

PROVERBS – SHORT VERSION

Introduction. Proverbs is generally regarded as the book that best characterizes the Wisdom tradition. It is presented as a “guide for successful living.” Its primary purpose is to teach wisdom.

A “proverb” is a short saying that summarizes some truths about life. Knowing and practicing such truths constitutes wisdom – the ability to navigate human relationship and realities.

The Book of Proverbs takes its name from its first verse: “The proverbs of Solomon, the son of David.” Solomon is not the author of this book which is a compilation of smaller collections of sayings gathered up over many centuries and finally edited around 500 B.C.

In Proverbs we will find that certain themes or topics are dealt with several times, such as respect for parents and teachers, control of one’s tongue, cautious trust of others, care in the selection of friends, avoidance of fools and women with loose morals, practice of virtues such as humility, prudence, justice, temperance and obedience. Family values are stressed; both father and mother should be involved in the instruction of children. The Book of Proverbs is quoted fourteen times in the New Testament and is alluded to in about twenty other passages. Jesus presents himself as a Wisdom teacher.

Division of chapters. As with many books of the Bible, different scholars break the chapters down in various ways. Below is one common way:

1. Ten wisdom instructions for a son
2. First collection of the proverbs of Solomon (Chapters 25-29)
3. Sayings of the wise (Chapters 22:17 to 24:34)
4. Second collection of Proverbs of Solomon (Chapters 25-29)
5. The words of Agur and Lemuel; the ideal wife (Chapters 30-31)

Suggested texts to read.

It is somewhat difficult to choose passages to read in this book of the Bible since it mainly consists of many *miscellaneous* sayings on many topics.

Chapter 2: Blessings of Wisdom

Chapter 11: Upright living

Chapter 16: Godly and human wisdom

Chapter 31:10-31: The ideal wife