

## Proverbs: Jesus our Wisdom

- I. Chp. 1:1-1:7 Wisdom's worth
- II. Chp. 1:8-9:18 Wisdom about life
- III. Chp. 10-24 Wisdom for godly living
- IV. Chp. 25-29 Wisdom for relationships
- V. Chp. 30-31 Wisdom by the number and from A to Z

The book of proverbs speaks to the human will and to the choices that life sets before us. Someone has said, "*Choices are the hinges of destiny*" and the truth is that our lives turn on the choices we make. The primary message of Proverbs is that life can never be fully understood nor lived except through a relationship with God. There are only three books in the Hebrew scripture's that can be categorized as **philosophic**: Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. And by philosophic I mean it in the sense that the Jews would as Hebrew philosophers believed that their "*love of wisdom*" began with their love and affirmation of God, as Paul so aptly put it in Col. 2:2-3 that, "*the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*" **Being a "philosopher" only makes a person a "lover of wisdom" but being a lover of God makes one wise!** And it is this truth that Solomon starts with in Proverbs 1:7 as he writes, "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*" And by "*fear*" Solomon doesn't mean to say the cringing sort of fear that lives in terror as John wrote in 1 John 4:18 "*There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.*" The **fear that Solomon mentions is the fear that our actions and attitudes may bring hurt or harm to our God by grieving His loving**

**heart.** Notice as well that Solomon says that the “*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge*”. It is not the “*END*” of knowledge it is only the door by which we may enter. It is through this door that Peter said in 2 Peter 3:18 that we were to then “*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*” The author’s name appears in the very first verse as we are told that these are “*The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel*”. According to 1 Kings 4:32 Solomon “*spoke three thousand proverbs, and his songs were one thousand and five*”. But we have in this book only 800 out of those 3000. In 1 Kings 3:5-9 at his inauguration instead of asking for popularity and wealth he asked for wisdom to rule God’s people and God granted him his request to the degree that he became famous and rich because of it. This book according to Solomon’s own words in Eccles. 12:9 is because the “*Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yes, he pondered and sought out and set in order many proverbs.*” Solomon was a “collector” of wisdom as well as an author of it and others apparently help in this as Proverbs was written and compiled over a 250 year period of time. The book is logically laid out with an easy to follow outline:

- **Purpose of Proverbs: Chp. 1:1-7**
- **Proverbs for young people: Chp. 1:8-9:18**
- **Proverbs of Solomon compiled by Solomon: Chp. 10-24**
- **Proverbs of Solomon compiled by Hezekiah: Chp. 25-29**
- **Proverbs of Agur and Lemuel: Chp. 30-31**

## I. Chp. 1:1-1:7 Wisdom's worth

In these brief seven verses we are given the author, theme and purpose of the book.:

**Author:** Verse 1 “*The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel*”

**Purpose:** Verses 2-6 is fivefold:

1. Verse 2 **To know** wisdom and instruction
2. Verse 2 **To perceive** the words of understanding
3. Verse 3 **To receive** the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity
4. Verse 4-5 **To give** prudence to the simple: a man of understanding will attain wise counsel.
  - a. To the young man knowledge and discretion—
  - b. A wise man will hear and increase learning
5. Verse 6 **To understand** a proverb and an enigma, the words of the wise and their riddles

**Theme:** Verse 7 is to bring the reader to place where they understand that “*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*”

In other words, this is a collection of wisdom designed to meet the needs of people of all ages and stages in life, this is a practical guidebook for the understanding of what life is all about. It is user-friendly, “*Godly living for dummies*” kind of book to unlock the mysteries of living righteously in an unrighteous world. Someone has well noted that:

- **Reading a Proverb takes seconds**
- **Memorizing a Proverb takes minutes**
- **Applying a Proverb takes a life time**

The seventh verse is the “Password” of proverbs is the door by which one must enter into a pursuit of wisdom. Once you have learned that a relationship with God described by way of the healthy fear that our behavior as seen in attitudes and actions can grieve our loving Father we can now enter into the practical application of this in every area of our life.

## **II. Chp. 1:8-9:18 Wisdom about life**

This sections starts out with the words of verse 8 *“My son, hear the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother”*. And as such we come into a series of ten exhortations from a wise father to his young son, each of these starts with the words, **“My son”**. Verses 8-9 address the son while he is still a boy in their house saying, *“My son, hear the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother; For they will be a graceful ornament on your head, and chains about your neck.”* A person is never too young to be instructed in “wisdom” to be given boundaries such lessons will set a child on a path to godly success and a life lived to the fullest. Next in verses 10-19 twice the father tells his son to avoid bad company, as there is a stern warning about bad peer pressure. As our children grow they come into outside influences, friends who can steer them in paths and pursuits that can destroy lives especially their own. There is no greater lesson we can teach our children in this life then how to choose their friends. There are only two possibilities: Either our children will impact their friends, or their friends will impact them! Next the father from 1:20-2:22 speaks to his son about pursuing the path of wisdom. He warns his son that Wisdom will continue to call out to him but if he continues to ignore its plea, counsel and rebuke then calamity will come and his refusal to listen will laugh and mock him. The father warns that then after the fact when

he attempts to listen it will be too late. The cause of this was 1:29 *“Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord”*. The father lists 10 things in 2:1-5 for his son to keep him from what he described in chapter 1:

Vs. 1a *“receive my words”*

Vs. 1b *“treasure my commands within you”*

Vs. 2a *“incline your ear to wisdom”*

Vs.2b *“apply your heart to understanding”*

Vs. 3a *“cry out for discernment”*

Vs. 3b *“lift up your voice for understanding”*

Vs. 4a *“seek her as silver”*

Vs. 4b *“search for her as for hidden treasures”*

Vs. 5a *“Then you will understand the fear of the Lord”*

Vs. 5b *“find the knowledge of God”*

In chapter 3:1-26 the father speaks of the benefits of wisdom with that familiar verses 5-6 which admonish all us children too, *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”* In 3:27-35 the father tells the son to be kind and tender hearted towards others as *“God gives grace to the humble”*, verse 34b. Chapter 4:1-13 the father tells the son to *“get wisdom”* verse 5 and in 4:14-22 he tells him to avoid evil, and it is the combination of getting wisdom and avoiding evil that the father says in 4:23-27 will keep his heart. This sets up the father’s discussion about the danger of lusting after women and committing adultery 5:1-14 and the blessings of being faithful to your spouse 5:15-23. The father will again bring this topic up in 6:20-7:27. In 6:1-5 he warns his son about the

danger of debt and in 6:6-19 cautions him about being lazy. Then in chapter 8-9 the father speaks of two ways to life as he compares wisdom to a beautiful woman and folly to following after a gal who has here beauty only skin deep.

### **III. Chp. 10-24 Wisdom for godly living**

Here we start Solomon's that Solomon himself compiled of his own. The first section of these chapters 10-15 make up 375 individual Proverbs and all but 19 are done in a poetical form known as **antithetic parallelism** "*parallels comparing opposite truths*".

The bulk of these are contrasting the godly and the wicked. Such as Proverbs 10:17 where Solomon contrasts the one who, "*keeps instruction is in the way of life*" ...with the one who, "*refuses correction goes astray*". Or one of my favorites Proverbs 11:22 where we read, "*As a ring of gold in a swine's snout, so is a lovely woman who lacks discretion.*" Here we see gold which represents value and worth but it has been clearly misplaced on her outward appearance instead of her inward beauty. Proverbs 14:12 reminds us that "*There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.*"

Next in line are Proverbs 16-22:16 which are self-evident moral truths where all but 18 of these are done in another form of Hebrew poetry called **synonymous parallelism** which is "*parallels of similar truths*". These proverbs encourage godly living. Take Proverbs 17:28 where we are reminded that, "*Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; when he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive.*" Or as we read in Proverbs 18:12 "*Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty, and before honor is humility.*" Proverbs 18:24 tells us that "*A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.*" Proverbs 20:30 remind us

that *“Blows that hurt cleanse away evil, as do stripes the inner depths of the heart.”* Proverbs 21:2 tells us that *“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the hearts.”* And Proverbs 21:23 tells us that *“Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles.”* Proverbs 22:4 tells us that *“By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches and honor and life.”*

Finally Solomon tells us in Proverbs 22:17-24:34 the first group 22:17-24:22 are 30 proverbs are sayings of the wise which are then followed by six more sayings for the wise in 24:23-34 and in these they cover a wide range of topics that wisdom needs to be applied to. Such as Proverbs 24:3-4 where we are told that, *“Through wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches.”* Or as Proverbs 24:6 tells us *“For by wise counsel you will wage your own war, and in a multitude of counselors there is safety.”*

#### **IV. Chp. 25-29 Wisdom for relationships**

These Proverbs, though written by Solomon, were compiled by King Hezekiah's men according to 25:1 and their aim is our relationships with others. 25:1-7 deals with kings. Whereas 25:8-20 deal with our relationships with our neighbors and 25:21-24 deal with handling our enemies where we are told in Proverbs 25:21-22 that *“If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; for so you will heap coals of fire on his head, and the Lord will reward you.”* Proverbs 25:25-28 he deals with the most cantankerous person you will ever meet, yourself. There we are told in Proverbs 25:27 *“It is not good to eat much honey; so to seek one's own glory is not glory.”* Fools are the subject in 26:1-12, sluggards in 26:13-16 and gossips in 26:17-28. Proverbs 26:16 tells us that *“The lazy man is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who*

*can answer sensibly.” And in Proverbs 26:20 we are told that “Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; and where there is no talebearer, strife ceases.”*

### **V. Chp. 30-31 Wisdom by the number and from A to Z**

These final Proverbs are written by two different authors that we know nothing about Agur who writes 30:1-33 based upon sets of numbers and King Lemuel who writes Proverbs 31:1-31 writes an acrostic 22 verse proverb based upon the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, where portrays the virtues of a godly wife. Agur writes in Proverbs 30:7-8 *“Two things I request of You (Deprive me not before I die): Remove falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches-- feed me with the food allotted to me”*. And King Lemuel writes in Proverbs 31:10 *“Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies.”*

Ah 31 chapters and I challenge you to try a “Proverb a day” and if you will you will find that it will keep you away from the world.