

Wisdom From Above For Living Here Below – Part 1

PROVERBS – DUMB AND SMARTER

Explain OT Wisdom Literature

- Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon

Explain LIFE GRID

- DOING (external, physical life) – Proverbs, Job
- FEELING (internal, spiritual life) – Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes
- CENTER (prayer, worship) – Psalms

PROVERBS – DUMB AND SMARTER

(Illustration: dumb people from “Darwin Awards” & “Stupid Videos”)

Proverb:

- Latin – PRO (“instead of”) and VERBA (“words”)
- A short statement that summarizes a wise principle
- Hebrew (MASHAL) – “a comparison” or “to be like”
- Comparisons between common concepts and life’s profound truths

The book of Proverbs collects the most important 513 of the 3000 wise sayings that King Solomon wrote or collected (1 Kings 4:32).

The subject of Proverbs is WISDOM, which in Scripture is a matter of the HEART more than of the MIND – real wisdom is, at its most basic level, simply OBEDIENCE TO GOD.

Proverbs 9:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

Proverbs mentions three kinds of people who desperately need wisdom:

Proverbs 1:22 How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?

THE SIMPLE

- Naïve people who believe everything, because they don’t have convictions about anything (what they think is “tolerance” is only spiritual ignorance, because they can’t distinguish truth from error)

Proverbs 14:15 The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.

- The wise learn from instruction and avoid trouble, but the simple have to learn the hard way

Proverbs 21:11 When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise: and when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge.

- The simple cannot see ahead so they repeatedly walk into trouble

Proverbs 22:3 A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.

- The simple are simple because they reject the truth of God’s Word that gives common sense

Proverbs 1:4 To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.

THE SCORNER

- Can’t understand God’s truth because they are not humble

Proverbs 14:6 A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth.

- Show how ignorant they are by the way they respond to advice and correction

Proverbs 9:8 Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.

- Has toxic attitudes that spread trouble and create problems

Proverbs 22:10 Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease.

- Brings reproach on anything they touch

Proverbs 24:9 The thought of foolishness is sin: and the scorner is an abomination to men.

THE FOOL

- **In Proverbs, three different Hebrews words are translated “fool” – “kesyl” meaning DULL, “ewiy” meaning PERVERTED, and “nabal” meaning STUBBORN**

- Thinks that their sin is “really living”

Proverbs 15:21 Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom: but a man of understanding walketh uprightly.

- Is light about spiritual things

Proverbs 15:2 The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.

- Constantly meddling in trivial affairs

Proverbs 20:3 It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling.

- Constantly return to their sin

Proverbs 26:11 As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.

THE WISE

- They associate with wise people

Proverbs 13:20 He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

- They flee from sin

Proverbs 14:16 A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.

- They discipline their speech

Proverbs 10:19 In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.

- They win souls

Proverbs 11:30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.

Proverbs contrasts **WISDOM** and **FOLLY** (and even personifies them as women out to woo us!). Folly often appears dumb to everybody, but sometimes (and this is the tricky part) it actually appears smart from a worldly perspective! That is why we need to **MEDITATE** on God's Word.

1 Corinthians 2:13-14 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

James 3:13-18 (NLT) If you are wise and understand God's ways, live a life of steady goodness so that only good deeds will pour forth. And if you don't brag about the good you do, then you will be truly wise! But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your hearts, don't brag about being wise. That is the worst kind of lie. For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and motivated by the Devil. For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and every kind of evil. But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and good deeds. It shows no partiality and is always sincere. And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of goodness.

In the book of Proverbs, King Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived (2 Chronicles 1:10, 1 Kings 4:29), gives us insight and advice regarding many of the issues of life that are not directly addressed in the Law or the Prophets (i.e. **PRINCIPLES** and **APPLICATIONS**).

That is why **PROVERBS are PROBABILITIES, not PROMISES.**

Generally, the wise prosper while fools do not – but it doesn't always happen that way! These general principles of life are balanced by the reality that the wicked sometimes prosper – but only temporarily!

Psalm 73:2-3 But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

Psalm 73:16-17 When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.

So, whatever the result, we still need to live by God's **PRINCIPLES**. God does not guarantee uniform outcomes for each proverb, but in studying them and applying the, we begin to understand the wisdom, character and blessings of God. **And that alone will make us grow!** The aim of Proverbs is to give us skill in all our human relationships.

We don't automatically get wisdom! It has to be known (1:2), received (1:3), heard (2:2), taken into the heart (2:10), found (3:13), kept (3:21), gotten (4:7), learned (4:11), attended to (5:1), understood (8:5), valued (8:11), purchased (23:23), and loved (29:3).

All of the wisdom expressed in Proverbs is hidden in Christ, so we need to know Him, receive Him, hear Him, taken Him into our hearts, find Him, keep Him, get Him, learn Him, attend to Him, understand Him, value Him, purchase Him, and love Him!

Colossians 2:3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

THERE IS NOT A "RULE" FOR EVERY LIFE SITUATION. We have to **ACQUIRE** and **APPLY** the wisdom of God (His Word) to our own lives. It is dangerous to try to "claim" a verse from Proverbs while ignoring the total message of the book!

PROVERBS TELLS US THAT GOOD THINGS ARE LIKELY TO HAPPEN IF WE DO RIGHT

JOB TELLS US THAT SOMETIMES BAD THINGS HAPPEN EVEN WHEN WE DO RIGHT!

