
The Book of **PROVERBS**



Part II:
A Topical Study of Proverbs Chapters 10-31

Crestwood
CHURCH OF CHRIST



SCAN ME

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*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and lean not on your own understanding;
In all your ways acknowledge Him, and
He shall direct your paths.*

*Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear
the Lord and depart from evil.*

*It will be health to your flesh, and
strength to your bones.*

—Proverbs 3:5-7

Introduction



Part one of this study covered a textual study of chapters one through nine where we are introduced to the purpose of the book and the nature and value of godly wisdom. Wisdom is personified as a godly and worthy woman, “Lady Wisdom”. She is contrasted with folly which is personified as the wicked woman or “Madam Folly.”

Key Verse:

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.”

—Prov. 1:7

In those first few chapters we are introduced to the source and foundation of true wisdom as well as our need to pursue it. The wisdom that calls to men is that which was with God when He founded the heavens and the earth and her delight is in the sons of men (Prov. 8:22-31). The wise man illustrates with vivid imagery the danger of ignoring wisdom’s call for the pursuit of pleasure and folly.

Continuing where Part I left off, this booklet will provide a topical outline of the wisdom contained in Proverbs chapters ten through thirty-one. Before entering this study, we should review the purpose of the Proverbs and refresh our understanding of key terms.

Purpose: Proverbs 1:2-6

List the intended purpose as stated by the author in the following verses:

Vs. 2: _____

Vs. 3: _____

Vs. 4: _____

Vs. 5: _____

Key Terms:

Using a dictionary or lexicon, define the following terms:

Wisdom: _____

Instruction: _____

Understanding: _____

Justice: _____

Judgment: _____

Equity: _____

Prudence: _____

Knowledge: _____

Discretion: _____

A proverb may be...

- A proverbial saying
- A by-word
- A similitude or parable
- A poem, of various kinds and lengths
- A sentence of ethical wisdom

What Is A Proverb?

A “proverb” is usually understood to be a short pithy statement containing some wisdom or observation. However, the Hebrew word for Proverb, *mashal*, has a much broader application. It literally means “to become like, to be comparable to” (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament).

It is observed concerning the use of this word, “To translate *mashal* simply as ‘proverb’ misses the wide sweep of the word,

suggested by the many suggested translations. We are accustomed to think of a proverb as a short, pithy, epigrammatic saying which assumes the status of gnomic truth. In the Old Testament, however, the word *mashal* may be synonymous with an extended parable... It may refer to an extended didactic discourse (Prov. 1:8-19 for example). A person (Saul, 1 Sam 10:12; Job, Job 17:6) or a group of persons (Israel, Ps 44:15), may function as a *masha'*" (Ibid) .

In short, the Hebrew proverb is any linguistic tool used to encapsulate or illustrate a truth, principle, wisdom in general, or to provoke thought. It may do so by means of comparison, simile, or by presenting a riddle or enigma. It may use poetry to paint an image on the mind. A proverb may also be a by-word as illustrated in Ps. 69:12. The book of Proverbs contains all of these:

- Short pithy statements: see chapter 10 beginning.
- Longer narratives or parables: See chapters 2-8 and 31.
- Statements of contrast: Most of the proverbs beginning in chapter ten are of this sort. Example, *"He who walks with integrity walks securely, but he who perverts his ways will become known"* (Prov. 10:9)
- Statements of comparison (simile): *"As a door turns on its hinges, so does the lazy man on his bed"* (Prov. 26:14).
- Sayings that make profound truths easy to understand. *"The blessing of the Lord makes one rich, and He adds no sorrow with it"* (Prov. 10:22).
- Riddles or enigmas (see Prov. 1:6). These are questions meant to challenge the mind and provoke deeper thought. *"Surely I am more stupid than any man, and do not have the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom nor have knowledge of the Holy One. Who has ascended into heaven, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is His Son's name, if you know?"* (Prov. 30:2-6)

Getting the Most from the Proverbs

Reverence for God is the starting point. Without it, a man is unlikely to seek divine guidance or heavenly wisdom. He will satisfy himself with what the school of hard knocks and the college of life experience can teach him. A little, but not much. And certainly not as much as God can teach. You cannot teach a fool, but one who fears God will sit and watch and wait and listen and learn.

“In the end, though he may prove to be less educated and esteemed than his worldly counterpart, the one who fears God and seeks divine guidance will be capable of outwitting his opponent and obtaining the greater victory. Three divine qualities are at the heart of heavenly wisdom – righteousness, justice and fairness. Without them, the brand of wisdom one boasts is highly suspect. Any lifestyle, mindset or character study will prove rather hollow where these criteria are missing. Their absence introduces a void which carnal appetites quickly fill – selfishness, greed, lust and arrogance.”

--J.S. Smith, *Great Themes of the Proverbs: Part 2*

Preparation Questions:

1. Prov. 1:1-5: What will a wise and understanding person do? How will he or she accomplish these objectives?
2. Proverbs 1:20-33: Is wisdom impossible to obtain, or is it accessible to those who seek it? According to verses 26-29, what will happen to those who reject wisdom?
3. Proverbs 2:1-22: What is man's responsibility in the search for wisdom? (see vs. 2) What effect can wisdom have in the life of the one who seeks her? (see vs. 10-12)
4. Prov. 4:1-9: Why is wisdom the principal thing?

Essay Questions:

Before continuing with the rest of this study, please consider at length the following two Questions:

- Define “wisdom” as it is spoken of in the Proverbs.
- How do the proverbs help the child of God increase in that wisdom?

The Folly of Fools



Introduction

The Hebrew word rendered “fool” occurs nearly 50 times in the book of Proverbs. In our culture this word it is often used to refer to someone who is dull and obstinate. In the Proverbs, however, “foolishness” describes one’s outlook on life rather than his abilities. It refers to one’s moral, rather than mental deficiencies, such as an unwillingness to heed God’s word or to seek godly wisdom. Often, the “fool” is the person who thinks that he is smarter than everyone else.

Key Verse:

“A fool has no delight in understanding, but in expressing his own heart.”
—Prov. 18:2

Definitions

With the help of a dictionary, define the following words

“Fool”

“Folly”

“Simple”

The Characteristics of a Fool

Read the following proverbs and identify the characteristics attributed to the fool from a Scriptural perspective.

 Prov. 12:15; 28:26: _____

 Prov. 1:7; 15:5; 23:9; 24:7: _____

What prevents him from receiving instruction?

 Prov. 18:3: _____

 Prov. 18:2; 14:33; 12:23; 13:16: _____

-  Prov. 10:8; c. 15:7: _____
-  Prov. 12:1; 17:10; 16:22 (cf. 19:29; 26:3): _____
-  Prov. 14:29; 17:24; 29:11: _____
-  Prov. 10:23; 13:19; 14:9: _____
-  Prov. 27:22; 26:11: _____

In summary

A fool is a person who...

1. Trusts in himself
2. Is deaf to instruction
3. Cannot be disciplined
4. Is impulsive
5. Commits evil
6. Is virtually unchangeable

—Mark A. Copeland, *Proverbs*

Questions for Discussion

1. What does a fool lack according to the book of Proverbs?
2. Though both the simple (naïve) and foolish may share many similar characteristics, why is there hope for the simple and none for the fool?
3. Is a man's foolishness usually a very well-kept secret? (see Prov. 12:23; 13:16)
4. Explain how Prov. 26:4-5 can be helpful in responding to a fool.

Categories of people in Proverbs:

- The Naïve
- The Simple
- The Wise
- The Fool
- The Scoffer

Matters of the Heart

Pride



Introduction

Pride is one of the most deceptive of all sin. It causes one to think more highly of himself than he ought to, and feel justified in doing so. Often pride is not alone, but is accompanied by other similarly destructive characteristics.

Key Verse:

"Pride goes before destruction,
And a haughty spirit
before a fall."

—Prov. 16:18

Definitions

With the help of a dictionary, define the following words:

"Pride"

"Haughty"

The Characteristics Associated with Pride

Read the following proverbs and identify the characteristics associated with pride and its effects from a Scriptural perspective.

Companions of Pride

 Prov. 18:12; 21:4; 16:18: _____

 Prov. 21:24: _____

 Prov. 27:2; 20:6; 17:19: _____

Pride vs. God

 Prov. 3:5-7: _____

 Prov. 8:13; 15:33; 22:4: _____

 Prov. 16:5; 6:16-19: _____

Consequences of Pride

 Prov. 11:2; 25:27: _____

 Prov. 13:10; 28:25: _____

 Prov. 15:25; 16:18-19; 18:12: _____

In summary...

“Pride is the ultimate sin against God (3:5-7). It is the assumption that man is self-sufficient and important enough to compete with God’s greatness, magnitude strength and wisdom.”

—Rob Harbison, *Proverbs*

Questions/Points for Discussion

1. Locate passages in the New Testament that describe God’s response to pride.
2. Why does the proud man scoff at others?
3. Why can’t pride admit it is wrong?
4. Who is wiser, the man who never makes mistakes, or the man who learns from his mistakes?

Matters of the Heart

Anger



Introduction

Though not a sin in itself, anger that is not controlled can be a very dangerous force. Throughout the Proverbs the angry man is contrasted with one who “rules his spirit.” The wise man learns to control his spirit, consider his ways, and to focus anger according to the righteous instructions of God. He learns to control the emotion rather than allowing it to control him.

Key Verse:

“He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty,
And he who rules his spirit
than he who takes a city.”
—Prov. 16:32

Definitions

With the help of a dictionary, define the following words:

“Anger”

“Wrath”

Understanding and Controlling Anger

Read the following proverbs and identify the characteristics associated with anger. Describe the wisdom God gives for controlling it.

 Prov. 14:29; 16:32; 19:11; 29:11: When does anger become a bad thing? _____

 Prov. 25:28: What causes a man to be quick-tempered? _____

 Prov. 12:16; 29:20; 30:33; 15:18; 29:22: What are the consequences of not controlling one's anger? _____

 Prov. 16:32; 14:29; 19:11: Is the man “slow to anger” devoid of all anger? _____
What is the difference between him and the quick-tempered man? _____

 According to the following passages, how can we learn to control anger and its destructive effects?

In ourselves:

- Prov. 19:19: _____
- Prov. 17:27-28; 21:23: _____
- Prov. 19:11 (cf. Eccl. 7:20-22; Eph. 4:31-32): _____

In others:

- Prov. 15:1, 18, 28; 25:15: _____
- Prov. 21:4 (cf. Matt. 5:23-24): _____

In Summary...

As with all other emotions, God created us with a capacity for anger. It is a quality He has in Himself. Left without restraint our anger can be destructive, but honed and polished with godly wisdom it can be used for righteousness, as God Himself so uses it.

Questions/Points for Discussion:

1. Is turning off one's emotions the solution to controlling anger?
2. Where should anger be directed?
3. How does self-discipline (control) help us rule over anger in ourselves and soften its affects on others?

Matters of the Heart

Self-control



Introduction

Godly wisdom consists not only of characteristics of the mind (knowledge, discernment, prudence, et. al.), but also the ability to put those characteristics into action. As God applied wisdom in the creation (Prov. 3:1; 8:29-30), so men must exercise control over self in order to apply His wisdom in their lives.

Key Verse:

"Keep your heart with all diligence,
For out of it spring the
issues of life."

—Prov. 4:23

Definitions

With the help of a dictionary, define the following words:

"Self-control"

"Temptation"

Learning Self-control

Read the following proverbs and identify why self-control is necessary and how it can be learned.

 Prov. 4:23; 23:7: _____

 Consider also Matt. 12:33-35; Mark 7:14-23: _____

Where and how is it learned?

From others:

 Prov. 10:8; 15:5, 31-32; 23:12: _____

 Prov. 3:11; 16:9; 17:3; 23:22: _____

-  Prov. 1:8-9; 6:20-22; 13:1: _____
-  Prov. 12:1; 11:14; 15:22; 24:6 (cf. 9:7-9; 15:10): _____
- _____

From Self:

-  Prov. 16:32; 25:28: _____
- _____
-  Prov. 4:14-17: _____
- _____
-  Prov. 20:5; 23:19; 16:23; 21:23: _____
- _____

In summary...

Self-control comes through discipline and instruction, by those who willingly receive them.

“The control of the inner man is the secret to a righteous life. Free-spirited, spontaneous living is irresponsible and destructive. The Book of Proverbs encourages us to exercise self-control, because disciplined living refines and strengthens character.”

—Rob Harbison, *Proverbs*

Questions for Discussion:

1. Why does the Bible emphasize the heart of the inner man so much?
2. Is a disciplined life as “boring” as the “free-spirits” make it out to be? Why?
3. Where can counsel be learned for controlling one’s self?
4. What preliminary steps can one take to help him retain control of himself throughout life?

Matters of the Heart

A Broken Spirit



Introduction

Trials of life have the ability to strengthen and build one's character. But without wisdom the spirit can be broken by those same trials. People can become exasperated and give up. God understands this and gives us wisdom for overcoming and recovering.

Key Verse:

"A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance,
But by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken."

—Prov. 15:13

Definitions

With the help of a dictionary, define the following word:

"Trust"

The Spirit Broken and Repaired

What can break the spirit?

 Prov. 29:25; 28:1: _____

 Prov. 12:25; Ps. 37:1-11: _____

 Prov. 15:15: _____

What can repair a broken spirit?

 Prov. 16:3; 29:25; 23:26; 28:26: _____

 Prov. 3:2-126: _____

 Prov. 13:12, 19: _____

 Prov. 14:30; 15:15, 30; 17:22: _____

 Prov. 27:9: _____

In summary...

“Most people are motivated—either for good or bad—more from their emotions than their intellect—not because emotion is **stronger** than intellect, but because such motivation is the easier of the two. The complexities of life are so great and the problems so heavy that the more we face them, the more ‘mixed up’ we become. Therefore, it is imperative to keep our hearts and emotions under control rather than being ruled by them (4:23).”

—Rob Harbison, *Proverbs*

Questions for Discussion:

1. What is meant by a “broken spirit”?
2. What kinds of things can break one’s spirit?
3. “The fear of God is the fear that removes all others.”
True or False? Why?

Alcohol



Introduction

The Proverbs emphasize the wisdom of self-control. One of the greatest enemies of control is alcohol. Therefore, the Proverbs also give stern warnings against the consumption of alcohol, whether in the form of wine or strong drink.

Key Verse:

"Wine is a mocker,
Strong drink is a brawler,
And whoever is led astray
by it is not wise."

—Prov. 20:1

Definitions

With the help of a dictionary, define the following words:

"Wine"

"Strong Drink"

Motivations for, Effects of, and Warnings Against Alcohol

Read the passages below and record your observations pertaining to each category.

Reasons for drinking:

 Prov. 23:31; Eccl. 10:19: _____

 Prov. 31:6: _____

 Prov. 31:7: _____

 Prov. 23:20-21: _____

Effects of alcohol:

 Prov. 23:29: _____

 Prov. 20:1: _____

 Prov. 23:33: _____

 Prov. 23:34-35a: _____

 Prov. 23:35b: _____

 Prov. 31:4-5; 23:20-21; 21:17: _____

Warnings:

 Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Cor. 5:11-13; Rom. 13:11-14 (drunkenness): _____

 1 Pet. 4:3-4; Rom. 12:1-2 (social drinking): _____

In Summary...

According to the Proverbs, alcohol consumption can impair judgment, lead to poverty and destroy lives. It can be tempting and does easily ensnare the unsuspecting.

“It shouldn’t take the wisdom of Solomon to see that God’s people should take the dangers of alcohol seriously and be proactive in helping themselves remain free of its clutches!”

—Mark A. Copeland, *Proverbs*

Questions for Discussion:

1. Does the Bible say taking a drink is a sin? What does the Bible say about taking a drink?
2. Does alcohol only ever affect the person who drinks it?
3. How can wine be one of the good things God has given us, and yet drunkenness and social drinking be condemned?

The Tongue



Introduction

Words are powerful things. They can help or hurt, build up or tear down, heal or wound. With great difficulty one may hope to tame the tongue, but in order to succeed both wisdom and control are needed. Therefore, the Proverbs have much to say about the use of the tongue, its power and how to control it.

Key Verse:

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue,
And those who love it will eat its fruit."

—Prov. 18:21

Definitions

With the help of a dictionary, define the following words:

"Tale-bearer"

"Flattery"

The Power of the Tongue

Read the passages below and record your observations pertaining to each category.

Destructive:

Prov. 10:19; 11:9; 18:6-7; 12:13: _____

Lying:

○ Prov. 12:22; 6:16-19; 19:5, 9: _____

○ Prov. 10:18; 26:24-26, 28: _____

○ Prov. 12:19; 21:6; 20:17: _____

Flattery:

○ Prov. 26:28; 29:5; 28:23: _____

○ Prov. 6:24; 7:21: _____

Tale-bearer:

- Prov. 16:28; 17:9; cf. 11:13: _____
- Prov. 16:27-30; 26:20-22: _____
- Prov. 11:9; 25:9-10: _____

Cursing

- Prov. 20:20; 40:10-11: _____

The Susceptible Ear:

-  Prov. 18:8; 26:22: _____
-  Prov. 17:4; cf. 20:19: _____

In summary...

The tongue, when unchecked, can be hurtful and destructive, even if that is not the person's intent. Tale-bearing and flattery can be deceptively sweet, to the ear but will always sour a relationship. When the ear is trained to discern and turn away, fires can lose their fuel. When the tongue is controlled and honed by wisdom it has great power for good.

Questions for discussion:

1. What is the difference between flattery and praise?
2. Can damage be done with the truth as much as with a lie? How?

Business, Wealth & Greed



Introduction

Physical resources such as possessions and money can be good when understood and used according to wisdom. However, many become blinded by the possessions and allow the pursuit of wealth to consume them. Greed begins to define their business practices, and when honesty and integrity don't seem to bear enough fruit, many often turn to deception, bribes, and other sinful practices. The wisdom of God helps us to keep a proper perspective toward wealth, and to remember which things are of greatest value in this life, such as integrity, a good name, and righteousness.

Key Verse:

"By pride comes nothing but strife, But with the well-advised is wisdom. Wealth gained by dishonesty will be diminished, But he who gathers by labor will increase."

—Prov. 13:10-11

Definitions

With the help of a dictionary or Bible encyclopedia, define the following words.

"Dishonest scales"

"Integrity"

Poverty and Wealth

Read the passages below and record your observations pertaining to the advantages and disadvantages of wealth.

 Prov. 10:15; 18:11; cf. 13:8: _____

 Prov. 14:20; 19:4, 6-6: _____

 Prov. 22:7: _____

 Prov. 18:23: _____

Why Poverty Comes:

 Prov. 22:16; 30:14; 28:3: _____

 Prov. 10:4; 14:23; 20:13; cf. 24:30-34: _____

 Prov. 21:17; 23:21: _____

 Prov. 12:11; 28:19: _____

Acquisition and Use of Wealth:

 Prov. 13:11; 10:4; 27:23-27: _____

 Prov. 20:17; 21:5-6; 28:8; 15:27; 10:2; 13:22: _____

 Prov. 11:28; 28:11; 23:4-5; 10:22: _____

Better than Wealth:

 Prov. 8:10-11, 18-19; 16:16; 20:15: _____

 Prov. 15:16: _____

 Prov. 22:1: _____

 Prov. 28:6; 19:1: _____

 Prov. 19:22: _____

 Prov. 16:8, 19: _____

Honesty in Business:

 Prov. 11:3: _____

 Prov. 28:8; 21:6; 10:9: _____

 Prov. 20:17: _____

 Prov. 15:27: _____

Gifts and Bribes:

 Prov. 15:27; 17:23: _____

 Prov. 17:8: _____

 Prov. 19:6; 18:16; 21:14: _____

Recipe for Success:

 Prov. 18:16;17:8: _____

 Prov. 10:9, cf. 11:3; 12:22: _____

 Prov. 22:29: _____

In summary...

“We must see that wealth does not blind us to those things that far excel it! What is important is not whether we are rich or poor, but whether we stand upright before God (Prov. 30:7-9). The greatest benefit of riches is not in having them but using them. The reason the giver will be requited for his gifts and generosity is because he is lending to the Lord (Prov. 19:17; 22:9; 28:27).”

—Rob Harbison, *Proverbs*

Questions for Discussion:

1. Dishonesty may bring a profit, but what else does it bring?
2. Explain the apparent difference in the Proverbs concerning gifts and bribes.
3. How may one be rich but also poor?
4. Describe wisdom’s motivation and approach to pursuing wealth.

Diligence & Laziness



Introduction

The Bible describes the sluggard as one of the most ridiculous kinds of people. Laziness is mentioned some thirty times in the book of Proverbs alone. It is described as being a symptom of a much greater problem—folly. Though we may laugh at some of the proverbs concerning sluggards, they stand as stern warnings to those who would choose to follow that path. God created man to labor with his hands and learn the value of hard work.

Key Verse:

"Go to the ant, you sluggard!
Consider her ways
and be wise."
—Prov. 13:10-11

Definitions

With the help of a dictionary or Bible encyclopedia, define the word, "Sluggard"

The Identifying Marks of a Sluggard

- Prov. 26:14; 6:9-11; 24:33: _____
- Prov. 10:4; 21:25-26; 6:9-11: _____
- Prov. 19:24; 26:15; 12:27: _____
- Prov. 20:14; 22:13; 26:13; cf. Ecc. 11:4: _____
- Prov. 13:4; 14:23; 21:25-26; contrast 16:26: _____

The Consequences of Laziness

- Prov. 24:30-34: _____
- Prov. 12:11; 19:15; 20:4; 24:34; 28:19: _____
- Prov. 12:24: _____

 Prov. 15:19; 13:4; 14:23; 21:25-26: _____

 Prov. 10:26; cf. 25:13: _____

The Diligent Man

 Prov. 6:6-8: _____

 Prov. 10:4-5; 20:4; 28:19: _____

 Prov. 22:29: _____

 Prov. 10:4; 13:4: _____

In Summary...

The Sluggard...

- Loves sleep
- Procrastinates
- Can't finish what he starts
- Makes excuses to not do something
- Desires success, but is frustrated because he doesn't have the diligence to achieve it
- Brings anguish to others and ruin to himself

Questions for Discussion

1. God provides us with rest from our labor. How does the sluggard abuse that rest?
2. What are the differences between the sluggard and the diligent man when presented with a challenge or task?

Integrity and a Good Name



Introduction

One cannot always help what other people say about him. One's reputation is mostly the result of one's actions. A good name is often the result of honesty, integrity, and values. It is to be valued and pursued above any physical riches. A bad reputation comes about from compromise, dishonesty and laziness. Therefore, God's people are exhorted to apply wisdom to gaining a good name, both with men and with God.

Key Verse:

"A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, Loving favor rather than silver and gold."

—Prov. 22:1

Definitions

With the help of a dictionary or Bible encyclopedia, define the following words.

"Reputation"

"Honor"

"Integrity"

A Good Name

 Prov. 12:3: _____

 Prov. 27:2, 21: _____

 Prov. 3:3-4; 11:20; 12:8; 10:7; 11:16: _____

How to Achieve a Good Reputation

 Prov. 10:9; 1:3; 20:7: _____

 Prov. 12:20; 13:5; 17:20; 20:17: _____

 Prov. 11:27; 21:21: _____

 Prov. 20:11 (cf. Matt. 12:33-35): _____

In Summary...

A good name originates from what others see of a man's character. He gets honor for himself from both men and God through his honesty, integrity, and righteous deeds towards others. His good name is valued when he upholds that integrity even in the face of physical and financial loss.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Why is a good name better than riches?
2. How do people respond to the mistakes of an honest man vs. an unscrupulous man? Why?
3. Can a dishonest man appear honest? At what times will the differences between an honest man and a dishonest man be most clearly be seen?

Friendships



Introduction

Friends are valuable and precious, one of the greatest blessings a man has. The friends we choose can either be a help or a hindrance in our lives. The Proverbs provide wisdom both for being a good friend, and for choosing our friends wisely.

Key Verse:

"A man who has friends
must himself be friendly,
But there is a friend who
sticks closer than a brother."
—Prov. 18:24

Real Friendships

Record your observations from the following passages.

Real Friends Are not:

 Prov. 19:4, 6-7; 14:20: _____

Are:

 Prov. 18:24a: _____

 Prov. 17:17; 18:24b: _____

 Prov. 27:5-6, 17; 28:23; 27:10: _____

Nurturing Friendships

 Prov. 25:17: _____

 Prov. 27:14: _____

 Prov. 17:9; 16:28: _____

 Prov. 25:8-10, cf. 25:19: _____

A Friend's Influence

 Prov. 12:26; 13:20: _____

 Prov. 1:10-19; 22:2-425; 23:20; 24:1; 28:7; 29:24: _____

 Prov. 27:6, 17: _____

In Summary...

Real friends don't stick around only when times are good. They are not "fair-weather friends." Rather, they are at our sides, even in the most difficult of times. They care about us enough to give sound counsel; they better us. Good friends sharpen each other's countenances and will give rebukes where they are necessary. But good friendships must be nurtured, and bad habits avoided. Friends influence us more than any other relationships, for good or bad. Therefore, we must take care to choose our friends wisely.

Questions for Discussion:

1. How does friendship benefit one as iron sharpens iron?
2. What is the great danger of evil friendships?
3. Where is the line between being friendly toward someone and being friends with them?
4. What is the difference between the wound of a friend and a wound caused by a scoffer?

The Family



Introduction

The Proverbs say a great deal about family relationships: Husbands, wives, mothers, fathers, and children. When the home and each member of the family operate with wisdom, then it can bring comfort, happiness, and increased wisdom to all. But when wisdom is tossed aside, when counsel is not given or received, when proper respect is forsaken, heartache, frustration and reign. As God created the family, he gives the wisdom for living in one.

Key Verse:

"Through wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; By knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches."

—Prov. 24:3-4

The Makings of a Home

Record your observations from the proverbs

Husband and Father

 Prov. 20:7; 17:6; 15:27: _____

Wife and Mother

 Prov. 14:1; 12:4; 31:10-31: _____

Children

 Prov. 10:1; 15:20: _____

 Prov. 23:15-16, 24-25; 29:3, 17: _____

 Prov. 17:21, 25; 19:27: _____

 Prov. 17:6: _____

The Value of a Good Home

 Prov. 24:3-4; 15:6: _____

 Prov. 15:17; 17:1: _____

In Summary...

God created the family to be one of the greatest treasures of this life. Every part of the family was created to have its own virtue and to add to the strength of the whole. Within this relationship a man is glorified, woman is honored; children are trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. But when one person rejects God's counsel for his/her role in the family, the quality of the whole begins to degrade. Rather than joy, rebellious and unruly children can bring anguish and sorrow to their parents. Contentious wives can cause husbands to seek peace elsewhere, and negligent or abusive fathers can do harm to all. Therefore, God's people need to look to His wisdom for guidance, learn to appreciate the value of the family, and embrace God's pattern for love, for teaching, for discipline and for spiritual growth in the family. Rather than seeking fulfillment everywhere else, let us focus our attention to nurturing and strengthen this great treasure.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why was the home and family relationship established?
2. What do children learn in the formative years while at home? (See also 4:1-13 and 6:20-23).
3. How does the mother have the power to build up or tear down the home? (see Prov. 14:1)

The Worthy Woman



Introduction

The Proverbs include a poem that extols the virtues of the godly woman and emphasizes her value to mankind (Prov. 31:10ff). These words are portrayed as being the counsel of a mother to her son, the king. Many women have been discouraged by the standard set by the worthy woman in these verses. Yet this passage is not meant for discouragement, but for encouragement and counsel. Consider the principle and wisdom to be learned.

Key Verse:

"Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies."

—Prov. 31:10

Record your observations

Her value:

-  Prov. 31:10; 12:4; 19:14: _____
-  Prov. 31:11-12: _____

Her life: Prov. 31:13-24

-  Vs. 13-15: _____
-  Vs. 16-19: _____
-  Vs. 20: _____
-  Vs. 21-24: _____

Her character: Prov. 31:25-27

-  Vs. 25 (cf. 1 Pet. 3:3-5; 1 Tim. 32:9-10): _____
-  Vs. 26 (cf. 18:2, 13; 14:33; 10:8): _____
-  Vs. 27 (cf. 1 Tim. 5:11-15): _____

Results of such a life: Prov. 31:28-29

-  Vs. 28: _____

 Vs. 29: _____

Her secret: Prov. 31:30-31

 _____

Questions for Discussion:

1. In your own words, describe a “worthy woman.”
2. How does she find time for the rigorous activity as a mother, wife, and home manager?
3. When the proverb says she buys a field and works in it (vs. 16), is that teaching that worthy women should get a job outside the home, or does the Lord have another lesson in mind? Explain.
4. How does she approach the work of providing for her family?
5. What is the key to her success?