

Two Year Bible Trek
Week 44
Week 44 – Proverbs 1- 16

Key Concepts: The key concepts in Proverbs are that there is wisdom out there in the world, it needs to be learned and practiced, that one can learn it and that if one practices it, life will go well...and if one does not learn and practice it, life will go poorly.

Stories: we begin with the purpose of the book (to teach young men wisdom), reminders that wisdom begins at home, wisdom is seen as a prophetic, good things come from seeking wisdom, religion is a good thing, true happiness comes from wisdom and not material goods, wisdom is divine, the teacher learned good things at home and we need to learn from the teacher, warnings against sexual indulgence and adultery, a look at various faults, more warnings about adultery, folly is contrasted with wisdom, and a long collection of maxims beginning in chapter 10.

Brief Summary: What is wisdom? Wisdom is not knowledge, though knowledge helps. Wisdom is not intelligence, though intelligence helps. Wisdom is not the accumulation of facts, though it helps. Wisdom is the ability to understand what makes for an appropriate life in relationship to God and others and then live it out. In a sense it is a spiritual version of social intelligence. One senses and knows the right things to do in order to maximize the meaning and value of life.

The book begins by explaining its purpose, which is that people be able to receive instruction in “wise dealing, righteousness, justice and equity; that prudence may be given to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth...” It is intended to help the fool and the wise man. In other words everyone needs wisdom and this book will provide the necessary instructions for finding it.

The first nine chapters are all based on the premise that one ought to be obedient to, and listen and learn from both God and parents. The reader is to listen to his (and in this case we mean his because this is an instruction manual for young men) parents’ advice. “Hear, my son, your father’s instruction and reject not your mother’s teaching.” Readers are warned not to hang out with bad people who will lead them astray to engage in robbery and murder. They are encouraged instead to listen for wisdom which cries out from the city gates and to fear the Lord. In so doing the youth will have long life and will not be overcome by evil.

The next section begins with an admonition to seek after wisdom which comes from God. If the reader fears God and asks for wisdom it will be granted and will allow the reader to understand righteousness and justice, and to live a pleasant life. It will save the reader from falling in with the wrong people and be saved when God cuts off the wicked. This section contains the first mention of avoiding the “loose woman.” In Proverbs, there are multiple warnings against the wiles of women...yet Wisdom is personified as a woman and wives and mothers are looked upon kindly.

In the next few chapters we learn that wisdom is to be preferred over gold and silver (recall Solomon’s prayer to God not for wealth but for wisdom); that we are to work hard in order to prosper, that we are to fear God, that we are to avoid adultery, that we are to accept correction, that God will take care of the righteous, that we are to share what we have rather than trusting in our riches and that we will be shaped by the company we keep.

1. What were your favorite proverbs in this section and why?
2. What do you think of all of the talk of avoiding “loose women”?
3. How does wisdom operate in your life?