

## STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

- A. We live in a day where we have knowledge-overload but wisdom is hard to find.
- B. The Book of Proverbs is a book on wisdom.
  - 1. Definition of wisdom
    - a. A basic definition of wisdom could be *the skill of living one's life well*.
    - b. As will be emphasized later, there should be some words added, *in light of eternity*.
    - c. Proverbs is not only a book of wisdom but a discipleship handbook, as well.
    - d. God cares about how we live. Actually, Satan is less concerned by what we believe as he is by how we live what we believe.
  - 2. Proper motivation for the study of Proverbs - to please God out of a heart of gratitude.
  - 3. Quotes on wisdom literature from early Church leaders.
    - a. Clement of Alexandria, *A proverb is a riddle or enigma that points to a deeper meaning, often by way of moral instruction or exhortation or wisdom for the living of life (Clement of Alexandria)*.
    - b. Didymus, *It is ...a sign or a roadmap*.
    - c. Augustine, *The fear of God can dissolve our human pride*.
    - d. Ambrose, *To fear the Lord is to renounce sin*.
    - e. Chrysostom, *The true source of wisdom is virtuous living*.
    - f. Didymus, *Knowledge without practice is insufficient*.
- C.. Outline of the Book of Proverbs
  - 1. Introduction to Proverbs (1:1-7)
  - 2. Exhortations (1:8-9:18)
  - 3. Proverbs of Solomon (10:1-22:16)
  - 4. Miscellaneous collections by wise men (22:17-31:3)
- D. Verses to be studied: 1:1-9:18

### THE INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS - PROVERBS 1:1-7

- A. Title - many of the proverbs were written by King Solomon 1
  - 1. He prayed for wisdom.
  - 2. He probably should have prayed for right living, as well.
  - 3. *Wisdom is a way of looking at life, a way based on observation. The genius of wisdom is that it announces conclusions reached, not arbitrarily or by special revelation, but at the end of experience.* L.D. Johnson
- B. Purpose (2-6)
  - 1. To develop moral discipline (2-3), *To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight, to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity;*
    - a. Righteousness
      - 1) Giving God His due
      - 2) Learning about Him - what pleases and displeases Him
    - b. Justice - giving man his due
    - c. Equity - the standard for righteousness and justice
  - 2. To give instruction to the naive (4), *to give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth—*
    - a. Knowledge - information
    - b. Discretion - proper use of the information
  - 3. To promote wisdom through the study of proverbs (5 - 6), *Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance, to understand a proverb and a saying, the words of the wise and their riddles.*

C. Instruction on wisdom (7), *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

1. Fear of the Lord (reverent obedience) is the foundation for Godly living.
  - a. Turning from evil, Ambrose, *To fear the Lord is to renounce sin.*
  - b. Submitting to God's will rather than asserting one's own will, Augustine, *The fear of God can dissolve our human pride.*
  - c. Emphasized in the wisdom literature of the Old Testament
    - 1) Proverbs 9:10, *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.*
    - 2) Proverbs 15:33, *The fear of the Lord is instruction in wisdom, and humility comes before honor.*
    - 3) Psalm 111:10, *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!*
    - 4) Job 28:28, *And he said to man, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding.'*
    - 5) Ecclesiastes 12:13, *The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.*
2. Fools despise Godly living in contrast to the wise.
  - a. The fool makes his own decisions but the wise seeks God's advice, Proverbs 3:7, *Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.*
  - b. The fool enjoys foolishness but the wise seeks wisdom, Proverbs 10:23, *Doing wrong is like a joke to a fool, but wisdom is pleasure to a man of understanding.*
  - c. The fool does not see coming judgment but the wise receive life, Proverbs 11:19, *Whoever is steadfast in righteousness will live, but he who pursues evil will die.*
  - d. The fool is far from God but the prayers of the wise are heard by God, Proverbs 15:29, *The LORD is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous.*
3. The wise are thankful for Godly fear through the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

E. Warnings on Proverbs

1. Acquisition of knowledge is not the key.
2. Appropriate behavior is not the key.
3. Gaining favor with God is not the key.
4. Pleasing God out of a heart of gratitude is the key.

<b>CONCLUSION</b>
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- A. May local churches be known as places where people live what they believe not out of necessity but out of thanksgiving.
- B. May we pursue the skill of living life well in light of eternity.