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

The Bible for Today

October 21, 2009



Our Study Divisions of Proverbs: Using Kenneth Aitken

1. Types of Characters/ People One Encounters in life
2. Wisdom in Various Places

The Home

The Community

The Market

The Law Court

The Palace (Government/ Rulers)

The Wisdom School

3. Way of God and Ways of the Humankind

The Wisdom School: Introduction

22:17-
21

- The words of the wise (father to son)
- 30 sayings (like Chapters 1-9/ prologue)
- Parallel to “Instructions of Amenemopet” (sequence and statements/ 22:17-24:22)
- Amenemopet is for professional training, but Proverbs is for the trust and “fear of the Lord.”

“Do not toil to acquire wealth;
be wise enough to desist.

When your eyes light upon it, it is gone;
for suddenly it takes to itself wings,
flying like an eagle toward heaven.” (Prov. 23:4-5)

“Cast not thy heart in the pursuit of riches,
For there is no ignoring Fate and Fortune...
They have made for themselves wings like geese
And are flown away to the heavens.” (Amenenopet)

The Wisdom School: Four Themes

20:12

15:31

18:15

23:12

19:20

29:1

15:10

12:1

19:8

15:32

19:27

[Aitken places the sequence and other Proverbs together]

1. Listening ear: paying attention to the teacher; eyes and ears directed toward learning AND applying one's mind (a "hearing heart" will lead to good life)

non-listener will become more hard of heart; "stiff necked" Jer. 19:10-15; stiff necked easily broken like a jar because cannot be healed— not open to the ways of God

The Wisdom School: Four Themes

16:16

23:23

24:13-
14

24:3-4

13:14

15:24

19:16

10:17

13:13

21:16

2. The Value of Wisdom: cannot pay high enough price to get wisdom; gives health and is practical.

3. Two ways—life or death: wisdom leads not just to existence, but fountain of life; full and good (growth, vitality, wholeness); folly snares like a hunter's trap—weakens life, poor choices, robs vitality and health.

The Wisdom School: Four Themes

15:33

4. Fear of the Lord:

16:20

14:27

Fear of the Lord-- phrase scattered throughout Proverbs, not just in the introduction (a fountain of life)

19:23

14:26

10:27

Fear of the Lord:

14:2

A. Brings best knowledge because it is from God;

29:25

B. Will bring fruit of righteousness; guides and guards against being pulled in to situations by people of folly;

28:14

23:17-
18

C. Security of life— brings safety in life, not calamity by foolish choices.

The Ways of God/ Humans: Nature and Society

30:15-
16

Observations (not to be pressed too far); “3-4” a numbering pattern throughout ANE (cataloging?)

30:18-
19

30:21-
31

What light can nature shed on human nature?

Four insatiable things: like grave wanting people, fire fuel, parched land water so are greed, coveting; a childless woman for a baby.

The Ways of God/ Humans: Nature and Society

30:15-16

30:18-19

30:21-31

Four marvelous things: eagle, snake, ship—
movements are a mystery, so is sexual attraction.

Four unbearable things: slave to king, fool who is
successful , mistress who takes the place of the
wife— overturns the status quo or unbearable to
live with.

Four small things: small but wise, brain over brawn;
one talent used wisely goes a long way.

Four stable things: a king's stable surroundings?

The Ways of God/ Humans: Wise Words/ Wise Communication

18:21

Power of the “tongue”— words shared for good or ill
(18:21; cf. James 3:1-12)

18:20

12:14

18:4

A guarded tongue: (from wretched or thoughtless speech)—

20:15

1. Be a person of few words; be careful in speech.

13:3

2. Be a person who thinks before speaking hastily— may have good intentions, but words may ruffle or harm.

21:23

10:19

3. Be a person who listens before speaking; your opinions may not be heard if do not give other people opportunity to also share; others will not listen to what you do know, if you do not listen to them.

29:20

12:18

18:13

24:26

The Ways of God/ Humans: Wise Words/ Wise Communication

25:11

Guide for speaking appropriately

15:23

12:25

16:24

15:4

16:21

16:23

27:2

25:27

25:12

28:23

27:5

10:10

1. Use fitting words: expression and timing, to the point, balanced; say it well—like a “gold apple in a silver setting.”
2. Use pleasant words: a “healing tongue,” kind, gentle, not harsh that do not help in discussion or share wisdom.
3. Use complimentary words: healthy in moderation; unhealthy in excess—a flatterer.
4. Use reproofing words: they are helpful, enhancing character; person may not want to hear them at the time, but later will benefit.

The Ways of God/ Humans: A Glad or Sad Heart

17:22

15:13

18:14

15:15

25:25

15:30

13:17

25:13

13:12

14:10

14:13

25:20

Glad heart– optimism for life (healthy body and appearance)

Sad heart– always down, fretting, complaining

- Happiness in life does not depend on material circumstances; when life is hard, inner strength is important.
- Good news revives a person.
- Privacy of emotions: no one knows our emotions better than us; sometimes we can hide our hearts.
- Be sensitive to people's situations: our own experiences should help us to see other's needs.

The Ways of God/ Humans: The Ways of God

15:3

22:12

15:11

17:3

21:2

16:2

30:12

20:9

20:11

20:27

24:10

24:11

24:12

The eyes of God:

1. God sees everything, big/ little/ good/ bad.
2. God is the guardian of truth, will condemn falsehood.
3. God can see into the grave (Sheol) so the human heart is open to him.
4. God assesses the heart, its professions, pretense, indifferences, excuses.

God weighs us against his standard—we are not the ones who set the standard.

The Ways of God/ Humans: Man's Plans/ God's Purposes

21:5

15:22

11:14

20:18

21:22

24:5

24:6

24:27

There is a need for planning and consulting/ care and diligence with plans and advise of others.

Three areas of plan/ advice needed:

1. Affairs of state: “to steer” like a ship
2. Conduct of war: strategy and tactics (personal: careful planning and advice)
3. Building a “house:” a house or a family; count the cost before building

The Ways of God/ Humans: Man's Plans/ God's Purposes

16:1

16:9

19:21

20:24

21:30

21:31

16:3

27:1

YET—God has the final word
(19:21, 21:30)—Psalm 33:10-11

So why plan?

- Be in partnership with God that his will might be done; God does not veto; asks us to be in relationship with his ultimate purposes for the world.
- Humans delude themselves if they think they are wise enough to chart a happy, fulfilled course through life (without grief). God's counsel will make our path the high road.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; “seek first the kingdom of God...;” a wedding of human and divine wisdom.

The Bible for Today

Proverbs 30:1-6: A fitting ending “Words of Agur”

- God is hidden: we should be humble enough not to believe we know everything there is to be known about God; there is mystery in God.
- God is revealed: in his word to us; it is reliable and trustworthy.

There is complexity of life; we cannot know it all, but can trust God for wisdom. *“For now we see in the mirror dimly, but then face to face... for now we know in part, then we shall know in full.”*