



PROVERBS

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PROVERBS

Wisdom Above

Wisdom to be Acquired	Wisdom is Superior	Wisdom's Voice
1:20-25,32,33	3:1-12	10:1; 29:7-9
1	2-9	10-31

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. 1:7

Welcome to the Book of Proverbs!

To begin your study of Proverbs, meditate upon the contents and message of the book reflected in the overview chart below. What are the major movements of the book? What is the emphasis of Proverbs? There are many things that people devote their lives to acquiring. To pursue and regard wisdom as a prize is unique. Our key verse is found in 1:7. In what way does it reflect the spiritual message of the book?

Also note the passages listed within the overview chart. Take this opportunity to note each one, relating the section titles to the appropriate passages. What have you learned thus far about the book of Proverbs?

Solomon was one of the wisest men who ever lived on the face of the earth. He devoted his life to practical wisdom. He would observe carefully, test his conclusions over time, and encapsulate his conclusions in a single or series of proverbs. We are the beneficiaries of this type of God-directed reflection!

Solomon himself understood the practical benefit of Proverbs when he said that the words of wise men are like goads (tenacious attention-getting devices), and that masters of these collections are like well-driven nails. They are given by one shepherd (Ecclesiastes 12:11).

Open your heart as you read!

In what ways do you consider yourself to have benefited from wise foundations in your life? How can wise foundations help and protect you? How can foolish foundations make you vulnerable and impact your ultimate success in life?

AUTHOR AND DATE:

Primarily Solomon about 970-900BC. (See 1:1; 10:1; 25:1) The Proverbs were probably arranged into book form during the reign of Hezekiah, King of Judah, about 700 BC., at which time were added the sayings of Agur (30), and the Oracles of Lemuel's mother (31).

OTHER BACKGROUND FOR THE BOOK:

The English word for Proverb indicates that a proverb is a brief saying that says much. Proverbs are pictures that speak volumes to the on who takes the time to listen, to meditate, and to apply what he or she sees!

It is important to remember that the Hebrew view of wisdom differed greatly from other eastern spokespersons such as Confucius. For the Jew wisdom was rooted in a belief and submission to a personal, holy God. In this sense Proverbs is an extremely practical approach to serving God within our everyday lives!

WHY STUDY THE BOOK OF PROVERBS?

Solomon himself said in Ecclesiastes 12:11 (also a book that he authored):

"The words of wise men are like goads, and the masters of these collections are like well-driven nails; they are given by one Shepherd!"

A goad is an attention getting presence or device that shocks us back to reality. The Proverbs are useful in assuring us of being driven straight, strong, and secure rather than bent, weak, and ineffective!

THE SEVEN PILLARS OF A FAMILY

God wants us to build strong households on the rock of Wisdom!

(24:3,4,27)

Building in this way is a challenge (24:10) and the fear of the lord is the foundation for such a quest! (14:26)

The goal of our efforts is to build a house of honor.

(15:33; 16:18-20; 23:10-12; 25:14; 28:13; 29:1)

To accomplish this someone once noted seven pillars from Proverbs for building a strong house. They are reflected elsewhere in the Scriptures. Define each one.

#1: 16:11; 20:7-10 _____

#2: 12:11; 14:23 _____

#3: 14:12; 20:25 _____

#4: 12:9; 15:16,17; 30:7-9 _____

#5: 20:1; 23:1-3 _____

#6: 13:12; 24:5,6 _____

#7: 23:10-12; 24:17,18 _____

And wisdom is built with full assurance of heart! (15:13,15; 17:22)



Proverbs Chapter Chart

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The Purpose of Proverbs

Read 1:1-7

Chapter Title

Key Verse

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
1		

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. What are the overall practical benefits of Proverbs?
2. List the specific qualities that are promised to a faithful reader.
3. Note the key words "to know." Proverbs does not claim to make you into a wise man or woman, rather she claims to reveal practical wisdom to you.
4. The key to success in the eyes of the writer of Proverbs is found in verse 7 of chapter 1. What is it, and why is it so important?

What about me?

How do you practically demonstrate respect and awe for God? Compare the statement of 1:7 with Solomon's reflective words in Ecclesiastes 12:13. What do we learn from this?

My thoughts about wisdom in my life and in the lives of those around me:

Values, Rewards, and Advice

Read 1:1-8-4:27

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
2		
3		
4		

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. What would you consider the "big picture" teachings of wisdom (1:8-33)?
2. What are the specific values of wisdom (2:1-22)?
3. What are the rewards of wisdom (3:1-35)?
4. What are the two paths of life and how do they differ (4:1-27)?

What about me?

How important, recognizable, and discernable is wisdom's voice to you? Do you agree with the concept of two basic life paths - or do you see more options? How can a person be sure they are seeking and following day-by-day wisdom?

My thoughts about the two paths of life:

Warning of Wisdom

Read 5:1-9:18

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. Chapter five defines the pitfalls of immorality. What determines what is moral and what is immoral?
2. How are people drawn toward immoral relationships?
3. What other warnings are found in this section?
4. Chapter six defines seven things God hates. What are they and why would they be so detestable to God? How are they connected?

5. What are the six follies that are listed? Folly is custom-made for fools!

What about me?

Evaluate your relationships based on the seven abominations and six follies. How do you measure up? How would God feel about your personal response to the warning voice of wisdom?

My thoughts about being a fool and knowing a fool:

Wisdom & Folly

Read 10:1-15:33

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		

KEY QUESTIONS:

In this section you will want to note the use of the connective word "but" and how often it notes a contrast. Good & evil, light & darkness, industrious & lazy; etc. Choose at least ten of these contrasts that most apply to your life, and are most likely to help you discern and choose wisdom and reject folly!

What about me?

There is a natural tendency for humanity (especially in our culture) to dislike being told what to do. The idea that there is someone in authority over us with specific absolutes is repugnant to the "enlightened" mind. You must decide about these absolutes. You must make your own day-by-day decisions: Is there a King over the earth? Over my life? Which do I choose: Wisdom or folly!?

My thoughts about what makes an enlightened mind:

Submitting to Wisdom

Read 16:1-22:16

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		

KEY QUESTIONS:

This section is similar to the one before it. Again, choose at least 10 statements that relate to your life and conduct. Where are popular sources of wisdom originating today? How do we decide on the validity of an authority source? What are some recurring themes in this section?

What about me?

How do the recurring themes of Proverbs relate to the recurring themes of your life? What does each teach you about God? About men? About yourself? Look for opportunities today at home, school, or work to contrast wise and foolish behavior. Who are some wise people in your life? Some of the foolish people?

My thoughts about the wise people whom I respect:

Words of the Wise

Read 22:17-24:34

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
22		
23		
24		

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. What would you consider the highlights of these chapters?
2. How do the words of Agur and Lemuel differ from those of Solomon in tone, style, and content? How are they similar?
3. Note the series of "fours" mentioned in chapter 30 and apply the three questions of the previous reading.

What about me?

What kind of balance is taught in 30:7-9? In what ways does this passage reveal a balance or imbalance in your life?

My thoughts about what makes a person live a balanced life:

Words of Solomon, Agur & Lemuel

Read 25:1-31:31

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
25		
26		
27		
28		
29		
30		
31		

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. How do the words of Agur and Lemuel compare with those of Solomon?
2. Take several of the "fours" of chapter 30 and apply the previous questions.
3. What do you consider the highlights of these six chapters?
4. What makes a noble woman in light of Proverbs 31?

What about Today?

In what ways does 30:7-9 reveal a balance or imbalance in your life?

Do you feel that you are a master of this collection of Proverbs?

What does it take to become a "master" in wisdom?

In what ways are you a well-driven nail? (and do you know what that feels like?)

My thoughts about being wise enough to penetrate my culture:



PROVERBS TOPICAL CHART

As you examine Proverbs look for recurring themes such as Family Life, money-management principles, being industrious or lazy, proverbs that promote good interpersonal relationships, purity, business life; etc. Begin a cumulative list under the various topics you observe!

Topic FEAR OF THE LORD

Topic _____

1:7; 1:29; 2:5; 8:13;
9:10; 10:27; 14:26; 14:27;
15:16; 15:33; 16:6;
19:23; 22:4; 23:17

Topic _____

Topic _____

Topic _____

Topic _____



PROVERBS STUDY CHART

The book of Proverbs merits special attention because of the numerous practical insights it provides for a variety of everyday circumstances. A steady commitment to Proverbs over the years can prepare a household and a person with a wealth of personal understanding! Most months have about 31 days. Proverbs has 31 chapters. Faithful reading in conjunction with the day of the month (Example: Proverbs 7 on May 7; etc.) can be an effective long-term tool.

ch# Favorite Proverb #1 Favorite Proverb #2 Favorite Proverb #3

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