



## THE PURPOSE AND THEME OF THE BOOK 1:1-7

The book of **Proverbs** is not mysterious, nor does it leave its readers wondering as to its purpose. At the very outset we are clearly told the writer's intention. The book begins with a separate introductory section [1:1-7] that states the purpose of the book. The introductory section opens with the **title** of the book; *"The proverbs of Solomon"* [1:1]. Though called *"The proverbs of Solomon"* the book is not entirely proverbial, with the proverbial section beginning in 10:1. Though called *"The proverbs of Solomon"* other writers are identified in the book [30:1; 31:1]. What is recorded in the book of **Proverbs** are not all of the *"proverbs"* which **Solomon** wrote, but some of the 3000 *"proverbs"* that he wrote [I Kings 4:32], and are referred to in **Proverbs 25:1** as the *"proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out"* WITHOUT A DOUBT, THESE PROVERBS WERE COLLECTED UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF GOD!

A *"proverb"* is *"a concise statement of truth, usually truths about human behavior"* A *"proverb"* is *"a sentence which briefly, forcefully, and pointedly expresses some practical truth"* **"Proverbs"** are designed to express truth in such a way as to hold one's attention.

Though called *"the proverbs"* it is not just a book of sayings, or a collection of short sentences that give wise advice, but

A BOOK OF GOD'S WISDOM TO MAN!

The book is not merely a collection of wise sayings, but  
DIVINE RULES FROM HEAVEN TO GOVERN THE CHILD OF GOD'S  
CONDUCT!

The book is not merely theory, but  
A BOOK OF PRINCIPLES FROM HEAVEN FOR LIFE UPON EARTH!

The book of **Proverbs** is not a book of laws to govern one's life, but  
A BOOK OF PATTERNS AND PRINCIPLES THAT ARE TO BE CONSTANT IN THE  
COURSE OF LIFE!

The truths expressed in the book are not merely a collection of wise philosophies, but  
THE VERY WORD OF GOD!

The book of **Proverbs** is not merely a collection of thought-provoking word pictures, but  
GOD'S SCHOOL OF WISDOM!

The book of **Proverbs** is not haphazard sayings, but  
A DEFINITE MESSAGE!

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The book of **Proverbs** covers a broad spectrum of human situations, relationships, and responsibilities, offering insights, warnings, instructions, and counsels. The book deals with experiences common to everyone, and the principles of living and character stressed in the book will serve as a guide to one's whole life. As one studies, and applies these principles, godly character will be fortified and strengthened, and one's walk with God will be energized and rejuvenated. The book gives the principles for a harmonious fellowship with God, and a harmonious relationship with our fellowman. The book of **Proverbs** is a book that is concerned with the **development of godly character**, a book about translating godly principles, the very principles of God into daily practice. The book of **Proverbs** is a book that helps the individual to look at life realistically, and to approach life in a right way. To understand the first seven verses of the book is to have a grasp of the purpose of the whole book.

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### I. THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK STATED [verses 2-4, 6]

After the **title** and **author** given in verse 1 there are **five statements** made, declaring the **purpose** of the book. These **five statements** are introduced by the words:

*“to know”* [verse 2].

*“to perceive”* [verse 2].

*“to receive”* [verse 3].

*“to give”* [verse 4].

*“to understand”* [verse 6].

**I. The Book Was Written To Make Known-***“To know”* The word *“know”* means *“to understand clearly, to be convinced or satisfied regarding the truth or reality of; to be assured of; to be aware of”*

TWO THINGS ARE SAID TO BE MADE KNOWN BY THE BOOK OF PROVERBS:

☞ **“wisdom”** This is the *“wisdom”* that comes from God [James 3:17], and is opposed to that which comes from the world [James 3:14-16].

There are **eight** characteristics of this *“wisdom that is from above”* [James 3:17].

It *“is first ①pure* (chaste, holy, and clean), ②*peaceable* (disposes one to live at peace with others), ③*gentle* (meek, modest, and kind), ④*and easy to be intreated* (easily persuaded to that which is right and proper), *full of ⑤mercy* (disposes one to show compassion), ⑥*and good fruits* (good living), ⑦*without partiality* (does not judge based upon respect of persons, does not make exceptions and determine right and wrong based upon persons), ⑧ *and without hypocrisy”* (it is open, honest, genuine, and true).

This is a *“wisdom”* that permeates every aspect and category of life. This is a *“wisdom”* that sees life from God's point of view, IT IS BIBLICAL SKILL IN LIVING! This *“wisdom that is from above”* is the **principal** thing [Proverbs 4:7], it is **invaluable** [Proverbs 8:11], is a

**defense** [Ecclesiastes 7:12], a source of **strength** [Ecclesiastes 9:16, 18], and profitable to **direct** [Ecclesiastes 10:10].

☞ **"instruction"** This has reference to *"teaching, educating, imparting knowledge or information"* It is the purpose of **Proverbs** to give knowledge by instruction. In the book of **Proverbs** we are exhorted to **hear** instruction [1:8; 4:1; 8:33; 13:1; 15:5], to **take fast hold** of instruction [4:13], to **receive** instruction [19:20], and to **apply** the heart to instruction [23:12].

**2. The Book Was Written To Give Perception-***"to perceive the words of understanding"* [verse 2]. The word *"perceive"* is **discernment** and the word *"understanding"* has reference to **insight** DISCERNING INSIGHT! The idea conveyed here is that the book was written to give the individual such **insight**, that they are enabled to distinguish between light and darkness, truth and error, right and wrong.

**3. The Book Was Written To Enable One To Receive Instruction-***"To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity"* [verse 3].

THERE ARE FOUR AREAS OF INSTRUCTION:

☞ **"wisdom"** The instruction of God Himself.

☞ **"justice"** Instruction concerning that which is **correct** and **right**.

☞ **"judgment"** Instruction in **discernment**, and the ability to make right decisions.

☞ **"equity"** Instruction in that which is **fair** and **upright**.

**4. The Book Was Written To Impart-***"To give (impart or convey) subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion"* [verse 4].

THERE ARE THREE THINGS IMPARTED:

☞ **"subtilty"** This is the same as **prudence** which is to *"be cautious, showing care and thought, to be sensible"* The book of **Proverbs** has much to say concerning the **prudent** individual [12:23; 13:16; 14:8, 18; 16:21; 19:14; 22:3; 27:12].

☞ **"knowledge"** This has reference to *"thinking and acting right, knowing how to behave and conduct oneself"*

☞ **"discretion"** This is *"the ability to know what should be done in a particular situation"* The Hebrew word has the meaning of *"something with purpose"* In other words, THE PRINCIPLES OF THE BOOK OF PROVERBS WILL GIVE PURPOSE TO LIFE! The book of **Proverbs** speaks of the value of **discretion** [2:11; 3:21; 5:2; 11:22; 19:11].

**5. The Book Was Written For Understanding-***"To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise and their dark sayings"* [verse 6]. The person who reads, studies, and applies the principles of the book of Proverbs will understand the things of God, and will have insight into the ways of God.

**In summary, the book of Proverbs should be read, and studied**

<p>In Order To Have Made Known To Them  <b>wisdom</b>  <b>instruction</b></p>
<p>In Order To Make <b>Distinction</b></p>
<p>In Order To Receive The Instruction Of  <b>wisdom</b>  <b>justice</b>  <b>judgment</b>  <b>equity</b></p>
<p>In Order To Have Imparted  <b>prudence</b>  <b>right thinking and acting</b>  <b>purpose</b></p>
<p>In Order To Have <b>Insight</b> Into The Ways Of God</p>

## II. THE EXCELLENCY AND USEFULNESS OF THE BOOK [verse 5]

**1. The Excellency Of The Book Is Seen From The Fact That A Wise Man Who Gives Attention To The Book Will Be Able To Increase Learning-***"A wise man will bear, and will increase learning"* The concept of these words are repeated in 9:9. The exhortation to hear is repeated throughout Proverbs [1:8; 4:1, 10; 5:7; 8:6, 33; 19:20, 27; 22:17; 23:19].

**2. The Usefulness Of The Book Is Seen From The Fact That The One Who Has Insight Will Make Use Of The Counsel Of The Book-***"and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels"* The book of Proverbs is a book of guidance and direction, and the one who has spiritual insight will grasp the *"wise counsels"* of the book, applying them to their everyday life.

### III. THE THEME OF THE BOOK [verse 7]

**1. Knowledge And Wisdom Used Synonymously** *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; but fools despise wisdom and instruction"* The words *"knowledge"* and *"wisdom"* are not distinguished in this verse, but are used as synonymous terms. When used in this way, it conveys the idea of *"the best knowledge wisely used, or the right use of knowledge"* [Proverbs 15:2]. The theme of the book of Proverbs is the **pursuit** after, and the **attaining** of this *"wisdom"* God exhorts His children to pursue the *"wisdom"* contained within the book [ Proverbs 4:7]. This *"wisdom"* is not human policy, cleverness, or ability, but THE APPLICATION OF GOD'S PRINCIPLES TO THE DETAILS OF LIFE, THE VIEWING OF LIFE FROM GOD'S POINT OF VIEW!

**2. What Is The Fear Of The Lord-**This *"fear of the LORD"* is a *"fear"* that dreads His displeasure! It is a *"fear"* that desires His favor and has a regard for His excellencies! It is a **reverence** of the majesty of God, and a **respect** for His authority. It is affectionate reverence that bows humbly before God.

☞ This *"fear of the LORD"* is commanded [Psalm 4:4; 33:8; 89:7; Proverbs 23:17; Ecclesiastes 12:13; Romans 11:20; I Peter 1:17]. When the Bible describes a true believer and worshipper of God, he is often said to be one who fears the Lord. The Lord told *Abraham* on Mount Moriah after he displayed a willingness to give the best that he had; *"for now I know that thou fearest God"* [Genesis 22:12]. It is said of *Obadiah* in I Kings 18:3 for showing respect unto the prophets of God *"Now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly"* It is said of *Cornelius* in Acts 10:2 that he *"feared God with all his house"* This godly *"fear"* leads one to God and not from God!

- The secret of the Lord is with them that fear the Lord [Psalm 25:14].
- The eye of the Lord is upon them for good [Psalm 33:18].
- The heart of God is toward them [Psalm 103:13].
- God takes pleasure in them [Psalm 147:11].

☞ This *"fear of the LORD"* will bring inward happiness and cause one to delight in the commandments of God [Psalm 112:1].

☞ This *"fear of the LORD"* will cause singleness of heart [Colossians 3:22].

☞ This *"fear of the LORD"* is a theme of the book of Proverbs:

- 1:7 It is the beginning of knowledge;
- 1:28-29 It brings answered prayer;
- 2:5 It is equated with knowledge;
- 3:7 It leads to a departure from evil;
- 8:13 It leads to a hatred of evil;
- 9:10 It is the beginning of wisdom;

- 10:27 It prolongs days;
- 14:26 It gives strong confidence;
- 14:27 It is a fountain of life;
- 15:16 It is better than great treasure;
- 15:33 It is the instruction of wisdom;
- 16:6 It leads one from evil;
- 19:23 It leads to life;
- 22:4 It brings riches, honor and life;
- 23:17-18 It rewards hope.

**3. There Is A Close Relationship Between The Fear Of The Lord And Wisdom-***"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge"* This is repeated in 9:10 and Job had pronounced this truth before [Job 28:28], and so had the *Psalmist* [Psalm 111:10]. The truth stated here is that *"the fear of the LORD"* is the foundation, and *"wisdom"* is the superstructure! *"The fear of the LORD"* is the root, and *"wisdom"* is the branches! *"Wisdom"* will not be found in the world [Job 28:12-14], WISDOM IS FOUND IN A REVERENCE FOR GOD!

**4. A Contrast Is Presented-***"but fools despise wisdom and instruction"* The word *"but"* introduces a contrast between the wise individual and the foolish individual. A *"fool"* is the one who lacks *"wisdom"* and the one who does not *"fear the LORD"* [Psalm 14:1], he is one who thinks lightly of heavenly *"wisdom"* and the *"instruction"* that leads to such! All through the book of Proverbs the fool and the wise are contrasted, and the book has much to say about the *"fool"*

- 1:22 They hate knowledge.
- 3:35 They come to shame.
- 10:8, 14 They are near destruction.
- 10:18 They are liars and slanderers.
- 10:23 They sport themselves in mischief.
- 12:15 They are self-sufficient.
- 13:19 They hate to depart from evil.
- 14:8 They are filled with self-deceit.
- 14:9 They mock at sin.
- 14:16 They are self-confident.
- 15:2 They speak foolishly.
- 15:5 They despise instruction.
- 17:25 They are a grief to parents.
- 18:2 They take no delight in understanding.
- 18:6 They are contentious.
- 18:7 Their words are entrapping to themselves
- 20:3 They are given to meddling.
- 26:11 They return to their own folly.
- 27:22 They cling to folly.

28:26 They trust in their own hearts.

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In the book of **Proverbs** God presents "*wisdom*" as a treasure that can be had in all of life's experiences, a "*wisdom*" that permeates life in its entirety. The theme of **Proverbs** is "*godly wisdom*" how to attain it, and how to use it in everyday life. This is a "*wisdom*" that is beyond intelligence or advanced instruction, it is a "*wisdom*" that knows how to act in the various situations of life. As one applies the counsels of the book of **Proverbs** they will find a power that will enable them to live above this world.

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