

Hermeneutics: Observe the Purpose of a Book
Proverbs 1:1-7

Written primarily as a guide to young men, Proverbs' specific purpose was to lay a strong foundation of a godly worldview and offers insight for living. It is a collection of proverbial collections that grew over time beyond the authorship of Solomon. Proverbs are designed to make one wise, but they must be used correctly; their truth is only realized when they applied in the right situation and circumstance.

1) The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel:

2) To know wisdom and instruction,

To perceive the words of understanding,

3) To receive the instruction of wisdom,

Justice, judgment, and equity;

4) To give prudence to the simple,

To the young man knowledge and discretion—

5) A wise man will hear and increase learning,

And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel,

6) To understand a proverb and an enigma,

The words of the wise and their riddles.

7) The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge,

But fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Prov 1:1-7, NKJV)

1. What are the proverbs of Solomon? Circle your observations.

2. What are the benefits for those who listen or read them? Underline your observations.

3. Perhaps the key verse of Proverbs is: **The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge** (Prov 1:7). How would you go about understanding “the fear of the Lord?”

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Teacher Notes

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1. What are the proverbs of Solomon? Circle your observations.

Before the student circles his answer, help him with his observations by placing a focus on how the Bible describes the proverbs of Solomon with questions.

Verse 2: wisdom, instruction, words of understanding

Verse 3: instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment and equity

Verse 6: words of the wise and their riddles

2. What are the benefits for those who listen or read them? Underline your observations.

Help the student observe the consequence of studying proverbs. How does the knowledge of proverbs help?

Verse 4: give prudence to the simple
young man knowledge and discretion

Verse 5: wise man will increase learning
man of understanding will attain wise counsel

3. Perhaps the key verse of Proverbs is: **The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge** (Prov 1:7). How would you go about understanding “the fear of the Lord?”

One of the best methods is to do a word study – what does the underlying Hebrew word for the English translation “fear” mean? For example, use BlueLetterBible.com.

- 1) Select the Bible version you use (i.e. In this lesson, NIV)
- 2) Type in “Prov 1” and press the arrow (>) button. The verses of Proverbs 1 will show up. Locate verse 7.
- 3) Press the “tools” button alongside verse 7. This causes a text box to expand with verse 7 separated according to each representative Hebrew word. When you find the word “fear,” you should see the Strong’s number is “H3374” and the Hebrew Root and Transliterated Form as “yir’â.” You can also hear how the Hebrew word is pronounced by pressing the audio symbol.

The transliterated form is the closest English letters used to convert from the Hebrew alphabet.

- 4) Press the Strong’s Number “H3374. This brings you to a Hebrew Lexicon, a dictionary of Hebrew words, where you can see all the different ways the Hebrew word “yir’â” is used.

When directed towards God, the Hebrew term for “fear” may be in a healthy sense or a harmful one.

In a harmful sense, the term “fear” can describe the feeling of dread (Deut 1:29) or terror (Jonah 1:10).

In a healthy sense, the term describes awe (1 Kings 3:28) or having respect or reverence (Lev 19:3). In essence, when one has respect and reverence of God, one fears not to disobey His word.

Did you notice that ethical development comes after an established relationship with God? “Fear of the Lord” is what determines progress in acquiring biblical wisdom; wisdom is the consequence of a loving relationship with God.

There is no disconnect between faith and reason. The person who knows God, knows that everything about life is created by God and belongs to Him. Experiences in God’s world, points a person to the reality of God and faith in Him, and a life in harmony with God’s judicial process.

Fear God and avoid evil. The world is a battleground between wisdom and folly, righteousness and wickedness, good and evil, to life or to death.