

# Gleanings from the Book of Proverbs – Part 1

## Considering Solomon

Scripture Reading: I Kings 2:1-4, 10-12; 3:5-15; 4:29-34

Before we dig into the passages of the book of Proverbs, we are first going to look at some of the background story of Solomon. As with all writers of Scripture, fallible men are used of God to give us infallible knowledge and wisdom.

I Kings 2:1-4           As David commissioned his son, Solomon, to be the next King of Israel, He set forth Solomon's need to be a strong leader who is obedient to God.

I Kings 2:10-12       In general, the kingdom of Israel prospered under Solomon's rule.

I Kings 3:5-15       God spoke to Solomon at night by a dream. God allowed Solomon to make a request. Solomon did not choose to ask for long life, wealth, or military success. Rather, he asked for an understanding heart in order to be a good, wise, and faithful leader of Israel.

God gave Solomon an understanding heart. God also gave him riches and honor, even though he did not ask God for these things. God promised him a long life if he would obey, as his father David had done.

When Solomon awoke from the dream, he went to Jerusalem. There he sacrificed and worshipped. Then he made a feast for all his servants.

I Kings 4:29-34       Solomon wrote many proverbs and songs. The wisdom God gave Solomon caused him to be able to write on many subjects. He became a speaker (a preacher – Ecclesiastes 1:1). Many people came from around the world to hear Solomon's wisdom – even royalty. Solomon also became very rich. See I Kings 10:1-29.

The Book of Proverbs gives us some of the many proverbs that Solomon wrote (Proverbs 1:1-2). In this book Solomon tells us how he knew to ask God for wisdom and understanding, instead of a long life, with wealth and military security. Proverbs 4:1-7 shows us that his father David taught him the priorities of life.

We note, in Proverbs 4:7, that David taught his son, ***“Wisdom is the principle thing; therefore get wisdom. And with all your getting, get understanding.”*** What is the relationship between wisdom and understanding? Wisdom is knowing what to do. Understanding is doing what you know is wise. See Psalm 111:10.

Now we must observe where Solomon experienced failure and was not like his father David, who was *“a man after God’s own heart”* (Acts 13:22 cp I Samuel 13:13-14; Psalm 89:20). Despite David’s sins and failures, David always sorrowed and repented before God when he sinned. He was very sensitive towards God and trusted Him greatly. One area that David never compromised was idolatry. And here is where Solomon failed. We previously made a reference to I Kings 10:1-29, where the fame and wealth of Solomon increased tremendously. But then comes chapter eleven! In some translations, I Kings 11:1 begins with the word *“But / However / Now”* to show a very negative contrast. It was not wrong for Solomon to become famous and rich. Perhaps those things affected Solomon, so that he did not see his need to consult God about the many political marriages that he was making. I Kings 11:1-4 shows that these foreign women brought with them their foreign gods and their foreign ways. Solomon sought to please his wives and facilitated their desires. This became a stumbling block to Solomon and to all of Israel.

In his later years, Solomon showed his repentance and wrote the book of Ecclesiastes. He, in essence, tells on himself and shows the vanity of pursuing worldly possessions and accomplishments without pursuing God as your highest priority. Perhaps Solomon was best describing himself in Ecclesiastes 10:1. Read Ecclesiastes 1:1-18 carefully and compare Solomon’s conclusion in Ecclesiastes 12:1, 13-14.

In Proverbs 23:23 Solomon wrote, ***“Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.”*** Herein lies the problem. The world, the flesh, and the Devil are always testing your resolve. Basically, you are constantly having to answer the question, “Is truth for sale?” What would you give in exchange for the knowledge of God and the life of wisdom, joy and peace that He offers? Living for worldly pleasures and possessions will cost your obedience to God. Disobedience will cost you your heart-affections for the Lord and His Word. Losing your affections for the Lord and His Word will cost you the benefits which come with wisdom and godliness. This includes your joy and peace. It is not just a one-time conflict. It is a daily issue (Luke 9:23).

Let us conclude our thoughts with these sobering warnings. See Jeremiah 9:23-24; I Timothy 6:3-21; Matthew 16:24-26 cp. I John 1:5 – 2:6; 2:15-17 (John 6:27-29; 10:27-30); I John 5:1-5, 19-21.