

Proverbs Ch1v1-7 - Wise Words

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[0 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. The Proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel. For gaining wisdom and instruction.

For understanding words of insight. For receiving instruction in prudent behavior. Doing what is right and just and fair.

For giving prudence to those who are simple. Knowledge and discretion to the young. Let the wise listen and add to their learning.

[1 : 40] And let the discerning get guidance. For understanding Proverbs and parables. The sayings and riddles of the wise.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. But fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. No, I don't hear. That's fine.

I'm a stream, sir. Well, good morning, everyone. Nice to see you. Please have your Bibles open there as we begin our new series in the book of Proverbs.

I'm looking forward to it because I've never taught from it before. And I hope it will be encouraging and helpful for us all. Need a drink?

[2 : 41] Let's pray.

Father, thank you for your word. For its truth and its wisdom. We pray that you will be our teacher.

Father, so that we become wise, as you call us to be. Amen. Well, a few years back, some friends of mine, and we went off down to Kerry.

And we went walking the mountains. And it was bad weather. So we decided that we would take a professional guide with us. And before we headed off, the guide gathered us around together and began to say, Listen to my instructions.

Do what I say. My job is to get you up and down the mountains safely. Of course, as he spoke, and being a bunch of lads, everyone was joking and fooling about.

[4 : 01] Everest, here we come. And then he said something that got everyone's attention. People have died up there. And with that, he just marched off down the path.

So in that moment, we had a choice to make. We had to decide, are we going to follow him? Or are we going to go it alone? Well, in a sense, we are all on a journey through life that it is fraught with danger.

Every day, we're faced with multiple choices and decisions. What course am I going to take after my leaving cert? Who am I going to marry?

What job will I apply for? Where will I live? How do I use my money? What words will I say to that person?

How will I manage this difficult situation? Make the right choice. And life will be pleasant and good.

[5 : 13] But if we make a wrong decision, well, we know that life can end in misery. So the question is, how do we know what is the right choice or the right decision?

How do we navigate the journey of life so that we do what is right? Well, as if you've been listening to the songs and the teachings so far this morning, we need wisdom.

And Proverbs is all about wisdom. In fact, wisdom is our teacher who will guide us safely through life. Look at verse 1, the Proverbs of Solomon.

A proverb is a nugget of wisdom to enable us to navigate all the twists and turns of life. Have a look at chapter 13, verse 14.

Chapter 13, verse 14. The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life turning a person from the snares of death.

[6 : 40] Or just go on a page further to chapter 15, verse 24. The path of life leads upward for the prudent to keep them from going down to the realm of the dead.

Let's go back to chapter 1. You see, wisdom is not just about making right and good choices. It's the difference between life and death.

So, as we begin Proverbs, we must let wisdom be our teacher. One writer put it like this. Wisdom will give you understanding of the world in which we live and the skills to navigate through it.

It'll give us understanding of the world we live in and the skills to navigate through it. So, as we look at this first little introduction to the book of Proverbs, we're going to see three things.

The source of wisdom, the purpose of wisdom, and the experience of wisdom. So, the source. Where do we get wisdom? The purpose.

[8 : 04] Why do I need it? And the experience. How can I get wisdom for myself? So, first, the source of wisdom.

Verse 1. The Proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel. Solomon, the author and writer, has many Proverbs, all the way through to chapter 31.

Many wise sayings that can teach us. But where did he get his wisdom from? Well, we know from reading the book where he got it from.

So, look at chapter 4. Verse 1. He gathered his wisdom, first of all, from his parents. Yes, children, parents are wise.

Chapter 4, verse 1. Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction. Verse 3.

[9 : 09] For I, too, was a son to my father, still tender, and cherished by my mother. Then he taught me.

So, he gathered wisdom from his parents as he grew up. We also know that he got wisdom from other places, from other nations. In chapter 22 to 24, there's a collection of sayings of the wise.

And scholars point out that these sayings more than likely came from surrounding nations. Not just his parents or from different places, but from different people.

At the very end of the book, chapters 30 to 31, we have some wisdom from a man called Agur and a king called Lemuel.

We don't know anything else about them other than what they've written in Proverbs. So, it seems as he goes through life, he gathers wisdom from his parents, from other places, and from different people.

[10 : 15] But that's not the only source. Turn with me to 1 Kings chapter 4. 1 Kings, you have to go backwards in your Bible. 1 Kings chapter 4.

Anybody have a page number?

339. 1 Kings chapter 4. Page 339. So, remember, Solomon was king of Israel and at the beginning of his kingship, God came to him and said, Solomon, ask for whatever you want and I will give it to you.

And Solomon asked for wisdom. Now, look at verse 29. Verse 29. God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore.

Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the east. He was a living, talking Wikipedia.

[11 : 46] Look at the end of verse, look at verse 34. From all nations, people came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world who had heard of his wisdom.

So, forget about asking Siri. Ask Solomon. He will have the answer. Let's go back to Proverbs. You see, Solomon is telling us that the ultimate source of wisdom wisdom is God.

Yes, parents have wisdom, nations have wisdom, other religions have wisdom. We can find wisdom in all kinds of places and people, but the source of wisdom is God.

All truth is God's truth because God is the creator of the universe and he is the one who is the source of all truth.

Go to your grocery stores today, pick up an item of food and you'll see that they're very concerned about the origin of the food they sell. It must be traceable.

[13 : 00] You need to know where it comes from. Well, all truth has a sticker and a label on it and it says its origin is God.

All wisdom can be traced back to God. So Proverbs chapter 2 verse 6 tells us for the Lord gives wisdom and from his mouth come understanding and knowledge.

That's the message of the Bible. That wisdom comes from God. So in the New Testament, the writer James tells us if any of you lacks wisdom you should ask God who gives generously.

Need wisdom over decisions? Just pray out and call out to God. So first, God is the source of all wisdom and truth.

Second, the purpose of wisdom. Why do we need it? Well, we need wisdom because we need to be wise to help us make the right kinds of choices that lead to life rather than death.

[14 : 20] If we look at our introduction verses 2 to 6, we'll see there that wisdom teaches us five core truths that will come again and again and again as we read through the book of Proverbs.

The first one, wisdom teaches us what is right. Verse 2. It's for gaining wisdom and instruction, for understanding words of insight.

Now, if you are insightful, it means you can see the whole big picture. You don't just see it from one angle, but you can see it from many angles.

What's the real issue behind all the detail? It enables us to grasp what is best and what is the right course of action.

Wisdom teaches us what is right. It also teaches us how to live. Verse 3. It's for receiving instruction in prudent behaviour.

[15 : 25] wisdom instructs us about how we should live. Not just knowing in our heads lots of information about right things, but knowing how to apply that information as it says at the end of verse 3 so that we can do what is right and just and fair.

Wisdom also teaches us thirdly who I am. Verse 4. It's for giving prudence to those who are simple, knowledge and discretion to the young.

Now the simple and the young are not two different people. When we read poetry and literature like proverbs, the second half of the sentence often help expand and give insight for the first part of the sentence.

So simple and young are the same person. And we're given a definition of who the simple are. If you look down at the bottom of your Bible, there's a little note.

It says something like this, the Hebrew word rendered simple in proverbs denotes a person who is gullible, without moral direction, and inclined to evil.

[16 : 55] Wisdom is teaching us, is telling us that we are all simple. Well, that's pretty offensive, isn't it? That we choose our own ways in life, we choose what we think is right.

None of us have been born wise. In fact, the other, as we read through the book, we'll discover that we're inclined to foolishness.

So, chapter 9 and verse 6 tells us, leave your simple ways and you will live. Walk in the way of insight.

So, wisdom is a great teacher. It also teaches us, fourthly, what we need in life. what we need. So, chapter 1 verse 5.

Let the wise listen and add to their learning and let the discerning get guidance. You see, wisdom is not a quick fix. It's not like we sign up to a course and we graduate in wisdom.

[18 : 08] It's not like come along on Sunday morning and listen to a few sermons and go away with your certificate, I'm wise. Now, wisdom says add to your learning.

So, when you've got a bit of wisdom, learn a little bit more and you will have more wisdom. And when you've done that, go and learn some more and you will have more wisdom. It also tells us, fifthly, how to mature.

Verse 6. Wisdom teaches us understanding for proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise.

You see, wisdom comes in all shapes and sizes. It comes in proverbs, that distilled word of truth. It comes as a parable, stories which contain a truth with an application to our lives within the story.

Or sayings, short comments on life or riddles, truths that we need to think about deeply to be able to get the meaning. So we don't just add wisdom, we develop ways of learning.

[19 : 26] We use all means possible to make us wise. You see, wisdom is our teacher. But did you notice how we are taught?

wisdom is God's word. Verse 2, understanding words of insight. Or verse 5, listening to the words of the wise.

Wisdom comes from God, but it comes through his word. Proverbs, parables, sayings, riddles are all communicated by his word. So wisdom is found in God's word.

Without God's word, we would have no understanding, no insight, and no guidance. So it begs the question, how often are we reading God's word so that we can be wise?

You see, living without the word would be like trying to put up an Ikea wardrobe without the words of instructions. I've tried to do it.

[20 : 40] It's not very helpful. It would be like trying to get to a restaurant that you've never been to before without the words of Google Maps telling you where to get to your destination.

God's word will make you wise. Now, God's word is good and beautiful. They're not harsh words. They're not just a bunch of rules to corral us into some kind of order or some kind of test that we have to pass.

No, God's word is wise. It's there for our benefit. One author put it like this. Proverbs is practical help from God for weak people like us stumbling through daily life.

It is his counsel for the perplexed, his strength for the defeated, his warning to the proud, his mercy for the broken.

God's word is good. So we could summarize wisdom like this. God's word to live God's way in God's world.

[22 : 05] You see, we all need the wisdom of God's word. So we see the source, we see the purpose, and we see the experience.

So how do we experience this wisdom? wisdom? How can I become wise like Solomon? Well, before we rush into the book of Proverbs to discover what career I should choose or what I should do with my money, we just need to slow down.

You see, if we are to experience wisdom, we need to start in the right place. And if we don't start at the right place, we're never ever going to be wise.

So where's the starting place? Where's the door? Well, verse 7 is the door to the whole book of Proverbs.

Do you see what it says? The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Or as it says in chapter 9 verse 10, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

[23 : 22] Now, when we think about the fear of the Lord, we think, run, hide, God is after me, I haven't done one of these Proverbs, I've got it wrong, he's going to punish me.

But that's not how God works. Remember, he's not out to crush us or break us, but to help us. Did you notice something different about one of the words in verse 7, how it's different to all the others?

It's the word Lord. It comes in capital letters. And whenever we see that phrase, that word Lord in capital letters, it's talking about God's personal name.

It's the God who reveals himself to his people for the purpose of rescuing us so that we can be in right relationship with him.

This is the personal God who wants the very best for you. So the fear of the Lord is to humble yourself under his loving authority.

[24 : 39] It's to submit yourself to his gracious rule. It's a desire that I want to please this God. I want to know him better.

It's a longing to want what he wants for me. So the fear of the Lord first of all leads to wisdom.

You see you can't have wisdom without God. We all want to be wise. We all want to know how to make good and right choices and decisions but so often we want to do it without God.

But wisdom without God will always mean I will always choose what I want. My decisions will always be self orientated.

What pleases me? And not only is that selfish living, it's downright foolish living. Look at the second part of verse 7.

[25 : 50] But fools despise wisdom and instruction. You see what he's saying? The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

But if we reject the Lord, well then it's the end of wisdom. We cannot have wisdom without God.

It's like me saying I want Kirsty's help but I don't want Kirsty. I need her for doing things but not in a marriage.

The two go together. So the fear of the Lord leads to wisdom and this wisdom leads to life.

If we start with God it means I will always be desiring what God wants. If I start with self it will always be about me. And if we start with what God wants it will always be what is right and best for me.

[27 : 01] Can we trust that the creator of the universe will only do what is right and best for his creation? Look at chapter 14 verse 27.

Wisdom leads to life.

Chapter 14 verse 27. The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life turning a person from the snares of death.

Or look at chapter 19 verse 23. 19 verse 23.

The fear of the Lord leads to life. Then one rests content untouched by trouble. So isn't it wonderful how wisdom takes us from death into life.

[28 : 18] It's the fountain of life. The source of life. But there's something even better than that. The fear of the Lord leads to wisdom. It leads to life. And ultimately it leads to Jesus.

Look as we read through the book of Proverbs we will discover that we're not just simple but that we're more foolish than we ever thought we were.

Rather than fear the Lord we're people who often reject the Lord. Rather than be listening to his words we so often listen to that internal word in our hearts.

Or as Proverbs 10 verse 8 tells us the wise in heart accept commands but a chattering fool comes to ruin.

in other words I know what is best for me don't tell me how to live my life. You see our choices may be wise in the eyes of the world but they are foolish in the eyes of God.

[29 : 33] What we need is not just advice we need more than direction about the career we're going to take or the person we're going to marry! or the place I'm going to live we need someone who will come to us who will save us from our self centred foolishness.

Let's go to 1st Corinthians where we began our time this morning 1st Corinthians chapter 1 1st Corinthians chapter 1 starting at verse 26 you see the fear of the Lord leads to wisdom which leads to life which leads to Jesus he alone is the one who can save us from our foolish ways and make us truly wise let's pick it up in verse 26 reflect with me on these words he's writing to the church to believers brothers and sisters think of what you were when you were called not many of you were wise by human standards not many were influential not many were of noble birth in the words of proverbs we might say we were all simple verse 27 but

God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things and the things that are not to nullify the things that are so that no one may boast before him you see here is true wisdom we do not come saying I'm wise I have my life all together no wisdom starts by saying I'm a fool I'm weak I'm lowly I need help verse 30 it is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus who has become for us wisdom from

God that is our righteousness our holiness and redemption did you see that little phrase there in verse 30 it is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus who has become for us the wisdom from God think of your journey through life as crossing a large sea a sea that's fraught with dangerous storms and currents there's two ways for you to cross that sea either you can swim or you can take the boat well in a sense Jesus is our boat the boat is called wisdom and as our captain he calls us on board to be in

Christ who is our wisdom and all those who come to him are given his righteousness so that we may be accepted before him we are given his holiness so that we might be treated like him and we are given redemption assured that we will make it to the other side even if we should fall overboard by our once again foolish actions he will grab us before we touch those stormy waters Christ our wisdom Christ our life Jesus is our wisdom who will see us through to our final destination let us come before him admit who we are and know his strength his help and all that we need to live life his way

[34 : 33] God's words to live God's way in God's world let's pray together we sang at the very beginning of our service a song with the line that you are God and we are not father help us that we might humbly come before you that we would submit to your loving gracious rule that we would not want what we want but desire the things of God help us that we would not listen to the voices inside of us but that we would listen to your wise counsel your wise word the truth about your son

Jesus Christ who takes foolish people like us and makes us wonderfully wise in your sight be our teacher through this day and through this coming week make us more like Christ we ask in Jesus name Amen well we're going to sing that song that we sang earlier it is a new one not only does it help us get to know it but it's a reminder and a summary of all that we're thinking of that Christ our wisdom let's stand together