Gregory,

I'm so glad that you are my son. Out of all the young men in the world, I could not have chosen any better than the Lord in selecting you to be a part of our family. I love you, son. Solomon had a very strong desire for his son to be wise, and I have the same desire for you. You have a tender heart, and the Lord is to be praised for that. I am writing this book as a love letter to you with the hope that utilizing its truths will make your tender heart a wise and tender heart. My desire for you is that you will come to know the Lord Jesus Christ in a close, personal, friendship relationship that will cause you to walk before God and men so that they will see your love, strength of character, and wisdom. It will happen as you practice Proverbs every day. I pray for you, son, and as the Lord permits, I'll be there to help, encourage, and love you as you grow in the Lord. Then, when I've gone to be with the Lord, you can look back at this letter of love as a constant reminder of my gratefulness to the Lord for allowing me you love you. You are one of my best friends, and I love you for who you are.

Please, read this book often, and make it yours in practice and in the desire of your heart. It will guide you through many difficult and trying times that likely lay ahead. Remember, though, that it will take time to digest and acquire its truths, but when you do understand, you will be much better prepared to handle the hard knocks of life. Give the Lord ample opportunity to teach you, and He will teach you well.

Matthew 22:37-40 tells us, *"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."* Whereas Psalms teaches us to love the Lord with all our heart, Proverbs teaches us to love our neighbor as ourselves. The whole of Proverbs is aimed at teaching you and me to learn the best way to interact with others in a godly manner based upon our relationship with the Lord. I do not believe that anyone who has not been truly born again can successfully live Proverbs. Living the way the book teaches is a spiritual exercise, and spiritual exercises are foreign to an unsaved man or woman. Gregory, you know the Lord and are learning to love him. You can do what Proverbs teaches if you want to study, learn, and then do what Solomon taught. It is solely up to you. If you choose to do so you can be all that Proverbs teaches. It will be a lot of work, but the whole process is worth all the effort you will exert.

I have just finished reading a book that has changed my life forever. I have known for a long time that God the Father loves us more than we can know. It says so in Ephesians 1:3-14 where it states,

> [3] *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who* ***has blessed us with every spiritual blessing*** *in the heavenly places in Christ,* [4] *just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.*
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> ***In love*** [5] *He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,* [6] *to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.* [7] *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace,* [8] *which He lavished upon us.*
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> *In all wisdom and insight* [9] *He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him* [10] *with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth.*
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> *In Him* [11] *also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,* [12] *to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.*
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> [13] *In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,* [14] *who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.*

As I sit here I am overwhelmed with the depth of God's love. The book I read was written by Francine Rivers and is entitled Redeeming Love. It is about a young man who married a prostitute and loved her to Christ. The story was taken from Hosea where God told him to marry a harlot. Reading this book was an act of spiritual worship for me, because throughout the whole of it I could picture God loving a vile, wretched man like me and bringing me to a point to where I would love Him in return. What a thrill it is to know that God loves us that much. His love was ordained before time began, and it was demonstrated in the person of Jesus Christ when He came to earth to live and die for us.

It has dawned upon me that as I write this commentary on Proverbs, the emphasis needs to be on living the book so that you and I can be the kind of people that love others to Christ as a way of saying thank you to the God who loves us. Since Proverbs is a book that teaches us how to interact with and react toward our neighbors, it ought to be something we do as an expression of love for the Savior with the hope that living and loving others like He wants will bring them to a saving knowledge of Christ. And that is exactly what I want to do in writing the commentary. Throughout the work I intend to learn how the love of God can be expressed through our love for other people and then write it for your benefit. I am not a people person, and I have often said, “I wouldn’t mind working with the public if it weren’t for people.” All the same, I need to love people in a way they perceive as genuine love. I pray that both you and I can do just that every day of our lives.

This work is a love letter to you, but it is also a labor of love from my heart to the Lord. I offer it to you and to Him expecting nothing in return. Hopefully it will last longer than me because after I am dead and gone it won’t be too many years before no one will remember who I was anyway. That’s alright though, because my goal is to write something that will exalt the Lord and bring honor to His name. Understand, I am not so naïve as to believe that many people will read this work, but if only you are helped, than this endeavor will have been worth all of the labor and sacrifice.

Son, I pray that in time you will read what I have written to you and develop the same hunger for the Word as I have. It is so sweet to understand the Scriptures and in the process understand more about the heart of God. It is so wonderful to walk with Him in an intimate way. For the first 35 years of being a child of God I could not comprehend such a personal walk with the Lord. I knew the Lord as savior, but there was nothing personal about it. Ah, but now that I have come to know Him better I never want to go back to being a mere academic believer. The kind of relationship I have found with the Lord is simply too sweet. I pray that in time you too will experience this sweet relationship with the Lord that I have found. I want to share with you a poem I wrote before coming to know the Lord intimately. It tells of the desire of my heart back then.

I serve the Lord each passing day from duty as I should,
but it would be so nice to know the Lord the way I could.
There is no depth of friendship there, the kind I’d like to know.
He is to me a distant God, at least it seems He’s so.

There must be more to knowing God than duty can convey,
and it would be so sweet to hear Him call me close today.
I long so much to hear His voice , to call me to His side,
and be with Him and share with Him and there with Him abide.

It’s sad to say that through the years I’ve never known the Lord
in such a sweet and friendly way that friendship can afford.
I want a chance to tell my Lord the burdens that I bear,
and be assured that He is there to hear and feel and care.

I know the Bible says He’s there to meet my every need,
He sees my thoughts, my motives, and my every single deed.
Oh sure He’s there upon His throne in majesty sublime,
yet where is the sweet fellowship that ought to come in time?

His Word is such a comfort in this world of sin and greed,
but fellowship with God above is really what I need.
I want to walk so close to Him that there is just no doubt
that He is there to show His love within me and without.

I hear Him speak through men who preach the word with fervent heart,
and joy in God for saving me and calling me apart.
There is no doubt that when I die I’ll be with Christ above,
so why is there this nagging need to feel the God I love?

Dear Lord, I want to know you as a friend so close to me
and feel your touch upon my life as real as it can be.
Please draw me close beside yourself and show your love to me
and keep me there for time and then for all eternity.

How did I find this sweet relationship? It was by immersing myself in Scripture and meditating upon it throughout much of the day. It came slowly, but after thousands of hours of meditating upon the Scriptures it came. You see, I am a slow learner, but I simply hang in there as long as it takes to make the truth become clear. Hopefully, someday you will learn to do the same, and when you do it will change your life.

Son, here is my heart. I offer it to you hoping that you will gain valuable insight from Proverbs and the accompanying Scriptures contained in this commentary. When you read it years from now, remember me, and most of all, remember the dear Savior who loves you and gave Himself for you. Give Him your life, your future, and your dreams. He will take them and make the very best out of them. Like Jim Elliot once said, “He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.” I love you, son. I have since you were born, and I always will. Remember that as long as you live.

Dad