

January 1

***“For acquiring a disciplined and prudent life,
doing what is right and just and fair” - 1:3.***

A good and productive life doesn't just happen, it takes planning, hard work and God's grace. **What are you goals this year to improve your quality of life and to be more disciplined?** Set goals in as many areas as possible - financial, health, spiritual, personal development and family. Read [Joshua 24:13-14](#) and make it your theme this year as you take steps to grow and be more faithful.

January 2

***“For the Lord gives wisdom,
and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding” - 2:6.***

Wisdom is a gift from God. You cannot earn it but you can position yourself to receive it. What's more, God is always communicating. **Are you listening for Him? Do you expect answers to your problems and questions?** Solomon asked for wisdom in [1 Kings 3:5-15](#) and God gave it to him. **Why don't you ask, too?**

January 3

***“By wisdom the Lord laid the earth's foundations,
by understanding he set the heavens in place” - 3:19.***

Wisdom enables you to do creative things in fresh ways. Therefore wisdom is not what you know but rather what you do with what you know. **What are you doing with your wisdom? What evidence is there that you have some? Where in your life do you need more?** Go to [1 Samuel 25](#) and read the fascinating account of wisdom in action by a woman named Abigail.

January 4

***“When I was a boy in my father's house, still tender,
and an only child of my mother, he taught me” - 4:3-4.***

It is never too early to teach a child about the Lord and His ways. **What are you doing to prepare the next generation to serve the Lord? What about your own children, nieces and nephews? What more can you do to instruct them or the children in your church?** Read what Jesus said about little children in [Matthew 19:14](#).

January 5

***“He will die for lack of discipline,
led astray by his own great folly” - 5:23.***

You pay a price if you lack of discipline. Usually the loss is not from what you do but rather from what you don't do. **What has your lack of discipline cost you in lost opportunities? What can you begin doing today that next year by this time you will have done something you always wanted to do?** Read the story of David and Bathsheba in [2 Samuel 11](#), noticing the discipline of Uriah her husband and the lack of discipline on the part of King David.

January 6

*“My son, keep your father’s commands
and do not forsake your mother’s teaching” - 6:20.*

Parents need to teach, children need to be taught. **What were your parents' favorite sayings or warnings? What are yours for your children? Are you living in a consistent manner with what you were taught or are teaching?** Whether a parent or child, you can read [Colossians 3:20-21](#) and [Deuteronomy 11:19](#) to review your duties and responsibilities toward one another.

January 7

*“My son, keep my words
and store up my commands within you” - 7:1.*

No matter your circumstances, God expects you to keep His commands. If money is tight, you must still be generous. If others are cheating, you must maintain your integrity. If others are mean-spirited, you are to be kind. **What are you doing to store (and then obey) the commands of God in your life?** As a good example of this, consider what Daniel went through yet how he stayed true to the Lord in [Daniel 1:3-8](#).

January 8

*“Blessed is the man who listens to me [wisdom],
watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway” - 8:34.*

Listening, watching and waiting are not passive postures. **What are you doing to access wisdom? What are you reading, studying or watching? Where are you going? With whom do you spend time?** If you seek wisdom, you will be rewarded! Read Paul's charge to Timothy in [2 Timothy 2:14-26](#) and notice the effort it takes to grow in wisdom and effectiveness. **Are you ready to pay the price?**

January 9

*“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,
and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” - 9:10.*

Never make a decision based on what's best for you, but rather on what is God's best for you. That requires that you know God, which can only happen as you know and apply His word. David wrote and sang about the power of the Word in your life in [Psalm 18:30-36](#). **Are you applying God's word effectively in your life, work, family and ministry?**

January 10

*“Blessings crown the head of the righteous,
but violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked” - 10:6.*

You can have confidence in God's ability to bless and protect you. Consider Rahab, who hid Joshua's spies and was spared when Israel attacked her city. What's more, Rahab ended up in Jesus' family tree. That is a great example of how God can protect and bless you! **Are you trusting in Him or given in to unwarranted fears?** To read more about Rahab, see [Joshua 2](#), [Joshua 6:25](#), and [Matthew 1:5](#).

January 11

*“When pride comes, then comes disgrace,
but with humility comes wisdom” - 11:2.*

When you are dependent on God and others, you open yourself to answers and help that are beyond your abilities and experience. When you stubbornly say, "I can handle this" when you can't, you set yourself up for failure and disgrace. **Are you disguising pride as something else, like not wanting to bother anyone else with your problems?** To see the power of humility, read what Nineveh did in response to Jonah's preaching in [Jonah 3](#). They humbled themselves and God spared their lives!

January 12

*“A man is praised according to his wisdom,
but men with warped minds are despised” - 12:8.*

In order to have and disseminate wisdom, you must have correct thinking and that requires confronting your incorrect thinking. **What are you doing to bring about the change of thinking necessary for growth and wisdom in your life, work and relationships?** Jesus said in [Matthew 22:36-38](#) that you are to love God with all your mind. **Do you, or is your thought life a mess?**

January 13

*“He who scorns instruction will pay for it,
but he who respects a command is rewarded” - 13:13.*

Learning is a way of life, not an event. You never outgrow your need to be taught, learn and then teach. **Do you have a teachable spirit? Do you apply what you learn? Do you look for opportunities to teach others, which in and of itself helps you to grow and learn?** Read [Hebrews 5:11-14](#) to see what the teaching expectations are for you as a mature believer.

January 14

*“The house of the wicked will be destroyed,
but the tent of the upright will flourish” - 14:11.*

Your actions and decisions have implications not only for you, but also for those closest to you. **Are you creating an environment that God can bless and where people can grow in your home, work or ministry?** Joshua made a decision that his household would serve the Lord in [Joshua 24:14-15](#) and the Philippian jailer did the same in [Acts 16:29:34](#). Their commitment carried over to those around them and yours should, too!

January 15

*“A gentle answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger” - 15:1.*

Jesus said your heart speaks through your mouth. Thus you communicate not only with your words, but also through your tone, volume, inflection, facial expressions and body language. **If you receive angry or annoying responses more often than not, are you in any way the source of the problem?** You can read what Jesus said in [Luke 6:45](#) and then what Paul wrote about the matter in [Ephesians 4:29-32](#).

January 16

*“Better to be lowly in spirit and among the oppressed
than to share plunder with the proud” - 16:19.*

Pride has the attitude, "I deserve better than this! I will take matters into my own hands." When you operate out of pride, there can be no good results or long-term benefits. Better to do without than gain through pride, which God hates. Read [Psalm 31:23](#) and [Psalm 40:4](#), which also speak to the issue of pride.

January 17

“He whose tongue is deceitful falls into trouble” - 17:20.

You don't have to lie to deceive, you just have to stay silent or not tell the whole truth. Yet any time you give an impression that you feel one thing while you actually believe another, you are being deceptive. Today's verse promises trouble any time you engage in

verbal misdirection. You can read where deception began in [Genesis 3:13](#) and then see a good example of it when Judas kissed Jesus while betraying Him in [Luke 22:47-48](#).

January 18

*“He who answers before listening -
that is his folly and his shame” - 18:13.*

It is difficult to listen and not be formulating your response while someone is still talking. What's more, you can hear the words but still not understand the full meaning of what someone says. And how well you hear others is an indication of how well you hear the Lord! Look at what Jesus had to say about how critical good listening skills are in [Mark 4:23-25](#) and then consider what can you do to improve your listening skills.

January 19

*“A foolish son is his father’s ruin and a quarrelsome wife
is like a constant dripping.” - 19:13.*

Family can be a source of great joy or pain. Every family member should strive to apply Christian behavior first and foremost at home, and see that there is an abundance of service, encouragement, prayer and most of all, love. **Are your attitudes and behavior a blessing to your family?** Read Paul's behavior guide for all family members in [Colossians 3:18-21](#) and then fulfill your duty to your family with excellence and enthusiasm.

January 20

*“It is a trap for a man to dedicate something rashly
and only later to consider his vows” - 20:25.*

It is easy to build a case that something is from the Lord because you want it to be. You can think, "**Maybe** the Lord wants me to do this ministry" or "**Perhaps** God is leading me to take that job." God doesn't deal in "maybes." He is direct and specific. **Where have you set your course only to find it to be a dead end?** Read how Joshua did this very thing in [Joshua 9:1-18](#) and see how his hastiness and assumptions caused Israel trouble.

January 21

*“The horse is made ready for the day of battle,
but victory rests with the Lord” - 21:31.*

You need to lay your plans and make preparations. Just remember that when you "fight," the outcome is in God's hands. Maturity is not waiting for God to do what only you can do, but also not trying to do what only God can do. **Are you waiting on God to do what**

He is waiting on you to do?The apostles fishing all night in [John 21:1-6](#) is a good example of today's verse playing out in real life.

January 22

*“Have I not written thirty sayings for you,
sayings of counsel and knowledge,
teaching you true and reliable words,
so that you can give sound answers to him who sent you” - 22:20-21.*

There is power in writing and the content can be read and reviewed again and again, making it a great teaching/learning tool. **Is there writing or some other creative expression in you that you are avoiding? What are you afraid of? How can you get started or improve?** Read the Lord's direction to the prophet in [Habakkuk 2:2-4](#) and see if it applies to you as well.

January 23

*“Do not move an ancient boundary stone
or encroach on the fields of the fatherless,
for their Defender is strong;
he will take up their case against you” - 23:10-11.*

God watches out for the weak and poor. Your job is not to contribute to their problems or to ignore their plight. **What are you doing for the poor and needy? How can you do more?** Be reminded of your duties as a "religious" person by reading [James 1:27](#).

January 24

*“Know also that wisdom is sweet to your soul;
if you find it, there is a future hope for you,
and your hope will not be cut off” - 24:14.*

If you want to be prepared for your future, then do all you can to obtain wisdom today! And if you want to reap good things in your future, then you must sow good things today. **What are you doing to prepare for your future? Are you saving, learning, doing good deeds and growing in your ability to handle more?** Jesus referred to this process of preparing for the future today when He spoke the words recorded in [Matthew 6:20-22](#).

January 25

*“These are the proverbs of Solomon,
copied by the men of Hezekiah king of Judah” - 25:1.*

For God's work to be done, He must use people and that includes you. It is good to be humble, but you can still talk about who you are and what you can do. **Are you willing for God to use your name and face, like Solomon, to accomplish His purposes? Can you surrender your desire for privacy to Him?** Jesus was a public figure and you can read about how busy He was in [Mark 3:20-22](#).

January 26

*“A malicious man disguises himself with his lips,
but in his heart he harbors deceit” - 26:24.*

If you want to "clean up" your speech, you have to work on your heart! **What heart area, like cynicism, sarcasm, or arrogance, may be affecting your speech more than you realize? What steps can you take to correct the problem?** Jesus Himself pointed out the heart is the source when speech is a problem in [Luke 6:45](#).

January 27

*“He who is full loathes honey,
but to the hungry even what is bitter tastes sweet” - 27:7.*

Sometimes God will allow you to go without so you can appreciate what you have and what He is about to give you, as described in [Deuteronomy 8:1-18](#). **Do you appreciate what you have or do you take it for granted? Can you thank God for your current situation even if you are experiencing lack or an unexpected setback?**

January 28

*“If anyone turns a deaf ear to the law,
even his prayers are detestable” - 28:9.*

Prayer is no substitute for obedience. You cannot do what you choose and then pray to ask God for help. Prayer should flow out of a relationship with the Lord that includes studying and obeying God's word, which contains His revealed will. **What plan do you have in place to grow in your knowledge of God's "law"?** Jesus addressed the need for obedience as well in [Matthew 7:21-23](#).

January 29

*“The poor man and the oppressor have this in common:
the Lord gives sight to the eyes of both” - 29:13.*

There should be no class or economic distinctions in the body of Christ. Both rich and poor must remember that God is the Father of them both. Yet it is up to the privileged to reach out to the less so. **What are you doing to fellowship and befriend those of less**

economic means than you? James, the brother of Jesus, spoke to this very issue in [James 2:1-13](#). Read it to better understand what today's verse is trying to convey.

January 30

*“This is the way of an adulteress:
She eats and wipes her mouth and says, ‘I’ve done nothing wrong’” - 30:20.*

It can be difficult to say, "I was wrong, forgive me." And saying, "I'm sorry," is not the same as saying, "Forgive me." It is easier to blame someone else or to explain why you did or said what you did. Yet you cannot get forgiveness unless you acknowledge what you have done to God and others. **Is it hard for you to say, "I messed up"?** Perhaps reading [1 John 1:8-10](#) will help you understand why this is so important.

January 31

*“Lest they drink and forget what the law decrees,
and deprive all the oppressed of their rights” - 31:5.*

God's word is clear: take care of the poor! It is easy, however, to be 'intoxicated' with other thoughts and causes, and to forget your duty and responsibility to them. **What are you doing to help the 'have-nots' in your community and the world?** Read the word of the Lord through Isaiah to God's people concerning their lack of respect for the poor in [Isaiah 10:1-3](#).