

The wisest person in the world is the person who knows the most about God. —A. W. Tozer  
 To search for wisdom apart from Christ means not simply foolhardiness but utter insanity. —John Calvin

We need God’s **Wisdom** -- it’s more precious than gold. We desperately need God’s wisdom...

- ✓Sin is paraded around as nothing more than sickness or, in many cases, 'mental illness';
- ✓Drug consumption is spoken of as recreation or medicinal;
- ✓The traditional family is considered to be an outdated, endangered species, even harmful;
- ✓Evil is labeled as good;
- ✓Immorality is heralded as sexual freedom;
- ✓Porn is projected as freedom of speech;
- ✓Transgenderism is applauded as freedom of expression;
- ✓Homosexuality is an alternate lifestyle;
- ✓The murder of the unborn children in abortion is cheered as being a woman’s right;
- ✓Lawlessness is condoned as liberation.

WHERE DO YOU TURN FOR ANSWERS?

❖ALL the issues of life are either *DIRECTLY* or *INDIRECTLY* addressed in Proverbs — *EVERYTHING*.

### *Background of Proverbs*

- Proverbs is “Truth for Youth”. It’s a teaching manual.
- It’s the guide for you to *live skillfully thru life & please God in every respect*.

### *How to Interpret Proverbs Rightly*

**SOME HERMENEUTICAL HELPS.** Some principles for pondering Proverbs properly.

1. TIP 1 - realize that no proverb or section intends to be an exhaustive, unabridged, final treatment of the subject at hand.
2. TIP 2 - Proverbs must be understood in terms of context which includes language elsewhere in Scripture; the particular section/ context in which it is in Prov; the writings of Solomon, the Old Testament [OT] itself and the whole Bible
3. TIP 3 - Proverbs demands to be interpreted in the cultural and historical settings of the time in which it was written
4. TIP 4 - Proverbs should not be taken as absolute, unconditional, guaranteed promises but rather, by definition, generalizations that can have exceptions.
5. TIP 5 - Poetic features and figures of speech need to be taken appropriately into account when interpreting Proverbs
6. TIP 6 – be careful not to use Proverbs with the personal motive of selfish gain but rather for achieving spiritual maturity and wisdom to glorify God
7. TIP 7 - if a proverb is unclear, read it in another good Bible translation and consult a commentary and find cross references in the Bible for help (e.g., James)
8. TIP 8 - interpret the proverb first to determine the original intent of the author and then develop personal applications and timeless principles in light of that authorial-intoned interpretation/meaning of the text.
9. TIP 9 - Proverbs is not designed for large doses of reading at one sitting; like a hard candy, put one in the mouth and suck and chew on it for a while, ponder, pray, consider, meditate, think.
10. TIP 10 - Treat proverbs as a divine imperative for your life, not merely another optional idea coming from the secular world of wisdom, therapy, psychology or self-help formulae.

The basic summary of Proverbs:

**The Fear of the LORD leads to divine wisdom for Godly Living!**

**THESIS — *Prov 1.1-7 will give us The A.B.C’s of wisdom from Proverbs...***

## **I. THE AUTHOR OF PROVERBS (1)**

**The giver** -- Solomon! Solomon wrote the Proverbs, Psalm 72 and 127, the Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes. Cf. 1 Kings 4.29-34 & Luke 11.31 [*Something greater than Solomon is here!*]

- A proverb is a statement that intends to reveal the actual nature of a profound truth by comparing it with a common, picturesque, tangible image of life.
- A proverb is a compressed (short) statement of wisdom, artfully crafted to be striking, thought-provoking, memorable, and practical.

There are 3 main distinctives of Hebrew poetry (including the wisdom literature of *Proverbs*):

- (1) terse [short, brief];
- (2) imagery [picturesque/paints a picture in your mind/vivid, colorful];
- (3) parallelism [correspondence of one line with another; parallel ideas worded differently; cf. 1:8; 1:15, 20].

## **II. THE BENEFITS OF PROVERBS (2-6)**

Wisdom is about theological INSTRUCTION (precepts) but also theological IMPLEMENTATION (practice) (Richard Mayhue).

The treasure chest of wisdom in verses 2-6:

to know wisdom (2a)

to have discernment (2b)

to behave rightly (3)

to gain prudence (4)

to receive counsel (5-6)

**III. THE CLIMAX/CROWN/CENTERPOINT OF PROVERBS (7)**

The genesis, the beginner, the foundation, high point, pinnacle.

\*Distill the whole book of Proverbs into one drop and it would be Prov 1.7!

Job 28.28 - the fear of the Lord is wisdom

Ps 111.10 - the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom

Verse 7 - The “fear of the LORD”

- **The Fear of the LORD** - includes 4 ingredients:
  1. AWE/ADORATION — worship God
  2. AFFIRMATION — affirm who God is
  3. AFFECTION — to love God
  4. AMBITION — to will to obey God

**More on Fearing the LORD:**

*True “Wisdom” comprises:*

1. knowing the facts
2. understanding them /comprehending them
3. implementing it in behavior

*The Fear of the LORD marries together:*

1. sweet awe, reverence and submission to the Lord
2. a proper dread and fear of God’s response to sin and iniquity

*Fear of God is not only in the OT: it’s in the New Testament also:*

- Matt 10:28 - fear Him who after killing the body can cast soul into hell.
- Acts 9.31 - the church went on in the fear of the LORD
- 2 Cor 5:11 - knowing the fear of the Lord...
- 1 Peter 2:17 - honor all people, love the brothers, fear God, honor the King
- Rev 19:5 - Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him

*4 kinds of people:*

1. those who have no fear of God or the outcome of their sins (Rev 16.17-21)
2. people who fear just the consequences of their sin only (Rev 6.15-17)
3. people who truly care about their sin but without having a right relationship/trust in God (Acts 10.2)

4. people who affectionately fear God b/c they are redeemed and they hate the sin in their lives (2 Cor 7.1)

*FEAR OF THE LORD: what does it look like?*

1. joyously delights in God’s WORD (Ps 112.1)
2. Consistently walks in God’s way (Ps 128.1; Prov 14.2)
3. Boldly declares God’s works (Ps 64:9)
4. patiently waits for God’s reward (Ps 147:11)
5. Fear God because God commands it (Matt 10.28)
6. Blessing is promised for it (Ps 128.1)
7. Knowledge and wisdom are obtained from it (Prov 1.7)
8. Judgment is rendered to those without it (Ecc 12.13-14)

*“The fear of God is... astonished reverence. I believe that the reverential fear of God mixed with love and fascination and astonishment and admiration and devotion is the most enjoyable state and the most satisfying emotion the human soul can know.”*  
(A.W. Tozer)

*We fear men so much, because we fear God so little. (William Gurnall)*

*In order to the attaining of all useful knowledge this is most necessary, that we fear God; we are not qualified to profit by the instructions that are given us unless our minds be possessed with a holy reverence of God, and every thought within us be brought into obedience to Him.... As all our knowledge must take rise from the fear of God, so it must tend to it as its perfection and centre. Those know enough who know how to fear God, who are careful in every thing to please Him and fearful of offending Him in any thing; this is the Alpha and Omega of knowledge. (Matthew Henry)*

**Proverbs 1:1-7 — “The ABCs of Wisdom: Get It, Live It, Enjoy It!”**

Prov 1:7 - the “fool” — the “fool” is the autonomous man who *loves & lives for self*.

The word here for “fool” is that of a thick-brained, thick-headed, self-loving fool. He’s morally deficient because he follows himself as his own god/authority. He’s recognized by his foolish mouth, ungodly life, harmful decisions, and God-ignoring lifestyle. This is the guy who laughs at and mocks sin (Prov 14.9)

The Book of Proverbs (and the Word of God at large) describes many *kinds of fools* —

1. The **blatant**/brazen fool (Ps 14.1; 53.1). — the one who shakes his fist at God (Prov 17.21)
2. The **gullible**, naive, the youth -- no great discernment (Prov 1.4, 22, 32)
3. the **disobedient** fool — lots believe in God but don’t live in obedience to Him (Matt 7.26-27) -- he scorns, he scoffs, mocks at it (Prov 10.23; 14.7; 28.26)
4. The **pick and choose** fool — he believes in God but not all of God’s Word — Luke 24.25; Prov 17.7
5. The **God-honoring & God-pleasing** fool — this is the one who lives life wholly for Christ’s sake — 1 Cor 4.10 [we are fools for Christ’s sake].

### BE THOU MY VISION

Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;  
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art.  
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,  
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Riches I heed not, nor man’s empty praise,  
Thou mine inheritance, now and always:  
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,  
High King of Heaven, my treasure Thou art.

Be Thou my **WISDOM**, and Thou my true word;  
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;  
Thou my great Father, I Thy true son;  
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.

High King of Heaven, my victory won,  
May I reach Heaven’s joys, O bright Heaven’s sun!  
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,  
Still be my vision, O ruler of all.

### PSALTER: PSALM 119:97-104 [*Tune: Amazing Grace*]

O, how I love Your law, it is  
my meditation sure.  
I’m **wiser** than my enemies  
from Your commandments, Lord.

I’ve kept my feet from evil ways,  
That I may keep Your word.  
I’ve not turned from Your ord’nances;  
You’ve taught me, and I’ve heard.

I’ve insight more than those who teach;  
Your statutes are my way.  
I understand more than the old;  
Your precepts I obey.

How sweet Your words are to my taste;  
Yes, more than honey sweet.  
Your precepts understanding give;  
I hate all wrong I meet.

“Not until we have become humble and teachable, standing in awe of God’s holiness and sovereignty... acknowledging our own littleness, distrusting our own thoughts, and willing to have our minds turned upside down, can divine **wisdom** become ours!” —J.I. Packer