

Proverbs (Part 1)
The Heart of Wisdom Series
Coast School of Theology; Pastor Earl Miles; 2-3-19

1. The Heart of Wisdom

Series Theme

So teach us to number our days,
That we may present to You a **heart of wisdom**.
– Psalm 90:12

¹⁵ Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as **wise**,
¹⁶ making the most of your time, because the days are evil.
– Ephesians 5:15-16

Watch over your **heart** with all diligence,
For from it *flow* the springs of life.
– Proverbs 4:23

Plan

- Discuss wisdom and living wisely
- Discuss an overview of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Job
- Discuss an overview of what the Bible teaches about the heart and how it relates to change

Sources

- The Bible Project Videos (BP)
- ESV Study Bible Notes
- The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life* by Jeremy Pierre
- Other

Question

- When you think of the book of Proverbs, what comes to mind?*

Intro Video

Proverbs Story Video (The Bible Project)

2. How do Proverbs and Ecclesiastes and Job work together?

- *What books make up the wisdom literature of the Bible?*

Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Job

‘All address the same questions:

- What kind of world are we living in?
- What does it look like to live well in this world?
- What is the good life and how do we find it from a Biblical perspective? - BP

Question

- *How might we view the three perspectives of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes and Job on living well in this world?*

Picture

‘Brilliant young teacher, sharp middle-aged critic, and weathered old man who’s seen a lot. - BP

- *What will these three views do for us?*
 - Help us to see the ‘rules’ and the ‘exceptions’ to the rules.
 - Help us to avoid too simplistic a view of life. - BP

‘Life is too complex for formulas; we need all the wisdom books together to get the Big Picture.’
– BP

3. What is the book of Proverbs about?

Wise guidance for all aspects of the good life.

‘A guide for living wisely and well in God’s good world.’ – BP

Through an emphasis on wisdom and the fear of the LORD, the book is meant to help us develop some practical skills for living well in God’s world. - BP

‘It argues that the wise often do better than the foolish. (Proverbs 1:32-33)

‘Ecclesiastes and Job wrestle with the reality that sometimes the wise have horrible things happen to them and the foolish prosper. - BP

□ *How is the 'brilliant young teacher' described?*

'Having 'incredible insights' (advice) into all aspects of life: relationships, work, sex, integrity, money, family, spirituality, etc.

'Proverbs states its theme right at the book's beginning (Prov. 1:1–7): its goal is to describe and instill "wisdom" in God's people, a wisdom that is founded in the "fear of the LORD" and that works out covenant life in the practical details of everyday situations and relationships.

'Proverbs covers a wide array of topics from daily life: diligence and laziness (Prov. 6:6–11); friendship (Prov. 3:27–28; 18:24); speech (Prov. 10:19–21); marriage (Prov. 18:22; 19:14); child rearing (Prov. 22:6); domestic peace (Prov. 15:17; 17:1); work (Prov. 11:1); getting along and good manners (Prov. 23:1–2; 25:16–17; 26:17–19; 27:14); eternity (Prov. 14:32; 23:17–18); and much more. In each of these areas it offers wisdom for realizing the life of the covenant in the details; it shows that "godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come" (1 Tim. 4:8). It demonstrates clearly that:

1. God's will is intensely practical, applying to every aspect of his people's lives. A proper relation to God involves, first, trying hard to understand his truth, and then embracing and obeying what one understands.
 2. A life lived by God's will is a happy life (Prov. 3:21–26).
 3. A life lived by God's will is a useful life (Prov. 3:27–28; 12:18, 25).
 4. A life lived by God's will does not just happen; one must seek after it, study, pursue it, and discipline oneself.
 5. Such a life is available to those who go after it (Prov. 9:1–6).
- ESV Study Bible

4. What is 'wisdom'?

Wisdom =

'A key term in Proverbs is of course "wisdom." The word (Hb. *khokmah*) can have the nuance of "skill" (as it does in Ex. 28:3), particularly the skill of choosing the right course of action for the desired result. In the covenantal framework of Proverbs, it denotes "skill in the art of godly living." – ESV Study Bible

'Wisdom (02451)(chokmah [word study] from the verb *chakam* - to be wise) is the ability to judge correctly and to follow the best course of action, based on knowledge and understanding. Wisdom is the ability to see something from God's viewpoint. Wisdom is "God's character in the many practical affairs of life." The noun "wisdom" (חֵכֶם, *khokmah*) could be nuanced "**moral skill.**" It refers to "skill" that produces something of value. It is used in reference to the skill of seamen (Ps 107:27), abilities of weavers (Ex 35:26), capabilities of administrators (1Kgs 3:28), or skill of craftsmen (Ex 31:6). In the realm of moral living, it refers to skill in living - one

lives life with moral skill so that something of lasting value is produced from one's life. –
preceptaustin.org

Khokhmah (Hebrew) = mental activity plus action; skill or applied knowledge - BP

‘How to live well in God's world.’ - BP

How is wisdom described?

‘As an ‘invisible creative force in the universe’ (which guides people in how to live)

‘As a ‘moral law of the universe’

‘As a ‘cause and effect pattern’ (which no one can escape)

‘As ‘boundary lines’ that should not be crossed

‘As a tool to make a beautiful life for ourselves and others

‘Not simply intellectual knowledge but applied knowledge or ‘knowledge put to work’ (like a skilled artisan)

‘Skill to create or make the good life like a designer

‘As an ‘attribute of God’ (not an impersonal force)

‘As a Person (Lady Wisdom and ultimately Christ) who rooms the world, calling to people, making herself available to anyone willing to listen to her and to learn. - BP

‘Wisdom is not the same as Law (Thou shalt or Thou shalt not).

‘Wisdom is not the same as Prophecy (Thus says the LORD).

‘Wisdom is the accumulated insight of God's people through the generations.’ - BP

5. What is the key to ‘wisdom’?

What is the key to living wisely?

‘The journey to be wise begins with the ‘fear of the LORD’ (healthy respect for God's definitions of good and evil or right and wrong). (1:7; 9:10; 15:33; Psalm 25:12) - BP

What is the fear of the LORD?

Proverbs 8:13; 14:2; Psalm 31:19; 33:8; 33:18; Psalm 47:2; 76:7; 86:11; 96:4; Psalm 111:10; 112:1; 115:11; 118:4; 128:1; 130:4; 147:11

- Moral mindset
- 'I am not God'
- 'I don't get to make up my own definitions of right and wrong.'
- Reverence and awe
- Humble oneself before God
- Embrace God's definition of evil and good whether I like it or not - BP

It is to rest in Jesus (trust God for forgiveness) and hope in God (His promises of lovingkindness) and pursue love (turn from sin and obey His commands to walk in His way).

6. What is a 'proverb'?

Not a precept or command.

Not a promise.

But a practical principle of life that is frequently true and observable to most.

'A short, clever saying that offers some kind of wisdom.' – BP

'Proverbs focuses on the general rule, not the exceptions.' (The many exceptions are what Ecclesiastes and Job are about.) – BP

- 'With the fear of God and wisdom things are likely to go great.'
- 'Without the fear of God and wisdom things are likely to go poorly.' - BP

'Proverbs is about probabilities, not promises or formulas for success. (no guarantees)' – BP

'Proverbs are not just good advice but God's invitation to learn wisdom from previous generations.' - BP

See Proverbs 10:27 and 22:6.

7. How is the book of Proverbs structured?

Outline of the Book

1:1-9 Introduction

1-9 Wisdom and the Fear of the LORD

- 10 Speeches of a Father to a Son (1:8-19; 2:1-22; 3:1-12; 3:21-35; 4:1-9; 4:10-19; 4:20-27; 5:1-23; 6:1-35; 7:1-27)

‘Encourages wisdom and the fear of the LORD leading to
A life of virtue, integrity, and generosity leading to
Success and peace

‘Warns against folly and evil (stupid decisions) leading to
Selfishness and pride leading to
Ruin and shame - BP

- 4 Poems from Lady Wisdom (1:20-33; 3:13-20; Ch. 8; Ch. 9)

‘Wisdom personified as a Woman.

‘Live in a moral universe so that goodness and justice are objective realities that we
ignore to our peril.

‘Fear of the LORD is living along the grain of the universe.’ - BP

10-29 Collection of Wise Sayings (100s of Ancient Proverbs)

Apply wisdom to every imaginable topic

Reference work to return to over and over again

30 Poems of Agur

‘Model Reader of the Proverbs’

Needs wisdom

Sees the Scripture as God’s Wisdom

31 Poems of Lemuel

Guidance for Wise Leadership

Alphabet Poem about the Wise Woman (lives according the Proverbs)

‘Model of Practical Wisdom Living’ (Outline – BP)