

How to Make Life Work



WISDOM FROM PROVERBS

Wisdom, Guidance, and Making Decisions

Selected Proverbs



Outline

- 1. Walk on the right path**
- 2. Carefully plan your steps**
- 3. Get to know the Guide**



1. Walk on the right path

Proverbs 4:10-11, 18-19



Proverbs 4:10-11

¹⁰ Listen, my son, accept what I say,
and the years of your life will be many.

¹¹ I instruct you in the way of wisdom
and lead you along straight paths.



Proverbs 4:18-19

**¹⁸ The path of the righteous is like the morning sun,
shining ever brighter till the full light of day.**

**¹⁹ But the way of the wicked is like deep darkness;
they do not know what makes them stumble.**



1. Walk on the right path

- Be sure you are headed in the right direction



1. Walk on the right path

- **Be sure you are headed in the right direction**
- **Remember it is a gradual journey**



1. Walk on the right path

- **Be sure you are headed in the right direction**
- **Remember it is a gradual journey**
- **Don't swerve off the path**



Proverbs 4:20-27

**²⁰ My son, pay attention to what I say;
turn your ear to my words.**

**²¹ Do not let them out of your sight,
keep them within your heart;**

**²² for they are life to those who find them
and health to one's whole body.**

**²³ Above all else, guard your heart,
for everything you do flows from it.**



Proverbs 4:20-27

**²⁴ Keep your mouth free of perversity;
keep corrupt talk far from your lips.**

**²⁵ Let your eyes look straight ahead;
fix your gaze directly before you.**

**²⁶ Give careful thought to the paths for your feet
and be steadfast in all your ways.**

**²⁷ Do not turn to the right or the left;
keep your foot from evil.**





Does it make sense to pray for guidance about the future if we are not obeying in the thing that lies before us today? How many momentous events in Scripture depended on one person's seemingly small act of obedience! Rest assured: Do what God tells you to do now, and, depend upon it, you will be shown what to do next.

—Elisabeth Elliot

2. Carefully plan your steps

Selected Proverbs



2. Carefully plan your steps

Five steps for making wise decisions:



2. Carefully plan your steps

Five steps for making wise decisions:

a. Preparation: Gather the necessary information

Prov. 24:27: Put your outdoor work in order and get your fields ready; after that, build your house.



2. Carefully plan your steps

Five steps for making wise decisions:

b. Consultation: Seek advice from others

**Prov. 11:14: For lack of guidance a nation falls,
but victory is won through many advisers.**



2. Carefully plan your steps

Five steps for making wise decisions:

b. Consultation: Seek advice from others

**Prov. 15:22: Plans fail for lack of counsel,
but with many advisers they succeed.**



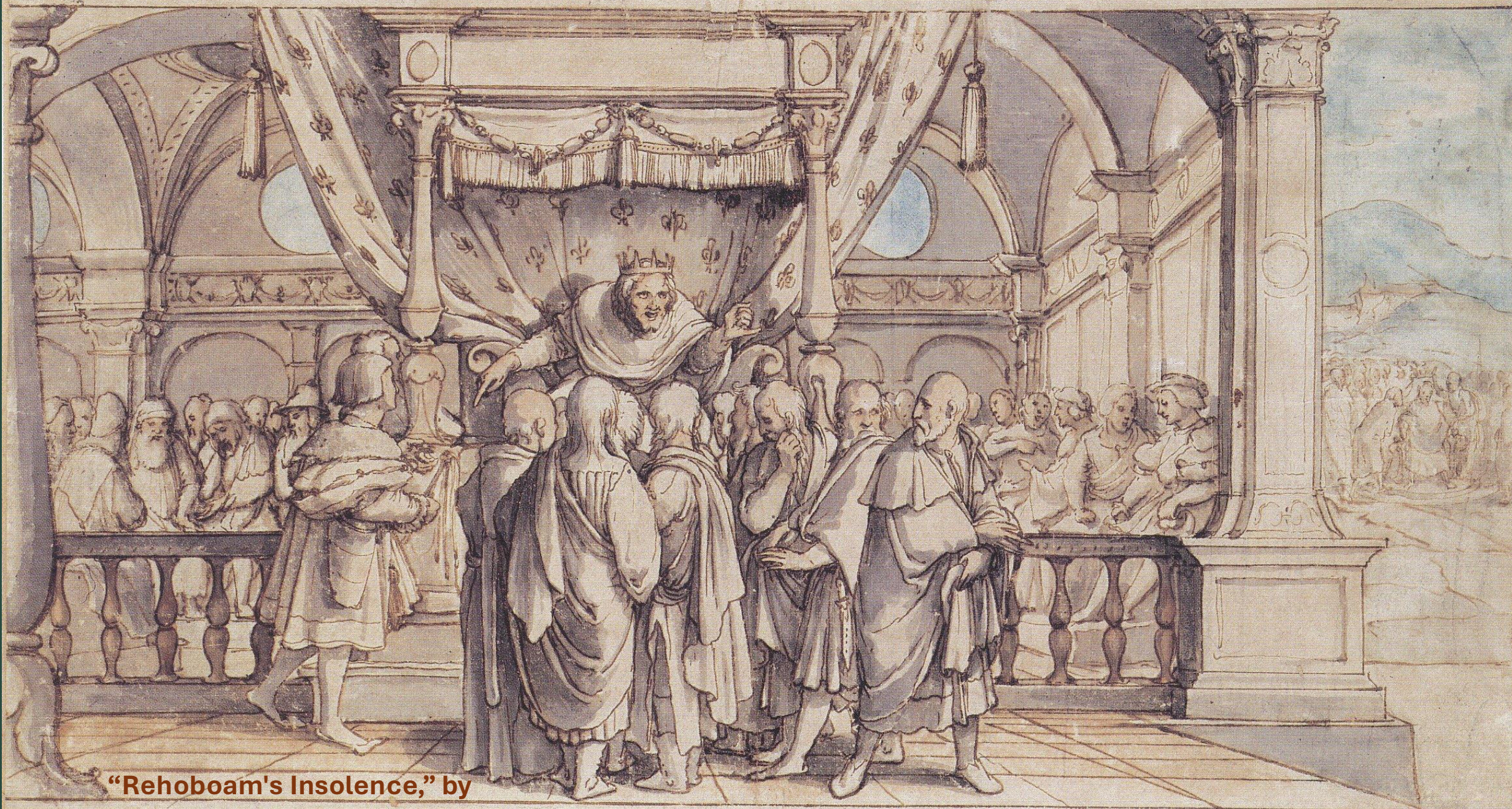
2. Carefully plan your steps

Five steps for making wise decisions:

b. Consultation: Seek advice from others

**Prov. 12:15: The way of fools seems right to them,
but the wise listen to advice.**





**"Rehoboam's Insolence," by
Hans Holbein the Younger, 1530**

Rehoboam

2. Carefully plan your steps

Five steps for making wise decisions:

c. **Consideration: Take your time and think it through**

**Prov. 14:15: The simple believe anything,
but the prudent give thought to their steps.**



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KNOWING
GOD



J. I.
PACKER

“The fundamental mode whereby our rational Creator guides his rational creatures is by rational understanding and application of his written word.”

—J. I. Packer

2. Carefully plan your steps

Five steps for making wise decisions:

c. **Consideration: Take your time and think it through**

**Prov. 19:2: Desire without knowledge is not good
—how much more will hasty feet miss the way!**



2. Carefully plan your steps

Five steps for making wise decisions:

c. **Consideration: Take your time and think it through**

**Prov. 21:15: The plans of the diligent lead to profit
as surely as haste leads to poverty.**



2. Carefully plan your steps

Five steps for making wise decisions:

d. Caution: Beware of self-trust and over-confidence

**Prov. 12:15: The way of fools seems right to them,
but the wise listen to advice.**



2. Carefully plan your steps

Five steps for making wise decisions:

d. Caution: Beware of self-trust and over-confidence

**Prov. 28:26: Those who trust in themselves are fools,
but those who walk in wisdom are kept safe.**



2. Carefully plan your steps

Five steps for making wise decisions:

d. Caution: Beware of self-trust and over-confidence

**Prov. 27:1: Do not boast about tomorrow,
for you do not know what a day may bring.**



2. Carefully plan your steps

Five steps for making wise decisions:

e. **Decision: Make the decision and act!**

**Prov. 13:16: All who are prudent act with knowledge,
but fools expose their folly.**



3. Get to know the Guide

Selected Proverbs



3. Get to know the Guide

God's sovereignty over human plans

Prov. 16:1: To humans belong the plans of the heart, but from the Lord comes the proper answer of the tongue.

Prov. 16:3: Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.

Prov. 16:9: In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps.





BAKER COMMENTARY
on the OLD TESTAMENT
WISDOM AND PSALMS

Tremper Longman III, EDITOR

Proverbs

Tremper Longman III

“All planning . . . should be done in recognition that God can indeed overturn it. The thought is not that we simply pray for God to honor our plans and establish them. Rather, it is the idea that we submit our entire life’s action to God, so that even if our human plans are subverted, we can recognize an even deeper plan at work in our lives.”

—Tremper Longman

3. Get to know the Guide

God's faithful guidance of his people

**Prov. 3:5-6: Trust in the Lord with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
⁶ in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight.**





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Matthew Henry's Commentary

IN ONE VOLUME

We must not only in our judgment believe that there is an over-ruling hand of God ordering and disposing of us and all our affairs, but we must solemnly own it, and address ourselves to him accordingly. We must ask his leave, and not design any thing but what we are sure is lawful. We must ask his advice and beg direction from him, not only when the case is difficult ...but in every case, be it ever so plain, We must ask success of him, as those who know the race is not to the swift. We must refer ourselves to him as one from whom our judgment proceeds, and patiently, and with a holy [indifference], wait his award.



ZONDERVAN CLASSIC REFERENCE SERIES

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In all our ways that prove direct, and fair, and pleasant, in which we gain our point to our satisfaction, we must acknowledge God with thankfulness. our requests known. In all our ways that prove direct, and fair, and pleasant, in which we gain our point to our satisfaction, we must acknowledge God with thankfulness. In all our ways that prove cross and uncomfortable, and that are hedged up with thorns, we must acknowledge God with submission. Our eye must be ever towards God; to him we must, in everything, make our requests known.”

Conclusion: Three Kinds of People

- Those on the wrong path – turn to Christ



Conclusion: Three Kinds of People

- **Those on the wrong path – turn to Christ**
- **Those with unwise approaches to making decisions – learn “sanctified common sense”**



Conclusion: Three Kinds of People

- **Those on the wrong path – turn to Christ**
- **Those with unwise approaches to making decisions – learn “sanctified common sense”**
- **Those anxious or suffering – trust the goodness and wisdom of your sovereign God**





**I will arise today through
God's strength to pilot me:
God's might to uphold me,
God's wisdom to guide me,
God's eye to look before me,
God's ear to hear me,
God's word to speak for me,
God's hand to guard me,
God's way to lie before me,
God's shield to protect me.**

—St. Patrick