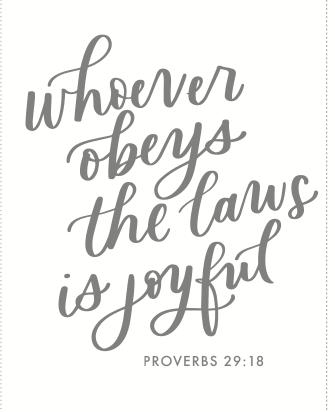
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PROVERBS 27:17 PROVERBS 22:1 PROVERBS 18:21 Studio Studio Studio



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Week 1:

trusting God

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight. PROVERBS 3:5-6 CSB

Mary most likely had all the feels. She was engaged. She was a virgin. And she was pregnant. As a devout Jewish girl, there was nothing usual—or acceptable—about her situation. "An angel said I'm carrying the Messiah" probably didn't quell the angry masses. Mary was most certainly surrounded by skeptics and furious family members. Not to mention a very confused Joseph, her fiancé.

But you know what? Mary didn't allow her senses, or those of the people around her, to dictate her heart position. Her stance was to trust in the Lord, even when her circumstance (her surroundings) was intense. Mary chose to believe her God when He said it would all be okay: "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true" (Luke 1:38 NLT).

In Proverbs 3:6, the Hebrew word for to know is yadá.

The word can refer to knowing through observation or experience. But yadá also carries with it a sense of direct, intimate contact. Elsewhere in the Bible, the word is used to refer to a husband and wife knowing each other in the most intimate earthly sense. When referring to the Lord, yadá can mean going into the deepest, most personal spaces with Him. God invites us into the very center of His heart, from where we can make choices in direct obedience to His will and purpose.

Mary looked past her surroundings and made choices in line with God's heart for her, for His Son, and for the eternal story of His Kingdom. To do this, she lived out Proverbs 3:5-6 on a daily basis: to trust in God, to rely on Him alone, to know the depths of His heart, and to let Him lead her. It was this lifestyle of intimacy with Him that allowed her a wise answer in the time of greatest need.

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Read Luke 1:26-38. When have you needed a wise response to an overwhelming situation? Have you been ready?

Read Proverbs 3:5-6 every day this week and ask God for a fresh perspective on the message.



Week 2:

thinking yourself happy

Anxiety in a person's heart weighs it down, but a good word cheers it up. PROVERBS 12:25 CSB

It can be easy to look at much of Scripture as a list of rules we have to follow if we're going to please God. However, He sees things quite a bit differently. God provides us with truth to live by: not because He wants us to blindly follow the rules, but because His Kingdom has a perfect design. And He knows we will live our happiest, best lives when we live by the Kingdom.

The Bible is full of advice not to be anxious or worried. I Peter 5:7 says we can cast our cares on Him. Philippians 4:6 straight-up says not to be anxious. Matthew 6:25 says not to worry about the essentials of life. But what about our toughest, most unusual circumstances? When the teenager is making scary choices. When the job is on the line. When the diagnosis is not what we were praying for. Is it okay to be anxious then?

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There's one sure way to know that we can always choose something other than anxiety: the Bible commands it. And God never asks us to do something we're incapable of. Scratch that: He invites us into many things we can't do...apart from Him. In our greatest weakness, when we're least able, God's grace is more than enough strength for us to thrive.

So what's the special formula for fighting anxiety? There may not be one. But we do have clues for success. I Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NKJV) tells us: Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. These are practical action steps. Rejoice. Pray. Give thanks.

And while an anxious thought will weight a heart down, a good word—one of rejoicing, prayer, or thanks—will cheer a person up. In any situation. That's a promise.

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Look up and write down the following Scriptures. Choose one to commit to memory this week.

Proverbs 12:25, I Peter 5:7, Philippians 4:6 Matthew 6:25, Philippians 4:13 II Corinthians 12:9-10



Week 3:

valued friendship

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. PROVERBS 17:17 NKJV

One of the most interesting friendships in the Bible happens between David, a shepherd and musician; and Jonathan, a prince. David worked in Jonathan's dad's house. Which is putting it mildly, as Jonathan's dad was the king, and his house was a palace. So while the two friends were about the same age and fought in the same army, they had little else in common.

But something endeared them to one another. After David defeated Goliath, I Samuel 18:1 (CSB) says that "Jonathan was bound to David in close friendship, and loved him as much as he loved himself." Jonathan gave David his own cloak, armor, and weapons as a sign of loyalty. And the friendship that had started after a great victory was primed for action in a time of crisis.

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When Jonathan made a covenant of friendship with David (I Samuel 18:3), it wasn't a fair-weather promise. Jonathan didn't say, "I'll be your friend as long as my dad approves." So when Saul turned on David, Jonathan's own safety was compromised in order to help his friend survive (I Samuel 20).

Proverbs 17:17 has two things to say about friendship. First, the love of a friend is constant. It doesn't have an on-off switch, whether we feel the feelings at the moment or not. Second, we have Kingdom friendships so that we have support when we need it most. The Hebrew word translated as *brother* in this verse is *ách*, which can simply mean a kindred spirit. Our close friends are our support system, and the people we support, in times of need.

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Read I Samuel 20. Have you been in a situation where your friendship saved your life, either literally or figuratively? If someone comes to mind, write them a note today to tell them how much they mean.

If you are lacking in close friendships, take heart. We were designed for fellowship! Ask God to bring kindred spirits into your life, and He will be faithful.





Week 4:

becoming a woman of God

She extends her hand to the poor, yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy. PROVERBS 31:20 NKJV

What Bible-reading woman hasn't read Proverbs 31 over and over again—either with nervousness that she doesn't measure up to the "ideal" wife, or for encouragement that she is called to great things? Proverbs 31 isn't meant to shame us, but to invite us into relationship with the Lord. When we partner with Him, it is the work of the Holy Spirit which transforms us. Over time, and in any of the many ways these verses highlight, God does His good work in us (Philippians 2:13).

A virtuous wife, according to Proverbs 31, works with her hands. Verse 20 actually uses two different Hebrew words to represent the hand. The first is *kaph*. This word can represent upturned hands, extended as if in prayer. The second is *yad*, or ministering and serving hands. In other words, her good works are accompanied by faith. James 2:14-16 assures us that works and faith go hand in hand. The Kingdom of God is designed so that we, the faithful and able, will serve in love, in all the ways we can. So as we minister with our hands, we can also pray faithfully every day: for our children, our husbands, our neighbors and friends. We can let someone go ahead of us in line, and silently ask God to bless them. We can open the door for the woman in the wheelchair, and ask if we can pray for her healing. We can drop off the thrift store donation, and ask the worker if we can pray for them today.

Maybe instead of wondering if we measure up, we can use Proverbs 31 as a road map. We can take action steps where we can, and ask God to keep transforming us. Then we can watch and see where He is taking us as virtuous women and wives. Be encouraged, friend: your worth is far above rubies. God is getting you there.

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Read Proverbs 31, paying special attention to verse 20. How are you most often in the position of serving someone? Who do you most often pray for?

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···· Proverbs ····						
Wlek one challinge Put your phone on silent and turn it over for the 5-10 minutes while you read						
DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6	DAY 7
CHAPTER 1	CHAPTER 2	CHAPTER 3	CHAPTER 4	CHAPTER 5	CHAPTER 6	CHAPTER 7
Week two challenge Show grace even when it is hard. Challenge yourself yourself to speak words of life about people through the week.						
DAY 8	DAY 9	DAY 10	DAY 11	DAY 12	DAY 13	DAY 14
CHAPTER 8	CHAPTER 9	CHAPTER 10	CHAPTER 11	CHAPTER 12	CHAPTER 13	CHAPTER 14
Week three challenge Write a daily note of three things you are thankful for!						
DAY 15	DAY 16	DAY 17	DAY 18	DAY 19	DAY 20	DAY 21
CHAPTER 15	CHAPTER 16	CHAPTER 17	CHAPTER 18	CHAPTER 19	CHAPTER 20	CHAPTER 21
Week four challinge Send your favorite verse from each chapter and why to a friend each day.						
DAY 22	DAY 23	DAY 24	DAY 25	DAY 26	DAY 27	DAY 28
CHAPTER 22	CHAPTER 23	CHAPTER 24	CHAPTER 25	CHAPTER 26	CHAPTER 27	CHAPTER 28
Week five challenge from the book of Proverbs!						
DAY 29	DAY 30	DAY 31				
CHAPTER 29	CHAPTER 30	CHAPTER 31				Studio

