

Introduction to the Book of Proverbs

by Chuck Smith

The book of Proverbs provides wisdom and guidance for living a virtuous life, with the ultimate goal of fearing and reverencing God.

Duration: 25:05

Scripture: Proverbs 1:1, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Proverbs"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Chuck Smith introduces the Book of Proverbs and its purpose. He emphasizes that the fear and reverence of the Lord is the foundation of knowledge. He warns against making knowledge or education one's god, as true understanding comes from knowing and revering God. Pastor Chuck also discusses the dangers of peer pressure and the consequences of giving in to evil practices, using the analogy of a bird falling into a trap despite seeing it being set.

Transcript

Oh, let the Son of God enfold you With His Spirit and His love Let Him fill your heart and satisfy your soul
Oh, let Him have the things that hold you And His Spirit like a dove Will descend upon your life And make you whole
This is titled, The Proverbs of Solomon, the Son of David, King of Israel. Solomon was a very wise man. When he ascended to the throne, God said to Solomon, Ask of me whatever you would like.

And so Solomon said, Lord, grant to me wisdom That I might rule over these, your people. And the Lord said, was pleased with Solomon's request, He said, because you did not ask for money or fame, But for wisdom, I will not only give you wisdom, But I will also give you money and riches and fame. And so Solomon became a very wise man.

We are told in Kings that he wrote 3,000 Proverbs. Now, I've been working all my life on a book of Proverbs. I've got about five so far.

If you challenge Solomon's wisdom, Then I challenge you, write a proverb. Now, a proverb is a short little saying That incorporates a lot of wisdom. And we hear proverbs all the time.

Your parents so often speak to you in Proverbs. Honey, a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. Now, there's a lot of wisdom to that.

Having something, possessing something, is really greater than hoping to get something that you don't yet have. And so Proverbs bring together thoughts and ideas that express a lot of wisdom. Now, in this book of Proverbs, not every verse is a proverb.

He gives us here the purpose of Proverbs in verse 2. To know wisdom. To receive instruction. To perceive words of understanding.

So a proverb will help you to be wise. Give you wisdom. It helps you to receive instruction.

We are instructed so many times by Proverbs. And it gives you understanding into life. Into the things of life.

The purpose of Proverbs is to receive the instruction of wisdom. Of justice. Of judgment.

And of equity. So these things, justice, judgment, equity, we are expressed so often times in Proverbs. It's to give subtlety to the simple.

In other words, it is used for instruction. To put the truth in a way that it can be remembered. In a clever way that sort of sticks to you.

It gives to the young man knowledge and discretion. Now also a proverb is good for the wise man. For he will hear and will increase his learning.

And a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels. So, the purpose of Proverbs. They minister to the simple, to the young, to the wise.

To men of understanding. And to understand a proverb and the interpretation. What's it really saying? The words of the wise and their dark sayings.

Or their sayings sometimes where you have to think it through. And those kind of things where you think about it and say, Oh, yeah, I see. Yeah, I get it.

I get it. But it doesn't come off right on top. You have to sort of meditate on it and think about it.

And as you do, the truth comes through. The dark sayings where the truth is hidden until it's drawn out through meditation. So, the first six verses sort of introduce Proverbs.

The purpose of them and what they will do. Now, in verse 7, he gives you sort of the foundation for the whole book. The Proverbs that he wrote.

The purpose of them was to bring you into the reverential fear of the Lord. For this is the beginning of knowledge. To fear God.

To reverence God. To know God. That's the beginning of knowledge.

Now, it is interesting to me that there are many people who make knowledge their God. Education is the big thing of their life. They're constantly reading.

Constantly studying. Constantly seeking to learn more and more. And as they gain knowledge.

Understanding. Become sophisticated in it. It is interesting to me that so often times when you ask that person about God.

What do you think about God? They'll say, well, I'm an agnostic. Because they think that sounds very wise. Very sophisticated.

In fact, they try to say it with a Harvard accent. Get some nasal in there. Agnostic.

And it sounds, oh my, you know. The word agnostic is a Greek word. The Latin word for agnostic is ignoramus.

I'm an ignoramus. But it's sort of interesting that a person who makes his intellect his God. Ends up with a confession of ignorance when it comes to ultimate knowledge.

The beginning of real knowledge is the fear of the Lord. The reverence of God. And to fear the Lord is to hate evil.

But fools despise wisdom and instruction. Now, Solomon addresses much of the book to my son. Not necessarily literally his sons.

Of which he had many. But as a teacher addressing the class. Having that desire and love for them and to see them grow in knowledge and wisdom.

As a instructor to the pupil, my son. Hear the instruction of thy father. And forsake not the law of thy mother.

For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head. And they will be as a chain around your neck. They will adorn you.

They will beautify your life. My son. If sinners entice thee.

Consent thou not. We have a lot of peer pressure. I would say that most people who have experimented with drugs.

Did so under peer pressure. In a party, in a group. Where drugs were brought out.

There was that peer pressure. Of everybody's doing it. And that first step.

And so many times. Left to ourselves. We would not have done that.

Had it not been for the peer pressure. We knew better. We really didn't want to do it.

Our hearts sort of rebelled against doing it. But there was that peer pressure that we succumbed to. And so this is the warning against that peer pressure towards evil.

If sinners entice you. Don't consent to it. Now this is enticement to crime.

If they say come with us and let us lay wait for blood. Let us lurk privately for the innocent without cause. In other words let's go out and rob a bank or whatever.

Let us swallow them up alive. As the grave. And whole as those that go down to the pit.

We shall find all of their precious substance. We will fill our houses with spoil. Cast your lot among us and we'll split everything that we get.

Is the idea. Let's become a gang and let's go out and start committing crimes. And we'll pool everything that we get.

My son walk not thou in the way of them. And refrain your foot from their path. For their feet run to evil.

And they make haste to shed blood. Now here's the proverb. Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.

That's the proverb. What does he mean. Proverbs have to be thought out.

He's warning. These young people. About the peer pressure to do evil.

And how there is that tendency. For a person to give in to the peer pressure. Though you know good and well.

The end result. Is disaster. You know you shouldn't do it.

And so he's talking about the folly of birds. Bird brains. Doves are silly birds.

And for the most part the dove was the bird that they sought to trap. To snare. And they would set out a net.

And then they would pour out the grain. And the doves would come and eat the grain. They drop the net on the dove.

Now the dove can be sitting there in the tree waiting for you to leave. So he can go down and get the grain. Watch as you set the net.

But the silly thing. As soon as you walk away the grain is on the ground. He flies right on down to get the grain.

And so in vain. The net is spread in the sight of any bird. They don't have enough sense not to fall in the trap.

Even though they can see it. They can see it being set. And that's the sad tragedy about a lot of people in evil.

They can see the consequences of evil. They know the consequences of evil. And yet they fall into evil anyhow.

The surgeon general warns us. That smoking cigarettes is dangerous to your health. But people smoke anyhow.

So surely in vain. The net is spread in the sight of any bird. And so they lay wait for their own blood.

And they lurk privately for their own lives. In other words, you're the one that's ultimately going to be hurt. By getting involved in these sinful practices.

It will always come back to you. And you are the one ultimately that will be hurt and destroyed. By your life of sin.

And so are the ways of everyone who is greedy of gain. If you're just after riches no matter how they may come. Honestly or dishonestly.

But these are riches of which a person has taken away the life of the owner. You've killed to get. So, that's the end of that section.

Now, he's going to talk about wisdom. And this is a subject that is going to be a very much of the part of the early part of Proverbs. Is wisdom speaks to us.

This is wisdom. And wisdom is personified by him. It's made like a person talking to you.

And in the personifying of wisdom. Letting wisdom speak to you. It is as though God is speaking to you.

Or Jesus Christ is speaking to you. For in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. So, he sort of personifies wisdom.

And just lets wisdom speak to you. But as you listen to wisdom speak to you. You're listening to the Lord speaking to you.

For he is all wise. So, it becomes a personification. But in a sense it's God speaking.

The wise God giving counsel. So, wisdom cries without. She utters her voice in the streets.

She cries in the chief place of business. In the openings of the gates. In the city she utters her words.

And this is what wisdom says. How long, ye simple ones, will you love simplicity? When will you grow up? When will you learn? How long will the scorner love or delight in their scorning? And how long will fools hate knowledge? How long will you go on in simplicity? In your scorning? In your hatred of knowledge? The encouragement, turn at my reproof. Behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you.

And I will make known my words unto you. So, wisdom crying. I'll pour out my spirit.

The spirit of wisdom. And we do read of that in the New Testament. The spirit of wisdom.

The spirit of knowledge. We read of that in Isaiah 11.1. The spirit of the Lord is upon me. The spirit of wisdom.

Knowledge. Understanding. Because I have called and you refused, I've stretched out my hand and no man regarded.

But you have set at naught all of my counsel. You wouldn't listen to my reproof. Therefore, I also will laugh at your calamity.

I will mock when your fear cometh. When your fear cometh as desolation and your destruction comes as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish comes upon you, then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer. They shall seek me early, but they shall not find me.

So, as I said, being personified, it's almost as though God is speaking. You can just hear actually God speaking in these same words, wisdom. If you don't listen to the voice of God, if you don't receive the reproofs of God, if you go on in your way headstrong, not listening to God, you're going to come to calamity.

And when you come to calamity, then you'll cry out. But there will be then at that time a refusing to help. You got yourself into the mess.

A proverb, you made your own bed, lie in it. That's not Solomon's, but that's just one that I heard when I was a kid. If the shoe fits, wear it.

We live by proverbs. So, we do know that through the prophet Jeremiah, God said much the same to Israel. God said, you wouldn't listen to me.

I'd call unto you. You wouldn't hearken unto me. You turn to other gods.

Now that you're in trouble, call on those gods that you've been worshipping. See if they will help you. And God said, I'm not going to help you.

You've created your own calamity by your disobedience, by not listening, and not hearkening unto me. So, what is said concerning wisdom is also said concerning God. For they hated knowledge, and they did not choose the fear of the Lord.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. But they hated knowledge because they did not choose to fear the Lord. And they would not listen to my counsels, and they despised all of my reproof.

Therefore, as a result, you won't hearken to wisdom, hearken to the Lord. Therefore, shall they eat of the fruit of their own way. What you sow, you're going to reap.

And they will be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoever will listen or hearken unto me will dwell safely and shall be quiet from the fear of evil.

Now, he again addresses his son. If you will receive my words and hide my commandments with thee, if you'll just lay my commandments to your heart, so that you will incline your ear unto wisdom and you'll apply your heart to understanding. Yes, if you cry after knowledge and you lift up your voice for understanding, if you will seek her as silver and you'll search for her as though you were searching for a hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and you'll find the knowledge of God.

A true search for knowledge, a true search for understanding and wisdom will lead you to God. You'll find God. Then you'll understand the fear of the Lord.

You'll find the knowledge of God. We return with more of our verse-by-verse venture through the Bible in our next broadcast. As Pastor Chuck continues his study through the book of Proverbs, we do hope you'll make plans to join us.

Now, for those of you that would like to secure a copy of today's message, simply order Proverbs 1, verse 1 when visiting the wordfortoday.org. While you're there, we encourage you to browse the many additional biblical resources by Pastor Chuck. You can also subscribe to the Word for Today podcast or sign up for our email subscription. Once again, all this can be found at thewordfortoday.org. If you wish to call, our

toll-free number is 1-800-272-WORD and our office hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific Time.

Again, that's 1-800-272-9673. If you prefer to write, our mailing address is The Word for Today, PO Box 8000, Costa Mesa, California, 92628. And now, on behalf of The Word for Today, we'd like to thank all of you who share in supporting this ministry with your prayers and financial support.

And be sure to join us again next time as Pastor Chuck continues his verse-by-verse study through the Bible. That's right here on the next edition of The Word for Today. And now, once again, here's Pastor Chuck with today's closing prayer.

Thank You, Lord, that Your mercy endures forever and that when we call upon You, You hear us and You answer us and You forgive us our sins because Your mercy endures forever. O Lord, we pray for Your mercy and we praise You. We give thanks unto You because You're so good to us and Your mercy endures forever.

Thank You, Lord. Amen. I have a question for you.

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