
*“Equipping believers for **growth** and **service** by encountering God through his word.”*

The Bible for Today

August 19, 2009



Wisdom Begins at Home: Understanding Proverbs for making godly choices

- Proverbs can serve as a set of lessons in making godly choices in life.
- Applying God's truth to our lives for the decisions we make throughout life.
- **Choice is key**; "Choice charts the course of our lives."
- Wisdom is personal and concrete—how we behave or act; not abstract or theoretical.

Wisdom Literature in Ancient Israel

- Intensely practical; the art of being successful, of forming a correct plan to gain a desired result.
- Sages to kings and rulers; the responsibility for correct decisions in political and social affairs.
- A wise counselor; a parental type relationship to those whose well-being hinged on his advice (Joseph was a father to pharaoh—Gen. 45:8).

Wisdom in Ancient Israel continued...

- Where does wisdom originate? From God. God is complete knowledge; **wisdom is insights gleaned from the knowledge of God's ways and applied to our daily lives.**
- God gives wisdom by grace; a discernment through the Holy Spirit.
- Wisdom is not IQ, cleverness or age alone; **it is a matter of orientation to God**, out of which come the ability to please him—of asking God to help us make godly decisions.

The Goal of Wisdom

- **Responsible, successful lives that please God.** Success is how effective are people at applying God's wisdom to the choices made—of applying God's truth to our experience.
- It is not about **being** wise, but **seeking to get wise**; not for personal advantage but for pleasing God.

Keys to Remember about Wisdom

- God is the origin of wisdom (Proverbs 2:5-6) and the purpose of wisdom is to please God (Proverbs 3:7).

“The advice may be strongly practical and concerned with secular issues, but it should never fail to acknowledge that the highest good a person can achieve is to do God’s will....wisdom can be used for selfish gain, but only when wisdom as a skill is subordinated to obedience to God does it achieve its proper end in the Old Testament sense.”

(Fee and Stuart)

Types of Wisdom Literature

A genre of literature in the ancient world; not unique to Israel

Proverbial, like Proverbs (sayings) practical attitudes and daily life behavior.

Speculative:

monologue like Ecclesiastes

dialogue like Job

(some Psalms are wisdom genre)

Literary Techniques of Wisdom Literature

- Parallelism (synthetic or antithetic) Proverbs 18:10 and Proverbs 10:1
- Alliteration (Psalms 37)
- Acrostic (Proverbs 31:1-10)
- Riddles, fables, allegories, parables

Understanding Wisdom Literature Today

- Often the concepts are unfamiliar to Christians; wisdom texts can help us with Christian living or be used wrongly.

- Misuse of Wisdom (especially Proverbs):
 1. Read bits and pieces at a time instead of the whole message.
 2. Misunderstand terms.
 3. Not following the train of thought or the total argument being presented.

Wisdom Begins at Home: Proverbs

“There are basic attitudes and patterns of behavior that will help a person grow into responsible adulthood.”

These attitudes, patterns, and knowledge are not the end in themselves, but will help lead one into the behaviors where wisdom will help us.

A way to teach youth how to reflect in the gray areas of life to make wise choices; to weigh their actions.

Choose Wisdom or Folly in Conduct

Wisdom

Care for poor

Respect for governing
leaders

Discipline of children

Alcohol

Regard for Parents

Sexual purity

Folly

Violence

Making careless
promises

Dishonesty; lack of
integrity

Sexual impurity

The Invitation: To walk in righteousness

- Wisdom begins with fear and trust in God
- Wisdom is actively choosing between good and bad; right and wrong
- Wisdom enables us to live a good and full life