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\*Links with an asterisk denotes an affiliate link where NETworkers TEC will receive a small commission if products are purchased through these links.

Regardless, we only recommend resources that we believe will be beneficial for equipping the body of Christ.

# INTRODUCTION

## Purpose



A lot of people like the idea of reading the Bible, but don't actually get around to reading it. Many people casually read the Bible, but they do not intimately know what the Bible says, means, or how it applies to their life. There are a lot of Bible studies about the Bible, but few dig in to read, study, memorize, and meditate on the text within.

**The purpose of this guide to the Proverbs is to give you nine unique challenges that will open your eyes to the truths of God's Word in various ways.**

Through reading, rereading, writing, studying, hearing, meditating, memorizing, and praying God's Word, you will get to know the Word of God and the God of the Word.

## Starter Supplies

### Paper Bible

- If you are buying a Bible for the first time you might consider a New King James or English Standard Version Bible. You may also want to get one that is a study Bible as it will be used for some of the challenges. Here is one recommendation. ESV Study Bible - [\\*https://graceandtruthbooks.com/product/esv-study-bible/?gtb=networkerstec](https://graceandtruthbooks.com/product/esv-study-bible/?gtb=networkerstec)

**Blue Letter Bible App** or website (<https://www.blueletterbible.org/>)

### Three-Ring Binder, Loose-Leaf Notebook Paper, and 4 Divider Tabs

- Divide the binder into four sections. Title section 1 "Insights", section 2 "Questions and Answers", section 3 "Proverbs Manuscript", and section 4 "Index".
- Another option is to purchase a journaling Bible with just the book of Proverbs. There is space alongside the text for you to write your own notes. [\\*https://graceandtruthbooks.com/product/9781433597190-proverbs-esv-scripture-journal-spiral-bound-edition/?gtb=networkerstec](https://graceandtruthbooks.com/product/9781433597190-proverbs-esv-scripture-journal-spiral-bound-edition/?gtb=networkerstec)

### Pen/Pencil and Highlighter

**Other tools are listed under specific challenges**

# Introduction

## **NINE CHALLENGES - ONE YEAR**

This guide is divided into nine challenges that you can start at any time. You may want to print this guide and 3-hole punch it to put in the front of your binder. There is a suggested time schedule for each challenge which will take you through a year in the Proverbs. Some of the challenges will overlap with other challenges. Before you begin, read through the challenge list. Based on your interest there may be ones that you want to focus on first or spend a longer time doing than the suggestion order or time. As you study and learn, record your insights, questions, and answers in your binder.

## **GOAL: FAITHFULNESS - NOT PERFECTION**

The goal of this study is faithfulness and fellowshiping with God through His Word. Sometimes it means giving up things in order to prioritize fellowship with God and other times it is seeking God for the discipline to do it and not get distracted with lesser things. Don't focus on keeping up with a calendar to merely check off boxes. Focus on being faithful to spend time with God through His Word. If you get "off course", don't give up; pick up where you left off and keep going.

## **BE INTENTIONAL**

Keeping your mind on Christ may look different for different days or weeks of your life. One day it may mean having a long period of time to dig deep and read commentaries or browse Bible study tools. Another day it might mean only having time to read half a chapter in the morning and half at night. Or maybe it's intentionally meditating or praying on a Scripture you memorized. There are many ways to focus your attention on God's Word in your life. Be looking for ways that you can intentionally focus on God and His Word.

## **HELPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS -**

For each challenge, there is a corresponding "Helps and Recommendation" section in Section 3 of this guide. Be sure to read this before starting the challenge. There you will find tips and resources for doing that challenge including websites for tools and links to learn more. While many free online resources are given, you may want to invest in some of the suggested hard copy resources instead to add to your library. Any time you have questions or discover answers to those questions or have insights, write them down in the corresponding section in your binder.

## **GO FORTH**

The skills you learn from this guide will be tools in your toolbox for you to continue to study God's Word going forward. After completing this challenge, choose another book or topic and start again!

# CHALLENGE LIST

## **Challenge A** (Month One - Twelve)

Every time that you read the book of Proverbs, copy three verses chronologically (e.g. Proverbs 1:1-3, 4-6, 7-9) in Section 3 of your notebook so that at the end you will have a complete handwritten copy of the book.

## **Challenge B** (Month One)

Read one chapter a day. Read the whole chapter in one sitting or divide the chapter in half and read half of it in the morning and half in the evening. Write down any insights you get in Section 1 of your binder. Record any questions that you have from your reading in Section 2 of your binder. Leave enough space between each question so that you can write in the answer later.

## **Challenge C** (Month Two)

Read one-two chapters a day again, either in one setting or dividing it in half for a morning and evening portion. Use a study Bible with footnotes and read the footnotes to gain a greater understanding of the text. If you discover any answers to the questions that you wrote down in Challenge B, write those under the appropriate question in Section 2 of your binder. Continue writing any insights in Section 1. Make a list of one verse from each chapter that stands out to you for you to memorize and meditate on in upcoming challenges. If the verse is part of a passage, note the whole passage so you can consider the verse in context.

## **Challenge D** (Month Three - Twelve)

Memorize the meditation verses that you chose in Challenge C.

## **Challenge E** (Month Three-Five)

Meditate on the verses picked out in Challenge C. Listen to the whole book of Proverbs throughout this time.

## **Challenge F** (Month Six - Eight)

Read a commentary on the book of Proverbs. Continue meditating on your meditation verses.

## **Challenge G** (Month Nine)

Read through the book of Proverbs again using a different Bible translation. Pray through the Proverbs as you read.

## **Challenge H** (Month Ten - Eleven)

Create an index of subjects for the book of Proverbs. Read the chapter and then record the addresses by subjects as a reference.

## **Challenge I** (Month Twelve)

Create verse cards from significant Proverbs. Consider who you could share these verses with to encourage them. Read through the book of Proverbs out loud. Seek answers to any remaining questions.



# HELPS AND RESOURCES

## Challenge A

*A note on copying the Bible*

The purpose of this challenge is to get a feel of what it was like to be an Old Testament scribe. In order to preserve the text of the Bible, scribes had to carefully copy the Bible by hand to preserve the text over time. There were certain requirements for how the text was copied which showed respect for God and His Word, as well as specific steps that were taken to ensure the accuracy of the manuscript (handwritten copy). For example if a manuscript had more than three mistakes it had to be thrown out and the work begun again.

To learn more about how the scribes copied the Old Testament check out these videos from the Josh McDowell Ministry.

- **Old Testament: Scribes' Commitment | Is The Bible Reliable?** - <https://youtu.be/Nsd8eBRiLzI?si=Wf5PwCVbHDsYH9TN>
- **Old Testament: Committed to Detail | Is The Bible Reliable?** - <https://youtu.be/SiPGwqCQdq0?si=e0jYoMdxN9YKW-9M>

## Challenge B

*A note on reading the Bible*

The purpose of this challenge is to get you into the habit of reading God's Word daily. Some people like to do it first thing in the morning. Others like to do it at night. Some people do it over a lunch break. You can also break up the reading into two different times during the day, so that your reading sections are more "bite-size", and to have more time to purposefully be in God's Word. Some people connect reading the Bible with something else they already do to help them to remember to do it. For example, before you turn on your favorite show, read your Bible portion or put your Bible on the dinner table so that you end your dinner time with reading. You could also set an alarm as a reminder.

# Challenge C

## *A note on study Bibles*

Using a study Bible can be useful to learn more information about the text. It is smaller than a full Bible commentary but still provides adequate explanations for various verses/passages to help you understand God's Word. If you don't already have a study Bible here are some suggestions that you could use.

- **ESV Study Bible** - \*<https://graceandtruthbooks.com/product/esv-study-bible/?gtb=networkerstec>
- **ESV Notes Online/App** - <https://www.blueletterbible.org/esv-study-bible/>
- **The Study Bible App from John MacArthur** - <https://www.studybible.org/>
- **The Geneva Bible** - <https://www.blueletterbible.org/geneva-study-bible/>

# Challenge D

## *A note on memorizing Scripture*

Memorizing is a skill; the more you do it, the better you get. It's like exercising a muscle. As you work on the skill of memorizing, you learn verses quicker and retain the verses longer. Don't forget to continue to review the verses you have learned throughout the year. Memorizing will also aid you in meditating because it will allow you to have the verse always in your mind for you to think about whenever you want and where ever you are. The following are memory verse tips and apps.

- **Scripture Memory Tips Video** - <https://youtu.be/BpilXTLsgMA?si=DP9BfqUH4vQve2kd>
- **Scripture Memory Tips** - <http://www.networkerstec.com/scripture-memory.html>
- **Verse Locker** - <https://scripturememory.com/verselocker/home/index.php>
- **MemVerse** - <https://www.memverse.com/>
- **Bible Memory** - <https://biblememory.com/>

# Challenge E

## *A note on meditating on Scripture*

Psalm 1:1-2 says “Blessed is the man ... [whose] delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.” (ESV) When Scripture exhorts us to meditate on God’s Word it is not talking about closing our eyes to empty our mind. When Scripture tell us to meditate, God is wanting us to concentrate on what His Word says, what it means, and how it applies to our lives.

Do you ever mull a problem over in your mind? Do you think about what someone said to you or about a situation (whether good or bad) over and over? Do you find yourself thinking about your favorite TV show and wondering what’s going to happen in the next episode? Do you go about your day humming a song? These are all forms of meditating. Biblical meditation is purposefully filling your mind to think God’s thoughts after Him.

Here are some tips you can use to help you meditate on God’s Word using Proverbs 1:7 as an example: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (ESV)

### **1. Ask Questions**

Some questions that you ask might be answered within the verse or passage of Scripture the verse is found in, but other questions might require extra research. You could write out questions for your meditation verse first and then look for and record the answers. Common questions might include...

(General Questions)

- Who is the author of this verse?
- Who are the recipients and how does that affect the understanding of this verse?
- When was this verse written (Old Testament, New Testament, period of the divided kingdom, during Jesus’ life on earth, etc.)?
- What is the genre for this verse (history, poetry, prophecy, etc.)?

(Specific to Proverbs 1:7)

- What does the fear of God bring?
- What do fools care about?
- How does the fear of the Lord bring about knowledge?
- If the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, what comes afterwards?
- What does this verse teach me about God?
- What does this verse teach me about mankind?
- How does this verse teach me or correct me?
- How can I apply this verse to my life?

# Challenge E cont.

## *A note on meditating on Scripture*

### 2. Look Up Words

Highlight key words in the verse and then look up these words in a Bible dictionary or concordance to gain a fuller understanding of the text. Words for consideration from Proverbs 1:7 might be... Fear, beginning, knowledge, fools, despise, wisdom, and instruction. Below are online resources. For a hard bound book for this section consider “The New Strong’s Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible” -

\*<https://graceandtruthbooks.com/product/9781418541682-the-new-strongs-expanded-exhaustive-concordance-of-the-bible/?gtb=networkerstec>

For help on using a book concordance, check out these videos:

- *How to Use a Strong's Concordance* – Uploaded by CedarvilleLIB - <https://youtu.be/vQGZ9He9s8A?si=vbhDV2rJ9csTsWgo>
- *How to Use Strong's Concordance* – Uploaded by Jonathan Wilkins - <https://youtu.be/djkVSxEd7us?si=HiHUNfz02IBAdKKs>

### DICTIONARY

This is a link for free Bible dictionaries -

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/Dictionary/viewEntries.cfm>

### CONCORDANCE

A concordance helps you to know what Hebrew or Greek word was originally used in the text, what that word means, and how it was translated in English. Studying the Bible in its original language helps to deepen our understanding of the Bible and gain a fuller perception of what was originally written and intended, as some words or thoughts cannot be precisely translated into English or other languages.

To learn more about Bible translation check out these articles...

- <https://412teens.org/qna/how-did-we-get-different-Bible-translations.php>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/translation-inspiration.html>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/Greek-Hebrew-Bible.html>



## Challenge E cont.

### *A note on meditating on Scripture*

Here are some instructions on using an online concordance. If you want to learn more about the tools in BLB you can watch these tutorial videos - <https://www.blueletterbible.org/help/videoHelps.cfm>.

I. Go to [www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org).

II. Type in Proverbs 1:7 in the box underneath the “SEARCH THE BIBLE” title and select your preferred Bible translation by clicking on the down arrow to the right of the word “KJV”. Then click on the green magnifying glass.

III. Click on the word “TOOLS” to the left of “Pro 1:7.”

IV. A box with six colored tabs will pop up and the first one will be blue with the word “INTERLINEAR” as the heading.

Scroll down until you see the English word “fear”. To the right of that word, you will see: “H3374”. Click on this. This is called the Strong's number. Every Hebrew and Greek word has a number so the number for the Hebrew word for “fear” in Proverbs 1:7 is 3374.

V. This page is where you can read the various definitions and usages for the word “yir'â” which is translated “FEAR” in Proverbs 1:7.

- At the very top of the page you will see how the Hebrew word for FEAR is spelled in English - yir'â. Beneath that you can see how the word is written in Hebrew.
- *Pronunciation* - If you click on the speaker in the Pronunciation box you can hear how the word is pronounced.
- *KJV Translation Count* - The box that says “KJV Translation Count” tells how the Hebrew word “yir'â” is translated into English and how many times it is translated as that word in the KJV.
- *Outline of Biblical Usage* - The Outline of Biblical Usage section is explaining what the word means based on its various usages in the Bible.
- *Strong's Definitions* - The simple definition of the word is found in the box that says “Strong's Definitions.” The style of these definitions are like a definition in a dictionary.

# Challenge E cont.

## *A note on meditating on Scripture*

- *Thayer's Greek Lexicon* - If you want to know more about the definition of the word and which one applies to Proverbs 1:7, look at the “Thayer's Greek Lexicon” section and click on the words to the right of the title labeled “Jump to Scripture Index”. Then click on “1:7” under the book of Proverbs and it will take you to the paragraph talking about Proverbs 1:7. Most of the time you have to scroll up to see which usage is being referred to. The usage headers are in bold (and they usually match the ones listed in the OUTLINE OF BIBLICAL USAGE section).
- *Concordance Results* - The last aspect of this page is that it will tell you all the Old Testament verses that also have the Hebrew word *yir'â* in it. Note that the word might be translated in English slightly different because the Hebrew word is not always translated as FEAR in English but the Hebrew word *yir'â* is still being used in these verses. For example, in Ezekiel 1:18 the word *yir'â* is translated “awesome” (ESV) or “dreadful” (KJV) but most occurrences of this word in the Old Testament is translated as “fear”.

### **3. Look up cross-references**

Cross-references are other verses in the Bible that contain the same key words or theme for your selected verse. Cross-references help to provide more understanding to a Biblical theme to make sure that we are understanding Scripture in context. [Study Bibles](#) often have cross-references noted throughout the verses of the Bible and many online tools do as well. To see how Blue Letter Bible displays cross-references click this video -

<https://youtu.be/H35SH-WEecg?si=rvtJuvqe9L3PaMLs>

**4. Write the verse on a notecard** and put it somewhere where it can be seen often.

**5. Repeat it aloud, at least once a day.** Emphasize different words each time you say the verse.

**6. Set an alarm** or get in the habit of saying it at a certain time of day (like before you eat).

**7. Intentionally think about it before you go to bed.**

**8. Read it in a different Bible translation** to help you gain a new perspective on the verse. Recommended translations include Legacy Standard Bible, New King James, English Standard Bible, New International Version, and the Amplified Bible. Think about how various words used in the translations help you to understand the meaning of the verse.

# Challenge E cont.

## *A note on meditating on Scripture*

### 9. Truth vs. Lies

After reading your meditation verse or passage think about the truth that it is communicating, and then think about lies from Satan or lies of the world that might be used against it. Write down the verse, the lies, and the truth that combats/destroys these lies in Section 1 of your binder. This is training your mind to recognize lies and resist them with the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:16-17).

Example:

Proverbs 1:7 - “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (ESV)

#### Lies

- I don't need God's Word to be wise.
- Secular education is worth more or more important than God's Word or spiritual teaching.
- The Bible is outdated.
- I should consider what \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank with a social media influencer, political commentator, or teacher) says about something without or before considering God's Word.
- I don't need to listen to godly counsel because I know what is best for me.

#### Truth based on Proverbs 1:7

- True knowledge begins with God, not man.
- The Bible is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness to equip me for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- Regularly reading the Bible is important.
- It is foolish to despise wisdom and instruction.
- I shouldn't trust in myself but trust in God.
- I should start my course with prayer and seeking guidance from God.
- The wisdom of God far outweighs the “wisdom” of man.
- God is the ultimate source of wisdom. He is all-knowing and all-wise.
- God puts godly counsel in my life for my benefit.

# Challenge E cont.

## *A note on listening to the Bible*

Listening to the Bible is another way to immerse yourself in the text of Scripture. You can do a focused listening time where you are listening to the Scripture while having the text in front of you. Or have it playing in the background while driving, working on the house, exercising. etc. Sometimes people say that they “don’t have time” for God’s Word but the truth might be that they don’t prioritize it. During this challenge, instead of listening to podcasts, music, or the radio listen to the book of Proverbs. Sometimes we use the things we listen to as a means of escape. Instead redeem the time by bathing yourself in God’s Word. We take in information even when we don’t realize it. For example, do you ever find yourself humming a song or discovering you’ve learned one without even trying? Your brain has processed what it heard even though you weren’t trying to learn it. What if we did that with Scripture? Even passively listening to Scripture is a way to meditate and take in God’s truth day and night.

- **The Daily Bible Podcast**
- **Faith comes by Hearing** - <https://www.faithcomesbyhearing.com/audio-bible-resources>
- **Blue Letter Bible** - [https://www.blueletterbible.org/audio\\_video/popPlayer.cfm?type=kjv\\_n&b=20&c=1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/audio_video/popPlayer.cfm?type=kjv_n&b=20&c=1)

# Challenge F

## *A note on commentaries*

A Bible commentary can be useful in understanding what a Bible text says, to understand certain customs of the day, or to know what certain words mean in their original language. You want to read commentaries that explain passages in context with the rest of Scripture and that draw conclusions OUT OF the text instead of putting their own ideas INTO the text.

You can buy paper commentaries, read ones online, or listen or watch sermons specific to certain Bible passages. Here are some suggestions...

- **Matthew Henry** - Free online <https://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/mhc/> or paper version \*<https://graceandtruthbooks.com/product/matthew-henrys-commentary-on-the-whole-bible/?gtb=networkerstec>
- **The Study Bible App from John MacArthur** - <https://www.studybible.org/>
- **J. Vernon McGee** - <https://www.ttb.org/programs/the-5-year-study>
- **Robert Jamieson, A.R. Fausset & David Brown** - <https://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/jfb/>

# Challenge G

## *A note on prayer*

Praying Scripture is a powerful tool in your prayer life. It is almost like walking on holy ground when talking to God (Exodus 3:5) because the Holy Bible is God's Word (2 Timothy 3:16) and He is the Word (John 1:1). When you pray Scripture with the correct understanding and application you have a sure promise, comfort, sword, and word. Below are some questions you can ask yourself to help you pray based on Scripture using 3-Rs...

### **Revere**

- How can you praise God based on this verse?
- What can you thank God for?
- What character of God is reflected in this verse?
- How does this verse leave you in awe of God?

### **Repent**

- Based on this verse, what is God convicting you to confess and repent of?

### **Request**

- What do you need to trust God with in your life based on this verses?
- Who has a need you can lift up in prayer that this verse reminds you of?

*(Generalized prayer based off of Proverbs 1:1-7)*

Dear Lord, I praise you as the giver of wisdom. I confess that there are times when I look to myself for understanding or look to the world around me. Please forgive me. Keep me ever aware that the fear of you is the beginning of knowledge. Please do not allow me to be foolish and despise wisdom. Amen.

# Challenge H

## *A note on the index*

Write your index in Section 4 of your binder, or you may want to do this on a computer as it may be easier to record and organize your index as you go. One reason for doing this is to deepen your familiarity with the book of Proverbs so that you know where to look for a specific subject. A sample index might look like this...

### **Fools**

1:7, 13:19, 14:9

### **Trust**

3:5

### **Wisdom**

1:7, 2:6

### **Woman**

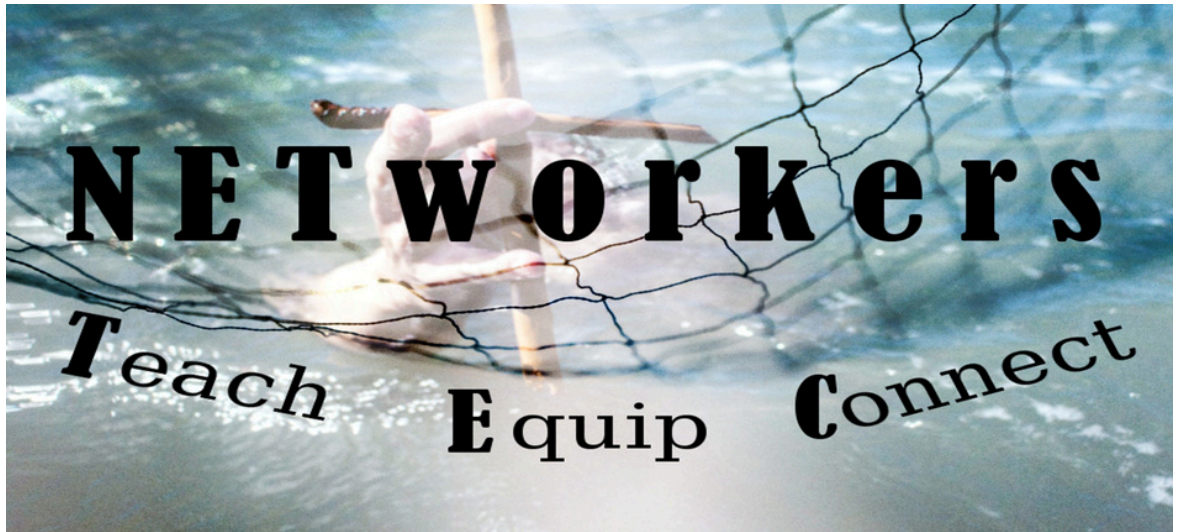
5 (adulteress), 14:1, 31:10-31

# Challenge I

## *A note on final questions*

To help you answer any remaining questions that you have refer back to the various study tools already mentioned or visit [gotquestions.org](http://gotquestions.org).





*Providing the body of Christ with a network of TRUTH tools to assist them in their Biblical ministry to the next generation.*

[www.networkerstec.com](http://www.networkerstec.com)



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[www.networkerstec.com/proverbs.html](http://www.networkerstec.com/proverbs.html)