

Proverbs Chapter 1

The book of proverbs has been known as the book of wisdom from the very beginning.

Most of the writing of Proverbs has been credited to the pen of Solomon.

God has given Solomon the wisdom to rule his people fairly.

Proverbs is actually a book of instructions on how to live a life pleasing to God and how to be more peaceful with all of mankind.

It is a wonderful book for people of all ages to study how to live moral, peaceful lives.

The purpose of the book is for moral instructions on everyday living.

The main topic is the fear of the LORD.

In fact, the "Fear of the LORD" is mentioned fourteen times.

Solomon's instructions were very good.

He would have been better off if he had heeded his own instructions. Solomon, in his later life strayed from his own teaching.

A "proverb" is a wise saying.

It is similar to a parable in fact it bears a hidden message.

Proverbs 1:1 "The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel;"

We see that these wise sayings are of Solomon, who is the second son of David and Bath-sheba.

David and Solomon were each king of Israel for forty years.

The basic meaning of the Hebrew word for proverb is "comparison," but it came to stand for a wide range of wise pronouncements including the byword lament and thought provoking sayings.

In the Book of Proverbs, the word is used to refer to an aphorism or concise statement of a principle or to a discourse.

The word aphorism (literally "distinction" or "definition", from the Greek: "from-to bound") denotes an original thought, spoken or written in a laconic and easily memorable form.

Laconic means: brief and to the point; effectively cut short; "a crisp retort"; "a response so curt as to be almost rude"; "the laconic reply; yes".

The proverbs are short pithy sayings which express timeless truth and wisdom.

They arrest one's thoughts, causing the reader to reflect on how one might apply divine principles to life situations.

Proverbs contains insight both in poetry and prose; yet, at the same time, it includes commands to be obeyed.

God's proverbs are not limited to this book alone.

As Solomon became king of Israel, he sought and received wisdom and knowledge from the LORD which led him to wealth, honor and fame.

In verses 2-6 the two-fold purpose of the book is to produce the skill of godly living by wisdom and instruction (verse 2a), which is then expanded (in verses 3 and 4); and then to develop discernment (verse 2b), which is expanded (in verse 5).

Proverbs 1:2 "To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;"

Wisdom is the key word of the book and basically means "skill in living."

It is used in the Old Testament to refer to a physical skill such as tailoring, metalwork and woodwork, spinning, engraving and designing, and warfare.

Used metaphorically (as in Proverbs), it refers to the skill to live life successfully.

Instruction refers to moral discipline of one's life, not to classroom instruction.

It refers to the discipline of a moral nature.

Understanding means the capability to distinguish between true and false, good and bad, what matters most, and what does not matter at all.

To the Hebrew mind, wisdom was not knowledge alone, but the skill of living a godly life as God intended man to live.

This word looks at the mental discipline which matures one for spiritual discernment.

Solomon came to the throne with great promise, privilege and opportunity.

God had granted his request for understanding and his wisdom exceeded all others.

However the shocking reality is that he failed to live out the truth that he knew and even taught his son Rehoboam, who subsequently rejected his father's teaching.

Proverbs contains a gold mine of biblical theology, reflecting themes of Scripture brought to the level of practical righteousness, by addressing man's ethical choices, calling into question how he thinks, lives and manages his daily life in light of divine truth.

More specifically, Proverbs calls man to live as the Creator intended him to live when He made man.

The recurring promise of Proverbs is that generally the wise (those of righteousness who obey God), live longer, prosper, and experience joy and the goodness of God temporally, while fools suffer shame and death.

On the other hand, it must be remembered that this general principle is balanced by the reality that the wicked sometimes prosper, though only temporarily.

Job illustrates that there are occasions when the godly wise are struck with disaster and suffering.

Proverbs 1:3 "To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;"

Expanding the purpose and terms (of verse 2a), Proverbs engages in a process of schooling a son in the disciplines of

- (1) Wisdom (a different Hebrew word from that in verse 2), which means discreet counsel or the ability to govern oneself by choice;
- (2) Justice, the ability to conform to the will and standard of God; a practical righteousness that matches one's positional righteousness;
- (3) Judgment, the application of true righteousness in dealing with others; and
- (4) Equity, the living of life in a fair, pleasing way.

Proverbs 1:4 "To give subtlety to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion."

"Wisdom" is the ultimate goal, so we see it mentioned here.

"Instruction" can flow out from the greatest teacher of all time and still we will be no more the wiser.

The point made here is to receive the instruction into your being and in so doing become the wiser.

We have to receive the instructions for it to help us.

We must open up "perceive" our understanding.

The "equity", "judgment", and "justice" are the fruits of wisdom.

A wise man will be just, etc.

To give "subtlety to the simple":

The purpose is to impart discernment to the naive and the ignorant.

The root of "simple" is a word meaning "an open door," and apt description of the undiscerning, who do not know what to keep in or out of their minds.

To the young, knowledge and discretion is to make one ponder before sinning, thus to make a responsible choice.

Proverbs 1:5 "A wise [man] will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:"

Be quick to listen and slow to speak is a very good way of learning.

A man of understanding will want to be counseled by older, wiser men.

They will be quick to be instructed by someone who has already experienced the same thing. These wise counsels can save many mistakes.

The wise believer will have the ability to guide or govern others with truth.

Proverbs 1:6 "To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings."

Jesus said that now we look through a dark glass.

We cannot understand the secrets of proverbs and parables now.

We understand them to the extent that the Holy Spirit reveals them to us.

Even the disciples had Jesus interpret his parables.

The Holy Spirit, working as a teacher, helps us interpret the hidden meanings.

Proverbs seeks to sharpen the mind by schooling one in "parabolic speech" and "dark sayings" that need reflection and interpretation.

Study of the scriptures is sufficient to provide the wisdom for the perplexities of life.

Proverbs 1:7 "The fear of the LORD [is] the beginning of knowledge: [but] fools despise wisdom and instruction."

There is very little left to say about this statement.

We know the fear of anything other than God is lack of faith. This type of fear of God would cause reverent worship of him.

In James 1:5 "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all [men] liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

A fool does not even realize that instruction and wisdom will benefit him.

He goes away ignorant as before, because he will not let anyone instruct him.

The fear of the LORD means submission to the LORD and His revelation.

When one is afraid of something, he either runs from it or submits to it.

The latter idea is in view here.

It is a healthy fear, like the fear of electricity or the fear of one's parents, which causes one to act in an appropriate manner.

The beginning does not mean that "the fear of the LORD" is left behind in the course of acquiring wisdom, but that it is the controlling principle of wisdom.

Proverbs 1:8 "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:"

The two people in the world who want you to have the best of everything are your mother and father.

The instructions they are trying to get you to heed are to save you headache and troubles.

They have your welfare at heart.

Accept their instructions so that you can gain from their experience and not have to make the same mistakes they have already made.

They wish you only good, not evil.

My son begins the first of 10 similar discourses in which the father appeals to the son to listen to his counsel and choose wisdom over folly.

The mention of the Mother shows that the original setting of the book was the home, not the court or school.

Proverbs 1:9 "For they [shall be] an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck."

The greatest gift a parent can give to a child is the gift of good moral teaching.

This "grace" above, I believe, is just that.

These parents have set high moral standards and passed them on to their children.

Chains about thy neck: refers to an adornment or thing of beauty in one's life.

Proverbs 1:10 "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not."

You see, we are a free moral agent.

We decide whether we will sin or not.

Just because the crowd is sinning, is no reason to get involved.

Use your own free will and say "no" to sin, even if it is inviting.

In the long run, we are responsible for our own decisions.

Sinners is a term reserved in Scripture to describe unbelievers for whom sin is continual and who endeavor to persuade even believers to sin with them.

The sins of murder and robbery are used as illustrations of such folly.

Proverbs 1:11 "If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause:"

"Come with us":

The intimidating force of peer pressure is often the way to entice those who lack wisdom.

Proverbs 1:12 "Let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit:"

The wicked devise a plot of deception in which the innocent are captured and victimized like one who is taken by death itself, as with Joseph (Gen. 37:20); Jeremiah (Jer. 38:6-13); and Daniel (Dan. 6:16-17).

"The Pit ... Sheol" is the place of death.

For the wicked it is a place of no return (Job 7:9), darkness (Psalms 143:3) and torment (Isaiah 14:11).

**Proverbs 1:13-14 "We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil:"
"Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse:"**

This is the enlisting of the innocent without full disclosure of intent.

Abundant spoil is promised by this outright robbery, which is made to appear easy and safe for the thieves and murderers.

Proverbs 1:15 "My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path:"

This directly confronts the invitation of (verse 11).

Sin must be rejected at the first temptation, by refusing even the association that can lead to sin.

Avoid the beginnings of sin (see 4:14).

Proverbs 1:16 "For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood."

This is warning not to keep evil company.

There is guilt by association.

You may not be guilty of their sins; but if you are caught with them, you will pay the terrible penalty with them.

Many a youngster has gotten into serious trouble because he wanted to be part of the gang.

Children's favorite saying to parents is, "everyone is doing it".

Sometimes peer pressure causes a youngster to join a gang.

He probably has no idea they are stealing or killing when he joins; but the longer he stays, the more deeply involved he becomes.

The only way to avoid this is just what the Scripture advises.

Don't go with them in the first place.

The time to say "no" is before you get in deep.

Proverbs 1:17 "Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird."

As a bird flies into a net and is caught, so will the sinner get caught if he goes head long into sin.

We know the net is there, but get into it anyway.

It would be ineffective to set up a net for catching a bird in full view of the bird.

Taken with (verse 18), this analogy means that the sinner sets up his trap for the innocent in secret, but in the end the trap is sprung on him (verse 19).

This greed entraps him.

Stupid sinners rush to their own ruin.

Proverbs 1:18 "And they lay wait for their [own] blood; they lurk privily for their [own] lives."

A person laying in wait to kill someone else is actually sealing their own doom.

Proverbs 1:19 "So [are] the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; [which] taketh away the life of the owners thereof."

Greed for things that do not belong to you is certainly the cause of most sin toward your fellow man.

Verses 20-33

From this section of scripture (from verses 20-33), wisdom is personified as a prophetess calling in public places to everyone to come to her and learn.

Three groups are especially singled out in the appeal: the simple ones, or untaught: the scorners, or scoffers; and the fools, or morally dull.

The consequences of rejecting wisdom are immense as we see (in verses 26-28).

Similar personifications of wisdom occur later in this book (see 3:14-18; 8:1-36; and 9:1-12).

Proverbs 1:20-21 "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets:" "She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, [saying],"

While enticement is covert and secret (verse 10), wisdom, with nothing to hide, is available to everyone, being found in the most prominent of public places.

Proverbs 1:22 "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?"

An idle mind brings on sin.

Wisdom is a gift from God, and we must pray to receive it.

Knowledge is accumulated learning that we study and acquire by effort upon our part.

Only a fool will turn away from the knowledge and wisdom of God.

Three questions reveal 3 classes of those needing wisdom and the downward progression of sin:

- (1) The simple or naïve, who are ignorant;
- (2) Scorners or mockers who commit more serious, determined acts; and
- (3) Fools or obstinate unbelievers, who will not listen to the truth. Proverbs aims its wisdom primarily at the first group.

Proverbs 1:23 "Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you."

God is telling the people to learn by His reproof.

God is offering to pour out His Spirit.

God the Holy Spirit will reveal the meaning of the word to us if we will accept His Spirit into us.

What does reproof mean?

After a lengthy study I came up with this: The sense is: "The Spirit will teach men the true meaning of these three words: sin, righteousness, judgment."

God's wisdom brings to bear against the sinner indictments for sin that demand repentance.

To the one who does repent, God promises the spirit or essence of true wisdom linked to divine revelation.

Proverbs 1:24-25 "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;" "But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would one of my reproof:"

Sinners who respond with indifference and mockery at God's indictments increase their guilt (Rom. 2-5), and bring upon themselves the wrath of God's mockery and indifference (verses 26-27).

Some wait to seek God until it is too late.

Proverbs 1:26-27 "I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;" "When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you."

Those who refuse the call of Jesus Christ as Savior or those who have not reached out to receive the Lord have nothing good to look for.

In their time of trouble, they have no one to turn to.

The Lord will have no sympathy for those who have rejected His salvation.

Notice the terms, calamity, terror, destruction, distress and anguish.

All these terms describe the severe trouble of divine judgment.

When sinners who have rejected wisdom call on God in the Day of Judgment, God will respond to their distress with derision.

Verses 28-32

God's rejection of sinners is carefully detailed (in verses 28-32).

This is the aspect of God's wrath expressed in His abandonment of sinners (see in the book of Romans verses 1:24-28).

No prayers or diligent seeking will help them (8:17).

Proverbs 1:28-30

"Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:"

"For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD:"

"They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof."

There is a time when the LORD will turn his back on us if we totally reject the LORD.

When that time comes, The LORD will not hear our plea anymore.

This shows that they had totally rejected everything that the LORD had offered them.

They did not want to learn the ways of the LORD.

Proverbs 1:31-32

"Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices."

"For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them."

The Ultimate punishment is God's giving a people up to the result of their wickedness. (Romans 1:24-28).

This is just another way of saying: If you reject the LORD, you will reap whatever you sow.

Having your eyes and desires set on things of this world can do nothing but destroy you.

There is no eternity in earthly desires.

"And the prosperity of fools shall destroy them:"

Willful carelessness or lack of appropriate care is intended here.

Proverbs 1:33 "But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil."

This is a beautiful description of the security and peace that comes when we are hidden in the Lord Jesus.

Fear will not be a part of our vocabulary, because it is the opposite of faith.

If we have faith in the Lord, there is no fear.

Proverbs Chapter 1 Questions

1. What is the book of Proverbs known as the book of?
2. Who penned the book?
3. Proverbs is a book of _____ on how to _____ _____ _____ ?
4. How many times is the "Fear of the Lord" mentioned in proverbs?
5. What is a proverb?
6. How is a proverb and a parable alike?
7. Who was Solomon's father and mother?
8. How long did Solomon reign?
9. What does "perceive" mean?
10. What three things here are fruits of wisdom?

11. A wise man will hear and _____.
12. Be quick to _____ and slow to _____.
13. Who helps us to understand the hidden meaning of Scriptures?
14. What is the beginning of Knowledge?
15. Who despise wisdom and instruction?
16. Fear is _____.
17. In James 1:5 we read how to receive wisdom. How do we receive it?
18. "Hear the instructions of thy _____, and forsake not the law of thy _____."
19. What is the greatest gift a parent can give a child?
20. This "grace on the head" in verse 9, means what?
21. In verse 10 we are told not to be enticed to sin. How is that our decision to make?
22. Verses 11-16 is warning us against what?
23. What gets many innocent young people involved in sin today?
24. As a bird flies into a net and is caught, so the sinner _____.
25. What causes many people to sin against their neighbor?
26. An idle mind brings on what?
27. What is knowledge?
28. In verse 23, God is telling us to do what?
29. Those who reject the Lord will find the Lord doing what at His calamity?
30. In contrast, verse 33 is a beautiful description of what?