

The Beginning of Wisdom

Proverbs 1:1-7
September 3, 2006

Introduction to Proverbs

- The author

Solomon

"Now God gave Solomon wisdom and very great discernment and breadth of mind, like the sand that is on the seashore. Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the sons of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt. . . Men came from all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom." (1 Kings 4:29-30,34)

Solomon

"In addition to being a wise man, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge; and he pondered, searched out and arranged many proverbs."
(Eccl. 12:9)

Introduction to Proverbs

- The author of Proverbs
- The genre of Proverbs

What is a Proverb?

"A penny saved is a penny earned"
"An apple a day keeps the doctor away"
"A fool and his money are soon parted"

Characteristics of Proverbs

- General statements, not absolute guarantees
- Describe the way life usually works, not how it always works or must work

Proverbs are general truths

“Many hands make light work”
...but “Too many cooks spoil the broth”
“Absence makes the heart grow fonder”
... but “Out of sight, out of mind”

Characteristics of Proverbs

- General statements, not absolute guarantees
- Describe the way life usually works, not how it always work
- **Proverbs in Scripture are not promises**

Introduction to Proverbs

- The author
- The genre
- The structure

The Purpose of Proverbs

1. To know wisdom and instruction
 "wisdom" = skill in godly living
 "instruction" = moral discipline or correction
2. To discern the sayings of understanding
3. To receive instruction in wise behavior

Who is Proverbs For?

1. The naïve
 ..receive prudence
2. Youth
 ..receive knowledge and discretion
3. The wise
 ..receive guidance

Theme of Proverbs

1. The starting point of wisdom
2. "The fear of the Lord"

The Fear of the Lord

"Fear of the Lord requires that we remove ourselves as the center of authority in our self-made universes." [Koptak]

The Fear of the Lord

- Prov. 9:10 The **fear of the Lord** is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.
- Prov. 14: 27 The **fear of the Lord** is a fountain of life, That one may avoid the snares of death.
- Prov. 15: 33 The **fear of the Lord** is the instruction for wisdom, And before honor *comes* humility.

The Fear of the Lord

- Phil 2: 12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation **with fear and trembling**;
- 1 Pet. 1: 17 And if you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each man's work, **conduct yourselves in fear** during the time of your stay *upon earth*;

The Fear of the Lord

"Wisdom comes from God, and whoever fears Him receives it." (Delitzsch)

"The life of wisdom is not just good sense or a list of principles for a happy life. . . it is above all an attitude toward God that influences all of our decisions and actions." (Koptak)

A Choice to be Made

"Fools are not those who cannot learn but those who **will** not." (Koptak)

"To submit to instruction is to acknowledge an authority higher than the fool's own. Therefore the fool, wishing to be his own authority, does not know whom he should fear." (Koptak)

The Beginning of Wisdom

- Wisdom is something that can be **taught** and **learned**
- Wisdom has to do with the formation of **character**
- Wisdom is demonstrated in how we **live our lives**
- Wisdom is anchored in the **fear of the Lord**

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