

Proverbs Study Guide #1
Proverbs 1-31

The Bible is a progressive revelation of the life and thought of God. This revelation does not meander aimlessly. Rather, the thoughts of God expressed in His Word increasingly open to us the design of God, the heart of God and His heart's intention. From Genesis to Revelation the Bible is a flow of increasing velocity and definition of who and what and how God is and the expression of His desire.

Without this view, the book of Proverbs may appear to be merely a collection of wise sayings by wise men. Yes, this book is a gathering of wisdom, but it is much more than this. With this view, we enter into a recognition of detailed aspects of the life and character and attributes of God, and His goal that these elements be imparted into a humanity that mirrors Him.

Proverbs provides the view and the way to practice our human life as it interacts with and upon the principles of God's Law given to Moses. These proverbs are not scattered thoughts. Rather, each one unlocks yet another aspect or angle or encouragement or warning or definition or instruction or testimony of an aspect of the ten commandments given to Israel. As the Law of Moses opens the character of God, Proverbs adds definition and detail for our experience.

Yes, the Law of God is expressed as commandments to His people; and as such, we may receive the Law as a punch list of proper and improper behavior. However, a deeper, more proper response is to see the Law not only as the expression of required high standards, but know that the divine life-power within the believer can grow him into such a lifestyle. Believers in the resurrected, living Christ are empowered and qualified to hope and expect no less than this maturation process little by little through His inward supply and their cooperation in daily life.

The Law is composed of mainly four items: 1), reverence for God; 2), needing wisdom for human living; 3), honoring of parents, and 4), honor in marriage. In going through Proverbs, nearly every verse may be placed in one of these four categories which reflect all things crucial in God's expression and man's living.

As to the timing of Proverbs: the law was given to Moses approximately 1500 B.C. King Solomon penned Proverbs 1-24 approximately 1000 B.C., and King Hezekiah penned Proverbs 25-29 approximately 700 B.C. Agur gave us Proverbs 30 and King Lemuel Proverbs 31.

It is my hope the Lord will give us much hunger for Himself in the words of Proverbs. We ought not compare ourselves to an impossible standard and give up; neither ought we to strive to accomplish self-perfection and become proud. In either extreme we miss God and His heart's intention for us. May we yearn after the Spirit of life in these words, pray over them until they become food to us and thus be strengthened to become a character befitting of the life and Spirit of God within and through our daily living.

I am challenged by W. Lee's admonition in a message on Proverbs regarding the Law and receiving these truths in Proverbs when he said "Even if a person accepts all these gems and is successful in keeping them, he will only build up himself to be a perfect man by cultivating the self...and build up (the) natural man." We need God, not an improved version of the natural man.

So, let us turn our hearts and our minds and our time after the giver of the Law, after the Breather of the divine Word and His words. Let us not come in curiosity to critically inspect with natural minds and seeking morality and ethics and philosophy and psychology and religion in this book. Rather, may we humble ourselves and find in Him grace, a wellspring of living water to refresh us and bring us into a living that expresses His joy through hearts and minds and wills set after God Himself, not merely improved behavior in a realm under the judgment of God.

The Ten Commandments
Exodus 20:1-17

1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain.
4. (a) Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. (b) Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work.
5. Honour thy father and thy mother.
6. Thou shalt not kill.
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.
10. (a) Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, (b) thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, (c) nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any things that is thy neighbour's.

Revere God**Needing Wisdom****Honoring Parents****Honor in Marriage**

#1
#2
#3
#4a

#4b
#6
#8
#9
#10, a
#10, c

#5

#7
#10b