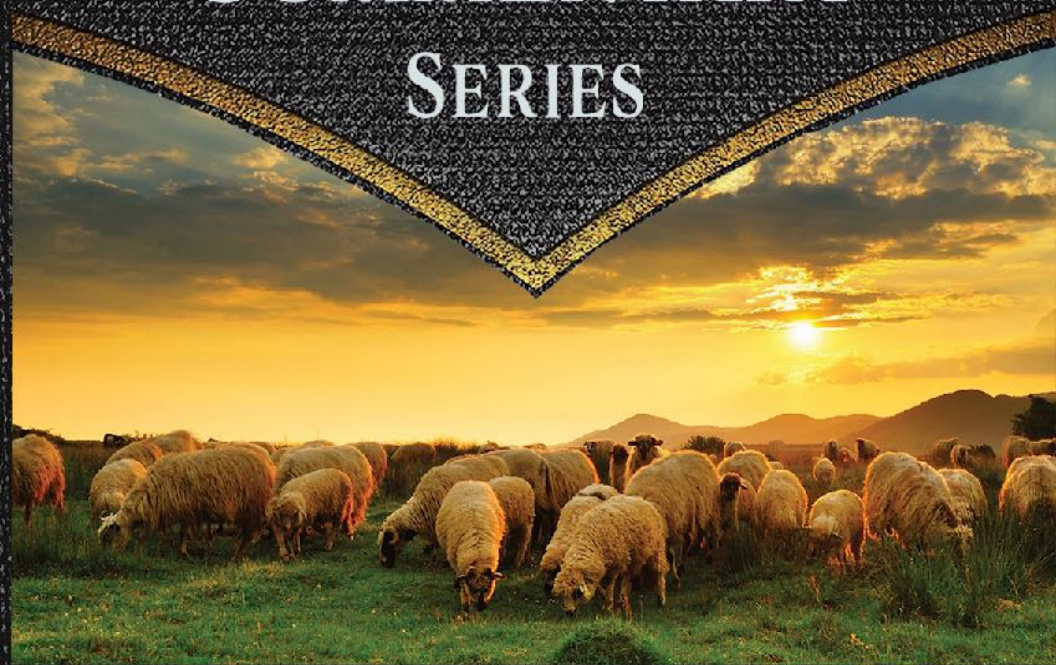


WAY OF LIFE
COMMENTARY
SERIES



PROVERBS
DAVID W. CLOUD

The Way of Life Commentary Series: Proverbs

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Way of Life Bible Commentaries

The *Way of Life Bible Commentary* series is designed in a unique format to be used as verse-by-verse commentaries, as Bible teaching courses, and for expository preaching. The commentaries are thorough, serious, broad, and practical, with an emphasis on application to the Christian life and ministry. Context is honored; words are defined; figures of speech are explained; difficulties are tackled. The commentaries are backed by 50 years of intense Bible study and are packed with historical backgrounds and archaeological studies based on the author's personal research, which is reflected in books such as the *Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible & Christianity*, *Mastering the English Bible*, *Bible Times & Ancient Kingdoms*, and *Jews in Fighter Jets: Israel Past, Present, and Future*. The interpretation is from a literal, dispensational perspective. The basis is the King James Bible and its underlying original language texts. The King James Bible is explained and illuminated but not criticized. The New Testament church is given priority as the pillar and ground of the truth and the headquarters for world evangelism. There is no hint of modernism or influence from compromised evangelicalism. The user will find no reference to or dependence upon men such as Origen, Jerome, Augustine, C.S. Lewis, Eberhard Nestle, or Bruce Metzger.

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“David Cloud has rung the bell squarely again with the newly published commentary books on Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Minor Prophets. These commentaries are chocked full of vital informative truths, Biblically sound doctrine and prophetic insights that are written in easy-to-understand language. *The Fundamentalist Digest* editor highly commends these books” (Don Jasmin).

“I’m in one room reading Isaiah with your commentary, while my wife is at her desk reading Ezekiel with your commentary. We can both say, with zero doubt, that there is no commentary on earth that we trust more than yours--and we own several others of great renown.”

“There is not a single Christian author/commentator that I trust and respect more than you. I am extremely excited about your full Bible commentary.”

“I am getting a lot out of your commentary on Revelation. I have about 10 commentaries and yours stands out as the best.”

“Everything you write seems to have the Spirit of God behind it, and nothing is as exceptional as your commentary on the general epistles. I’ve only finished going through the first 13 verses of 1 Peter and you have already handled depression, angels, heaven, election, holiness and our glorified bodies in such a deeply profound manner that it’s as if I had never studied those issues before (as a 35 year Christian and zealous student of Scripture).”

Introductory Lessons

“Proverbs are meant to be to our practical life, what Psalms are to our devotional life” (J. Sidlow Baxter).

Proverbs is wisdom for the wise and foolish. It can make the foolish man wise and the wise man wiser.

I love Proverbs. I discovered this wonderful book when I was a new Christian and began reading it the first year I was saved. The next year, at Bible college, a visiting preacher challenged the students to read a chapter of Proverbs every day, and I started that practice and kept it up for many years. I collected the best commentaries and studied every verse. I wrote my own commentaries on many verses. This was immensely profitable. A few months ago, I challenged a young preacher to do the same thing. He followed up by email recently as follows: “I appreciate very much your push of me as a young man to become a more devoted student of God’s Word. Your testimony of yourself as a 23 year old young man who gave himself over to studying Proverbs, sparked more desire in my heart to never go a day without listening to or reading over Proverbs. My promptness, punctuality, and prudence have all been improving just over the past several weeks, because there is a stronger desire to be so much better than before to grow in Wisdom in the word of God, as well as in practical daily living.”

Introductory Lessons

1. The English title “Proverbs” is from the Latin Bible (*proverbium*). The Hebrew title is *Sepher Mashal* (book of wisdom). For a title to the book, I like this better than “Proverbs.” It is the book of practical wisdom!

2. The theme of the book of Proverbs is finding wisdom through the fear of the Lord. See Proverbs 1:2-3, 7. The fear of the Lord is the path of salvation and blessing. The fear of the Lord is to know God personally through repentance and faith (Ac. 20:21). The wisdom of Proverbs cannot be known apart from this relationship.

3. Every individual should approach Proverbs in great humility and thanksgiving, because Proverbs contains infinite wisdom. It is the very wisdom of God. No sinner deserves to know this wisdom. It is only by God’s amazing grace that fallen man can know these things.

4. Proverbs contrasts the way of the wise with the way of the fool. (The wise are also called “prudent,” Pr. 12:23.) The way of the fool is the way of the natural man. Man is foolish by nature (Pr. 22:15). Man naturally follows the dictates of his fallen heart (Jer. 17:9) rather than God’s Word. He

lives by his own thinking and by the thinking of man in general (human philosophy and religion). The fool is impenitent and unbelieving. The way of foolishness seems right to fallen man; it is the broad way, the popular way. But Proverbs teaches that it is the way of judgment and destruction. Children and youth desperately need the instruction of wisdom.

5. Proverbs begins by calling men to repentance (Pr. 1:20-33). The very first chapter contains God's gracious invitation to the "simple," the "scorners," and the "fools" to turn at His reproof and to receive His Spirit whereby they can understand wisdom. This is the only door into God's wisdom. "Ye must be born again." Parents must do everything possible to lead their children to repentance and saving faith in Christ. Christian schools must do everything possible to lead their little scholars to Christ. Biblical education without regeneration is dead religion and produces hypocrites and atheists.

7. Proverbs looks beyond this present life to the next. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death" (Pr. 14:12). Proverbs gives the student a proper worldview. The natural man is shortsighted. His thinking and hope are wrapped up in the present life. He must learn to see "the end" of things. He must learn to weigh the things of this life by their eternal consequences.

8. Proverbs is not merely a collection of wise sayings. "God" and "LORD" are mentioned 190 times. Like the Bible as a whole, Proverbs is revelation of God. Proverbs is a schoolmaster to teach men about God. This is the main wisdom that every person needs for life and eternity.

Following are a few of the things that Proverbs teaches about God:

- God is great; He is the Creator of all things; He is man's judge (Pr. 26:10).
- God is in His character what Proverbs teaches in principle (i.e. justice, judgment, honesty, equity, righteousness, truth, light).
- God calls sinners to repent and receive wisdom (Pr. 1:20-23).
- God pours out His Spirit on those who turn at His reproof (Pr. 1:23).
- God judges those who reject His call (Pr. 1:24-30; 3:33).
- God gives wisdom to men (Pr. 3:5).
- God corrects those He loves (Pr. 3:12).
- God created the world by His wisdom (Pr. 3:19).
- God watches over those who fear Him (Pr. 3:26).
- God sees all things that man does (Pr. 5:21; 15:3, 11).
- God hates evil (Pr. 6:16-19).
- God cares for the righteous (Pr. 10:3).

- God hates a false balance (Pr. 11:1).
- God hears the prayer of the righteous (Pr. 15:29).
- God is in control of man's speech (Pr. 16:1).
- God understands man's motives (Pr. 16:2).
- God made all things for Himself (Pr. 16:4).
- God is in ultimate control of man's ways (Pr. 16:9, 33; 21:1; 21:31).
- God cares for the poor and blesses those who help the poor (Pr. 19:17).
- God's will cannot be successfully resisted (Pr. 21:30).

9. In Proverbs, we see that God is concerned about every detail of man's life and has seen fit to show us the way of wisdom in the most minute matters. That the Creator would see fit to give a book of practical wisdom to sinful, careless men is an amazing thing and is an evidence of His grace.

"The Book of Proverbs gives us the application of that wisdom which created the heavens and the earth to the details of life in this world of confusion and evil. This thought brings out the immensity of grace unfolded here. God deigns to apply His wisdom to the circumstances of our practical life, and to shew us, with His own intelligence, the consequences of all the ways in which man may walk. For it is often in the way of knowledge, not of precept, that the statements made in the Book of Proverbs are presented. It is a great blessing to be provided for in the labyrinth of this world, in which a false step may lead to such bitter consequences, with a book that sets forth the path of prudence and of life; and that in connection with a wisdom which comes from God" (John Darby).

10. Proverbs teaches us that young people *can* learn wisdom. In fact, this is the best time to learn wisdom and this is where Proverbs begins. Proverbs is first of all a book for youth. See Pr. 1:4; 4:1; 5:7; 7:24; 8:32. In contrast to most teaching given to young people in churches today, Proverbs is very serious and has great depth. Churches cannot compete with the world's entertainment, but they can give young people something they won't get anywhere else, and that is eternal wisdom. Churches need to trade the entertainment program for the wisdom program.

11. The book of Proverbs is intended not only for Old Testament saints but also for New Testament ones. The writer of Hebrews quotes from Proverbs and applies it to the churches. Proverbs 3:11 says, "My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction." This is quoted in Hebrews 12:5 where we are told that the exhortation in

Proverbs 3:11 speaks to New Testament believers. “And ye have forgotten the exhortation which SPEAKETH UNTO YOU as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.” Each believer should see himself as the “son” to whom Proverbs is addressed in God’s love and grace.

12. True godliness and wisdom are very practical. It gets down to where we live our everyday lives and involves every activity and relationship. Preaching that lacks this level of practicality is not good Bible preaching. The New Testament teaches the same thing. In Titus 2 Paul gave practical instructions to each class of believer, the aged men, the aged women, the young men, and the young women, and preceded this instruction with these words: “But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine” (Tit. 2:1). The things that become, or are fitting to, sound doctrine are the things pertaining to practical Christian living.

13. Proverbs is the supreme book of human psychology and sociology (“human social behavior, patterns of social relationships, social interaction, and aspects of culture associated with everyday life”). Scripture shows how to have right relationships in all areas of life, in marriage, in child training, in friendship, in education, in government, in one’s occupation, in recreation, in leisure. The book of Proverbs contains more wisdom about human life and the operation of home, society, commerce, and government than all of this world’s secular colleges and universities combined. For example, there is more sound information on child training in the little book of Proverbs than in all of the child psychology books that have ever been written. As David Thomas wrote in about 1884, “The Book of Proverbs is a far better guide for a young man in business than Adam Smith or the *Times*” [the London newspaper].”

14. Proverbs refutes man’s natural wisdom. It shows that man’s wisdom is folly in God’s eyes, man’s natural thinking is wrong, man’s natural ways are under God’s judgment. The things that man values are despised by God. No matter how a man prospers in this world, if he is impenitent before God and does not receive God’s salvation, he will be cut off and will have nothing in the end and will abide forever under God’s judgment. The wicked shall be cut off from the earth (Pr. 2:22); the curse of God is in his house (Pr. 3:33); his substance will be cast away (Pr. 10:3); his name shall rot (Pr. 10:7); the fear of the wicked shall come upon him (Pr. 10:24); “as the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more” (Pr. 10:25); the expectation of the wicked shall perish (Pr. 10:28); he shall not be unpunished (Pr. 11:21); he will be condemned of the Lord (Pr. 12:2); he will be overthrown (Pr. 12:7; 21:12); he will come to shame (Pr. 13:5); his house will be overthrown (Pr. 14:11); his candle shall be put out (Pr. 24:20).

15. The breadth of Proverbs is amazing. It contains practical wisdom for every type and class of person, for the king and the subject, the simple and the prudent, the male and the female, the young and the old, the rich and the poor, the master and the servant, the wise and the foolish, the married and the unmarried, the husband and the wife, the parent and the child, the angry and the calm, the patient and the impatient, the sluggard and the diligent, the friend and the enemy, the sad and the joyful, the one who talks much and the one who talks little.

16. The book of Proverbs is a mirror that reveals the condition of our hearts. I remember when I first started studying Proverbs as a very young Christian, and I was discouraged to find that I had some of the characteristics of the foolish person described by Solomon. I was “soon angry,” for example (Pr. 14:17). But the Word of God is not only a mirror, it is the means of repentance and spiritual power, and the individual who looks into Proverbs’ mirror can find cleansing and change by confessing what he sees there to the merciful God of his salvation.

17. The book of Proverbs teaches by repetition. The major themes are repeated throughout the book. For example, at least 29 verses deal with sloth and diligence. By this means the reader is constantly reminded of these truths. Further, the same truths are sometimes restated in slightly different ways. This helps keep the repetition interesting and adds instruction upon instruction. For example, Proverbs 19:5 says, “he that speaketh lies shall not escape,” and Proverbs 19:9 says, “he that speaketh lies shall perish.”

18. The biographical portraits in the Bible are illustrated in the Proverbs. Consider three examples:

Haman is an example of Proverbs 16:18, “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.” See Esther 3-7.

David’s encounter with Bathsheba is an example of Proverbs 28:13, “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper,” and Proverbs 14:14, “The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways.” Compare Ps. 51:8-12.

Shimei and Goliath are examples of Proverbs 26:2, “... the curse causeless shall not come.” See 1 Sa. 17:42-51 and 2 Sa. 16:5-7.

19. The training of Proverbs is preparation for Christ’s kingdom (Pr. 2:20-22). His kingdom will be a kingdom of wisdom, righteousness, justice, and equity, and this is what we learn in Proverbs.

What is a proverb?

1. The Hebrew word for proverb is *mashal*, the same word translated “parable,” and means to compare one thing with another. As we will see,

most of the Proverbs are in the form of Hebrew parallelism or comparison statements.

2. The English word “proverb” is from *Proverbs* (for) and *verba* (words) and is “a short statement that takes the place of many words.”
3. A proverb contains a wealth of teaching, but it is given in a form that is easy to remember. Consider Proverbs 16:18: “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.” That is 11 words in English and 7 words in Hebrew but it contains unforgettable and far-reaching truth.

“The genius of the proverb lies in its shrewd concentration of a truth or of some sagacious counsel in a terse and striking way, so that it catches on, and becomes easier to remember than to forget” (*Explore the Book*).

4. Following are some other definitions of the term proverb:

“A proverb is a wise saying in which a few words are chosen instead of many, with a design to condense wisdom into a brief form both to aid memory and stimulate study.”

“A proverb is a saying that conveys a specific truth in a pointed and pithy way.”

“A proverb is a short sentence drawn from long experience.”

“A proverb is a truth that is couched in a form that is easy to remember.”

“A proverb is a pithy statement that summarizes in a few choice words practical truths relating to some aspect of everyday life.”

“A proverb is wisdom in portable form.”

The human authors of Proverbs

1. **Solomon** wrote Proverbs 1-29. In his lifetime he spoke 3,000 proverbs (1 Ki. 4:32), and we have about 700 of these in the book of Proverbs. Solomon refers to his proverbs in Ecclesiastes 12:9, “And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, *and* set in order many proverbs.”

Solomon was David’s son, the king of Israel.

In his youth Solomon delighted in the Lord and was given great wisdom (1 Ki. 3:3-28; 4:29-34).

Solomon’s kingdom was large and very wealthy (1 Ki. 10).

Solomon wrote two other books of Scripture, the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes.

Solomon turned away from the Lord in his later years, but he repented and wrote Ecclesiastes as his swan song. See 1 Kings 11:1-8 and Ecclesiastes 12:8-14.

2. **Agur** the son of Jakeh wrote Proverbs 30. All we know for sure is that Agur was a prophet who spoke this message by divine revelation. Since he gave both his name and his father's name, it is probable that Agur was well known to his generation, and it is probable that his proverbs were collected by the men of Hezekiah. Compare Proverbs 25:1.

3. **King Lemuel** wrote Proverbs 31 from the prophecy that his mother taught him (Pr. 31:1). Most conservative commentators have identified Lemuel as Solomon. Following are some examples:

The Geneva Bible notes of 1557 said: "Lemuel, that is, of Solomon who was called Lemuel, that is, of God, because God had ordained him to be king over Israel. The doctrine which his mother Bathsheba taught him."

Matthew Poole (1624-1679): "It is believed by most conservative commentators, both Jewish and Christian, that Lemuel was Solomon."

Matthew Henry (1662-1714): "Most interpreters are of opinion that Lemuel is Solomon; the name signifies one that is *for God*, or *devoted to God*; and so it agrees well enough with that honourable name which, by divine appointment, was given to Solomon (2 Sa. 12:25), *Jedediah beloved of the Lord*. Lemuel is supposed to be a pretty, fond, endearing name, by which his mother used to call him; and so much did he value himself upon the interest he had in his mother's affections that he was not ashamed to call himself by it."

John Gill (1697--1771): "the general sense of Jewish and Christian writers is, that Solomon himself is meant; whose name Lemuel is either a corruption of his name Solomon, a fond pretty name his mother Bathsheba gave him when young, and he thought fit to write it just as his mother spoke it; as mothers often do give such broken names to their children in fond affection to them: or it was another name of his, as it appears he had more than one;"

John Wesley (1703-1791): "Of Solomon, by the general consent both of Jewish and Christian writers; this name signifies one from God, or belonging to God, and such an one was Solomon eminently, being given by God to David and

Bathsheba, as a pledge of his reconciliation to them after their repentance. Possibly his mother gave him this name to mind him of his great obligations to God, and of the justice of his devoting himself to God's service."

Joseph Benson (1749-1821): "It must be acknowledged, some have doubted whether Lemuel was not a different person; but, according to Dr. Delaney and many others, without sufficient reason. 'I know,' says that judicious divine: 'that some modern critics, contrary to the unanimous judgment and tradition of all antiquity, have raised some scruples upon this head, as if Lemuel were not Solomon, but some other king, they know not who. I have examined them with all the care and candour I am capable of, and conclude, upon the whole, that their objections are such as my readers, of best understandings, would be little obliged to me either for retailing or refuting.'"

E.W. Bullinger (1837-1913): "Compare Jedidiah = beloved of Jah (2 Sa. 12:25). Solomon was the royal seed in the line of Him Who is King of kings and Lord of lords. The Talmud says (*Avoth d'Rab. Nathan*, c. 39): 'Solomon was called by six names: Solomon, Jedidiah, Koheleth, Son of Jakeh, Agur, and Lemuel'"

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, which was first published in 1890, said "Lemuel" is "a symbolic name of Solomon."

H.A. Ironside, writing in 1908, said: "That Lemuel was his mother's name for Solomon is generally believed, and seems likely to be true. ... No doubt the loss of her first-born, taken away in the Lord's discipline, made him who had been called Jedediah, 'Beloved of Jehovah,' all the dearer to her heart (2 Sa. 12:24-25)."

B.H. Carroll, in his *Interpretation of the English Bible* of 1913, said Lemuel is "just another name for Solomon."

We know that there was no king in Israel named "Lemuel," because all of the kings are listed in the Bible; thus it is obvious that what we have here is a nickname. The name Lemuel means "belonging to God," and it is probable that this was a pet name that Solomon's mother gave him to remind him that God loved him and that he had a special calling as David's son. See 2 Sa. 12:24-25. Jedidiah means "beloved of the LORD."

We know that Bathsheba had a special relationship with Solomon and a special place in his heart, as is evident from his action in 1 Kings 2:19-20.

Though he did not grant Bathsheba the petition that she asked on that occasion (only because he knew that the conniving Adonijah was trying to gain a future claim to the throne by asking for Abishag), Solomon treated her with the utmost respect, rising to meet her, bowing to her, causing a seat to be set for her on his right hand. The very fact that Adonijah asked Bathsheba to make the request shows that it was common knowledge that she had a close relationship with Solomon and that he was accustomed to hearing her.

We believe, then, that Proverbs 31 was taught by Bathsheba, and it is an amazing fact that God used a repentant adulterous woman to write the description of the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31. But, then, are any of us better than “sinners saved by God’s wonderful grace”? It is fitting that this prophecy by Solomon’s mother to Solomon forms the conclusion to the book of Proverbs, which was written entirely by Solomon excepting one chapter (chapter 30). “His mother, Bathsheba, who having truly repented of her adultery, did not only avoid it in herself for the future, but seriously endeavoured to prevent that and such-like sins in others, and especially in Solomon, whom the remembrance of her sin might possibly provoke to an imitation of her example. But when she gave him these instructions is but matter of conjecture. Probably it was either, when she first discerned his inclinations to those sins of which she here warns him, to which she saw he was like to have many and strong provocations. Or, after he was made king, and had more plainly discovered his proneness to these excesses, although he had not yet broken forth into those scandalous enormities into which he afterwards fell” (Matthew Poole).

The divine inspiration of Proverbs

1. The New Testament often quotes from and refers to the book of Proverbs and teaches us that it is for the saints in the present dispensation. Following are the chief quotations of Proverbs in the New Testament. (Sometimes the New Testament writers give vague citations from the Old Testament rather than a word-for-word quotation.)

Proverbs 3:11-12 - Hebrews 12:5-6

Proverbs 3:34 - James 4:6; 1 Pe. 5:5

Proverbs 10:12 - 1 Peter 4:8

Proverbs 11:31 - 1 Peter 4:18

Proverbs 25:6-7 - Luke 14:8-10

Proverbs 25:21-22 - Romans 12:20

Proverbs 26:11 - 2 Peter 2:22

2. Proverbs shows its divine inspiration by describing things that would be impossible to know by mere human observation. See, for example,

Proverbs 15:3. Apart from divine revelation, it would be impossible to know that the eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the good and the evil.

3. The book of Proverbs shows its divine inspiration by its perfect truthfulness and accuracy and lack of contradiction. What other collection of proverbs written 3,000 years ago is perfectly accurate? In fact, what other collection of proverbs written at any time in human history is perfectly accurate? Consider some of the famous proverbs from uninspired pens:

“An apple a day keeps the doctor away.” While it is true that fruit is an important part of a healthy diet, it is not true that an apple a day keeps the doctor away.

“He who hesitates is lost.” While there is some truth to this proverb, it falls short of complete truth because there are many occasions when it is wise to hesitate and to carefully contemplate one’s course before acting.

“Never cry over spilt milk.” In fact, sometimes it is good to cry over things that are lost, such as failed opportunities to witness for Christ or failed opportunities to train our children or to love our wives or husbands. The unsaved in hell will cry over spilt milk forever in that they have lost the opportunity to be saved.

“Early to bed; early to rise; makes the man healthy, wealthy, and wise.” In fact, a man can go to bed early and rise early and still lack health, wealth, and wisdom.

The Benefit of Proverbs (Pr. 1:2-6)

See the chapter “Proverbs, the Benefit.”

Proverbs as a Child Training, Youth Discipling Manual

Proverbs is especially an instruction manual for children and youth. There is more wisdom for this purpose in this one small book than all of the world’s textbooks put together.

The phrase, “my son” is repeated 23 times (Pr. 1:8, 10, 15; 2:1; 3:1, 11, 21; 4:10, 20; 5:1, 20; 6:1, 3, 20; 7:1; 19:27; 23:15, 19, 26; 24:13, 21; 27:11; 31:2) and “children” is repeated 13 times (Pr. 4:1; 5:7; 7:24; 8:32, etc.).

Proverbs is therefore very important for the home and church, both of which are charged by God with training children and youth.

Proverbs for “My Son” (Pr. 1:7 - 9:18)

“My son” is repeated 15 times in this passage (Pr. 1:8, 10, 15; 2:1; 3:1, 11, 21; 4:10, 20; 5:1, 20; 6:1, 3, 20; 7:1).

Proverbs 1:7-33

Three important lessons of life (Pr. 1:7-19)

The teaching of these three lessons must be the objective of every parent, every pastor, and every teacher. Education apart from these three fundamentals is humanism.

None of these things are in the child by nature. He has no fear of God; he has no respect for authority; he does not hate evil.

1. A right relationship with God (Pr. 1:7)

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. This refers to the true knowledge of life, of wisdom. Compare Pr. 9:10, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.” Men may have much knowledge (in the sense of learning) apart from a right relationship with God, but such knowledge is not wisdom. It has no element of godliness or eternal benefit.

The fear of the Lord is to submit to God as the God of my life. Proverbs defines the fear of the Lord in four ways: **(1) *The fear of the Lord is humble submission to God; it is the opposite of a disobedient spirit*** (“but fools despise wisdom and instruction,” Pr. 1:7). **(2) *The fear of the Lord is a right relationship with God’s Word*** (Pr. 2:1-5). It is impossible to walk in the fear of the Lord apart from the Bible. In Psalm 19 Scripture is called six things, and one of those is “the fear of the Lord” (Ps. 19:9). An intimate relationship with the Bible is a necessary part of walking in the fear of God. **(3) *The fear of the Lord is to hate evil*** (Pr. 8:13). **(4) *The fear of the Lord is to reject sinners*** (Pr. 23:17). It is to walk in the narrow way of truth and to reject the broad way of the world (Mt. 7:13-14). “[The fear of the Lord] is that affectionate reverence by which the child of God bends himself humbly and carefully to his Father’s law. His wrath is so bitter, and His love so sweet; that hence springs an earnest desire to please Him, and--because of the danger of coming short from his own weakness and temptations--a holy watchfulness and fear, ‘that he might not sin against Him’” (Charles Bridges).

The fear of the Lord comes through salvation. Wisdom comes when a sinner repents and bows his knees to God and receives God’s salvation in

Jesus Christ ("repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," Ac. 20:21). The Holy Spirit comes into that person's life and imparts wisdom (1 Jo. 2:27). Only then can a sinner understand God's Word properly, for the natural man "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God" (1 Co. 2:13).

Children learn the fear of the Lord by wise child training, the kind we see in Proverbs that includes the use of the rod for correction. Biblical child training is a schoolmaster to lead children to Christ. Biblical discipline teaches them that God is holy and just and punishes sin; it teaches them that they are sinners; and it leads them to Christ.

2. Submission to authority (Pr. 1:8-9)

Wisdom teaches submission to God-ordained human authority, beginning with parental authority. God is a God of order. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (Ro. 13:3). The fifth commandment, which is to honor thy father and thy mother, is the first of God's commandments that had a promise associated with it (Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:1-3).

Submission to parental authority is the fundamental aspect of a well-ordered society. When this is broken, society is broken and the nation is ruined. In the end times, there are powerful forces devoted to stirring up rebellion to authority at every level of society. It is the devil's "mystery of iniquity" plan to create disorder and to put his man on the throne of the world (2 Th. 2). These forces include Marxism, humanistic psychology, and the pop culture which encourages children and youth to live as they please.

The child is to be taught to obey all God-appointed authority, not only parents. This includes government rulers, police, pastors, and teachers (Ro. 13:7). There is to be respect for elders in general. Compare 1 Pe. 5:5.

The one exception to submission to authority is when the authority contradicts God's authority. The higher law must always be obeyed ("We ought to obey God rather than men," Ac. 5:29). If a young person has parents who want him to go in the way of folly, he must honor God more than his parents. Jesus said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me" (Mt. 10:37). Yet even when the young person must refuse to follow unwise parental rules, he must still treat the parents with all possible respect and honor.

Note that the law of one's mother is to be obeyed as well as the law of the father (Pr. 1:8). It is natural for mothers to spend more time with the chil-

dren than the father does, and her law is to be obeyed just as surely as the father's.

Note that both parents are to be involved in the training of the children. The father is mentioned first because he is responsible to oversee all things that are done in the household. Compare Eph. 6:4, "And ye fathers ... bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." God made Adam first, then Eve, and Adam was responsible even for Eve's error. Though Eve sinned first, God addressed Adam first (Ge. 3:9-10). Adam was judged for hearkening to the voice of his wife in the wrong thing (Ge. 3:17).

Note that both instruction and law are needed for effective child training (Pr. 1:8). Parents have an obligation to lay down the law for their children. This is contrary to the modern method of "positive" child training. The parents also have an obligation to instruct their children as to the reason for the law. They are to make them understand why we are to fear God and why wisdom is better than folly.

Proverbs promises that obedience to parents is "an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck" (Pr. 1:9). The attitude of submission to authority is a beautiful thing in a young person. It is beautiful before God and man. Joseph had this beauty, as did David and Daniel and Jesus and Timothy. The attitude of submission to authority is far more beautiful than expensive designer clothes. Though the world does not value obedience, God does. It is beautiful before Him, and He will reward it. Proverbs teaches the true wisdom, the true beauty, the true riches.

3. Separation from evil (Pr. 1:10-19)

"My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not ... walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path" (Pr. 1:10, 15). Separation is a necessary part of walking in wisdom. It is a major theme of the chapters that are addressed to children and youth. See Pr. 1:10, 15; 4:14-15, 25-26; 5:8; 7:25; 9:6. Separation is almost a dirty word in Christianity today, but that is a sign of apostasy. Separation is much emphasized in Scripture and it is a matter of spiritual and moral protection. If a young person is regenerated and has wise parents and teachers who instruct him, he can still go astray into folly if he does not avoid wrong associations. Thus the Psalms begin with separation (Ps. 1:1) and the New Testament is filled with it. "... mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Ro. 16:17); "be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Co. 15:33); "wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (2 Co. 6:17); "and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11); "... withdraw yourselves

from every brother that walketh disorderly" (2 Th. 3:6); "flee also youthful lusts" (2 Ti. 2:22); "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (2 Ti. 3:5); "ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (Jas. 4:4); "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world" (1 Jo. 2:15).

For neglect of separation, Lot lost his family, Samson was blinded, Solomon turned to idols, and Demas forsook God's call.

Sinners entice the righteous (Pr. 1:10). Not content to mind their own business, sinners are aggressive proselytizers. The devil drew many angels after him in his rebellion, and his chief business still is enticing others. Sinners entice in many ways: *by mocking righteousness and wisdom* and trying to make the person feel that he is not "cool" if he obeys God ("fools despise wisdom and instruction," Pr. 1:7), *by promising friendship* ("come with us ... cast in thy lot among us," Pr. 1:11, 14), *by promising excitement* ("let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily ... their feet run to evil," Pr. 1:11, 16), *by promising gain* ("we shall find all precious substance," Pr. 1:13). There are always testings and temptations in this present world.

These sinners do not understand true riches. They speak of "precious substance" (Pr. 1:13), but in reality such "riches" are vanity that take wings and fly away (Pr. 23:5). True riches are "durable riches" (Pr. 8:18). They are those things that are right in God's eyes and have eternal value (Mt. 6:19-20). "They call it precious substance; whereas it is neither substance nor precious; it is a shadow; it is vanity, especially that which is got by robbery. ... It is cheap, it is common, yet, in their account, it is precious, and therefore they will hazard their lives, and perhaps their souls, in pursuit of it. It is the ruining mistake of thousands that they over-value the wealth of this world and look on it as precious substance" (Matthew Henry).

These sinners pretend that they are not seen by God ("let us lurk privily," Pr. 1:11). They think they are committing their sin in the dark and in secret, but in fact God sees every thought, word, and deed. "... the darkness and the light are both alike to thee" (Ps. 139:12).

These sinners do not know that they are rushing to judgment (Pr. 1:17-18). The wise person will look to the end of his actions and not only to the beginning. This is what Moses did when he rejected the life of wealth and ease as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and the pleasures of sin, and chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God (Heb. 11:24-27). He knew that the pleasures of sin are but for a season, and the reward of Christ is infinitely greater than the reward of this world.

Sinners can be resisted. Many young people have walked in wisdom and have refused the voice of temptation. The Bible gives many examples (e.g., Joseph, Moses, Samuel, David, Daniel, Timothy), and we find countless other examples in history as well as among those who serve Christ today. I personally know many men and women of God who were virgins when they married and have maintained their purity throughout their lives by God's grace.

James Nisbet was a Christian publisher and a teacher and worker with the British Sunday School Union in the 19th century. He grew up in a Christian home and at age 18 traveled to London by himself to work at a job. Following is what happened: "On one of the first evenings after his arrival a youth, who from the same vicinity had gone up to town the previous year, took him out to see the sights. The stroll ended in a sort of blind alley, and as his companion knocked at a door it was opened by some light-looking girls, evidently well acquainted with their visitor. With instant revulsion the new comer started back, for instinctively he felt that it was 'the house which inclineth unto death.' In much agitation he exclaimed, 'Oh, friend, where are you going?' and he entreated his companion to come away. That companion only laughed and went in, and as our friend sought his way back to his lodging he felt very desolate. It was a cold and dreary night, and in his disheartened mood he thought that London must be a devouring monster, which swallowed up whatever came into it, and changed it into the likeness of its own deformity. Here in a few months it had made a virtuous youth a profligate, and as if walking amidst snares and pitfalls, and strange mysteries of iniquity, he trembled for himself. The next Sunday he inquired his way to Swallow Street. There he found the worship which he had learned to love back home, and as he listened to the earnest sermon he began to feel, 'God is in this place.' The little church brightened into a Bethel, and helped to cheer the following week; and then came an introduction to the minister and a class in the Sunday school, and the acquisition of one good friend after another, till at last the streets, which at his first arrival were haunted by gloomy phantoms and cruel ghosts, grew populous with brethren in the Lord; till he who had himself been so graciously preserved became distinguished for his efforts in preserving and strengthening younger brethren" (James Comper Gray, *The Biblical Museum*, vol. vii, c. 1880).

Another example is David Sorenson. He has been in the ministry more than 50 years and God protected him from the temptation of the strange woman. He tells the story in his book *Moral Failure: Its Cause and Prevention* (Northstar Baptist Ministries, 2007). "By the grace of God, this author has maintained moral fidelity. I was a virgin when I married at the

age of 24. I was not intimate with anyone prior to marrying my wonderful wife. I say that not to brag, for it is only by the grace of God. ... I well remember an incident while in seminary before I married my wonderful wife. That particular year, I lived in an apartment building that was in a deteriorating neighborhood. The building was owned by the seminary and housed only seminary students. The house across the street however had several apartments and housed people of the world. The church in which the seminary was located owned the old house across the street. It was slated for demolition to make way for a coming addition to the church. One soft autumn afternoon, I was standing outside my building when from across the street came a siren call from a young adult female hanging out an upper window. She was dressed less than modestly and invited me, a complete stranger, to come up and visit her. I don't know if she was a prostitute or just a loose young woman who thought this seminarian was attractive. Her motives, in any event, seemed less than pure. I can honestly say I was repulsed by the thought. ... The virginity I had maintained throughout high school, college, and then seminary became a shield of protection. To be honest, I wouldn't have known what to do with such a woman. Furthermore, the prospect of meeting with a woman of loose morals was abhorrent to me."

Wisdom cries out to men (Pr. 1:20-33)

Wisdom calling sinners is a major theme of the first chapters of Proverbs. There is nothing like this in all the literature of the world, and there is nothing exactly like this in the rest of the Bible.

"Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets ... saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof..." (Pr. 1:20-23).

"Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice? ... Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice *is* to the sons of man. O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart" (Pr. 8:1-5).

"Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars ... She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city, Whoso *is* simple, let him turn in hither: *as for* him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine *which* I have mingled" (Pr. 9:1-5).

Wisdom is Christ personified. This is a powerful, amazing description of Christ calling to sinners to repentance. Christ is Wisdom. "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3). He is the Word. He is the way, the truth, and the life. Christ loves men and seeks to save men. He came "to seek and to save that which was lost." He suffered and died for men.

"Wisdom crieth" (Pr. 1:20, 21). Wisdom's cry shows the great love and compassion of God. It is because God loved the world that he gave His only begotten son so that whosoever believeth in him might have eternal life (Joh. 3:16). It is a most amazing thing that God loves sinners and wants to save them. No other God of any religion loves sinners. Baal didn't love sinners. The Babylonian chief god Ea took an oath from the other gods not to tell mankind about his decision to send a flood to destroy them. The Greek Olympian gods didn't love sinners. When Prometheus taught mankind how to make fire, the gods were angry that he would help them. The Hindu gods don't love sinners. As for Allah, he loves only those who obey him. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Ro. 5:8).

Wisdom **"crieth without."** Wisdom cries out everywhere: in the streets where men travel, in the chief place of concourse where men conduct their business, in the openings of the gates where men govern (Pr. 1:20, 21). ("The opening of the gates" referred to the place of ruling and judgment and commerce in ancient times. See De. 16:18; 21:19; 25:7; Jos. 20:4; 2 Ki. 7:1.) Jesus spoke in public (Joh. 18:20). He commanded the gospel to be preached to every creature (Mr. 16:15). True wisdom is not "gnostic" (secret knowledge) or occult (hidden). True wisdom does not meet in secret societies. Her teaching is for the common man rather than for intellectuals or for some elite group.

Wisdom's cry indicates God's earnestness. Wisdom does not merely speak; she cries out. She yearns for men to be saved. She has a burden for the lost. She cares deeply whether they say yes or no. Jesus wept over Israel because she did not repent (Lu. 19:41-42; Mt. 23:37).

Wisdom calls the simple and the fools (Pr. 1:22). This describes all men who are in their natural state. From our earliest days, "foolishness is bound in the heart" (Pr. 22:15). "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way" (Ro. 3:11-12). In our natural state the things of God "are foolishness" (1 Co. 2:14). It is the simple and fools who need to hear the gospel. God can impart spiritual wisdom to the heart of a fool.

Wisdom calls upon men to turn from their folly ("**Turn you**," Pr. 1:22-23). This is repentance. It is required for salvation. It was preached by John the Baptist (Mt. 3:2) and Christ (Lu. 13:3, 5) and Peter (Ac. 2:38) and Paul (Ac. 20:30). Repentance is a change of mind that results in a change of life. It is a surrender to God. It is a renunciation of sin and error. The Thessalonians did it when they "turned to God from idols" (1 Th. 1:9). The Prodigal Son did it when he turned his feet from the world to the father (Lu. 19:18-19).

Wisdom judges men if they do not turn (Pr. 1:24-32). The gospel must be preached with much warning. The good news of salvation requires the knowledge of the bad news of the sinner's lost condition and God's awful judgment. The Bible does not promise that all will be saved. The same God that offers salvation today to "whosoever will" (Re. 22:17) will punish those who reject it. The Lamb of God has both great mercy (Joh. 1:29) and great wrath (Re. 6:16).

Wisdom speaks with reproof ("**Turn you at my reproof**," Pr. 1:23). Sinners need reproof. The Bible says that "reproofs of instruction are the way of life" (Pr. 6:23). Preachers are to reprove and rebuke (2 Ti. 4:2; Tit. 2:15). This is necessary both to turn men from their sin and to keep them in the way of truth. Reproof is despised by those who are committed to the contemporary philosophy of church growth. We must be positive and entertaining, they say. We must get the sinner to dance to our music and to smile at our clever sermons and to be impressed with our social work, and then he will feel "non-threatened" and believe in Jesus. This is not the Bible way. The Bible way is to plainly rebuke the sinner's sin so that he will be convicted and repent. True wisdom speaks with reproof. When Paul preached the gospel in Romans, he spent nearly three chapters warning of God's holiness and judgment and man's sin before he even mentioned God's grace in Christ.

Wisdom promises enlightenment to those that turn ("**behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you**," Pr. 1:23). When men respond to the light they have, they receive more light. Compare Jer. 29:13, "And ye shall seek me, and find *me*, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." And Ac. 17:27, "That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us." When Cornelius lived up to the light that he had, God sent a preacher to preach the gospel to him (Ac. 10:1-6). When Rahab in pagan Jericho believed that the God of the Jews is the true God of heaven and earth, two messengers were sent to save her from destruction (Jos. 2:8-13). She became a Jewish proselyte, married Salmon of the

tribe of Judah, was the great grandmother of King David, and thus was in the lineage of Jesus Christ (Jos. 6:25; Ru. 4:21-22; Mt. 1:5).

Wisdom warns men not to say no to God (Pr. 1:24-25, 29). Man can refuse God's offer, and this is evident from Genesis to Revelation. Man can say no to God. God would have all men to be saved (1 Ti. 2:4), but men can refuse. Jesus draws all men (Joh. 12:32), but all do not come. Men do not perish because they are not "sovereignly elected" but because they do "not choose the fear of the Lord" (Pr. 1:29).

Wisdom warns that the opportunity of salvation will come to an end (Pr. 1:28-31). The fool says, "Later," but God says, "Now is the accepted time." The fool waits, and God closes the door and the accepted time is forever gone. Compare 2 Co. 6:2 and Jas. 4:13-14. It is easy to see how important this warning is for youth. They feel that they have all the time in the world to do business with God. Their great need is to be challenged with the uncertainty of life, of the brief nature of the season of opportunity, and of their responsibility to say yes to God's pleas now rather than to procrastinate in the deceitful hope of a future opportunity. Again, this clear Bible teaching refutes every type of doctrine associated with "universalism." It is obvious that all men will not be saved. Jesus warned, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and MANY there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Mt. 7:13-14).

Wisdom warns that for the sinner to despise reproof is the same as rejecting it ("***They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof;***" Pr. 1:30). To despise means to count it of little value, to treat it lightly. Many sinners do this in regard to the gospel of Jesus Christ. They don't openly scoff at it; they don't consciously reject it; they simply consider it of little value and neglect it. But to despise the gospel is to reject the gospel. Men are responsible to seek after God (Ac. 17:26-27). The Parable of the Sower teaches that if men do not make the effort to understand the Word of God the devil snatches it away from them (Mt. 13:19). This is what happened to me when I was a kid growing up in church. I do not recall saying to myself, I don't believe this. I simply neglected the things I was hearing and made no effort to read the Bible, to seek Christ, to know God's will.

Wisdom warns that "***the prosperity of fools shall destroy them***" (Pr. 1:32). When the fool prospers, he is deceived into thinking that everything is well. The most gracious thing God can do for the sinner is to afflict him and take away his prosperity. I am glad that the Lord did this to me when I rebelled against what I was taught in church and was living in sin as a

young man. He did not allow me to prosper in anything I endeavored to do. My cars were wrecked and my plans were confounded and my friends turned against me. The pleasure of sin was taken away from me, and my soul was depressed and afflicted. This was a blessing because it brought me to the place of repentance. I say with the Psalmist, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes" (Ps. 119:71).

Wisdom promises safety to those that heed her call ("***But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil,***" Pr. 1:33). The New Testament enlarges upon this. The safety consists of eternal life (Joh. 3:16), adoption as children (Gal. 3:26), eternal inheritance (1 Pe. 1:3-4), and God's provision and protection in this world (Heb. 13:5-6).

Proverbs 2 Wisdom as Protection

In this chapter the author urges his son to follow after wisdom so that it will protect him from evil. See Pr. 2:10-12 and 16.

The source of wisdom (Pr. 2:1)

Wisdom comes to the individual that earnestly attends to the Word of God.

Wisdom is found in "words" and "commandments" (Pr. 2:1) and these are found in the Bible. The words of the Bible are from the mouth of God (Pr. 2:6). Compare 2 Ti. 3:16.

True wisdom cannot be found apart from God's Word, and those who would lead youth to God must make much of the Bible. "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Ti. 3:15). The education of youth is a failure if it does not place the Bible in the central role. Parents who send their children to be educated in institutions that ignore or try to discredit the Bible, by teachers who do not know and fear God, should not wonder when the youth's faith is shipwrecked.

The getting of wisdom (Pr. 2:1-6)

Wisdom must be pursued with diligence. It must be embraced, captured, kept. Obtaining wisdom must be the highest priority. You must hide wisdom with you, incline your ear unto it, apply your heart to it, cry after it, seek her as silver. The seeking of wisdom must be first. It cannot be obtained by a casual, half-hearted attitude. This is emphasized by repetition. See also Pr. 3:21; 4:5-8, 13, 20-21; 5:1; 6:20-21; 7:1-4.

The Scripture must be received ("***receive my words,***" Pr. 2:1). This is an active reception. The individual who would be wise must be keenly recep-

Proverbs of Solomon (Pr. 10-29)

Proverbs 10-24 are the first collection of Solomon's proverbs. They were gathered by priests in the days of Hezekiah (Pr. 25:1). There was a revival in that day (2 Ch. 29-31). Ancient archives were still in existence before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 BC.

Proverbs 10-29 consists largely of proverbs of a single verse, but sometimes spanning multiple verses.

Most of these proverbs are contrasting parallels with two thoughts contrasted by the word "but."

The proverbs deal with practical living. They teach practical wisdom. They deal with every aspect of life, and the major themes are woven throughout the proverbs. The repetition is an aid to learning. Some of the themes are the wise son and foolish son (10:1, 5; 13:1), slackness and diligence (10:4-5, 26; 12:11, 24, 27; 13:4), the tongue (10:11-14, 19-21, 31-32; 11:9; 12:6, 13, 14, 18; 13:2-3), poverty and wealth (10:15; 11:4; 13:7, 11, 18, 23; 11:28), reproof and instruction (10:17; 12:1; 13:1, 18), slander (10:18), the fear of the Lord (10:27), commerce (11:1), honesty (11:1), pride and humility (11:2; 13:10), hypocrisy (11:9), justice (11:10-11), government (11:11), talebearing (11:13), counsel (11:14; 12:15), surety and debt (11:15), mercy (11:17; 12:10), cruelty (11:17; 12:10), judgment (11:21, 31; 12:7), beauty (11:22), giving, liberality (11:24-26), virtuous woman (12:4), marriage (12:4), companionship (12:11; 13:20), anger (12:16), false witness (12:17), lying (12:19, 22; 13:5), deceit (12:20, 22), depression (12:25), the wise son (13:1), the scorner (13:1), child discipline (13:24).

The proverbs contrast the wise with the fool, wisdom with foolishness (Pr. 10:14, 23; 12:15-16). The student learns how to be wise and to avoid foolishness.

The proverbs contrast the righteous with the wicked (Pr. 10:2-3, 6-7, 11, 16, 20, 21, 24, 25, 28, 30, 32). It is essential to know that the righteous are those whose righteousness is of God in Christ. "**Righteous**" is the Hebrew *saddiya*, which is also translated "just" (Pr. 10:6, 7, 20, 31). The righteous or just are those who have the imputed righteousness of God. They are righteous because they have been given righteousness. They are just because they are justified. The sinner has no righteousness of his own that is acceptable to God (Ro. 3:10; Isa. 64:6). He cannot gain righteousness by his own works (Ro. 3:19-20). He must have righteousness imputed to him as the gift of God in Christ by faith (Ro. 3:21-24). The saints of Old Testament times, such as Abraham and David, had the free righteousness of

Christ imputed to them by their faith (Ro. 4:1-6). Those who have been justified, love God and submit to His Word. The just walk in the ways of the Lord (Hos. 14:9). The “**wicked**” are impenitent sinners who are not submitted to God and His Word. “Wicked” is *rasa*, which is translated “wicked” 249 times and “ungodly” 8 times (2 Ch. 19:2; Job 34:18; Ps. 1:1, 4, 5, 6; 3:7; 73:12). The wicked are not reconciled to God by faith in Christ; they are at enmity with God by their corrupt minds and impenitent sinning (Ro. 8:7).

The proverbs have an eternal perspective (Pr. 10:30, 25, 30; 11:7; 13:9). The student of proverbs is enabled to see beyond this present life.

The proverbs deal with consequences (Pr. 10:27, 28, 29). The student of proverbs learns how to see the benefits and dangers of certain actions. For example, if I go in the way of the Lord I will have strength, but if I go in the way of iniquity I will have destruction (Pr. 10:29).

Proverbs 10

Proverbs 10:1 “The proverbs of Solomon.”

Solomon is the author of Proverbs 1-29. In his lifetime he spoke 3,000 proverbs (1 Ki. 4:32), and we have about 700 of them in the book of Proverbs. Solomon refers to his proverbs in Ecclesiastes 12:9, “And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, *and* set in order many proverbs.”

Proverbs 10:1 “A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.”

Proverbs 15:20 “A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother.”

Proverbs 17:21 “He that begetteth a fool *doeth* it to his sorrow: and the father of a fool hath no joy.”

Proverbs 17:25 “A foolish son *is* a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him.”

Proverbs 19:13 “A foolish son *is* the calamity of his father...”

This section of Proverbs (chapters 10-29) begins with wise and foolish sons. This is repeated in Pr. 15:20; 17:21, 25; 19:13. This deals with the home. It deals with the parent-child relationship. It deals with child training. It deals with emotional wellbeing. It deals with the fruit of one's actions.

A child's character has a great effect on the parents. The child can be a source of gladness or heaviness, grief, and bitterness. The foolish son is a calamity (Pr. 19:13)! These are strong statements. The proverb is repeated by way of emphasis. "**Heaviness**" (Pr. 10:1) is the Hebrew *tugah*, "A feminine noun indicating grief, sorrow. It refers to the emotion and process of feeling a great loss and loneliness (Ps. 119:28)" (*Complete Word Study Bible*). "**Grief**" (Pr. 17:25) is *kaas*, "meaning anger, provocation, vexation." "**Bitterness**" (Pr. 17:25) is *memer*, which "indicates something difficult to process, harsh, the opposite of pleasantness." "**Calamity**" (Pr. 19:13) is *hawwah*, which describes Job's trouble (Job 6:2).

This is a loud warning about the importance of right child training. Elsewhere in Proverbs we learn that wise and foolish sons are the product of child discipline (Pr. 22:6, 15; 23:13-14; 29:15). David had heaviness, grief, bitterness, and calamity by his sons, but he had not disciplined them (1 Ki. 1:5-6).

Both father and mother are made glad by a wise son and made heavy by a foolish son (Pr. 17:21, 25; 19:13), but there is a particular way in which the father is made glad by a wise son (Pr. 10:1; 15:20) and the mother is made heavy by a foolish son (Pr. 10:1; 17:25). Typically, the mother is more emotionally attached to the child, she spends more time with him, she usually has closer dealings with him. The father "may be thought to be a better judge of his wisdom, and more abroad to hear the fame of it, and to observe the effects of it" (John Gill).

The wise son is mentioned six other times (Pr. 10:5; 13:1; 15:20; 23:15, 19; 27:11; 28:7). He is also called the "righteous" son (Pr. 23:24-25) and the son "who keepeth the law" (Pr. 28:7). He hears his father's instruction (Pr. 13:1). He guides his heart in the right way (Pr. 23:19).

The foolish son despiseth his mother (Pr. 15:20). He does not value her. He holds her in contempt. He does not honor her. He ignores her motherly pleas and exhortations and reproofs. This is a great evil. "Observe the shame of wicked children, that by their wickedness they put contempt upon their parents, slight their authority, and make an ill requital for their kindness" (Matthew Henry).

This proverb teaches parents to look beyond their children's physical beauty, intelligence, personality, talents, success, etc. Whether they are wise or foolish by God's standard is the only thing that matters, ultimately.

"The vast power of parental influence must be used wisely, at once, at any cost. We must not instruct, or entreat only, but command. We must allow no appeal from our authority, no reversal of our decision. This discipline in the spirit of love, and enforced by example, is God's honoured ordi-