

Proverbs Study Guide #6  
Proverbs 1-31

## Understanding

**Introduction:** Each book in the Bible is unique and each has its format and purpose. For example, some books are developed chronologically, unfolding events in time such as Genesis, Exodus and the Chronicles, and in the New Testament the first four gospels. The Song of Songs is a mystical love story, written as an allegory reflecting the future revelation of the preciousness of the relationship between the Bridegroom and the Bride, between Christ and the Church. Some deal with persons and their life experiences, such as Job and Philemon.

Many of the epistles are written to focus on solving specific problems with answers bringing in further revelation about the Lord's love and desire. Psalms is poetry, and good poetry is best understood and received when openhearted and read out loud. Hebrews is very topical and focused. Some epistles cover several subjects for one primary goal. Psalms describes a progressive experience of believing ones and their relationship with Jerusalem as pictures of their reality, which pictures Christ and the church.

Proverbs is unique in another respect. It speaks recurrently of themes and crucial words which depict basic elements of human living and human living related to the divine experience within daily life. It is important to realize this, to understand that life is fragmented. There is a thread of recurrent subjects and ideas and character issues and developmental thoughts that can be traced from childhood all through life into great age. The matters are constant but they change constantly in relation to new growth, new problems, new maturity, failures, etc. Proverbs matches this heartbeat of fragmented human experience.

Many of the same crucial words in the beginning of the book recur all through the book to the end. The words are static but their meaning and relationship and development change with the person and circumstance. For example, the book opens with wisdom and chapter four says wisdom is the most crucial thing to acquire, but this is still quite general.

By the last chapter of Proverbs we see a woman who has become the embodiment of wisdom. You wonder what wisdom is but when you see her live you suddenly know. You see the woman and she is so utterly human, but not like her early humanity. She was processed that way, not born that way.

You wonder what made her grow into that kind of person, and then you realize she became the consummate expression of human living by engaging the ideals and experiences throughout this book from her youth onward until she became such a person, able to live out what all would like to be. She has passed through what others pass through, but she has done so successfully, in spiritual and human terms. We would do well to process these crucial words as we study this book, memorize as many as possible, and give the Lord permission to work in our lives until He becomes our actions and reactions in all things. His work and dealings in our lives will always have an expression in our human living. God does not express Himself in a vague way. He works within a believer and comes out in their living.

In the Old Testament, God appeared difficult to know because He was invisible and not often definable and tangible. In the New Testament that all begins to change. When God became flesh, the first four gospels show God defined. When you see Jesus live and die and live again you see God by watching how the Man Jesus lived. The work of the Spirit of God was contained in, defined by, and expressed through His humanity. This principle is a prototype that is multiplied in Acts, the Epistles and the Revelation in and through the believers in the church. It is not typical, but it is normal that believers and the church become the multiplication of this principle and prototype.

Proverbs was not written that we might be masters of philosophy, iron-willed men of ethics or self-remodeled religious people. It was written in order that by knowing Christ and experiencing the Spirit of Christ we might have our natural life replaced and uplifted by the transforming Christ within and through us. May He help us to know Him in this perfecting Way. If we can grasp this and enter into it, Proverbs and the spirit in it may be helpful to us.

The book of Proverbs contains many words key to understanding human life, especially human life that is to engage itself with divine life. Following are some of these words. Compare each word as it is used in several different verses, chapters and contexts in this book. Note contrasts, progression of thought, exceptions, promises, circumstances in which the word may have a different meaning, etc. Exercise yourself to drink in these words as written on page thirteen. Last lesson we considered “wisdom”, this lesson we will consider “understanding”.

1. Wisdom (Proverbs Study Guide #5) (Proverbs 1:2, 3, 7, 20, etc)

2. **Understanding**

Prov. 1:2, 5, 6

2:2, 3, 5, 6, 11

3:4 (meaning, wisdom)

3:5, 13, 19

4:1, 5, 7

5:1

6:32 (heart)

7:4

7:7 (heart)

8:1, 5, 9, 14

9:14, 16 (heart)

9:6, 10

10:13 (heart)

10:13 (intelligence)

10:23

11:12

12:11 (heart)

13:15 (meaning, wisdom)

14:33 (intelligence)

14:8, 29

15:14 (intelligence)

15:21

15:32 (heart)

16:16

16:22 (meaning, wisdom)

17:18 (heart)

17:24, 27 28

18:2

19:8,

19:25 (intelligence)

20:5, 24

21:16 (acting wisely)

21:30

23:23

24:3

24:30 (heart)

28:2, 5, 11, 16

29:19

30:2

Genesis 11:7

Genesis 41:15; 42:23

II Samuel 3:7

I Chronicles 28:9

Ps. 73:17

Daniel 10:11, 12, 14

Daniel 12:8, 10

Hosea 4:14; ;13:2

Matthew 13:13, 14, 15, 19, 23, 51

Matthew 15:17

Luke 24:45

Romans 1:20

Romans 3:11

Ephesians 1:18; 4:18

Ephesians 5:17

Philippians 4:7

I Timothy 1:7

Hebrews 11:3

Revelation 13:18

**Exercises:**

1. Things about understanding you've seen:
2. Application to your daily life:
3. Something to share with others:

**Other words to study in Proverbs:**

3. Instruction (Prov. 1:1, 3, 8)
4. Prudence (Prov. 1:4)
5. Wise man (Prov. 1:5, 6)
6. Hear (Prov. 1:5, 33)
7. Learning (Prov. 1:5)
8. Fear of the Lord (Prov. 1:7, 29)
9. Knowledge (Prov. 1:7, 22, 29; 2:5, 6)
10. Teaching (Prov. 1:8)
11. Sinner (Prov. 1:10)
12. Sheol (Prov. 1:12)
13. Wealth (Prov. 1:13)
14. Path (Prov. 1:15; 2:8, 15, 18, 19)
15. Way (Prov. 1:31; 2:8)
16. Fools (Prov. 1:22, 32)
17. Spirit (Prov. 1:23)
18. Reproof (Prov. 1:30)
19. Receive (Prov. 2:1)
20. Commandments (Prov. 2:1)
21. Heart (Prov. 2:1)
22. Law (Prov. 1:8)
23. etc.

**Exercises:**

1. What other key words might be added to this list for us to study?
2. Try to memorize at least one verse in Proverbs every week of this study, remembering the reference with each verses. Review, review, review.

