

The Book of Proverbs
“God’s Handbook for Successful Living”
Introduction

THE UNIQUE NATURE OF PROVERBS

- Proverbs tells us that the “good life” can be found only in wisdom about God and about ourselves
- There is more in Proverbs on the development of godly character than in any other book of the Bible.
- Diligently learning Proverbs is excellent preparation for facing life’s most perplexing questions. We must prepare now to face problems that will come by carefully studying Scripture.
- Proverbs shows us in detail that the Lord cares deeply about the details of our lives and keeps a careful eye on all our actions (Proverbs 5:21).
- Proverbs gives us examples of ways we can obey God’s Word.

DEFINITION OF A PROVERB:

“A proverb is a short statement that declares a profound truth designed to give us wisdom for life.”
(Chuck Swindoll)

“A proverb is a compactly constructed sentence packed with practical insight.” (John Kitchen)

“Parables are tools that make a deep, abstract concept understandable by clothing it in an easily grasped metaphor.” (Malbim – ancient Jewish Rabbi)

The Hebrew word “proverb” means “to be like” or compared with.” The word came to stand for any kind of wise pronouncement.

A proverb makes a comparison or summarizes a common experience about life.

AUTHOR:

1 Kings 3:5-12; 4:29-34

Most of the Proverbs were written by Solomon or compiled by him between 971-931 B.C. This included a collection of wise sayings from others. Hezekiah compiled proverbs that were written by Solomon. Other authors include Agur and Lemuel (possibly Solomon under another name).

The book was probably edited and published during the reign of Hezekiah.

It is tragic that Solomon failed to apply to himself (especially in regards to women) the good advice he gave to his son, and to everyone else, and this failure caused his own downfall.

We are reminded that knowing truth doesn’t save us – we must apply it in repentance and faith.

Asking the Following Questions When Reading Scripture Will Help Us Avoid

Making Solomon’s Mistake

1. What does this passage teach concerning God’s will for a holy life?
2. How does my life measure up to that Scripture? Specifically where and how do I fall short?
3. What definite steps of action do I need to take to obey?

Solomon’s experience teaches us that knowing the right thing to do is not enough. Wisdom is, first and foremost, a relationship with God.

DIVISIONS:

Proverbs is basically divided into two parts:

Chapters 1-7 – a preface that attempts to convince you to read the book by explaining why wisdom is so valuable

Chapters 10-31 – collections of various wise sayings called “proverbs”

How to Read Proverbs (by Mark Dever)

Clue #1: Common sense is required

Clue #2: They are always ultimately true

Clue #3: They are normally true now

Clue #4: They employ poetic imagery

Clue #5: They are partial in themselves

Clue #6: They are sometimes obscure

Clue #7: As a whole, Proverbs comes from a godly perspective. Proverbs is not simply a book of secular proverbs

Additional help in reading Proverbs:

- When reading one proverb, keep all of them in mind
- If a proverb is unclear, read it in other good Bible translations and consult several trusted commentaries on Proverbs

Conclusion:

Colossians 2:1-3 “In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”

1 Corinthians 1:24 “Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God”

1 Corinthians 1:30 “You are in Christ Jesus, Who became to us wisdom from God”

Proverbs reflects “the mind of Christ” – Philippians 2:5 “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus”