

The Book of Proverbs - II

"Proverbs--God's Rules and Standards"

I. BOOK OF PROVERBS PRIME REFERENCE SOURCE FOR WISDOM IN PRACTICAL, "NITTY-GRITTY" DETAILS OF DAILY EXISTENCE.

- A. As Christians, live in two worlds--natural and supernatural.
 - 1. The "righteousness of God" still has to sweep the floor, carry out the garbage and change the oil in the car.
 - 2. The "joint-heir with Christ" still has to fix meals and mow the lawn.
 - 3. We still need to have wisdom in the natural, everyday things of life.
- B. In study of Proverbs, will be considering different topics rather than verse-by-verse analysis.
 - 1. Tonight, look at Proverbs in general.
 - 2. Following weeks:
 - a. Sluggardness (laziness).
 - b. Finances
 - c. Child-rearing
 - d. Friendship
 - e. Marital fidelity
 - f. Fools
 - g. Wicked
 - h. Health and longevity of life

II. WHAT IS A PROVERB?

- A. The word "proverb" actually refers to a rule or a standard.
 - 1. In Hebrew, it means "to be like"
 - 2. These are rules and standards of God Himself, passed down to us in order that we can be more like God through the study and application of His Word.
 - 3. When gardener wants a tender young tomato plant to grow up strong and straight, he doesn't say to it, "Now plant, I want you to grow up straight. But I'm leaving it up to you. You just grow up any way you feel is right for you."
 - 4. If we want children to grow up tall and straight morally and spiritually, we must provide them some standard that does not change. We dare not leave them to choose their own standard, or allow them to live their lives without one.
 - 5. The Word of God is eternal; if we will take the time and effort to bind our children to the Word of God, if we will train them up in the way they should go, then when they are old, they will not depart from it. That is a promise of God!
- B. Proverbs are more than just simple sayings.
 - 1. They are the very wisdom of God expressed in everyday language.
 - 2. To understand the words is not enough; must get past the words of men into the mind of God.

3. To fully appreciate and benefit from the truths expressed in these proverbs, will need the presence of the Holy Spirit to reveal to us the wisdom contained (and often hidden) in these "wise sayings."

C. Many of the proverbs of Solomon make sense naturally, it's not difficult to understand them.

1. We grasp their meaning right away and our own experience tells us that they are true.

2. Others are more difficult to understand and to relate to our modern-day lifestyle.

III. SIX BASIC TYPES OF PROVERBS

A. Synonymous Proverb

1. A proverb in which both lines say essentially the same thing, but expressed in a slightly different way.

2. Prov. 11:15 - *The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.*"

a. A verse on prosperity.

b. Saying that those who truly become prosperous are givers, because generosity is an attitude of the heart; an attitude which results in blessing.

3. Prov. 11:29 - *"He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind: and the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart."*

a. Anyone who doesn't know how to manage his own household will eventually lose everything he has. He will end up inheriting the wind, which is nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit.

b. Will end up being a servant to the wise.

B. Antithetical Proverb

1. A thought is presented in the first line, with the negative of that thought expressed in the second line.

2. If you do such and such, you will be blessed; but if you don't, this is what will happen."

3. The negative accentuates the positive.

4. Prov. 14:30 - *"A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones."* (usually find a "but" between two lines).

a. Believers ought to have the healthiest flesh of anyone on this earth, because our heart is full of the joy of the Lord.

b. The opposite is true: when we get off into strife and discord, we open the door for Satan to come in and put sickness and disease on us.

5. Prov. 17:22 - *"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones."*

a. Basically same as above.

b. Repetition is key to learning--wisdom is "pounded in."

C. Synthetic Proverb (perhaps the rarest of all types in Proverbs).

1. Identifies a proverb in which both lines seem to express a totally different thought (even sometimes direct opposites), yet which have one common theme.
2. Prov. 10:18 - *"He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool."*
 - a. First line: lying or falsehood.
 - b. Second line: Slander or malicious talk.
 - c. One speaker hides true feelings; the other speaker makes no attempt to conceal his.
 - d. Though actions direct opposites, both are condemned because the intent and results are the same--harm and injury. Common

theme is wrong use of the tongue.

D. Integral proverb

1. Second line completes the thought of the first line.
2. Because of flow, effect produced is almost that of one continuous line with no interruption.
3. Prov. 13:14 - *"The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death."*
4. Second line completes or complements the thought of the first.
5. Prov. 19:20 - *"Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end."*
 - a. The second line emphasizes the results obtained by applying the first.
 - b. It is important to hear counsel and receive instruction; because that is the best way to insure success in the future.
6. Prov. 22:6 - *"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."*

E. Parabolic Proverb

1. The first line illustrates the second.
2. The second line is the teaching; the first is an analogy.
3. Prov. 11:22 - *"As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion."*
 - a. Swine was the most degrading or contemptible of creatures. Ugly, smelly, profane.
 - b. Used to symbolize what was to Solomon the most useless and most repugnant thing imaginable--a beautiful woman with no sense!
 - c. If young person dates another based simply on attractiveness, more interested in self than in them. Really want something good to hang onto your arm.
4. Prov. 26:9 - *"As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of fools."*
 - a. Drunk never seems to feel the pain--until later.

b. Just as the senses of a drunkard are too dull to register pain, so are the senses of a fool too dull to register shame. Neither realizes his sad situation and desperate need. Neither understands that he is the cause of his own sorry state."

5. Prov. 20:26 - *"Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth."*

F. Comparative Parable

1. A parable that compares one thing with another to illustrate a common trait or theme.

2. Prov. 27:15 - *"A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike."*

- a. Steady dripping gets on your nerves.
- b. So does the continual nagging of a shrewish wife.
- c. Nagging is not the way to change a person; if you want to change someone, don't nag them to death--love them to life!

3. In some comparative proverbs the first line expresses something which is superior to or more desirable than the second. The key word in this type is better.

4. Prov. 15:16 - *"Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith."*

- a. Great ones have prosperity, but if lose peace and happiness in the pursuit of wealth, what have you really gained?
- b. Better to possess fewer of this world's goods and a healthy reverence and fear of the Lord than to have great earthly treasure and

trouble.

5. Prov. 10:22 - *"The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it."*

- a. When God gives riches, they do not bring sorrow as they so often do when amassed by worldly means.
- b. Riches earned rightfully will not bring sorrow.

6. Prov. 15:17 - *"Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith."*

- a. It is better to come home from work to a dinner of vegetables and a loving wife, than to come home to filet mignon and a house full of hatred and animosity.

7. Prov. 17:1 - *"Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife."*

a. Don't be uptight trying to please your husband by cooking like his mother--he didn't marry you for your cooking.
b. You just be the best lover in the world and the cooking will take care of itself; have you ever heard anyone say, "I'm divorcing my wife because of her apple pie?"

- c. It's not food that breaks up homes, it's strife; and the cure for strife is love.

8. Prov. 21:9 - *"It is better to dwell in a corner of the house top, than with a brawling woman in a wide house."*

- a. Should quit working on the house, and start building the home.
- b. No matter how grand or expensive it may be, no house is worth having if it is devoid of love; love transforms a cottage into a castle.

IV. A GREATER THAN SOLOMON IS HERE

A. "And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt...And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five.. And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. And thee came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom" (I Kings 4:29-34)

- B. But a greater than Solomon is here.