

Book of Proverbs

Here's how you can better understand the Book of Proverbs!

MOST people think they understand the Book of Proverbs but they really do not! Have you noticed that the *first* nine chapters of Proverbs are not the proverbs of Solomon at all?

These chapters are only *an introduction* to them.

Have you noticed, also, that in this introduction *God is* speaking to you direct, in the *first person*? Solomon was merely the instrument in God's hand. Though Solomon wrote these words through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, God nevertheless is speaking direct to you!

Many who read the book of Proverbs fail to observe these facts. They fail to understand the significance of the first nine chapters. They misunderstand the first verse because it announces "the proverbs of Solomon." It is assumed that Solomon was writing especially to his own sons to introduce a series of disconnected proverbs. Consequently, they miss the dynamic and personal appeal of God Almighty to His children of all ages. *That includes you and me!*

If you have not noticed this **KEY**, as few people have, the chances are that you have missed **THE GREAT KEY** to wisdom that God reveals in the book of Proverbs.

Let's not overlook it any longer!

Introduction a KEY

A close examination of the first few verses of chapter one and chapter ten will reveal that Solomon's proverbs begin in the first verse of chapter ten! The intervening verses contain the **KEY** to unlock the proverbs to your understanding.

The Eternal-the Lord of the Old Testament, also called the **WORD**- is the One through which the Father has always dealt with man. He spoke directly to the prophets of olden times. He was made flesh and dwelt among us to instruct the apostles. Through His resurrection and life, we may receive God's Holy Spirit. He has spoken to all ages through the prophets and apostles. Their writings were under His direct inspiration.

Thus, He is also the spokesman in the book of Proverbs, speaking through Solomon the wisdom of God.

If, therefore, God is speaking to us, calling us His sons, should we not listen and weigh each word carefully? Should we not take each one to heart? These

Are the words of Almighty God! They *are* spoken to you and to me, giving us insight into a part of His own character. The proverbs express the same character that must someday be in us if we are to have eternal life.

The Great KEY to Wisdom

God says, "Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom:..." (Ch. 4.17).

If we are alert, we will not read far before we realize that He is speaking of a *different* wisdom than we are used to. This is not carnal, human wisdom.

What is the definition of this wisdom? **Don't guess!** The factors involved are too important to resort to just guessing! You may pick up most any dictionary and find man's definition of *wisdom-what man thinks wisdom is*. But, can we accept that?

Job 28:12-13 shows us that we cannot. "But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? *Man knoweth not* the price thereof. neither is it found in the land of the living."

Job did not stop with man. He continued looking until he found true wisdom. "God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof ... and unto man he said, Behold, THE FEAR OF THE LORD, *that is wisdom*; and to DEPART FROM EVIL IS UNDERSTANDING." (Job 28:23, 28.)

Again in Proverbs 9:10, "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*; and knowledge of the holy is understanding." (Read also Psalm 111.)

What does "the fear of the Lord" mean? Does it mean that we should "quake in our boots" at the mere mention of His name? Are we to be so afraid of Him that we don't dare seek Him?

Again, we must not guess, but look to divine revelation for the answer.

This time in the eighth chapter, 13th verse of Proverbs, "*The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.*" Since God hates pride, arrogancy, evil ways, and lying or oppressing lips, could we be terrified that He will bring His wrath upon us if we do what pleases Him?

Nor at all. Paul said, "Let us come *boldly* unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 4:16.)

Purpose of Proverbs

Now, let us begin these first nine introductory chapters of Proverbs with these facts in mind. Don't forget, it is God who is talking to us.

In verses 1 thru 6 of chapter 1, note the proverbs are given that we *may* know *wisdom* and instruction, that we may perceive words of understanding. These are the same proverbs of God that His servant Solomon used according to the wisdom God gave him (I Kings 4:29).

Right away we are given the key to wisdom (verses 7 thru 9) which is obedience to God. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; but fools despise wisdom and instruction." Yes! Before we can even begin to know knowledge and wisdom, we must obey God. We must first keep His commandments which in turn opens our minds to apply the knowledge from God that the proverbs contain!

Businessmen and clergymen alike read Proverbs for practical information, but all in vain because they do not know how to apply them. They have not learned *obedience* to God, and they are foiled from the beginning. "*My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother ...*"

This is God speaking. Remember? If He is calling us His son, then He is the Father whose instructions we should hear. This being so, who is the spiritual "mother"? The mother whose law we should not forsake?

Whose Laws Should We Obey?

Remember that a woman is used symbolically to mean a church. A virtuous woman the symbol of the true church (Rev. 12), and a whore a false church (Rev. 17).

In this case the true church is symbolized. We know that the true church constitutes those people in whom the Holy Spirit of God resides (Gal. 2:20), and over whom God rules.

It is apparent then that the "mother" is symbolically the *church* through which the Spirit of God operates.

The "law of thy mother" then is the law of God, given us through the Holy Spirit, *preserved in the Bible, and taught by the true church-the Church of God-your church!*

Notice verse 8 again. How befitting it is that God should begin (after showing that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge and that fools despise wisdom and instruction) by importuning us not to be fools, but to follow His instruction and the laws revealed by His Spirit and taught by the church.

Are you following this in *your Bible*? If you are not, you are missing the most of the lesson.

What a Son of God Should Know

In the next ten verses (Prov. 1:10-19), God enjoins His sons not to succumb to the enticement of sinners and to take part with them in their evil ways.

Verses 20 thru 23: Wisdom is not forbidden to the world. She cries out in the streets and all the busy places. Anyone who will can hear and follow right ways instead of the foolish way of the sinners outlined in verses 10 thru 19. Notice what God's wisdom cries, "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?" Yes, this includes the so-called wise of this world who think they have great

understanding but reject God as a superstition. They reject God and His rule over their lives by refusing to keep His commandments. He is the Creator and Ruler of the whole universe. But puny, headstrong, created man rejects Him. "Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you."

Notice the *fare of the headstrong*. *Verses 24 thru 33*: These verses show what will happen to those who hear God's call but who have no regard for it_ Read it for yourself and see that you take heed, and that *you* don't spurn His counsel and despise His reproof.

Rewards to the Righteous

Chapter 2: This whole chapter is devoted to those who will receive His words and keep His commandments and who seek wisdom as if it were hidden

treasure. (Verse 9) "Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity (that is, what is equal or right, thus righteous; the opposite of inequity) ; yea, every good path."

The remainder of the chapter shows that when wisdom enters into one, he is preserved by discretion. And that understanding shall keep him by delivering him from evil men who speak 'froward" or obstinate, self-willed or oppressive words.

Wisdom also delivers from the "strange woman"-both symbolic and literal If you have only seen the literal meaning before, you have missed the greater significance of this and other scriptures. Literally, of course, this means a licentious woman. But, if we realize that a woman is used throughout the Bible as a symbol of a church, then this scripture takes on real meaning.

God Pleads With You as a Father

Chapter 3: This is one of the most beautiful chapters of the Bible. God is admonishing His son-You-to walk in right paths. He explains how and why they are best, and about the rewards and happiness that come from them. Read them carefully-PRAYERFULLY.

Chapter 4: God continues to speak to us, in the personage of the Eternal the one who was made flesh, the one we know as Jesus Christ. This is brought out so clearly in the opening verses of this chapter. "Hear, ye children the *instruction of a father*, and attend to know understanding. *For I give you good doctrine*, forsake ye not *MY* law. *For I was my father's son*, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother

(the Holy Spirit that binds the whole Church of God together).

"He taught *me also*, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live." (Jesus did keep His Father's commandments! See John 15:10 and realize that Jesus' commandments are the Father's.)

Have you ever wished you could just sit down and have a heart-to-heart talk with Jesus? Here is your chance! No other scripture is so obviously a personal appeal to you and me to live

righteously so that we can inherit the glory of God, dwell safely, and be quiet from the fear of evil. Get the significance of the scene-Jesus is talking to you with AUTHORITY as well as love.

If you had a son killing himself in some way, would you sit *up* and talk to him about the weather, or some other unimportant matter? No! You would be trying to do all you could to get him to quit doing that which will kill him!

Your son might wish you would change the subject, but you wouldn't.

God is not going to change the subject either. Your well-being, your happiness and salvation are His chief concerns when He talks to you.

So, then,, before He begins to give you those precious pearls of wise and practical truths in the form of proverbs, He gives you the Great KEY that will unlock them for you.

Obedience Toward Him

Proverbs contain practical solutions to our many problems. But knowledge of how to apply them in your life is gained by obedience to God. We must keep His law FIRST. Keeping God's law corrects our attitudes and opens our minds so that we know how to apply it.

So reap the benefits and the comforts of a private conversation with God, who knows all your private thoughts. He is not just saying them for you to forget; He has had them written down so you may have them again and again!

On the remainder of Proverbs a running commentary would be but vain words. There is no trick to understanding these words of God-just an acknowledging and a surrendering to Him is all that is needed.

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