

Study Series: Proverbs

Questions about Overall Message of Proverbs

1. Many of the sayings in Proverbs are well over 2000 years old. It has been said that true wisdom is timeless. What does that mean? Give two or three examples of proverbs that may be described as “timeless wisdom.” On the other hand, which proverbs do you believe are not timeless, that do not make good sense today?
2. Name two new things you discovered while reading and studying Proverbs. How can these things be applied to your life?
3. Though Proverbs is categorized as one of the books of the Bible's Wisdom Literature, wisdom the themes and concepts can be found throughout the Hebrew Bible. Think of three or four places where you find wisdom themes.

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Questions about Proverbs 1.1—9.18

1. Complete this sentence in your own words. Proverbs are intended to teach... (1.1-6).
What is the source of true wisdom? (1.7; 2.4-7).
2. Wisdom teaches what is right and honest and fair (2.9). Explain what this statement means in your own words.
In contrast, people who act stupidly and foolishly are described as living in darkness and headed for death (1.32; 2.13; 9.13, 17). What does this mean?
3. Identify and describe Wisdom as a wise woman. (1.20-33; 3.16-18; 4.6-9; 8.1—9.12)
What is the opposite of Wisdom? (2.16; 5.3-6; 7.6-27; 9.13-18)
4. In ancient Israelite society, who was responsible for passing on wisdom and instruction? (1.8, 9; 2.1, 2; 3.1, 2; 5.1, 2; 6.20-22). How are wisdom and understanding passed on in modern society? In your opinion, what value does modern society put on the wisdom of parents and elders?
5. To have wisdom means taking the path or road that leads to life. When we have the option of going in many directions or taking many paths through life, how do we know which path to take?
6. In chapters 1–9, choose two sayings that were especially meaningful to you.
What “truth” or meaning do you find in these statements?

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Questions about Proverbs 10.1—31.31

1. According to wisdom, how can riches be both a blessing (10.22) and curse (13.8; 11.28)? What does it mean that one can become rich by being generous or poor by being greedy? (11.24).
2. A number of proverbs mention foolish talk, gossip, and mean or hurtful comments. Why is it important to “be sensible and watch what you say” (10.19)? In your opinion, does our modern society place enough emphasis on speaking respectfully and carefully? Why or why not?
3. A number of proverbs emphasize the importance of hard work (10.4, 26; 12.11, 27). Why? What value is placed on hard work in modern society? Should more or less value be placed on work? Why?
4. How are the following images used in connection with wisdom and doing right—lamp (13.9); fountain (13.14); smooth road (15.19)? What other images might be used to describe “wisdom”?
5. Read 16.1-4, 33; 21.1. What do these passages have in common? What do you think about the idea that God controls everything that happens?
6. Choose at least one of the thirty sayings in 22.17—24.22 and explain what it means in your own words. How does the saying apply to modern circumstances?
7. Modern society puts a great deal of emphasis on wealth. What do you think of the prayer in 30.8, 9?
8. Review the “descriptive list” proverbs in 30.15-31. Then create a “wisdom” proverb of your own that follows this pattern.
9. Why is the description of a good wife and mother (31.10-31) a fitting ending for Proverbs? List some of the book’s themes which can be found in this description.