

YWJ Teen Devo: Sharing the Valentine's Day Love
Barry Shafer

The Word

Proverbs 2:1–11 (TNIV)

- ¹ My son, if you accept my words
and store up my commands within you,
² turning your ear to wisdom
and applying your heart to understanding—
³ indeed, if you call out for insight
and cry aloud for understanding,
⁴ and if you look for it as for silver
and search for it as for hidden treasure,
⁵ then you will understand the fear of the LORD
and find the knowledge of God.
⁶ For the LORD gives wisdom;
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.
⁷ He holds success in store for the upright,
he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless,
⁸ for he guards the course of the just
and protects the way of his faithful ones.
⁹ Then you will understand what is right and just
and fair—every good path.
¹⁰ For wisdom will enter your heart,
and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.
¹¹ Discretion will protect you,
and understanding will guard you.

The Backdrop

Before we get started, this devo is heavy on asking you to write and mark things; so you might want to go ahead and print this.

Have you ever noticed the Bible isn't a normal book? For that reason, it's not necessarily meant to be read like a normal book. Because we're close to our annual celebration of Valentine's Day, it might be helpful to think of the Bible this way: Imagine receiving a love letter (or text) from someone you've had a crush on. Circle the words/phrases below that best describe how you might read this letter.

casually	once	skim it
with extreme intensity	several times	between the lines

My guess is that you circled the phrases on the bottom row. Have you thought about how much of a love letter God's Word, the Bible, is to you? He's told you how much He loves you and why the two of you would make a great relationship. It's a letter that's not meant to be skimmed or casually read. In fact, God gave us several clues about how to experience His Word such as in Proverbs 2. So, let's see what happens when we approach God's Word with love-letter intensity.

The What

Read Proverbs 2:1–11 below. As you read, you’ll see an “If/Then” situation—“IF you do these actions, THEN you’ll experience these results.” You may want to print this passage and (with a colored pencil) circle any actions you see in this passage, then underline the results of these actions. (Hint: These results come after the word *then*.)

Now look at what you marked and list the actions and results in the space below. By writing these down, you’re giving God more opportunity to show you what He wants you to see, and it’s more likely to impact your life.

Actions

Results

The So What

Look at the actions you’ve listed. Those are some pretty descriptive and specific phrases. What do you think would happen if you applied these action phrases to God’s Word—the Bible—every time you opened it up? Think about what life would be like if you experienced these results every day. Meditate on these results for a minute, and let God teach you what they could mean in your life. Journal things that come to mind.

Did you notice that every result in Proverbs 2 represents a worthy goal in the faith journey?

- closeness to God
- greater understanding of spiritual things
- wisdom for good decisions
- strength and perspective for beating temptation

These are things we all want, and God is showing us in this passage the direct path to spiritual fulfillment—it’s all those great action phrases you just discovered—but it starts with God’s love letter, doing more than just reading it (see the devo “Don’t Read the Bible”); but lingering with it, marking it up, taking commands and instructions to heart, meditating on what God is saying specifically to you, and finally doing something with what you find.

It might help to picture this: Imagine sending a love letter to your crush. Think about what you hope is happening on the other end of that letter. Imagine getting a positive response. That’s a pretty good picture of how God feels about you. He sent His love letter to us via the Bible. He’s expecting us to explore it with love-letter intensity, and He’s desperately waiting for our positive response.

So the next time you open your Bible, do what every writer of every love letter hopes for: Say yes! There’s a huge reward for those who are willing to search with love-letter intensity and say yes to what they find. Let’s take God’s Word for it.

You can get started with some words from Jesus that speak of God’s love for us:

Matthew 13:18-23

Luke 6:47-48