

The Proverbs

The Benefit of Studying the Proverbs

Proverbs 1:1-7

1. **A King Blessed with Wisdom** (v.1)

Solomon was blessed with an amazing opportunity from the Lord and he chose to request wisdom to rule (1 Chron. 1:7ff; 1 Ki. 3:16-28). His wisdom is seen in the ways he judged the people (1 Ki. 4:29-34), and he was renowned in his day for his wisdom (1 Ki. 10:1-10; cf. Luke 11:31).

2. **The Purpose of the Proverbs** (v.2)

In a broad sense, the biblical idea of wisdom is “‘masterful understanding’, ‘skill, ‘expertise’” (cf. Ex. 28:3; 31:6; 1 Ki. 5:7; Ecc. 4:13; Jer. 50:35; Isa. 3:3; 10:3).

A. To Know Wisdom and Instruction.

To become wise, a person must submit himself to the teaching authority (Prov. 1:8; 3:12; 24:32) in order to subdue innate waywardness (cf. Prov. 22:15).

B. To Discern Sayings of Understanding

It is possible to both be confronted with something and to examine it while still lacking understanding (cf. Isa. 6:9). It is important to seek (Prov. 2:3), purchase (Prov. 4:5), and learn (Prov. 4:1) the wise understanding of Proverbs.

3. **The Student's Benefit in Studying the Proverbs** (v.3)

Here the general benefits for learning the proverbs are laid out as the ability to know and understand what is right, just, and fair. These are all components necessary for judging rightly so as to uphold justice (Ps. 9:8; 96:10) and have always been elements in God's justice (Ex. 23:6; Deut 16:19; 27:19; cf. Lev 19:15).

4. **The Teacher's Goal in Teaching the Proverbs** (v.4)

The goal in teaching the proverbs is to take the ‘morally brainless’ and give them the tools to become enlightened and guided by wisdom. This knowledge is inseparable from the teachings of this book and “it is imperative that the gullible youth seek (Prov. 15:14; 18:15), find (Prov. 8:9), and acquire it (Prov. 18:15).”

5. **The Enduring Benefit in Studying the Proverbs** (vs.5-6)

Since the purpose of Proverbs is to guide a person to skillful mastery of moral knowledge, it is important to remember that even those who are no longer naive benefit greatly from careful study.

6. **The Epistemology of the Proverbs** (v.7)

Epistemology refers to the nature and grounding of knowledge. Central to the understanding of knowledge in the Proverbs is the fear of the Lord (cf. Prov. 9:10). This is intrinsically linked with the special revelation of God in the Scriptures, and it can be taught and memorized (Ps. 19:7-9; 34:8ff).