



Wise Thinking in A Foolish World

Text: Proverbs 1:29-33; James 1:5-8

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Introduction to Proverbs: King Solomon, famous for his wisdom, is credited as one of the authors of Proverbs. Other contributors include a group of men called "The Wise," Agur, and King Lemuel. The goal of the book is stated right at the beginning (1:1–7): to describe what wisdom is and to help God's people become wise. Wisdom is founded in the "fear of the Lord," and it enables believers to express their faith in the practical details of everyday life. The book is addressed to a young man. The situations he will face while he is young receive much attention. These situations supply concrete examples from which all readers can apply lessons to their own lives. Anyone who is wise and who pays attention will benefit (1:5) from this instruction.

1. In order to know what wisdom is, one must know how to recognize foolishness. When was a time in your life when you exhibited each of the three types of foolishness: super-bozoism, super-I-knowism, and super-heroism? Share with the group what you learned from these experiences.
2. Read Proverbs 2:1-15.
 - a. What is wisdom? What is the difference between wisdom and knowledge?
 - b. What is the promise to the one who is obedient to seek insight & understanding (v. 5)?
 - c. From where does wisdom come and who gives it (v. 6-7)?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-31. The Corinthians boasted in worldly wisdom and those who taught it. How does the message of the cross destroy all such boasting?
4. Read James 1:5-8.
 - a. What does James mean when he writes that God "gives generously to all without reproach?" What does this say about God's character?

- b. Describe a time in which you have asked God for wisdom that you were thankful that He did not respond to you with reproach (even though you might have deserved it)?
- c. Since we are commanded to ask “with no doubt,” what would it look like if we asked “with doubt?” In other words, what would we doubt? How are asking in faith and without doubt connected?

Challenge: Are you asking for wisdom from God often enough? What will you do today to remind yourself of your constant need to ask for God’s wisdom? What are some strategies that will help you implement this much-needed request more often?

Prayer: Heavenly Father thank You for Your Word, which reminds us of the importance of asking You for wisdom when we feel that we are lacking in understanding or discernment, for You have promised to give generously to all who ask in faith.

Lord, there are many areas of my life in which I desire to apply godly wisdom, and pray that by Your grace, You would supply me with a sound mind, so that I may be able to give an answer to whosoever asks me about the faith that I have in the Lord Jesus Christ.. and Father, by Your grace I pray that this will help to prevent me from being tossed about by the wind.

Help me to truly ask in faith, for I know and believe that Your word is true and I trust You to keep Your word.. but Father, at times I doubt that You include me in this promise as well – so help me to overcome any doubts that may surface in my heart and may my faith in You become strong and my wisdom from You be used to Your praise and glory – in Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

STUDY DEEPER

Praying through Proverbs: The Art of Living Wisely Everyday

“A wise man is able to discern between good and evil, and he knows how to respond to and deal with a situation. He is discreet and realistic, with power to make plans. He makes the most out of life.” David Pawson

We live in a day where wisdom is most needed, but very often neglected. Because of the complexities of daily life, we need lots of wisdom to make godly choices. The Book of Proverbs is filled with God’s wisdom. The 900 proverbs cover most of life’s situations. Learning from Proverbs and praying through this incredible book leads to wisdom and character transformation. Walking with stability in a shaking world is going to become a necessity as the days become more evil. God’s wisdom and knowledge keeps us stable and secure with a heart at rest. He is our shield and guards our path.

“For the Lord gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding...He is a shield to those who walk uprightly; He guards the path of justice” - ([Proverbs 2:6-8](#)).

King Solomon wrote the Book of Proverbs. When becoming King, God offered him anything he asked for, and he asked for wisdom. What would you ask for if you had this incredible offer? God gave him wisdom along with fame, power, and wealth. But the condition attached to wisdom was to walk in God’s ways and obey His commands. King Solomon neglected this and was unwise in his later years. Can you imagine having 700 wives and 300 concubines! This would not be wise nor would it make life easy!

The book of Proverbs is all about acquiring wisdom and avoiding the pitfalls of evil and folly. There are over 70 proverbs about what a fool is. Biblical wisdom is what is best for our character and is based on the character of God. Wisdom is actually practicing God’s presence in every area of life. This leads to success and health. The book of Proverbs gives us happiness and strength as we pray through wise sayings that keep us on a clear path to victory. Wisdom is better than silver or gold!

“Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding. For her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, and her gain than fine gold” - ([Prov. 3:13](#)).

Proverbs is a practical book that deals with the art of living and is based on the fear of the Lord. Its reverence of God is the path to life and security. It describes life as it really is in all aspects. It tells us how to live wisely in every situation we face. It shows contrasts such as wisdom and folly, pride and humility, love and lust, work and leisure, wealth and poverty, and life and death. Proverbs tells us how we can make the most of life. It affirms God as all wise and the source of all wisdom. In Proverbs we choose whether we want life or death and light or darkness.

Do we want wisdom or folly as our companion throughout life? It’s a moral choice we each have to make.

I know a man who has turned from the way of the wise. He was gifted and had so much going for him but he strayed from the path of wisdom. I’m sure it wasn’t a huge leap off the right path, but it was gradual. It wasn’t intentional, but little by little he made wrong choices. Then he became addicted to alcohol and

everything fell apart. He has lost his job, his family, his home, and the joy of living. He seems to be entrenched in a huge trap of the devil and has turned to the path of the foolish. But there is still hope for this man because he can repent and turn back to the wisdom of God. The Book of Proverbs can be a tremendous spiritual guide to bring him back into the path of wisdom and righteous living.

Proverbs is an amazing book that gives an appropriate word that fits the situation. It's a general observation on life. It's easy to remember because the proverbs are poetic with a unique rhythm of thought. It contains parallelism where one line relates to the other and where the first line is repeated, contrasted, or advanced in the second. It's written as a father's advice to a youth.

The Wisdom of Praying Through Proverbs

It's wise to pray through the Book of Proverbs. When we bring Proverbs to God in prayer verse-by-verse, He changes our character in the process and shows us how to really live fruitful lives. He instills His wisdom into our hearts and helps us in our practical life decisions and choices. We learn the art of living wisely day-by-day and hour-by-hour. We walk in God's ways and obey His commands in a fuller dimension.

How to pray Proverbs chapter by chapter or one verse at a time: Begin by praying and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you study Proverbs. You may want to pray Ephesians 1:17-19 as you begin. Take a small portion, verse or chapter of Proverbs.

- Read it slowly and take time to quietly meditate on it. Don't hurry but be still.
- Have a journal or diary and write down any insights God gives you regarding those verses. You may want to start a Proverbs Journal.
- If you are studying a chapter of Proverbs, take a sheet of paper and make a list of "Benefits of the Wise" on one side and a list of "Disadvantages of the Wicked" on the other side.
- Have another sheet of paper with a list of "Wise Advice from God" for those verses that do not go into the other two categories.
- On the second half of this sheet write "My Prayer for Wisdom" and write out a prayer, thanking God for what you learned from the chapter and asking for His help for wise and righteous living.
- Pray the Proverb back to God asking for His help to obey and refrain from the ways of the wicked.
- Thank Him for showing you His wisdom through these verses, and ask Him to remind you during the day to obey His wisdom. Be specific.
- Memorize a proverb every few days and meditate on it during the day, saying little "breathe prayers" to God. For example:

"Lord, teach me to walk in truth and mercy this week."

"I commit my work to You now. I want my way to please You."

"Show me how to bless my family through the words I speak."

"I ask for wisdom and understanding as I do my homework."

"Teach me to walk in the fear of the Lord today."

We need God's guidance regarding healthy speech, our relationships (family life, friendships, etc.), and in so many other things relating to practical life. Praying through Proverbs internalizes these truths and brings God and His wisdom into our personal life. We can learn to be prudent, sensible, and careful to

avoid that which is evil rather than becoming reckless, rash, careless, and wasteful. Isn't this what we all need?

God is enabling us through Proverbs to walk in a new level of wisdom and to model to others how to live in troubled times. Walking in God's wisdom can keep us from so much heartache and loss. We don't have to waste our lives but we can accomplish great things for God! Let's take hold of this great gift and pray a Proverb or a chapter of Proverbs every day. Let's learn the art of living wisely every day.

You've heard the saying: *"An apple a day keeps the doctor away!"*
We can also say: *"A Proverb a day keeps the devil away!"*

"So Proverbs is interested in where most of our waking life is lived. This book tells us how we can make the most of life and warns us that many people waste it. It is about the 'good life'. Its wisdom enables us to arrive at the end of our days pleased with all that we have accomplished." - David Pawson

<http://www.crosswalk.com/faith/prayer/praying-through-proverbs-the-art-of-living-wisely-everyday.html>