

Woodland Baptist Church
 Wednesday October 2, 2013
 Seeking Wisdom Together - Proverbs 1:1-7

1) INTRODUCTION - The Anthology of Solomon's Wisdom

- a) How many of us in here tonight can remember a recent time when there was a decision you had to make or a situation you were confronted with and you were really bewildered and confused as to how to move forward?
 - b) In those situations, most of the time what I do is ask someone who has experience in that area or that has wisdom on the subject.
 - c) Wisdom - that is what our next study during this time will be about. Do you want to be able to always make decisions that honor God and maximize his blessing for your life and for the lives of your family and friends and those that do not know God? A good knowledge of Proverbial wisdom is one of the missing elements in our judgment that can make a huge difference if we will listen and apply what we learn.
 - i) **Colossians 4:5-6** -5 Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. 6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.
 - d) There are two kinds of wisdom:
 - i) **James 3:13-18** -13 Who is **wise and understanding** among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. 15 This is **not the wisdom that comes down from above**, but is **earthly, unspiritual, demonic**. 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. 17 But the **wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere**. 18 And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.
- 2) We are "Seeking Wisdom Together" - **Read 1 Kings 10:1-13; Matthew 12:42 - 42** The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

3) Proverbs

- a) The wisdom of Proverbs started out historically for the training of leaders in ancient Israel. It was written by kings and others in the royal court for young men in their teens and twenties whose future was bright with nobility.¹
- b) During this Old Testament era God standardized his speaking to us in three ways. The **priests** taught his law, the **prophets** declared his word, and the **sages or wise men** gave his counsel (Jeremiah 18:18).²
 - i) For example, Proverbs 27:14 in the NLT says, “A loud and cheerful greeting early in the morning will be taken as a curse!” We don’t find that in the Ten Commandments or in Isaiah or Jeremiah.
 - ii) How do you think banging on someone’s door at 2am in the morning to witness to them about Christ?? Probably not the smartest thing to do - I know very few people who would respond well to that form of witnessing.
- c) Wisdom will help answer questions such as: What kind of woman or man should I marry? What should I do to make a living? How can I endure this suffering I can’t escape? How should I spend my money? What should my reaction be to oppression?
 - i) Proverbs is not a quick fix. It is ancient wisdom from long human experience endorsed by God himself. If we’ll pay close attention, God will graciously make us into profound people.³ This is a life long time of building our lives on one foundation or another...as Jesus said in Matthew 7:24-27 - “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. 26 And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

¹ Ortland

² Ortland,

³ Ibid

d) Since we used that passage from Matthew, where is Jesus in the Proverbs?

- i) Jesus is our priest and our prophet, but in the book of Proverbs we encounter Jesus as our mentor. Do you see him that way? We can have him that way—the universe's greatest expert on us. He alone is qualified to have that kind of say in your life. [1 Corinthians 1:30-2:16]

4) What is the book of Proverbs?

a) Collection of wise sayings that have been recorded for the benefit of those who choose to listen and adhere to them.

- i) All types and classes of people are spoken to here⁴

(1) The monarch is given divine wisdom - 8:15-16

(2) The principles of national prosperity and decay are set out - 11:14, 14:34

(3) The rich are warned about their besetting temptations - 18:11; 23:4-5; 28:20;
22

(4) The poor are comforted in their worldly humiliation - 15:16-17; 17:1; 19:1;
22

(5) Wise Rules are given about self-discipline - 4:23-37-16:32

b) How is the book divided? 7 Sections:

- i) Section 1 - 1-9, introductory - selling us on the fact that we need to listen - the benefits of wisdom.
- ii) Section 2 - 10-22:16, come from Solomon himself
- iii) Section 3 - 22:17-24:22, the Thirty Sayings from the Wise
- iv) Section 4 - 24:23-34 - More Sayings from the Wise
- v) Section 5 - 25:1 - 29:27 - Proverbs of Solomon - These are the proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah, King of Judah copied (25:1).
- vi) Section 6 - 30:1-33 - The Word of Agur, son of Jakeh
- vii) Section 7 - 31:1-31 - The words of King Lemuel. An oracle that his mother taught him

⁴ Bridges, 13

5) **READ Proverbs 1:1-7 - CLEARLY STATED OBJECTIVES⁵**

a) Verse 1 - The Title of the Book

i) **The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel:**

(1) How the book communicates - “proverbs”

(a) Learn and Live - What then is a Biblical proverb? The Hebrew noun “proverb” is related to a verb that means “to represent, to be like.” So a proverb is a little model of reality, a little verbal representation of some aspect of our daily lives. And by picking a proverb up and turning it over and over and looking at it from all angles, we can see something about our lives before we step out into the actual reality. The world says, Live and learn. God is saying, Learn and live.⁶

(2) Where the book comes from - **Solomon, son of David, King of Israel:**

(a) The book was written in the flow of the true people of God, the Israelites, which ultimately leads us directly to Christ.

(b) **1 Kings 4:29-34** -And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding beyond measure, and breadth of mind like the sand on the seashore, 30 so that Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt. 31 For he was wiser than all other men, wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Calcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol, and his fame was in all the surrounding nations. 32 He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005. 33 He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall. He spoke also of beasts, and of birds, and of reptiles, and of fish. 34 And people of all nations came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and from all the kings of the earth, who had heard of his wisdom.

⁵ Phillips, 19

⁶ Ortland, 381

b) Verses 2-6 - **The Goals of the Book - Deep Character & Straight Thinking**⁷

- i) **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.**

(1) Deep Character - to know wisdom and instruction

- (a) **Verses 3-4** more about deep character - 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—

(2) Straight Thinking - to understand words of insight

- (a) **Verse 6** - more about straight thinking - 6 to understand a proverb and a saying, the words of the wise and their riddles.

(3) Keep Growing

- (a) **Verse 5** - 5 Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance,

ii) What is wisdom?

- (1) Wisdom is more than brains. It is more than morals. We could memorize the whole Bible, and mean it from the heart, without wisdom. Wisdom is skill, expertise, competence that understands how life really works, how to achieve successful and even beautiful results.⁸

- (a) Whether craftsmanship working with the materials of life or seamanship steering through the currents of life, so to speak, wisdom understands how real life can work well.

⁷ Ortland

⁸ Ibid, 411

(2) Types of Wisdom: Perceiving, Acting, Communicating

- (a) *Perceiving wisdom* asks the hard questions about life and understands God's answers.
 - (b) *Acting wisdom* guides us in our practical conduct every day.
 - (c) *Communicating wisdom* educates us in the school of the sages, as we see here in Proverbs 1:2–6.5 We are being invited into the counsels of the best and the brightest.
- c) So if wisdom is that wonderful, why are people not flocking to it? Because of the next word - "instruction" (also translated discipline).
- i) We are lost people, under the curse of God, crawling as beggars to the table of our Lord - everyone, I mean everyone, comes the exact same way, or they do not come.
 - ii) People do not like correction or admonition, but yet, Scripture calls for it regularly...**2 Timothy 3:16** - 16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
- d) **3 to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity;**
- i) To receive - **James 1:21** - "receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls." We must have humble posture to receive the Word of God; we must humble ourselves before God and realize that without Him we are nothing...without him we cannot achieve wise dealing, in righteousness, justice and equity.
- e) **4 to give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth**
- i) Turns to the teacher's perspective - to give - prudence, knowledge, discretion
 - (1) Prudence - (shrewdness) - a good kind of cunning; skill and good judgment.
 - (2) Knowledge - We were born into a preexisting order that God created long ago. We need to know what that order is and how it works in relationships, in finances, in sex, in every area of life, so that we can stop

shooting ourselves in the foot. If we know, we can adjust, and we can thrive.⁹

- (3) discretion -the ability to apply prudence and knowledge to your decision making to make the best choice.

(a) You only have so much resources - how will you use them?

f) Straight Thinking - **To understand words of insight** -

- i) Insight - means the non-obvious can become obvious to you; so we not only are insightful, but we are insightful about words; to be able to understand the meaning of what someone says - to be able to read between the lines (we must be very careful when we do this).

g) Straight Thinking - **to understand a proverb and a saying, the words of the wise and their riddles.**

- i) Have you ever hung around someone that talked over your head - and what I mean by that is that they were not necessarily smarter than you, intellectually, but they talked using words and sayings that you just couldn't connect with?

(1) But...if you continued to hang around them, asking questions, clarifying what they mean, dialoging with them...eventually what happens? You begin to understand them.

h) Verse 7 - **The Threshold of the Book**

- i) **7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.**

ii) **What is the fear of the Lord?**

(1) It is a combination of meanings from a biblical perspective - it most definitely involves true fear of a Holy God which should be more fear than we feel for any earthly threat.

(a) **Matthew 10:28** - And do not FEAR those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather FEAR him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

⁹ Ortland, 457

- (b) **Isaiah 6:4-5** -And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!
- (c) **Revelation 1:17-18** - When I saw him, **I fell at his feet as though dead.** But he laid his right hand on me, saying, “FEAR not, I am the first and the last, 18 and the living one.
- (2) The fear of the Lord is openness to him, eagerness to please him, humility to be instructed by him (Proverbs 15:33).⁸ The fear of the Lord is a willingness to turn from evil and change (Job 28:28). The fear of the Lord is surrender to his will (Genesis 22:12). The fear of the Lord is one way we love him (Deuteronomy 6:2, 5). The fear of Christ is meekly fitting in with one another (Ephesians 5:21, literally translated). The fear of the Lord is when we realize, “I am not the measure of all things. I am being measured.” That reverence toward God, perhaps surprisingly, builds our confidence and flows out as a “fountain of life” into everyone and everything we care about (Proverbs 14:26, 27). It takes us to that place of maturity where no one has to follow us around with a tedious list of do’s and don’t’s, constantly telling us what to do. We are motivated from deep within. We know what is right, and it is what we love, because it is of God.
- (3) Knowledge starts within God, and then it moves toward us. He must reveal it by grace, and we must receive it in humility. Verse 7 is saying that what your ABC’s are to reading Shakespeare, what playing the scales are to performing Bach, what $2 + 2 = 4$ is to doing calculus, the fear of the Lord is to wisdom. We start there, and we never leave it behind. Our search for reality can go wrong not only because of miscalculations along the way but also because of one grand blunder at the start—leaving God out, and making ourselves the judges of everything.

6) CLOSE

- a) Wisdom is the gospel of Christ reshaping us for royalty, as God places us on his anvil and we trust him enough to stay there until his work is done.¹⁰

¹⁰ Ortlund