

Theme: The wisdom books of the Old Testament teach us how to shape our souls so that we acquire the skill to lean and live successfully in this fallen world.

I. Intro – The Way of Wisdom

- A. Prevalence of education today
- B. The purpose of education, knowledge & wisdom?
- C. Michael Craven – Excellence Without A Soul
- D. CS Lewis – A more clever devil
- E. Wisdom literature in OT

II. The Structure of the Book of Proverbs

- A. The structure of the Book of Proverbs
 - 1. Proverbs 1-9 – extended intro – how to read
 - 2. Proverbs 10-31 – various collections of sayings
- B. Three main sections in Prologue (1:1-7)
 - 1. Title (v1)
 - 2. Preamble (v2-6)
 - 3. Theme (v7)

III. The Prologue to Proverbs

- A. The title (v1)

- 1. Proverbs – genre of book – proverbial wisdom
- 2. Solomon – wisdom patriarch
 - a. Wise man – 1 Kings 4:29-34
 - b. Proverbs – Pr 10:1; 25:1
 - c. Other writers too – Pr 30:1; 31:1
- 3. Son of David, King of Israel – court (25:1)

B. The purpose (v2-6)

- 1. Note the structure – ‘for’; v2a, b as headings
- 2. Purpose 1 – attaining true wisdom (v2a)
 - a. Wisdom and synonyms – multifaceted
 - b. Wisdom is related to ethical living (v3)
- 3. Purpose 2 – understand wisdom writings (2b, 6)
 - a. Many types of wisdom writings (v6)
 - b. Proverbs not universal laws – 26:4-5; English
 - c. Misunderstanding disastrous – 26:7, 9

C. The theme (v7) – fear of the Lord – next time

IV. The Characteristics of Wisdom

- A. The characteristics of wisdom

1. Wisdom is comprehensive (9 terms in prologue; 1Ki 4 areas)
2. Wisdom is hermeneutical – how to read proverb
3. Wisdom is ethical – how to actually live
4. Wisdom is for everyone (except the willful fool)
5. Wisdom is situational – right proverb for time!
6. Wisdom is relational – context of other people/God
7. Wisdom is theological – fear of the Lord (next wk)

B. An initial definition of wisdom

1. Wisdom is the skill of learning and living
2. Acquired through instruction & experience
3. Cornerstone is a proper relationship with God.
4. Allows us to survive and thrive in fallen world

V. Walking the Way of Wisdom

A. Do we recognize wisdom is related to practical living?

1. Can't separate wisdom from ethical living
2. Character counts – pass faith to *reliable* men

B. Do we understand how to read wisdom writings?

1. Wisdom can't be reduced to laws!
2. Example – Prov 22:6 – not a guarantee!

C. Are we shaping wise or foolish souls?

1. Do we try to shape our souls, or float along?
2. Do I see that true wisdom changes me?

The Way of Wisdom

Proverbs 1:1-7

September 24, 2006

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Impromptu on Christ the Wisdom of God with us

29 God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. 30 Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the men of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. 31 He was wiser than any other man, including Ethan the Ezrahite-- wiser than Heman, Calcol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. And his fame spread to all the surrounding nations. 32 He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five. 33 He described plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also taught about animals and birds, reptiles and fish. 34 Men of all nations came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom.
1 Kings 4:29-34

1 The proverbs of Solomon: A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son grief to his mother.
Proverbs 10:1

1 These are more proverbs of Solomon, copied by the men of Hezekiah king of Judah:
Proverbs 25:1

1 The sayings of Agur son of Jakeh-- an oracle: This man declared to Ithiel, to Ithiel and to Ucal:
Proverbs 30:1

1 The sayings of King Lemuel-- an oracle his mother taught him:
Proverbs 31:1

4 Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will be like him yourself.
5 Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes.
Proverbs 26:4-5

7 Like a lame man's legs that hang limp is a proverb in the mouth of a fool.
Proverbs 26:7

9 Like a thornbush in a drunkard's hand is a proverb in the mouth of a fool.
Proverbs 26:9

C. The characteristics of wisdom

8. Wisdom is comprehensive (9 terms in prologue; 1Ki 4 areas)
9. Wisdom is hermeneutical – how to read proverb
10. Wisdom is ethical – how to actually live
11. Wisdom is for everyone (except the willful fool)
12. Wisdom is situational – right proverb for time!
13. Wisdom is relational – context of other people/God
14. Wisdom is theological – fear of the Lord (next wk)

D. An initial definition of wisdom

5. Wisdom is the skill of learning and living
6. Acquired through instruction & experience
7. Cornerstone is a proper relationship with God.
8. Allows us to survive and thrive in fallen world