

The Book of Proverbs

<u><i>Introducing the Proverb</i></u>	
Origin	The Hebrew term for a proverb is “mashal,” which means “comparison” or “to be like.”
Biblical	A short saying that expresses a universal truth for practical and righteous living presented as a comparison
Practical	Proverbs are some of the most applicable nuggets of truth in all of the Bible because they concern everyday situations.

<u><i>Introducing the Book of Proverbs</i></u>	
Solomon’s Work	In 1 Kgs 3:5-9, Solomon asked God for wisdom in his reign over Israel. It was a request God granted (1 Kgs 4:29-31). Solomon’s name appears at the beginning of 3 distinct sections of the Book: 1:1 – 10:1 – 25:1
That Also Includes Wisdom He Collected	Proverbs 22:17 – 24:34 expresses “words of the wise” that Solomon – assumedly – compiled from various sources.
The Final Two Chapters	The final two chapters identify <u>Agur</u> (30:1) and <u>Lemuel</u> (31:1) as their authors. Unfortunately, we know nothing about them other than Solomon included them.

<u><i>Outline of the Book</i></u>		
Prologue to Wise Living <i>The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.</i> <i>Chapters 1-9</i>	Principles for Wise Living <i>Before honor comes humility.</i> <i>Chapters 10-31:9</i>	Personification of Wise Living <i>Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord shall be praised.</i> <i>Chapter 31:10-31</i>
Wisdom for Youth	Wisdom for All	
Wisdom Contrasted with Folly	Proverbs of Solomon he set in order (chs 10-24) Proverbs of Solomon the men of Hezekiah set in order (chs 25-29) The Oracle of Agur (ch 30)	Proverbs of a mother to Lemuel (ch 31)
All of which remind us that God concerns Himself not just with the extraordinary events of life. But with the ordinary as well.		

<u><i>Prologue to Wise Living (Chs 1-9)</i></u>	
Wisdom for Youth	
In Proverbs 1-9, the wisdom of folly is contrasted with the wisdom of godliness and righteous living that reads like instructions to a young person. To do this Solomon uses the images of two women: one of folly and the other of righteousness. All of the proverbs in this section center around those two images and asks this question of the youth: which one will you pursue?	
The Woman of Folly (Unwise Pursuits/Unwise Living)	The Woman of Righteousness (Wise Pursuits/Wise Living)

<p style="text-align: center;">Seen the Clearest in Proverbs 7</p> <p>¹⁹ My husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey. ²⁰ He took his purse filled with money and will not be home till full moon.” ²¹ With persuasive words she led him astray; she seduced him with her smooth talk. ²² All at once he followed her like an ox going to the slaughter, like a deer^[a] stepping into a noose ²³ till an arrow pierces his liver, like a bird darting into a snare, little knowing it will cost him his life. ²⁴ Now then, my sons, listen to me; pay attention to what I say. ²⁵ Do not let your heart turn to her ways or stray into her paths. ²⁶ Many are the victims she has brought down; her slain are a mighty throng. ²⁷ Her house is a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Seen the Clearest in Proverbs 3</p> <p>⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight... ¹³ Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding, ¹⁴ for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. ¹⁵ She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her. ¹⁶ Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. ¹⁷ Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace. ¹⁸ She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her; those who hold her fast will be blessed (3:5-7; 13-18).</p>
<p>The point Solomon is making is that one type of lifestyle leads to death: pursuit of folly/foolishness/unrighteousness. And one leads to life: pursuit of wisdom/righteousness. The irony of this section is that Solomon knew both roads from personal experience (thus the use of women in his imagery). It’s almost as if he wrote this towards the end of his life with the hope of the child(ren) not taking the same route.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Key Verse: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction (1:7)</p>	

<i>Principals for Wise Living (Chs 10-31:9)</i>	
Wisdom for All	
<p>In Proverbs 10:1-31:9, the wisdom of choosing righteousness and virtue is contrasted with the foolishness of following in the ways of the world. A wise person gives good advice and receives it. In contrast, a fool gives bad advice and receives it. What a person says dominates this section. For you can tell a lot about a person by what comes out of their mouth</p>	
<p>Wise vs Fool Written By Solomon Himself and Put Into Book Form by Solomon (Chapters 10-24)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Best Example:</p> <p>¹¹ The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence. ¹² Hatred stirs up conflict, but love covers over all wrongs. ¹³ Wisdom is found on the lips of the discerning, but a rod is for the back of one who has no sense. ¹⁴ The wise store up knowledge, but the mouth of a fool invites ruin. ¹⁵ The wealth of the rich is their fortified city, but poverty is the ruin of the poor. ¹⁶ The wages of the righteous is life, but the earnings of the wicked are sin and death. ¹⁷ Whoever heeds discipline shows the way to life, but whoever ignores correction leads others astray. ¹⁸ Whoever conceals hatred with lying lips and spreads slander is a fool. ¹⁹ Sin is not ended by multiplying words, but the prudent hold their tongues. ²⁰ The tongue of the righteous is choice silver, but the heart of the wicked is of little value. ²¹ The lips of the righteous nourish many, but fools die for lack of sense. ²² The blessing of the Lord brings wealth, without painful toil for it. ²³ A fool finds pleasure in wicked schemes, but a person of understanding delights in wisdom... ²⁹ The way of the Lord is a refuge for the blameless, but it is the ruin of those who do evil (Proverbs 10:11-23, 29)</p>
<p>Wise vs Fool Put into Book Form by Men of Hezekiah that</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">*This section is dominated by comparisons with like or as</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Best Example:</p> <p>¹⁸ Like a club or a sword or a sharp arrow is one who gives false testimony against a neighbor. ¹⁹ Like a broken tooth or a lame foot is reliance on the unfaithful in a time of trouble. ²⁰ Like one</p>

Solomon Either Wrote or Compiled (Chapters 25-29)	who takes away a garment on a cold day, or like vinegar poured on a wound, is one who sings songs to a heavy heart. ²¹ If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. ²² In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the Lord will reward you. ²³ Like a north wind that brings unexpected rain is a sly tongue—which provokes a horrified look. ²⁴ Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife. ²⁵ Like cold water to a weary soul is good news from a distant land. ²⁶ Like a muddied spring or a polluted well are the righteous who give way to the wicked. ²⁷ It is not good to eat too much honey, nor is it honorable to search out matters that are too deep. ²⁸ Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control (Proverbs 25:18-28)
The Inspired Utterance of Agur (ch 30)	* The phrase: "There are things . . ." dominates this section:

The Personification of Wise Living (31:10-31)

What Righteous Living Looks Like in Action: The Summation of the Whole Book

This is the most popular section of the book, but one that should be better understood within the context of the whole book. It's Solomon's way of applying what a man who is truly wise (assumedly one of his sons) will pursue: a woman of noble character who represents wisdom herself.

- ¹⁰ A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.
- ¹¹ Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.
- ¹² She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.
- ¹³ She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands.
- ¹⁴ She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar.
- ¹⁵ She gets up while it is still night; she provides food for her family and portions for her female servants.
- ¹⁶ She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.
- ¹⁷ She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks.
- ¹⁸ She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night.
- ¹⁹ In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers.
- ²⁰ She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.
- ²¹ When it snows, she has no fear for her household, for all of them are clothed in scarlet.
- ²² She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple.
- ²³ Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.
- ²⁴ She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes.
- ²⁵ She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come.
- ²⁶ She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.
- ²⁷ She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.
- ²⁸ Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her:
- ²⁹ "Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all."
- ³⁰ Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.
- ³¹ Honor her for all that her hands have done, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.