

THEOLOGY II: Wisdom Literature

Session 5 - Proverbs - Dr. Chris Miller

Wisdom Literature - God's design for humans to flourish

Job - except when they don't **Ecclesiastes** - Curse, pain, suffering, death

PROVERBS - the heart of what wisdom is all about.

What is "wisdom"?

- From Dictionary.com (21st century AD):
 - 1) Knowing lots of stuff AND
 - 2) Knowing how to use it
- From ancient times (21st century BC):

A universal search, to learn by observation of the world and human experience how the Creator designed the creation to function and then ordering one's behavior in accordance with that plan to achieve life as it's supposed to be.

The uniqueness of wisdom literature

God gives knowledge directly to Man... *"Thus saith the Lord"* (62 of 66 books) With Wisdom Literature... Man connects the dots (experiences) and finds the same thing happens over and over again. But there are times that don't fit the pattern. (Jesus in the temple. Unsaved parents don't understand being a missionary) *"A wise child (usually) brings joy to her parents"* Prov 10:1

Structure & Context (1-9)

Proverbs 1:1-7 Introduction & Purpose

Proverbs 1:8-33 *Two Appeals to Youth*

- **2-4 Encouragement towards Wisdom +**
- **5-8 Warnings against Folly -**

Proverbs 9:1-18 *Two Appeals to Youth*

Proverbs 10-22 Anthology of Solomon's Proverbs

Proverbs 23-30 Various collections

Proverbs 31, the final example of wisdom

Introduction to the book: Audience and purpose!

Proverbs 1:4 To make the simple (naive) wise - we all start out this way

Proverbs 1:5 To make the wise even wiser

for giving prudence to those who are simple, knowledge and discretion to the young- let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance - Prov 1:4-5

*Listen, **MY SON**, to your father's instruction and do not forsake Prov 1:8*

***MY SON**, if sinners entice you, do not give in to them. Prov 1:10*

***MY SON**, do not go along with them, do not set foot on their paths; Prov 1:15*

***MY SON**, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, Prov 2:11*

***MY SON**, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, Prov 3:1*

***MY SON**, do not despise the LORD's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, Pr 3:11*

***MY SON**, preserve sound judgment and discernment, do not let them out of your sight; Prov 3:21*

***MY SON**, accept what I say, & the years of your life will be many. Prov 4:10*

***MY SON**, pay attention to what I say; listen closely to my words. Prov 4:20*

***MY SON**, pay attention to my wisdom, listen well to my words of insight,
Prov 5:1*

*Why be captive, **MY SON**, by an adultress? Why embrace the bosom of another man's wife? Prov 5:20*

***MY SON**, if you have put up security for your neighbor, if you have struck hands in pledge for another. Prov 6:1*

*Then do this, **MY SON**, to free yourself, since you have fallen into your neighbor's hands; Go and humble yourself; press your plea with your neighbor! Prov 6:3*

***MY SON**, keep your father's commands and do not forsake your mother's teaching.
. Prov 6:20*

***MY SON**, keep my words and store up my commands within you. Prov 7:1*

*Stop listening to instruction, **MY SON**, and you will stray from the words of knowledge.
Prov 19:27*

***MY SON**, if your heart is wise, then my heart will be glad; Prov 23:15*

*Listen, **MY SON**, and be wise, and keep your heart on the right path. Prov 23:19*

***MY SON**, give me your heart and let your eyes keep to my ways, Prov 23:26*

*Eat honey, **MY SON**, for it is good; honey from the comb is sweet to your taste.*

*Fear the LORD and the king, **MY SON**, and do not join with the rebellious, Prov 24:21*

*Be wise, **MY SON**, and bring joy to my heart; then I can answer anyone who treats me with contempt. Prov 27:11*

But, the book does not neglect daughters. Wisdom is embodied as female, i.e. "Lady Wisdom" Hebrew for wisdom, *hochma*, is feminine.

- **Survey**

Notice the CONTRASTS & COUNTERFEITS

Read over Proverbs 1:10-19 then answer the question:

*My son, if sinful men entice you, do not give in to them, If they say, "Come along with us; let's lie in wait for innocent blood, let's ambush some harmless soul; let's swallow them alive, like the grave, and whole, like those who go down in the pit; we will get all sorts of valuable things and **fill our houses with plunder**; cast lots with us; we will all show the loot" my son, do not go along with them, do not set foot on the paths; for their feet rush into evil, they are swift to shed blood. How useless to spread a net where every bird can see it! These men lie in wait for their own blood; they ambush only themselves! Such are the paths of all who go after ill-gotten gain; it takes away the life of those who get it.*

Prov 1:10-19 not ~~Genesis 1:26-28~~

When was the last time you struggled with chapter 1?

What actually is the struggle/ counterfeit?

1:13, getting money through _____ instead of _____

- **Stealing** versus **work**
- **Taking** versus **giving (providing service)**
- **No effort** versus **effort**

- Can you list specific ways that our society gives in to this?
Pirating movies and music.
Water cup slips under the Mountain Dew at Chipotle
- Can you list specific ways that we as students give in?
Cheating on a test - stealing the results of someone else's work
Plagiarism.
Don't try to take shortcuts.
- Is the topic really that big a deal to us or is it just Dr. Miller's thing?
- Is it important to God?

Work is at the center of who God is, and is at the core of our identity, Genesis 1-2
We are made in the image of a creative worker and given the baton to continue His work of ruling! (work so hard on the 6 days that you need a day or rest)

Still valid even after the Genesis 3 though the fall does make a huge difference between work and toil (what it turns into after the curse)
It continues in Wisdom literature - Sluggard, Ant *and others*

*"I have glorified you, Father, on earth by **finishing the work you gave me to do.**" - Jesus' words, John 17:4*

What is the work God has given you to do?

What is the means by which you bring glory to God?

For the student who is a follower of Jesus, worship and study are not separate. It never ends based on Revelation 21-22 in the new heavens & earth ("reigning")

- **On "work" in the future**

"We should not think of ourselves as destined to be celestial bureaucrats, involved eternally in celestial "administrivia."

That would be slightly better than being caught in an everlasting church service.

No, we should think of our destiny as being absorbed in a tremendously creative **team effort**, with unimaginably **splendid leadership**, on an inconceivably vast plane of activity, with ever more **comprehensive cycles** of productivity and enjoyment. (It keeps getting better and better)

THIS is the "eye hath not seen, neither ear heard" that lies before us in the prophetic vision (Isa 64:4).

- Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 339

Notice the CONTRASTS & COUNTERFEITS!!!

In chapter 1 **the counterfeit of taking** vs. **working**

In 2-9 **the counterfeit of** Illegal sexual pleasure vs. that of marriage. (romance)

Summary: Satan will tempt you to attain, in a wrong way, all of the good things God has designed you for. Don't be stupid and go for the bait.

Notice the contrasting "women" in chapters 1-9

Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn out its seven pillars. She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine; She has also set her table. She has sent out her maids, and she calls from the highest point of the city. Let all who are simple come in here! She says to those who lack judgment. Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed. Leave your simple ways and you will live; walk in the way of understanding.

Prov 9:1-9

The woman Folly (Lady Foolishness) is loud; she is undisciplined and without knowledge. She sits at the door of her house, on a seat at the highest point in the city, calling out to those who pass by, who go straight on their way. Let all who are simple come in here! She says to those who lack judgment. Stolen water is sweet; food eaten in secret is delicious! But little do they know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of the grave. Prov 9:13-18

Notice the contrasting “women” in chapters 1-9

Both concepts (metaphysical)...

But only one also has a physical counterpart

Metaphysical	“Lady Wisdom”	“Lady Folly”
Physical		Adulteress

Proverbs 31 (Lady Wisdom)

The Cedarville guy’s checklist?

Acrostic (22 verses dedicated to her)

In English... A... B... C. It’s common in Hebrew.

“As we’ve exhausted the *alphabet*, so we’ve exhausted the subject” or

“This person is the complete embodiment of wisdom.

There is no character trait of significance that is missing.

This person is ‘whole’ i.e., has integrity.”

So what is the good (wise) life?

Simple, faithful, fear of God and love of people.

Jesus, before the first miracle... NO FAME

Wisdom encourages us to focus on the **depth** of our walk with God and let Him determine the **breadth** of our influence.

Evil in our society = the better you market yourself, the better off you are. Proverbs = worry about what your heart is like.

Will you have

- 1) Boaz - not known outside of Bethlehem
- 2) David - known in terms of the nation, or ...
- 3) Jesus - internationally.

If you’re reading Proverbs you don’t care about what people see and what people think... What matters is who you are.