

PROVERBS OVERVIEW

Opening: Cajun “Wisdom” from Sheriff Melacon and Deputy Boudreaux. Common sense is not so common any more. Seventh dwarf – Dopey (Prov 1:4, simple, naïve)

Wise men and women: Important and common in the ancient world, facilitating a well-lived life. In Israel, perhaps a class equal to the prophets (Jer 18:18).

- Present at creation: Jer 51:15, Prov 3:19, 8:22-23
- Canaan: Judges 5:28-29
- Egypt: Ex 7:11, Is 19:11, 41:8, 41:39-40 (Joseph)
- Edom: Jer 49:7
- Tyre: Ezek 28:1-5
- Babylon: Daniel (Dan 1:3-4)
- The East: at Jesus’ birth, Magi (wise men) from the East (Matt 2:1)

Author: God, but as for a human, unknown, probably a compiler or compilers (25:1), but most of the book attributed to Solomon (Prov 1:1), some at the end (30 and 31) to others.

When: 400-700 BC. Not a solid agreement on when.

Why Written: a guide to have a well-lived life not focusing on head or heart knowledge or a set of rules, but the skill and ability to act and accomplish a task.

Frequent Terms (in a proposed hierarchy):

- Knowledge (see terms defined)
- Discernment and Understanding (see terms defined)
- Wisdom (see terms defined) – it’s ACTION-ORIENTED

Why Study: We face enormous challenges in life (medical, relational, financial, moral, family, career, marital, mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, etc.) God provided Proverbs as practical instruction to help us deal with life’s challenges, i.e., wisdom.

Approach: Topical study, not a chapter by chapter study

Assignments: (1) Read a chapter a day for the month of January, 31 chapters, 31 days. (2) Pick your birthdate. Go to that Proverbs chapter. Write an anecdote of what God has laid on your heart for the chapter. Trying for an anecdote for all 31 chapters, seeking volunteers.

Conclusion: Proverbs is “Pro” (**for**) “verbs” (**action**), **for** our **action**.

TERMS AND HEIRARCHY

DATA. Basic element and building block of the learning progression; items, facts, factors, values, observations, measurements, numbers, indicators. Used as a basis for reasoning, calculation, and discussion.

KNOWLEDGE. A possession of organized data, facts, truths, ideas, or principles, awareness and recognition acquired by analysis, reasoning, association, research, instruction, study, investigation, observation, or experience; a firm mental grasp of the information about a way of life, science, art, skill, or technique.

DISCERNMENT (“Twin” 1). The ability to judge people and things well; a power to see and to distinguish and select what is true (and false), good (and evil), right (and wrong), appropriate, meaningful, or excellent, including the ability to see what is not evident to the average mind or is missing. Implies a searching mind that goes deep and beyond what is obvious, at the surface, or superficial coupled with understanding sympathy; keen practical judgment.

UNDERSTANDING (“Twin” 2). Comprehension; superior power of discernment; *especially* the capacity to identify relationships among the parts, cause and effect; identify trends and patterns; the power to make experience intelligible; the recognition of sources of emotional difficulty; identifying the motivational forces behind actions, thoughts, or behavior; ability to apprehend the true nature of a thing, especially through intuitive reasoning; self knowledge.

WISDOM. The act of grasping the sum of meaning, experience, instruction, relationships, dependencies, character, importance, and implications of: people, processes, life, actions, interactions, and conduct with knowledge and insight thoroughly understood in order to apply that understanding and insight for such things as:

- Make good decisions, including determining direction and when and how to act and understanding the implications of those decisions
- Make sound judgments
- Shed light on or help solve a problem for ourselves or others
- Provide guidance and counsel
- See the potential in others
- Foster and develop/build relationships

- Know ourselves and our history in order to learn, improve, and grow
- Instruct, mentor, and encourage others to reach their potential and follow God's plan
- Create and leave a positive legacy.
- [See also 2 Tim 3:16-17]

Note: Definitions are Chadbourne versions, taking into account verses from the Bible as well as inputs from American Heritage Dictionary, Cambridge Dictionary On-Line, Dictionary.com, and Merriam-Webster On-Line Dictionary. Proposed hierarchy reflects my personal thoughts.

SELECTED VERSES RELATED TO WISDOM

(Note: I have purposefully tried to not use many verses from Proverbs so as to show the breadth of Wisdom verses across the Bible)

From the beginning

Pro 8:23 "From everlasting I [wisdom] was established, From the beginning, from the earliest times of the earth.

Jer 51:15 *It is* He who made the earth by His power, Who established the world by His wisdom, And by His understanding He stretched out the heavens.

Wise Men as a class with priests and prophets

Jer 18:18 Then they said, "Come and let us devise plans against Jeremiah. Surely the law is not going to be lost to the priest, nor counsel to the sage [wise man], nor the *divine* word to the prophet! Come on and let us strike at him with *our* tongue, and let us give no heed to any of his words."

Early Examples

Exo 35:30 Then Moses said to the sons of Israel, "See, the LORD has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah.

Exo 35:31 "And He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding and in knowledge and in all craftsmanship;

Exo 35:32 to make designs for working in gold and in silver and in bronze,

Exo 35:33 and in the cutting of stones for settings and in the carving of wood, so as to perform in every inventive work.

Exo 35:34 "He also has put in his heart to teach, both he and Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan.

Deu 34:9 [At the death of Moses] Now Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; and the sons of Israel listened to him and did as the LORD had commanded Moses.

God blesses Solomon with Wisdom

1Ki 3:9 "So give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?"

1Ki 3:10 It was pleasing in the sight of the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing.

1Ki 3:11 God said to him, "Because you have asked this thing and have not asked for yourself long life, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have you asked for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself discernment to understand justice,

1Ki 3:12 behold, I have done according to your words. Behold, I have given you a wise and discerning heart, so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you.

1Ki 4:29 Now God gave Solomon wisdom and very great discernment and breadth of mind, like the sand that is on the seashore.

1Ki 4:30 Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the sons of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt.

Other verses with Wisdom

[Ezr 7:25](#) "You, Ezra, according to the **wisdom** of your God which is in your hand, appoint magistrates and judges that they may judge all the people who are in *the province* beyond the River, *even* all those who know the laws of your God; and you may teach anyone who is ignorant of them.

[Job 12:12](#) "Wisdom is with aged men, *With* long life is understanding. **[Old guys in our class LOVE this one]**

[Job 12:13](#) "With Him are **wisdom** and might; To Him belong counsel and understanding.

[Dan 1:17](#) As for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every *branch* of literature and **wisdom**; Daniel even understood all *kinds of* visions and dreams.

Foundation of Wisdom

[Job 28:28](#) "And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is **wisdom**; And to depart from evil is understanding.'"

[Psa 111:10](#) The fear of the LORD is the beginning of **wisdom**; A good understanding have all those who do *His commandments*; His praise endures forever.

[Pro 9:10](#) The fear of the LORD is the beginning of **wisdom**, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

Importance of our actively seeking Wisdom

[Ecc 7:25](#) I directed my mind to know, to investigate and to seek **wisdom** and an explanation, and to know the evil of folly and the foolishness of madness.

Wisdom of Jesus

[Isa 11:2](#) The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of **wisdom** and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

[Isa 11:3](#) And He will delight in the fear of the LORD, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear;

[Luke 2:52](#) And Jesus kept increasing in **wisdom** and stature, and in favor with God and men.

New Testament admonitions for Wisdom

[Col 1:9](#) For this reason also, since the day we heard *of it*, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual **wisdom** and understanding,

[Col 3:16](#) Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all **wisdom** teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

[Col 4:5](#) Conduct yourselves with **wisdom** toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.

Jas 1:5 But if any of you lacks **wisdom**, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

Jas 3:17 But the **wisdom** from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.