

**What is a Proverb?**

- A short, pithy statement that gives us insight into how life works.
- In our English language, we hear proverbs all the time. Short, quick thoughts.
- In the Hebrew language, proverbs are a little different. They include similes, metaphors, parallelism, etc. Meant to be read slowly & take time to understand.
- The real difference in these Proverbs is that God inspired them and they are useful for teaching, reproof, correction, & training in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16).

**Foundational Facts about the Book:**

Author: Solomon and other inspired writers

Purpose(s): Impart wisdom, help leaders in their day, Character formation, Ultimately: To teach people how to ‘make life work’ in the way that brought God the most glory and the world the most good.

How They Work:

**Proverbs provide a COMPASS to help us navigate many of the questions of life.**

1. Instruct us in making the right decisions—both explicitly and implicitly.
2. Help us grow in wisdom that we will need to make right decisions.
3. Help us become the right kind of *people* who make the right kind of decisions.

Our Approach: Megathemes and Topics. (Words, Men/Women, Parenting, etc.), Recognizing them as Wisdom Literature (needs to be interpreted as such), in light of the ‘Big Story’ of Scripture.

**Interpretive Helps for Rightly Handling the Proverbs:**

1. Proverbs are general principles, not promises. They are wise statements about how the world works most of the time.
  - a. “A generous man...” “No one who oppresses the poor...”
  - b. There is a difference between Law, Promises, and Proverbs.
2. In interpreting a proverb correctly, the SITUATION is key.
  - a. Proverbs 26:4-5
3. We must connect the Proverbs to Jesus and the Gospel or we miss their fullest intention & fall into moralism (which leads to all kinds of trouble...)
  - a. The Big Story of the Bible: What God has done through Jesus, Lk. 24
  - b. Proverbs have an original meaning and also point us to Christ.
    - i. Jesus is the ultimate embodiment of wisdom (Prov. 8, 1 Cor. 1:24)
    - ii. God is not seeking to simply make us wise people but like Jesus. **We don’t just need principles. We need a Person.**
    - iii. Applying the Gospel through Proverbs:
      1. *Where do we turn when want to see this wisdom in action?*  
We look to Jesus. The Gospels are a great start.
      2. *Where do we turn when we don’t embody the kind of wisdom we see?* We look to Jesus.

*Is this how we read the Bible?*

*The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel: 2 To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight, 3 to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity; 4 to give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth- 5 Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance, 6 to understand a proverb and a saying, the words of the wise and their riddles. 7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. Proverbs 1:1-7 ESV*

**Exposition/Explanation:**

“Solomon” King of Israel, wisest man in the world, Writer/compiler of the book  
 “To know wisdom and instruction...words of insight...prudence to the simple” To make you wise  
 “to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity;” Natural outworking  
 “knowledge and discretion to the youth” Great for the naïve and the young  
 “Let the wise hear and increase in learning and the one who understands obtain guidance” Intro.  
 Of ‘the wise.’ Great for those already on their way to becoming wise.  
*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.* Intro.  
 of the ‘fear of the Lord’ (dominant theme in the book), fools = another major theme. Fools don’t listen to the kind of truth that is about to be set forth.

**Personal Inventory:**

1. Where do I need to grow in wisdom the most? (*work, money, singleness, marriage, parenting, making decisions, man/womanhood, speech, etc.*)
2. Where do I need my character formed the most? (*how I treat people, how/when to speak, biblical man/womanhood, my temper, my work ethic, , my parenting, etc.*)
3. Share your answer with your community group for support and accountability.

**Implications for Us as a Community:**

1. Wisdom creates a **COUNTERCULTURE**—a city within our city.
  - a. The uniqueness of our church:
    - i. Some of us have knowledge, but little experience.
    - ii. Some of us may have experience, but little knowledge.
    - iii. Knowledge + Experience = Wisdom
    - iv. We need one another to become wise as a church.
  - b. Wise living is part of our outward, missional lifestyle.
    - i. *Do people come to you because they know you make wise choices? If not, what needs to change?*

**Homework:**

1. Read a chapter a day (31 chapters). Soak in it. These are meant to take time.
2. Pray for wisdom like Solomon did. God will answer this prayer!
3. Continue asking “*Where does my character need formation?*” Ask God. Ask others.
4. Begin asking “***What is the WISE choice in this situation?***”

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Visit [www.crossinglouisville.com](http://www.crossinglouisville.com) for more helpful resources.  
 Works Consulted : Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Life Application Bible, MacArthur Study Bible, Messages by Steve Hart, Tim Keller, Darrin Patrick, Mark Driscoll, Introduction to the Old Testament