

- **\*READ Proverbs 1:1-7/PRAYER\*** As we continue to make our way through the wisdom literature of the Old Testament for our 2017 Daily Bible Reading, we now come across a book which is unlike any other book in the entire Bible. The Proverbs could be and probably have been described as a collection of God breathed fortune cookies. Indeed, there is a good section of this book that could easily be found inside those stale little after meal cookies from the Chinese restaurant, but there are some other things within this book that we would do well to consider before we spend the next couple of months reading through it.
- As always, let me strongly encourage all of our church family to be involved and dedicated to daily Bible reading. We offer this schedule to make things a little easier on everyone by having a schedule to follow. 5 chapters a week isn't a heavy load at all, and I'm sure that all of those who have been diligent in reading have been greatly benefitted so far this year. So with these things in mind, I want to take just a few minutes to consider four things that would be good for us to be aware of as we are getting started in the Proverbs for our daily Bible reading.

### I. Primary author is King Solomon.

- A. Solomon is mentioned by name three times throughout the book. **(1:1; 10:1; 25:1)** However, some dispute whether the last couple of chapters originated with Solomon since they bear the names of Angur and King Lemuel. We might not know the circumstances surround the inclusion of the names, but we need not worry at all about anything being amiss in the writing of this book.
- B. Let's also point out that it makes sense for Solomon to be the writer of a book that focuses on extremely practical wisdom because we know that he was an extremely wise man. However, we ought to be extremely thankful that Solomon was not stingy with his wisdom, but he also gave a lot of effort to share his wisdom with others. **(Eccl. 12:9) I Kings 4:32** tells us that he had as many as 3,000 proverbs that he shared with others.
- C. Solomon's wisdom was not only know to his own people, but his wisdom was actually known world wide. From **I King 4:34**, we come to see that foreign leaders would travel great distances in order to hear King Solomon share wisdom or bring down decisions and decrees. Solomon is an extremely logical choice for the author of this extremely practical book.

### II. Central Theme of Proverbs: "To know wisdom and instruction, to discern the sayings of understanding." (1:2)

- A. The first seven verses of this book are very straight forward with what the goal of this book is. It is written so that the reader might come to be a person of wisdom and understanding. It is one thing just to know a lot of facts, but it is another to possess true wisdom that allows you to see things of the world as God sees them.
- B. As we'll see in just a moment, Solomon speaks to a wide range of individuals on a wide range of levels and on a wide range of topics. It might be helpful for you, as you read, to make some markings or notes in the margins of your Bible that gives you some quick idea of what the text is saying. Sometimes Solomon speaks to wisdom in relationships. Sometimes he speaks to wisdom in using our tongues. Sometimes he speaks about wisdom in regards to money. And other times he speaks about the heart and having hearts that please God. Just about anything having to deal with practical issues of life is addressed in the Proverbs.
- C. I have little hearts, lips, eyes, and money signs in different portions of the Proverbs that simply helps me to see quickly what is going on in the text since the book doesn't continue a single train of thought or main theme throughout its entirety. So how is this book broken up if it doesn't have a main theme?

### III. The Proverbs are naturally divided into three sections:

- A. Chapters 1-9: Instructional writings of a father to his son.
  - 1) Solomon opens up this first section of writing by speaking as a father to his son whom he is hoping to instruct as to how he is to live his life. **(1:8)**
  - 2) Solomon writing as if these teachings were addressed to a son continues at the beginning of chapters 2-7. Within these chapters we find topics that you would expect to find in discussions between a father and son. Solomon addresses the needed pursuit of wisdom and her reward. He considers the pitfalls of immorality and the deductive woman. Solomon offers up parental wisdom concerning relationships and hard work. If you're a person looking for some things to focus on as a parent with your kids, then let me suggest you give some special attention to these first nine chapters of the Proverbs.

B. Chapters 10-24: Short wise sayings to the common man.

- 1) The next fifteen chapter divisions of the Proverbs are those random short little sayings of wisdom that we might refer to as fortunes. They are mostly written in couplet form meaning they have two lines that contain sometimes flowing or contrasting ideas that shows the folly of the fool but the wisdom of the righteous man.
- 2) This is the section where I have different symbols that can help me to find any particular proverbs I might be in search of. Compiling a running list of proverbs that really stand out to you might be something that can help you in your daily reading of the Proverbs.

C. Chapters 25-31: Wise instruction to leaders.

- 1) The final section of the Proverbs seems to focus on wise instructions to those who might be in some type of leadership. They deal primarily with how to interact with others, and how to set oneself up for success.
- 2) Probably the most well known section of the Proverbs is of course that last portion of Chapter 31 that deals with the worthy woman. For us guys, we recognize the all importance of choosing a spouse who will do nothing but help us to excel in all we do. Solomon is a man who would be well aware of what helps leaders to excel, but he also knows all too well what can cause them to fall....particular in regards to women.

D. All of these sections really fall right into Solomon's wheelhouse. The wisdom that God had blessed him with was not only beneficial for himself, but thankfully he wrote many things of his mind down so that they could be recorded for generations to come.

**IV. The Proverbs are written for the reader to understand that there are consequences or rewards for either rejecting or embracing the wisdom of God.**

A. So how can the Proverbs be beneficial for us as readers? Again, they were written so that we might come to be wise. But what are the benefits of being wise? According to Solomon..the wise man is blessed with...

- 1) long life (*"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For by me your days will be multiplied, And years of life will be added to you."* 9:10,11)
- 2) prosperity (*"So you will walk in the way of good men And keep to the paths of the righteous. For the upright will live in the land And the blameless will remain in it; But the wicked will be cut off from the land And the treacherous will be uprooted from it."* 2:20-22)
- 3) joy (*"How blessed is the man who finds wisdom And the man who gains understanding. For her profit is better than the profit of silver And her gain better than fine gold. She is more precious than [a]jewels; And nothing you desire compares with her. Long life is in her right hand; In her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are pleasant ways And all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, And happy are all who hold her fast."* 3:13-18)
- 4) the goodness of God (*"No harm befalls the righteous, But the wicked are filled with trouble."* 12:21).

B. On the other hand those who reject God's wisdom will suffer for those decisions. They will suffer shame and death (3:35; 10:21) They will continually stumble apart from God and His wisdom. As we read, I hope we'll take special note of what all is said to be a blessing of following God's wisdom in the Proverbs, and then also be impressed with other things that Solomon points out as a consequence of rejecting God and His wisdom.

As far as books go, the Proverbs aren't overly complicated in their nature. We certainly wouldn't put them on par with Revelation or another book of prophecy. However, even with the simplicity of the Proverbs, they are extremely challenging to us because they show us the right and better way of life. If we will be committed to reading the Proverbs and putting their teaching into practice each day, then I am confident we will see very visual benefits in our day to day lives. May God be praised and thanked for His wisdom as we are committed to His teachings for us over the next few months as we read through the Proverbs.