
Proverbs

What Are Proverbs?

We can view Proverbs as a guide book for the godly. The Hebrew word for proverb is **Mishal** whose root meaning is “to rule.” By definition, proverbs are “rules” we can use to guide our lives.

A proverb is a brief saying filled with meaning. Pro=for and verba = words. A proverb gets to the point in few words. The design of proverbs also serves to help us recall key learnings easier. Many proverbs use contrast and comparison.

Are Proverbs Relevant?

Many believers refer to Proverbs as one of the wisdom books. That's because Proverbs reflect the mind of God or the way He thinks. If we agree that Proverbs reflect the way God thinks, it makes sense that they are good rules for our life.

Because of the perpetual struggle of good and evil in our lives, proverbs speak to us with relevance. Even though the examples are from a simpler time, human nature has not changed. In Proverbs, when we read of a talebearer, a fool, a backbiter, or a boaster, it is easy to recall someone we've known who fits that description.

What is the Purpose of Proverbs?

God's gift of Proverbs provides us an **opportunity** to gain knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. Not everyone benefits from this opportunity. As generations of believers have discovered, we must approach God's Word with humility. We must be willing to conform ourselves to His Word if we are to make much progress

in obtaining knowledge, understanding, and wisdom.

What is the Theme of Proverbs?

On a basic level, the theme of Proverbs is: Practical Principles for Powerful Living. At a deeper level, the theme of Proverbs is: Fear Me, Know Me, Love Me, I am God.

The wise person:

- Fears the Lord
- Trusts Him
- Seeks to know and obey His will

What Is the Structure of Proverbs?

The arrangement of Proverbs is not linear. There is not a chronology. You'll notice what appears to be repetition or even contradiction.

Watch for 3 Types of Parallelism

<i>contrast</i>	<i>completion</i>	<i>comparison</i>
Watch for “but.” Pro 17:22	Watch for “and.” Pro 16:33	Watch for “than.” Pro 16:8

Who Is the Author of Proverbs?

King Solomon wrote most of Proverbs.

- the proverbs of Solomon [**Pro 1:1**]
- the proverbs of Solomon [**Pro 10:1**]
- these are also the proverbs of Solomon [**Pro 25:1**]

Scripture says Solomon is the wisest man who ever lived [**2Chr 1:11-12**]. He wrote the book to help his son, King Rehoboam, avoid making some of the huge mistakes he made with his life.

High-Level Outline of Proverbs

1-9	<p>the Importance of Wisdom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 Sonnets • 2 Monologues
10-24	<p>the Benefits of Wisdom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 375 Couplets, Pro 10:1-22:16 • 16 Poems, Pro 22:17-24:34
25-31	<p>More Sayings on Prudence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 Clusters, Pro 25:1-27:27 • 55 Couplets, Pro 28-29 • 13 Sayings of Agur, Pro 30 • Saying of Lemuel's Mother, Pro 31:1-9 • Virtuous Woman, Pro 31:10-31

Personal Reflection and Application

Some people may view Christians as naive, but God's Word can give even the simplest of us uncommon sense. God's Word can give us discretion, even if we are young or less mature Christians ([Pro 4:1](#)).

- Would those who know you well say you have discretion? Why or why not.
- What changes are you prepared to make in your daily habits to increase your discretion?

Small Group Conversation Guide

What is pretty? The world looks for the pretty on the outside. God looks for the pretty on the inside. As a group, brainstorm a list of things that describe pretty on the outside and a list of things that describe pretty on the inside.

Read [Proverbs 1:8-9](#) and [1Peter 3:4](#). Discuss what we each can do to be prettier on the inside.

<i>Pretty on the Outside</i>	<i>Pretty on the Inside</i>

Leadership Principles from Proverbs

Practical Life Advice

Consider the advice in the following table.

- Which advice applies to your current life circumstances?
- Make a plan to begin applying it today.

Think Big

Leader, are you aware of the leadership paradox of **Proverbs 2-3**? God wants us to seek wisdom and understanding (**Pro 2:1-5**); however, He doesn't want us to lean on it apart from the Lord (**Pro 3:5-6**). How do godly leaders think?

- ▶ BIG because they know God's vision is bigger than theirs (**Pro 3:19-20**).
- ▶ GENEROUSLY because they trust in the generosity of God (**Pro 3:9-10**).
- ▶ HUMBLY because they want to please God and add value to people (**Pro 3:3-4**).
- ▶ CONFIDENTLY because the Lord is their confidence (**Pro 3:26**).

Are you thinking big and generously? Are you thinking as a servant and as a victor?

<i>Question</i>	<i>Advice from Proverbs</i>
How should I handle a potentially volatile conversation?	Be the one to defuse it (Pro 15:1).
What should I consider when offered more money or a promotion?	Determine how the change will affect your relationship with God and your family (Pro 17:1).
What should I be looking for in a spouse?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women: look for a truthful man worthy of your trust (Pro 20:6). • Men: look for a woman of strong character (Pro 31:10).
What is the best way to impact my child long-term?	Work on a relationship with your child that captures his heart, set a good example, and teach your child (Pro 23:26).

Something to Find in Each Chapter

As you read through the book, it may help to have something to find in each chapter.
Try these:

01. What Proverbs was intended to do for a person	02. How to understand the fear of God and His knowledge
03. What three steps to take so God directs your path	04. Who taught King Solomon the Word of God
05. How temptation is described as sweet but deadly	06. What seven things God hates / finds an abomination
07. How to avoid the temptations of the immoral woman	08. How people benefit more from wisdom than money
09. How correcting wise and foolish people differs	10. What was the topic of the very first proverb listed
11. How God blesses generosity and curses greed	12. How the tongue has the power to heal or hurt
13. How our companions / friends impact our future	14. How it is wise to befriend other people who are wise
15. How a soft answer changes the tone of an argument	16. How the way that seems right can lead to death
17. How relational peace is more valuable than riches	18. How it is foolish to speak on a topic before listening
19. What happens if you stop being taught / instructed	20. What happens if people become wealthy too quickly
21. What is more acceptable to God than our sacrifices	22. How a group experiencing division can restore peace
23. How parenting is about the heart first, then actions	24. What the consequences of laziness are
25. How God wants people to treat their enemies	26. How listening is sweet but divisive
27. How true friendship helps both parties grow	28. How not listening to God's Word affects your prayers
29. Who has more hope than those who speak hastily	30. Why having all our needs met is dangerous
31. What is the source of a virtuous woman's beauty	