



A TIME OF GUIDED PRAYER

PROVERBS AS WISDOM FOR CHURCH AND NATION

FOR PREPARATION

['Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus](#)

- Kirkpatrick / Stead

[Isn't That Amazing Grace](#)

- Josh Bales

AS OUR FOUNDATION

Proverbs 25:15 (ESV)

"With patience a ruler may be persuaded, and a soft tongue will break a bone."

TO KEEP IN MIND

Patience is the perspective we should have. God can use us to persuade people toward the Gospel – and toward ideas that are good for our culture.

Let us get back to our first love – and follow the example that you (Jesus) gave: you showed mercy to those in sin, you spoke truth and didn't compromise, but you always did it out of a heart to see people transformed for the Kingdom.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- *It's always the right time to get back to our roots and pray. And through prayer, God is doing something bigger in our hearts.*
- *From Romans 2, "it's God's lovingkindness that draws us to repentance. Christianity is not only true, but what it offers to the world uniquely is truth AND grace.*

- *These Proverbs represent, in a small way, showing grace to people – inside AND outside the Church – that frankly today, people don't expect. It catches them off-guard.*
- *With patience, a ruler may be persuaded*
 - Patience brings with it this sense of longsuffering. However, we want everything instantly. We want the quick answer – and then move on.
 - Some change only takes place with patience. We should think more about the long term – than how we can fix "this" by tomorrow (or next year, or within the next five years...).
- *Long, and Longsuffering*
 - The process may be painful while waiting for change to take place. That's true for athletes, but it's also true spiritually.
 - A ruler is, frankly, anyone with authority over us – not just elected officials.
 - We often think of our leaders as being beyond hope – "they're gone." This is such a human perspective, however. Proverbs reminds us that leaders CAN be persuaded.
 - Patience is the perspective we should have. God can use us to persuade people toward the Gospel – and toward ideas that are good for our culture.
- *A soft tongue will break a bone*
 - It seems ironic. How can something soft break something hard? It's meant to jar us – and make us think "Wait a minute – this is the opposite of what we'd expect."
 - Immaterial things that we use (e.g., words) can have an effect in physical reality.
 - Words can change things – they're very powerful. But not ANY words. Only soft, kind, and tender words can lead to unexpected results.
- James 3
 - "Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. 5 Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark."*
 - Bones are the strongest parts of our body – designed not to break, except under extreme pressure. But bones are also our innermost self – they're the deepest parts of who we are.

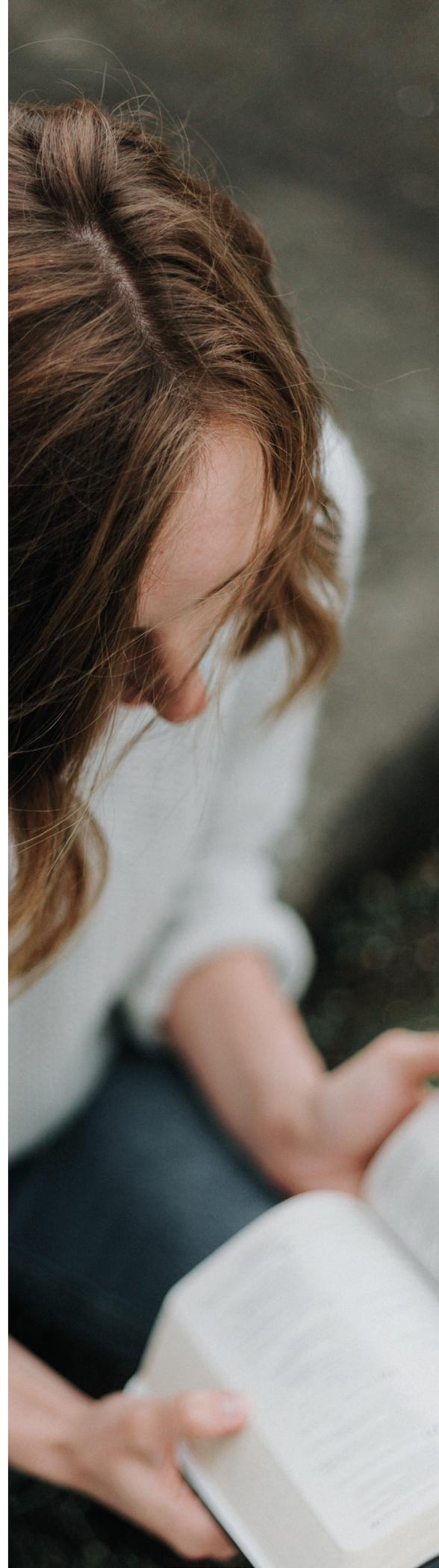
- So what Proverbs is saying is that through tenderness and kind words, you can transform something that is very hard and entrenched in somebody's life – if you're willing to have a long-term view.

- If we really want to persuade people (not politically, but their hearts), it's going to come through patience – and it's going to come through a soft tongue.

- What if Christians were known less for being vitriolic, and bitter, and quick, and debating – but instead, when people thought of Christians, would say, "I still think they're really wrong – but yet they're gracious and tender and kind." Isn't that the Gospel?

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN PRAY AND LIVE THIS WEEK

- *Let's pray that God would change OUR hearts – so we can love our neighbors – despite what happens in our culture that we can't control. Help us be agents of grace and tenderness – to all the people who are hurting around us.*
- *Lord, it's natural to wonder why the division and anger is happening in our culture. But you've appointed us for right now – in this moment – and there's nothing that catches you by surprise.*
- *Help us look at the world today through the eyes of our biblical faith:*
 - Give us patience and longsuffering
 - Let us not fall into the trap of thinking we can fix what's broken in our culture overnight.
 - May we keep in mind that ultimately, our hope would be in you – and that we'd take a (and your) long-term perspective.
- *As we think of the words we use, it's obvious that both inside and outside the church, our words are often hot honoring of you. Forgive us – and help us to speak with a soft tongue.*
- *Our words are an expression of our hearts. Turn our hearts towards reconciliation, towards loving our neighbors – so when our hearts are changed, we can use our words to honor you and honor people.*
- *The next time we hear words that anger us, help us not to respond in anger, but instead respond in tenderness. Help us lead with grace and kindness.*
- *Let us get back to our first love – and follow the example that you (Jesus) gave: you showed mercy to those in sin, you spoke truth and didn't compromise, but you always did it out of a heart to see people transformed for the Kingdom.*
- *May we speak soft words and believe that you'll use those words to lead to change.*



- *Despite what happens in our culture that we can or cannot control – whether political or any other dynamic (even families) – allow us to put our confidence and trust in you alone. And may the words we use reflect who we are in you – not merely what our culture or political party may say – but what you in your word say about us.*
- *May we be agents of genuine love for people – striving for genuine unity and genuine kindness – in a world that desperately needs it. If we recall times where we didn't do this, convict our hearts – and help us see the areas where we need to be more loving and gracious towards others. And if you bring specific situations to mind – give us the encouragement, ability, and conviction to go speak these kind words to others.*

BENEDICTION

- [Psalm 139](#) (sung to the tune of Just As I Am)

CLOSING

- *Here are several related resources you may find valuable:*
 - [Colson Center's National Time of Guided Prayer](#)
 - [The Colson Center for Christian Worldview](#)
 - [BreakPoint](#)
 - [Josh Bales](#)



*True prayer is neither a mere mental exercise nor a vocal performance.
It is far deeper than that. It is spiritual transaction with
the Creator of Heaven and Earth. - Charles Spurgeon*