



# PROVERBS

## Proverbs 1-9 Sons and lovers

So far we have been exploring some key ideas for understanding how to engage with the book of Proverbs. We have noted the importance of coming to the wise king - that is Jesus. We have also explored how 'the fear of the LORD' is the foundation for gaining wisdom. In all of this, a right attitude to our God and Saviour is fundamental to a wise and 'Christian' reading of Proverbs. In this study we will explore two interconnected images woven throughout Proverbs - the picture of the 'son' and the one he is called to embrace as his 'lover'. These two ideas continue to offer us keys to understanding Proverbs itself, and Proverbs as a part of Christian Scripture.

### Preparation

In this study we will read a long section of Proverbs together. Please read chapters 1-9 and note any important themes that emerge in this section. It may help to index some of these themes with verse references.

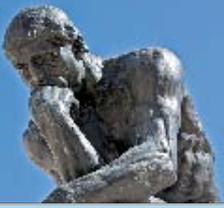
Themes

Verse references

Read Proverbs 1:8; 2:1; 3:1; 4:1; 5:1; 6:1; 7:1. What do you notice about the shape of the introductory chapters of Proverbs? Why do you think the book begins in this way?

Chapters 1-9 are one long introduction to this book. 10:1 begins a new section dominated by single sentence sayings of Solomon. What might be the significance of it beginning the way it does?

WISDOM



# PROVERBS

## Sons and lovers cont...

Throughout Proverbs, wisdom is portrayed as a 'woman'. We meet her first in 1:20-33. What is she doing, and what options does she present?

Take away the imagery, and what is the basic message here?

Proverbs 2:16-19 introduces another woman. Who is she? What does she represent? And what is the lesson for us here?

We have seen that Proverbs 1-9 is framed as instructions from 'a father' to 'a son.' From 4:1-9, who should 'the son' fall in love with?

Putting the ideas of the 'son' and 'lover' together, and stripping back the imagery, how would you summarise the fundamental lessons of this section?

Read Proverbs 9:1-12. What imagery is used to describe wisdom here?

What does wisdom offer?

What does the description of the banquet represent in real-life terms?

Read Proverbs 9:13-18. Who is the other woman?

What are the similarities and differences of these two women?

What's the appeal and the outcome of eating with this woman?

WISDOM



# PROVERBS

## Sons and lovers cont...

### Going deeper

How does the Bible speak of the 'son' and the 'lover' to reveal bigger themes of the relationship between i) Israel and God in the Old Testament, and ii) the Christian/church and God in the New Testament? If you can think of specific verses to support your ideas, then please note them down.

How might this knowledge help us to read Proverbs more wisely?

### Application

While the themes of the 'son' and the 'lover' offer helpful advice for parents, children, and couples alike - and we will explore such issues later in this series - they offer us important keys to reading the book itself. How would you summarise their value as keys to Proverbs.

What connections, if any, do you see to the other keys we have discovered:

- i) coming to the wise king?
- ii) the fear of the LORD?

Folly often tempts us with short term worldly gains and experiences, but at the expense of long term spiritual blessings. How can we keep our focus as Christians? What do you find hardest?

What have you discovered i) from Proverbs, and ii) in your experience, are the real and practical benefits of embracing wisdom?

### Prayer

Spend time asking God to help you to know the difference between wisdom and its counterfeit. Ask Him to enable you to embrace wisdom.

