

BOOK *of* WISDOM

PROVERBS



“Listen to God’s Wisdom”

SUNDAY, JUNE 7, 2020

Lesson: Proverbs 1:1-4, 7-8, 10, 20-22, 32-33;

Time of Action: about 950 B.C.;

Place of Action: Jerusalem

- GOLDEN TEXT: "THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF KNOWLEDGE:
BUT FOOLS DESPISE WISDOM AND INSTRUCTION"

(PROVERBS 1:7)

INTRODUCTION

The prophet Isaiah noted that secular education had not resolved Israel's societal problems and he suggested a reason for its failure. He asked, "Where are thy wise men? And let them tell thee now, and let them know what the LORD of hosts hath purposed" (see Isaiah 19:12).

The best way to correct social and moral problems is to be willing to understand God's purpose and also fulfill it. This week's lesson is concerned with the issue of where knowledge begins. We cannot expect to gain wisdom without beginning at the right starting point.

BACKGROUND FOR THE LESSON

The book of Proverbs is a great resource for acquiring knowledge. It not only provides factual information to make us wise, but also directs us to the source of knowledge—God. The writing style of the book of Proverbs is parabolic. **This means that information is conveyed by likening or comparing the idea being presented to something else.** The Hebrew word for “proverbs” means **comparisons, similitudes, or parables.**

We often use the term “proverbs” to describe a short, concise insightful expression of a particular truth or experience. It communicates practical, moral guidance in an effective way. Parables are intended to draw pictures in the mind; they carry a message that will not be soon forgotten. Solomon wrote the major portion of Proverbs around 950 B.C.

THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

(Proverbs 1:1) The author of the book (Proverbs 1:1). Our first verse says, “The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel...” Here, in the beginning of the book of Proverbs, we are told that these are “The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel...” Although, “Solomon” is credited with being the author of “the proverbs,” at least two chapters are ascribed to Agur (see Proverbs 30:1) and Lemuel (see Proverbs 31:1). However, “Solomon” wrote the majority of the “proverbs” in this book.

THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

(Proverbs 1:1-4) Cont'd

“Solomon” succeeded his father “David” as “king” of the united kingdom “of Israel” (see I Kings 2:10-12). As believers, we look forward to everlasting life in the New Heaven and the New Earth, but we are still residents of the present earth and must learn to live prudent, honest lives while we are here. The book of Proverbs helps us to do that by teaching us how to live godly lives through wise thoughts and actions.

Wise leaders possess the ability to bring people together not divide them to maintain power and control. In other words, they build bridges and not walls!

THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

(Proverbs 1:2) This verse says “To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding...” The term “wisdom” comes from a word meaning “to be capable of judging.” The idea is having the ability to make skillful decisions in divine and human affairs because of past experience and training. Such ability comes only from a relationship with God.

The wise person is one who is **sensitive to God and willingly submits himself or herself to Him**. Solomon, the wise man tells us that the proverbs have several purposes. First, “To know wisdom and instruction;” that is “wisdom” which we get by “instruction,” by divine revelation, so that we may know both how to speak and act wisely, and to give “instruction” to others.

THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

(Proverbs 1:3) This verse says “To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity...” A third purpose of the proverbs is for those who are teachable

To neglect or not “receive” God’s “instruction” results in spiritual immaturity among God’s people. To illustrate this point, the writer of Hebrews wrote “For every one that uses milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belonged to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (see Hebrews 5:13-14). **An underlying problem in many churches today is that many immature Christians are among the members.** But immaturity here does not mean lacking in biblical knowledge, **but it refers to the inability or lack of desire to put biblical principles to work in everyday life.**

THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

(Proverbs 1:4) This verse says “To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.”

Here Solomon says that another purpose of the proverbs is “To give subtilty to the simple.” The word “subtilty” means the ability to make fine distinctions. The word “simple” refers to those who are easily persuaded or enticed to follow the wrong people or advice. A “simple” person is one who must be teachable and willing to pay attention to wisdom’s instruction and correction. Therefore, the phrase “To give subtilty to the simple” means that the proverbs gives the easily persuaded person the ability to make distinctions or discern between right and wrong decisions. You don’t have to be a genius to know the difference between right and wrong

THE PURSUIT OF WISDOM

(Proverbs 1:7) The fear of God (Proverbs 1:7). This verse says “The **fear** of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.” Throughout the book of Proverbs, Solomon mentioned various insights regarding “wisdom.” This verse gives us the key for obtaining “wisdom.” Solomon said that “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.” To “fear the LORD” means that we are aware of God’s mighty presence that leads us to want to constantly please Him in our attitudes and actions. Some people call this reverence for God.

This “fear” is not a disruptive quaking in terror that hinders a person’s ability to function; instead it is a “fear” that leads a person to think, act, and live in a right relationship with God.

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THE PURSUIT OF WISDOM

(Proverbs 1:8) Heeding parental instruction - This verse says “My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother...” Those who are wise or seek to be wise regard their parents as their superiors. So Solomon said “My son, hear the instruction of thy father.” By interpretation, the word “son” here most likely refers to Solomon’s own “son,” but by application, it includes young people in general. His “son” and all children are called to “hear” or pay close attention to his “instruction” or admonition.

THE PURSUIT OF WISDOM

(Proverbs 1:10) Warning of potential opposition - This verse says “My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.” In this verse, Solomon gives another general rule to young people to be aware of bad company. He said “My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.” The word “entice” means “to lead on or attract by arousing hope of pleasure or profit.” It also carries the idea of tricking someone. This is good advice for parents to give their children when they send them abroad into the world.

Solomon’s warning to his “son” concern keeping company with “sinners.” More often than not, “sinners” or unsaved folk, seek to involve others in their sin.

Conclusion

The Bible exhorts us to search for and find wisdom; but many people don't understand what wisdom is. Our culture often twists the meaning of the word. Some people feel that if one knows a lot, he or she is wise. This is not necessarily the case.

A person may be a well of knowledge and still lack ethical direction. This week's lesson has taught us that the fool who lacks the wisdom that comes from God is morally deficient and inclined to do evil. But the wise person listens to the wisdom that comes from God and therefore, he or she exercises moral discernment and prudence. They are skillful in reasoning and resourceful in applying truth. That's true wisdom!



wisdom