

A Word to the Wise

A study of major themes in the Book of Proverbs

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Additional themes for study on your own –

General Information about the Book of Proverbs & Bibliography

These study guides have been designed to assist you in the “Three R’s” of your own Bible study – reading, receiving, and responding. You are welcome to print out the whole series. If you wish to print out only one lesson at a time, choose that option from your printer.

Please feel free to use these materials for your own personal use or with a small group, remembering to give credit where credit is due.

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Lesson #1

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The Place to Begin

**“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,
and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”**

Proverbs 9:10

While it may be true that wise individuals do not describe themselves as having wisdom; it is also true that those who are wise have not become that way without purposefully seeking God and searching for the truth that can be found only in Him and in His Word. The central theme of the Book of Proverbs is “the fear of the Lord”. Job, in the middle of His great pain and troubles understood this relationship – “Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.” (Job 28:28) Perhaps the question that we should be asking ourselves when we get advice, confide in a friend or choose a leader is not “who is wise” but “who fears the Lord”. How is your “fear factor” these days?

PREPARE - As you begin this study about what it means to “fear the Lord”, take time to ask yourself if this is a desire of your heart and talk to the Lord about it. He wants to help you focus on Him alone as you share this time together.

PERUSE – Proverbs 1 and 2 –

As you re-read these chapters notice the emphasis on wisdom and the part that fearing the Lord has in it.

PONDER – “THE FEAR OF THE LORD” - What is it? Where does it come from? What are the results?

Learn all you can about it just from reading Proverbs. No commentaries or helps at this point!

1:7	15: 16
1: 28 - 29	15: 33
2: 1 -5	16: 6
3: 7 -8	19 :23
8: 13	22: 4
9: 10	23: 17 - 18
10: 27 – 29	24: 21 - 22
14: 2	28: 14
14: 16	29: 25
14: 26	31: 30
14: 27	

1. Write your own explanation of what it means to “fear the Lord” based on what you have read. This will help you clarify your thinking.
2. There are “God-fearing” people in both the Old and New Testament. What do you observe about them?
Abraham – Genesis 22: 1 – 12
Midwives - Exodus 1: 15 – 21
Leaders - Exodus 18: 17 – 21
Job - Job 1: 1, 8 – 12, 2:3
Cornelius – Acts. 10: 2, 22
3. Do you think that these verses from Proverbs are as true today as they were in centuries past? Why or why not?
4. Summarize your impressions (what’s important to you in this study) in a way that is helpful to you – journaling your thoughts, a poem, a psalm, a song, a picture, a letter to our group or a friend or to God, a short speech or newspaper editorial or column. You choose and let God enable you to personalize His truth to you.

PRAY

There is no doubt that God wants you and me to understand in a deeper way what it means “to fear Him”. You have the opportunity now to listen to Him in quietness. He will speak to you and then you can respond.

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Lesson 2

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Do You Understand?

**Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding,
for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold."**

Proverbs 3: 13 – 14

Do you find that "the older you get the less you know"? It probably is not a totally accurate statement, but sometimes with age comes the realization that there is so much more that we do not know that the percentage of what we do know seems to be decreasing. However, the correlation of knowledge to understanding may be quite limited. Understanding, that is seeing all of life from God's perspective, comes directly from Him and through His Word to us. Proverbs gives us many clues for finding "the treasure of understanding". Are you ready to begin the "treasure hunt"?

PREPARE – As you begin this study, give yourself some time to focus on the Lord. The Holy Spirit has been given to you to guide you into all truth and to comfort, encourage, and strengthen you in your faith and understanding. What would you like Him to do in your heart and mind as you study today?

PERUSE – Proverbs 3

PONDER – "UNDERSTANDING" What is it? How is it different from wisdom, discernment, knowledge, insight? What kind of understanding does God want us to have? What characterizes someone with understanding? Learn all you can from reading the Book of Proverbs – no commentaries or helps at this point.

1: 1 – 6	11: 12
2: 1 – 3	13: 15
2: 6	14: 29
2: 11	15: 21
3: 5 -6	15: 32
3: 13 – 18	16: 16
3: 19 – 20	16: 22
4: 1	17: 27
4: 5 – 9	18: 2
7: 1 – 4	19: 8
8: 1 – 5	20: 5
8: 12 – 14	21: 16
9: 6	23: 23
9: 10	24: 3 - 4
10: 23	28: 2

1. Now you are ready to write a description of someone who has the kind of understanding that comes from the Lord. Try to include the characteristics from the verses in Proverbs. How would you describe the person who is without understanding?
2. As you read the story of Solomon, to whom God gave an amazing gift of wisdom and understanding, what impresses you? I Kings 3: 1 – 15, I Kings 4: 29 – 34
3. Psalm 119 has many clues for those on a treasure hunt to find understanding. Make a collection of those clues. You can scan the whole Psalm for the clues or try reading these verses –
Psalm 119: 34, 73, 104, 130, 169
4. Go back to Proverbs 3. What are some of the principles for living that are laid out in this chapter? If you really understood, grasped, comprehended them, what difference would it make in your choices and attitudes this week? You might want to use the same method you used in Lesson 1 to help you remember what God is teaching you about looking at life from His perspective – "UNDERSTANDING."

PRAY

You have the opportunity now to listen to the Lord in quietness. He will speak to you and then you can respond. In any areas of confusion, doubt, or uncertainty that you may be experiencing, admit them and let the Lord bring to your mind and heart a measure of understanding. He wants you to know that in Christ are "all the treasures of wisdom and understanding". (Col. 2: 2-3)

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Lesson 3

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Don't Go It Alone

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.

In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."

Proverbs 3: 5 - 6

From the beginning God never intended that any one should live life in isolation. Yet, we all find ourselves choosing to close ourselves off from others and from God Himself from time to time. Our need for independence and our desire for freedom to do things our own way can easily move us into "aloneness". Certainly, there may be people surrounding us, but the question is whether we are in relationship with some of those people so that we are receiving the benefit of their insights and counsel, their love and encouragement, their wisdom and advice. Giving certain people permission, both through word and attitude, to be forthright and honest with us is a healthy way to live and a Godly thing to do. Proverbs offers to us some great reasons to live with open ears.

PREPARE – As you begin this study, take some time to think about whether you are as eager to "receive advice" as you are to "give advice". When you need encouragement, counsel, wisdom, to whom do you turn? Are you willing to admit to anyone your weaknesses and your doubts, your struggles and your questions - the ones that you would rather deny or hide? God knows it all and you can always be honest with Him, but would He like you to learn something about your need to trust another person? Why not start by inviting the Holy Spirit to teach you?

PERUSE – Proverbs 3: 1 – 8 What are the reasons for knowing and doing life the way that God designed it to be?

PONDER – Learn all you can from these proverbs about the benefit of getting counsel, correction and advice.

Jot down your observations as you read the verses in each of the categories.

<u>CORRECTION:</u>	<u>GUIDANCE:</u>	<u>ADVICE:</u>	<u>ENCOURAGEMENT:</u>
10: 17	11:14	12: 5	12: 25
12: 1	16: 20	12: 15	13: 17
13: 1		13: 10	16: 21
13: 18		13: 20	27: 9
15: 10		15: 22	27: 17
15: 31, 32		19: 20	
28 13, 23		20: 18	
29: 1			

1. Are there a few of these proverbs that particularly catch your attention today? Why? Copy them down, so that you can refer to them later.
2. There are some "Christians" who depend solely on God's Word and the prompting of the Holy Spirit when they are making important decisions. Try to defend this position and then think about the dangers inherent in it. What are your conclusions?
3. What makes it possible for some people to accept correction and advice so graciously and humbly while others immediately respond defensively, tearfully, with hostility? Or by withdrawal? What do you think your tendency is? Would your family and friends agree? If there is a need for change, where would be a place to begin?
4. Summarize your impressions (what's important to you in this study) in a way that is helpful to you.

PRAY -

Take some time to wait quietly before the Lord. Why don't you take the proverbs that you chose in question 1 and use them as a basis for talking with the Lord about your ability to receive correction and advice and to be open and honest with the people that God brings into your life?

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Lesson 5

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The Gift of Friendship

Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart,
and the pleasantness of one's friend springs from his earnest counsel."
Proverbs 27:9

Wouldn't you think that making friends would be a natural and easy thing for all of us to do? After all, we're created to have relationships with one another and we're designed to find enjoyment and pleasure in the company of other people. Yet, it seems that we all need help in this area and bookstores are full of resources to assist us in our search for friendship that is genuine and lasting. While these books may be helpful, the insight that Scripture gives us is probably the most challenging that exists because we are instructed to love as Christ has loved us. The wonderful thing is that He did not leave us to do this by ourselves, but He gave to us the Holy Spirit to empower us to become the kind of person that He desires us to be.

PREPARE – Isn't it amazing that Jesus called his disciples "his friends"? What is even more surprising is that He wants to be your friend and mine. Little children in Sunday School often learn the following song :

"My best friend is Jesus. He loves you. He loves me.

My best friend is Jesus. He loves you and me."

Talk with your friend, Jesus, and tell Him what you most appreciate about His friendship with you.

PERUSE – John 15: 9 – 17

What kind of example and explanation does Jesus give to His disciples concerning friendship in these final minutes with them before His arrest and crucifixion?

PONDER – The Book of Proverbs has many insights and instructions for friendships and relationships.

Write down your observations as you read these proverbs. Note the contrast or comparison.

11: 13	18: 1	22: 24 - 25
12: 26	18: 24	23: 6 - 8
13: 10	19: 4	25: 19
14: 20	19: 6 – 7	25: 20
15: 18	19: 11	26: 26
16: 28	19: 20	27: 6
17: 9	20: 3	27: 9
17: 14	20: 19	27: 10
17: 17	22: 11	27: 17

1. There are a variety of ways to summarize these proverbs. For example: the negative and positive suggestions or the things to do and the things to avoid. Try to find a way to do this from your study.
2. As you think about your friendships through the years, what contributed to ones that were very special? What are some of the reasons that some of them did not end well. What part did you have in this?
3. Why do you think this topic is one of the major themes in Proverbs?
4. What are basic friendship principles that apply to both the extrovert and the introvert in these verses? Can you put these principles into some form of creative writing or art or expression? Try it! Maybe it will be a simple letter to a friend, expressing appreciation for that friendship or a letter of apology for something that you did to disappoint a friend. Perhaps it will be a psalm or poem in praise of friends.

PRAY – How's your friendship deepening with the Lord? Tell Him the desires of your heart and listen to Him express His love and care for you.

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Lesson 6

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“Truth or Consequences”

“An honest answer is like a kiss on the lips.”

Proverbs 24: 26

So, is there such a thing as a “little white lie”? Is there ever an occasion when it is better to lie than tell the truth? How do you feel about exaggeration and under-statement? Sometimes an honest answer can feel more like injury than a delight, so what does this proverb mean? Why is it that we are so easily tempted to avoid truth, to deny reality, and to “protect” ourselves by believing the things that we want to believe rather than truth? This might be a good time to give these questions some thought as we come to the wisdom that is in the Bible. To love what God is and to love what he loves is a quest that is worth a great deal of time and energy, don’t you agree?

PREPARE – Don’t you love the word, the idea of “integrity”? It represents someone who can be trusted, who is genuine, who is the same at church, at home, and at work, and who values truth and honesty totally. As you come to this study today, ask the Lord to teach you something that you need to know about yourself.

PERUSE – Luke 22: 54 – 62 - One example of consequences. Can you think of any other examples in Scripture?

PONDER – A lying tongue and a false witness, an honest answer and a truthful reply – give them some thought as you read the following verses in Proverbs. Highlight a few that you find especially thought provoking.

6: 16 – 19	15: 4	20: 17
10: 18 - 19	16: 11	20: 23
11: 1, 3	16: 13	21: 6
12: 9	17: 4	21: 28
12: 17, 19	17: 7	24: 23 - 25
12: 22	17: 20	24: 26
13: 5	19: 5	24: 28 - 29
13: 11	19: 22	26: 28
14: 5	20: 10	29: 5
14: 25	20: 14	29: 27

1. Make a list of how God feels about false scales, a lying tongue, pretension, dishonest witness as you find it in these verses. What kind of conclusion does this cause you to make?
2. Summarize the benefits of truth telling and honesty. Have you experienced any of these either through choosing to tell the truth or being told the truth? Try to think of some examples from your own experience.
3. We all have an amazing capacity to fool ourselves. The offices of counselors, therapists, and pastors are full of people who desperately need to hear the truth about themselves, the world they live in, and the God who forgives and accepts them. It’s very hard to tell the truth when you do not know it, isn’t it? How do you go about learning truth and making it a part of your life?
4. Do you ever rationalize your behavior? That means “to devise self-satisfying but incorrect (dishonest) reasons for something you have done or said or thought”? In light of these verses, how do you think God looks at this?
5. Summarize your impressions from this lesson in a way that will help you remember them.

PRAY – Take some time to listen to the quiet voice of Jesus as He comes to you with love and truth. He wants you to simply sit with Him and admit what He already knows – the truth that is in your mind and heart, so that He can comfort you and help you to know that “the truth will make you free”.

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Lesson 7

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What Did You Say? – Part 1

A man finds joy in giving an apt reply –
And how good is a timely word!”

Proverbs 15: 23

There are more proverbs that give us wisdom and insight about our lips, tongue and words, than any other theme in the whole book. Do you have any ideas why this might be? There is an amazing amount of power not only in spoken words but in written words. When you add timing, tone of voice, emotions, and body language to simple words, the intensity of the communication increases dramatically, so as you think about these proverbs be sure to notice the descriptive words that are used.

PREPARE – Begin your time with this prayer from Psalm 19: 14:

“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.”

PERUSE – James 3: 1 – 12 gives a very graphic picture of the power of our words. Take some time to reflect on these images and the questions that are asked in these verses.

PONDER –

1. There are some basic commands given to those who are wise in the opening chapters of Proverbs.

What are they teaching us?

4: 24

5: 1 – 3

6: 1 – 5

8: 13

2. The tongue can be an amazing resource for good - for healing, encouragement, and joy. In what ways do these proverbs help us to understand the positive potential of our words?

18: 19

17:27

22: 20 - 21

12:14

17: 28

23: 15 - 16

12: 25

18: 4

25: 11

15: 1

18: 20

25: 25

15: 4

18: 21

27: 1

15: 23

20: 15

27: 2

16: 1

21: 23

28: 23

16: 23

22: 11

29: 5

16: 24

22: 17 – 19

31: 8 – 9

3. Think of some times when the words spoken to you by some else made a difference in your day. Why were they so helpful or encouraging? Is this ability to use one's words for good a gift for only a few select people or an opportunity/challenge for every believer?

4. Choose a few of these proverbs to focus on more specifically. What could you do to keep them in your mind and in your thoughts every day this week? How will they influence your conversations?

5. Here are 2 additional proverbs to ponder:

“Wise men talk because they have something to say. Fools talk because they have to say something.”

Plato

“A good learner is one whose ears get as much use as his/her mouth.”

B. Wilkinson

PRAY – Take time to talk to the Lord about the power of your tongue. Perhaps you would like to incorporate the kind of wisdom that is in James 3: 17 – 18 into your speech and communication. Jesus is waiting to answer your prayer and give you the desires of your heart.

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Lesson 8

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What Did You Say? – Part 2

“The tongue of the righteous is choice silver,
But the heart of the wicked is of little value.” Proverbs 10: 20

The contrast between the words of one who is righteous, upright, or wise in heart and the one who is foolish, wicked, or perverse is very vivid in the book of Proverbs. When you put more than 40 of these wise sayings all together, you can begin to understand that what is in the heart of a person is clearly seen through his speech. Listen to someone long enough and you will know what kind of a person he/she really is. Those who ignore God and go their own independent way will have the speech of the godless person; while those who seek God will have their heart transformed so that their speech will increasingly reflect the character of The One that they worship.

PREPARE - Begin your time with this prayer from Psalm 19:14:

“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord,
my strength and my Redeemer.”

Have you experienced God as your redeemer and your strength in any conversations or comments this past week? Why or why not?

PERUSE - Read Matthew 12: 33 – 37 as you come to the Word of God today. Why not talk to Jesus about what He had to say in these verses as you begin your study today.

PONDER – As you study these proverbs make two lists. The first will be the characteristics or results of the words of the upright. The second list will be the characteristics or results of the words of the wicked.

10: 8	12: 22	18: 13
10: 11	13: 2	19: 1
10: 14	13: 3	19: 28
10: 18	14: 3	22: 14
10: 20	14: 7	24: 1 - 2
10: 21	15: 2	24: 28 - 29
10: 31	15: 7	25: 23
10: 32	15: 14	26: 7
11: 9	15: 28	26: 9
11: 11	16: 28	26: 22,
11: 12	17: 4	26: 23
11; 13	17: 7	26: 24 - 25
12; 6	17: 20	26: 28
12: 18, 19	18: 6 – 7, 8	

1. If you were to rate your present speaking habits on a scale of 1 to 5 with #1 being “never a problem” and #5 being often a problem, how would your graph look?

Gossiping	Quarreling	Questionable humor
Boasting	Criticism	Angry remarks
Flattering	Sarcasm	Talking too much
Profanity	Nagging	Talking too little

2. Now it's time to rate yourself on the other kinds of speech with #1 being a regular habit and #5 seldom part of your life.

Kindness	Good questions	Spontaneous prayer
Encouragement	Initiate conversation	Peace making
Apology	Forgiveness	Reach out to strangers
Counsel	Reconciliation	Friendship evangelism

3. Old habits of speech and communication are sometimes hard to break. What advice would you give someone who is trying to learn new ways?
4. Summarize your impressions (what's important to you in this study) in a way that is helpful to you.

PRAY – Communication is always a combination of listening and sharing. God desires you to come to Him for both.

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Lesson 9

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The Right Thing To Do

To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice."
Proverbs 21: 3

The choices you make in life make all the difference, don't they? Teaching children how to make wise choices, to consider the consequences of our choices, and to look at the long range impact is perhaps one of the greatest challenges of parenting. Perhaps what we model for others in the choices that we make for ourselves continues to be one of life's greatest opportunities! It's always fascinating to ask people whom we greatly admire about their choices. To "do what is right and just" throughout any given day means making choices multiple times daily to live life from God's perspective or from our own selfish viewpoint. How are you "**doing**"?

PREPARE – God is waiting to meet you today. In quiet confidence, you can come into His presence. He is waiting to meet you, to uphold you, to forgive and restore you. Will you let Him?

PERUSE – Galatians 5: 22 – 26

The work of the Holy Spirit is to produce "fruit" in our lives which we could never do on our own. As you come to the proverbs for today, remind yourself that He is within you to enable you to reflect your Savior each day.

PONDER - As you read these proverbs, make a list of the positive qualities that are characteristic of the one who is wise and Godly, of the person who is righteous. What are the benefits of choosing to live wisely and Godly.

11: 2	14: 30	19: 11
11: 17	14: 31	19: 17
11: 18	15: 13	19: 19
11: 20	15: 15	20: 3
11: 22	15: 17 - 19	24: 17 - 18
12: 16	15: 24 - 26	24: 19 - 20
12: 25	15: 29	25: 28
14: 10	16: 6 - 7	27: 4
14: 13	16: 32	29: 22
14: 21	17: 14	29: 25
14: 22	17: 19	
14: 29	17: 22	

1. How do these attributes compare or contrast to the "fruit of the Spirit" in Galatians?
2. Many of these proverbs have contrasting ideas presented. Did any of the negative or ungodly behavior and its results cause you to pause and think?
3. If you were to post 2 or 3 of these proverbs on your refrigerator, which ones would be most helpful to you?
4. Try to summarize your impressions of these proverbs through the means of a psalm, prayer, poem, editorial or some other means of expression. What does the Lord want you to remember and TO DO?

PRAY – It might be good to remember that God's strength is made perfect in your weakness and that He has promised to strengthen you and uphold you. What would you like Him to do for you today? Let Him assure you that He is able to do abundantly more than you can ask or think.

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Lesson 10

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A Prescription without Side Effects

“Do not be wise in your own eyes. Fear the LORD and shun evil.
This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.”
Proverbs 3: 7 – 8

Do you ever get tired and bored with all the advertisements on TV for medications? If you listen to the list of side effects that each one of them seem to have, why would you go to your doctor and inquire about the benefits? On the other hand, aren't you grateful to God for the medical progress that has been made in recent years which enables us to live more comfortable and healthy lives. Wouldn't it be great if more people would follow the instructions for a long, healthy and happy life that are found right in the Bible? How are you doing in knowing them and following them, by the way?

PREPARE – It would be a good day to stop and thank God for the blessings that you have in your life, including health and strength, family and friends, comforts and delights, and His love and faithfulness.

PERUSE – Proverbs 4: 20 – 27 – There are several clues in this passage about the way to wholeness and life. Take some time to find them and consider them carefully.

PONDER – As you read these proverbs, write out the prescription and the expected results that are given.

9: 10 – 11	16: 3	21: 30
10: 27	16: 9	21: 31
11: 7	16: 17	22: 1
11: 19	16: 31	22: 4
11: 23	17: 6	22: 5
12: 28	18: 14	24: 19 - 20
13: 22	19: 21	27: 1
14: 12	20: 7	31: 25
14: 30	20: 11	31: 30 - 31
14: 32	20: 29	
15: 24, 30	21: 21	

1. Many very Godly and wise people suffer illness and endure lives of physical pain and physical ailments. How do you put together these proverbs with that reality?
2. “A man's spirit sustains him in sickness” – Proverbs 18: 14 - How is the best way to pray for those who are sick or dying? Is it more important to “get well” physically or to be healed in your spirit? Why?
3. Prolonging youth, denying old age, worrying about the future are all major themes in our culture. What do you do to avoid believing some of these lies about life and how to live it? Any clues in Proverbs?
4. Do you think the wisdom in these proverbs are as true today as they were for King Solomon? Why or why not?
5. Find a few of these proverbs that are practical for you today and decide what will help you remember them.

PRAY – God sent Jesus to give you abundant life today and life eternal - John 3: 16, John 20: 31
God sent His Son to give you joy and peace - John 15: 9 – 11
As you reflect on the quality of your life, talk it over with Him and make your requests known to Him.

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RICH/POOR

10: 2
10: 4
10: 15
10: 22
11: 1
11: 4
11: 24 – 25
11: 28
13: 7 – 8
13: 11
13: 23
14: 20
14: 23
14: 31
15: 16, 17
16: 8
16: 16
17: 1
17: 5
17: 16
18: 11
18: 23
19: 1
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19: 7
19: 17
19: 22
20: 13
20: 17
21: 5 -6
21: 13
21: 17
22: 1 – 2
22: 7
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22: 22 – 23
23: 4 – 5
23: 21
27: 24
28: 3
28: 6
28: 11
28: 20
28: 19 – 20
28: 27
29: 13 – 14
30: 8
30: 9

GENEROSITY

15:27i
21:26
23: 1 – 3
23: 6-8
28: 8
28:22
30: 19
31: 9

RIGHTEOUS- NESS

10:2-3
10: 6-7
10:11
10:16
10: 21
10: 24
10: 28 – 29
10: 31- 31
11: 5 – 6
11: 8
11: 10
11: 18 – 19
11: 23
11: 30 – 31
12: 1
12: 28
13: 5 – 6
13: 9
13: 21
13: 25
14: 32
15: 6, 8
16: 8
18: 10
20: 7
20: 11
21: 3
21: 21
28: 1
29: 6 – 7
29: 27

LAZY

6:6 – 9
10: 4
10:5
10:26
12:24
13: 4
15: 19
18: 9
19: 15
19: 24
20: 4
20:13
21:17
21: 25
22:13
22:29
23; 1
24: 31 – 34
26: 15 – 16
28: 19
31: 13 – 19

LIFE/DEATH

1: 32
5: 2 – 23
10:21
15: 10
29: 1

HEART

11: 29
14: 10
17: 3
19: 21
21: 2
21: 4
22: 18
23: 12
23: 15 – 16
23: 17 – 19
24: 12
27: 19

FAMILY-HOME

10: 1
11:22
11:29
12: 4
13:22
13:24
14: 1
14: 26
15:5
15: 20
17: 1
19: 14
19:18
20:7
20: 20-21
21: 9
21: 19
22: 6
22: 15
23: 13 - 14
23: 22
23: 24 - 25
23: 26 - 28
26: 21
27: 8
27: 11
27: 15 - 16
28: 7
28: 24
29: 3
31: 10 - 31

GOOD NAME

3: 3 - 4
22: 1
25: 9 - 10

NOTEWORTHY PROVERBS:

16: 2 - 4
16: 9
16: 17
21: 30 - 31
28: 4
29: 2

A Word to the Wise

A study of major themes in the Book of Proverbs

THEME - The beginning & end of wisdom is to fear God and avoid evil.

What is a proverb?

The Hebrew word is "mashal" – which means "comparison"

Webster's Dictionary – "A short, pithy saying in frequent use, expressing a well-known truth."

Bible Dictionary – "A self-contained unit that presents a capsule truth about life, the world, the way God works."

Other definitions – "A shrewd concentration of truth." "Reliable counsel for right living."

Synonyms - Adage, aphorism, axiom, maxim, precept, saying

Who wrote the book of PROVERBS?

The Egyptians had proverbs as early as 2700 B.C.

Solomon wrote almost all of the book – over 900 proverbs. 950 B.C.

King Hezekiah's scribes wrote the proverbs in Chapters 25 – 29

Agur and Lemuel wrote the last 2 chapters. The book was probably edited between 715 – 686 B.C.

Outline:

1. Ch. 1: 1 – 1: 6 – Introduction
2. Ch. 1: 7 – 9 Father to Son Discourses on Wisdom
3. Ch. 10 – 24 – Solomon's Proverbs
4. Ch. 25 – 29 – Hezekiah's scribes –
5. Ch. 30 – 31 – Agur & Lemuel (Numerical Sayings and Acrostic Poem on Wife)

Hebrew Poetry – Proverbs

– Focused on the development of an idea – repetition, recapitulation, balance, reinforcement, contrast, comparison. (Not sound, rhyme, or rhythm)

1. Synonymous - repeats or restates 22: 1
2. Antithetical – opposite or negative 22: 3
3. Climatic - completion of thought 22: 2
4. Comparison – "better than" 16: 8

Guidelines for studying the wisdom literature in the book of PROVERBS –

1. They are memorable & transferable – through the ages for all ages
2. They are generalizations, not promises or predictions.
They are not legally binding promises from God.
3. They are the likely outcome of our choices, not a guarantee.
4. Their final outcome maybe in eternity.
5. They are a guideline of regularly repeated actions
6. They use hyperbole – a deliberate exaggeration in order to make a point
7. No individual proverb should be taken as whole truth on any subject.
8. They provide insight on the consequences that certain choices will bring.
9. They reveal God's design for human relationships
Be careful not to misuse a proverb!

Purposes for the PROVERBS:

1. Incentive to take God seriously – "to fear God"
2. Create a desire for wisdom, understanding and discipline
3. Help differentiate between good & evil, between wisdom & foolishness
4. Give us truths that shape our thinking, attitudes, and behavior
5. Perspective on God's character and nature as revealed through His design for right relationships and personal integrity.

Bibliography

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