

Proverbs Study Guide #8
Proverbs 1-31

Prudence

Introduction. As in previous studies, this cover sheet does not address the word to be studied directly or exclusively. Rather, we continue with the general thought of language, of speaking and of accuracy in our words and understanding. If we are careless in either receiving or giving training we will be careless in our receiving the words of the Bible and likely careless in interpreting the Lord's specific speaking to us in the Word and even our response to it.

Careless and loose words expose a careless and loose person. Since God's intention is to use the whole man, He is much affected in His ability to use us in those things in which we are careless, loose or even lacking in attention to detail. Paul even exhorts the believers to not jest or talk foolishly. He places the exhortation on these careless ways in the same category as "filthiness" and all of them as the opposite of giving thanks (Eph. 5:4). It is particularly important that those who preach the Word and teach others the Word and in Christian matters handle the Word carefully as well as in the way of life that conveys His thought and His Spirit in the expression of it.

Last week I addressed the matter of learning any language by learning basic words. Not only foreign tongues are languages in this sense, but also any trade or profession or subject of study. In this sense, "Bible-speak is a foreign language", it is the language, the tongue, the Word, the words of God to mankind. If believers actually believe and embrace the Word of God as being inspired ("God-breathed"), then each and every word is important to the receiver.

To treat any verse in the Bible carelessly is a great mistake. To assume we "know" a verse because we have read it before; to presume a verse is not important and flippantly pass over it (again) because it is full of names we can't pronounce without some effort or to select topics and verses that fit into "our" doctrine is a very serious offense to the Giver of the words.

For the Word to be given and ministered in health and in accuracy it must firstly be received in that same manner. It is imperative for the believers to bring the Word to the subject of consideration, not the pre-learned topic to the Word. The Word must never be ignored, presumed upon, neglected, overlooked or laid aside because it contains a word or a phrase, a chapter or even a book that does not fit into "our" doctrine or convenient understanding.

Each word in the Word must be actively courted to challenge every thought and teaching we have. If we actually "believe the truth" let us aggressively allow "the truth" to always challenge our thoughts and doings and words and our definitions of our words. Error comes often not from consciously re-defining words but in casual, loose, careless useage of words that causes the thought conveyed by the word to be distorted, and therefore distort the thought of God and His heart's desire that we accurately receive what He in passion gave.

Those who believe there is Truth can afford to live in a challenge of it. Those who fear challenge may be protecting their own inaccurate view of it. Truth can never be changed. It is those who misperceive in error that distort its assumption to themselves and to others that suffer.

On the contrary, truth challenged will find believers refined, clarified, purified, emboldened and strengthened to stand upon its bedrock of believeability and execution. If we do something so simple as define many words we use and compare them to the scriptures we will be in a position to receive further revelation and practice of divine truths from the Lord. Pure words received will more likely pure vessels make for pure vessels established and testified. It is my hope and prayer we will not treat this subject carelessly. That indeed would not be **prudent**.

Following are further thoughts about speaking the language of God and a few words often used, perhaps in presumption, in careless assumption, often in glaring error from the Bible. Is each one scriptural? If the word or concept is Biblical, is it used today in a biblical manner? Correct words may have distorted meanings, just as in “Americanese” “gay” today is something defiled and defiling, whereas “gay” years ago was a wonderful word depicting happiness and cheerfulness. The error of careless language is rampant in Christendom as well. Consider each word below, and add additional missing words to this little dictionary as you go.

A proper culture needs words to match it. To enter the culture of the Bible’s thought it requires words to match it. The culture of Christianity has deviated noticeably through the centuries from the Bible’s vision and centrality. Some of the words currently used need to be added, re-considered, re-defined, or eliminated in order to produce a Biblical experience of Christ and the church.

Proverbs, more than any other book, defines not only the doings of a man who is right with God and with other men, but the man himself. The man and what he does must be right. The man must think rightly before doing rightly. Right thinking and careful speech are present when the man himself is right with God, right with the thought and Word of God, and right in his ministry to others with the Word and with the words of God.

Even with words we use that are scriptural in thought, we do well to define and apply them according to the way and thought and practice in the scriptures. Cultural thoughts added to the Bible are excused easily by many, but if they mis-color the revelation in the Word, it leads the believers astray. A slight deviation today becomes a great error tomorrow, just as a satellite off-course by a nearly imperceptible degree today may miss its goal entirely after time and distance multiply its error.

The following list is but a sampling of words in today’s culture of Christianity that are often used, some words needed but employed; many words contrary to the Bible, some with much license, some with assumption that the deviated thoughts are necessary to explain “an advance in Christianity” to fit “today’s culture”, not realizing the error the presumption causes. If some of the words are useful, it is important to define and use them according to that in the scriptures and not according to a culture of partial truths colored badly by the world’s influence.

Richard A. Nelson/ December 2004

Consideration Of Vocabulary In Today’s Christendom
After church
Altar
Anglican, Lutheran, Episcopalian, Roman, Church of God, Church of Christ, Church of Jesus, Assembly of God, etc., 100s of etceteras
brothers, Brothers
Buying a church
Christian psychiatrist, Christian plumber, Mexican brother, Korean church, etc
Christian school
Christmas, trees, whiskey, angel hair, Santa Claus, nativity scene, wise men, shepherds

Church marriage	Page
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Church member	
Clean the church	
Communion table	
Controlled by the spirit/Spirit	
Cup full of names	
Deacon and deaconess	
Deacon body	
Dressed for church	
Easter, Easter hat, rabbit, duck, colored eggs	
Elder	
Elder body	
Father, Holy Father	
Free group	
Gold cross	
Hades	
Heaven	
Hell	
Hierarchy types and patterns	
Independent Baptist, Freewill Baptist, Conservative Baptist, American Bapt., GARB, etc.	

Laity	
Layman	
Lay preacher	
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Local body	
Local church	
Lords Day/Sunday	
Mary	
Meet at the church	
Meetings, assembly, meeting place, meeting hall, home meetings, cell meetings, carecells	
Minister, ministers, Minister of..., Teaching Minister, etc.	
Missionary, apostle	
Missions	
Money to build a church	
Non-denominational	
Our body	
Painting the church	
Parsonage	
Pastor's salary	
Pastor's wife	
Pew	
Podium	
Prayer	

Preacher's kids	
Preacher's wife	
Priest, priest	
Program	Page
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Pulpit	
Rev., The Most Holy Reverend, etc.	
Saints	
Sanctuary	
Sermon	
Service	
Shepherd, Pastor	
Shhhh! God's house!/ Don't run in the House of God!	
Special number	
Sunday best	
The gospel	
The Lighthouse body	
The Most Holy Reverend	
The offering	
Their body	
Transubstantiation	
Universal church	
What church do you go to	
Worship hour	

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 and other books. 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 “instruction”, this lesson we will consider “prudence”.

1. Wisdom (Proverbs Study Guide #5) (Proverbs 1:2, 3, 7, 20, etc)
2. Understanding (Proverbs Study Guide #6) (Proverbs 1:2, 5, 6, etc)
3. Instruction (Proverbs Study Guide #7) (Proverbs 1:2, 7, 8, etc)
4. **Prudence:** subtle, crafty

Proverbs 8:12

12:26

12:23

13:16

14:8

14:15

14:18

15:5

16:21 (intelligent, understanding)

18:15 (intelligent, having understanding)

19:5 (cause to act wisely, understand)

22:3

27:12

I Samuel 16:18

II Chronicles 2:12

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Isaiah 3:2

Isaiah 5:21

Isaiah 10:13

Isaiah 29:14

Isaiah 52:13

Jeremiah 49:7

Hosea 14:9

Amos 5:13

Matthew 11:25 (intelligent)

Luke 10:21 (intelligent)

Acts 13:7 (intelligent)

I Corinthians 1:19 (intelligent)

Ephesians 1:8 (wisdom, mental feeling)

Exercises:

1. Things about **prudence** you've seen:

2. Is there a distinction between a prudent act and a prudent person?

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3. Does God make people prudent? Does prudence belong only to believers? Can an unbeliever be prudent and a believer foolish?

4. What is the difference between wisdom and understanding and prudence? Can you reflect one and not the other?

5. Application(s) to your daily life:

6. Something to share with others:

Other words to study in Proverbs:

5. Wise man (Prov. 1:5, 6)
6. Foolish man (Prov. 1:22, 32)
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. Hear (Prov. 1:5, 33)
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)

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23. Righteous (Prov. 2:7)
24. Simple (Prov. 1:32)
25. Evil man (Prov. 2:12)
26. Upright, good men (Prov. 2:20, 21)

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.

Richard A. Nelson/ March 2004