

I. Introduction to the book of Proverbs. v. 1 How do you measure success?

A. God offers you wisdom for success in the book of Proverbs.

1. **What is a proverb?** *A comparison, an object lesson, a simple illustration or a parable which exposes a fundamental reality about life.*
2. **The collection of proverbs is not unique to the Bible.**
3. **The biblical proverbs are unique because they are grounded in covenant relation to the LORD God. 1:7** All other wisdom shall perish. Isa. 29:14

B. The author of Proverbs: King Solomon, son of David (and others).

1. **Solomon was the wisest man on earth. I Ki. 3:2-28 4:29-34 5:7,12 10:1-10,23-24**
2. **Other collections of proverbs appear to have been added later. 25:1.**

C. The book of Proverbs is for you! .

1. **The Proverbs were written for a young man growing up in the court.**
2. **The Proverbs instruct parents how to train their children (and children how to be trained). 1:8f Deut. 6:4f**
3. **The Proverbs offer the basics of wisdom to those who are young and naive. v. 4**
4. **The Proverbs deepen the understanding of those who are already wise. v. 5**
5. **The Proverbs expose fools for what they are. v. 7b**

D. The Structure of the book of Proverbs.

1. **Prologue. 1:1-7 (Title, Purpose, and Motto)**
2. **A fathers' praise of wisdom. 1:8-9:18**
3. **The proverbs of Solomon. 10:1-22:16**
4. **Sayings of the wise 22:17-24:34**
5. **Further proverbs of Solomon (the Hezekian collection). 25:1-29:27**
6. **Words of Agur. 30:1-33**
7. **Womanly wisdom. 31:1-31**
 - a. **Advice from King Lemuel's mother. 31:1-9**
 - b. **An alphabet of wifely excellence. 31:10-31**

E. Challenges in preaching from the Proverbs.

1. **Organization:** It would be difficult to preach consecutively through Proverbs.
2. **Evangelism:** This is primarily a book for the redeemed.
3. **Maxims:** Not every verse is a promise. Pr. 22:6
4. **Can Christ be found in the Proverbs? 8:22f I Cor. 1:24,30 Col. 1:15-18 2:3,9-10 Matt. 12:41-42**

F. The purpose of the book of Proverbs. v. 2

1. **To train God's people with moral skill for holy living. v. 2a, 3-5 v**
2. **To impart mental discernment. v. 2b, 6 I Kn. 3:9**

II. The book of Proverbs will teach you wisdom (moral character). v. 2a, 3-5

A. What is wisdom? v. 2a

1. **In general, wisdom is skill. Ex. 28:3 36:2 I Kings 7:14 Acts 6:3**
2. **In the book of Proverbs, wisdom is skill for living before God.**
3. **Proverbs uses different words to describe the various aspects of wisdom.**

- B. Wisdom is gained through disciplined instruction. v. 2a
 1. All worthwhile training (education) involves discipline 13:24 22:15 15:33
 2. We need to be brought under the rule of God. 3:11-12 Heb. 12:1f
- C. The student is to receive instruction. v. 3
 1. Learn to successfully apply wisdom in real life situations. v.3a. I Sam. 25:3
 2. Such prudence produces acts of righteousness, justice, and equity. v. 3b
- D. The teacher is to impart knowledge to the simple. v. 4
 1. The naive need to become shrewd. v. 4a 14:15 1:8f 7:7
 2. Youths need knowledge and direction. v. 4b 2:6,11
- E. Those who are already wise will listen and grow in wisdom. v. 5 1:8f
 1. The book of Proverbs isn't just for the young and immature.
 2. Those who are truly wise remain teachable.

III. The book of Proverbs will teach you discernment (mental understanding). v. 2b,6

- A. You need insight to know reality in our post modern world.
- B. You need insight into God's Word. II Pet. 3:16 Mk. 4:10-12
- C. Studying the book of Proverbs will sharpen your mind.

**IV. Your quest for wisdom begins with the fear of the LORD. v. 7 9:19 Ps. 111:10
Ecc. 12:13 Job 28:28 :**

- A. Wisdom begins with the LORD God.
 1. Proverbs is not merely a "how to" book. It is focused upon the LORD Who is in *covenant* with His people.
 2. Wisdom is an attribute of God. Eph. 1:8 Job 12:13 Jer. 10:12 Ps. 19:7
 3. God imparts wisdom to those who seek Him. James 1:5
 4. There is no true wisdom or understanding apart from the Lord. Js. 1:5 3:13-17
- B. What does it mean to fear God?
 1. Reverent awe. 16:6 Isa. 6:1f Heb. 12:28-29
 2. Dependent submission. 3:7 23:17
 3. To fear Him is to know Him. 9:10 To fear Him is to have life. 19:23
 4. When you know and fear God you no longer fear men. 29:25
- C. Don't be a Fool!
 1. The opposite of the fear of God is pride. 3:7 Ps. 14:1
 2. A fool rejects God's wisdom and hates discipline. 15:32,5 10:8
 3. A fool lives a wasted life and comes to ruin. 1:30-32
- D. The loss of wisdom in our foolish culture.
 1. It is possible to be an educated fool.
 2. What is wrong with American's children?
 3. Why is the American church failing to impact our culture?

V. Concluding applications: What do you seek?

- A. All true knowledge is founded on the fear of the LORD.
- B. You can only be wise through Christ. Isa. 52:13 53:11 11:1-2 Jer. 23:5 I Co. 1:30

Discussion exercise for family devotions (Read Proverbs 1:1-7).

1. What is a proverb? v. 1
2. What are the two goals of the book of Proverbs? v. 2
3. What is wisdom?
4. How can you gain wisdom?
5. What is a fool? v. 7b
6. Can you think of any examples of fools?
 - a. In the Bible.
 - b. In history.
 - c. Modern day fools.
7. What does it mean to fear God? v. 7a
8. Can you think of men and women who are God fearing and wise?
 - a. In the Bible.
 - b. In history
 - c. Modern day wise men.
9. Memorize Proverbs 1:7

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