

A TIME OF GUIDED PRAYER

PROVERBS AS WISDOM FOR CHURCH AND NATION

FOR PREPARATION

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

Louisa M.R. Stead (1882)

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

-Thomas Cranmer (1662)

AS OUR FOUNDATION

Proverbs 1:7 (NIV)

⁷ *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

TO KEEP IN MIND

Wisdom is like a tuning fork – that brings our thoughts, habits, actions, our whole lives into resonance into how God has designed us as human beings.

- Jennifer Marshall Patterson

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- *The Proverbs work on us as we work on them – and they grow in us as we grow in our knowledge of God's word, and how He's created the world around us.*
- *We're living in a culture that's dislocated from God's design – and Proverbs is a source of wisdom in the midst of all this confusion.*
- *Proverbs 8 – where wisdom stands at the crossroads and calls out at the city gates. Wisdom is calling out – seeking to serve us – offering direction, a sense of purpose, and the way to true human flourishing.*
- *Wisdom is about serving our neighbors and seeking their flourishing. Wisdom calls a world dislocated from its design back to a flourishing that it cannot generate on its own.*
- *What is wisdom? Wisdom is a combination of character and worldview that generates practical know-how for the here and now. It's correct knowledge – correctly applied – to the situation at hand.*
- *Wisdom is about living well. It brings our character and discernment about the reality around us into alignment with the way God has made the world for our good and for his glory.*
- *Where is wisdom? True wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord – hearing and embracing the word of God in a way that leads us to reverence and love for the Lord.*
- *Wisdom is also found in observing the works of God. Look for his purpose and design in all God's works of creation and providence.*
- *Wisdom is found in the WORD of God, the WORKS of God, and in EXPERIENCE.*

- Experience teaches us a practice that John Stott called “double listening.” That is, listening to both the word and to the world. The habit of hearing God’s word should make us better listeners to both the aspirations and the frustrations of our neighbors.
- At a personal level, each and every one of us is trying to make sense of the world around us. Every human being is asking: who am I, where do I fit, and how do I make sense of reality?
- The holistic piece of existing in right relationship: first with God, then with self, then with others, and the created world. This is the substance of a life of wisdom – and of true human flourishing.
- No one ever has the luxury of answering these questions in the abstract. They’re always embedded in the context of life experiences – which can be full of bitterness, suffering, and hardship – often deeply personal.
- Two cultural winds are especially powerful: control / autonomy – and that which fragments our view of human nature.
- How does wisdom go about restoring? First, human dignity is grounded in our created identity. Second, by calling our communities to do justice to misunderstanding of human flourishing.
- Christians have an opportunity to love and serve our neighbors by walking in wisdom. What we believe about the image of God in humanity is going to determine the character of our communities. The character of community is formed by its view of the human person, but the conviction of this work must shape us.
- To be human is to be relational. And true human flourishing depends on right relationships with God, self, others, and the world.

HERE’S HOW YOU CAN PRAY AND LIVE THIS WEEK

- Forgive us for times we have not acknowledged you – and instead, leaned upon our own understanding, without seeking yours.
- We do ask you for wisdom. We need it – and seek to find it through you and your Spirit.
- Give us wisdom that aligns our character and our understanding of reality with your design for our wholeness and flourishing.
- We seek wisdom for each day – to guide our thoughts and habits.
- We seek wisdom for the great challenges of our generation. We seek to serve our neighbors in the midst of confusion about what it means to find wholeness as human beings.



BENEDICTION

- *Closing Prayer*

Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

- Thomas Cranmer (1662)

- *Closing Worship*

- [Isn't That Amazing Grace](#) – Josh Bales

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Reformed Theological Seminary – Washington D.C. campus](#)
- [The Institute for Theology and Public Life – RTS/DC](#)
- [Colson Center's National Time of Guided Prayer](#)
- [The Colson Center for Christian Worldview](#)
- [BreakPoint](#)
- [Wilberforce Weekend '21](#)
- [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*



COLSONCENTER
FOR CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW