

The Book of Proverbs

Godly Wisdom for Everyday Life

SSBC Proverbs Bible Study #1

Take this Bible Study home and use it to guide your exploration of the scripture passage that next Sunday's sermon will be focused on.

Passage: Proverbs 1:1-6

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Introduction to the Book of Proverbs

There are so many books these days! They all claim to have the secret to some essential aspect of our lives. Yet, how many times have you brought home a book you were sure was going to improve your life, only to be left frustrated after you'd read it (if you even read it at all)?

Well, there is a book that does deliver on its promises. It sits nestled among the perhaps-dusty pages of the Old Testament section in our Bibles. Have you read the jacket cover of Proverbs? (You know, that's the short introductory paragraph publishers put just inside the front cover that makes us want to buy and read their book.)

In this week's Bible study, we kick off a new study series in the Book of Proverbs. As we'll learn from the "jacket-cover" verses (Prov 1:1-6), this book comes with a promise (underwritten by God himself) that diligent intake of this book will help us attain wisdom, discipline, understanding, knowledge, discretion, and more. How much would you pay for a book that could deliver on such promises?

And when you got it home, would you read it? Let's read it and study it together, okay? The benefits are heavenly!

These studies are produced by South Shore Baptist Church in conjunction with our weekly sermon series. Studies are distributed one week prior to the sermon as inserts in the church bulletin and are also posted at <http://sermonhouse.com/SSBC>. Sermons are also recorded and can be listened to later by visiting that same website. Have feedback or questions? Contact studieditor@southshorebaptist.com

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1. When beginning a comprehensive study of a book of the Bible, a great place to start is by reading through the whole book. Because Proverbs is mostly a large collection of sayings, this can be rather hard to do in one sitting. For this week's study, begin your time by flipping through Proverbs, reading an excerpt here and there. After you do that, answer the following questions.

- a. What do you notice about the Book of Proverbs? What is the literary style? How is it different from other books in the Bible?

- b. Note who wrote or collected the Proverbs by reading Proverbs 1:1, 30:1, and 31:1. Who was Solomon? What was happening in Israel in his day? (see 1 Kings 4:20-28)

- c. What were Solomon's credentials for writing or collecting such an important book of wisdom? (read 1 Kings 3:5-15, 4:29-34)

- d. Why was this book written? (see Prov 1:1-6)

2. Read this week's Bible passage and use the following charts to note your observations and any questions you have.

Scripture	Your Observations & Questions
<p style="text-align: center;">Proverbs 1: 1-6 (NIV)</p> <p>¹The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:</p> <p>²for attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight;</p> <p>³for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair;</p> <p>⁴ for giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young-</p> <p>⁵ let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance-</p> <p>⁶ for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise.</p>	

3. Next, use this chart to **interpret some key observations**.

a. Select a few of your observations & questions from page 3 that you find most interesting or important. Rewrite these below, and interpret and apply them using the columns to the right.

b. For each observation, begin to interpret by asking yourself these kinds of questions:

- What does it mean?
- Why is this important?
- What does this tell me about the Father? Jesus? The Holy Spirit?
- Are there other scriptures that could help me understand this?

Observation What does it say?	Interpretation What does it mean?
<i>Sample: Proverbs is a source of wisdom (v 2)</i>	<i>God is willing to give us wisdom, much as He gave it to Solomon</i>

4. Now consider how you can **apply** the Word to your life. Look for:

- **S**ins to avoid
- **P**romises to believe
- **E**xamples to follow (remember "SPECK")
- **C**ommands to obey
- **K**nowledge to share

Don't just write things to write them – listen carefully to God's Word and what he seems to be teaching you, and look for relevant things that you're truly stirred to do. Then as you do them, God will help you learn, grow, and help others grow.

Application How do I apply what it means?
<i>Since I really need wisdom these days to deal with the things that are happening at home, I should read a little from Proverbs every day</i>

5. What is Wisdom?

6. In our personal search for God's truth, wisdom is often associated with discipline. How does discipline help one gain wisdom?

7. According to Proverbs 1:1-6, this book is designed to affect those who read it and live accordingly. Take time to imagine what your life would look like if the intended effects described in vv. 1-6 came true for you.

a. How would your life look different if you were much better at doing what is right and just and fair?

b. What would be the practical benefits if you experienced a substantial increase in knowledge and discretion?

c. What impact would it have on your life if you could better understand (and remember) wise literature such as parables, proverbs, and other sayings of the wise?

8. Proverbs includes various literary forms, including parables. Jesus often taught through parables, which use familiar stories with unexpected twists to make a key point. Yet, despite their rich content and distinct main point, many people were unable to understand these parables.

“Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand.” (Mt 10:13)

a. What enables a person to understand the Bible? (consider Mt 13:10-17, Rom 10:8-21, and 1 Cor 2:12)

b. How does your answer to “a.” relate to your own ability to understand and apply things that you read in the Bible? How could you improve your abilities in this?

9. What was your key insight in doing this study? What can you do this week to apply what you have learned?

Are You Up for a Challenge with Great Rewards?

You considered in question 7 the potential benefits of reading and absorbing the Proverbs. Imagine the possible impact it would have on your life if you read some Proverbs every day! God conveniently gave us 31 chapters, making it simple to pick up Proverbs on any given day and read the chapter corresponding to that day of the month. Try it for a month, and you'll experience the power of “soaking” in God's Word!

Closing Prayer:

As you close your time of study, follow Solomon's example of asking the Lord for wisdom (recall 1 Kings 3:5-15) as you embark on this season of studying the book of Proverbs. You might find it helpful to use some verses from Proverbs as a template for your prayer. For instance, Proverbs 2:1-6 gives us insight into how God wants us to look to Him for wisdom. Read through this passage once. Then go through it one verse at a time, stopping after each to respond to God about what He said to you in that verse. Then read the next verse, and again stop and respond in prayer.

¹ My son, if you accept my words
and store up my commands within you,
² turning your ear to wisdom
and applying your heart to understanding,
³ and if you call out for insight
and cry aloud for understanding,
⁴ and if you look for it as for silver
and search for it as for hidden treasure,
⁵ then you will understand the fear of the LORD
and find the knowledge of God.
⁶ For the LORD gives wisdom,
and from his mouth come knowledge
and understanding.

(Proverbs 2:1-6)