

WISDOM of PROVERBS

By: Bill Richardson

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The New King James Version, (NKJV) of the Bible, which I have in my library, has an introductory paragraph of the Book of Proverbs which makes this statement: “The Proverbs are written in condensed language; therefore, special attention is sometimes needed to gain their full impact. This may be done by reading them aloud, reading them often, and meditating on them.” The Proverbs cited herein will be from the NKJV.

I have been considering, for some time, writing about my favorite Proverbs. But I happened upon an outline, which was developed to use Proverbs in discussing a specific theme. I like that, and it is the way I’m going with this study. I hope that you will have an appreciation for and enjoy the format and the content of this study.

It has been said that the Proverbs are known or referred to as “Wisdom literature of the Old Testament.” That they touch on practical and political. It can be said along with that, they admonish in many Christian principles. There is also poetic composition often used in the Proverbs, which to me are added features which have place in my heart.

There will be twelve themes listed in this study with cited Proverbs that address them.

1. KINDNESS:

(a). Proverbs 3:3, *“Let not mercy and truth forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart...”* [Kindness must be tempered with truth.]

(b). Proverbs 11:17, *“The merciful man does good for his own soul, but he who is cruel troubles his own flesh.”* [Kindness brings its own reward. The wicked actually destroy themselves because of their greed.]

(c). Proverbs 14:22, *“Do they not go astray who devise evil? But mercy and truth belong to those who desire good.”* It is true “Kindness beget Kindness.” [A troublemaker who uses all kinds of subtle deceitful methods to sow discord is certain to face calamity.]

(d). Proverbs 16:6, *“In mercy and truth Atonement is provided for iniquity; And by the fear of the Lord one departs from evil.”* [Kindness atones for fault. Mercy...Truth...and the fear of the Lord are characteristics of the holy life.]

(e). Proverbs 19:22, *“What is desired in a man is kindness, and a poor man is better than a liar.”* [Kindness makes a man attractive. Kindness is required of us by our Lord. It is His Will and shows faithfulness on our part.]

(f). Proverbs 20:6, *“Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness, (mercy), but who can find a faithful man?”* [Genuine kindness is rare.] The Lord also asks *“Who then is a faithful and wise servant?”* (Matthew 24:45).

(g). Proverbs 21:21, *“He who follows righteousness and mercy finds life, righteousness and honor. “* [Kindness is followed by life.] Jesus said, *“With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you.”* (Mark 4:24).

(h). Proverbs 20:28, *“Mercy and truth preserve the king, and by loving kindness He upholds His throne.”* [Kindness should characterize a king. Kindness is required of us. It is referring covenant faithfulness.]

(i). Proverbs 14:34, *“Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.”* [National welfare like personal destiny is tied to righteousness. Kindness should characterize a nation.]

(j). Proverbs 31:26, *“She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness.”* [Kindness should characterize a home. There expressions of the woman are expressions of her stability and her love for God.]

2. CHARITY:

(a). Proverbs 28:27, *“He who gives to the poor will not lack, but he who hides his eyes will have many cures.”*

(b). Proverbs 19:7, *“He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord, and the Lord will pay back what He has given.”*

(c). Proverbs 25:21, *“If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink...”*

Observation: The way we treat the poor, whether to do good or evil, is the way we treat the Lord. Persons are made in God’s image, (See Genesis 1:26-28; Matthew 25:40, 45); to oppress them is to oppress HIM. The more we give of ourselves, the more we receive. In contrast, one who does not share with others finds that others will not share with him, (See Proverbs 11:24; 13:7).

3. TEMPER:

(a). Proverbs 16:32, *“He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.”*

(b). Proverbs 19:11, *“The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and his glory is to overlook a transgression.”*

Observation: In ruling our spirit, self-discipline, under God is the way to holy living. It’s attitude. It’s a mind thing! Remember...as we think, we are. There is no doubt about that. It’s scripture! No attitude is godlier than to forgive or to overlook a wrong. Strict discipline of body, mind, and soul is essential to the Christian’s life. Without it we will never be what God intends we should be.

4. TONGUE:

(a). Proverbs 10:31, *“The mouth of the righteous bring forth wisdom, but the perverse tongue will be cut out.”* [OUCH!]

(b). Proverbs 12:19, *“The truthful lip shall be established forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment.”*

(c). Proverbs 15:14, 23, *“The heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge, but the mouth of fools feed on foolishness.”* “A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, and a word spoken in due season, how good it is!”

Observation: Living righteous lives helps develop straight thinking and consequently acceptable speech. Truth can and will stand the test of time. Lies cannot. Speech springs from inward character. We must allow the Holy Spirit to

cleanse the heart, (the mind), if we are to control the tongue. Is thy mind right with God? Does He each moment abide in thy soul? Hast ‘thou dominion o’er self and o’er sin? Is thy heart right with God? Thought provoking questions, yes!

5. FAMILY LIFE:

(a). Proverbs 12:4, *“An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who causes shame is like rottenness in his bones.”*

(b). Proverbs 19:14, *“...A prudent wife is from the Lord.”*

(c). Proverbs 13:34, *“He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him properly.”*

(d). Proverbs 22:6, *“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”*

Observation: A family consists of husband, wife and children, each honoring one another. All must be obedient to God and one another for their duties and responsibilities as designated by God. The dysfunctional, disobedient, and disillusioned family is a blight to society. They are total degradation to God. (Please read Proverbs 31:10-31).

6. BUSINESS LIFE:

(a). Proverbs 10:5, *“He who gathers in summer is a wise son; He who sleeps in harvest is a son who causes shame.”*

(b). Proverbs 11:1, *“Dishonest scales are an abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is HIS delight.”*

(c). Proverbs 16:26, *“The person who labors, labors for himself, for his hungry mouth drives him on.”*

Observation: Hard work and diligence produce both material gain and moral character. The ant, a diligent worker and provider, is a model for the sluggard to observe. Honesty is involved, as is dishonesty. Dishonesty is a social and

economic abuse and is condemned in the word. God is a God of truth. Honest and truthful life is the life we must live. Are we truthful when we say and do not? Do we say, 'O How I love Jesus and do not His Will? Thought provoking isn't it?

7. PUBLIC LIFE:

(a). Proverbs 11:14, *"Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety."*

(b). Proverbs 8:14, *"Counsel is mine and sound wisdom; I am understanding, I have strength."*

(c). Proverbs 15:22, *"Without counsel, plans go away, but in the multitude of counselors they are established."*

(d). Proverbs 20:18, *"Plans are established by counsel; by wise counsel wage war."*

Observation: A modern proverb says, "Two heads are better than one." Wisdom is great counsel. It is better than money and is to be preferred to it, although wisdom often leads to wealth. The counsels of others help our plans to succeed. Persons of wisdom are not quick to offer advice, if we are wise, we will seek it from them.

8. SOCIAL LIFE:

(a). Proverbs 17:17, *"A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born from adversity."*

(b). Proverbs 22:2, *"The rich and the poor have this in common, The Lord is the Maker of them all."*

(c). Proverbs 18:24, *"A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother."*

Observation: Our true friend(s) and brother become known when trouble comes. There are times and conditions in life when we do need a friend. Who is our best friend? Therefore, both our friend(s) and we are responsible to the same maker. Rich and poor are responsible to their Maker. When we need someone we should not forsake the help of a friend who is near. In turn, we must not forsake a friend. Remember, he who has friends must be a friend and must be friendly. Do unto others, as you want them to do to you. It's Biblical, and thus true!

9. THE SLUGGARD:

(a). Proverbs 10:4, *"He who has a slack hand becomes poor, but the hand of the diligent make rich."*

(b). Proverbs 12:24, *"The hand of the diligent will rule, but the lazy man will be put to forced labor."*

(c). Proverbs 13:4, *"The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; But the soul diligent shall be made rich."*

(d). Proverbs 19:15, *"Laziness cast one into a deep sleep, and an idle person will suffer hunger."*

(e). Proverbs 19:24, *"A lazy man buries his hand in the bowl, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again."*

(f). Proverbs 20:4, *"The lazy man will not plow because of winter; He will beg during harvest and have nothing."*

(g). Proverbs 26:16, *"The slothful man is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render reason."*

Observation: Nothing good can be said of the slothful man. Good can be rendered to the man according to his works. *"I went by the field of the slothful and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and lo, it was all grown up over the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well; I looked upon it, and receiving instructions"* (Proverbs 24:30-33). Question! Was it necessary to say or write the instruction? Not for a prudent man! Not for the wise observer! The instructions received were in seeing. I looked upon...I saw...I received. Great lesson!

10. THE FOOLS: (of whom three classes are distinguished):

(a). Morally bad fools; Proverbs 12:15-16, *"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who receives correction is prudent."* *"A fool's wrath is known at once, but a prudent man covers shame."* Proverbs 15:5, *"A fool despises his father's instruction."*

Observation: The antidote, remedy, is to fear the Lord and depart from evil. Unlike the fool whose temper is uncontrolled, the wise person does not react quickly, either to the shame of an insult or perhaps in ways, which lead to later shame.

(b). Stupid fools; Proverbs 10:18, *"Whoever hides hatred has lying lips, and whoever spreads slander is a fool."* Proverbs 13:16, *"Every prudent man acts with knowledge, but a fool lays open his folly."* Proverbs 14:8, *"The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way, but the folly of fools is deceit."*

Observation: There is nothing good that can be said of the fool. It can be realized they are in need of help. Helped if they are willing to be helped, if so, then we must help. The prudent person, however, is able to understand, (gain sight into), his or her own behavior, but the fool is lost in a fog of self-deception.

(c). Senseless, empty-minded fools: Proverbs 17:7, *"Excellent speech is not becoming to a fool, much less lying lips to a prince."* Proverbs

17:21, "He who begets a scoffer does so to his sorrow, and the father of a fool has no joy."

Observation: It hurts the heart to think of what is said of the mind condition of a person spoken of in Proverbs 17:7, 21. If one is a liar he speaks not the truth. Deceiving is involved; error is involved; falseness is involved; even treacherousness is involved. If a person is empty-minded, they would be carrying nothing pertaining to knowledge of good, (which is needless), and of no value; void of quality and not capable to perform acts of benefit; thus senseless, thus dead.

11. INTEMPERANCE:

Proverbs Chapter 23:1 through 35, the whole chapter covers intemperance on varied indulgences. There is no doubt that unrestrained appetite is doubly dangerous; it may be both a source of disgrace and a point where undue influence may be applied. Note the danger of alcohol consumption and to look beyond short-term pleasure to long-term consequences.

Proverbs 23:29-35, in full text:

Who has woe?

Who has sorrow?

Who has contentions?

Who has complaints?

Who has wounds without cause?

Who has redness of eyes?

Those who linger long at the wine;

Those who go in search of mixed wine;

Do not look on the wine when it is red.

When it sparkles in the cup,

When it swirls around smoothly;

At the last it bites like a serpent,

And stings like a viper.

Your eyes will see strange things,

And your heart will utter perverse things.

Yes, you will be like one who lies down

In the midst of the sea, or like one who lies

At the top of the mast saying: "They have struck me,

But I did not feel it, when shall I awake,

That I may seek another drink?

12. CHASTITY:

Observing both a good father's command and the law of a loving mother will keep us from many an evil. Recognize the good parent's command

and law as the command and law of God. The commandment is a lamp, and the law of life. Reproofs of instruction are the way of life.

Note Proverbs 6:24-29, 32-35.

To keep you from the evil woman, from the flattering tongue of a seductress. Does not lust after beauty in your heart, nor let her allure you with her eyelids.

For by means of a harlot a man is reduced to a crust of bread; and an adulteress will prey upon his precious life.

Can a man take fire to his bosom and his clothes not be burned?

Can one walk on hot coals, and his feet not be seared?

So is he who goes into his neighbor's wife; whoever touches her shall not be innocent.

Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; He who does so destroys his own soul, wounds and dishonor he will get, and his reproach will not be wiped away.

For jealousy is a husband's fury; therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance.

He will accept no recompense, nor will he be appeased through you to give many gifts.

There are inevitable personal, spiritual, psychological, social, and physical results of the sins cited above. It hurts to think of the results. But it seems that, for whatever reason, these sins are prevalent in society today. We must realize that we have to teach against all sin, and we will if we love God and value our soul and the soul of others. There are great rewards in teaching Proverbs.

Let us conclude this study by noting Proverbs 1:2-7. Note, what I call, strong words, used in these six verses. The words offer so much for us. They counsel us in great blessings if we will but adhere to their meanings! Note some of these strong words before we read the six Proverbs.

WISDOM, INSTRUCTION, UNDERSTANDING, JUDGMENT, EQUITY, PRUDENCE, KNOWLEDGE, ATTAIN, WISE, FEAR, JUSTICE, PERCEIVE. RECEIVE.

Is there other "words" that you would want to name and let the principle of that word lead and help in the walk of life?

Here now in full text is: Proverbs 1:2-7

2. *To know wisdom and instructions, to perceive the words of understanding.*

3. *To receive the instructions of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity.*
4. *To give prudence to the simple, to the young men knowledge and discretion.*
5. *A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel.*
6. *To understand a proverb and an enigma, the words of the wise and their riddles.*
7. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instructions.*

It can be said, and rightfully so, that these verses form an introduction to the entire Book of Proverbs. Being cited here at the end of this study writing can still have great attention to us. Maybe it will be the energy needed for us to study again and more of the great principle contained in Proverbs.

God bless you for studying with me in this most beneficial lesson. Don't forget to keep everyone in your prayers and keep studying with me via these writings. I'll keep 'em coming. They are free and all of them available on my Website www.geocities.com/dubbyt. Check it out. Read, study and pass them on. Please advertise my Website it will help us to get the "Word" out. You may copy, reproduce and give them away. And oh yes, please help in advertising God's Word, it is commanded we do so!

God bless us in our serving and doing the will of our Father Almighty.

I love you, but I just 'gotta say it, tell-ye, and am trying to show it!

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TRUST GOD

By Bill Irby, Minister, West Hobbs Street Church of Christ, Athens AL

* See note bottom of page

TRUST IN THE LORD *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction”* (Proverbs 1:7).

These words are the key to the Book of Proverbs and the key to life. Solomon used just sixteen words (in our NJKV translation) to describe all the problems of humanity and their solution. That we have not learned these things is our fault; the words are here, given by God.

He said “the fear of the Lord.” The word “fear” means what we think it normally does, but with an added emphasis on the idea of respect or reverence. This is where our problems begin. Mankind does not respect God. I think we are at a juncture of time wherein it seems that man is especially disrespectful of God. Supposedly smart people have embraced ideas that eradicate God from Creation, the school and the home. Indeed, we were never created; the story goes...we just happened to happen.

This is part of a price man is paying for enthroning “science falsely so called.” A system of knowledge (the meaning of “science” in I Timothy 6:20 is “knowledge”) that does not include the spiritual and those things that transcend material existence is not valid. The dominant culture in our world is making a vain attempt to exclude God from serious considerations of reality.

A society that does this will not last. It will fall because the weight of it rests on a nonexistent foundation. Knowledge begins with respect for God, all that He is, and all that He has taught.

Without God we become fools. Fools despise wisdom and instruction. A well-known characteristic of a fool is that you cannot tell him anything. He is an expert. He does not need God for anything. We endanger ourselves and our heritage when we place trust in men who do not need God.

The solution, “Trust God”, Solomon said it: *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not to your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths”* (Proverbs 3:5-6 NKJV).

* This writing is included herein for reasons not listed—it’s good one!