



SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS

Proverbs 1:1 through 9:18

KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (Proverbs 1:7)

BACKGROUND

The Book of Proverbs is made up of several collections of concise sayings— frequently in couplet form— that contain moral truths and practical instruction for a truly successful, happy life. The first collection is found in Chapters 1–9.

These chapters consist of fatherly advice given by King Solomon to his son and the young men of Israel on the topic of wisdom. Since the proverbs were drawn from the king’s personal experience, this is the most conversational, narrative, and thematic portion of the book. Solomon’s purpose was to guide the youth of Israel into an understanding of why wisdom should be valued and folly despised.

Biblical proverbs are not universal in scope nor applicable in every instance. However, the adages and instruction in these chapters relate to our era, as they have to every generation. All who seek true wisdom can benefit from these spiritual insights which point to the Source, value, and benefits of wisdom, as true wisdom and knowledge come from and represent God.

The introduction to the book appears in verses 1-7 of chapter 1. The purpose is succinctly stated in verse 2: “to know wisdom and instruction.” From 1:8 through 9:18, Solomon developed the superiority of wisdom over foolishness through a series of admonitions related to wise living, and explanations as to what that entails. Since wisdom is a concept not easily captured in words, he frequently employed the technique of showing how a wise person behaves, rather than describing wisdom itself.

QUESTIONS

1. Solomon expressed the major theme of the Book of Proverbs in our focus verse, which states that “the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge.” The word *beginning* as used here means “the first and controlling principle.” Given that perspective, how would you define or describe the “fear of the LORD”?

2. In the opening statement of Solomon’s discourse (Proverbs 1:1-6), he used a variety of words which are synonymous or closely related to the word “wisdom.” What are some of these words, and why do you think he employed so many different ways of describing wisdom?

3. Proverbs 1:20-33 is the first of many times in the Book of Proverbs where wisdom is personified in feminine terms. In this section, wisdom spoke in the first person and referred to the reader as “my child.” How would you summarize the warning given in these verses?

4. The words “My son...,” which open chapter 2, mark the beginning of a new theme. Verses 1-5 present an if – then form of argument: *If* you meet the conditions (described in verses 1-4), *then* you can be certain of the result (described in verse 5). Briefly state the conditions and the result described in this passage.

5. In chapter 3 Solomon continued to press home the merits of wisdom, outlining six principles for having a good life. Summarize the principles in the following verses:

Proverbs 3:1-2

Proverbs 3:3-4

Proverbs 3:5-6

Proverbs 3:7-8

Proverbs 3:9-10

Proverbs 3:11-12

6. What visual illustration did Solomon use in Proverbs 4:10-19 to portray the importance of wisdom? What specific words contribute to his analogy?

7. Earlier in his discourse on wisdom, Solomon warned of being delivered from an immoral woman (see Proverbs 2:16-20). In chapter 5 verses 5-14 we read of the peril of sexual sin, and in chapters 6 and 7, similar warnings are repeated. Why do you think Solomon repeatedly addressed this topic?

8. Chapter 9, the conclusion of Solomon's wisdom speeches, reviews the major themes already spelled out in the first eight chapters of the book. How does verse 10 of this chapter summarize Solomon's message in these nine introductory chapters to the Book of Proverbs?

CONCLUSION

While wisdom and folly vie for our allegiance, the ultimate choice lies with us. Which call will we answer?

NOTES
