

Proverbs 1

(New International Version)

¹The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel: ²for attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight; ³for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; ⁴for giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young ♦ ⁵let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance ♦ ⁶for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise. ⁷The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline. ⁸Exhortations to Embrace Wisdom ⁹Warning Against Enticement ⁸Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching. ⁹They will be a garland to grace your head ⁹and a chain to adorn your neck.

PROVERBS 1:1

What the book of Psalms is to prayer and devotional life, the book of Proverbs is to everyday life. Proverbs gives practical suggestions for effective living. This book is not just a collection of homey sayings; it contains deep spiritual insights drawn from experience. A *proverb* is a short, wise, easy-to-remember saying that calls a person to action. It doesn't argue about basic spiritual and moral beliefs; it assumes we already hold them. The book of Proverbs focuses on God's character, works, and blessings and it tells how we can live in close relationship to him.

PROVERBS 1:1

Solomon, the third king of Israel, son of the great king David, reigned during Israel's golden age. When God said he would give him whatever he wanted, he asked for an understanding mind (1 Kings 3:5-14). God was pleased with this request. He not only made Solomon wise but also gave him great riches and power and an era of peace. Solomon built the glorious Temple in Jerusalem (1 Kings 6) and wrote most of the book of Proverbs.

PROVERBS 1:7

One of the most annoying types of people is a know-it-all, a person who has a dogmatic opinion about everything, is closed to anything new, resents discipline, and refuses to learn. Solomon calls this kind of person a fool. Don't be a know-it-all. Instead, be open to the advice of others, especially those who know you well and can give valuable insight and counsel. Learn how to learn from others. Remember, only God knows it all.

PROVERBS 1:7-9

In this age of information, knowledge is plentiful, but wisdom is scarce. Wisdom means far more than simply knowing a lot. It is a basic attitude that affects every aspect of life. The foundation of knowledge is to fear the Lord ♦ to honor and respect God, to live in awe of his power, and to obey his Word. Faith in God should be the controlling principle for your understanding of the world, your attitudes, and your actions. Trust in God ♦ he will make you truly wise.

PROVERBS 1:8

Our actions speak louder than our words. This is especially true in the home. Children learn values, morals, and priorities by observing how their parents act and react every day. If parents exhibit a deep reverence for and dependence on God, the children will catch these attitudes. Let them see your reverence for God. Teach them right living by giving worship an important place in your family life and by reading the Bible together.

PROVERBS 1:10-19

Sin is enticing because it offers a quick route to prosperity and makes us feel like one of the crowd. But when we go along with others and refuse to listen to the truth, our own appetites become our masters, and we ♦ will do anything to satisfy them. Sin, even when attractive, is deadly. We must learn to make choices, not on the basis of flashy appeal or short-range pleasure, but in view of the long-range effects. Sometimes this means steering clear of people who want to entice us into activities that we know are wrong. We can ♦ not be friendly with sin and expect our lives to remain unaffected.

PROVERBS 1:19

Being ♦ greedy for gain ♦ is one of Satan ♦ s surest traps. It begins when he plants the suggestion that we can ♦ not live without some possession or more money. Then that desire fans its own fire until it becomes an all-consuming obsession. Ask God for wisdom to recognize any greedy desire before it destroys you. God will help you overcome it.

PROVERBS 1:20

The picture of Wisdom calling aloud in the streets is a personification ♦ a literary device to make wisdom come alive for us. Wisdom is not a living being; it is the mind of God revealed. By reading about Jesus Christ ♦ s earthly ministry, we can see Wisdom in action. In order to understand how to become wise, we

need to heed Wisdom calling and instructing us in the book of Proverbs (see the chart ♦Wisdom and Foolishness♦). For New Testament calls to wisdom, see 2 Timothy 1:7 and James 1:5. Make sure you don♦t reject God♦s offer of wisdom to you.

PROVERBS 1:22

In the book of Proverbs, a ♦simpleton♦ or a fool is not someone with a *mental* deficiency but someone with a *character* deficiency (such as rebellion, laziness, or anger). The fool is not stupid, but he or she is unable to tell right from wrong or good from bad.

PROVERBS 1:23-28

God is more than willing to pour out his heart and make known his thoughts to us. To receive his advice, we must be willing to listen, refusing to let pride stand in our way. Pride is thinking more highly of our own wisdom and desires than of God♦s. If we think we know better than God or feel we have no need of God♦s direction, we have fallen into foolish and disastrous pride.

PROVERBS 1:31, 32

Many proverbs point out that the ♦bitter fruit of living their own way♦ will be the consequence people will experience in this life. Faced with either choosing God♦s wisdom or persisting in rebellious independence, many decide to go it alone. The problems such people create for themselves will destroy them. Don♦t ignore God♦s advice even if it is painful for the present. It will keep you from greater pain in the future.