

# God's Wisdom for Our Lives – Week 1

## Introduction to The Book of Proverbs

### Background and Overview

1. Authorship: King Solomon (and others)
2. Genre: Wisdom
  - a. Guidelines for reading the Proverbs:
    - i. Common sense is often required
    - ii. Individual proverbs are *normally* true now
    - iii. Individual proverbs employ poetic imagery
    - iv. Many individual proverbs are partial in themselves
    - v. Gospel-Centered humility is required
    - vi. The Proverbs, like the law, ultimately point us to Christ
3. Theme: Wisdom
  - a. The Basic concept behind wisdom is skill...
  - b. Biblical wisdom is “the skill of living in reference to God” or “the skill of living in a way that pleases God”.
  - c. The foundation of Biblical wisdom: The fear of the LORD (Prov 1:7, 9:10, 31:30)... The Fear of the Lord is the controlling principle for understanding and applying the proverbs.
  - d. Wisdom is a gift for those who fear the Lord (James 1:5-6)
4. The fear of the LORD:
  - a. Characteristics of the Fear of the LORD:
    - i. A reverential awe and respect that is characterized by trust (Exodus 14:31)
    - ii. I’m sure He’s for me, but I’m sure I don’t want to be against Him (Ps 34:9, Ps 76:7)
    - iii. Love and obedience (Deut 10:12-13)  
You cannot fear God without loving Him, and you cannot love God without fearing Him
  - b. Definition: “The fear of the LORD is a proper awareness of my smallness and God’s greatness, of my weakness and His power, of my utter neediness and His saving love. It is not slavish fear, but rather it is the response of a people who have been redeemed by the Lord of love. But it is not a trite or cheap love, because it is the sober response of a people delivered from death and whose lives depend upon the saving mercy of God. And this response of fear and awe translates into a daily life characterized by God-oriented wisdom.” – Joshua Blount, CCEF
  - c. **Simple Definition: “Lord, I trust you, and what you say goes, no matter what I think or feel”.**
5. A covenantal book: Proverbs shows us what it looks like to embrace God’s covenant and live it out in everyday life situations.
6. Structure: The prologue and the plea (Ch 1-9); Real wisdom for real life (Ch 10-29); Extended Sayings (Ch 30-31)  
- Bookended with the foundational concept of the fear of the Lord (1:7, 9:10, 31:30)
7. The fear of the Lord leads to godliness in everyday life.
  - a. Connecting salvation to the ordinary:
    - i. All of life belongs to Him
    - ii. Salvation results in living in reference to God. This begins with the fear of the Lord, and it moves into every nook and cranny of existence.
8. The Characters:
  - a. The wise
  - b. The simple
  - c. The fool

## Read Proverbs 1:1-7

9. According to verse 1, what is the purpose of the proverbs?

- a. Can proverbs make you wise? (Consider proverbs 26:7-9, 25:11)
- b. Why do you need wisdom to understand and apply the proverbs?
  - i. How can proverbs be misused or cause harm?

10. According to verses 4-5, who are the proverbs for?

- a. What are the implications for us?

11. Why is the fear of the Lord the beginning of knowledge and wisdom (1:7, 9:10)?

- a. Can you know true things without fearing the Lord?
- b. What's the distinction between knowing true things and fearing the Lord?

12. The elephant in the room: Solomon's Authorship

- a. What might be unsettling about receiving instruction from Solomon about wise living?
- b. Read Deuteronomy 17:16-17...
  - i. In 1 Kings 10:26, Solomon imported thousands of horses from Egypt. He had a large Harem of wives (1 Kings 11:1-3) and he accumulated large mounts of gold...
  - ii. What happened?
  - iii. Why did it happen? How do you suppose Solomon was capable of doing this?
    - How is this instructive to us?