

*Principles and Proverbs  
from  
Pride and Prejudice*

*A 120-day devotional inspired by the classic novel by Jane Austen*



Chrisann Dawson



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To Jane Austen lovers everywhere who  
appreciate her insights into relationships.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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“It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife. However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering the neighborhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered as the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters.”

*He who finds a wife finds a good thing. . .*  
Proverbs 18:22



Pride and Prejudice opens with this beautiful line that declares that all single, rich young men must be in search of the perfect partner to share their lives and fortunes with. Scripture supports the idea that a good wife is a treasure, worth the seeking and prized when found. The word “finds” implies acquiring after a diligent search. We are worth being sought after. We are valuable, a treasure.



“Do not *you* want to know who has taken it?” cried his wife impatiently.

“You want to tell me, and I have no objection to hearing it.”

That was invitation enough.



*Love is patient and kind. . .*

1 Corinthians 13:4



Mrs. Bennet, the mother of five grown daughters, wants to engage her husband in a conversation about this new single man. She does so, referring to a neighboring mansion. Mrs. Bennet lived for only one goal: to see her daughters all happily married to rich, young men with the means to be able to care for them properly.

Longbourn, the Bennet family's estate, came to Mr. Bennet through an entail. If a property was entailed, it could only pass to male heirs. Mr. and Mrs. Bennet's original plan was to have a son, keep the estate in the family, and provide for Mrs. Bennet and daughters, but no son arrived; only five daughters. The girls' only hope for being cared for financially was marrying someone with money.

Mrs. Bennet's pursuit of husbands for her daughters often motivated her to act foolishly and annoyingly. Patience was often the necessary ingredient for Mr. Bennet to endure his wife's folly. After more than twenty years of marriage, he had learned to patiently tolerate his wife's foolishness.

Practicing patience, tolerance, and kindness is vital to any relationship, especially marriage.



“Oh! single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!”

“How so? How can it affect them?”

“My dear Mr. Bennet,” replied his wife, “how can you be so tiresome! You must know that I am thinking of his marrying one of them.”

“Is that his design in settling here?”

“Design! nonsense, how can you talk so! But it is very likely that he may fall in love with one of them, and therefore you must visit him as soon as he comes.”

“I see no occasion for that. You and the girls may go, or you may send them by themselves, which perhaps will be still better, for as you are as handsome as any of them, Mr. Bingley may like you the best of the party.”

*Do not toil to acquire wealth;  
be discerning enough to desist.*

Proverbs 23:4



Mr. Bennet's toying with his wife was a game he often played. The custom of the day insisted that introductions be formal. As the head of his home, Mr. Bennet was expected to pay a visit to Mr. Bingley before any of the rest of the family would have a chance to get to know him. Mr. Bennet was the key to one of his daughters marrying this new young neighbor; as he well knew; and he thoroughly enjoyed the idea of pretending that he would not pay the visit.

Often other people in our lives attempt to steer our direction and decision-making with their goals for our lives. Scheming ways to become rich, especially through marriage, contradicts Biblical principles, and often leads to misery. Neither Mr. Bennet, nor Mrs. Bennet take seriously the role they are playing in the lives of their daughters.



“My dear, you flatter me. I certainly *have* had my share of beauty, but I do not pretend to be anything extraordinary now. When a woman has five grown-up daughters, she ought to give over thinking of her own beauty.”

“In such cases, a woman has not often much beauty to think of.”

*Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a  
woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.*

Proverbs 31:30



Self-absorption will diminish any true beauty. Mrs. Bennet, although claiming to only think of her daughters and their need for rich husbands, primarily thought only of herself. Wisdom and proper speaking would have only enhanced any lingering beauty that Mrs. Bennet possessed. Let us be different from this self-centered mother. Let us appreciate ourselves; care for our body but focus principally on nurturing our internal beauty through a strong relationship with God.



“I dare say Mr. Bingley will be very glad to see you; and I will send a few lines by you to assure him of my hearty consent to his marrying whichever he chooses of the girls; though I must throw in a good word for my little Lizzy.”

“I desire you will do no such thing. Lizzy is not a bit better than the others; and I am sure she is not half so handsome as Jane, nor half so good-humored as Lydia. But you are always giving her the preference.”

“They have none of them much to recommend them,” replied he; “they are all silly and ignorant like other girls; but Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sisters.”

“Mr. Bennet, how can you abuse your own children in such a way?”

*Buy truth, and do not sell it; buy wisdom,  
instruction, and understanding.*

Proverbs 23:23



The most beautiful facet of any woman is her intellect. Mr. Bennet esteemed his daughter Elizabeth for her quick mind and intuitive thinking. What Mr. Bennet, in his wisdom, admired; Mrs. Bennet, in her folly, could not appreciate. May we invest in our own learning process, grow in wisdom and true understanding of the human heart, and make it a practice to purposefully absorb life as it happens around us.



“Mr. Bennet, how can you abuse your own children in such a way? You take delight in vexing me. You have no compassion for my poor nerves.”

“You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves. They are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these last twenty years at least.”

“Ah, you do not know what I suffer.”

“But I hope you will get over it, and live to see many young men of four thousand a year come into the neighborhood.”

“It will be no use to us, if twenty such should come, since you will not visit them.”

“Depend upon it, my dear, that when there are twenty, I will visit them all.”



*Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends.*

Proverbs 17:9



Mr. Bennet has practiced “covering his wife’s transgressions” for their more than twenty years of marriage together. This is a two-sided coin: may we not be the irritating one, whose transgressions require a covering; that needs to be tolerated. May we practice, through seeking love, being the one tolerant of other people’s weaknesses.



When she was discontented, she fancied herself nervous. The business of her life was to get her daughters married; its solace was visiting and news.

*... a whisperer separates close friends.*  
Proverbs 16:28



(Mr. Bennet was among the earliest of those who waited on Mr. Bingley. He had always intended to visit him, though to the last always assuring his wife that he should not go; and till the evening after the visit was paid, she had no knowledge of it.)

Mrs. Bennet made a habit of comforting herself by seeking the latest “news” or gossip while visiting her friends. It is said that a weak mind speaks of people; an average mind speaks of events; a strong mind speaks of ideas. The sad state of the marriage of Mr. and Mrs. Bennet has primarily evolved as a direct result of the foolishness of Mrs. Bennet, and her willingness to share her lack of wisdom with anyone who will listen. May we become a thoughtful and wise speaker.



Mr. Bennet was among the earliest of those who waited on Mr. Bingley. He had always intended to visit him, though to the last always assuring his wife that he should not go; and till the evening after the visit was paid she had no knowledge of it. It was then disclosed in the following manner. Observing his second daughter employed in trimming a hat, he suddenly addressed her with,

“I hope Mr. Bingley will like it, Lizzy.”

“We are not in a way to know *what* Mr. Bingley likes,” said her mother resentfully, “since we are not to visit.”

“But you forget, mamma,” said Elizabeth, “that we shall meet him at the assemblies, and that Mrs. Long promised to introduce him.”

“I do not believe Mrs. Long will do any such thing. She has two nieces of her own. She is a selfish, hypocritical woman, and I have no opinion of her.”

*You have set our iniquities before you,  
our secret sins in the light of your presence.*

Psalm 90:8



Mrs. Bennet loves to gossip. Everyone knows it except her. Blind to her own folly and bad habits, Mrs. Bennet is quick to criticize in others what is most evident in her own life. Since our true self is open to God (and usually before others), let us be transparent ABOUT ourselves TO ourselves.



The girls stared at their father. Mrs. Bennet said only, “Nonsense, nonsense!”

“What can be the meaning of that emphatic exclamation?” cried he. “Do you consider the forms of introduction, and the stress that is laid on them, as nonsense? I cannot quite agree with you there. What say you, Mary? For you are a young lady of deep reflection, I know, and read great books and make extracts.”

Mary wished to say something very sensible, but knew not how.

“While Mary is adjusting her ideas,” he continued, “let us return to Mr. Bingley.”

“I am sick of Mr. Bingley,” cried his wife.

“I am sorry to hear *that*; but why did not you tell me that before? If I had known as much this morning I certainly would not have called on him. It is very unlucky; but as I have actually paid the visit, we cannot escape the acquaintance now.”

*Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the  
one who understands obtain guidance. . .*

Proverbs 1:5



In his delight in teasing the foolishness of his wife, Mr. Bennet occasionally turned his wry sense of humor on one of his daughters. This time Mary received his wit. Mary, a typical middle child, always sought the approval of others. She did this through extensive reading, not with the goal to improve herself practically, but to impress her listeners. Wisdom is the motive for learning, which should be applied to our daily lives.



“How good it was in you, my dear Mr. Bennet! But I knew I should persuade you at last. I was sure you loved your girls too well to neglect such an acquaintance. Well, how pleased I am! and it is such a good joke, too, that you should have gone this morning and never said a word about it till now.”



*If a wise man has an argument with a fool, the fool  
only rages and laughs, and there is no quiet.*

Proverbs 29:9



Just a moment earlier, Mrs. Bennet was angry with her husband for not visiting Mr. Bingley, then was quickly overjoyed by hearing that he had already made the visit. Mr. Bennet is wise but made a foolish decision in marrying his wife. Truly, Mrs. Bennet gives her family no rest from her folly and simple-minded comments. Avoid being easily swayed from one emotion to another...avoid being a fool.



A few weeks later at the first assembly dance that Mr. Bingley attended with his guests, he was declared to be good looking and gentlemanlike...but his friend Mr. Darcy soon drew the attention of the room by his fine, tall person, handsome features, and his noble mien. The report in general circulation within five minutes was...of his having ten thousand a year. He was admired till his manners gave a disgust, which turned his popularity. For he was discovered to be proud...and above being pleased. Not all his large estate in Derbyshire could then save him from having the most forbidding, disagreeable countenance, and being unworthy of being compared to his friend.

*Pride goes before destruction, and a  
haughty spirit before a fall.*

Proverbs 16:18



Mr. Bingley was of average good looks and pleasant manners, but his friend, Mr. Darcy, was exceedingly handsome and very rich. For several minutes at the dance Mr. Darcy was admired by all, but quickly his proud manners made him despised. Mr. Darcy could benefit from pondering this old proverb: “Beauty is as beauty does.” Mr. Darcy could improve his popularity by realizing that looking amazing and acting awful is not attractive.



“Come, Darcy,” said he, “I must have you dance. I hate to see you standing about by yourself in this stupid manner. You had much better dance.”

“I certainly shall not. You know how I detest it, unless I am particularly acquainted with my partner. At such an assembly as this it would be insupportable. Your sisters are engaged, and there is not another woman in the room whom it would not be a punishment to me to stand up with.”

“I would not be so fastidious as you are,” cried Mr. Bingley, “for a kingdom! Upon my honor, I never met with so many pleasant girls in my life as I have this evening; and there are several of them you see uncommonly pretty.”

“You are dancing with the only handsome girl in the room,” said Mr. Darcy, looking at the eldest Miss Bennet.

“Oh! She is the most beautiful creature I ever beheld! But there is one of her sisters sitting down just behind you, who is very pretty, and I dare say very agreeable. Do let me ask my partner to introduce you.”

“Which do you mean?” and turning round he looked for a moment at Elizabeth, till catching her eye, he withdrew his own and coldly said: “She is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me; I am in no humor at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men.”

*Be kind to one another. . .*

Ephesians 4:32



Mr. Darcy offended Elizabeth Bennet on their first opportunity to meet. He displayed his disdain for people whom he considered below him in station. A man should always be kind and tender-hearted to any woman, and Elizabeth Bennet was more honorable than most, with both outward beauty and inward intelligence and spirit. Woman is the crown of God's creation and deserves respect.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Chrisann has been writing her whole life. As a child, she started hundreds of stories that she never finished.

She has taught high school English Grammar and Composition for more than twenty years and was blessed by the opportunity to teach English as a second language in the Congo, Africa through the Lingala language.

Chrisann is now finishing her stories. Lots of them. Shine-A-Light Press will be publishing her trilogy of novels inspired by her time in the Congo in 2021.

She has three adult children and currently lives in Northern Arizona with her husband, Gale.