

## Proverbs 1:1-6

### ~ Get Wisdom ~

#### Introduction

So I have **by the grace of God**...3 beautiful children who I love dearly...

Each of my kids are **5 years and under** – and so you could say that **in one sense**:

*They just got here...*

They just arrived on planet earth!

They don't know **customs** – they don't know **manners** – they don't know **wisdom**!

And so currently in our home – there is this **repeated phrase** that is consistently falling from the lips of **Salli and myself** as we're seeking to raise these kids to the glory of God:

*Is that wise or is that foolish?*

Is that something you should be doing – or is that something you **should NOT** be doing!

That refrain...is **the reason**...I decided to pick the book of Proverbs!

#### Proverbs

The book of Proverbs was written as the **boxing glove of God** to our dumb and foolish behaviour...

Proverbs is the **2 X 4 plank** that our heavenly Father **wields** to keep us from the path of sin and on the path of righteousness...

It is I believe **the antidote** needed in the church today to the common notion: you just need to:

*Follow your own hearts!*

How many of you have heard the phrase before:

*You just need to do what is right in your own eyes!*

*You just need to go where your heart is leading!*

*Go with what feels most natural to you!*

Well the book of Proverbs has a **very different** approach and **strategy** to living!

The book of Proverbs tells us that:

*The way of the fool is the way to destruction!*

The way of the fool is folly and **leads to death!**

It tells us **exactly what happens** when **the fool** in Scripture decides to go **his own way** – **refusing** to listen to **the voice** of wisdom!

Proverbs 12:15 says that:

*The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to instruction...*

Proverbs 18 verse 2:

*A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but **only delights** in his own opinion...*

And Proverbs 28:26 tells us:

*He who trusts in himself is a fool, but the one who walks in wisdom will be rescued...*

### **Main Point**

And so at the heart of this **incredibly rich** book of Proverbs – a book **neatly nestled** between the book of ***Psalms*** and ***Ecclesiastes*** is the overarching **message** and **main point** of the book that we need to get:

*Wisdom is a priceless possession so get serious about getting it!*

That is what I believe to be the **main point** and **reason** for Solomon writing the Book of Proverbs!

*Wisdom is a priceless possession so get serious about getting it!*

In fact I have called this series:

*Heavenly wisdom for earthly saints*

Because I believe that at the heart of this incredibly rich book of Proverbs we see something of the **heavenly wisdom** of God!

The **heavenly thinking** of God!

Something of His **nature** – something of His **character** – something of His wisdom **given to us** in concrete realities (in very earthly ways)!

And that's true really of **every book** of the Bible – every book of the bible reveals His goodness and His grace in Jesus Christ – but the book of Proverbs **in particular** is:

Really the **most practical** book in the entire Bible

The book of Proverbs is *God's heavenly wisdom in street clothes* – wisdom for daily living – wisdom for everyday life!

### **Earthly Spirituality**

In fact someone once said that if the Book of Proverbs were to be written today – it's the **kind of book** that would tell you:

*To mow your lawn – to clean your gutters – to take out the trash – and to do the dishes!*

It's **that kind of street level practicality** that Solomon is so seriously concerned about giving to his sons!

And whoever said that:

*Christianity is so heavenly minded that it's of no earthly good...*

Never read the book of Proverbs!

## Proverbs 8

In fact here's what I want us to do – please turn over in your bibles to Proverbs chapter 8 for a moment...

Proverbs chapter 8 [Pg. 559 in the black pew bibles] – what I want us to see in Proverbs 8 is how **God decided** to in-build His wisdom into the very **fabric & makeup** of His cosmos!

Wisdom is inbuilt into the very fabric of His cosmos!

Listen to how Solomon speaks about wisdom regarding the purposes of God in God's **ways** – God's **word** – and God's **world**!

Proverbs chapter 8 beginning at verse 10 – Solomon writes:

*Accept my instruction instead of silver, and knowledge rather than pure gold. <sup>11</sup> For wisdom is better than jewels, and nothing desirable can equal it. <sup>12</sup> I, wisdom, share a home with shrewdness and have knowledge and discretion. <sup>13</sup> To fear the Lord is to hate evil. I hate arrogant pride, evil conduct, and perverse speech. <sup>14</sup> I possess good advice and sound wisdom; I have understanding and strength. <sup>15</sup> It is by me that kings reign and rulers enact just law; <sup>16</sup> by me, princes lead, as do nobles and all righteous judges...*

So it's talking about how wisdom is in-built even into the way that Kings operate and how judges rule!

Now skip down to verse 22 where **wisdom continues** to speak – she says:

*The Lord acquired me at the beginning of His creation, before His works of long ago. <sup>23</sup> I was formed and before ancient times, from the beginning, from before the earth began. <sup>24</sup> I was born when there were no watery depths and no springs filled with water. <sup>25</sup> Before the mountains were established, prior to the hills, I was given birth— <sup>26</sup> before He made the land, the fields, or the first soil on earth. <sup>27</sup> I was there when He established the*

*heavens, when He laid out the horizon on the surface of the ocean, <sup>28</sup>when He placed the skies above, when the fountains of the ocean gushed out, <sup>29</sup>when He set a limit for the sea so that the waters would not violate His command, and when He laid out the foundations of the earth. <sup>30</sup>I was a skilled craftsman beside Him. I was His delight every day, always rejoicing before Him. <sup>31</sup>I was rejoicing in His inhabited world, and delighting in the children of Adam...*

You see this book is **NOT only** the **most practical** book in the entire Bible – but this book has **something of** the wisdom of God!

Something of God's wisdom **brought forth** to humanity!

Something eternal!

Something unending!

Something everlasting!

And it **only makes sense** that the God who made the world – made the world **His way** and according to **His wisdom!**

And that concept of God **giving His wisdom** to His **earthly saints** is **what drives Solomon** (the author is this book) – to repeatedly say to his sons:

Wisdom is a priceless possession so **get serious** about getting it!

Wisdom is a **priceless possession** (better than gold – better than jewels – in-built into the very fabric of creation) – so we need to **get serious** about getting heavenly wisdom!

*Because we need wisdom like we need air friends!*

## Intellectual Age

But what exactly is wisdom?  
 And what does it look like?  
 How does it feel?  
 What does it mean?  
 How do you recognize wisdom?

Well to quote one pastor:

Wisdom is **so much** more than mere intellectual knowledge!

It is **so much more** than brains/ or data/ or knowledge or facts!

I'm sure **we've all met** before those **really smart** dumb-people – or really **dumb-smart** people!

Those who know **every answer** on a calculus test – but **wouldn't know** how to change a lightbulb in a bedroom!

The kind of person who writes a **10,000-word essay** on metaphysics – but forgets to **set their alarm** on time!

Today we have access to **infinitely more** amounts of **data** and **knowledge** and **information** than **any other generation** – and yet:

We are among some of the **dumbest people** to ever have lived on the face of the planet!  
 In fact I saw this great quote on Facebook the other day which I thought was telling – (Facebook being that great source of all **wisdom** & truth) – and it said:

*Never has a generation of people so diligently documented themselves as achieving so little...*

Just think about that statement:

Never have we lived in a generation of people who have been **so quick** to document themselves as being **so dumb**!

And yet **that's the generation** we're in!

We live amongst a people who have infinite access to **data** and **information & knowledge** at the touch of a finger – and yet there are so many **dumb** – so many **stupid** – and so many **unwise** people living all around us in the world today!

## Wisdom

And so we know that **wisdom** is **more than just** mere intellectual knowledge...

It is so much more than simple data/ general **knowledge/** and **information!**

And so at the **risk of oversimplification** – I think we could say at minimum that:

*The essence of biblical wisdom consists in the knowledge/ the know-how of doing a **specific task** to the glory of God – while living in **God's world!***

So in Exodus 35 the word (wisdom) is used to describe the **skill of an artist** adorning the tabernacle **in the wilderness...**

The word is used to speak of goldsmiths using their **skill & talent** to fashion idols in Jeremiah 10...

Or in Psalm 107 it speaks of **the seamanship and ability** of seasoned sailors steering the ships on **rough & tumbled** seas!

The point is that wisdom is **NOT just** the ability to memorise facts – but how to use those facts wisely in God's world!

*Wisdom is the **applied knowledge of the Scriptures** to everyday life*

## Wisdom's Whole

This is why Solomon used a number of **different words** for wisdom in these **first 6 verses** of Proverbs chapter 1– to describe for us the **multi-faceted** ways that wisdom **displays itself** in God's world!

So that in **verse 2** Solomon uses the phrase: *sayings of understanding and wisdom*/or *insightful sayings*!

It's another way to speak of wisdom!

In **verse 3** he calls wisdom *prudent instruction* – or *wise behaviour*!

In **verse 4** he refers to it as *shrewdness* or *the ability to have craftiness*!

In the latter half of **verse 4** he refers to wisdom as *knowledge* and *discretion*!

In **verse 5** he speaks of wisdom in terms of *learning & discernment*/ or *guidance* as the CSB has!

In **verse 6** he calls wisdom a proverb or a parable: *the words of the wise*, and *their riddles*...

Finally then in **verse 7** he identifies wisdom in its covenantal context when he refers to the concept of:

*Fearing the LORD !*

### **Multi-dimensional**

The point is that:

Wisdom is **NOT** just a *one size fits all* reality!

It is **NOT** something that you point to and say: *that there is the essence of wisdom*!

But wisdom is a **multi-faceted** thing!

Wisdom is **multi-dimensional**!

It is **multi- directional**!

It has many different **words** and **windows** and **ways** of expressing itself!



Another way to say that:

*Wisdom is **NOT** ibuprofen...*

It is **NOT** a Panadol that you just *pop a proverb* here or there and life starts to become easy and carefree for us...

Wisdom is **NOT** learned in a single sermon **series** – or a lecture – a list of **commands** – a solitary example...

Wisdom comes from a lifetime of **thoughtful reflection** on the experiences of life (that's the sphere of God's **world**) – and a **careful study** of God's **word** (that's the revelation of Himself)...

So that those **2 areas** that come together for *skilful godly living* (God's **word** in God's **world**) is what I think the bible refers to as:

Wisdom!

Therefore, wisdom is seen in a craftsman's skill – it is seen in a parent's instruction – in a king's integrity – it's a farmer's patience – a pastor's counsel – a doctor's practice – a mother's command – a friend's loyalty – a builder's precision – a father's discipline – a servant's humility – a child's honesty!

Wisdom for all of it's multi-faceted **beauty** is:

The art and skill of living in God's **world** while following God's **word**

And this is how the Hebrews often spoke of wisdom – they referred to it as:

*Skilful godly living*

And we have something similar of that in our modern culture today – we say to people:

*He or she are **NOT making** wise choices...*

Which is another way to say that they're **NOT being skilful** in their living!

## **Air**

And so I do hope that you are now starting to feel the **weight** & this **immense burden** of godly wisdom as it comes to us in the book of Proverbs friends:!

*We need wisdom friends like we need air!*

*Wisdom is to the Christian life as **air is** to a drowning man!*

In fact I was **this close** to calling the series:

*Life is hard, but it's harder when you're dumb!*

*Life is hard, but it's harder when you're dumb!*

Because that's what Proverbs is trying to communicate!

We are all foolish/and fickle sinners in desperate need of God's holy wisdom!

In fact, the **only person** who does **NOT feel** their **acute need** for wisdom is the fool (the simple) – the one who feels like they've **already arrived** at being wise!

Because what we **just read** in Proverbs chapter 1 verse 5 is that:

It's the **wise person** who seeks further counsel & insight!

It's the wise person one who seeks out more understanding!

And that's why Solomon has written this book of 31 chapters so that he may faithfully begin to skill us all in the **art** and **skill** of godly living!

This book is the heavenly wisdom of God – for every earthly saint!

## Proverbs 1

Now having said all of that – what I want to do for the rest of our time is briefly walk us through **the nature** of the Proverbs – their **unique style** and **literary genre**!

I want to briefly give you a warning when it comes to the **nature of wisdom**!

And then I want to finish with a **final picture** and **conclusion** of reading the book of Proverbs!

So 3 things:

*The **nature** of Proverbs*  
*A **warning** in Proverbs*  
*And the **end** of Proverbs!*

## Proverbs 1

So let's begin first by speaking about the **nature of the Proverbs** – how do we interpret the book of Proverbs rightly?!?!

Well notice again chapter 1 verse 1 where Solomon begins like this:

*The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel...*

So notice that these are **the Proverbs** of Solomon!

So that this is **NOT** a Gospel like Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John!

This **isn't** history like the book of Genesis or 1st and 2nd Chronicles!

It's **NOT** apocalyptic like Zechariah or Revelation!

And it **isn't** prophecy like the book of Daniel or Jeremiah!

No the book of Proverbs is very clearly stated as:

*Proverbial wisdom*

And as such we need to read the Proverbs in way that **God-intended** this style to be read!

So that we **do NOT read** the book of Proverbs **in the same way** that we would read a Gospel – or a history lesson – the book of Revelation!

God intends for us to read the book of Proverbs according to its God-ordained literally style!

**Genres**

And to be honest we do this **kind of thing** all the time in our daily lives!

When you go to cook dinner for your family and you use a recipe – you **don't read** a recipe in the **same way** that you do a history lesson or a love letter!

No you read a recipe – as a recipe!

And you're gonna be **very confused** if you try to read a recipe **in the same way** you do a fairy tale, or a nursery rhyme!

The point is that we need to read **certain literary genres** in the style and intention that these things are **intended to be written in!**

Slam poetry is **NOT** the same thing as history – history is **NOT** the same thing as prophecy – prophecy is **NOT** the same thing as a narrative – and a narrative is **NOT** the same thing as a Proverb!

Each one of these **God-ordained styles** are to be **read** and **interpreted** in the God-ordained **way** in which they are intended to be read!

## Proverbs

And so a Proverb is to be read as a Proverb!

For the most part **a proverb is:**

*2 short lines of poetry (or couplets) expressing one **general truth** of wisdom!*

How life is **supposed to work** under the fear and admonition of the LORD!

In fact, the Hebrew word for “*Proverbs*” literally means “*a comparison/ or “a parallel.”*”

And that’s what we find in the **middle section** of the book in chapter 10 to 29:

These **short/pithy aphorisms** or **sayings** that compare:

The way of the **righteous** & the way of the **wicked**!

The way of the **fool** & the way of the **wise**!

The fear of **God** & the fear of **man**!

And so that's what a proverb literally means:

To **compare** and **contrast** 2 different ways of life!

More broadly speaking however a Proverb has **also come to mean:**

*A short pithy statement of truth **drastically condensed** for teaching purposes!*

So an example of that would be like:

*An apple a day keeps the doctor away...*

Now that’s **NOT** a Proverb found in the bible, but I’s a *short pithy statement of truth **drastically condensed** for teaching purposes!*

And so the point of the Proverb is **NOT to say** that if you **only eat apples** everyday of your life – then you’ll **never have to** visit the doctor – but rather **it’s conveying to us** that:

A healthy eating **habit & lifestyle** generally **tends to keep you** healthy and away from the doctor!

### Normal Rails

And that’s the other thing we need to note when it comes to the book of Proverbs!

The book of Proverbs are designed to give to us the **normal rails** of life – the **normal pattern** of life – it tends to give us the way that life **generally tends** to go:

*Don’t flirt with the flirty girl in the office and you **won’t have** an adulterous affair!*

*Don’t neglect the discipline of your children and they **generally won’t** want to steal a car!*

*Work hard to the glory of God and you **will have** savings in your bank account!*

The Proverbs tends to give us the **normal patterns** of life...

But at the **same time** a proverb is **NOT to be taken** in the way of a promise!

You don’t read the Proverbs in the **same way** that you read:

*He who began a good work in you **will complete it** in the Day of Christ Jesus!*

That’s NOT how we take the Proverbs!

We **don’t take** the Proverbs in the **same way** that we take the book of Philippians or Colossians or Romans or Ephesians!

### NOT Promises

Because the nature of the Proverbs are that they are **wisdom literature** – they are **proverbial wisdom!**

They **are NOT** universal truths taken as absolute realities!

They are **axioms/maxims** that are **most likely** to occur when a particular course of action takes place!

So if you serve God **faithfully** – if you work hard **diligently** – if you treat others **fairly** – and you pursue **purity** – the book of Proverbs says that:

You will have a joyful/blessed/and prosperous life!

Correct?!?!

Yes! Absolutely – amen – 100% - I agree!

So what about Job?!?!

What happened to his blessing?!?!

What happened to his prosperity?!?!

What happened to his best life now?!?!

He served God faithfully!

He loved God truly!

He honoured man rightly!

But God in His infinite wisdom decided to curse Job's life – and to take away his **children** – his **wealth** – his **empire** – and to give him an **insurmountable amount** of trials & tribulations!

And it's the **very same thing** with the book of Proverbs friends!

You can do every **right thing** that this book **tells you to do** – you can do it with the **purest of motives** – and in the **purest of ways** and yet:

There are **NO GUARANTEES** that your children will be Christian – your wife will be a blessing – or your job will be secure!

There are no guarantees in the book of Proverbs that if you do AB&C you will get XY&Z!

That's **NOT** how the Proverbs are intended to work!

If you train up a child in the way he should go (Proverbs 22:6) and yours is the child that **doesn't go** that way – that's **NOT a disproof** of that proverb!

It's **NOT a failure** on the part of God to honour His word – that's simply to direct you to the **nature & style** of proverbial wisdom!

**Normally** training up a child – **does result in their** love for Jesus!

**Normally** hard work over long periods of time – **does result in** gaining wealth!

**Normally** having excesses bouts of alcohol – **does lead you** to liver failure!

But of course it **doesn't always** do that!

There **are exceptions** to the rule!

### Genesis 3

And the reason is because we live in a Genesis 3 reality – we live in a world where **sin** – **death** – **rebellion** – **wickedness** – **crime** – **corruption** – **evil** all exist in a place that God is currently redeeming!

And so in this **evil** and **broken** system:

Sometimes the **evil** do **prosper**!



Sometimes the **righteous** do go to jail!

Sometimes Christian **kids** do go astray!

And that's **NOT** a failure on the part of God friends – that's simply to direct you to the **nature & style** of proverbial wisdom!

So that when **those trials do come** – when we do suffer as Christians *for righteousness' sake* – we would have the ability & wisdom to entrust our lives to a **sovereign God!**

To glorify God in every season of suffering – because He's given to us the wisdom from above to **deal with** those trials in **this life!**

And so that's **the nature** of proverbial wisdom!

These Proverbs tend to give us the **normal patterns** of life (the way that life generally tends to go) – but there **are always exceptions** to the rule!

### **Warning**

Second – let me briefly speak to you about:

*The warning* in the book of Proverbs

The warning of proverbial wisdom!

### **1 Kings 3**

Now the warning comes when we gaze our eyes on the author of this book...

When you think **about wisdom** you should think **about Solomon**

And in particular the book of 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 3 has **a lot to say** about the nature of wisdom **in the life of** Solomon the King!

Now in **1<sup>st</sup> Kings 3** (I'm **NOT** gonna read the whole chapter for you) – but in **1<sup>st</sup> Kings 3** you have *the beginning of the kingly reign* of Solomon – the *beginning of his coronation* – the beginning of his **earthly rule!**

And in **1<sup>st</sup> Kings 3** God **appears to Solomon** in a dream and invites Solomon to ask God for  
**whatever he so desires**

Anything that he wants – God is going to grant to Solomon the King!

And so in **1<sup>st</sup> Kings 3:7** we see **the request** that Solomon gives to God in this dream – he says:

*And now, O Lord, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, and although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or how to come in...*

That's **another way** of saying:

*I lack **wisdom** – I lack **knowledge** – I lack **understanding** when it comes to **governing your people!***

And so in verse 8 he says:

*And now your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. <sup>9</sup> Therefore give to your servant **an understanding mind** to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil...*

So Solomon comes to God **in his dream** and he requested to God to grant **to Solomon** the ability to have **heavenly wisdom** to govern God's people!

The wisdom of God given to Solomon!

And in **1<sup>st</sup> Kings chapter 4** (the **very next chapter** after this) – we see God **granted the request** of Solomon **far beyond** anything he could have ever imagined!

Turn over to **1<sup>st</sup> Kings 4** if you're there – verse 29:

*And God gave to Solomon wisdom and understanding **beyond measure**, and breadth of mind **like the sand on the seashore**,<sup>30</sup> so that Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt...*

Now look down at verse 32:

*<sup>32</sup> He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005. <sup>33</sup> He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall. He spoke of beasts, and birds, and reptiles, and fish. <sup>34</sup> And the people **of all the nations** came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and from all the kings of the earth, who had heard of his wisdom...*

Now that last part should remind you if **1<sup>st</sup> Kings chapter 10**

## **1 Kings 10**

In 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 10 we have the famous visit **of** the Queen of Sheba that comes from the South **to listen to** Solomon's wisdom!

And so in 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 10 **by the time** the Queen of Sheba arrives in Jerusalem verse 5 says that:

**She doesn't have any more breath** left in her lungs!

She considered the wisdom of Solomon – she considered all of his ways – she considered his kingdom – his people – his servants – and his palace – and the text tells us:

There was **no more breath** left in her lungs!

Such was the **wisdom** and the **glory** of Solomon's **Kingdom & knowledge** of Solomon that:

She was speechless!

She had no more breath to express her wonder and amazement!

And in fact in 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 10 says that she responded to Solomon and said:

*The half of what this man knows has **NOT** even been told yet*

Such was the **wisdom** – and the **knowledge** – and the **glory** of Solomon to his people!

Solomon had this **uncanny ability** through his **wealth** – and through his **wisdom** – to bring **fame** – **fortune** – and **favour** to the people of God – that it was said that:

Solomon had introduced so much precious silver into the economy of Israel that silver was about as **common & valuable** as stones in the street!

That's how wealthy and wise Solomon had made the nation of Israel!

Solomon was the **wisest human** being ever to have lived and will ever live in the history of the world!

And yet!

Now here's the **warning of wisdom!**

### **Solomon's Downfall**

You **cannot know** the story of Solomon without **also knowing** where his general life direction was headed!

Solomon had 700 wives (**1 Kings 11:3**)

Solomon had 300 concubines (**1 Kings 11:3**)

Solomon married foreign women (**1 Kings 11:1-2**)

Solomon worshiped foreign idols (**1 Kings 11:4-8**)

Solomon built pagan altars (**1 Kings 11:7**)

Solomon taxed and **overtaxed** his people (**1 Kings 12:4**)

Solomon trusted in wealth and military power (**Deuteronomy 17:16-17; 1 Kings 10:26-29**)

And at the end of his reign in **1<sup>st</sup> Kings 11** it was said that *Solomon's heart was turned away from Yahweh because of these foreign and wicked women* (**1 Kings 11:4**)

You see for all of his **wisdom** – and all of his **riches** – and all of his **glory** – Solomon could still **NOT** stop himself from ending up as:

The proverbial fool of Proverbs!

Friends:

Solomon became the **very person** that he warned his people about!

He became the proverbial fool that disobeyed the wisdom of God!

And this is a **sad** and **severe** and **sobering** warning to any of us who think that we are above reproach and the above the reach of sin & temptation!

### **Solomon's Repentance**

Now I do think that Solomon finally came to a place of repentance & faith at the **end of his life**:

Which is **why he wrote** the book of Ecclesiastes!

Ecclesiastes was written as Solomon's repentance letter!

Because Solomon understood that for **all of his riches**, and wealth, and gain – God was the **ultimate end** of his life's pursuit!

And yet Solomon serves as the **ultimate example** and **warning** to us – that you can have all the **knowledge** – all the **wisdom** – and all the **glory**!

And you can have God **on your side** – you can live in a **place of peace** with your **neighbour & prosperity** in the land:

And yet you can **still end up** the proverbial fool of the book of Proverbs!

For all of his **wisdom** and all of his **character** Solomon **could still NOT control** the allurements of sin!

### **End of Wisdom**

And that's why I think it's important that we **end today's sermon** by speaking about:

The end of the book of Proverbs

Now by end I **don't mean** literally the end (like **Proverbs 31**) – I mean:

The goal of Proverbs!

The telos!

Where is this book leading?!?!

Where does the book take us?!?!

To whom does the book point?!?!

And the obvious answer is I hope (as with all of the Bible) the ultimate purpose of the book of Proverbs is to lead us to **Christ!**

The book of Proverbs should lead us to Jesus Christ!

### **Negative Shading**

And I think there's **2 ways** that the book of Proverbs ultimately leads us to Jesus – number 1:

*We must see the wisdom of Solomon ultimately fulfilled in the wisdom of Jesus!*

So this is the **compare & contrast** model!

And here's what I mean by that – if we go to Matthew chapter 12 and we read the words of Jesus **in verse 42** when He's condemning the Jews of Jerusalem for **always seeking a sign** – He says in verse 42:

*No sign will be given this generation except the sign of the prophet Jonah...And the men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment of this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and something greater than Jonah is here...*

Verse 42:

*And the queen of the South (the Queen of Sheba) will rise up at the judgment of this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here*

So there's a way to read the wisdom of the Proverbs in this kind of **compare & contrast** to say:

*Solomon was **wise** – Solomon was **lovely** – Solomon was **incredibly gifted** in knowledge and yet how **staggering it is that something greater** than Solomon is here!*

Someone even more wise!

Someone even more lovely!

Someone even more beautiful **is here!**

We just learned that Solomon's **breadth of knowledge** was **greater** than the **sand of the sea** on the shore – and yet:

Something **even greater** – something wiser – something better than Solomon is here!

So that's one way to read the book of Proverbs!

### **Wisdom Personified**

But I think a **better way** and a **more faithful** way to read the book of Proverbs is to say that:

Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the wisdom of God!

He is the Personification of heavenly wisdom!

In other words:

There is no wisdom in this life **apart from** Jesus Christ!

If we want to get **wisdom** – if we want to be **wise** – if we want to **ultimately benefit** from the book of Proverbs – then we must ultimately **look and come** to the one who is:

The wisdom of God manifest **in the flesh!**

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1 verse 30 says:

*And because of Him [that is God the father] you are in Jesus Christ – (you have been united to Jesus Christ) who became to us wisdom from God...*

He became to us the wisdom of God **manifest!**

Now how did He do that?

How did He manifest God's wisdom?

Well 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians chapter 1 verse 23:



*But we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jew – folly (or foolishness) to Gentile, but to those who are called, it is the wisdom and power of God...*

He lived in this world – He came to this world – and He died in this world in order to show this world and to demonstrate where **true wisdom** and beauty is found!

Look to the cross of Jesus Christ!

Look to the Person of Jesus Christ!

If you seek the wisdom of the book of Proverbs – then you must **ultimately look** to the **only place** in which Paul the Apostle says:

*Are hidden all the treasure of wisdom and knowledge in Jesus Christ!*

We're **NOT** gonna get anywhere in this book – we're **NOT** gonna get anywhere in life – or make any progress **in this world** apart from the Person and work of Jesus!

Coming to Jesus in **repentance** and **faith** which Solomon says will **look** strangely like verse 7 that we're gonna talk about next week:

Trusting and fearing the LORD

The best gospel help that you can find in the book of Proverbs – to quote one pastor and theologian **is going to be that:**

*We are all **ultimately the fool** in Proverbs – that we are **NOT** wise – and that we all must ultimately **seek the one** (the only one greater than Solomon) who can help us find our way!*

And what would that faith ultimately look like to an Old Covenant Jew who seeks to walk in the ways of wisdom and honour?

Well Solomon says that that faith and repentance in God – will ultimately look like:

*The fear of the LORD as the beginning of wisdom...*

*The fear of the LORD as the beginning of knowledge!*

Coming to Jesus Christ because that's where all fear and admonition of the LORD **ultimately comes** to bear!

Wisdom is a priceless possession and so we need to get serious about getting it!

## Proverbs 1:1-7

### Discussion Questions

**[Read Proverbs 1:1-7].**

**Main Point:** *Wisdom is a priceless possession so get serious about getting it.*

**Q1.** As you read the opening verses to the book of Proverbs what do you think is the main purpose of the book? **[note specifically verses 2-6]. [Read Proverbs 4:5-9].** – What does Solomon say are the benefits of wisdom here? – How would you summarise in a simple sentence the main point of the book of Proverbs?

**Q2. [Read Proverbs 8:10-21].** How highly does Solomon seem to value the possession of wisdom? – How should this change the way we seek after it?

**Q3.** Speaking of God’s wisdom – how would you define wisdom according to Proverbs? – Why is it important to distinguish wisdom from simply gaining facts or intellectual knowledge? – How is biblical wisdom different from simply following your heart or doing what feels natural? **[See Proverbs 12:15; 18:2; 28:26].**

**Q4. [Read proverbs 8:22-31].** According to Proverbs 8, how is wisdom connected to the very creation of the world? – How does the idea of wisdom being “*apart of creation*” affect the way we should view wisdom in our daily lives?

**Q5.** Why is it important to read Proverbs according to its genre/literary style? – In what ways can misunderstanding the nature of Proverbs lead to disappointment or false expectations?

**Q6.** Despite being the wisest man who ever lived (other than Jesus), how did Solomon eventually fall into folly? [See **1 Kings 11:1-10**]. –What warning does Solomon's life provide for us who are seeking after wisdom? [See **proverbs 16:18; 1 Corinthians 10:12; James 4:6**]. –What role do repentance and humility play in the pursuit of true wisdom?

**Q7.** How does Proverbs ultimately point us to Jesus Christ? – How is Jesus the true fulfillment and personification of wisdom? – What does it mean when Jesus says, *something greater than Solomon is here*? [**Matthew 12:42**].

**Q8.** In what areas of life do you most feel your need for godly wisdom? –How does recognizing Jesus as the wisdom of God impact the way you seek for wisdom? – What steps can you take this week to *"get serious about getting wisdom"*?