



## Theme: Summer Wisdom in Proverbs and James

### *"Messy Wisdom"*

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#### Weekly Memory Verse:

**<sup>3</sup> No one can comprehend the height of heaven, the depth of the earth, or all that goes on in the king's mind!** – Proverbs 25:3

**Meditation Moments for Monday, August 10** – Our memory verse for the week is **Proverbs 25:3**, "No one can comprehend the height of heaven, the depth of the earth, or all that goes on in the king's mind!" Pray this verse as you begin time with God today. Is there a word in this proverb that grabs your heart? What is that word and why does it speak to you today? Now read **Proverbs 25:1-14**. Is there a proverb that speaks to you from this list today?

 Today's verses contain the memory verse for this week. The idea behind this verse is that sometimes our own desire to gain wisdom and comprehend everything gets in the way because sometimes life is messy and a mystery. This is especially true when it comes to trying to read other people's minds. Have you ever made assumptions that you found were not true about God or about life? Have you ever tried to read someone's mind and been frustrated because you have no idea what's happening inside their head? How might you begin to give some of those struggles to God and sit with the mystery that God is God and you are not?

 Verses 11 and 12 Talk about timely advice and their willingness to listen to others. When have you received some timely advice from someone else? Is there some timely advice you need to hear right now? Have you ever received criticism that has been helpful? Have you ever failed to listen to advice that you should have heeded? One of the best ways to get good advice is to ask for it from

others. Do you have a hard time asking others for help or advice? Why or why not?

**Prayer:** *Gracious God, give me patience to sit with the mystery of the height of heaven and the depth of earth. Help me to remember that I have no way of knowing what's going on inside of everyone else's mind and that others can give me a gift of timely advice. May I have the humility to listen when something in my life needs to change. Amen.*

**Tuesday, August 11** – Read aloud our memory verse for the week, **Proverbs 25:3**, “No one can comprehend the height of heaven, the depth of the earth, or all that goes on in the king’s mind!” Now read **Proverbs 25:15-28**. What proverb grabs your heart as you read them?

 Let's focus on verse 15 which talks about patience. One of the frustrating things about wisdom is that it often means we must be patient because wisdom often comes over the course of a lifetime and not always right when we want it. Have you ever been in a hurry and been frustrated because you haven't gotten the answers you wanted right away? When those moments come up in the future, try pausing and inviting God to give you patience for the wisdom that might be needed. When have you found that patience paid off? Do you like people being patient with you? Do you have a hard time offering patience to others? You might think of patients as a gift that you might give to yourself and to others.

 Verse 20 talks about patience in a different way by inviting us to sit with others when they have a heavy heart. We sometimes have a habit of trying to cheer people up when what people really need is someone to sit with them and acknowledge their grief. Do you find it hard to sit with others when things are difficult or do you try to cheer them up? What do you need when you are grieving or have a heavy heart? How might you offer others what they need when life is difficult rather than assuming they need the same thing you do?

**Prayer:** *Patient God, thank you for being patient with me and help me to be patient with others. You listen to me in my heart ache so help me listen to others when their hearts are heavy so I might offer them what they need in those moments. Amen.*

**Wednesday, August 12** – Read aloud **Proverbs 25:3**, the memory verse for this week, “No one can comprehend the height of heaven, the depth of the earth, or all that goes on in the king’s mind!” Now read **Proverbs 26:1-14**. If there is one that speaks to you off this list, read it out loud two times and see what it is that grabs you.

 Let's look at verse four more closely today. This is a very appropriate proverb for a time when we often get caught up in arguments or conversations online which are foolish and don't solve anything. Often, when we get into bantering online or on social media, we don't solve any problems, but we simply get ourselves and others worked up. When have you found yourself in a foolish argument that leads to nowhere? How might you avoid those in the future?

 Now we turn to verse 5 which seems to be the opposite of verse 4! We are told to answer the foolish argument of fools instead of avoiding them. Why do you suppose the writer of these proverbs put them both together? Is it possible that

they are pointing out that even proverbs are meant to be used in context? The truth is that sometimes we should avoid foolish arguments and there are other times where we need to find out how to have thoughtful conversations so that people don't get hurt. How do you tell the difference when you need to engage in a foolish argument and when to step back?

**Prayer:** *God, give me wisdom to know when to speak and when to walk away from foolish arguments. Help me to speak up not just because I want to be right but so that I might serve others. Keep me from being drawn into foolish arguments and help me to have good conversations that lead to life. Amen.*

**Thursday, August 13** – Read aloud **Proverbs 25:3**, the memory verse for this week, “No one can comprehend the height of heaven, the depth of the earth, or all that goes on in the king’s mind!” Now read **Proverbs 26:15-28**, asking God to reveal a proverb or phrase that you need to hear today.



These 14 proverbs contained several that seem profoundly applicable today because of things we have seen happening in the world lately. Verses 18 and 19 talks about the damage caused by a madman shooting a deadly weapon and we just have seen several incidents of shootings in places like Idaho and Connecticut. To compare that to someone who says, “I was only joking,” a bit trite. Why do you think the writer of the proverb compared these two things to each other? When have you experienced someone saying something to you and then saying, “I was only joking,” and it caused tremendous pain? How might you avoid doing this to others in the future?



Verses 20 and 21 use the images of fire and embers at a time when we have seen wildfires ravage parts of the West and when many in our community in Durango are anxious about the possibility of that happening here. Do you find these metaphors helpful when it comes to quarrels or fights with others? How might you not feed the anxiety in arguments with others whether it's online or in person? Do you find yourself starting fights with others easily or gossiping in ways that lead to disagreements? How might you change those patterns in your relationships?

**Prayer:** *Loving God, help me not to feed arguments or disagreements with joking words or quarrelsome behavior. Give me wisdom to treat others the way I would want to be treated and to love others the way you love me. Amen.*

**Friday, August 14** – Recite this week’s memory verse, **Proverbs 25:3**, “No one can comprehend the height of heaven, the depth of the earth, or all that goes on in the king’s mind!” Read **Proverbs 27:1-14**. As you prepare to read today’s chapter, watch for verses that might help us understand How God might want us to respond when life gets messy.



Verse 4 talks about anger and wrath, and how those emotions are cruel and like a flood, but jealousy is even more dangerous. What do you think this proverb is pointing at or trying to help us understand? When has jealousy caused damage in your heart or in your life? Anger and wrath and jealousy are all complicated emotions which can get the best of us and make life messy. When have you

discovered this proverb to be true? Invite God to respond differently when these emotions creep up in your heart, so they don't make a mess.



Verse 10 is not just a proverb but an important truth about where we turn when life gets messy. It encourages us to remember that when disaster strikes, we need friends and people in our lives who are not just family but neighbors or friends. How might you invest in others in your life so that they might be available when disaster strikes for you? When has someone been there for you and when have you been available for someone else when there has been disaster? Verse 12 talks about understanding that life will get messy and there are going to be dangers and so we should take precautions by preparing ourselves ahead of time. How are you doing that?

**Prayer:** *Lord God, I know you don't bring disasters into my life but sometimes they show up when I'm not expecting them. Help me to prepare my heart and my life for those moments so I know I'm not alone. I need you and I need others. Amen.*

**Saturday, August 15** – Read once again your memory verse, **Proverbs 25:3**, “No one can comprehend the height of heaven, the depth of the earth, or all that goes on in the king's mind!” How has it felt to read that this week? What word or phrase have you carried with you and why? Today, we are going to turn to some really messy wisdom which is also attributed to King Solomon. Read **Ecclesiastes 1:1-11** and **Matthew 11:25-30**.



In many ways, this first chapter of Ecclesiastes embodies our memory verse because it is written from the perspective of someone who is trying to know everything and have every piece of wisdom. The writer of this book begins by recognizing how many people feel in today's world where things feel meaningless and difficult. We sometimes wonder if God exists or if God really cares about us, especially when life gets messy. The point of Ecclesiastes is to remind us to balance the desire for human wisdom with something that is deeper and that we will carry with us, which is a relationship with a God who made us to love us. Our human effort can often feel meaningless, which is why we need God. How has your pursuit of earthly wisdom gotten in the way of a relationship with God?



Jesus answers this question in Matthew 11 and reminds us that our ultimate rest comes from a relationship with him. How might you sit with the mystery of the messiness in life and allow God to comfort you when you are out of answers?

**Prayer:** *God, I often try to know everything and have a handle on every situation in my life, only to find out I have much less control than I thought. Help me to rest in you and to give you my burdens and my cares. You came in the person of Jesus to remind me that I don't need to carry every burden in life on my own but instead I can rest in you. May I do that today and every day. Amen.*