



PROVERBS

Proverbs 1:1-6 Royal Wisdom

Preparation

At first glance Proverbs appears to be the most random book in the Bible. Certainly large sections of the book contain sayings that have no immediate connection with what goes before or comes after. However, closer scrutiny reveals both structure and purpose within the book. A basic outline of the book looks like this:

1:1-7	Prologue
1:8-9:18	Extended discourses on wisdom
10:1-29:27	Collection of Solomon's proverbs (with a few others added in)
30:1-31:9	Sayings of Agur and King Lemuel
31:10-31	Acrostic poem extolling the noble woman

Introduction

Read Proverbs 1:1-7. How would you define 'wisdom'? And how does it differ from intelligence?

What different words are used to convey ideas associated with wisdom? What type of life is being described? Who do you know who displays these qualities?

What connections should exist between wisdom and morality?

According to these verses, what is the purpose of this book? Rewrite this passage in your own words as a 'purpose statement' for Proverbs.

Solomon

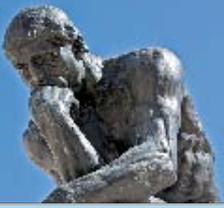
Read Proverbs 1:1, 10:1 and 25:1. Add to these verses the sheer volume of material attributed to Solomon in this book and you will recognise that we need to know a little about this man.

Read 1 Kings 3:1-15. What does the Lord promise to Solomon?

How does God intend his gift to be used?

What are the 'opportunities' and 'threats' before Solomon?

WISDOM



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Royal Wisdom cont...

Read 1 Kings 4:29-34. What do you notice about the extent and impact of Solomon's wisdom?

In what ways does Solomon fit into the plans and promises of God to his people? See also Genesis 12:1-3 and 18:18-20.

What then are the implications for God's people if they follow the wisdom of Solomon?

Sadly, Solomon didn't follow his own wisdom, and neither did the kings after him. By the time the Old Testament finishes the kingdom of Israel is no more. So what place has the king as the source of wisdom for God's people?

Read Matthew 12:38-42. What does Jesus say about his own wisdom? If Jesus is wiser than Solomon, how will listening to him bring good into our lives?

Read Colossians 2:1-8. How will our relationship with Jesus shape the way we are to read Proverbs?

Can you suggest three or four tips for reading Proverbs as a Christian?

Application

Devise a strategy for reading Proverbs over the course of this term. Be specific and practical.

Think about someone whom you would consider to be truly wise? What is it about them that makes them wise? What does it look like in practice?

In what ways have you grown in wisdom? Are there any changes you can be making to see this continue to happen more and more?

Read James 1:2-6. God calls us to trust Him and pray for wisdom. Spend some time considering the areas of your life where you need wisdom, and then ask God to grant you his wisdom.

WISDOM