

PROVERBS:

the surprising secret
of growing wise

How can you tell if someone is wise or not?

**“Do not rebuke mockers or they will hate you;
rebuke the wise and they will love you.”**

Proverbs 9:8

ASIDE: How to read Proverbs

- ▶ A book of parental teaching, training a son to live wisely
 - ▶ 1-9: Introduction
 - ▶ 10-30: Main bit
 - ▶ 31: Epilogue

ASIDE: How to read Proverbs

- ▶ Proverbs are **not laws or promises**
- ▶ They are poetic, thought-provoking **insights**
- ▶ So they are designed to be chewed over and reflected on
 - ▶ How do the first and second lines relate?
 - ▶ How does this proverb relate to others on a similarly issue?
 - ▶ How does this proverb relate to the others around it?

1. To begin, read the proverb cluster together. Do you spot any immediate links or themes?
2. Now take each proverb individually. What is it saying? What is the gist of it?
 1. Pay attention to the poetic features of the proverb. What imagery does it use? Does it use any characters? What effect do those features produce?
 2. Think about the parallelism of the verse: how does the second half relate to the first? Is it a contrast, an intensification, an expansion/explanation, a consequence...? How does that change the way you read the first half?
3. What situation(s) might this proverb apply to? When and where would a wise person need to bring this to mind? Are there any situations where this proverb might have exceptions?
4. Now reconsider the context – do the other nearby proverbs affect the way you read this one?
3. What do these proverbs reveal about the structure of the world? What does it reveal about the character of God? How would following these proverbs require or build
 - a) trust in God?
 - b) humility?
 - c) love for God and others?
4. How does being a Christian shape the way you read these proverbs? What in the gospel or character of Jesus informs your reading of it?

How can you tell if someone is wise or not?

- ▶ **Wise people listen when they're corrected.**

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

Proverbs 1:7

**“Do not be wise in your own eyes;
fear the LORD and shun evil. “**

Proverbs 3:7

“Do not rebuke mockers or they will hate you;
rebuke the wise and they will love you.
Instruct the wise and they will be wiser still;
teach the righteous and they will add to their learning.
The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,
and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”

Proverbs 9:7-10

“Whoever heeds life-giving correction
will be at home among the wise.
Those who disregard discipline despise themselves,
but the one who heeds correction gains understanding.
Wisdom’s instruction is to fear the LORD,
and humility comes before honour ”

Proverbs 15:31-33

**“Do you see a person wise in their own eyes?
There is more hope for a fool than for them.”**

Proverbs 26:12

“Do not rebuke mockers or they will hate you;
rebuke the wise and they will love you.
Instruct the wise and they will be wiser still;
teach the righteous and they will add to their learning.
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Proverbs 15:31-33

**“The path of the righteous is like the morning sun,
shining ever brighter till the full light of day.
But the way of the wicked is like deep darkness;
they do not know what makes them stumble.”**

Proverbs 4:18-19

How can you tell if someone is wise or not?

- ▶ Wise people listen when they're corrected, because they know God and are humble before him.

How do we become wise like this?

Why is it hard to receive and appreciate challenge and correction?

What holds us back from wanting to be shown where we've been wrong?

“Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers,
and blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD .”

Proverbs 16:20

“Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper,
but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.
Blessed is the one who always trembles before God,
but whoever hardens their heart falls into trouble. ”

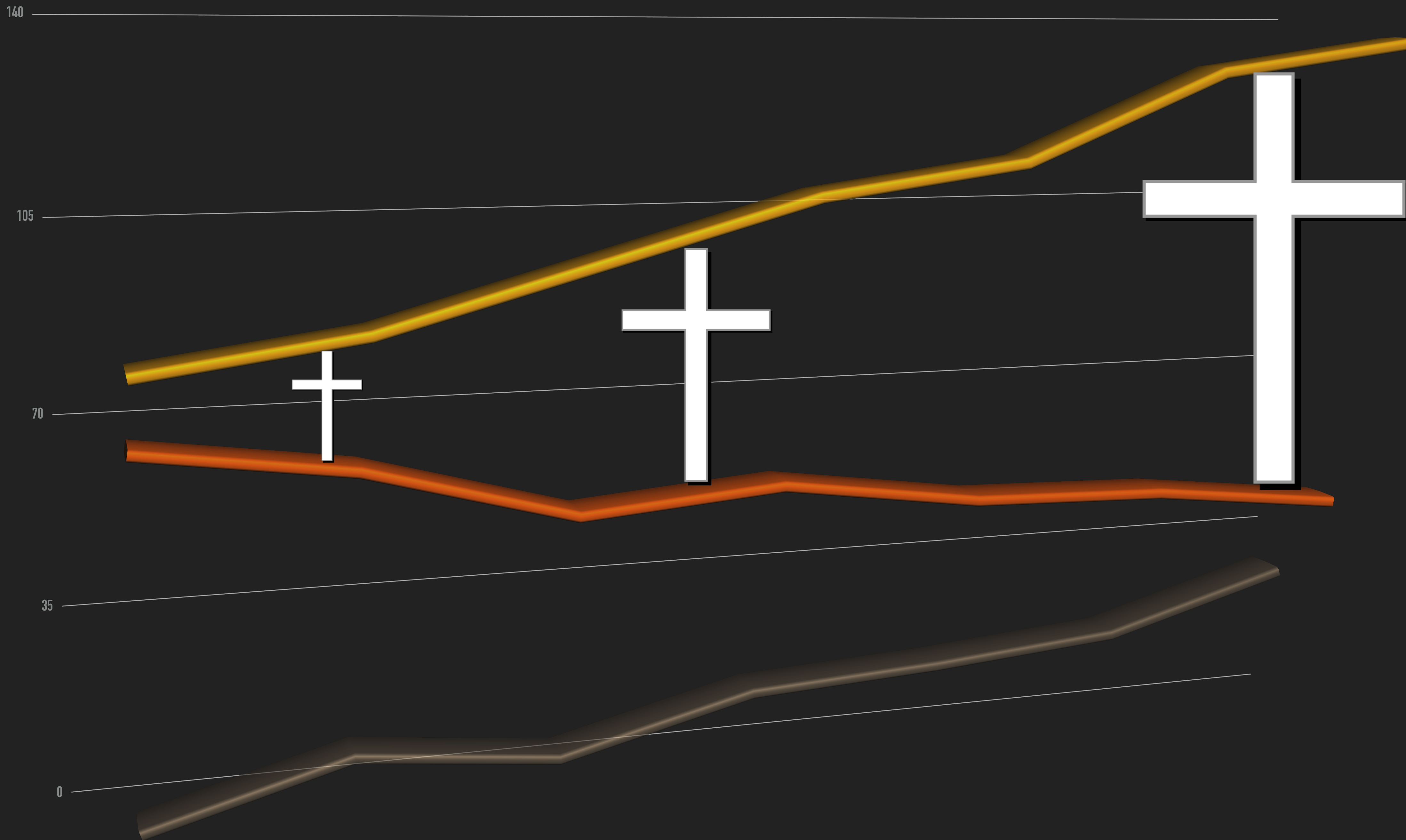
Proverbs 28:13-14

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Proverbs 4:18

How can you tell if someone is wise or not?

- ▶ Wise people listen when they're corrected, because they know God and that makes them humble.

How do we become wise like this?

- ▶ We let Jesus draw our hearts to trembling trust in God.

How do we grow in this together as a community?

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”

Colossians 3:16, ESV

- ▶ **Grow in courage to both invite & offer correction**

“Whoever rebukes a person will in the end gain favour rather than one who has a flattering tongue.”

Proverbs 28:23

“Those who flatter their neighbours are spreading nets for their feet.”

Proverbs 29:5

- ▶ **Grow in courage to both invite & offer correction**
- ▶ **Give correction wisely and graciously**

“The words of the reckless pierce like swords,
but the tongue of the wise brings healing.”

Proverbs 12:18

“The wise in heart are called discerning,
and gracious words promote instruction.

...

Gracious words are a honeycomb,
sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.”

Proverbs 16:21, 24

“Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the
Spirit should restore that person gently.”

Galatians 6:1

- ▶ **Grow in courage to both invite & offer correction**
- ▶ **Give correction wisely and graciously**
- ▶ **Receive correction humbly and wisely**

What do you think is the wise response to a foolish or harsh 'correction'?

