

Pondering Proverbs



Twenty-six lessons covering the Proverbs of Solomon, Lemuel and Agur found in the Old Testament Book of Proverbs. The study is designed to consider the various proverbs in their contextual setting. However, an effort is made to collect the proverbs into a topical arrangement as the class progresses.

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Lesson One: *The Proverbs of Solomon*

Lesson Text: Proverbs 1:1-19

Lesson Aim: To become acquainted with the design and purpose of the Old Testament Book of Proverbs written by Solomon the son of David.

Memory Verse: Proverbs 1:7

■ *Introduction—*

The word *proverb* (1:1) is from a Hebrew word that indicates a brief, pithy saying that expresses wisdom—strictly speaking, it is a representation or comparison, noting likeness in unlike things.

The content of the *Book of Proverbs* is attributed to three men: Solomon, for the most part (1:1; 10:1; 25:1), Agur (30:10), and Lemuel, the king (3:1). In I Kings 4:32, we learn that Solomon evidently spoke many proverbs which were not recorded. The Proverbs are inspired of God, regardless of who is said to be the author.

Compare the following New Testament writings with the Proverbs: Romans 3:15 and Proverbs 1:16, Hebrews 12:5 and Proverbs 3:11, 1 Peter 4:8 and Proverbs 10:12, 1 Peter 4:18 and Proverbs 11:31, 1 Peter 5:5 and Proverbs 3:34, 2 Peter 2:22 and Proverbs 26:11.

In our study, we will find the book broken up into several sections; the first sets forth “The Praise of Wisdom” (Proverbs 1:1 – 9:18). Verses 1-6 of the first chapter is an introduction assigning the book the purpose of imparting divine wisdom and knowledge. Verses 7-19 give a restatement of the theme and warnings against sins of violence.

■ *Questions for Review—*

1. What does the writer say a study of this book will do for the simple? To the young man?
2. What does he say a wise man will do?
3. What is the beginning of knowledge?
4. What class of persons will despise wisdom and instruction?
5. The son is exhorted to hear what people?
6. How is he to react to the enticement of sinners?
7. In what ways may sinners try to entice him?

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Lesson Two: *Wisdom Personified*

Lesson Text: Proverbs 1: 20-2:22

Lesson Aim: See the compiler urge upon his auditors the inculcation of wisdom through personification as he portrays wisdom as a woman crying out her warnings in the streets and places of judgment.

■ *Questions for Review—*

1. As wisdom cries out, her warnings and exhortation may be heard in what places?
2. As she cries out, what question does she ask the simple ones? The scorners? The fools?
3. As a result of rejecting her counsel, what things will come upon them?
4. When it is too late they will call upon her and seek her, but she will not answer because they had hated what? They had refused to choose what?
5. When they are punished for having rejected her counsel and reproof, she says they actually are only eating of what?
6. Along this same line, what will cause the destruction of the simple? The fools? What shall be the reward of those who hearken unto her?
7. What are the 4 sets of parallel causes given here as prerequisites of our receiving the promise that “we shall understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God”? (See: John 17:3)
8. What is the source of this wisdom that we are to seek?
9. Discretion shall preserve and understanding shall keep what class of people? From what class of men shall these people be delivered?
10. Wisdom will deliver one from “the strange woman,” who uses what to entice us?
11. In contrast with the upright, who shall dwell in the land (of their fathers)? We are told that the wicked and transgressors shall receive what fate?

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Lesson Three: *The Blessings of True Wisdom*

Lesson Text: Proverbs 3:1-35

Lesson Aim: Learn about God's promised blessings to those that seek divine wisdom.

Memory Verse: Proverbs 3: 9, 10

■ *Questions for Review—*

1. What three blessings shall be added to one who will forget not my law but rather lets his "heart keep My commandments"?
2. We shall find favor in the sight of God and man if we possess what two character traits?
3. In opposition to "leaning unto our own understanding," we are exhorted to do what?
4. God will direct our paths if we will do what?
5. Since one of the greatest hindrances to true wisdom is the feeling we have already attained it, we are exhorted to "be not wise" in whose eyes?
6. "Thy barns shall be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine," was an assurance given unto what people? (cf. 2 Corinthians 9:6-11)
7. Why should we not "despise the chastening of the Lord, or be weary of his correction"? (cf. Hebrews 12:6)
8. The value of wisdom and understanding is said to be greater than that of what substances?
9. The Lord founded the earth by what? By what did He establish the heavens?
10. What will sound wisdom and discretion do for one who keeps them from departing from him?
11. When and unto whom are we to do good? (cf. Galatians 6:10 and Romans 13:7)
12. We are exhorted to not envy the oppressor; for, regardless of what man thinks of him, how does God feel about him?
13. What will be the inheritance of the wise? Of fools?

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Lesson Four: *Hear, Ye Children, the Instruction of a Father*

Lesson Text: Proverbs 4:1–5:23

Lesson Aim: Study these practical admonitions from a father to his son concerning morality, especially faithfulness in marriage.

Memory Verse: Proverbs 4:23

■ **Questions for Review—**

1. Having gotten “wisdom and understanding” what things should we not do? What things should we do with wisdom? (4:1-6)
2. What is the “principal thing”?
3. What will wisdom do for us if we exalt her?
4. What will be true of us in our “journey of life,” if we have been taught in the way of wisdom? (4:12)
5. What four things are we told to do concerning the way of wicked men? (See Proverbs 4:15)
6. What expressions does the writer use to show the contrast between “the paths of the just” and the “way of the wicked”? (4:18,19)
7. Why is it important to keep our heart with all diligence? (cf. Matthew 12:35, Proverbs 23:7)
8. In warning his son against the wiles of the harlot (strange woman), how does the writer describe her words? How does he describe the end result of being deceived by her?
9. What will happen to the son who inclines his path after the strange woman? (5:9-12)
10. In contrast to this, the writer compares the true and faithful wife with what?

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Lesson Nine: *The Prudent Man and the Fool Contrasted*

Lesson Text: Proverbs 12 and 13

Lesson Aim: Receive advice concerning our relationships with family, friends, strangers and brethren.

Memory Verse: Proverbs 13:24

■ *Questions for Review—*

1. Whose favor does the good man obtain?
2. What does the writer say concerning a virtuous woman?
3. What is said concerning the thoughts of the righteous?
4. What fact is stated concerning the house of the righteous?
5. What will happen to one who is of a perverse heart?
6. What reward is assured those who till their land (are industrious)?
7. The wicked snared by what?
8. The way of the fool seems right unto whom?
9. What is said concerning “the lip of truth”?
10. With what shall the wicked be filled?
11. What is proclaimed by the heart of fools?
12. Who will not hear (or heed) a rebuke?
13. What truth is stated concerning one who “keepeth his mouth”? See James 3:21
14. What is hated by the righteous?
15. What will happen to the lamp of the wicked?
16. What will happen to wealth gotten by vanity?
17. What shall come to him that refuseth instruction?
18. What will happen to a companion of fools?
19. What will a father do who loves his son?

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Lesson Twelve: *On the Highway of the Upright*

Lesson Text: Proverbs 16

Lesson Aim: Obtain instruction regarding the right way to go in life in order to preserve the soul.

Memory Verse: Proverbs 16:17,18

■ Questions for Review—

1. What expression is used by the writer in pointing out “we are blind to our own faults”?
2. Upon whom are we told to transfer our burdens? (See: 1 Peter 5:7)
3. Who is said to be an abomination unto the Lord.
4. By what is iniquity purged?
5. When men please God, what effects will that have upon his enemies?
6. To be righteous, having only a little of this world’s goods, is more important than what?
7. What expression is used to teach that honesty is to prevail in business?
8. Civil government (the throne) is established by what? (See: Romans 13:1)
9. We are told that it is more important to get wisdom than what other things?
10. What is said to be the highway of the upright?
11. How will one feel that trusts in the Lord?
12. What is said to be a “wellspring of life” unto the person who has it?
13. Unto what are pleasant words compared?
14. What expression is used to teach that we should not rely on our own feelings to direct us?
15. What does the writer say a whisperer will do?
16. Under what circumstances is the hoary head a crown of glory?
17. The person that is able to control his temper (and rule his spirit) is better than whom?

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Lesson Fourteen: *The Lips of a Fool*

Lesson Text: Proverbs 18

Lesson Aim: Learn the mouth may become a snare to the soul; therefore, guard your lips.

Memorize: Proverbs 18:24

■ **Questions for Review—**

1. What type person has no delight in understanding?
2. With what does the writer compare a flowing brook?
3. What does the writer say will “enter into contention”?
4. What is the snare of the fool’s soul?
5. The slothful is said to be a brother to whom?
6. What is said to be a strong tower?
7. What is the condition of a man’s heart before destruction? Before honor?
8. What is said concerning one who answers a matter before he even hears it?
9. What will the ear of the wise seek?
10. What fact is set forth concerning a brother that has been offended?
11. What is said to be in the power of the tongue?
12. What contrast is made between the entreaties of the poor and the rich?