

1- Road Skills - Introduction

05/16/2010 - Jim Johnson



A. _____ is a Proverb?

A biblical proverb is *“an inspired, concise yet general statement of what is usually true in life, designed to help us live a better life.”*

B. _____ penned the book of Proverbs?

According to Prov. 1:1 Solomon wrote the book of Proverbs (with a few contributions from others that were added to the book.) (Cp. 22, 30 and 31). He was an expert in the field of wisdom because...

1. He was _____ with wisdom from God. (1 Kings 4:29-34)

2. And He thoroughly understood _____.

As King, part of Solomon’s job was to serve as a judge or arbiter when it came to the law of Israel. Day after day he would have to judge in the most difficult cases. He, therefore, developed a thorough understanding of how people worked.

C. Why was it _____ (Prov. 1:2-6)

According to Prov. 1:2-6, the book was given as a manual designed to impart the distilled essence of wisdom. The theme of the book is wisdom with the words “wise” and “wisdom” being used 125 times. The book distinguishes between knowledge which has to do with the acquisition of information and then wisdom – which is knowledge put to work.

D. To _____ was it written?

It was written to Solomon’s son (to whom he refers to 15 times in the book). This was most likely his flesh and blood son, Rehoboam who was being groomed to be King. Proverbs is the only Bible book specifically written to teenagers.

E. _____ do I make Sense of Proverbs?

Most of the Proverbs were created using two short phrases. The author uses the 2 lines to compare or contrast in order to flesh out the truth.

1. Synonymous parallelism: Line one has a thought, which is repeated in a different way in line 2. (Prov. 11:25)
 2. Antithetical parallelism: The thought in line 1 is contrasted by line 2. (Prov. 10:1)
 3. Emblematic parallelism: The thought of line 1 is illustrated by line 2 (Prov. 10:26)
 4. Synthetic parallelism: The thought of line 1 is continued by line 2. (Prov. 12:9)
- Not all Proverbs, however, are limited to 2 lines. Some have 3, 4 and 6.

F. _____ did God use Proverbs to teach wisdom?

Most ancient people did not have books –even sacred books. They had to depend upon their memories to be able to learn. A proverb was made for the memory. It sticks in your mind. You find yourself recalling them and quoting them. This would be extra helpful in educating a teen. A Proverb takes a tedious conversation and distills it in one brief memorable thought.

G. Why was the book _____ in this way?

Though there are a few longer sections in Proverbs that stick with one topic, the bulk of the book consists of one thought contained in 2 lines, and then another, and another –with the topic changing every verse. And yet the same topic will pop up multiple times as you read throughout the book. Perhaps God organized it this way so that we would be forced to read it from beginning to end. This way, rather than becoming an expert in one topic, we would be broadly educated with all the Road Skills needed. The repetition of concepts scattered throughout the book would drive the truth deep. Also, if it were arranged according to topics, then we would pick and choose what we want to read. Typically, we would gravitate to topics that affirm us and make us feel good, and avoid those that don't.

H. How do I make theological _____ of the Proverbs?

1. Proverbs are not _____ but general statements of truth.

There are different rules when it comes to interpreting Scripture. We understand John 3:16 as a literal promise, whereas we understand Ps. 96:12 as a poetic figurative expression. Proverbs is a form of poetry called Wisdom literature and needs to be interpreted as such. A biblical proverb is *“an inspired, concise, yet general statement of what is usually true in life, designed to help us live a better life.”*

Each Proverb should be understood as a guideline, not an absolute observation. In other words, it is usually true, but there are exceptions. Take for instance Proverbs 10:27, *“The fear of the Lord prolongs life, But the years of the wicked will be shortened.”* Not hard to understand. Basically, it tells us that the person who fears the Lord and lives by the precepts in His Word, will typically live a longer life. The unwise person may get shot by a jealous husband, or get cirrhosis of the liver from alcohol, or die of an STD. The wise person not so much. This proverb is generally true, but not always. For instance – What do you do about the fine Christian teen that is killed by a drunken driver who is a middle aged man? In that case both parts of the Proverbs are reversed. Generally, however, it is very true that the person who lives for the Lord will enjoy a longer life.

2. Proverbs are not intended to be _____ exact.

The book of Proverbs is not a technical manual. (Prov. 6:27-29) Sometimes we need to search for the underlying principle.

3. Proverbs must be culturally _____ into today's meaning.

There are proverbs that deal well in the biblical culture that do not make as much sense in our culture. (Prov. 22:29). We solve this problem when we identify the principle in the passage.

CONCLUSION

Why Proverbs? Why now? Each of us needs wisdom. We each have pockets of foolishness that need to be challenged by this book. Those of us who are parents have the blessing of being able to put this to immediate use with our kids as well. It is recommended that you read a chapter a night at dinner, every night of the year.

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

Use this section in your personal or family devotions to better apply the truth.

Glance through Proverbs this week. Identify one Proverb (principle) there that has served you well. Tell us your story. Give us an example of how this truth worked for you. Write it down. Send it then to jimj@longviewfbc.