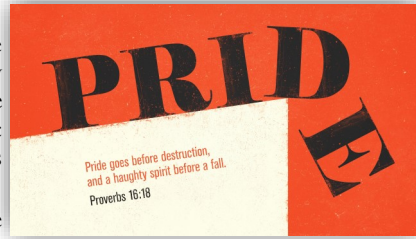


Interpreting the Proverbs

Proverbs is a treasure trove of wisdom, but the Bible student must approach the book seriously and well-prepared if they desire to unearth all the treasure to be mined out. There are some basic principles that will help us approach the Proverbs correctly.



- 1. Read Deliberately:** This may seem to simple to mention, but recognize they type of literature Proverbs is. It is poetry, not narrative. While it may be easy to quickly read many proverbs, it is better to slow down and carefully digest each verse. This is especially true since each verse often jumps to a new topic. One might be able to read through dozens of proverbs without truly getting the full meaning of a single one.
- 2. General Truths:** A very important point about a proverb is it is a general truth. A proverb states something that is generally the case, but may not account for every possible scenario. For example, Proverbs 22:6 says, *“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.”* Generally speaking, that is true. Parents play a great role in training their children, and many children leave the church because their parents didn’t raise them to love the Lord. Is that always the case though? No. Good, faithful, godly parents have had children who, in older years, made their own choice to leave the Lord. Generally speaking, however, that is not the case. The fact that proverbs are general truths doesn’t weaken the truth they reveal—it just means we need to be careful in our interpretation and application.
- 3. The Principle:** Because Proverbs is poetic, we must dig into the meaning to determine the principle. Overly wooden applications can be dangerous. Proverbs 22:24-25 says, *“Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man, lest you learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare.”* Does this mean we should immediately and completely sever all ties with friends who struggle with anger issues? No. The principle being taught is to be careful who we choose as friends and who we allow to influence us. Associating with evil people will likely cause us to pick up their characteristics. This is not a call to be an introvert—it is a call to use wisdom in our relationships.

Other principles could likely be listed, but these should be a good starting point for delving into the wonderful wisdom of Proverbs!

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| ◆ God | ◆ Honesty/Dishonesty |
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| ◆ Humility/Pride | ◆ Foolishness |
| ◆ Friendships | ◆ Correction |
| ◆ Leadership | |

“That You May Grow Thereby...”

A weekly Bible reading plan



Proverbs 11-20

Wisdom for Life and Godliness

Overview

A proverb is “a short pithy saying in general use, stating a general truth or piece of advice.” Proverbs boil big ideas down to short phrases that are easier to understand and are more memorable. While the first nine chapters of Proverbs are a collection of poem-like writings, the “proverbs proper” begin in chapter 10. Chapter 10 through chapter 22:16 contain proverbs of Solomon. While there is some grouping of subject material, by and large the largest grouping of a topic is one or two verses. Topics are, however, repeated frequently throughout the entire book. There are a couple forms of proverbs used frequently: chapters 10-15 primarily use antithetic parallelism. That simply means that opposite principles are contrasted. For example, Proverbs 10:1 says, *“A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother.”* All but 19 verses in chapters 10-15 uses this formula. Chapters 16-22:16 rely more heavily on synonymous parallelism. This method pairs similar or identical principals together. An easy example is Proverbs 16:16, *“How much better to get wisdom than gold! To get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.”* The short, memorable sayings of Proverbs can be a magnificent blessing to every Bible student. Whatever one’s level of spiritual maturity, if they will give themselves to reading and meditating on the Proverbs, they can find the path that leads to greater wisdom!

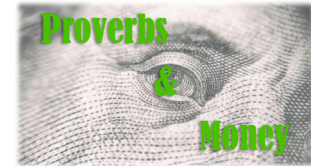
Suggested Reading Schedule

Monday: Proverbs 11-12
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 Wednesday: Proverbs 15-66
 Thursday: Proverbs 17-18
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Things a Loving God Hates

When Christians think of God, one attribute they often think of is His love. After all, John tells us, *“God is love”* (1 Jn. 4:8, 16). We often think of love as the opposite of hate. Thus, we conclude God does not hate. But Proverbs shows us such a conclusion is false. While God certainly is love, there are things He hates. Proverbs 6:16-19 gives us a list of 7 things God hates, but this theme is picked up in other places throughout Proverbs. Do we love the things God loves, and hate the things God hates?

- Lying Lips.....Pro. 12:22
- The Sacrifice of the Wicked.....Pro. 15:8
- The Way of the Wicked.....Pro. 15:9
- The Thoughts of the Wicked ...Pro. 15:26
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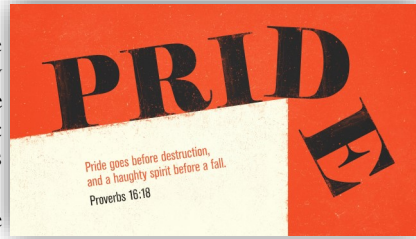
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because money is a realm where many people act very foolishly, and we all need to learn godly wisdom in terms of finances. Here are few lessons from this week’s reading section (and a few extra) that teach the path of financial wisdom:

- Be Generous..... Pro. 11:24-25
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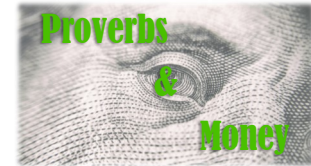
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