

# *Thirty-One Days at the Gate*

A Daily Devotional through Proverbs



*"Blessed is the man who listens to me,  
Watching daily at my gates, Waiting at my doorposts."  
Proverbs 8:34*



## *A Special Note From Janice...*

Hi Ladies,

I am so excited to be able to share this devotional booklet with all of you. I hope that you will be blessed by the various insights the Lord gave me as I read and meditated on the amazing Book of Proverbs.

Proverbs has 31 chapters, which makes it possible to focus on one proverb each day of the month. You can do this in any order, but I like to read the specific proverb that corresponds with that day. For example, if it is January 15<sup>th</sup>, I read Proverbs 15 that day. This system works for me, but let the Lord minister to you in whatever way works for you.

As you open this booklet, pray that God will richly increase your understanding in regard to Wisdom. My life was changed by writing this devotional. I never really understood the importance and character of Wisdom. Now I do!

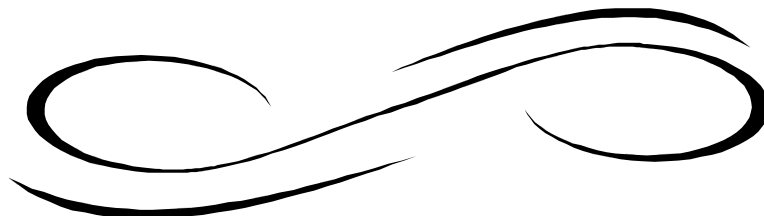
Please accept this as a love gift. Read and consider it with an open heart and a measure of grace. Even though the contents may not be flawless, the heart with which it was written is sincere. I hope this blesses you as much as all of you have blessed me.

**Note:**

This booklet is not copyrighted, so feel free to copy and share it with friends and family

God Bless,

Janice Young 09/17/2011





Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 1.**

Our meditation verse for today is:

**“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge;  
Fools despise wisdom and instruction.”  
Proverbs 1:7**

In chapter one, Solomon gives a detailed introduction (v.1-6) giving the basic outline and purpose of the Proverbs. This brings us to our meditation verse. The word for “beginning” in the Hebrew means “to sum up”. V.7 is a summary of the first 6 verses. With this in mind, we could translate this verse, *“The fear of the LORD is the sum total of knowledge”*.

Later, in Proverbs 9:10, Solomon says, *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom”*. In this particular verse, however, the word *BEGINNING* in Hebrew means *a starting place*. Okay... Now that we got the technical stuff out of the way, let’s see what God wants to minister to our hearts today...

There’s knowledge and then there’s knowledge. A person could go through life filling their head with more and more knowledge, striving to achieve every degree, title, etc. and yet still be considered a fool in the eyes of the Lord. Sometimes I don’t *feel* very smart because I didn’t even go to college. I don’t like playing those games that ask all the trivial questions to see who “knows” the most. All I know is that those games make me *feel* really stupid. I recently attended a college graduation and listened to one speaker after another claim that all of our nation’s problems could be solved with more education. Hmmm. I Corinthians 1:27 says, *“For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty and noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise...”* That’s talking about me!! I’m NOT saying that we shouldn’t go to college; knowledge is good, but the knowledge that comes from fearing the LORD is far better.

If the “sum total” of knowledge is found in God, why do we ever look anywhere else? David was in awe of God when he considered His infinite knowledge and His unceasing care for him (Psalm 139). As he pondered it, he declared, *“Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it.” (Psalm 139:6)* I may not have tons of worldly knowledge, but there are some things that I KNOW for sure: My God is all powerful, all knowing, and all sufficient; My God loves me SO much that He sent His Son to die for me; My God walks with me every day; My God cares about me and listens to my prayers; My God has a plan for me; and lastly, My God is coming for me... in His time.

As I consider all of these things... I realize I am pretty SMART for having said "yes" to Him.

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today’s meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 2.**

Our meditation verse for today is:

**"He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity,  
Guarding the paths of justice, And He preserves the way of His godly ones."**

**Proverbs 2:7-8**

To put it simply, God is "Provider" and "Protector" to those who belong to Him and walk with Him. He has STOREHOUSES full of wisdom, and not only wisdom, but "sound wisdom". Sound wisdom is reliable, profitable and reasonable... unlike man's wisdom. God has storehouses packed full of this amazing wisdom, just waiting for His children to open their hearts and minds to receive it. I think of the widow's bowl of flour and oil that was never exhausted. God's supply of wisdom can NEVER be tapped out! ( 1 Kings 17:11-16)

I've never been a big supporter of the women's liberation movement. I really like the role of the woman as one that needs to be protected and guarded by her husband. I readily admit to being "***the weaker vessel***" spoken of in I Peter 3:7. That doesn't mean women are inferior in any way, just not as strong. If I find myself in a dangerous situation, I have no problem relying upon the size and strength of my spouse to save me. In the same way, I have no problem whatsoever admitting that I am unable to "save myself" spiritually. I rely completely upon the "***everlasting arms***" (Deuteronomy 33:27) not only for salvation through His Son, but for strength and stability throughout my daily walk. I love that He's my "Protector"! To "guard" and "preserve" both mean to KEEP. The Lord has promised to be our keeper; to be there for us... never allowing anything to touch us outside of His perfect will. That's awesome!

In Psalm 91:4, we are told that, "*He will cover you with His pinions, and under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark*". I will end with this illustration: A group of firemen were walking through an area of a forest that had recently been devastated by a massive forest fire. As they walked through the charred remains, they assessed that no life had survived... until... one fireman spotted what appeared to be a black bird perched at base of a tree. As they drew closer, the bird didn't move. The fireman reached out with a stick to arouse the bird and as he poked the dark structure, the remains quickly disintegrated. As the frail frame crumbled to the ground, several baby birds scampered out. The mother bird had stood over her babies and gave her life to protect them. That's God's love for you and me. He loves us, oh how He love us...

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 3.**

Our meditation verse for today is:

**"Trust 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 3:5-6**

These two verses are among the most well-known and frequently quoted verses not only in the Book of Proverbs, but the whole Bible as well. There is so much to be gained by meditating on and memorizing these verses. How we need His guiding hand to keep us on the right path. When the Lord fashioned me in my mother's womb, He chose not to give me the "sense of direction" gene. I am the worst! I can easily get turned around in a Mall or a parking lot... and it's not wise to trust me on any freeway without detailed instructions. Last Christmas, I left to pick up my daughter and granddaughters at the L.A. airport and turned off on the wrong freeway and got totally lost!! Well, to make a long story short... after many tears, desperation, frustration, and much appreciated help to get back on track... I finally made it. I was late and frazzled, but without the right re-direction... who knows how things would have ended!! I thought I knew where I was going, but obviously I was wrong!

As I pondered these verses, I thought, "If I have no sense of direction in the physical world, perhaps my "sense of direction" in regard to spiritual matters is equally as poor. It makes sense to me that My Creator and the Creator of all things would probably be the best one to guide me through this life. He can see *way* down the road L O N G before I ever get there. The goal is to stay on the straight and narrow path, and the way to do that is to trust in the LORD... not halfheartedly, but with ALL our hearts.

If I ever go to Israel, I will make sure that I am being led by a well trained; well-seasoned tour guide. I want to be able to "trust" that this person knows how to get me to the best places, how to steer me away from danger, and how teach me things as we go along. I have a choice to make; I can totally rely upon the tour guide or I can make my own plans. I can stay on the bus or I can choose to get off. I can wander down side streets out of curiosity or I can stay with the rest of the group. We make these same decisions every day.

The Lord (the perfect tour Guide) calls and directs. We can choose to follow Him or make our own plans. We are the experts of "rabbit trails"! We see something shiny over there and we wander off, we get a brilliant idea that appeals to our flesh and we spend large "chunks" of time pursuing it. How easily we get distracted. That's why this proverb is so important. Let's check our hearts today and see in what way we are "leaning on our own understanding". I'm tired of wasting so much time on side roads that don't prosper, aren't you? Let's end with this verse, "...and your ears will hear a word behind you, 'This is the way, walk in it.' whenever you turn to the right or to the left". (Isaiah 30:21)

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 4.**

Our meditation verse for today is:

**Watch over your heart with all diligence,  
for from it flow the springs of life."  
Proverbs 4:23**

Many of us are reaching the age where we need to pay closer attention to the health of our hearts. The hard truth is... if we neglect to eat right, exercise, avoid unnecessary stress, etc., our heart could take us out! Not that going to be with the Lord is a bad thing, but God has given us the responsibility of caring for these bodies as long as we are here. This proverb exhorts us to "watch over your heart with all diligence".

The heart spoken of here is not the physical organ, but the very seat of our emotions. The heart is fickle, it's fragile, and it needs lots of care! Diligence implies that our hearts need constant attention. We can't guard them "occasionally", but must keep watch over them continually. As young girls, we probably all had a "fairy tale" idea of the perfect man that would someday sweep us off our feet. When that day came we gladly surrendered our whole heart to him. The result for many has been a broken heart.

Throughout our lives, we may experience many *broken heart* experiences: a failed relationship, the loss of a loved one, a devastating illness, or a prodigal child. The tendency, after awhile, is to not only guard our heart but close it off completely, cast it in a vault and throw away the key. This was never God's intention. God wants to fill our hearts with His love and His Word, so our lives can be a witness and a testimony. So... I guess what we need is a type of intake valve. We need to be careful what we allow to enter.

It's interesting to me that "springs of life" flow from our hearts. As I pondered this, I pictured what kind of spring I would be tempted to partake of. It would be clear, sparkling, cool and very inviting. A healthy spring would be one where fresh water flows in and fresh water flows out. A stagnant spring or well would only bring sickness and death to those who drink from it. As I thought about this, I wondered what "springs" flow from my life? If I allow unforgiveness, bitterness, jealousy, and/or a critical spirit to take up residence in my heart, what is going to "flow" out, but more of the same. That's tragic.

In Jeremiah 2:13, God refers to Himself as "*The fountain of living water*", and in John 7:38, Jesus said, "*He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being (the heart) shall flow rivers of living water.'*" As His daughters, we have regular access to the best springs imaginable. So...I guess it comes down to this. Every day we get thirsty and need to drink. We can drink from the Living Waters and allow the springs of our heart to be filled to overflowing - OR - we can sip from the cup of anger, despair, and vengeance that the enemy freely offers with whipped cream on top... something to think about.

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 5.**

Our meditation verse for today is:

**"My son, give attention to my wisdom, Incline your ear to understanding;  
that you may observe discretion, and your lips may reserve knowledge."  
Proverbs 5:1-2**

In this passage, a father is giving life-changing instruction to his son. His hope is that his son will learn from him and avoid falling prey to the enticements of this world. Even though we are neither a father nor a son, there are precious gems here to be found by us as well. As with any child, the father must first get his son's attention before instruction begins, and once he has it, he is exhorted to "incline" his ear. This literally means "to lean in".

When we *want* to hear something, we often instinctively lean our ear toward the one speaking. This ensures that we will hear every little detail with accuracy and clarity. If something is not worth listening to, we don't feel the need to "pay attention" or "lean in". What the father has to say is well worth forsaking any other distractions to zero-in on the forthcoming advice.

This message is two-fold; "that you may observe discretion" and "your lips may reserve knowledge". Even though this particular advice immediately precedes the father's warning to the son in regard to the adulterous woman, the principles given are precious and beneficial safeguards for all of God's children. What does it mean to "observe discretion"? To observe is to "keep", such as "observing" an ordinance or a holiday. Discretion is "action based upon caution"...being discreet. So how important is "discretion" for a woman? Proverbs 11:22 says, "*As a ring of gold in a swine's snout, so is a beautiful woman who lacks discretion.*" In other words, a woman's outward beauty means nothing if her behavior says otherwise.

It's always sad to see a woman who *initially* appears gorgeous, but she opens her mouth and harsh words, even cursing come spilling out. The world says, "If you've got it, flaunt it". I believe a woman who is blessed with a dynamite body lacks discretion if she flaunts or parades herself in front of others... especially men. The woman of God who "observes discretion" is modest in her behavior AND in the way she dresses. It's better to err on the side of caution and choose wisely rather than to boldly plow right in or make a hasty decision that you can't take back.

A woman who learns to "observe discretion" will also have lips that "reserve knowledge". To reserve is to save, as in "reserving" a table at your favorite restaurant. A mouth that constantly spouts off leaves nothing in reserve. It's the woman who knows when to "hold back" and test the waters for the right moment to share that will have an abundance of wisdom (a reserve) to share WHEN it's appropriate. It will be there when you need it... just like your dinner reservation.

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 6.**

Our meditation verse for today is:

**"For the commandment is a lamp, and the teaching is light; and reproofs for discipline are the way of life."  
Proverbs 6:23**

"Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." (Psalm 119:105). Does a song come to mind? Sing it to the Lord. Have you ever imagined what our lives would be like without light? Just imagine if there were no sun or moon; no stars; no candles or batteries; and no lamps of any kind? I recently watched a movie on the Family channel about a society that depended solely upon a large generator to illumine their underground community. As the years passed, the generator started to wear out and they faced the possibility of living out what remained of their lives in total darkness... unless... they could find a way to escape the darkness and start over in the new world above ground. Of course, they did. As silly as this plot sounds, there is much truth there. What are we depending upon to illuminate our lives and to light the path ahead of us and to keep us from stumbling over the many obstacles that lie ahead? Psalm 19:8 says, "The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes."

We all have houses full of lamps... probably one or more in each room. These sources of light require power of some kind to keep working. Most of us keep extra light bulbs in a closet somewhere to have on hand when the old ones burn out. That's just smart. Now... with the energy crisis, we are expected to buy those new light bulbs, the energy saving ones. Even though they don't shine quite as brightly, they require less electricity and are less likely to deplete our power supply.

As I thought about this, I was in awe of God. Do you know where Jesus sits? He sits "at the right hand of **Power**"! (Mark 14:62). God not only has inexhaustible power... He **is** Power! You won't find anywhere in Scripture an exhortation to the believer to cut back on the power. No energy saving bulbs for us, instead, we are constantly encouraged to **stay** "plugged in", fully drawing from the power that His Word supplies to live a fully charged, fully illumined life. As we walk down the path He illumines for us, He wants us to shine brightly as a testimony of the LIGHT that we have found. "... for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light." (Ephesians 5:8)

Lastly, "reproofs for discipline are the way of life". Let's face it... none of us like to be disciplined or corrected. However, we all need guidelines and we all need to be accountable for our behavior. Do you love your children? If you do, you give them rules to follow and you discipline them when they're naughty. How much more does our Heavenly Father need to give us life changing instruction and, if necessary, discipline to keep us in line... not because He enjoys it, but because He loves us? (I Corinthians 11:32)

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 7.**

Our meditation verse for today is:

**"My son, keep my words, and treasure my commandments within you.  
Keep my commandments and live, and my teaching as the apple of your eye."  
Proverbs 7:1-2**

Again, this proverb is the words of a father to his son, warning him of the consequences of giving in to the adulteress woman. Let's look at this from a different standpoint. The warnings and instruction given here could also apply to our Heavenly Father giving sound wisdom to His daughters (you and me). We may not be enticed by the adulteress women, but we face temptations every day of our lives; we are tempted to take control over our husbands, indulge in jealousy and gossip, and be impatient with our children. We are constantly working on being more diligent; physically... to eat and exercise as to be good stewards of our bodies, spiritually... to spend time in the Word and in prayer, and relationally... to be a good parent, wife, friend, etc. So, what is the enemy using in your life to tempt to stray from the path that leads to the abundant life? We could just try harder... OR... we can heed the words of our memory verse. Do we treasure His commandments? Do we consider His Word priceless? Do we seek after His Word with the same zeal and excitement as we would if someone gave us a treasure map leading to a huge fortune? As the Apostle Peter said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." (John 6:68) In keeping His commandments, we have victory over temptation and a desire to be pleasing in His sight!

I love the exhortation to keep His teaching "as the apple of your eye". This literally means the "pupil" of your eye. Do you realize that the pupil of your eye is one of the most guarded parts of your body. If something comes hurling towards the eye, God has designed the eyelid to blink shut at a speed faster than any other muscle in the body. The eye is precious and needs to be protected. Do we guard and protect God's Word in this way. Do we cling to, defend and protect the Gospel? Another interesting thing about the pupil of the eye: this is the part of the eye that allows the light to enter. Nothing foreign or threatening can enter, but the light is welcomed in. Hmmm... Great spiritual analogy! (See Matthew 6:22-23)

In closing, let's consider just how much God loves us.

"He **found him** in a desert land, and in the howling waste of a wilderness;

He **encircled him**, He **cared for him**,

He **guarded him** as the apple of His eye" (Deuteronomy 32:10)

I hope this blesses you

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 8.**

Our meditation verse for today is:

**"Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at my doorposts."  
Proverbs 8:34**

This proverb is amazing!! It was really difficult choosing only one meditation verse!! I think we could do numerous devotionals on this one chapter. Did you pick up on the fact that wisdom is talked about as if it were a person? Proverbs 3 actually refers to wisdom as "she", which makes a lot of sense to us women... just joking!! Seriously, though, did you notice that wisdom calls and has a voice (v.1), she stands at the gate (v.2), she has lips and a mouth (v.6-7), she walks (v.20), she was there at creation and she "stood" beside God as a master workman (v.30)? I am beginning to view wisdom in a whole different way, aren't you? I believe that when we're finished with our devotions in the Book of Proverbs, we'll better understand her role in the scope of everything and fully realize that "She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who hold her fast" (Proverbs 3:18).

The main reason I chose Proverbs 8:34 for our meditation verse today is because of the exhortation to watch "**daily**" at wisdom's gate. Isn't that exactly what we are doing by having these daily devotionals together? Before starting this, I only asked for wisdom occasionally... now I ask for it **DAILY!** Look at verse 30, as wisdom stood beside God at creation, she was "**daily**" His delight! Think about that! Wisdom delights the heart of the Father... perhaps that's why He wants us to ask for it, it benefits us and it delights Him. Let's take a minute and look at these verses: "Blessed be the LORD, who **daily** bears our burden..." (Psalm 68:19); "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross **daily**, and follow Me." (Luke 9:23); *When speaking of the dedication of the Bereans*, "Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the scriptures **daily**, to see whether these things were so." (Acts 17:11)

According to I Corinthians 15:31, how often did the Apostle Paul die to the flesh? **DAILY.** God is there for us every single day and His desire is that we would meet with Him **every single day.**

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 9.**

Our meditation verse for today is:

**"Do not reprove a scoffer, lest he hate you,  
Reprove a wise man and he will love you."  
Proverbs 9:8**

Did you notice that wisdom (once again) is referred to as "she". This time "she" is planning a banquet and we're all invited! Wisdom offers an alternative to the invitation of folly which mankind is so quick to accept. Wisdom makes herself so attractive.... not like the adulteress, but in a warm and caring way.... offering "life" and "understanding" (v.6) unlike the woman of folly whose "guests" end up in Sheol. (v.18) By accepting the invitation to "dine" with wisdom, we are offered a substantial and satisfying meal. There is, however, a price attached. Admitting to the fact of how much we really need God's wisdom will cost us a huge dose of humility, and we can't let pride get in the way. Notice, in v.4, the invited guests must admit that they are "naive" and that they "lack understanding"!! I'm not too proud to admit that I'm both of these things... how about you?

Sometimes, wisdom comes through the reproof (a cutting rebuke) of another, which leads us to today's meditation verse. Not many people like to reprove others or... even worse... be reprovved by others. "If you reprove a scoffer, he will hate you!" A scoffer is by definition: arrogant disdainers of others. I surely don't want to be that, so what will prove that I am a wise woman? A wise woman will love you and thank you when you are willing to tell her the truth (my definition). I must admit that this is not always easy for me.

Hopefully, many of you can relate. Nobody wants to be corrected, challenged, etc. We would rather be complimented, encouraged, and sometimes praised... but we all know that's our flesh! Please join me today in praying that God will refine us in this area. In loving each other, we need to be willing to accept criticism, correction and even yield when things don't always go our way. Ouch!!

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 10.**

Our meditation verse for today is:

**"When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable,  
But he who restrains his lips is wise."**

Proverbs 10:19

This proverb gives us one more important tip to consider if we want to be like those wise women spoken of in Scripture (Esther, Ruth, Mary, etc.). In a nutshell, "we all need to learn when to stop talking and be quiet"! It's a well-known fact that women use more words in a day than men do. Though there are exceptions to this rule, generally speaking, this is a proverb that all women should pay strict attention to.

We've all experienced times when we wish we could take back some hurtful or confusing words that we have recklessly "blurted out". This proverb is saying... speaking less doesn't guarantee you'll always say exactly the right thing, but the chance of blowing it goes down significantly! When we talk less, perhaps we are more sensitive to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit giving us discernment in what to say and when to say it. "A man has *joy* in an apt answer, and how ***delightful*** is a timely word." (Proverbs 15:23)

The LORD often speaks to me in illustrations, as most of you know. Colossians 4:6 says, "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each one." I was meditating on this as I went for a walk today and I was thinking about cooking. Seasoning/salt is good! It's essential to the flavor of the recipe; however, too much seasoning/salt can ruin the whole thing. Not knowing **when** to stop pouring on the salt will surely lead to a totally inedible dish! It's good to error on the light side... you can always add more *as needed*. Something to think about...

One more thing to ponder before we close... wait! I don't want to be guilty of **saying too much**... so the "one more thing" can wait for another time. Have a blessed day.

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 11.**

Our meditation verse for today is:

**"He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets,  
But he who is trustworthy conceals a matter."**

Proverbs 11:13

We are really getting some harsh exhortations through this book, aren't we? The reason I chose this particular verse is because it so perfectly follows yesterday's verse (do you remember ... *the talking too much thing*) I closed with... just one more thing... so this qualifies as just that. The more we talk, the more tempted we will be to stray from healthy conversation... straight to gossiping. Tale bearing, gossiping, slander are all pretty much the same thing. We really have to check our heart in this matter.

Carefully think about this verse, "The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels, and they go down into the innermost parts of the body." (Proverbs 18:8) We all know what gossip is and we've all been guilty of it at one time or another. Gossip is truly like "dainty morsels". For some reason, our flesh is just drawn to it... like those little bite-sized cakes covered with frosting that is smooth and flawless and topped off with a beautiful flower confection. Can you see it? It's so appealing, just the right size to "pop" into your mouth as it slowly melts on your tongue giving you instant pleasure. Instead of this picture, perhaps we can train our minds to picture a "morsel" of gossip as a nothing more than a cowpie or a road apple! Nothing appealing about that... gossip is toxic and it stinks!!

Let's look at the second part of our meditation verse. When you have something of a very personal nature that you need to share with someone, let me ask you two questions. (1) Who comes to mind as being trustworthy? You can share anything with them knowing they will keep your confidence. (2) Who is just the opposite? You hesitate telling them things... afraid they'll repeat it to someone else. Which one of these people are you? I know this is painful! I'm totally being convicted right now!!

Let's close with this: Jesus was slandered as a drunkard (Matthew 11:19), a blasphemer (Matthew 9:3), as demonized (John 8:48, 52), a rebel (Luke 23:5), and a insurrectionist (Luke 23:2). There will be times in our life when we are guilty of slander, and there will be times when we *will* be slandered. Jesus was wrongly accused many times, and yet, continued to love. "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and **slander** be put away from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ Jesus forgave you." (Ephesians 4:31-32)

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 12.**

Our meditation verse for today is:

**"Anxiety in the heart of man weighs it down,  
but a good word makes it glad."  
Proverbs 12:25**

Anxiety.... A term used often in our society. Everyone has some measure of anxiety, some more than others. Every one of us faces trials and stresses in our life and, again, some worse than others. What is the common denominator? We all have the ability to choose what to do with our anxiety. The definition of anxiety is: *a disturbed state of mind produced by real or imaginary fears*. If anxiety is a "disturbed state of **MIND**", then why does this proverb say that anxiety is in our **HEART**? Could it be that anxiety first reaches our minds and then we "choose" whether or not it reaches our heart? Once it reaches our heart, that's when it becomes that heavy weight spoken of in this Proverb.

So... how do we keep anxiety from taking up residence in our heart, becoming an unwelcome visitor? Philippians 4:6 says, "Be **anxious** for nothing, but in everything **by prayer and supplication** with **thanksgiving** let your requests be made known to God." This is a familiar verse, but we often fail to read the next verse, "And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your **hearts** and your **minds** in Christ Jesus". (Philippians 4:7) By choosing to take all our anxieties to God in prayer and by expressing our thanksgiving to Him, both our **MIND** and our **HEART** will be well guarded.

The second part of our meditation verse says, "A good word makes it (our heart) glad". How healing and encouraging are the words of a loving friend who knows exactly what to say and when to say it. Even more powerful are the pure Words of Scripture. Who in your life is going through a fiery trial right now? Perhaps God would have you send them an encouraging Bible verse or two. Let's close with this verse, "Encourage the exhausted, strengthen the feeble, say to those with **anxious heart**, Take courage, fear not, behold, your God will come..." (Isaiah 35:3-4a)

Have a blessed day!

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 13.**

Our meditation verse for today is:

**"The light of the righteous rejoices (or shines brightly),  
but the lamp of the wicked goes out."  
Proverbs 13:9**

My first question here is... "*Who are the righteous?*" The definition of righteousness is: uprightness before God. The righteous are those who have a right standing before God. Sometimes when I hear the Bible speak of the "righteous", I disqualify myself as not being quite up to that standard of super faith... like David, Abraham or Sarah. The more I meditated on this, I was reminded that MY attempts to be righteous are like filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6), and so I most definitely need a wardrobe change!

So... in what way shall I clothe myself? Ephesians 4:24 says, "... and PUT ON the *new self*, which in the likeness of God has been created in **righteousness** and holiness of the truth." Whew!! I already did that when I accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior. "Therefore if many man is in Christ, he is a *new creature*; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come".

Now, let's focus on the lamp. What causes the light of the righteous to shine brightly, while the lamp of the wicked goes out? Have you ever looked at a pregnant woman and declared..."You're just glowing"?! Perhaps it's evidence of the precious life abiding within her. "He who has the Son has the life, but he who does not have the Son of God does not have life." (I John 5:12) We have Jesus Christ, the Light of the world, (John 8:12) residing within... causing *us* to glow!

The lamp stand in the temple was continually filled with oil, so the light would never go out. In the same way, we need to be continually filled with the Spirit through the Word, prayer; worship and fellowship... or our light could become a "tiny flicker". For the wicked, on the other hand, their lamp completely goes out... no flicker... no flame... no light at all! I don't know about you, but I want a BLAZE!

Be blessed by this passage: "*The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the **righteous will shine forth as the sun** in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.*" (Matthew 13:41-43)

**"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works,  
and glorify your Father who is in heaven."  
(Matthew 5:16)**

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 14.**

Our meditation verse for today is:

**"The wise woman builds her house,  
but the foolish woman tears it down with her own hands."  
Proverbs 14:1**

Grab your tool belt! Today we're exploring the construction business. Seriously, though... who knew that we, as women, had **so** much power and influence in our homes? According to this verse, we can be a master builder... or... we can literally become "**THE TERMINATOR**".

It's a well-known fact that the woman sets the tone in her home. If we are grumpy and depressed, it spreads. If we are positive and encouraging, that will also spread. Our husbands, children and anyone else who lives in our home are directly affected by our decisions, our attitudes, our behavior and, most of all, our faith in God. I Peter 3:1 tells us that an unbelieving husband "may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives". Notice, it did **NOT** say, by the preaching and nagging of their wives. This principal also holds true with a believing husband... it's our "behavior" that speaks the loudest. (Pun intended)

As we "build" our house, every time we exhibit the qualities of a "gentle and quiet spirit" (I Peter 3:4), we are adding another room, another floor, another tile on the roof... all built upon the foundation of the Word of God. In contrast, if we choose the way of the "foolish woman"... demanding control, always grumbling and complaining, moody, discontented... we may as well take out a large ax or sledgehammer and start swinging away!

Here's a little tip that I discovered while raising my children: When there is tension in the home... when the kids are whining, pouting, fighting with each other... just go about doing whatever you need to, but start singing some familiar praise songs!! It might take some time, but if you persevere, more often than not... they'll start singing with you. Try it sometime.

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 15.**

Our meditation verse for today is:

**"Better is a dish or vegetables where love is,  
than a fattened ox and hatred with it."  
Proverbs 15:17**

This verse takes me back several years... before I knew the Lord. I was young and naive and I thought I knew what I wanted and needed. I was wrong!! I got an engagement ring on the night of my High School graduation. The man who gave me the ring had declared his undying love for me and was a hard worker, so surely he would make lots of money and take really good care of me.

My engagement ring was quite impressive. It had a large pear-shaped diamond and certainly made a statement. I was married only one year later... still, not knowing the Lord. By the time I was 25 years old, I was living in a brand new two-story, five-bedroom house with a new truck and a corvette parked in the driveway... but I was miserable! The marriage ended, but through it I found the Lord and, eventually, I found my "dish of vegetables"... his name is Brad. We don't possess wealth (in a material way) but we're rich in the ways that matter and the Lord blesses our life together. *"He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income. This too is vanity. The sleep of the working man is pleasant, **whether he eats little or much.** But the full stomach of the rich man does not allow him to sleep."* (Ecclesiastes 5:10, 12)

The wedding ring that I have cherished over the past 31 years is simple... but, much like "a dish a vegetables where love is"; it symbolizes the far better choice!! Every once in awhile Brad tells me that someday he wants to get me a fancy wedding ring with diamonds... I just smile and say, "That's not necessary, this one suits me just fine."

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 16.**

Our meditation verse for today is:

**"The highway of the upright is to depart from evil;  
He who watches his way preserves his life."  
Proverbs 16:17**

Road trip!! Our entire life is one big road trip! What exactly is "the highway of the upright"? I believe it's just a fancy way of saying... the path that one chooses when wanting to follow after God, with one variation. When we think of a "path", most likely we see a narrow, unpaved walkway... like what we would follow on a hiking trip in the mountains. So...how is our "journey" here on earth like a highway?

A highway is a main thoroughfare, moving at a far greater pace. Even though "the way is narrow that leads to life" (Matthew 7:14), this life goes by so quickly... if we don't "watch our way", we can easily be detoured. The amazing thing about this highway is that God promises to go before us, so if I choose to "depart from evil" and keep my eyes on the road... I'll be fine. Have you ever been driving in a heavy rainstorm and the only thing that kept you in your lane was keeping your eyes on the painted lines that were visible even in the darkness?

In the same way, the "highway" of this life is often like a rainstorm in the darkness, if we keep our eyes straight ahead (Proverbs 4:25), we will see the footprints of our Savior. All we have to do is place our feet directly in the imprint of His. One more thought to leave you with. Isaiah 35 speaks of the coming kingdom of our Lord and what it will be like. Consider our future highway:

**"And a highway will be there, a roadway, and it will be called the Highway of Holiness.**

**The unclean will not travel on it, but it will be for the one who walks that way,  
and fools do not wander on it.**

**No lion will be there, nor will any vicious beast go up on it;  
these will not be found there. But the redeemed will walk there,  
and the ransomed of the LORD will return, and come with joyful shouting to Zion,  
with everlasting joy upon their heads.**

**They will find gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away."**

**(Isaiah 35:8-10)**

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 17.**

Our meditation verse for today is:

**"The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold,  
But the LORD tests the hearts".  
Proverbs 17:3**

This is a test... this is only a test!! We have all seen and heard this warning flash across our television screens. Most of the time, we see this as a bit of a nuisance... don't they know I'm watching my favorite program? The "tests" that we should definitely take seriously are the ones that God allows in our lives, but they shouldn't take us by surprise. *"Beloved, do not be surprised at the FIERY ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your TESTING, as though some strange thing were happening to you;"* (1 Peter 4:12)

Did you notice... we will experience "fiery" trials. Why do these "tests" have to be so difficult, and why do the "fires" of our refining have to be so HOT? To refine is to purify... the hotter the flame, the purer the precious metal becomes. Could God be saying that WE are that precious to Him and He wants us to *"be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing"*? (James 1:4) I wish I could be as understanding as Job was when the fires in my life get too hot to bear. He lost everything... his children, his wealth, and even his health. He had running sores all over his body and was in unbearable pain, but he never lost hope. He declared in Job 23:10, "When He has tried me (tested me), I shall come forth as gold." He knew that God hadn't abandoned him and, in time, things would turn around. Guess what?! They did!!

The main point of this Proverb is that man may be able to refine silver and gold to bring it to its purest and most valuable form, but only God can test the heart of man... the purer the heart, the purer the life... the purer the life... the more glory for the Lord. Lord, search my heart today. If it needs further refining, bring on the test...

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 18.**

Our meditation verse for today is:

**"He who gives an answer before he hears,  
It is a folly and shame."  
Proverbs 18:13**

In so many of the proverbs, we are exhorted in regard to our mouths... the things we say. This verse focuses more on the wisdom of listening, rather than speaking. You've probably heard it said that we were given two ears and only one mouth, for a very good reason. The child of God who genuinely cares about others doesn't *feel* the need to "carry" the conversation. How often do we find ourselves "avoiding" the person who doesn't want to listen to anybody else talk... all they want is to talk about themselves!! I am always amazed at the people who are just the opposite. When you ask them how things are going for them... all they want to do is talk about you! Which one of these people makes you feel more special?

I really don't have the gift of counseling others, but one thing I have learned: Most of the time, when people are hurting... they need a compassionate and listening ear more than anything else. I marvel at the fact that many women have shared their "struggles" with me and thanked me for helping them when, in fact, all I did was listen and give one or two words of encouragement. This was the help that Job's pompous friends neglected to give him. Job cried out, "Oh, that I had one to hear me!" (Job 31:35)

Why is listening so important? It's a way of loving others and... all of us are capable! Listening says, "I care about you", "You are important to me", but simply "being quiet" isn't necessarily listening. Listening involves PAYING ATTENTION!! How often, we get frustrated because the person we're sharing with "pretends" to listen, but the blank look in their eyes tells us otherwise. Listening takes practice and concentration, but how powerful it is when we understand its value and learn to apply it. Just remember, you can win more friends with your ears than with your mouth.

I want to leave you with one more thing to think about. When you have your prayer time today, try listening for the Lord. We don't have to fill every second by speaking... those quiet moments sandwiched in between your praise and requests may be just the opportunity He is waiting for. Perhaps... until now... He hasn't been able to get a word in edge-wise! Ouch!

Blessings...

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 19.**

Our meditation verse for today is:

**"What is desirable in a man is his kindness,  
and it is better to be a poor man than a liar."  
Proverbs 19:22**

Let's focus on KINDNESS today. When I was young, there was a very popular television show called Bonanza. I'm sure many of you also remember this show. It was the story of a wealthy widower, Ben Cartwright and his three sons who lived on an impressive ranch called the Ponderosa. The sons were distinctly different in every way. The oldest, Adam, was dark, handsome, and very levelheaded... the youngest, Little Joe, was also handsome, but more charismatic than smart... the third brother, Hoss, was a large, scruffy, unattractive man with a heart of gold. Hoss was definitely my favorite. He could easily have been called a "gentle giant" or a "teddy bear". This proverb made me think of him because "kindness" was without a doubt his best quality. Many of my friends were in love with Little Joe... but my heart belonged to Hoss.

Even the world considers kindness "attractive" or "desirable" ... promoting "random acts of kindness" and praising those that choose to adopt this way of life. If the world sees value in these acts of kindness, how much more should the Church! For the believer, kindness is not only something we do, but something we are... we have the love of Jesus in our hearts, and His "love is KIND" (I Corinthians 13:4). When you consider a kind-hearted person... they will usually also display the qualities of gentleness and a willingness to forgive others. These qualities are also attributes of our Lord. (Matthew 11:29; Luke 23:24). Random of acts of kindness" are admirable, but only the **ultimate act of kindness** can save souls. *"But when the KINDNESS of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,..." (Titus 3:4-5)*

An old worship song keeps popping into my head. If you know it... sing it to the Lord! "It's your kindness that leads us to repentance O Lord, knowing that You love us... no matter what we do... makes us want to love You too..."

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 20.**

Our meditation verse for today is:

**"An inheritance gained hurriedly at the beginning,  
Will not be blessed in the end."  
Proverbs 20:21**

I immediately thought of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15. He just **couldn't wait** to receive his inheritance... so he convinced his father to give it to him early. Was that a good thing to do?

The question for all of us is, "Why are we always in such a hurry"? Our flesh is always looking ahead to something better. It starts when we're very young. We always want to reach the next big "marker" in our lives... our first bicycle... our first training bra.... our first boyfriend, date, kiss... getting engaged... getting married... having a family... buying a house... career... and, now what?

You reach a point in life where you've "been there, done that", and now you look back at that first training bra that you "convinced" your mother you needed to support a minimal amount of flesh and wish you could return there . Instead, you are now searching out the most heavy duty body shaper to hold in all the excess flesh you now carry around!! Why can't we just be satisfied with where God has us TODAY, and be content with what we have NOW?

The Apostle Paul proclaimed in Philippians 4:11, "... I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am." As believers, it's good to pray for and anticipate the Lord's return, but we can be in such a "hurry" to reach that next big thing (eternity with Christ), that we often fail to be thankful for each day He gives us and allow Him to use us to bring many other into His kingdom. We never want to be like those who sell everything, go sit on the top a mountain and just wait. That's just selfish.

Many of us are looking for an inheritance in this life from a parent/grandparent, etc. We can't count on how much we will receive and when we will receive it (especially with the dwindling economy). However, we have a wealthy Father in heaven... and we CAN look forward to an abundant inheritance. We are sealed with a promise! In others words, we're sporting a valuable engagement ring (a down payment) and can rest in the fact that our wedding day will come... in His time, not ours.

***"In Him, you also, after listening to the message of the truth, the gospel of your salvation - having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our INHERITANCE, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory."***

***(Ephesians 1:13-14)***

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 21**.

Our meditation verse for today is:

**"It is better to live in a corner of a roof,  
than in a house shared with a contentious woman."  
Proverbs 21:9 & 19**

Okay... it's confession time. As I was reading through this chapter, considering which verse to choose for our **meditation** verse, I read and quickly moved on when I came to verse 9. I thought, "surely there's a better verse to meditate on", and then I came face to face with verse 19. I was busted!

This exhortation **can't** be directed at any of us... or can it? First of all, let's consider what "contentious" means. A contentious person is quarrelsome, competitive and likes to have the upper hand. "Vexing", in verse 19, means wrathful; angry. The NASB labels this person a woman, but some other translations attribute this character to a wife. Whether we're married or not, this is definitely NOT the character we want to possess as a daughter of the King. James 4:1-3 says that the reason we quarrel stems from selfishness, envy, and wrong motives... it's a heart issue.

I believe it all started with Eve. After she disobeyed God, He proclaimed, "...*your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.*" (Genesis 3:16) Ladies, whether we recognize it or not... we've been fighting to have control ever since that day. The problem is, we're hurting ourselves by giving in to the flesh in this area. We have really good arguments for getting frustrated with others (especially our husbands). After all, they don't do things right and we often need to set them straight! For instance... they often fail to put on their seat belts and use their blinkers while driving... and that's dangerous... right? I could go on and on... but you get the picture...

Do you remember when your husband LOVED spending time with you? What has changed? If Jesus felt the need to exhort the church in Ephesus *to return to their first love... to go back and do what they did when they first met the Lord...* perhaps we need to "examine" our hearts toward our husbands and/or those we love. Have we become "quarrelsome" or "angry"? Am I moody and difficult to get along with? Do I complain about everything they do and make them feel as if they can't do anything right?

Let's face it, marriage doesn't mean we have to be joined at the hip... spending every waking minute together. BUT... if our husbands are camping out "in the corner of the roof" or "in a desert land" (i.e. the den, garage, etc.) instead of "wanting" to be with us, perhaps we're a BIG part of the problem?!

Blessings...

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 22.**

Our meditation verse for today is:

**"A good name is to be more desired than great riches,  
Favor is better than silver and gold."  
Proverbs 22:1**

What is a good name? There are names that we are given and names that are earned. When we were born, our parents lovingly chose a name that they felt was right and good for us at the time. Some of those names could be considered "good" and some... not so good. I'll always remember the name of one of my sister's classmates, because it was so awful. The poor guy's name was Welcome Thankyou Frawley... seriously!

This name had been given to him, not earned. Even the name "saint" is freely given to anyone who receives the free gift of eternal life... not a name that can be earned by good behavior or good deeds. *"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit."* (Titus 3:3) Our salvation was a free gift and so is the name "saint". I love the fact that I have another name waiting for me in Heaven. In Revelation 2:17, our Lord promises, *"...I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but the one who receives it."* Just like we give "pet" names to husbands and children in this life... one day Jesus will hand us that precious little white stone with our new name carefully inscribed on it. Unlike the name we now use that identifies us... our new name will be a secret only to be known by Him and us...  
SWEET!

Now... let's look at the name that CAN be earned. This proverb is not *really* speaking about our name in regard to what we are called. When this verse speaks of a "good name" it is referring to a person's REPUTATION. Whether a person's reputation is good or bad, it is something that they have acquired through a particular lifestyle or event that now identifies them. How often we have watched someone be raised to a place of authority or fame, that is, until some scandalous affair or misappropriation of funds was brought to light? That's why a "good name" is so valuable. It takes time and work to acquire it, but only one moment to destroy it.

Sadly, even well known pastors and evangelists have traveled that path... giving Christ and Christianity a "bad name". When we make choices that tarnish our reputation as a loving and compassionate believer, we drag our Savior's name right through the mud with us. We are told in this Proverb "a good name is to be more desired than great riches". That's quite a statement! How much more do we need to "desire" the respect of others... knowing that the behavior of the children directly reflects the Father.

Blessings!!

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 23**.

Our meditation verse for today is:

**"Do not let your heart envy sinners,  
But live in the fear of the LORD always."  
Proverbs 23:17**

Envy sinners? Is it possible for the righteous to EVER envy sinners? The answer is a firm YES!! If we are being completely honest, we must admit that we struggle with this very thing from time to time. What does the sinner possess that could even begin to compare with what the believer possesses? And yet... we still struggle! I believe we all struggle in two ways.

The first is the obvious. Often the sinner seems to have the better life in a material sense. They have the looks, the body, the fame, the house, car, etc. that makes our flesh rise up and longingly look upon from a distance and wonder what it must be like to live like that! I'm not a very materialistic person, but my "temptation" in regard to the prominent is this: I think it would be wonderful to have someone plan, shop and cook for me. They, of course, would be educated in nutrition and could feed me only the healthiest meals and snacks. My second area of weakness would have to be: I love linen stores!! If I had lots of money, I would probably spend most of it on towels, bedding, etc. Sound silly? I'm sure you could name some of your own.

The second way we tend to "envy" sinners has to do with this: they sin, they flaunt their immorality, and yet, they continue to prosper. On the other hand, even when the righteous keeps themselves pure... they seem to exist from one trial to another, barely getting by. Ever felt this way? If so, you're in good company. The Psalmist was perplexed when he proclaimed, *"Behold, these are the wicked; and always at ease, they have increased in wealth. Surely in vain I have kept myself pure, and washed my hands in innocence;" (Psalm 73:12-13)*. You can really see the Psalmist struggling UNTIL... (v.17) *"...I came into the sanctuary of God; The I perceived their end."* WOW! The sinner may prosper in this world, but we must remember that the unrepentant sinner will suffer for all eternity. They are like a beautiful flower that blooms so sweetly, causing its onlookers to marvel... but within days it withers and is tossed into the garbage. Perhaps, the righteous are late bloomers! Late, but once we bloom... our beauty and fragrance lasts forever!

The last part of our meditation verse says, *"But live in the fear of the LORD **always**"*. We know that the fear of the LORD is to revere and honor God for who He is and trusting that He knows best. Do I do this ALWAYS? I am fickle... I am so easily distracted. The next time that I start "dreaming" about a having a personal cook or enough money for a shopping spree at "Linens & Things", I will remember that I have a new body and a mansion waiting for me in heaven. Much better!

Blessings...

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 24.**

Our meditation verse for today is:

**"If you are slack in the day of distress,  
your strength is limited."  
Proverbs 24:10**

PUSH!! PUSH!! Those words ring true in the lives of many of us moms. There we were... in the delivery room of the hospital, completely exhausted (physically and emotionally) and wondering if this baby will EVER be born!! Just when you reached that point where you had nothing left to give, those who are "helping" have the nerve to tell you, "You can do it, just give me one more big push"! As impossible as it sounded at that time, you had one more big push in you... and you have a child to prove it! At the moment when things got really hard and the "distress" was unbelievable was NOT the time to abandon ship. This proverb tells us *"If you are slack (kicking back) in the day of distress (adversity), your strength is limited"*. My interpretation of this verse is, "When your house is on fire is not the best time to recline and watch T.V., lest your lungs fill with smoke and you become too weak to exit the building".

It's interesting to me that God likened the events of the last days to that of birth pangs, *"For nation will arise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will also be famines. These things are merely the beginning of **birth pangs.**" (Mark 13:8)* Doesn't this verse read like something out of a recent newspaper? Ladies... we're in that place again! As things get more and more difficult and our world is suffering the "distress" of birth pangs, we need to be girded up or we will faint under the pressure. How do we avoid becoming weak? The best way to be prepared for the trial is to become "gluttons" of righteousness and of the Word. Even though "gluttony" is sin (in a physical sense), we need to strengthen ourselves with an abundance of spiritual food. Gluttony means: excessive appetite. We need to become spiritual gluttons. Like newborns that cry loudly until they're fed, let us "... long for the pure milk of the word..." (I Peter 2:2)

If you're going through an incredible trial and you *feel* like you don't have even one more PUSH in you... don't give up! Call on the LORD today for HIS strength, *"He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power" (Isaiah 40:29)*. Also, like Moses needed Aaron and Hur to come alongside and hold up his weary arms in the midst of the battle (Exodus 17:8-12), you have many Hurs (or "hers") that would love to be there for you. All it takes is a phone call... or an email.

Blessings!

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 25.**

Our meditation verse for today is:

**"Like a bad tooth and an unsteady foot  
is confidence in a faithless man in time of trouble."  
Proverbs 25:19**

Have you ever gotten up from a comfortable sitting position, legs crossed and neatly tucked beneath the weight of your body... and OOPS!! It didn't take long to discover that your foot had fallen asleep and you were going down! My sister-in-law had this happen to her in a restaurant once. When she got up and started to walk, she discovered she couldn't! After several "attempts" to steady herself, she lost all control and ended up on the lap of a kindly gentleman in the next booth. Her foot "literally" let her down when she needed it the most!

So...what is this proverb talking about? You can't bite down on a bad tooth anymore than you can "confidently" rely upon an unsteady foot to hold you up. Both illustrate for us the "faithless" man; one who can't be trusted and relied upon when you really need him. So then... where **do** we place our trust and where **should** we place our trust? We have all been let down at one time or another by someone who "claimed" to be there for us and have our backs, so what went wrong? I am so thankful for the "faithful" people that the Lord has placed in my life (friends, family, church, etc.), which have been there for me in times of "trouble". The only problem is, even the well-meaning sincere person has physical limitations. On the other hand, have you ever considered how many times **we** have let the Lord down? We promise to be faithful to Him, but in hard times, our loyalty sometimes strays. II Timothy 2:13 says, *"If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself"*. That seems like an unfair trade... for Him!! Our faithfulness is fickle; His is forever (Psalm 119:90). In closing, consider this illustration:

On a river trip, two brothers fell out of their raft. Separated from their parents, they are stranded on a large rock in the middle of an extremely dangerous, rapidly flowing river. They needed to get to shore, to safety, but the angry waters were too powerful for them and they'd surely lose their footing on the slippery rocks if they attempted to walk across. Having bare feet, one of them notices a pair of their Dad's boots caught under the rock that supported them. The older of the two offers to put on the boots (much too large for him) and go for help... a dangerous attempt in itself. Just when they thought this was their only option, a deep and familiar voice is heard behind them. It's Dad!! He reaches down, puts on his boots, scoops them up in his arms and carries them to safety! The lesson: It's good to have others around us to rely upon, but when all is said and done... it's the sure-footed strength of our Heavenly Father that hold us up every time!

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 26.**

Our meditation verse for today is:

**"Like one who takes a dog by the ears,  
is he who passes by and meddles with strife not belonging to him."  
Proverbs 26:17**

Who let the dogs out? You may be able to pull on the ears of your loving and faithful pet, but with the nervous stray that wanders into your yard... not so much. "Taking a dog by the ears" is probably not the wisest decision, but if that EVER *did* happen... I see it happening somewhat like this: You see the dog, so you wander over to greet him. Not knowing that he's having a *really* bad day, you bend down... now you're at his level, looking right into his face. Since the proverb says "ears" (plural), you would probably reach out with *both* hands, take hold and start yanking away. If anyone was crazy enough to do this, on what part of your face do you think the angry canine what take out his revenge? You guessed it... that protrusion that sits in the middle of your face!

As I thought about how ridiculous this seems, I started to wonder if this is where the expressions, "being nose-y" or "sticking your nose where it doesn't belong" comes from? This proverb refers to the person lacking sense as a "meddler". The definition of "meddler" is one who interferes in the affairs of others. I Peter 4:15 gives this exhortation to the Believer, "*By no means let any of you suffer as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler*" Did you notice that "meddler" is lumped in with murderer, thief, and evildoer! This meddling must be serious stuff!

As I meditated on how serious it is to the Lord to "meddle" I started searching my own heart. Most of us probably aren't guilty of this... at least, most of the time. One area for concern is with our adult children. A Mom's heart sometimes has difficulty letting go. After all, you raised them for all of those years.... caring for them... watching out for them.... telling them what to do and not do, etc. Now, they've gone off and gotten married and they don't need you as much as they used to. That hurts!! DANGER!!

There's a fine line between helping and "meddling". The enemy will tell us that all we're doing is showing that we care, but the best way to love them is to let go and let them work out their own disputes (with the exception of abuse, of course). The title Mother-In-Law doesn't get a bad rap for nothing. Too many well-meaning Moms have been going around "yanking on ears". I know "staying out of it" is hard... but it's the right thing to do. Since this proverb is using a "pooch" to make a point, let's end with this. Remember, "You can't teach an old **DOG** new tricks", but "*The things impossible with men are possible with God.*" (Luke 18:27)

*Blessings!*

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 27.**

Our meditation verse for today is:

**"Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; A stranger and not your own lips"  
Proverbs 27:2**

There's nothing less attractive than a person who LOVES to talk about how wonderful they are! Most of us want to be appreciated for the good things that we do for other people, but "telling" them this just gets us nowhere! Let's face it! If you signed up to be a mother... you have accepted the role of the "thankless job". This is true, at least, when they are young... BUT, if we follow the guidelines of the Proverbs 31 woman, there's hope! Proverbs 31:28 says, "*Her children rise up and bless her; Her husband also, and he praises her*". So... next time you are tempted to lash out at your family saying, "I cook, I clean, I sacrifice all day long for you... and this is the thanks I get?", OR, "Have you forgotten how I endured 48 hours of labor to deliver you and you treat me like this?", this is a good time to remember the words of this proverb.

You can look at this verse in a different way as well. It's sad when those we love don't know how special and appreciated they really are, because we have failed to tell them. I often sit in church, listening to my husband teach the Word of God... often in awe of the way God uses him. He *never* brags about what an amazing job he did, but I was convicted by this verse. After the service is over, many "strangers" and "visitors" tell him how much the message blessed them... but not his own wife!! I'm often guilty of "thinking" good things about him and how God uses him, but I'm not very good about telling him. "Lord, give me words of praise and encouragement for my husband".

Have you ever known someone who won't full out sing their own praises, but they love to go "fishing"? They are master manipulators and know just how to draw compliments out of people. This is just as self-centered and WRONG as if they were boldly bragging! What do we really have that's worthy of another's praise? "*For who regards you as superior? And what do you have that you did not receive?*" (1 Corinthians 4:7) So... any gifts, talents, etc., that we have are only because God gave them to us. So attached to this proverb should be sign that reads, "NO FISHING ALLOWED".

As awesome as it to be recognized by others from time to time, we need to be really careful. As encouraging as a word of praise may be, our flesh can start to "crave" the attention and we no longer humbly receive it, but now we NEED it to validate ourselves. It's much safer to seek the approval of God instead of man. "*... for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.*" (John 12:43) When God gives you a "pat on the back", it often comes in the form of JOY!

Blessings..

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 28.**

Our meditation verse for today is:

**"He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper,  
but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion."  
Proverbs 28:13**

It's nothing new. It's been done since the beginning of creation. Eve sinned and quickly blamed the serpent; Adam sinned and didn't hesitate to blame Eve; and, even worse, Adam indirectly blamed God for the whole thing when he said, "It was that woman the **YOU** gave me"! Whether we "pass the buck" or sweep our sin under the carpet... no good thing will come of it. How does this happen? Why are we so quick to "cover up" our sin in some way rather than immediately *fessing up*? As children, we are taught that if we do something wrong, we will get punished for it. So... rather than admitting we did it, we lie, blame our unsuspecting younger sibling, or we do everything humanly possible to hide our indiscretion. Not only do we have the God-given "check" called a conscience, but we are afraid of getting caught and suffering for it.

At what point do you think Adam and Even knew they had done something wrong? Genesis 3 tells us that AFTER they ate the fruit, their eyes were opened and they knew they had blown it. How do we know this? They immediately recognized that they were naked and when "*they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD...*" (Genesis 3:8) Then, Adam told God that he hid himself because he was **afraid** because he was naked.

I love this proverb because it gives me hope when I blow it, but I have to make a choice. I can lie, shift blame, manipulate... OR ... I can just admit my wrongdoing and receive compassion. Un-confessed sin will eat you alive! David admits, "*When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long*" (Psalm 32:3), but he goes on to say, "*I acknowledged my sin to Thee, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD, and Thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin.'*" (Psalm 32:5)

Sometimes we neglect to confess our sins because we don't acknowledge them to ***be*** sin. Sometimes we excuse our "pet sins" by giving them less convicting names. Our lies we call "exaggeration", our temper we call "PMS", our gluttony we call "a healthy appetite", our procrastination we call "busyness", etc. Then again, we can always blame our husbands for the fact that we're not happy. It can't possibly be that I'm doing anything wrong! In a nutshell... let's search our hearts to make sure we're not playing the "blame game" or excusing our sin. Confession is a beautiful thing! We have a compassionate and loving Father waiting with open arms...ready to forgive. Remember, any questionable behavior you wouldn't do if Jesus was *physically* in the room, probably shouldn't be done!

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 29.**

Our meditation verse for today is:

**"A fool always loses his temper, but a wise man holds it back."  
Proverbs 29:11**

Have you ever found yourself saying, "He just makes me so mad" or "They really know just how to push my buttons"?! Probably, most of us have said these things at one time or another. The sad reality is... these statements are usually made AFTER our temper has already been unleashed and now we're searching for ways to "justify" our behavior. One thing I learned while searching the Scriptures on this subject is, temper "feeds" off of anger like a tick on a dog.

Picture a volcano. Inside of the mountain, the lava is heating up, the gasses are flowing and unless something interferes with the process... there's going to be an explosion!! Not only will there be an explosion, but **look out** because anyone who is found in its path is sure to suffer its wrath! Does this describe you or someone you love? Do you spend most of your days "walking on egg shells" for fear of upsetting the beast or are your loved ones "stepping lightly" around YOU?

We know that anger in itself is not always wrong IF it's righteous anger. Most anger we experience is self-centered; "I'm offended"... or ... "I didn't get my own way". Righteous anger motivates us to act in a way that rights a wrong; selfish anger *usually* leads to destructive behavior. When Paul was writing to the church in Ephesus, he exhorted them to "put on the new self" and to "be renewed in the spirit of your mind". Then he went on to say, "*Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity!*"! So... next time you find yourself getting irritated, REMEMBER, if I fuel the flames of the molten lava in my heart by "dwelling" on my own personal injustices... I'm basically swinging the door wide open for the enemy to walk right in and do his best. None of us want that to happen. Once the damage is done, it's **really** difficult to make things right again. Proverbs 18:19 says, "*A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city.*" Wow! If losing one's temper is NOT acceptable behavior for God's daughters, what would be the opposite? I think God is taking us back to I Peter 3:4 AGAIN!! It's that "gentle and quiet spirit" that pleases Him.

God Bless

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 30.**

Our meditation verse for today is:

**"This is the way of the adulteress woman; she eats and wipes your mouth, And says, 'I have done no wrong.'"  
Proverbs 30:20**

This proverb gives a vivid and terrifying portrayal of the heart of the adulterous woman. We can almost liken her to a wild animal who devours his prey, feasts on its flesh, and proudly stands on top of its carcass. She feels no remorse, but rather a certain pride over her conquest. What can we possibly learn from this immoral woman? Do we have ANYTHING in common with her... surely NOT! This was my first thought: "This woman disgusts me. I would NEVER do anything that even remotely resembles her behavior"! This is what I thought *until* I searched the Scriptures. James 4:4 says, "You **adulteresses**, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God".

That verse sure brings clarity, doesn't it? Before we immediately proclaim our innocence, perhaps a little soul searching is in order. In what way(s) do we align ourselves and make ourselves "a friend of the world"? I'm a nibbler, so I look at it like this. Say you were just placed on a strict diet and your doctor told you to COMPLETELY cut out sugar. You're doing really well UNTIL your birthday rolls around and there's a surprise party with an unbelievable cake (chocolate on chocolate)! You know you should not have sugar, but one little bite won't hurt... right? Okay, there's grace. Next, your friends "insist" you take what's left of the cake home with you... for your husband and kids. Well, on the way home in your car... you guessed it... your hand just keeps wandering over there for a finger full of frosting.. There's maybe a little more grace extended. Then, that night after everyone is in bed, the cake starts calling your name. No joke... you all know what I'm talking about! In the end, when you've successfully consumed the majority of this delectable confection, what do you say when your doctor questions you? "Well, doctor, it was my birthday, so I didn't do anything wrong!" The only problem is, now you're really sick as a result.

Of course, having birthday cake isn't the best illustration of "friendship with the world". It does, however, show the progression of how we can "find" ourselves engulfed in sin and fully justifying it. In what other ways do we "nibble" on the things of the world? How often do we "compromise" in the areas of T.V., movies, books, music, etc. A little nibble here, a little nibble there and pretty soon we find "nothing wrong" with watching an R rated movie where the language and nudity don't even bother us anymore. Think about the adulteress woman in this proverb. There was a time when she was young, innocent and probably NEVER imagined herself doing the things she now considers nothing more than an acceptable lifestyle. At some point in her life, she was persuaded to take a little "nibble", then a bigger bite, and now... without any indication of a guilty conscience, her ravenous appetite consumes the souls of men. Hmmm... Something to think about... Tomorrow ~ the Proverbs 31 woman!

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Today is: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Spend a couple of minutes in prayer and then read and meditate on **Proverbs 31**.

Our meditation verse for today is:

**"Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain,  
But a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised."  
Proverbs 31:30**

We've been told so many things about beauty that sometimes we get confused. Growing up, I remember how obsessed I was with beauty pageants. We used to hold competitions in the garage, where all the neighborhood kids would participate. Of course, the girls were all contestants and the boys were the judges. We would strut in our self-made costumes, sing and dance, and do whatever might win us the dime store tiara that only the winner would possess. Looking back, I am so embarrassed! So much emphasis was put on outward beauty in my formative years, but without the Lord, isn't that what the world teaches?

The need to be recognized and appreciated for physical beauty is difficult to overcome, but not impossible. I am so thankful for this proverb... especially as I watch the ravages of time increasingly being revealed with each new wrinkle, sag, and bulge. I'm convinced that God in His mercy dims our eyesight so we don't have to see how bad things really are. Beauty is "vain". Vain is to be empty or futile. Look at Hollywood. I don't care how beautiful and successful those women are, without the Lord they are EMPTY! We may look at what we observe to be "near perfection", but there is no such thing. Imagine the pressure that these women are under on a regular basis to "maintain" their looks!

I must admit, I don't like the things that the passing years are doing to me, but I can rest in the knowledge that my husband still thinks I'm beautiful AND God does too! *"You are altogether beautiful, my darling, and there is no blemish in you."* (Song of Solomon 4:7) Another thing we can learn from this proverb is "charm is deceitful"! Charm can mislead... give an inaccurate picture of what is really going on in the heart of a person. Can it be a mask? Can it be that some of the most "charming" women in the world are really just the opposite? The next time we are drawn in by a successful woman who "charms" her way into everyone's hearts, perhaps we need to see past the exterior and pray for her.

So... true beauty (inner beauty), is found in the woman that "fears the LORD". It's not a competition. We can ALL be winners if we keep seeking His face, keep worshiping and serving Him, and keep our hearts pure before Him. Guess what?! Just like my childhood fantasy was to win that worthless crown, we will ALL be given a crown someday... a valuable one... an imperishable one. What's more beautiful than that? *"... in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to ALL who have loved His appearing."* (II Timothy 4:8)

Take a moment and write out your thoughts in regard to today's meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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