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November memory verse: **Philippians 4:13 (NKJV)**

¹³ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Shoe boxes are due back by Sunday November 8th

Commentary on Proverbs 1 by, Chuck Smith,

With background info by Chuck Swindoll

November 1, 2020

Chuck Swindoll's overview of Proverbs

Who wrote the book?

Proverbs, like Psalms, names multiple individuals as the authors of its various sections. Solomon was uniquely qualified to serve as the principal author for this book of wise sayings. [First Kings 3:5–9](#) recounts Solomon asking God for wisdom in his reign over Israel, a request God eventually granted ([1 Kings 4:29–31](#)). In fact, Solomon identified himself as the source of most of the book. His name appears at the beginning of three distinct sections—[Proverbs 1:1](#), [10:1](#), and [25:1](#)—covering almost all of the first twenty-nine chapters of the book.

A short section consisting of [Proverbs 22:17–24:34](#) expresses “the words of the wise” ([Proverbs 22:17](#)), which Solomon may have compiled from various sources. Evidence that Solomon drew on multiple sources appears in [Proverbs 24:23](#), where Solomon used the plural noun for “wise” (also translated sages) to describe the authors of this section. Also, due to the book’s similarities with Mesopotamian and Egyptian collections of proverbs such as “The Instruction of Amenemope,” it’s possible that God inspired Solomon to record this section based on wise sayings he had been exposed to throughout his life.¹

The final two chapters identify Agur (30:1) and Lemuel (31:1) as their authors, though the identities of these men remain mysterious in history.

Where are we?

The composition of Proverbs remains one of the most difficult questions about the book. Its strong association with Solomon means most of its contents were completed prior to his death in 931 BC. Clearly the book stayed in the southern kingdom of Judah, as Hezekiah's men compiled more of Solomon's proverbs in [Proverbs 25–29](#). This indicates that the book was likely in its final form sometime before the end of Hezekiah's reign in 686 BC.

Why is Proverbs so important?

Proverbs accomplishes something no other biblical book does: it simply compiles numerous short instructions for living an effective life on earth. While other books articulate profound theological truths, lengthy narratives of triumph and failure, or prophetic preaching to a disobedient people, Proverbs concerns itself completely with instructing people in the path of wisdom. The writers of the book recognized the varied circumstances of a person's life and provided principles to apply in a variety of situations rather than instructions to follow in only a few specific instances.

What's the big idea?

Proverbs states its theme explicitly very early in the book: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" ([Proverbs 1:7](#)). The fear of the Lord refers to our viewing Him with the respect He deserves. It means living our lives in light of what we know of Him, holding Him in the highest estimation, and depending on Him with humble trust. Only then, Proverbs teaches, will we discover knowledge and wisdom (see also 9:10).

In writing the Proverbs, Solomon hoped that his readers would attain practical righteousness in all things and that we would do this by living our lives under the authority and direction of God. He specifically explained the book's purpose in 1:2–6, focusing on imparting understanding that would impact every facet of our lives. Much of the book emphasizes listening to others so that we might learn from them and apply the combined knowledge of those who have gone before us—such as parents and elders—to the unique circumstances of our own lives (1:5, 8). Wisdom then involves appropriating a measure of humility, first before God and then before others. If instead, we decide to speak rashly rather than listen attentively . . . well, Proverbs deals with that too (12:15; 13:3).

How do I apply this?

Read it! Then live it! Proverbs contains some of the most applicable nuggets of truth in all of the Bible. Most of the proverbs are pithy statements brimming over with imagery from the real world. This approach allows us to see very clearly how any particular proverb might be applied to any number of everyday situations we encounter—from getting out of bed in the morning to building a strong foundation in our relationships with others. Proverbs reminds us that God concerns Himself not just with the big,

cataclysmic events of life but even those mundane, “invisible” moments in our lives as well.

Are you following God, even in those seemingly “small” circumstances? Allow Proverbs to refocus your attention on all the hidden moments of your life.

Proverbs, chapter 1. The first six verses are sort of a preface to the book, as authors many times write a preface to their work.

The Proverbs of Solomon the son of David, the king of Israel ([Pro 1:1](#));

When Solomon first came into the throne of his father David, the kingdom of Israel had come really to the zenith of its glory, of power. It was at that point one of the strongest kingdoms in the world. Blessed of God mightily. And when Solomon became king, God said unto Solomon, "Ask of Me what you will." And Solomon prayed unto the Lord and said, "Lord, I ask You that You would give me wisdom in governing over these Your people." And so the Lord said unto Solomon, "Inasmuch as you did not ask for fame or riches or honor, but you asked for wisdom, I will grant unto you that which you have asked, but I will also give to you that which you did not ask. I will give to you wealth and honor and glory." And so the scripture said that God gave wisdom unto Solomon.

Unfortunately, in Solomon's later years, he did not really follow his own counsels and advice that he had given here to his son in the first eight chapters. It's sort of ascribed or defined, "To my son." And he did not even follow his own advice. He did not follow after wisdom and we see the tragic results of it as is reflected in his writing of the book of Ecclesiastes, a man who had everything and yet had nothing. A man who had everything in life that anybody could possibly wish for, and yet cried out against the emptiness and frustration of life, because he did not continue in wisdom. We'll get to that a little bit more as we get down to verse 7.

But Solomon was a very prolific writer. He wrote several songs. He wrote 3,000 proverbs. He wrote books on biology, zoology, and many different fields. People came from all over the world to sit and to hear his wisdom, as he would expound on plants and animals and things of this nature. So these proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, the king of Israel. Now the purpose of a proverb is

To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding ([Pro 1:2](#));

For the most part, they are put in such a way as they can fasten their selves upon your memory. In little words of contrast or in such a way picturesque or compared to, so that they really fix themselves in your mind. And the purpose of the proverb is to know wisdom, to receive instruction.

To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity; To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. Now a wise man will hear, and will increase his learning; a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: To

understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings ([Pro 1:3-6](#)).

So now he begins with the proverb with this first and foremost.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: [in contrast] but fools despise wisdom and instruction ([Pro 1:7](#)).

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning." Now, the word beginning here in Greek, or in Hebrew rather, the Hebrew here means sort of the head or the sum total. In other words, the fear of the Lord, this is knowledge all wrapped up. It's the summation of knowledge, the fear of the Lord. We come to chapter 9 and he says again there, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge or the beginning of wisdom" ([Proverbs 9:10](#)). It sounds like he's saying the same thing but he's not.

In chapter 9, verse 10, the word *beginning* there is a different Hebrew word, which does mean more what our word beginning means, is the first steps of wisdom. So the fear of the Lord is the first step, but it is also the total.

Now, what is meant by the fear of the Lord? As you get into chapter 8, verse 13, "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil." That's what the fear of the Lord is all about, to hate evil. So this is really the beginning, the sum of real knowledge, is that of hating evil. It's the first steps towards wisdom, the hating of evil.

We live in a very tolerant age, and unfortunately, our tolerance level has become very high. We've become very tolerant of evil. What we are really lacking today is a real hatred of evil. We've been taught, you know, we're not to hate anything, and so hate has been put as one of those intolerant words and people who have hatred are put in a category, so we want to accept everybody. "Live and let live," you know, and to develop a tolerance towards evil things. Evil is always seeking to be tolerated. It always is looking for you to compromise and to accept it. The real beginning and the sum of knowledge is really a hatred of evil because God hates evil.

If I am to fellowship with God, I must also hate evil. I cannot tolerate evil in my life if I'm to have true fellowship with God. So, the fear of the Lord is the summation of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

My son ([Pro 1:8](#)),

And he addresses this whole first part to, "My son."

hear the instruction of thy father, forsake not the law of thy mother: For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck. My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not ([Pro 1:8-10](#)).

All of the invitations of evil that we are presented with week by week, but don't consent. If sinners entice thee, consent not.

If they say, Come with us ([Pro 1:11](#)),

And, of course, these guys are really real robbers and all.

let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privately for the innocent without cause: Let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down to the pit: We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil: Cast our lot among us; let us all have one purse: My son, walk not thou in the way of them; refrain thy foot from their path: For their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed blood ([Pro 1:11-16](#)).

Now we have an interesting little proverb, and I don't know just why it's put right in this particular place. But he said,

Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird ([Pro 1:17](#)).

Now if you're going to try and catch birds, if you set the net right out while they're watching you, it's in vain. They won't come into it. But then he goes right back to the wicked.

They lay wait for their own blood; they lurk privately for their own lives. So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; which takes away the life of the owners thereof. Wisdom crieth without; she utters her voice in the streets: She cries in the chief place of the concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she utters her words, saying ([Pro 1:18-21](#)),

Now wisdom at this point, from verse 20, he gets into a discourse on wisdom, and he personifies wisdom. Makes it a... actually personifies, and some see in the personification either God or Jesus Christ, but there are certain dangers in this likening it to God or Jesus Christ, as you'll discover as we get further into the personification of wisdom. But here again, the personification of wisdom. As she cries in the streets, she says,

How long, ye simple ones, will you love your simplicity? and the scorners delight in scorning, and [how long will the] fools hate knowledge? Turn at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and you have refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But you have set at nought all of my counsel, and you would not heed my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear comes as desolation, and your destruction comes as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish come upon you. Then shall they call unto me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD ([Pro 1:22-29](#)):

So the scriptures speak of the calamity that will ultimately call to those who reject wisdom, which is to hate evil. Ultimately, calamity will come. God declares that when the calamity comes, then there would be no one to help you.

They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of the fool shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from the fear of evil ([Pro 1:30-33](#)).