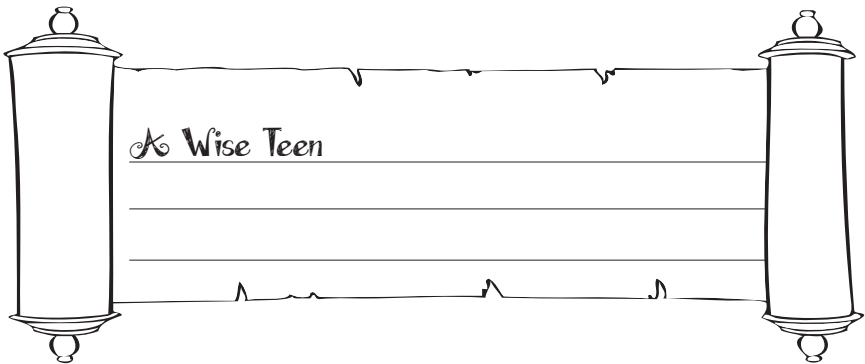


What one idea or thought from today’s reading stands out for you?

Action



How are you going to apply the idea or thought above?



A Wise Teen

Day 16

What Makes Planning Complete?



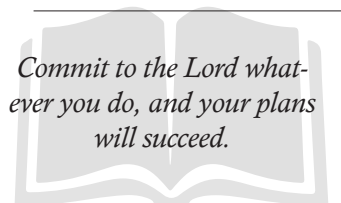
One time, when I was constructing our house, I was troubled about where to get good timber at the fairest price. I searched for weeks and it seemed like it cost the same in all the places I looked until I sought advice from one fundi (wood artisan). Without any hesitation, the fundi quickly told me about a town that I thought I had checked out. However, after I mentioned the timber yard I had checked within the town, the fundi informed me that the one I had visited was the most expensive there! The place he suggested was going to give us a deal at far better prices. The following day we went to the yard and I spent about ten thousand shillings less than I would have

What Makes Planning Complete?

had I not consulted him.

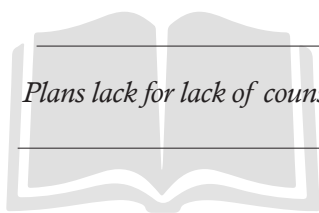
Can you believe that something that had given me so much trouble was solved in just a few minutes! Why did I have to bother with all the “market survey” expedition when I could just have asked a fundi? Why did it have to take all this time before I got this fundi? How frustrating is it that I could not have got this place by using Google!

In Proverbs 16, I see several pieces of advice that I may have over-looked that cost me all the time lost in my timber searching business. Have a look at verse 3.



However, we cannot assume that planning is a given. More often than not, the temptation is to do things without any planning. The fact that you are thinking about something does not necessarily mean that

you have planned for it. Planning is thinking thoroughly and clearly about something and writing down an action plan towards the set-out goals. The plan must be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound. As concerns my timber experience, I actually realized that I had planned but my plan was not SMART. One other thing it lacked was the element of consulting. In Proverbs 15:22, Solomon says;



Just as planning is important, so is seeking advice from the right source – from the experts or the experienced. This is not

just where big, long-term issues like career or where to settle are involved, but also in small matters like where to shop for good timber at a fair price! You can learn from me.

As a wise teen, what specific advice do you need to seek at this particular time so that your plans succeed? Could it be to talk to a doctor and understand what the life of a doctor is like before you decide you want to train to be one? Could it be to request that experienced businessman or woman or musician to share with you the must-do to attain his or her level of success because you dream of becoming one? Could it be to talk to that excellent English teacher so that she can share with you some language improvement techniques to enable you to become the best debater since you want to be the best lawyer someday?

If you want your plans to succeed you better seek advice on that matter that is pending today or plan to do it the next time you meet that person. From my experience with the fundi that day, I learned that I need to seek advice. Whatever issue I may be struggling with, there is someone who is capable of helping out. That someone may not be on my social media network or on Google. He could be in a village like my fundi. Hence, you need to step out of your circle to find him or her. Do not delay any longer!

However, after you have planned and identified the people to seek advice from, before you step out and execute the plan, Solomon says that you “commit whatever you do to the Lord.” In other words, pray for God’s blessings and favor upon your plan, that He will guide in every step you take, as well as lead you to the people that will help you achieve your goals. Remember, before you even planned, the Lord had already seen what you need and still does. Only He can make you achieve it.

Reflection

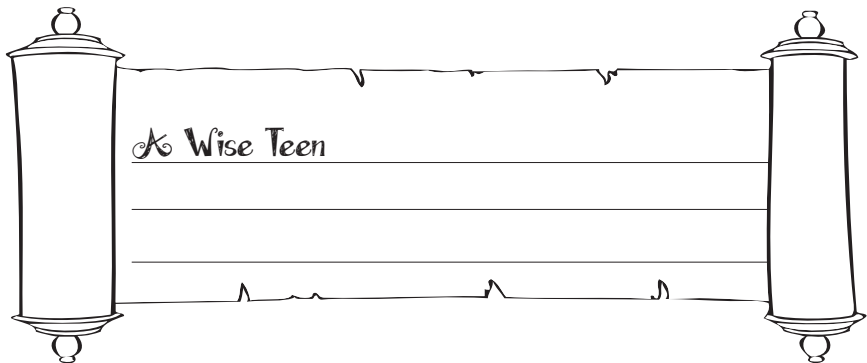


What kind of mistakes have you made in the past regarding planning that either made you not achieve your goals or achieve them later than you had hoped?

Action



How are you going to apply today's lessons as far as your academics and future career are concerned?



Day 17

Drop That Quarrel!



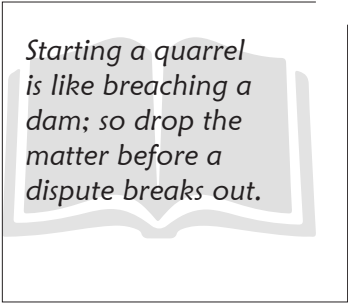
Have you ever found yourself in such a shameful situation that you were at a loss as to how to explain how you ended up there? For example, maybe you were caught fighting with another student or you were caught red-handed hurling abuses at each other. The next logical thing that would have resulted was a fight had the teacher delayed one minute longer! Interestingly, only as soon as you come back to your senses do you realize that you are surrounded by other students who have been staring either in disbelief or enjoying the free but ugly soap opera scene.

Drop That Quarrel!

Before that, you were too consumed by the multiple emotions that propelled you to shout insults at each other!

When you arrive at the principal's office, you do not know what to say. You are ashamed and you wish darkness would just fall and cover you as this scene melts away. Your lips are suddenly immobile and you are nowhere close to coherence as you mumble a feeble but honest "I am sorry" to the principal. Your partner in crime may be trying to act composed but is most likely in much turmoil within as he or she asks the same questions.

Quarreling has never produced positive results which is why the obvious happened in the above situation. Biology informs us that quarreling only increases our adrenalin hence priming us to fight. We start at a mental fight, express it verbally and eventually demonstrate it physically. All this way, one is somewhat "out of his or her mind." Emotions take over instead of reasoning. And soon we are apologizing, saying, "I never wished to do that." What's the use of an apology when a friend is writhing on the floor in pain? What's the use of an apology when hurting words have already left your mouth and can never be taken back? How much will that apology mend the broken trust that may never be won back? All such consequences are possible if one does not stop a quarrel. Proverbs 17:14 says,



*Starting a quarrel
is like breaching a
dam; so drop the
matter before a
dispute breaks out.*

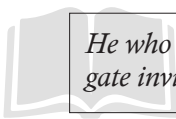
Let's consider the image used. Picture yourself at a huge dam. You are standing on the wall of the dam. The water looks calm as it reflects the clear blue sky. So calm is the surface that it seems almost possible to walk on it. Then, suddenly, a crack appears on the wall you are walking on! Before you know it, you are

kicking and screaming somewhere one hundred meters down the stream. All the peace that was almost tangible a minute ago is replaced by loud, rumbling dangerous water seeking to escape downhill. I think that is what a breached dam looks like.

A breached dam brings destruction. Everything on the water's way will be swept away. Plants will be uprooted. Rocks will be dragged downhill. Any human being on the path risks fatality. Similarly, a quarrel will yield devastating effects, some that one may never be able to recover from, just like the water that escapes the dam can never be brought back.

So, if you see a quarrel coming up, drop the matter. It could be due to some difference in opinion over something. It could be due to some ill words said about you. It could be because of some lies being peddled about you. It could be about a misrepresentation. Certainly, you are hurt. That is hard. Nevertheless, think before you act this time around. The last time you got involved you ended up ashamed and looking like a fool. Mind you, some people are serving life sentences in jail because they could not control themselves. Wisdom says "drop the matter before a dispute breaks out."

You see, in the beginning, it may seem like a very minute matter. However, gradually it will gain momentum and get out of control. A full dispute will be birthed. Disputes are no longer a two persons' affair. A third party is required to mediate, implying that the two participants in the quarrel lack the capacity to reason at that time. You sure do not want to end there. As if that is not enough, verse 19 gives further imagery on the same matter of quarreling. It says;



He who loves a quarrel loves sin; he who builds a high gate invites destruction.

In other words, a quarrel is a sin. If you ignore the protection

Drop That Quarrel!



that comes from knowing that quarrels are dangerous, and hence avoiding them, you are sure to end in destruction.

Reflection



Have you ever experienced or witnessed the picture painted by the two verses quoted in today's text? How do you relate or identify with today's teaching on quarrelling?

Action



What do you feel convicted to keep, start or stop doing in regard to quarreling?

A decorative scroll with ornate ends. The text "A Wise Teen" is written in a cursive font at the top, followed by several horizontal lines for writing.

Day 18 *Pride or Humility:* Which Way



Some of the expectations placed on a pastor can be very difficult to fulfill sometimes. For example, there is an unspoken rule that a pastor should have all the answers to questions about God and life issues. This is not possible for any human being because only God is omniscient! It is also often expected that a pastor should be able to address any life topic because he or she is connected to the highest source. A

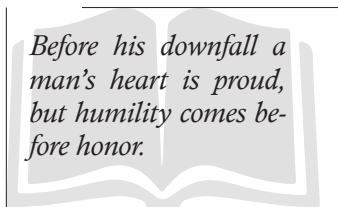
Pride or Humility: Which Way

pastor's prayer life is thought to be smooth, and hence he or she can take all our issues to God at any time. The list goes on.

While these and more expectations are reasonable to some extent and partly biblical, many aspects of them are not borne out in everyday life. A pastor struggles to read and study the Bible just the same way the high school student does. As a pastor, I struggle with illness just as my neighbor does. As a pastor, I strive hard to find answers to difficult questions in the Bible just as a physics teacher does! Nevertheless, I enjoy being a pastor!

I open with this pastor experience because I have come to learn one thing: being a pastor is not being a mini-God. I should not behave like I have answers to all questions about and related to God and the Bible. I must tell you though that I did not get here without a struggle. I tried many times to play a know-it-all pastor and I failed miserably every time. So, as I get more grey hair, I am learning to admit that I am not a dictionary containing all the answers about God, man, and life. Instead, I have come to admit that I am a student too. I am learning. I am in the process of being made a better disciple every day. Today, I rarely struggle to say "I don't know." I am learning to be humble.

In Proverbs 18:12, Solomon warned:



Can you imagine what experiences must have inspired the wisest man to say this? I guess he must have either observed people who landed in great downfalls or experienced it himself!

What does he say is the source of man's pride? In what areas do you think you are proud and need to cultivate humility? Write down some thoughts on the space below.

As a wise teen, you can begin your journey of extinguishing pride that brings downfall and cultivate humility that brings honor. As a teen, how many times have you been tempted to think that your mother or father should stop lecturing you because they do not know everything? I know sometimes you feel like you can handle being with that girl or boy in the same room alone. It may be feeling like that friend is going too far by advising you against being too expressive on social media. Perhaps you are thinking you should ignore that Geography teacher who told you that you were daydreaming in class.

I suggest that in any of these or such situations, the biggest problem is the pride in your heart and the lurking danger is a big downfall! The remedy is humility. Just swallow your pride and listen. Cultivate humility and you will reap honor.

Humility is not easy because it is not natural. Hence, you want to be very deliberate in cultivating it. In fact, for more assured results, you may want to surrender to He who lived it and taught it: Jesus Christ. Only Jesus Christ is able to help us be aware of our pride and work towards humility every day.

Reflection



What do the following other passages in Proverbs teach you on today's topic?

The fear of the Lord teaches a man wisdom, and humility comes before honor (Ch 15:33).

Humility and fear of the Lord brings wealth and honor and life (Ch 22:4).

Action



Think back about instances when you responded to a situation with pride instead of humility. What results did your choice have? Are you happy with the habit of being proud? Do you want to continue being proud or to change and become humble? If you want to change, please write down your resolve.

I _____ from this day (date)

resolve and commit that _____

Signed _____.

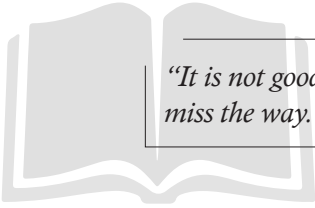
Day 19 Zeal Alone is not Enough



Have you ever played a jigsaw puzzle game? What is the easiest way of completing the puzzle within the shortest time? If you have not completed a jigsaw puzzle, what about a crossword puzzle? How do you complete one the fastest way possible? To be able to achieve any of the above, you need to know some basic rules. Otherwise, fixing a 300 pieces jigsaw puzzle that could take you one hour can easily last you up to four hours! The same thing is likely to happen in class if you attempt to solve a mathematical sum using the wrong formula.

Zeal Alone is not Enough

Today we consider Proverbs 19:2 that says,



“It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way.”

What are your immediate thoughts after reading this verse?

Many of us want to look smart before the crowd. No one ever wants to appear clueless in fixing his or her jigsaw puzzle of life. Little wonder spectators always spot something a player could have done better! However, does it matter anymore after the mistake is made? Maybe it does not matter immediately because the mess is already done. The winning goal might have been missed. The milk may have been spilled. The exam may have been failed. So, yes, crying over the mistake at that point will not change anything. Nonetheless, it does not mean one should not rethink how the mess came about. One should not ignore the spectators even if they have never played the game before.

Proverbs 19:2 advises that one should not continue with zeal without knowledge. You see knowledge results from a new experience. Knowledge is something one did not know before, or an experience never encountered earlier. Hence, knowledge could only be new to you and not to a spectator you chose to ignore. Your mother, father or relative may be old but they have much more knowledge by virtue of their long existence and the experiences associated with this. Therefore, you should not ignore their rebuke against your new wanting habit of keeping unkempt hair or an untidy room. You may feel like they are being too bossy and nosy. You may feel like they are infringing on your rights. However, take caution! Ignoring their concern and advice may lead you to “miss the way” as the verse ends.

What's the use of running too fast only to discover you were headed in the wrong direction? The destination for such a person is obvious; regret, disappointment, frustration, and waste.

Hey, listen! Having zeal is not enough. Knowledge is critical too. So what to do? Look at more wisdom from this chapter in the following verses:

He who gets wisdom loves his own soul; he who cherishes understanding prospers. (19:8)

Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end, you will be wise. (19:20)

Stop listening to instruction, my son, and you will stray from the words of knowledge.

Reflection

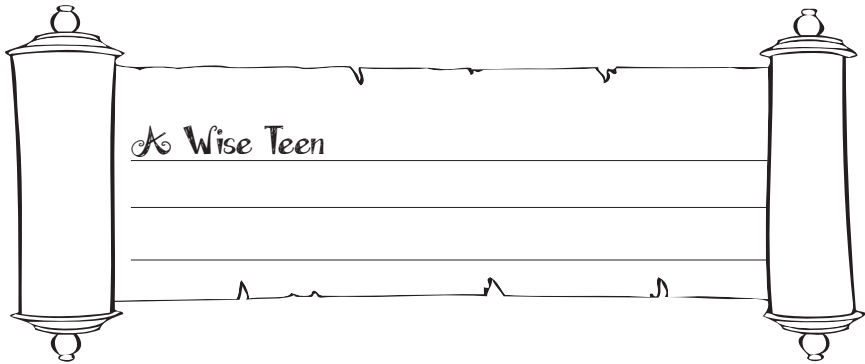


What do you notice from these three verses about the relationship between wisdom, knowledge, and understanding? How are they attained or acquired?

Action



What one thing do you need to either keep, start or stop doing in order to apply today's lesson? Put it down and state how you are going to take action.



Day 20

Alcohol:

To Indulge or to Abstain?

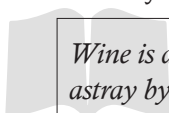


What does the Bible say about taking alcohol and alcoholism? Does it condemn it fully? Is there any verse that says very clearly that one should not take alcohol? If there isn't, why does the church teach against it? Why should I not be left to 'enjoy' myself with a little sip that the Bible says is good for the stomach? If anything Jesus turned water into wine! If it was that bad this miracle would not have happened in the first place.

Alcohol: To Indulge or to Abstain?

The above and many other questions exist on this topic of taking alcohol. Moreover, the brewing industry is not about to cut their manufacturing and marketing budgets because another unwise teen-ager will fall for the bottle soon. Unfortunately, the main target is innocent teenagers whose curiosity to taste everything that he or she is told not to do, is over the top! Before you either come to that point of being tested and tempted or continue in the habit that you are hiding from your parents and friends because you are ashamed and trapped, I wish to share some wisdom from today's passage in Proverbs that teaches against drinking. I believe this passage will both forearm and forewarn you.

Proverbs 20:1 says:



Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise.

To be mocked is to be laughed at, ridiculed, made fun of or scoffed at. The synonyms of brawl include scuffle, fight, clash, affray, broil, scrap, fracas and tussle. If wine is a mocker and a brawler, therefore, what is this verse saying? Jot below what you think this verse means. Actually, re-write the verse in your own words.

Wine and beer will both beat you up and make you a laughing stock. This beating may not necessarily be physical. It mostly starts at an intellectual level. You cannot outsmart anything that impairs your mental capacity, which is what alcohol does. It hits the drinker's most important organ and affects everything he or she does or doesn't do after that! That is how alcohol beats you up first. Sometime after the drinking has started, the thinking mode is suspended and nasty things can happen during this 'mindless' period.

Secondly, wine and beer beat the drinker at the pocket when addiction strikes. Every drinker at the start feels very much in control of the bottle. However, gradually and surely, the bottle takes over and the master becomes the slave. At this point, the biggest priority to the alcoholic is the bottle, no matter the color, name or manufacturer! It is at this level that one has to rush to 'get the lockout' (be able to function) at the nearest drinking den very early in the morning! Certainly, by this time one has become a laughing stock. He is unable to behave in any manner that requires sobriety and decency. For example, it is not very strange to see such a person having either urinated or defecated on themselves. Besides, the individual does not care much about how he or she looks. Bathing may no longer be a priority and personal grooming may have become a non-issue. Truly, has such a person not been beaten and laughed at? All because of wine and beer!

No wonder the sage said, "Whoever is led astray by them is not wise."

You cannot outsmart
anything that
impairs your mental
capacity.

And that is what alcohol
does

A fool because, first, it is very clear that no one can outsmart what takes away your mental capacity. But secondly, a fool because there are countless examples of people who started drinking naively but today they are wallowing in the mud of drunkenness and all that goes with it, and yet one has not learned to stay away!

A wise teen chooses to stay off. A wise teen listens to wisdom and refrains from any kind of temptation that poses the risk of

Alcohol: To Indulge or to Abstain?



trying a sip of wine or beer. A wise teen knows that never to start is the best policy when it comes to taking wine or beer. By the way, those who have never tasted either are very, or even more, normal people, and they enjoy themselves totally. Ask me. They drink too, but only water and non-alcoholic beverages. That is the option for the wise and it exists in the market and on the shelves too!

Reflection



Other key passages in Proverbs that go on to support today's lesson are 21:17; 23:20-21, 29-35, 30:4-5 and 31:4-7. Please set aside some time today or this week and study them. As you study, write all the lessons you derive from them in your journal and share with your friends. Become a positive influence on this subject.

Action

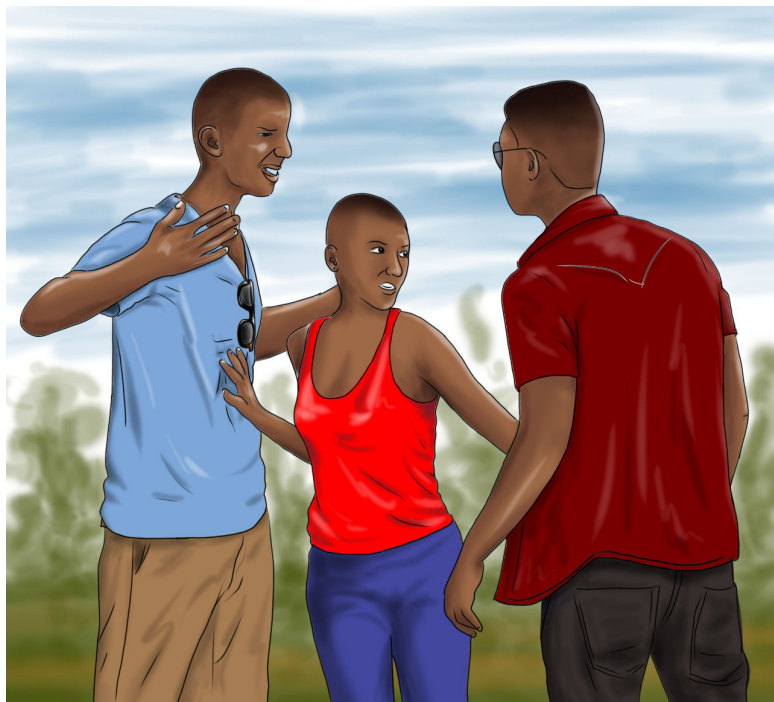


Share what you have learnt today on why we should keep off wine and beer with your inner circle of friends. Which friends will you share with?

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Day 21

What Software is Running You?

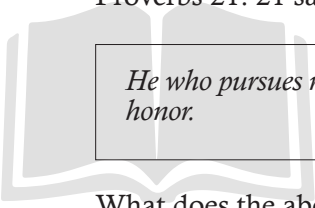


If you live in a world like mine, you must have noticed some selfishness and hatred somewhere. In this pursuit of selfish interests, trails of hate and hurting are always visible. For example, if you switched on the television to watch the news on any day, chances are that 80 percent of the news will be bad news. When you look at a newspaper, the pages are awash with stories of pain and bad memories. Why is that so? Most of the time this is explained by the fact that people are pursuing selfish interests. Consequently, anyone who stands in the way or opposes their plan is an enemy. They become targets of elimination, use, misuse or abuse. Hate speech fills the air. Ill

What Software is Running You?

songs are composed about them. War lines are drawn. In the final analysis, the world is in a mess. The big question is: how can it be different? Is there anything one can do to make a difference? Absolutely.

Every computer is run by invisible software located in the central processing unit. Whatever the computer does is determined by the software installed in it. Similarly, in order to make a difference in this world, one has to be driven by different software than what is popular and widespread: selfishness and hatred. Proverbs 21: 21 says:



He who pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity, and honor.

What does the above verse say to you?

To change the software, we must replace selfishness with selflessness. We must replace hatred with love. To get there, the above Proverb suggests that we must pursue righteousness and love. But what does pursuing righteousness and love mean?

Righteousness simply means standing and living right. It is seeking to know and do what is right. If you are like me, this is not possible by our own effort because we are born selfish and self-loving. Many times, doing the right thing requires that we sacrifice something for someone. That is what love is all about. Love is action.

Love is doing, not feeling. Love means going an extra mile even when tired. Under such a definition, only one man was righteous and loved perfectly: Jesus Christ. No other person under the sun is able to do the same. Consequently, it is only under Jesus Christ that one can be able to be righteous and

practice real love. There is no other way. Have you accepted Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord of your life? Have you allowed him to drive you or are you still at the steering wheel?



But of what benefit is pursuing righteousness and love?

The verse says that the rewards are life, prosperity, and honor. You see, there are two categories of people. Those who add years into their lives and those who add life into their years. The latter category lives in such a way as to leave behind a rich legacy of things to be emulated. They are an inspiring lot even as they live and they seem to enjoy every moment. They are honorable by deed rather than title. Their prosperity is measured not by how much money they have in the bank but by how many lives they have touched or are touching using their wealth. They are concerned with the well-being of others rather than being absorbed with the accumulation of wealth for old-age security. They are others-centered rather than self-centered. They are happy when everyone is happy rather than when their enemies are crying.



How do I practice that as a teen?

By accepting the love of Jesus Christ! Be saved and allow Jesus to be the software that runs you. Then he will enable you to look at others the way He sees them. He will help you love that boy or girl that has become the laughing stock in your class. He will hold your hand as you face that crowd of sneering 'friends' who want you to give up your purity commitment. He will give you the courage and boldness to share the gospel with your friends in class. He will guide you to the right kind of friends who will encourage you to shun evil. You certainly wish to have life and live in prosperity and honor. Why delay anymore? Do not harden your heart any longer. Today is your day of surrender!

Reflection



What software has been running your life: selfishness and hatred or righteousness and love? Where will you end up if you continue on the path that you are on?

Action



In what area(s) of your life do you need to change today?

Will you choose to let Jesus Christ be the Savior and Lord of your life? If you wish to, you can believe and confess the commitment presented on Day 8 and follow the steps outlined there on what you need to do next. I urge you not to delay one more day in making this decision.

<p><i>A Wise Teen</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Day 22

Your Talent is Your Key!



I have shared with you a number of my hobbies so far. I have others: writing and teaching. I hope what you have read so far is convincing evidence of that claim. But how did I get to the level of converting those two hobbies into my strategies for reaching you? Was I born a writer and teacher or did I learn it? Where did I get the inspiration to write and teach more seriously? First, writing was nowhere in the list of the things I liked to do when I was growing up. I wrote more for the sake of exams rather than to express my thoughts.

To be a good writer, you need to read and read, and then read again! I struggled, and still do, to read as much as I should. However, over time, I noticed that every time I put down my thoughts on paper, I liked the flow of ideas and grammar. Be-

Your Talent is Your Key!

sides, those who read my work liked it too. However, I did not have the discipline of writing consistently. That is why the idea of writing this book took many years to come to fruition. So, was I born a writer? Maybe! But I did not take it seriously until I started writing this book. Where did I get my inspiration to take writing and teaching beyond being a hobby?

I have many sources of inspiration and one of them is in Proverbs 22:29. Listen to what it says:



*Do you see a man skilled in his work?
He will serve before kings;
He will not serve before obscure men.*

What does this verse mean to you?

You see, every man and woman must work while they live on earth. Besides, God has a designated work for every person that he created. Some call that work purpose. Adam was put in “*the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it,*” (Genesis 2:15). Eve was made to be a “helper suitable” to Adam (Genesis 2:18). Abraham was the father of faith. Moses was a deliverer. David was the greatest king who ever lived. Jeremiah was appointed a prophet. Paul was a preacher to the Gentiles and to kings.

In the case of each of the people above, God gave them different skills that were necessary to carry out their work. The process of discovering and developing the skill was not always easy but absolutely critical. It was painful at times but there was no shortcut. When we look at their achievements or failures, we see what Solomon may have meant in Proverbs 22:29. For example, how Adam named all the animals is a skill we can only call genius. Before Moses could take the Israelites through the desert, he had acquired desert navigation

skills for forty years. Before David could kill Goliath, he had practiced with a lion and a bear with his bare hands. Paul was well educated and hence well skilled to preach to the Gentiles and kings.

In all these examples, the skills were meant to fulfill a greater purpose than just serve self-interest. They used their skills for their earthly work and the results will be read through all generations. That is why I cannot help but better my skill in writing and teaching. It certainly will outlive me. I no longer take hobbies lightly. In many cases, they are but pointers of skills deep inside that I should draw out and place in the hands of God towards enabling me to live out my purpose on earth.

Could you be sitting on talents that God wants you to develop for his work in this world? If you discover and develop them, they will enable you serve before kings in this world as you serve the King above. You will end up achieving your goals here on earth even as you please your Master in heaven. Most importantly, you will have the right perspective when faced with great challenges as demonstrated by David before he killed Goliath. In 1 Samuel 16:45-46, David said:

You come to me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut your head. and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel.

David could have chosen to boast about his skills and achievements. However, he knew well the source of his skill and the purpose of his victory. In the same manner, when we place our hobbies and skills in the hands of God, there is no limit to what the outcome can be for his glory.

Reflection

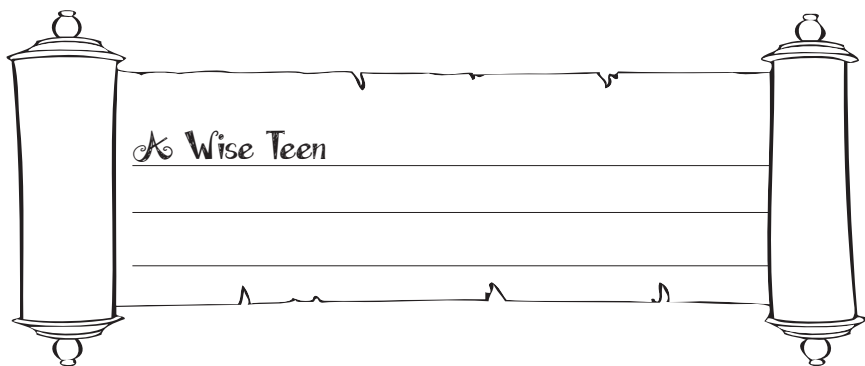


Have you discovered any God-given skills, talents or abilities that make you unique? Which one(s) are you developing and using as tools for God's work through you in your family, school, community or nation?

Action



Pick one thing that you do well that you will start doing more consistently with the mind of using it to serve God and humanity and write it down below. For further insights on talents, please read Matthew 25:14-30. Write it down here and set SMART goal to develop it.


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Day 23

Don't Chase Riches



Whenever I ask teens what they want to become in future, the ultimate goal is always the same: to have lots of money. For example, many bright students want to become lawyers, doctors, engineers, architects, or politicians because they think any of these professions guarantees them a well-paying job that will make them rich in the shortest time possible. I thought the same when I was a teen too. Unfortunately, however, when we look at life this way, if one does not perform well in school, we look down on them because, in our eyes and those of society, there is little hope for them to succeed in life where money is concerned. If you hold the

Don't Chase Riches

same view, you may well be trapped in the endless race to become rich. Should riches be all we live and work for? Should what we are doing or pursuing be motivated by becoming rich? Solomon knew better.

Apart from being the wisest person who ever lived, Solomon was also the richest king of his time (See 1 Kings 4:20-34 and 10:14-29).

1 Kings 10:23-24 summarizes this as follows:

King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth. The whole world sought an audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart.

In a similar way, anyone who taps into the wisdom in Proverbs today taps into the wisdom that originated from God. But what's more, Solomon's counsel was also based on his personal experience with the very things that he talked about, whether positively or negatively. One of them was riches. In Proverbs 23:4-5, he shared the following:

*Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint. Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone,
For they will surely sprout wings and fly off like an eagle.*

Note, Solomon does not say do not get rich. There is no problem with being or getting rich, however, if that becomes one's sole pursuit, there is a promise of disappointment and frustration.

So why shouldn't we just pursue riches?

Solomon says riches are elusive. Riches run fast and are hard to catch. Riches are like a mirage. If your goal is chasing riches, as soon as you get to the previously set goal of possessions, another goal appears on the horizon. Figuratively, it is as if

the previous one has just sprouted wings and flown away like a butterfly. Consequently, the one who chases riches lives a life of simply wearing themselves out.

There has to be something greater than riches to pursue in life. You are in school for something more than to become rich someday. You must pursue a career that is motivated by something more than money or riches. The reason you wake up early and stay up late must be for more than to have a fat bank account. The measure of your hope and happiness must not be based on how rich or poor you are financially. A life guided by chasing riches is a weary and disappointing life. A wise teen knows and lives guided by the wisdom of the richest guy who ever lived.

So, if money and riches should not be your motivation and purpose in life, what should? What attitude should I have in this life regarding riches? Two of my favorite guiding passages on this topic are worth considering.

First, Matthew 6:33 says:

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

To understand what these other things are, please read 6:25-34. Second, 1 Timothy 6:6-10 says:

But godliness with contentment is a great gain. For we brought nothing into the world and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for

money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

Reflection



How has today's message challenged you? From the previously mentioned New Testament passages, what further advice and precautions do you see regarding what we should pursue and how?

Action



Without mentioning money or riches, write down what you want to become and achieve in life.

A Wise Teen	

Day 24 Sleep and Poverty are Bedmates



Do you know that, on average, every human being will spend a third of their years on earth asleep, another third working and the last third doing all the rest of the stuff? The rest of the stuff includes cooking, eating, drinking, enjoying family, talking to friends, playing your favorite sport, learning

Sleep and Poverty are Bedmates

something new, surfing on the internet, or watching a movie. But here is the disclaimer. The above average is based on the assumption that you work for eight hours a day, spend another eight hours on all the other activities and then sleep for the remaining eight hours.

Considering that time is the only commodity that every human being has in equal measure, it matters much how one spends their allocation every day. Think for a moment: which item is consuming most of your time currently? Why is that the case? What do you think are the pros and cons of your current time expenditure plan, or lack of it?

Guess what, Solomon seems to have done the same math and got to some conclusion about sleep. In several passages in Proverbs, he clearly paints a very unattractive picture for the soul that loves sleep. Look at the following description in 24:30-34:

*I went past the field of the sluggard, past the vineyard of the man who lacks judgment;
Thorns had come up everywhere, the ground was covered with weeds,
and the stone wall was in ruins.
I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw;
A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest – And
poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man.*

What does Solomon say he saw in the field of the sluggard?

Why do you think he calls the sluggard the man who lacks judgment?

What was his conclusion from his observation?

What is the destination of the sluggard?

Solomon paints a clear picture. The sluggard's vineyard is in a mess: littered and in ruins. When you look at his or her plot, it is hard to tell what is grown in it, whether thorns, weeds or grapes. But how did the situation get this bad? By way of a little by little sleep that led to more than enough slumber. A little by little folding of hands that led to more than enough rest!

Which teen does not want to sleep or rest just a little more? You are an exceptional teen if waking up early consistently is one thing you don't struggle with. If you don't find it tempting to spend just a little more time playing that game or watching that movie, you are another exception. If you are always looking forward to spending every minute of your preps time productively, consider it an achievement. If you are ever alert during that math lesson in the afternoon, you are exceptional. If you find it easy to study while your friends chat and laugh their lungs out in the next room you are very self-controlled.

That notwithstanding, if you keep giving excuses for not doing things when they should be done, you will soon find yourself in the league of the sluggard who lacks judgment. Soon, your grades will show this. Your candle will go out. Your disorganization will be evident to all.

The sluggard's vineyard is in a mess, littered and in ruins

Untidiness will be your second name. Later after school, your poor work ethic will be your hindrance to progressing in your career. You may succeed in writing a very good curriculum vitae but your employer will soon discover your true identity and show you the door. You will wear smart suits but they will not cover your sluggardly habits. As a wise teen, correct the situa-



tion as soon as now. Throw away any excess sleeping, slumbering and folding of hands before it matures to become your character and finally lifestyle. If you continue entertaining laziness, the end will be the bedmates: poverty and scarcity. I am sure you don't wish to host or be the carrier of their offspring either. You can bolt out today.



What laggardly habits are you guilty of?

Between sleeping too much and folding of the hands (lazing around), which one are you more prone to? List any three personal struggles.

Some other passages on the same subject include Proverbs 6:9-11, 13:4, 20:13, 21:25-26 and 22:13.



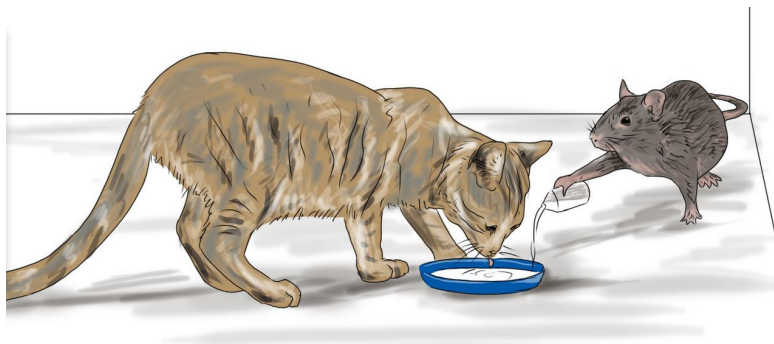
What specific anti-laziness steps or actions will you start, keep or stop doing to avoid ending up in poverty and scarcity?

Start	
Stop	
Keep	

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A Wise Teen

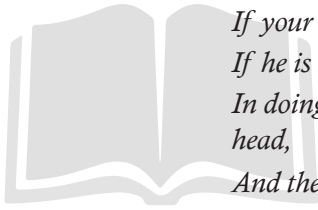
Day 25 Do Good to Your Enemy!



The vices of enmity and rivalry are very common in our society today. Sadly, they are almost considered OK. Bad blood seems to exist within families across villages and towns. Battle lines are marked within economic and political spheres. Social and spiritual fronts are marred with conflicts. Laws to deal with defamation, hate speech and incitement are not in short supply. In school circles, I hear of the existence of grudges between school A and school B. Whenever A and B meet, be it in a soccer tournament or symposium, shouting and fighting easily erupt. In class, some students are known never to talk to each other because they hate each other. All these scenarios combined mean that there are high levels of negative emotions all around us. As a result, the atmosphere is so charged that one has to be careful not to step on an angry person somewhere and face their wrath. Are you in any such situation? Are you the one who caused it and became someone's enemy or someone messed you up and you marked them your enemy? Irrespective of which side you are on, what is the wise and godly thing to do? Proverbs offer some timeless ideas.

Do Good to Your Enemy!

In 25:21-22, Solomon advises:



*If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat;
If he is thirsty, give him water to drink.
In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his
head,
And the Lord will reward you.*

What? Is Solomon serious? Where on earth do you do that? How can I make myself such a fool? How can I stoop that low? I am not the one who started it, so why should I behave like a loser? Have you ever felt like this, i.e., that you could not repay evil with good? What had happened?

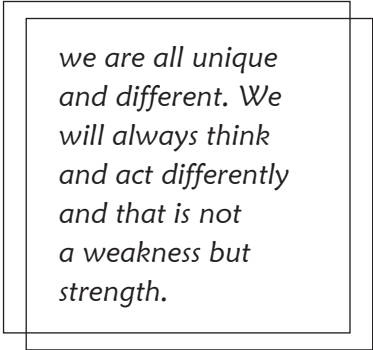
I feel you. The rational and human thing to do is to give your enemy a taste of their own medicine. After all, if one good turn deserves another, it is only logical that one bad turn deserves another, isn't it? It makes sense for sure but as Mahatma Gandhi also said, "An eye for an eye will eventually make the world blind!"

Solomon knew better. Curb the enmity problem before it grows bigger. Be the first one to kill the virus of bad blood which only breeds the cancer of pain and hurts. So what to do? Instead of acting evil, act nice. Be kind. Feed your enemy, and it may not be with physical food only. It may be some emotional or spiritual support. It may be helping him or her regain self-esteem. It may be ignoring that gossip that originated from your closest friend. It may be praying for them. It may be helping them overcome some stress. It may be sharing how you overcame a hurting relationship. It may be assisting them in a difficult subject. It may be becoming their friend in

order to help them out of lone-ranger behavior. It may be being honest with them about a habit that you feel is the cause of their trouble with peers. I suggest to you that all the above acts are similar to feeding and giving water to a hungry and thirsty person.

The effects of being kind and nice to a bad person are often not spectacular or immediate. The enmity melts away gradually and a deeper level of friendship begins to appear. The real cause of enmity is identified and rectified in love. Consequently, a better relationship is cultivated onwards and greater benefits enjoyed.

Remember, we are all unique and different. We will always think and act differently and that is not a weakness but strength. That is why we need each other. Our differences should not make us enemies but growing friends. They should not tear us apart but bring us closer.

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*we are all unique
and different. We
will always think
and act differently
and that is not
a weakness but
strength.*

Reflection



Do you have enemies? What do you feel challenged to change with regard to how you relate with them?

Action



Identify one relationship that you are going to mend using principle of feeding and watering your enemy as gained from today's lesson. Share with a close friend for accountability.

A Wise Teen

Day 26

Do Not Answer A Fool



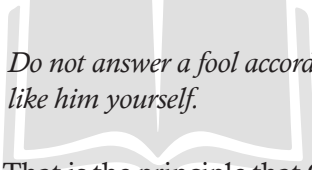
Collo, a close friend, shared with us a very painful experience that he had one evening. He was the youth leader at their church at the time. On this particular afternoon, he was speaking to the youth in his church. A group of them had done something that needed a rebuke. But just when he was about to be done with the matter, a young man sprung up in the middle of the attentive gathering and started hurling insults at him. The insults were even more piercing because they had nothing to do with what he had said. They were very personal and attacked his character. The last insult made Collo's hair stand. It went like, "... you dog! What can an uncircumcised guy like you tell us?"

Do Not Answer A Fool

If you were in Collo's position, what would you have done at that point?

Collo walked away. He felt that was the best thing to do. He courageously stepped off the podium and walked to the door. Interestingly, as he walked away, the younger man followed him on, literally escorting him out with more, louder and worse words. He did not turn back. He went home (which was about five minutes walk to church) and cooled off before returning. One thing he did as he cooled off was to pray that God forgives the young man as he did not know what he was doing.

Here is what Proverbs 26:4 says:



Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will be like him yourself.

That is the principle that Collo applied at that moment. Do you think it was easy? By all means NO! In the eyes of his insulter, walking away was the most foolish thing Collo could do. It was an act of cowardice, a demonstration of defeat. He was not “being a man.” How could a man just walk away as another man hurled insults at him? Moreover, I am sure there was conflict between Collo's head and heart too. I guess his head was whispering, “Just beat this guy. He sure deserves some blows and everybody expects you to do it”

But his heart said “... leave him alone. He is either ignorant and arrogant or intoxicated with some illicit substances. We are not on the same mental level at all.” Despite that raging internal conflict, Collo set a good example that day.

In bringing this home, think of a time when you were quick to respond to an insult without thinking. Like begets like, you thought. After all, he or she started it. However, what was the destination? Were you not embarrassed as you got paraded together with your aggressor? Instead of one fool, now there

were two. In fact, the principal may have put it this way, “Why didn’t you come and report to me immediately after he insulted you?” Somehow, you had become the greater fool! Next time someone says or does something that is by any standard foolish, gather the guts to restrain yourself from hitting back with similar standard. Master all the courage to back off. Bite your lips. Turn 180 degrees and walk away. At that very moment, you will feel and look like a fool to all those near the scene but just a few minutes later and for the rest of your life, you will be an example to be quoted, like Collo. Nevertheless, please pray for your aggressor. Jesus said, “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44).

Reflection

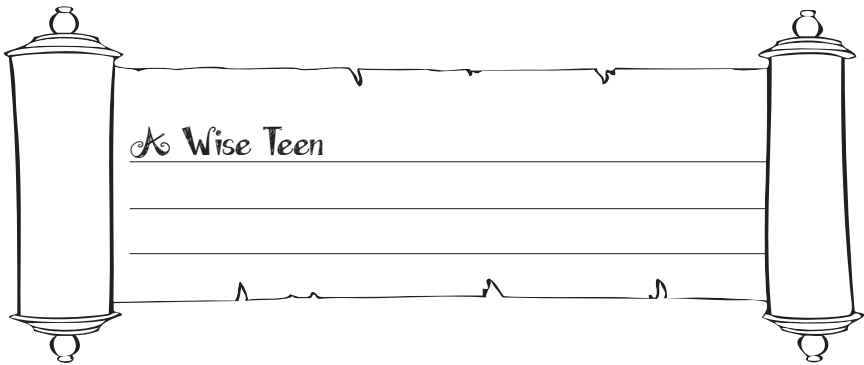


What has today's verse challenged you to do or not to do in a situation of conflict in the future?

Action



What one thing are you going to do today or this week out of what you have mentioned above?



A Wise Teen

Day 27

Take Cover

When You See Danger



You are taking a leisurely walk one evening in your neighborhood with a friend and then all of a sudden you see a mob in front of you. They are advancing towards the two of you while shouting and waving twigs and clubs. They seem to be high on something and some have stones in their hands. As they come closer, you hear one shout, “These two guys look like them. The tall guy was wearing a red jacket like that one (the one you are wearing).” Just as he completes that sentence, the mob starts running towards you. You glance back and see no one else who might be their target. You suddenly begin to sweat and your adrenaline surges. Your mind races.

Take Cover When You See Danger

You have only two options: fight or flee! What would you do?

The above hypothetical scenario may not have happened to you but it symbolizes situations that happen all the time in the life of a teen. I am sure you have been a victim of ‘mistaken identity’ on at least one occasion. Maybe guys said something untrue about you. Maybe one of your close friends betrayed you. It could be that one of your buddies turned her back on you when you needed her most. Can you remember any such incident? What did you do? Did you continue with the relationship as it was before or changed direction?

Proverbs 27:12, offers invaluable lessons should you find yourself caught in such a situation.



The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it.

The natural thing to do when we see danger approaching is to either fight or flee. But this response is no longer the obvious thing to do. In fact, that is what distinguishes between the wise and the foolish. In the earlier hypothetical example, if you were the tall guy with a red jacket, I assume you would run for your life, wouldn't you? Unfortunately, there are times when we are faced with almost similar life-threatening situations and yet we wait for the mob hoping to reason things out with it. When was the last time you saw people in a mob use their grey matter positively? The end of such waiting will usually be very costly.

Some of the dangers I am thinking of, include continuing to entertain a friend whose character is questionable. If you have found yourself in trouble more than twice because of a mall that you visited, why do you still insist on going there? If your friend tried convincing you that just one puff of a killer nicotine stick won't hurt last night, why are you planning to join his gang next weekend? If the chemistry teacher warned you against joining that group of students because they believe in

cheating in exams, why are you ignoring his counsel? If you know exactly what made your grades to slip in the last term, why are you continuing to do the same things that brought poor results? That is called insanity – doing the same thing and expecting different results!

A wise teen faces the truth though it hurts. He or she doesn't pretend that all is well and then cry under the blankets every night. Instead, he or she takes the risk of being the odd one out by taking cover. He or she does not carry anger, hurt, disappointment and frustration in their hearts in the name of living at peace with everyone while he or she rots internally.

Simply, a wise teen ducks as quickly as possible when they see an arrow coming their way. Run for your life if you have discerned, seen or have been cautioned of danger by a friend, parent, teacher or stranger. It is prudent and the opposite is foolishness. You certainly do not want to

A wise teen faces the truth though it hurts. He or she doesn't pretend that all is well and then cry under the blankets every night.

become another statistic of one who suffered the obvious. You will sadly have added to the number of those who learn through foolishly repeated mistakes.

Reflection



Have you ever found yourself in any of the above described or similar dangerous situations that required quick response? What did you do and what were the results?

Action



What situations do you need to run away from at present because they are unhealthy or dangerous?

--

Day 28

Confess
Don't
Conceal!



One of my other hobbies is gardening. In order to make sure that I enjoy this hobby all the time, I set aside a 15 by 20-meter plot in my little piece of land for that purpose. My daughters have come to know me as *mkulima* (farmer) too because of my love and constant engagement in gardening. This has gone on to fuel my passion even further. At one time, I planted tomatoes in one corner of my small garden. The tomatoes started well and I did everything to make sure they were healthy. I weeded, applied fertilizer and foliar

Confess Don't Conceal!

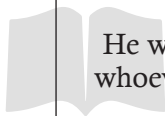
feed, sprayed them against blight and watered them when the weather was dry. After doing all these, it was just fair to wait for a good harvest.

By all indications from the outside, my tomatoes looked great! However, I eventually harvested nothing. My crop flowered well and started bearing healthy-looking tomato fruits. But as time passed and the fruits neared ripening, I noticed some dark lesions on them. I enquired at the agro vet store as to the correct intervention and applied this, but sadly, this did not help. Eventually, my entire crop was lost to a disease whose name I knew not.



*"My entire crop was
lost to a disease
whose name I knew
not."*

You see, while I was busy doing all I could to eventually get a good harvest and save some coins from the kitchen budget, something killed my tomatoes from the inside. I suspect it was a problem with the soil or a fungal disease. Whichever way, the rot seemed to have originated from the inside rather than the outside. Proverbs 28:13 says:



He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but
whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

Sin is the worst disease that eats from the inside. Just as my tomatoes looked good from the outside, there are many people who have perfected the art of faking great looks while they rot from the inside. The fact that nobody else knows about that stolen thing in your locker or closet does not make it right for you to keep it. The fact that you were not caught cheating in exams last term does not make you clean. The tears that your friend shed when you betrayed her trust did not evaporate because

she moved to another town or school. Those little secrets that no one else knows but which send shivers down your spine will crush you one day if you continue to entertain them. In fact, elsewhere in the Bible, the following is stated about sin;

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus. (Romans 6:23).

...but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is fully grown gives birth to death. (James 1:14-15).

Clearly, it is very unwise to keep on sinning. The destination is a fatality. Death! Why keep hiding it?

So what should I do?

A wise teen “confesses and renounces” his or her “sin and finds mercy.” This is not a minor requirement. It is what each of us needs because we are all sinners. No one should be so ashamed of their sin that they feel they cannot confess it because everybody has sinned and will still sin! Here is what the Bible says on the matter of our sinfulness:

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us (1 John 1:8).

So, no one is excused or excluded. The truth is that we all sin. And the remedy is confessing and renouncing. The last verse for today on the effects of confession is 1 John 1:9. It says:

Confess Don't Conceal!



There you have it. The complete benefits of confessing our sins, and turning away from the same are finding mercy, being forgiven of our sins and being purified from all unrighteousness.

If we confess our sins, he (God) is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins, and purify us from all unrighteousness.

A wise teen chooses to go this route rather than to harbor sin and die slowly, then completely one day.

Reflection



What sins will you confess to God today? After all, He knows them. He has been waiting for you to be truthful so that you can enjoy the benefits of confession. Don't wait any longer.

Action

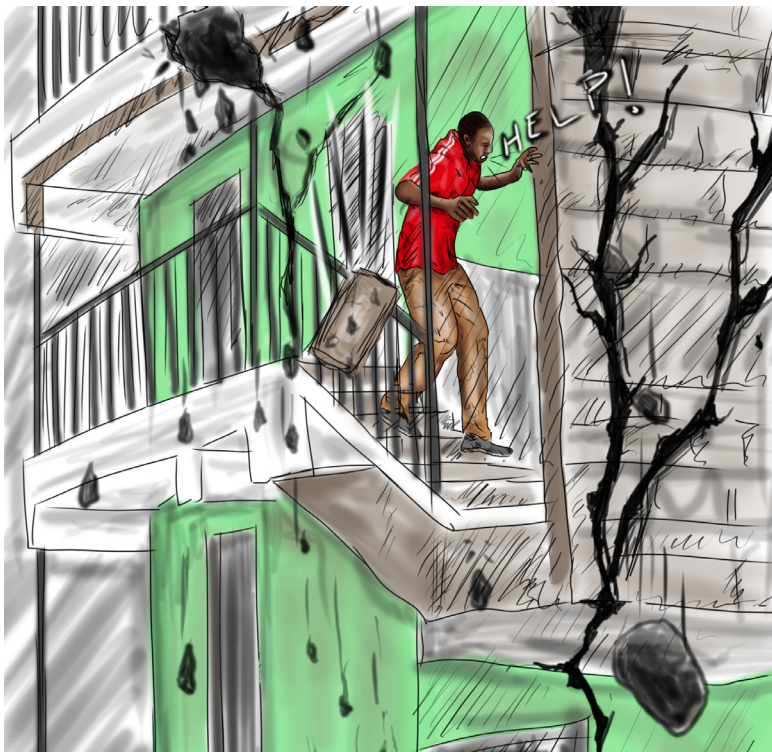


From today on, what verse will you memorize and use whenever you are tempted to hide sin?

--

Day 29

Accept Rebuke



Life is not a straight line. It has turns and detours, good times and bad times, smooth seasons and rough ones. And as life goes on, we make blunders and mistakes, at times not because we want to but just because we do not know better, or we are trying things out. If such is life, therefore, we must learn to be flexible and accommodative enough to allow for necessary turns in order to reach our desired destinations. One indicator of the need to turn is when a friend, parent, teacher, pastor, or neighbor tells you a painful thing about yourself or your action(s) that you would rather not hear. Such is called

Accept Rebuke

a rebuke. Rebukes should serve in a similar way to the ‘watch out’ signs placed at strategic points by a cleaner working on a slippery floor. The ‘watch out’ sign does not necessarily mean you are headed for a fall, but if you ignore it, that may turn out to be your end, or at least your getting a possible associated bone or tissue injury. Solomon put out a warning sign too. Proverbs 29:1 opens with a very straightforward warning;

A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed – without remedy.

Every person has what is at times referred to as a blind spot. Some Swahili sages also said a long time ago that ‘*mwerevu ha-jinyoi*’ (however intelligent one may be, they cannot shave their own head). The idea behind these two concepts is that if we want to make it in this world, we need to listen to others’ views about things that we may be blind to in life. As an example, I vividly remember our new mathematics teacher in Form Three cautioning us about our wanting attitude towards the subject. I took his advice and the result was evident soon after and later. I ended up with an A in mathematics all the way from a C-(minus). My only problem was a negative attitude that had led to disinterest in and laziness towards mathematics. The timely reversal of that pattern brought sweet victory.

Had I ignored the rebuke of my mathematics teacher, I would have been the stiff-necked person spoken about by Solomon. For sure, this teacher was not the first one to give us that advice and not everybody took him seriously. However, when we finally sat our final high school exam, the results were enough evidence that he was right. Certainly, it was too late for anyone who had not changed. Some dreams were destroyed. Some courses were unreachable. On my part I feel I acted as a wise teen at that time. I heeded my teacher’s advice and took a 180 degrees turn from my wanting attitude and habits towards

mathematics.

For your information, both from personal experience and observation, teenage is a period when one feels very confident even when doing the wrong thing.

There is some strong, foolish belief in almost every teen that they are always right and the rest of the world is wrong.

Anyone who attempts to share their honest concern and wisdom against a matter is often seen and labeled as a spoiler.

Such people are gossiped about in teens' circles as intruders and jeered at when passing. However, heed Solomon's advice. Be warned that if you continue to entertain the ordinary teen mindset of ignoring rebukes and honest concerns from loving and caring people, you will end up in destruction. Wise teens take correctional measures upon being rebuked. Will you?

Reflection



How have you been handling rebukes? Tick one.	Positively. Accepting and taking action to change.
	Negatively. Thinking that the source just wants to make my life boring.
	Ignoring. Feeling that there's need to change but not doing anything about it.

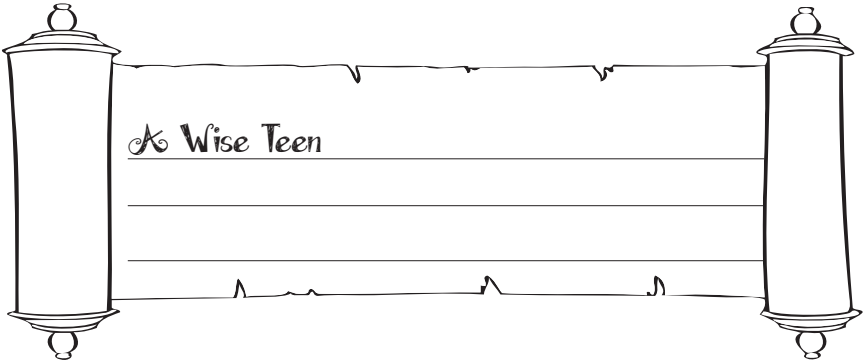
If you continue on the same path, where do you think you will end up?

How do you need to adjust in order for you to reach your desired destination?

Action



Think of at least two rebukes that you have received in the last three months from your peers or family. Write down how you are going to, where necessary, take a 180 degrees turn in response to the rebuke(s). And then go on and act immediately.

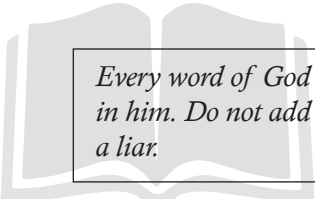


Be Wise Teen

in search of the truth.

We live in a world where our minds are trained to think that what we are seeing and hearing is not the whole thing. This further means that we are subconsciously trained to doubt and ignore. Considering the world in which we live, such a mind is critical for the times. To what extent, however, should we apply that mindset as far as Gods' word is concerned? Can the Bible be trusted on the first account? Where should I look to confirm its content?

Proverbs 30:5-6 hints that even in ancient times, the possibility of doubting God's word existed. Agur, the author of this chapter says:

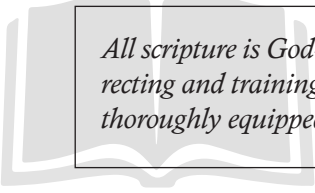


Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.

Yes, it is important to doubt almost everything we hear on media but not the word of God. Unlike media that often presents what the audience wants to consume (which is why comedy sells), God means exactly what He says. There is no distinction between God and His word. So, unlike us, you can take God at His word, and His word is the Bible.

Have you ever read what Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:16-17?

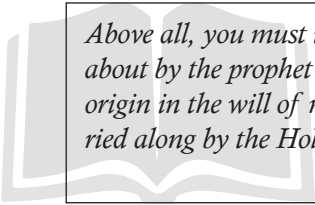
This is what it says:



All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

What truths do you observe about the word of God in these verses?

Elsewhere, Peter, the apostle of Jesus also defended the source and authority of God's word in 2 Peter 1:21:



Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

What does Peter say is the source of the flawless word of God?

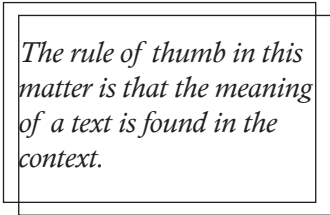
That the word of God is God-breathed, from God and flawless simply means that you can trust it fully. Just like you can cash an open cheque across a bank counter, you can enjoy life if you willingly receive and heed the promises, warnings, instructions, teachings, rebukes, training and commands contained in the Bible by faith. Indeed those who take refuge in God's word are shielded from the traps contained in this world's bad 'breaking news.' No wonder Jesus told some Jews who had believed in him as follows:

If you hold my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free (John 8:31).

Upon knowing the truth, one's eyes are opened and can distinguish light from darkness and lies from the truth. Instead of flipping through media channels, or gossiping about celebrities, a wise teen now finds pleasure in reading and studying the word of God to know the truth.

The Lies That Bind: The Truth That Frees

Nonetheless, a wise teen does not take in everything that is said to be God's word before confirming it. The same Bible warns of the presence of false teachers and false prophets, those who twist the word of God to say what they intend it to and not what God says. Beware of such. The only remedy is to learn to read and study the word yourself. Learn to counter-check the preacher's or teacher's text. The rule of thumb in this matter is that the meaning of a text is found in the context. A text out of context is a pretext. Before you draw a conclusion as to what a passage means, look at the context for the whole picture.



The rule of thumb in this matter is that the meaning of a text is found in the context.

Reflection

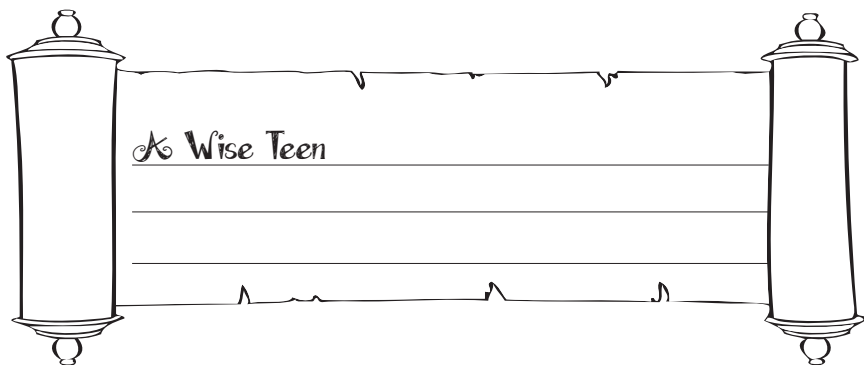


Think of and write down two examples of statements you once heard from a teacher or preacher about the Bible or God that you doubted or wondered as to whether they were correct.

Action



To help you gain a good grip of scripture, I encourage you to consider reading the Bible from cover to cover for the next one year, beginning now. A comprehensive day-by-day reading plan is available at the end of this book. You could identify a friend that you can request to join you in the reading for moral support and discussion as you discover the life-changing truths in the Bible.



Day 31 The Best Source of Sex Education



I wish to end these reflections with a question: who is the second most important person to you after God? Why? As for me, it is my mother. I do not mean to disrespect or demean my father's efforts in bringing me into this world, nor his contribution to my growing up and overall upbringing. Far from it. However, I do not think it is fair to compare this to the contribution that my mother has made in me getting to where I am today. First, she carried me for nine months in her womb. During that time, she was everything to me. I was on full board accommodation, with exquisite room service. All I did was just

turn and grow. I did not need to see because she did it for me. I kept asleep most of the time and was full all the time. Yes, I fed on her too. I was on tour wherever she went and she did not complain that I was a bother. When I troubled her with churning hormonal imbalances, she stayed strong to the end.

Secondly, when my time in her womb expired, she labored in great pain to deliver me into the world. Immediately thereafter, she nursed me during my most delicate days, then months in the world. She supplied my first very nutritious and delicious meal. No wonder I enjoyed it for more than a year! My mother kept an eye on me almost every minute when I was in my 'terrific twos' and that is how I survived many possible infant accidents. I clung to my mother's dress for a long time because she was my lifeline.

Because of this respect for my mother, I take anything she tells me very seriously. Interestingly, that seems to have been the case for King Lemuel who wrote Proverbs 31. Little is known about this king except that he was a king who received wise teachings from his mother. While a huge chunk of this chapter centers on the qualities and lifestyle of a wife of noble character, there are two passages that are relevant to any teen. The loaded line for a wise teen is 31:2-3:

O my son, O son of my womb, O son of my vows, do not waste your strength on women, on those who ruin kings. For all the ladies, here is my parallel translation:

O my daughter, O daughter of my womb, O daughter of my vows, do not waste your strength on men, on those who ruin queens.

What do you make of these verses?

Personally, I call this the biggest sex education lesson from the best source – an honest mother!

First, it takes energy to pursue women (or men for that matter). The advice given is not necessarily not to spend energy on the opposite gender, but rather that it is foolish to think that one can handle more than one woman or man, even at the appropriate time. In other words, just thinking about one woman or man when married is enough.

Consequently, if a mature man can handle only one woman, what about a growing boy? I suggest that he is

socialize and not
specialize.

not capable of handling even one girl, hence my advice to socialize and not specialize.

Secondly, women ruin kings (just as men can ruin queens). Now, as a teen, you may not think you are a king or queen yet. Nevertheless, do you not envision being a king or queen in a certain career? Will you not be a king or queen in your own family one day? If you envision becoming a king or queen someday, then you better live like one today. You will not just wake up one some-day. You are either in the process of becoming one or not. So, are you spending your energy on boy or girl issues that will stop you from becoming the king or queen you hope to one day become?

Reflection



Whenever you spend an hour conversing with a girl or boy, how much time do you spend later thinking about what you were talking about? Be honest.

Consequently, how much of a distraction are boy-girl relationships to you today? _____

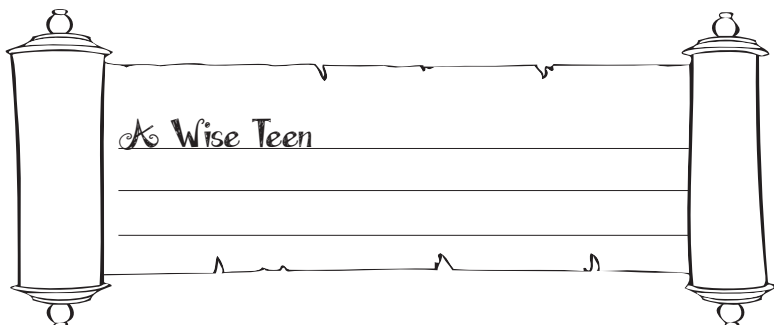
Action



Consider quitting any boy-girl relationship that you now think will jeopardize your ability to reach your 'king' or 'queen' achievement as far as your dreams are concerned. Write down your resolve today.

"I _____ do decide this
day _____ of _____ year _____ that _____

____ so help me, God. Amen."



What Next?

Do not Conform, Be Transformed!



I hope the reading of Proverbs so far has convinced you that the Bible contains innumerable lessons and principles that are meant to make our lives better. What are the top five lessons that have stood out for you throughout the Wise Teens adventure?

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

Continuing Action



What changes are you beginning to experience in your life as a result of applying some lessons gained through the Wise Teens? Write them down in your journal.

If you were to recommend Wise Teens devotional to five people, who would they be? How will you do that?



“Wise Teens “season one” is over but the reading of the Bible continues.”

Finally

Just like every marathon has a finish line, every road trip has a destination. Then what? Do you sit and start endlessly narrating how exciting the trip was or do you narrate once and then think of the next adventure trip and start working towards it? Choosing the first option is good for the short term satisfaction and enjoyment but the latter gives hope to the possibility for more enjoyment in the future. Wise Teens ‘Season One’ is over but the reading of Proverbs and the Bible has either just began for you or has been fanned more! I hope you feel motivated enough to start all over again after you are done with this first lap of reading through Proverbs every month. As you do so, I challenge you to also start reading the gospel of John in the similar format of a chapter a day.

As you read, note what Jesus said about the purpose of his coming and how you relate with it. Keep asking yourself where you are as far as a relationship with Jesus is concerned. I hope, pray and believe that the Holy Spirit will reveal the truth to you about why Jesus came to earth. To make it even better, I challenge you to request a close friend to join you on this journey of reading and studying through Proverbs and John together. Who are your top two friends you wish to invite? _____
and _____

Start praying for them now!

If you continue in this trip and invite those friends, you will be eternally grateful that you started this life-transforming lifestyle of being shaped and sharpened by the word of God to your destiny.

Let's conclude this Wise Teens trip with the lesson in Romans 12:2:

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will.

What two principles offered in this verse can you start living by today?

1 _____

2 _____

ONE YEAR BIBLE READING PLAN

Read the Bible Daily!

But when and how?

1 Start reading the Bible today - there is no better time, and there's no reason to wait.

2 Set aside a specific time each day. Set your schedule and then stick to it. Mornings are great, but feel free to use any time that works consistently for you.

3 Start with the book that most appeals to you then keep going till you are done. You don't have to follow the specific days but target to be done in one year! You can keep alternating between Old Testament and New Testament.

4 Cancel or tick the daily portion read and write the date of the day you did it on the space provided to keep track and avoid confusion.

5 Read the Bible for the sake of learning, not simply to accomplish your next reading. Say a short prayer to God before you begin, asking the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom and understanding, then be refreshed by the words you read!

6 Underline outstanding verses and make comments on your Bible margins. Write your major thoughts and inspirations from daily reading in your Wise Teen journal.

7 You can start now!

ONE YEAR

BIBLE READING PLAN

Day 1	Genesis 1-4		Day 42	Numbers 8-10	
Day 2	Genesis 5-8		Day 43	Numbers 11-13	
Day 3	Genesis 9-12		Day 44	Numbers 14-15	
Day 4	Genesis 13-17		Day 45	Numbers 16-18	
Day 5	Genesis 18-20		Day 46	Numbers 19-21	
Day 6	Genesis 21-23		Day 47	Numbers 22-24	
Day 7	Genesis 24-25		Day 48	Numbers 25-26	
Day 8	Genesis 26-28		Day 49	Numbers 27-29	
Day 9	Genesis 29-31		Day 50	Numbers 30-32	
Day 10	Genesis 32-35		Day 51	Numbers 33-36	
Day 11	Genesis 36-38		Day 52	Deuteronomy 1-2	
Day 12	Genesis 39-41		Day 53	Deuteronomy 3-4	
Day 13	Genesis 42-43		Day 54	Deuteronomy 5-8	
Day 14	Genesis 44-46		Day 55	Deuteronomy 9-11	
Day 15	Genesis 47-50		Day 56	Deuteronomy 12-15	
Day 16	Exodus 1-4		Day 57	Deuteronomy 16-19	
Day 17	Exodus 5-7		Day 58	Deuteronomy 20-22	
Day 18	Exodus 8-10		Day 59	Deuteronomy 23-25	
Day 19	Exodus 11-13		Day 60	Deuteronomy 26-27	
Day 20	Exodus 14-16		Day 61	Deuteronomy 28-29	
Day 21	Exodus 17-20		Day 62	Deuteronomy 30-32	
Day 22	Exodus 21-23		Day 63	Deuteronomy 33-34	
Day 23	Exodus 24-27		Day 64	Joshua 1-4	
Day 24	Exodus 28-30		Day 65	Joshua 5-7	
Day 25	Exodus 31-34		Day 66	Joshua 8-10	
Day 26	Exodus 35-37		Day 67	Joshua 11-13	
Day 27	Exodus 38-40		Day 68	Joshua 14-17	
Day 28	Leviticus 1-4		Day 69	Joshua 18-20	
Day 29	Leviticus 5-7		Day 70	Joshua 21-22	
Day 30	Leviticus 8-10		Day 71	Joshua 23-24	
Day 31	Leviticus 11-13		Day 72	Judges 1-3	
Day 32	Leviticus 14-15		Day 73	Judges 4-5	
Day 33	Leviticus 16-18		Day 74	Judges 6-8	
Day 34	Leviticus 19-21		Day 75	Judges 9-10	
Day 35	Leviticus 22-23		Day 76	Judges 11-13	
Day 36	Leviticus 24-25		Day 77	Judges 14-16	
Day 37	Leviticus 26-27		Day 78	Judges 17-19	
Day 38	Numbers 1-2		Day 79	Judges 20-21	
Day 39	Numbers 3-4		Day 80	Ruth 1-4	
Day 40	Numbers 5-6		Day 81	1 Samuel 1-3	
Day 41	Numbers 7		Day 82	1 Samuel 4-7	

One Year Bible Reading Plan

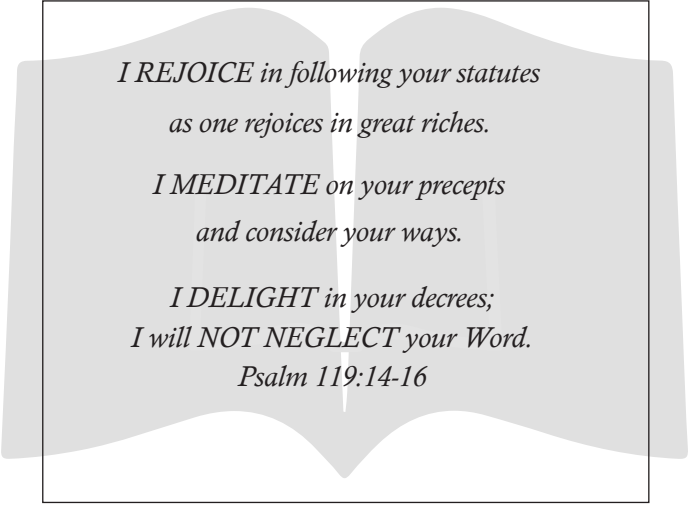
Day 83	1 Samuel 8-12		Day 128	2 Chronicles 1-4	
Day 84	1 Samuel 13-14		Day 129	2 Chronicles 5-7	
Day 85	1 Samuel 15-16		Day 130	2 Chronicles 8-11	
Day 86	1 Samuel 17-18		Day 131	2 Chronicles 12-16	
Day 87	1 Samuel 19-21		Day 132	2 Chronicles 17-20	
Day 88	1 Samuel 22-24		Day 133	2 Chronicles 21-24	
Day 89	1 Samuel 25-27		Day 134	2 Chronicles 25-28	
Day 90	1 Samuel 28-31		Day 135	2 Chronicles 29-31	
Day 91	2 Samuel 1-3		Day 136	2 Chronicles 32-34	
Day 92	2 Samuel 4-7		Day 137	2 Chronicles 35-36	
Day 93	2 Samuel 8-11		Day 138	Ezra 1-4	
Day 94	2 Samuel 12-13		Day 139	Ezra 5-7	
Day 95	2 Samuel 14-16		Day 140	Ezra 8-10	
Day 96	2 Samuel 17-19		Day 141	Nehemiah 1-3	
Day 97	2 Samuel 20-22		Day 142	Nehemiah 4-7	
Day 98	2 Samuel 23-24		Day 143	Nehemiah 8-10	
Day 99	1 Kings 1-2		Day 144	Nehemiah 11-13	
Day 100	1 Kings 3-5		Day 145	Esther 1-5	
Day 101	1 Kings 6-7		Day 146	Esther 6-10	
Day 102	1 Kings 8-9		Day 147	Job 1-4	
Day 103	1 Kings 10-12		Day 148	Job 5-8	
Day 104	1 Kings 13-15		Day 149	Job 9-12	
Day 105	1 Kings 16-18		Day 150	Job 13-16	
Day 106	1 Kings 19-20		Day 151	Job 17-20	
Day 107	1 Kings 21-22		Day 152	Job 21-24	
Day 108	2 Kings 1-3		Day 153	Job 25-30	
Day 109	2 Kings 4-5		Day 154	Job 31-34	
Day 110	2 Kings 6-8		Day 155	Job 35-38	
Day 111	2 Kings 9-10		Day 156	Job 39-42	
Day 112	2 Kings 11-13		Day 157	Psalms 1-8	
Day 113	2 Kings 14-16		Day 158	Psalms 9-17	
Day 114	2 Kings 17-18		Day 159	Psalms 18-21	
Day 115	2 Kings 19-21		Day 160	Psalms 22-27	
Day 116	2 Kings 22-23		Day 161	Psalms 28-33	
Day 117	2 Kings 24-25		Day 162	Psalms 34-37	
Day 118	1 Chronicles 1-2		Day 163	Psalms 38-42	
Day 119	1 Chronicles 3-4		Day 164	Psalms 43-49	
Day 120	1 Chronicles 5-6		Day 165	Psalms 50-55	
Day 121	1 Chronicles 7-9		Day 166	Psalms 56-61	
Day 122	1 Chronicles 10-12		Day 167	Psalms 62-68	
Day 123	1 Chronicles 13-16		Day 168	Psalms 69-72	
Day 124	1 Chronicles 17-19		Day 169	Psalms 73-77	
Day 125	1 Chronicles 20-23		Day 170	Psalms 78-80	
Day 126	1 Chronicles 24-26		Day 171	Psalms 81-88	
Day 127	1 Chronicles 27-29		Day 172	Psalms 89-94	

Day 173	Psalms 95-103		Day 218	Jeremiah 9-11	
Day 174	Psalms 104-106		Day 219	Jeremiah 12-14	
Day 175	Psalms 107-111		Day 220	Jeremiah 15-17	
Day 176	Psalms 112-118		Day 221	Jeremiah 18-21	
Day 177	Psalms 119		Day 222	Jeremiah 22-24	
Day 178	Psalms 120-133		Day 223	Jeremiah 25-27	
Day 179	Psalms 134-140		Day 224	Jeremiah 28-30	
Day 180	Psalms 141-150		Day 225	Jeremiah 31-32	
Day 181	Proverbs 1-3		Day 226	Jeremiah 33-36	
Day 182	Proverbs 4-7		Day 227	Jeremiah 37-39	
Day 183	Proverbs 8-11		Day 228	Jeremiah 40-43	
Day 184	Proverbs 12-14		Day 229	Jeremiah 44-46	
Day 185	Proverbs 15-17		Day 230	Jeremiah 47-48	
Day 186	Proverbs 18-20		Day 231	Jeremiah 49	
Day 187	Proverbs 21-23		Day 232	Jeremiah 50	
Day 188	Proverbs 24-26		Day 233	Jeremiah 51-52	
Day 189	Proverbs 27-29		Day 234	Lamentations 1-2	
Day 190	Proverbs 30-31		Day 235	Lamentations 3-5	
Day 191	Ecclesiastes 1-4		Day 236	Ezekiel 1-4	
Day 192	Ecclesiastes 5-8		Day 237	Ezekiel 5-8	
Day 193	Ecclesiastes 9-12		Day 238	Ezekiel 9-12	
Day 194	Song of Solomon 1-4		Day 239	Ezekiel 13-15	
Day 195	Song of Solomon 5-8		Day 240	Ezekiel 16-17	
Day 196	Isaiah 1-3		Day 241	Ezekiel 18-20	
Day 197	Isaiah 4-8		Day 242	Ezekiel 21-22	
Day 198	Isaiah 9-11		Day 243	Ezekiel 23-24	
Day 199	Isaiah 12-14		Day 244	Ezekiel 25-27	
Day 200	Isaiah 15-19		Day 245	Ezekiel 28-30	
Day 201	Isaiah 20-24		Day 246	Ezekiel 31-32	
Day 202	Isaiah 25-28		Day 247	Ezekiel 33-35	
Day 203	Isaiah 29-31		Day 248	Ezekiel 36-38	
Day 204	Isaiah 32-34		Day 249	Ezekiel 39-40	
Day 205	Isaiah 35-37		Day 250	Ezekiel 41-43	
Day 206	Isaiah 38-40		Day 251	Ezekiel 44-46	
Day 207	Isaiah 41-43		Day 252	Ezekiel 47-48	
Day 208	Isaiah 44-46		Day 253	Daniel 1-3	
Day 209	Isaiah 47-49		Day 254	Daniel 4-5	
Day 210	Isaiah 50-52		Day 255	Daniel 6-8	
Day 211	Isaiah 53-56		Day 256	Daniel 9-12	
Day 212	Isaiah 57-59		Day 257	Hosea 1-4	
Day 213	Isaiah 60-63		Day 258	Hosea 5-9	
Day 214	Isaiah 64-66		Day 259	Hosea 10-14	
Day 215	Jeremiah 1-3		Day 260	Joel 1-3	
Day 216	Jeremiah 4-5		Day 261	Amos 1-4	
Day 217	Jeremiah 6-8		Day 262	Amos 5-9	

One Year Bible Reading Plan

Day 263	Obadiah 1		Day 308	John 7-8	
Day 264	Jonah 1-4		Day 309	John 9-10	
Day 265	Micah 1-4		Day 310	John 11-12	
Day 266	Micah 5-7		Day 311	John 13-15	
Day 267	Nahum 1-3		Day 312	John 16-17	
Day 268	Habakkuk 1-3		Day 313	John 18-19	
Day 269	Zephaniah 1-3		Day 314	John 20-21	
Day 270	Haggai 1-2		Day 315	Acts 1-3	
Day 271	Zechariah 1-5		Day 316	Acts 4-5	
Day 272	Zechariah 6-10		Day 317	Acts 6-7	
Day 273	Zechariah 11-14		Day 318	Acts 8-9	
Day 274	Malachi 1-4		Day 319	Acts 10-11	
Day 275	Matthew 1-4		Day 320	Acts 12-13	
Day 276	Matthew 5-6		Day 321	Acts 14-15	
Day 277	Matthew 7-9		Day 322	Acts 16-17	
Day 278	Matthew 10-11		Day 323	Acts 18-19	
Day 279	Matthew 12-13		Day 324	Acts 20-21	
Day 280	Matthew 14-17		Day 325	Acts 22-23	
Day 281	Matthew 18-20		Day 326	Acts 24-26	
Day 282	Matthew 21-22		Day 327	Acts 27-28	
Day 283	Matthew 23-24		Day 328	Romans 1-3	
Day 284	Matthew 25-26		Day 329	Romans 4-7	
Day 285	Matthew 27-28		Day 330	Romans 8-10	
Day 286	Mark 1-3		Day 331	Romans 11-14	
Day 287	Mark 4-5		Day 332	Romans 15-16	
Day 288	Mark 6-7		Day 333	1 Corinthians 1-4	
Day 289	Mark 8-9		Day 334	1 Corinthians 5-9	
Day 290	Mark 10-11		Day 335	1 Corinthians 10-13	
Day 291	Mark 12-13		Day 336	1 Corinthians 14-16	
Day 292	Mark 14		Day 337	2 Corinthians 1-4	
Day 293	Mark 15-16		Day 338	2 Corinthians 5-9	
Day 294	Luke 1-2		Day 339	2 Corinthians 10-13	
Day 295	Luke 3-4		Day 340	Galatians 1-3	
Day 296	Luke 5-6		Day 341	Galatians 4-6	
Day 297	Luke 7-8		Day 342	Ephesians 1-3	
Day 298	Luke 9-10		Day 343	Ephesians 4-6	
Day 299	Luke 11-12		Day 344	Philippians 1-4	
Day 300	Luke 13-15		Day 345	Colossians 1-4	
Day 301	Luke 16-18		Day 346	1 Thessalonians 1-5	
Day 302	Luke 19-20		Day 347	2 Thessalonians 1-3	
Day 303	Luke 21-22		Day 348	1 Timothy 1-6	
Day 304	Luke 23-24		Day 349	2 Timothy 1-4	
Day 305	John 1-2		Day 350	Philemon 1; Titus 1-3	
Day 306	John 3-4		Day 351	Hebrews 1-4	
Day 307	John 5-6		Day 352	Hebrews 5-8	

Day 353	Hebrews 9-10	
Day 354	Hebrews 11-13	
Day 355	James 1-5	
Day 356	1 Peter 1-5; 2 Peter 1-3	
Day 357	1 John 1-5	
Day 358	2 John 1; 3 John 1; Jude 1	
Day 359	Revelation 1-3	
Day 360	Revelation 4-7	
Day 361	Revelation 8-11	
Day 362	Revelation 12-14	
Day 363	Revelation 15-17	
Day 364	Revelation 18-19	
Day 365	Revelation 20-22	



*I REJOICE in following your statutes
as one rejoices in great riches.*

*I MEDITATE on your precepts
and consider your ways.*

*I DELIGHT in your decrees;
I will NOT NEGLECT your Word.
Psalm 119:14-16*