

Proverbs Lesson 01

Proverbs Chapter 1

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Introduction: Proverbs Chapter 1 commences by introducing the purpose of the book: *to know wisdom*. Solomon also urges his son to learn wisdom and flee from sinners. In this first chapter, wisdom is personified and speaks as if it were a person.

A little background of the book of Proverbs is timely to discuss. As noted in the first verse, was penned for the most part by Solomon. The final two chapters were written by Agur and King Lemmuel. The book is a collection of divine wisdom. In fact, wisdom is the major theme of the book and applies to every aspect of life.

Chapters 1-7 are addressed to Solomon's son.

Chapters 8 and 9 present the blessings of wisdom.

Chapters 10-19 reflect on the folly of sin and its consequences.

Chapters 20-29 provide further warning and instruction.

Chapter 30 are proverbs of Agur.

Chapter 31 are proverbs of King Lemmuel.

I. The Beginning of Knowledge

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

The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel. There is no question upon whom God's Spirit moved to so pen the inspired words of this blessed book. Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel, made a record of these proverbs under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit during the first part of his reign.

It should be recalled that it was during the first portion of Solomon's reign when he walked close to God. He was a godly, wise man. As time passed, Solomon began to disregard God's commandments and he drifted far from God. See I Kings 11:1-10.

1Ki 11:1 But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites;

1Ki 11:2 Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love.

1Ki 11:3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three

hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.

1Ki 11:4 For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.

1Ki 11:5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.

1Ki 11:6 And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father.

1Ki 11:7 Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon.

1Ki 11:8 And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.

1Ki 11:9 And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice,

1Ki 11:10 And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded.

Being king of Israel, much was required of Solomon. His distance from God had a negative impact on himself as well as his kingdom. Distance from God hinders fellowship with God and will have a negative impact upon us. It also has negative effects on all that God has given us.(a spouse, children, a home, a church).

Solomon wrote as having godly wisdom, which He did. Knowing godly wisdom and exercising godly wisdom are as far apart as the east is from the west.

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

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

Pro 1:4 To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.

A fivefold purpose of the book is set forth. The first is to know wisdom and instruction. The English word wisdom is found here for the first of fifty-three times in the book. Seven separate Hebrew words are translated as such in the book. Here, the word is (hmkx) khok-maw' which is the predominate usage throughout the book. It simply refers to wisdom or 'wiseness' in any area of life.

The word wise is also used over sixty times in the book and refers to one who has wisdom. The first purpose of the book of Proverbs is to know or learn wisdom. Wisdom can come also through prayer (James 1:5) as well as the experiences of life. The book of Proverbs is a divinely inspired book about godly wisdom.

The second purpose of the book is to perceive the words of understanding. The word translated as perceive (Nyb biyn) has the simple sense 'to understand.' This word is found almost as often as that of wisdom in Proverbs. Throughout the book, the concept of wisdom and understanding are often used together. Though they are related, they are not synonymous.

Wisdom springs from understanding. The former is built upon the latter. A necessary to the gaining of wisdom is first obtaining understanding of the Word of God and the issues of life. The next purpose of the book of Proverbs is to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity. The second word translated as wisdom (lkssaw-kal') appears. It has the sense of acting 'wisely' or 'prudently.'

The word translated as justice (qdu tsedeq) is the basic Hebrew word for righteousness. Throughout the book of Proverbs, wisdom and righteousness are closely related. In fact, they are almost synonymous. To do what is right is wise and to do wisely is to do what is right. Having godly wisdom results in right judgments (i.e., decisions). Of further interest is that the words righteousness (qdu tsedeq) and judgment (jpvmmishpat) are often found together in Psalms and Proverbs. . Righteousness refers to righteous principle.

Judgment refers to righteous decisions. Also, the book of Proverbs was given for the purpose of receiving the instruction of equity. The word so translated (rvym meysar) has the idea of 'fairness,' 'uprightness,' or being 'equitable.' In other words, the thought is of making just and fair decisions, particularly as they pertain to others.

The book of Proverbs was given to give subtility to the simple. The word translated as subtility (hmre ormaw') has the sense of 'savvy' or 'prudence.' The word translated as simple (ytp peth-ee') has the general idea of being 'naive.'

Proverbs in part was provided to give savvy or discernment to those who may be naive in life. Such is usually the case of those who are young in years. Those who understand wisdom pass it on. God has given us this blessed book so that we might learn basic issues of life without having to do so the hard way. That thought is made clear in this final purpose.

Youth are often led into sin (particularly sexual sin) because of a lack of insight and discretion. Proverbs was given, in part, to instill godly wisdom the to the youth, which leads to godly morality. It is not coincidental that warning against

immorality is found early and frequently throughout the book.

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

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

Pro 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

The first of the many proverbs of the book is set forth. Wise men will listen. What is also clearly implied is that fools will not listen to advice. A wise man will also seek as much education as is possible. Though formal education, sooner or later, comes to an end in one's life, learning should never end. A wise man will always be learning.

The second phrase "a man of understanding" seems to be in apposition to "a wise man." They are essentially one and the same. Thus, a wise man will also seek the advice of wise men. There is something godly and wise about seeking the counsel of those known to have wisdom and understanding. A wise man will listen to advice, continually seek to learn, and will seek out wise counsel.

Wise men will endeavor to understanding other proverbs and their meanings. They will seek out the wisdom of others, even that which is difficult to understand. At times learning and education becomes tedious and difficult. A wise man will tough it out. Fools will quit. "The foundation of godly learning is now set forth. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction."

Only when one knows God and fears the power of His majesty can true education and knowledge develop. One of the follies of modern education is its evolutionary underpinnings which leave the naive student without any knowledge of God, much less a fear of Him. Such education is built upon shifting sands which have no true foundation. No true education can come apart from a true fear of God. It is not surprising therefore that "fools despise wisdom and instruction."

Of interest is the word translated as instruction (rowm moo-sawr'). Though it is most frequently translated as 'instruction,' it also has the sense of 'discipline.' There is a direct correlation between learning and discipline of mind. The former follows the latter. A fool shows contempt for both wisdom and disciplining one's mind to learn. Parents will do their children a great favor by instilling discipline of life. Education and learning is not always fun or exciting. But a disciplined spirit will enable one to learn what must be learned. Wise men are disciplined. Fools are not.

II. The Enticement of Sinners

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

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

In that regard, the sacred writer continues, "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother." For the first of twenty-three times in Proverbs, Solomon writes to his son. One purpose of his writing of the book (from a human perspective) was to give godly wisdom to his son.

It seems apparent that his eldest son did not pay much attention to the godly advice of his father or of the book which he wrote for his benefit. Sadly, it may have been the backsliding of Solomon later in life which had a profoundly negative influence upon Rehoboam. It is of interest that King James I of England wrote a similar book of advice to his son entitled Basilikon Doron which essentially means 'a kingly gift' or 'a king's gift' to his son.

Likewise, Solomon urged his son to pay heed to the principles taught to him by his mother. Contained herein is profound wisdom to wit, wise children will pay attention to the advice and rules set by their parents. It is therefore incumbent upon parents to instill discipline, obedience, and the principle of righteousness in their children at the earliest age.

A child who despises such counsel is not well trained by his parents. The training and rules of godly parents will be as fine jewelry to a young person. That is, paying heed to parental advice will be that which brings valuable and beautiful adornment to one's life. The world's counsel is to be cool. The Bible counsels to listen to one's parents. The farther a parent can keep his or her children from the world, the less trouble they will have in training their children.

When Job struggled through his trials, he showed that he had learned great wisdom from the Lord.

Job 13:15 Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.

In the book "My Grandfather's Son" by Clarence Thomas, one of our Supreme Court Justices, he stated:

That stopped me cold. I thought of what Daddy had said when I asked him why he'd never gone on public assistance. "Because it takes away your manhood. You do that and they can ask you questions about your life that are none of their

business. They can come into your house when they want to, and they can tell you who else can come and go in your house." Real freedom meant independence from government intrusion, which in turn meant that you had to take responsibility for your own decisions. When the government assumes that responsibility, it takes away your freedom--and wasn't freedom the very thing for which blacks in America were fighting?

Here is a man passing on Godly Wisdom to his son. We want freedom, but freedom is not free. You have to seek it and fight for it. And where to seek it is to seek the guidance of our Heavenly Father.

III. Consent Not to Sinners who Entice

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

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

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

Pro 1:13 We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil:

Pro 1:14 Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse:

Solomon now moves to specific advice which a young person needs to learn. From the Garden of Eden onward, sinners have sought to entice the innocent. Whether the sin is that of dishonesty, immorality, disrespect, or violence; sinners will often seek to enlist gullible and naive accomplices in their evil.

The counsel of Solomon is as simple as it is profound: consent thou not. The world suggests to try it, you might like it. Or at least try everything at least once. Or, you only go around once. God says, consent thou not. It is as simple as that. Ungodly sinners seek to entice the naive to join with them in their planned crime. They promise that the gullible will share in the proceeds of their crime.

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

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

Solomon counseled, "My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path." The principle of separation comes into view. The godly counsel of Solomon to his son, to warn him to not even associate with the world's crowd. Truly, blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly

(Psalm 1:1-6).

In the very first Psalm, God tells us how to be blessed.

Psa 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

Psa 1:2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

Psa 1:3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Psa 1:4 The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

Psa 1:5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

Psa 1:6 For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Separation from the world is a profoundly wise principle. The rich beneficiaries thereof are our children. The world's crowd is quick to run to that which is sinful. It eventually leads to violence. The newspapers are full of such events every week. Many of the things that we read about are bizarre. These situations occur among every race and every class. The only common denominator is the prince of this world.

IV. Wicked Wait like Animal of Prey

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

Pro 1:18 And they lay wait for their own blood; they lurk privily for their own lives.

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

The context, both before and after, remains of the warning to his son about those who would entice him into criminal acts. "Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird." The key to understanding this sentence are within the following two verses. The thought is that one who lays a trap for another will do so in vain. Eventually, the trap will spring upon the one who set it.

It is not only wrong to try and harm another, but also unwise. The whole thing will

eventually backfire on the perpetrators. Those who plan to do violence to another will eventually have it come back upon them. Sin has a nasty habit of backfiring. Rarely does one ever get away with his wrong doings. Sooner or later it will come back to visit.

Those who seek ill-gotten gains will eventually be caught. Those who seek to do violence unto others eventually suffer the same. Willful sin is not only wrong, it is unwise. It always catches up and the consequences are never pleasant.

V. The Call of Wisdom

Pro 1:20 Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets:

Pro 1:21 She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying,

For the first of a number of times in Proverbs, wisdom is described as a person. Solomon, having shown how dangerous it is to hearken to the temptations of Satan, here declares how dangerous it is not to hearken to the call of God. Later in the book, the personification of wisdom is clearly found in the person of Jesus Christ. He is the ultimate personification of true Godly wisdom.

The thought of wisdom crying in the streets implies that she has been shut out of the lives and homes of many. And so it is to this day. The world finds welcome in the lives and homes of many while wisdom is left out cold in the street. Wisdom cries out in the places of prominence and to those who are prominent. Yet and sadly, wisdom is often shut out even from those in positions of influence.

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

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

A question is posed. Three categories of sinners are noted: (1) simple ones, (2) scorers, and (3) fools. They all are related.

Simple ones refers to those who are naive, especially to godly principles. Scorers are those who mock righteousness and the things of God. Fools are those who deny God and rebel against wise instruction.

Wisdom cries out asking how long will they reject her godly counsel? The answer is apparent. The ungodly even to this day ignore godly wisdom. The counsel of God personified in wisdom is to turn at his reproof. The idea is of repentance—

turning to or back to God. That call remains to this day. A wicked and Christ-rejecting world to this day is called to turn to God. And for the minority that do, God promises to pour out the blessing of His Spirit and teach His Word to them.

Notice that God refers to His words. The very words of God are inspired and remain important. Beware of those who would diminish the very words of God.

Pro 1:24 Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;

Pro 1:25 But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:

The subject now turns to those who refuse to turn back to God and His wisdom. Wisdom personified in the person of our Lord now warns those who ignore Him. There is a dual stream of thought running side by side. On the one hand is warning for those who ignore godly wisdom. On the other hand is warning for those who ignore God Himself and His Word.

For those who reject wisdom, ominous consequences await. The same is even more so for those who reject Christ. The world routinely refuses the call of God. When God in His great mercy has extended His hand of grace thru Christ to a lost world, most disregard it. They ignore His Word and want none of His correction. And so it is with the fools who ignore godly wisdom in their lives.

Pro 1:26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;

Pro 1:27 When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.

Pro 1:28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

Wisdom personified in Christ warns, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh. The day will come for ungodly men when wisdom personified in Christ laughs at the consequences of sin. Once again, sin is not only morally and ethically wrong, but also unwise. It eventually brings calamity and trouble.

The ultimate fulfillment of this warning will be when Christ rejecters stand before God at the Great White Throne Judgment which we recently studied in Revelation Chapter 20. In that day, Jesus will pronounce their just reward. He offered His grace and they rejected it. Jesus will have the last Word.

The double stream of thought continues. Those who ignore wisdom (as well as God) will sooner or later meet with great fear and trouble from the consequence of their sin. Sin brings trouble like a tornado. It brings distress and anguish. In that day, fools may attempt to turn to God, but He will not answer. They may even rise early in the morning to pray and God will not hear them. It is a serious thing to ignore the truth and grace of God.

Likewise, on an everyday basis, those who ignore wisdom in day-to-day living will soon run into deep trouble. Then they suddenly decide to try and be wise. Yet, wisdom in that day will ignore their pleas. It is too late. We live in a day and age where the world has sought to subsidize, mitigate, and amend the consequences of sin. Men and women of the world continue headlong down the path of ignoring both wisdom and Christ.

The day is coming when the trouble which comes from such living as well as the judgment to come will catch up with them. Sinners mock at sin. God as well as wisdom will have the last laugh. Sin does catch up. If not sooner, certainly later.

Pro 1:29 For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD:

Pro 1:30 They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.

Pro 1:31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

Fools and the ungodly hate the truth of God. This sort has no fear of the Lord. They want nothing to do with His Word and counsel. They despise God's Word and the wisdom found therein. They snicker at true wisdom and mock its truth. They reject godly wisdom as being 'moralistic' or 'prudish.' Usually, these are one and the same individuals. They will both suffer the consequences of their folly and sin.

Fools who ignore godly wisdom eventually reap a bitter harvest. They are forced to eat the bitter fruit of their own folly and sin. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. It is inevitable. It is a spiritual law as much as it is a biological law. Those who ignore wisdom will endure bitter consequences. Moreover, that which is harvested is usually much more than that which was sown.

Pro 1:32 For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.

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

The backsliding or turning away from the things of God by the naive will have tragic consequences. It is true both for foolish living now as well as the ultimate consequence when men stand before God someday. The prosperity of fools usually deceives them into thinking they can get away with their sin. Yet, sin always comes back to bite those guilty thereof. It is true in the consequences of sin both now and at the judgment.

Once again the dual thought of wisdom as well as the One personified in wisdom are in view. Those who hearken to wisdom in this life will live a quiet life without fear of trouble. And, those who hearken to Christ, the personification of wisdom, will dwell safely for all eternity and not fear the wrath of God.

Wisdom therefore is a crucial concept to be taught to our children at the earliest age. As children learn to seek wisdom in this life, it follows quickly to seek Christ, the personification of wisdom. Parents to this day need to learn and teach this godly truth.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.