

# Pondering Proverbs #2

Proverbs 20-21

## **MEMORY VERSE**

PROVERBS 21:2

“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the hearts.”

## **WHAT YOU WILL NEED:**

Newspaper and masking tape, or a 6” to 8” Nerf ball.

8 1/2” x 11” card stock, the “Self-exam” template included with your curriculum, scissors and markers.

## **ATTENTION GETTER!**

### **Keep Focused**

Today we are going to learn about character and how important godly character is to the Lord. For us to have godly character we need to remain focused on the Lord at all times. But sometimes the world has so many distractions that it can make our head spin and take and our focus off of the Lord. Do this fun activity as an introduction to today’s lesson and to illustrate our need to stay focused on Jesus even when the world tries to confuse us and take our eyes off of Jesus.

You will need newspaper and masking tape, or a 6” to 8” Nerf ball. Before class roll up newspaper into a 6” to 8” ball and wrap it with masking tape. Have the class form a large circle in the center of the room. The center will need to be clear except for the ball. Place the ball in the center of the circle. Pick a child to begin. Have the child close their eyes and turn them around about 15 times. Then tell them to open their eyes and find the ball and kick it. Watch out, they may be a little dizzy and have a difficult time. Allow the other children to take turns one at a time. Have the other children help and look after the children who are dizzy.

Explain to the children that the world can make us dizzy sometimes and take our focus off of Jesus. But we need to always keep our focus on Him!

## LESSON TIME!

The Lord had Solomon record the wisdom that He had given him as a gift. Over the three thousand years that have followed, all the way up to today, many have been blessed by these wonderful proverbs. Today we are going to learn that **Character is important to God**--not just any character, godly character. Character is not very important to the world anymore, but it has always been and is still very important to the Lord. **Character is important to God.**

The Lord did not leave us guessing as to what His character is. We need to go to the Word of God to receive understanding of how He desires for us to live our lives. Let's dig deep into God's Word, today, to find the nuggets of wisdom for our lives and learn to be obedient to Him in all things. **Character is important to God.**

## PROVERBS 20

Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise.

The wrath of a king is like the roaring of a lion; whoever provokes him to anger sins against his own life.

It is honorable for a man to stop striving, since any fool can start a quarrel.

The lazy man will not plow because of winter; he will beg during harvest and have nothing.

Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.

Most men will proclaim each his own goodness, but who can find a faithful man?

The righteous man walks in his integrity; his children are blessed after him.

A king who sits on the throne of judgment scatters all evil with his eyes.

Who can say, "I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin"?

Diverse weights and diverse measures, they are both alike, an abomination to the LORD.

Even a child is known by his deeds, whether what he does is pure and right.

The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the LORD has made them both.

Do not love sleep, lest you come to poverty; open your eyes, and you will be satisfied with bread.

"It is good for nothing," cries the buyer; but when he has gone his way, then he boasts.

There is gold and a multitude of rubies, but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel.

Take the garment of one who is surety for a stranger, and hold it as a pledge when it is for a seductress.

Bread gained by deceit is sweet to a man, but afterward his mouth will be filled with gravel.

Plans are established by counsel; by wise counsel wage war.

He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with one who flatters with his lips

Whoever curses his father or his mother, his lamp will be put out in deep darkness.

An inheritance gained hastily at the beginning will not be blessed at the end.

Do not say, "I will recompense evil"; wait for the LORD, and He will save you.

Diverse weights are an abomination to the LORD, and dishonest scales are not good.

A man's steps are of the LORD; how then can a man understand his own way?

It is a snare for a man to devote rashly something as holy, and afterward to reconsider his vows.

A wise king sifts out the wicked, and brings the threshing wheel over them.

The spirit of a man is the lamp of the LORD, searching all the inner depths of his heart.

Mercy and truth preserve the king, and by lovingkindness he upholds his throne.

The glory of young men is their strength, and the splendor of old men is their gray head.

Blows that hurt cleanse away evil, As do stripes the inner depths of the heart.

When we read chapter 20, we can see two different subjects that King Solomon shares with us. He shares concerning a king and his character and then shares some about a child and his character. **Character is important to God.**

It is important for kings, or government leaders, as we would know them today, to have character. To be a good leader they should be a godly. We see repeated over and over in scripture that evil leaders bring problems to the people they are over, but righteous leaders are a blessing. God certainly had instruction for leaders if they will heed His Word.

Verses 2, 8, 26, 28, and 21:1 are all about a king and his conduct. Today we don't have a king like Solomon, but we certainly have leaders. We have presidents, governors, congressmen and senators and all kinds of other leaders that we need to obey and respect. Those who are in authority have a lot of power. It is important that they use their power for the good of the people and not for themselves.

If we disobey the laws of the land, the government has the power to put us in jail (see Romans 13). If our rulers who are placed over us are not ruling with wisdom and in submission to God, then their power will be like the roar of a lion; it can make us tremble and be afraid. Maybe you have read about in history about evil leaders over the years that were terrible towards their people, even imprisoning and killing them unjustly. It is sad, but it can happen when people who don't care about God and His ways come into power and only have their own selfish interests at heart.

It is always important to God that leaders use their power with wisdom. It is unwise to quarrel, or argue with someone who is not following wisdom. A good kind of ruler who pays attention to his affairs gives justice and uses compassion to rule his subjects. His officials under him have respect and are restrained from doing wrong themselves. **Character is important to God.**

In verse 26 we see that a ruler sometimes has to be severe in his dealings. It is important to take care of those who do wrong or are openly violent towards others. In verse 28 we see the virtues of a good leader include mercy and truth. If he is faithful to his word and sincere, there is security in his rule, and the people will love him. With compassion he will gain the affection of his people (Proverbs 29:4,14; 29:2; 28:15).

What is our responsibility towards those who are over us? We need to be praying for our rulers every day. We need to pray that they will give their heart to the Lord willingly desiring the Lord to direct them while they rule over us. We need to obey them and the laws of our country. The only time we cannot obey or should not is if a law is in direct contradiction to the Word of God.

There are also verses in these chapters about the conduct and character of children. Verse 11 gives us the idea that a child will “discover himself.” They do not conceal their bent, or disposition, the way adults have learned to do. It is obvious when a child is disobedient. Often they don’t even try to hide their disobedience. Parents are encouraged to observe their children during this time, so they can be wise to know how to instruct and guide them through their childhood. Parents have the responsibility from God to mold and shape their children’s characters and direct them to the Lord. **Character is important to God.**

Verse 20 says some children can become wicked little by little. They start by not liking their parents; not obeying the instructions of mom and dad; then raging at their correction and rebukes. They

curse their parents. They are in defiance to God's law and rebel against their parents. When a child rebels and then grows up in that rebellion God's blessing will be removed from them. God only blesses obedience, but only misery, sin and destruction comes from a life in rebellion to Him. How important for us to learn about obeying God by obeying our parents. You have the opportunity to grow up a different way, to choose a blessed life by loving your parents and their instruction. **Character is important to God.**

## **God is Always With Us!**

The Bible talks about how that God is everywhere. His presence is everywhere. He lives in the hearts of those who believe in Jesus. He promises to help us to live our lives for Him and develop His character in us.

Have the children form pairs and stand back to back. Next have them link their arms together. Then have them do various things around the classroom. Have them sit in a chair, crawl on the floor or put marbles or pennies into a jar. Then ask the children what it was like to have someone with them all of the time. Did it change the way they did things? Ask how that having God present with them and in them at all times will change what they do. How can that help them to grow in godly character?

## **PROVERBS 21**

**The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.**

**Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the hearts.**

**To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.**

A haughty look, a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked are sin.

The plans of the diligent lead surely to plenty, but those of everyone who is hasty, surely to poverty.

Getting treasures by a lying tongue is the fleeting fantasy of those who seek death.

The violence of the wicked will destroy them, because they refuse to do justice.

The way of a guilty man is perverse; but as for the pure, his work is right.

Better to dwell in a corner of a housetop, than in a house shared with a contentious woman.

The soul of the wicked desires evil; his neighbor finds no favor in his eyes.

When the scoffer is punished, the simple is made wise; but when the wise is instructed, he receives knowledge.

The righteous God wisely considers the house of the wicked, overthrowing the wicked for their wickedness.

Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be heard.

A gift in secret pacifies anger, and a bribe behind the back, strong wrath.

It is a joy for the just to do justice, but destruction will come to the workers of iniquity.

A man who wanders from the way of understanding will rest in the assembly of the dead.

He who loves pleasure will be a poor man; he who loves wine and oil will not be rich.

The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, and the unfaithful for the upright.

Better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and angry woman.

There is desirable treasure, and oil in the dwelling of the wise, but a foolish man squanders it.

He who follows righteousness and mercy finds life, righteousness and honor.

A wise man scales the city of the mighty, and brings down the trusted stronghold.

Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles.

A proud and haughty man—"Scoffer" is his name; he acts with arrogant pride.

The desire of the lazy man kills him, for his hands refuse to labor.

He covets greedily all day long, but the righteous gives and does not spare.

The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination; how much more when he brings it with wicked intent!

A false witness shall perish, but the man who hears him will speak endlessly.

A wicked man hardens his face, but as for the upright, he establishes his way.

There is no wisdom or understanding or counsel against the LORD.

The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but deliverance is of the LORD.

In chapter 21 we see more verses that are good for children to hear. Verse 2 reminds us that we tend to think that we're always right; but it is God who looks at our heart. Sometimes He will change the plan. This is a good verse to remind us to pray about everything that we think is important. He will help us have a right heart and make good decisions. Have you ever thought you were right about something only to find out that you were really wrong? We cannot always trust our emotions or thoughts. We need to rely on the Lord because only He knows our hearts and what is the right thing to do.

Verse 3 is a good reminder that God desires mercy and justice more than an expensive gift. We sometimes think that if we give money for the offering or go to church on Sunday that God is pleased with us, and we do not need to be kind to our brothers and sisters. God wants obedience in our hearts, not our gifts. Let us pray that we would love Jesus and love each other the way He has asked us to. **Character is important to God.**

Let's look at some other verses that encourage us to use our lips, mouth, tongue, and words in a way that is pleasing to our Lord. Does He want us to lie? Does He want us to gossip? Is it good to go

around telling other people what someone told you in confidence? Proverbs 20:15 tells us that in Solomon's time gold and rubies were everywhere. There was great wealth in the kingdom; but King Solomon realized that men may have pockets full of money and yet not have lips that speak knowledge. Wisdom cannot be purchased.

Proverbs 20:19 reminds us to be careful of two kinds of people: talebearers and flatterers. These are the people who cause problems among their neighbors and family. A talebearer is a person who involves himself in gossip. Gossip is listening to or sharing a rumor or report about a person that you would not want him to hear if he were present. A person that gossips cannot be trusted. The Lord does not want us to be that kind of a person. It is a challenge not to become involved in gossip, but the reward from God will be worth the effort it takes. Verse 23 says you will stay out of trouble if you are careful with your tongue.

King Solomon reminds us that any money you make by cheating people will not last, nor will the Lord bless it. Do not be rash or inconsiderate in your affairs; do not be afraid of hard work. Do not lie. Always honor any contract you enter into. When we give our word to someone else it is very important that we keep it. **Character is important to God.**

There is so much in these chapters that can speak to our hearts. Our Lord is thorough; He does not leave us with a lot of questions. He is clear about His desires for us to love mercy, be honest, be hard working, and be careful to love and obey our parents. He wants to reward us for loving each other and doing what is good. Let us learn all the days of our lives about His ways and continue to "ponder" on the proverbs.

**Character is important to God.** The character of God is revealed in His Word. God has equipped us with everything we need—the help of the Holy Spirit—to demonstrate the character of

God in our lives. God does not ask us to do anything that He does not give us the power to do. **Character is important to God.**

## Take a “Self-Exam”

Today’s memory verse talks about how that we may think we are thinking or doing what is right, but really the Lord knows our hearts. Whenever we are sick we go to the doctor to have an exam. We want to find out what is wrong so we can do what is necessary to get better. It is similar in our hearts. The Bible talks about how that we need to examine our hearts to see if our motives and thoughts are right before the Lord. Just like a doctor writes the results of his exam on a chart, make this “self-exam” chart to help you examine your own heart together with the Lord.

You will need 8 1/2” x 11” card stock, the “self-exam” template, scissors and markers. Copy the template onto cardstock, one for each child. Cut out the markers at the bottom indicating, “OK” and “Not OK.” Cut small slits in the indicated lines. At the end of each day pray and ask the Lord to search your heart. Are there areas that need improvement? Indicate on your chart and ask the Lord to help you to improve in those areas. Color and decorate with markers.

## PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to discover God’s character and live it out in the power of the Holy Spirit. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.

# **"SELF" EXAMINATION CHART**

Name of Examining Doctor \_\_\_\_\_ (along with the Lord)

Loving Others		
Obedience		
Honesty		
Kindness		
Self-Control		

"Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the hearts." PROVERBS 21:2

	OK			NOT OK	
	OK			NOT OK	
	OK			NOT OK	
	OK			NOT OK	
	OK			NOT OK	