

Proverbs - Chapter 1

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READ [Proverbs 1:1 – 7](#)

The first seven verses give an introduction to the purpose of Proverbs. This book is not just a collection of wise sayings. It is not the Farmer's Almanac. It is a collection of divinely inspired instructions for daily Godly living.

A proverb is a short, concise, easy-to-learn statement that calls a person to action. The book of Proverbs focuses on God – His character, His work and His blessings – and it tells us how we can live a close relationship with Him.

v.1 – v.6

In these verses, we are introduced to the author, Solomon, and also to the purpose behind him taking the time to write this wisdom down. In verses 2-4 and verse 6, he mentions five reasons for this:

v.2 – “to know wisdom and instruction”

Notice here that this is a two part statement that involves wisdom and instruction.

Although wisdom can involve items such as knowledge (accumulated scientific or philosophic learning) and judgment (good sense), the usage of the word “know” here is more akin to insight (ability to discern).

The word instruction here refers to a precept (a command or principle intended especially as a general rule of action), or a direction that calls for compliance (no wavering).

So, in essence, Solomon is saying here that he is writing this that we can receive the ability to discern the rules of living that God has laid out for us, and to know how to act upon it without wavering to one side or the other.

v.2 – “to perceive the words of understanding”

To perceive means to attain an awareness of. Solomon wants the reader to understand what is being said. This may relate back to how the proverbs are written in couplets. Just as Jesus got His message

across through parables, Solomon used everyday examples that people would recognize to help people understand the message. Since all this was done under divine inspiration, it is no accident that it was written this way.

v.3 – “to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity”

Solomon instructs the reader not to merely know what he’s talking about, nor to just understand it. He wants the reader to receive it, or act upon the wisdom given here. In essence, we are encouraged to make it a part of our daily living.

v.4 – “to give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion”

Here Solomon is speaking of small details in our daily living that we may deem as unimportant, but that God recognizes are very important. He goes on to admonish young men to act with discretion (the quality of being careful about what you do and say so that others will not be offended or embarrassed).

A few years ago, the WWJD bracelets (What Would Jesus Do?) were very popular. They were designed to remind the one wearing these bracelets to stop and think how Jesus would react in a particular situation before action was taken on impulse. In other words, it was there to remind us to think before we act, making sure we are careful of how our actions would affect others, as well as our reputation.

The world looks at the church with a closer eye than they do the rest of the world – and they should. We should live at a higher octave. Scripture tells us that we should be a “peculiar” people, not strange, but different. The world should look at us and be able to tell immediately that there is something different or special about the way we carry ourselves. Using discretion in all we do will help us in this endeavor. If not, we appear to be just like the world, which gives those who do not know Christ as their personal Savior ammunition to criticize the gospel.

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled. And they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.” ([Acts 4:13](#))

v.5 – Solomon pauses here to tell the reader that **“A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels.”** (Complementing couplet)

Solomon gives an insight as to how these proverbs can help us all. He also reminds us that not only having this knowledge, but putting it to use in our daily lives will help us make better decisions (i.e., “wise counsels”).

v.6 – **“to understand a proverb...”** – Here, Solomon gives the final reason for writing this book – to help the reader understand these sayings that are to help us “rule and govern” our lives.

To sum up the first six verses, Solomon introduces himself as the writer, and reiterates how having and using this wisdom should benefit us all in our daily lives. He also tells us that we are to:

- Know (to discern)
- Perceive (be aware)
- Receive (to act)
- Give (to attain)
- Hear (to listen)
- Understand (to grasp)

v.7 - The introductory section of Proverbs ends with the key verse. **“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; but fools despise wisdom and instruction.”** (Contrasting couplet)

Ever meet someone who appears to “know-it-all”? They’re sort of annoying, right? God is the only one who knows it all. As long as we learn from Him, He will never lead us wrong.

Here we see that Solomon reminds us that fear (a feeling of respect and wonder for something very powerful) is where knowledge begins. If we don’t respect and honor God, this is useless to us because it will not have any value to us. Those that despise this wisdom and instructions are called fools.

We may see this as harsh, but Jesus even used this description – **“Then He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.”** ([Luke 24:25](#))

“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.” ([Romans 1:22](#))

“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.” ([Ephesians 5:15](#))

The next twelve verses seem to be aimed particularly at a young man, and they seem to deal specifically with peer pressure.

READ [v.8 – v.19](#)

[v.8 – v.9](#) – Here, Solomon is teaching as a father would instruct their own child. He reminds us that it is wise for children to listen to their parents. Why? Because they are older, have undoubtedly made some mistakes, and love their children so much they would never want them to make the same mistakes they have in the past. He compares adherence to the instruction of the parents to someone being adorned with something that is precious (“an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck”).

Our actions speak louder than our words, especially in the home. Our children learn values, morals, and priorities from seeing how their parents react to situations each and every day. If parents show a reverence for and a dependence on God, children will see these attitudes and will hopefully catch on to them. A little further in Proverbs, we will see instruction to **“Train up a child in the way he should go. And when he is old, he will not depart from it.”** ([Proverbs 22:6](#))

Story of Spencer Praying

In many ways, we can even compare this to the instruction given by God all through the Bible. From the beginning, instructions were given to His creation on how to live. Adam was told not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge; yet, he and Eve gave in to temptation and were put out of the Garden of Eden. The Ten Commandments were given to the children of Israel as instructions on how to live right before God. However, they soon turned their backs on God, even though they had seen first-hand how mighty God was when He delivered them from bondage in Egypt, and they were punished. Instead of following God’s instructions, they rebelled and had to suffer the consequences.

For every decision we make, there is a corresponding result. When a decision is made that is led by God, the results are favorable. When a decision is made because of our self-serving attitudes that are not led by God, there is a resulting consequence – and some can be severe.

Solomon is reminding the reader how important it is to listen and act upon the wisdom he is about to impart.

v.10 – Solomon is reminding us to turn away from sin when we are enticed. In the way he uses this, it brings peer pressure to mind. We think of peer pressure as being something that our children have to deal with on a daily basis. We tell them to say no to drugs, wait until after marriage to have an intimate relationship, not to drive fast when they are with their friends, etc. And we worry each and every time they leave the house that somehow they are going to be enticed into falling into the trap the Satan lays for them.

But peer pressure isn't just felt by children – adults feel it too. How many times do you find yourself in a situation where you know you should stand up for what is right, but it's just easier to go along with the crowd? How many times do you know something is wrong that Christ would not be pleased with, but you keep silent to avoid "ruffling feathers"?

We all like to be "one of the crowd". But when the crowd goes against Biblical tenets, it's time for God's people to take a stand. Solomon's advice, as relevant today as when it was written, is to stay away from sin.

v.11 – v.19 – Sin is attractive. When Eve gave in to Satan in the Garden of Eden, she was enticed to go against the instruction that God had specifically given because she was tricked into believing that it was a quick route to all knowledge and prosperity. The same is true today.

We go along with sin and refuse to listen to God's truth because, many times, it conflicts with what we really want to do. Our own desires become our master, and we'll do anything to satisfy them and get what we want. But sin, even when it appears so attractive, is always deadly.

We must learn to make choices, not based on what we want right now, or not on the basis of flashy appeal or short-term pleasure, but with the long-range effects in mind – and with an understanding of what God tells us is right and wrong. Sometimes, this means steering clear of people who want to draw us into activities that we know is wrong, and that God would not be pleased with. We can't be friendly with sin, and expect not to be affected in some way. We need to turn and run,

just as Joseph did when Potipher's wife tried to lure him into a relationship with her.

"And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her. And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business. And there was none of the men of the house there within. And she caught him by his garment saying, Lie with me. And he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out." ([Genesis 39:10-12](#))

There's an old Southern Gospel song by a group called The Reggie Sadler Family called "Run Joseph, Run". It's about this encounter, and there is a line that states, "Run, Joseph, run. You'll be glad when the morning comes." Nothing could be truer.

That's not cowardly – that's brave.

READ [v.20 – v.21](#)

[v.20 – v.21](#) – Solomon paints a picture of wisdom shouting the streets. He wants to show us that Godly wisdom is readily available to anyone who will listen. Wisdom knows the mind of God. It is God revealing Himself to us so we can better understand His will for our lives. This is not just in the Old Testament, but is also prevalent all through the New Testament.

From Jesus spending 3 ½ years in His earthly ministry revealing Himself to anyone who would accept Him as the Messiah, to the apostles such as James, all showed that God is willing to reveal Himself to anyone that accepts Him. **"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not. And it shall be given him." ([James 1:5](#))**

READ [v.22](#)

[v.22](#) – Throughout the book of Proverbs, Solomon uses phrases like "simple ones" and the word "fool" to describe someone with a character deficiency. This person is not dumb, but is unable to tell right from wrong.

READ [v.23 – v.30](#)

[v.23 – v.30](#) – God has given us the Bible to help us live a Christian life. He has sent the Holy Spirit (Comforter) to convict us when we have done wrong and cause us to repent. He has given us a conscience that hopefully helps us keep our morals and ethics in check. Access to God's word and His instruction is as quick as opening our Bibles or hitting a computer key. Yet, so many people have turned their backs on Him.

God is more than willing to pour out His wisdom to us. But to receive His instruction effectively, we must be willing to listen (there is a big difference between hearing and listening). To listen to God effectively, we cannot let pride stand in our way. Pride is thinking more highly of our own wisdom and desires than of God's. If we think we know better than God, or feel we have no need of God's direction, we have fallen into foolish pride. And the resulting consequences are our own.

“Pride goeth before destruction and an haughty spirit before a fall.” ([Proverbs 16:18](#))

“I will also choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake they did not hear. But they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.” ([Isaiah 66:4](#))

READ [v.31 – v.32](#)

[v.31 – v.32](#) - Solomon tells the reader that those who refuse to adhere to the divine wisdom that God is sharing through these proverbs will get what they deserve. As mentioned previously, there is always a resulting consequence for disobedience to God.

There will come a point in everyone's life that they are confronted with a decision to either accept Christ as their Savior or decide to go it alone. Those that refuse Christ or refuse to follow God's instructions will create problems for themselves that will eventually destroy them.

Hell was never created for any of us – we are all God's creation. We were created to worship and to serve Him. If we end up in Hell, we have to pass right by Calvary to get there. The cross stands in between us and Hell as the punishment we all deserve, but stained with the blood of the One who willingly took our place. All we need to do to be saved is to accept the free gift of Salvation that is offered to

us. We can't earn Salvation – it's a gift. But refusal of this gift only results in us getting the consequences of what our actions have earned for us.

“For the wages (something earned) of sin is death. But the gift (something not earned, but given) of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” ([Romans 6:23](#))

READ [v.33](#)

[v.33](#) – What a beautiful picture Solomon gives of those who know and act upon the wisdom God grants to us. He says that we will have safety, quietness, and no fear.

We live in a post-9/11 world where fear is around every corner. We are in an economic climate that is going through one of the worst upheavals since the Great Depression. People are hurting and people are living in fear of what tomorrow might bring.

But Solomon says that as ones who have put our faith, hope, and trust in Almighty God, we have nothing to fear. We can live in a spirit of safety knowing that God is in control of all, including us. We can know with certainty that whatever tomorrow brings, God will take care of us.

He says that those who listen and act upon this wisdom **“...shall be quiet from fear of evil.”** Do you ever have times you just want to experience quietness? We need those times. In many ways, we get so wrapped up in all the “noise” of this world so we can't even hear the voice of God when He speaks to us. The psalmist tells us to **“Be still, and know that I am God...”**. ([Psalm 46:10](#)).

Instead of letting worry take control in our lives, or being concerned about things that we cannot change or fix, we need to rest easy in God's arms, knowing that He will take care of us. He gives us a peace and a quietness that only He can give. It is that **“...peace of God, which passeth all understanding...”**. ([Philippians 4:7](#))