

Old Testament Overview Proverbs and Ecclesiastes

Proverbs:

The word “proverb” means “to be _____.”

A proverb can be a short pithy statement of _____.

Solomon’s wisdom was a gift from _____.

Above all else, proverbs are about the _____ of _____.

Most of the time “wisdom” denotes the the ability to live in a God-honoring manor, according to His _____.

Proverbs touches on so many everyday issues:

- How to relate to God
- Parents
- Children
- Friends
- Neighbors
- Government
- Sin and Temptation
- Right vs Wrong

Proverbs is the most practical book of the Old Testament since it helps put spiritual _____ into _____.

Proverbs teaches us in very practical terms how to put these principles into action:

- Wisdom and _____.
- Righteous and _____.
- Pride and _____.
- Justice and _____.
- Laziness and _____.
- Good and bad _____.
- Poverty and _____.
- Love and _____.
- Life and _____.

The book of Proverbs breaks down into two (2) main divisions:

- Chapters 1-9:
 - 15 uses of the Phrase “my son”.
 - These are organized by various topics.
 - Typically these are longer sections of related topics.

- Chapters 10-31:
 - 22 chapters by which most of the proverbs are not organized in any logical manner.
 - These proverbs come at us in rapid-fire succession.
 - Chapters 30 and 31 are different in that they are grouped along a thematic approach.

The New Testament writers refer to or quote Proverbs frequently

- Paul, Peter, James, the author of Hebrews, and even Christ Himself quoted from Proverbs.

These writers saw in the Proverbs _____ from _____.

Practical helps for everyday life.

There are 31 chapters in Proverbs

- The longest chapter is 36 verses.
- You could read a chapter in around 10 minutes
- You could easily cycle through the proverbs every month.

2 Challenges for us in Proverbs.....

- There isn't very much context.
- Sometimes the statements in a proverb can be quite puzzling.

Tips on how to read Proverbs:

- Read with _____ in mind: use normal reading and comprehension skills when reading the proverbs.

- Realize that individual proverbs are ultimately _____; some proverbs won't be true in the near term, but when we take the long view from God's perspective, they will.

- Proverbs aren't designed to be _____; rather they are designed to impart small amounts of truth.
- Proverbs utilize _____; don't read with such a literal mindset that you don't account for poetic imagery.
- Proverbs are partial, and need the help of _____; in other words, don't base your entire view of an issue on one proverb. Consult the rest of scripture for support and correct interpretation.
- Some proverbs are very obscure and hard to understand. You may need to read a commentary to understand the culture and background of the day in order to understand things rightly.
- Proverbs are about _____; wisdom and knowledge aren't the end goal; rather, encountering God is the end goal. The book of Proverbs should point you to God.
- Proverbs are not absolute promises from God. We can't take them as universal guarantees from God.

Proverbs 22:6 *"Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it."*

Proverbs 10:27 *"The fear of the Lord prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be shortened."*

Proverbs 22:4 *"The reward of humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, honor, and life."*

God does not guarantee the absolute and total application from each proverb.

Parallelism

A _____ of _____ wherein one statement serves to help define another.

3 types of Parallelism:

- Synonymous Parallelism - the 2nd clause restates what was given in the 1st clause.

Proverbs 19:29: *"Judgements are prepared for scoffers, and blows for the back of fools."*

- Contrast Parallelism - the 2nd clause helps to define the first by contrasting the original thought.

Proverbs 13:9: *"The light of the righteous rejoices, but the lamp of the wicked goes out."*

- Completive Parallelism - the 2nd clause develops the original thought further.

Proverbs 20:2: *"The terror of a king is like the growling of a lion; he who provokes him to anger forfeits his own life."*

Proverbs are designed to be consumed one bite at a time.

They are designed to make us think deeply about the reality of life.

They are designed for us to ponder and meditate on them over the course of our lives.

Simply reading them apart from personal application robs the proverbs of their power.

Proverbs helps us with a skill that all of us can develop - How to manifest practical righteousness.

Proverbs will help us understand and apply various facets of knowledge.

Proverbs facets:

- Wisdom
- Prudence
- Understanding
- Discretion
- Knowledge
- Guidance
- Competence
- Correction

- Counsel
- Truth

Note the relationship between wisdom and the fear of the Lord:

Proverbs 1:7
 Proverbs 9:10
 Proverbs 2: 2-5

So the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, but wisdom leads to the fear of the Lord.

Issues in Proverbs:

1. The fool

This does not refer to someone who is dumb or lacks intelligence.

In the Bible, a fool refers to someone who lacks wisdom - the skill of living for God.

How do you identify a fool?

- By his lack of _____. He lacks discipline.
- By his _____. Arrogance; folly.
- By his _____ and counselors. Hangs with wrong crowd.
- By his ultimate _____ (death)

Believers can be fools too.

- We can be foolish at times
- But fools are characterized by their godless mindset and way of life.

2. The Sluggard

- He wastes opportunities.
- He loves sleep
- He fails to finish what he starts

God ordained work before the fall.

3. The Family

- Husband and wife relationships are discussed
- This is used to describe God's relationship with his people.

- Parent and children relationships
The _____ passages point out fatherly instruction to children
Proverbs reminds parents to teach their children about spiritual matters.

Proverbs is the best _____.

4. Friendship

There are good and bad friendships

- We will become like those we spend time with.
- Proverbs warns us to be careful who we hang around with, converse with, etc.

_____ works both ways

Your influence others.....they influence you.

Proverbs 27:5-6: *"Better is open rebuke than love that is concealed. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy."*

- A good friend is willing to confront you over the truth instead of ignoring issues. It's a demonstration of real love.

- If you want to teach your kids how to be a good friend, read and apply the book of Proverbs.

5. Words

Our words tell a lot about our _____.

Mt. 15:19: *"For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and slanders."*

- The tongue is the highway to the heart....
- What is found in our hearts will eventually come out of our mouths.

A simple principle to learn from this is think before you speak.

Proverbs will help you be mindful of your speech.....

- Gossip
- Slander
- Encouragement
- Admonition

6. Life and Death

We are all on a path...

- Your path is either heading you to death or life.

Proverbs 14:12, 16:25: *“There is a way which seems right to man but its end is the way of death.”*

- Some are deceived, thinking they are on the path to life.
- In reality they are on the path that leads to death.

To summarize Proverbs...

Proverbs isn't about a list of rules and regulations

- Rather it is about how to have a right relationship with the Lord
- It's about how to know what pleases Him.
- It's about how to live a life of holiness, integrity, and godliness.

But none of those qualities can save us...the only salvation comes from Christ.

When we think of wisdom we may think of Solomon. But there was one greater than Solomon in every way. Jesus was the epitome of wisdom

Paul wrote that in Christ is *“hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”* (Col. 2:3).

Christ “became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption”
(1 Cor. 1:30)

As you read Proverbs, remember,

- Look for the sovereignty of God in the Proverbs.
- Remember that wisdom is moral, not merely intellectual. There's no such thing as a wise atheist.
- Wisdom comes through God's word, and He gives it freely if we ask.
- The more we obey God's word, the deeper our love for Him grows.

End Notes

The following sources were used in this study:

1. Mark Dever, *The Message Of The Old Testament*, 508, 509, 511-522
2. This lesson references material from Capitol Hill Baptists core seminar on the Old Testament. www.capitolhillbaptist.org-introduction-to-the-old-testament/
3. John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Handbook*, 161, 169, 171
4. Bruce Wilkinson & Kenneth Boa, *Talk Through the Bible*, 162,165,163,170, 172
5. Dr. Allen B.Stringfellow, *Through the Bible in One Year*, 72
6. Gerard Crispin, *The Bible Panorama*, 276
7. The above sources for this study were compiled by Kevin McAeer
8. John MacArthur, *End Of An Era, The Rise and Fall of Solomon*, 9-39
9. Ray Stedman, *Adventuring Through the Bible*, 277-287
10. Steven Lawson, *Foundations of Grace, A Long Line of Godly Men*, 150-159