

Proverbs 1-9 Series Introduction to Proverbs

- 1) The general theme of Proverbs:
 - a) Acquire Godward wisdom
 - b) Avoid foolishness
- 2) The general purpose of Proverbs
 - a) To impart wisdom. This will be expanded in 1:2-6.
 - b) Remember 1 Kings 3:9; 4:29-31
- 3) The writer and editors of Proverbs
 - a) Solomon is the primary writer of the Proverbs (1:1; 10:1; 25:1) (cf. 1 Kings 4:32)
 - i) 250 years after Solomon (@ 700 BC), King Hezekiah commissioned his scribes to collect and edit the sayings of Solomon. (Prov. 25:1)
 - b) Two other authors are included in the appendices: Agur (30:1) and Lemuel (31:1).
- 4) The literature of Proverbs
 - a) Extended instruction (1-9; 22:17-24:23; 31:1-9)
 - b) Parallelism; 2-line proverbs (10:1-22:16)
 - i) Antithetical (contrast)—10:7; 12:27 (dominates Proverbs 10-15)
 - ii) Synonymous (restatement)—17:4; 18:7
 - iii) Synthetic (expansion, “how much more/better”)—16:23; 17:18; 19:7; 21:27
 - iv) Emblematic (comparison)—10:26; 25:13
 - v) Formal (evaluation, “better ... than”)—16:8, 16, 19, 32
 - c) Personification (1:20-33; 8; 9:1-6)
 - d) Numerical sayings (30:15-31)
 - e) Acrostic poem (31:10-31)
- 5) Interpreting Proverbs
 - a) The valid, skillful application of the general principles to any number of particular situations.
 - b) The proverbs are consistent observations, not categorical absolutes. (Kitchen)
 - c) A proverb is a compressed statement of wisdom, artfully crafted to be striking, thought-provoking, memorable, and practical. (Phillips)
- 6) The NT use of Proverbs
 - a) Possible use in **Jesus’** teaching
 - i) Cp. Prov. 25:6-7 and Mark 14:7-11
 - ii) Cp. Prov 12:7; 14:11 and Mark 7:24-27
 - iii) Cp. Prov. 27:1 and Luke 12:19-20
 - iv) Cp. Prov. 30:4 and John 3:13
 - b) In **Paul’s** teaching
 - i) Cp. Prov. 3:7a and Rom. 12:16
 - ii) Cp. Prov. 25:21-22 and Rom. 12:20
 - c) In **Peter’s** teaching
 - i) Cp. Prov. 3:34 and 1 Pet. 5:5b
 - ii) Cp. Prov. 10:12 and 1 Pet. 4:8

- iii) Cp. Prov. 26:11 and 2 Pet. 2:22
 - d) In **James'** teaching
 - i) Cp. Prov. 3:34 and James 4:6
 - e) By the writer of **Hebrews**
 - i) Cp. Prov. 3:11-12 and Heb. 12:5-6
- 7) What is the fear of Yahweh?
- a) Ed Welch (*When People Are Big and God is Small*) reminds us that there is a continuum in which we move about. Consider the following:
 - i) Terror >> dread >> trembling >> astonishment >> awe >> reverence >> devotion >> trust >> worship
 - b) Dan Phillips (*God's Wisdom in Proverbs*) helpfully shows what the fear of Yahweh involves:
 - i) **Learning**: the revelation of God in his Word (Ps. 119:38; Deut. 31:9-13)
 - ii) **Doing**: the direction away from sin and toward obedience to God (Prov. 8:13; Deut. 5:29)
 - iii) **Fearing**: a relationship with the personal God who is to be feared (Ps. 130:3-4; 1 Pet. 1:17-19)

Proverbs 1:1-7

- 1) The title and primary author/compiler of the book—1:1
 - a) See the introduction
 - b) Why should we listen to King Solomon? 1 Kings 3:5-12; 4:20-32
- 2) The primary purpose of the book—1:2-6
 - a) Benefits for the general reader—1:2-3
 - i) To be acquainted with 2 things—1:2a
 - (1) **Positive:** *wisdom* [*hokmah*]—skill of living life from a Godward perspective
 - (2) **Negative:** *instruction/discipline* [*musar*]—corrective training aimed at maturing character
 - (3) Reading Proverbs is profitable, but not comfortable. (J. Kitchen)
 - ii) To understand understanding—1:2b
 - (1) *Understanding* [*binah*]—discernment to distinguish the importance of the information one receives
 - iii) To receive instruction related to 4 moral areas—1:3
 - (1) *Wisdom* [*sakal*]—the ability to think through a complex arrangement of thoughts resulting in wise dealings
 - (2) *Justice* [*tsedeq*]—that which accurately conforms to God's standard
 - (3) *Judgment* [*mishpat*]—the right application of law to a specific situation
 - (4) *Equity* [*meshraim*]—conformity to God's standard which enables one to make decisions free from discrimination or dishonesty
 - iv) Taken together, these three purposes show that Proverbs will shape the thinking, attitude, moral character, and behavior of the general reader. (Moody Bible Commentary)
 - b) Benefits for the needy—1:4
 - i) For the naïve/easily influenced
 - (1) *Prudence* [*ormah*]—to show appropriate shrewdness in the management one's affairs
 - ii) For the immature youth
 - (1) *Knowledge* [*da'ath*]—the capacity to use the information one possesses
 - (2) *Discretion* [*mizimmah*]—the ability to successfully carry out one's purposes and plans
 - c) Benefits for the wise—1:5-6
 - i) He will develop a teachable spirit, a willingness to listen and a hunger to learn, and the ability to carefully think through and interpret both plain and difficult scenarios.
- 3) The primary theme of the book—1:7
 - a) **Positive:** living in awe of Yahweh is foundational to true knowledge.
 - b) **Negative:** a fool (a person whose stubborn will and preference for moral perversion is demonstrated in making poor judgments) show contempt for skillful living [*hokmah*] and corrective training [*musar*] aimed at helping them mature.
- 4) **Remember:** the wise never graduate from the school of instruction and wisdom. (J. Kitchen)

Proverbs 1:8-19

- 1) **Positive:** Listen to your parents—1:8-9
 - a) The importance of deliberate discipleship (*musar* and *torah*) by both parents (1:8, 15; 31:1) and the child's active embracing of what is being taught.
 - i) cf. 2:1; 3:1; 4:3-4, 10; 5:1; 6:20
 - b) Submitting early to the refining process of instruction and discipline of parents removes many of the personal habits and qualities that could spoil relationships later in life. (J. Kitchen)

- 2) **Negative:** Don't listen to the seductive but deadly persuasions of sinners—1:10-19
 - a) The ability to withstand temptation is characteristic of the wise. (1:10) (FSB)
 - i) Sin is the active rebellion against legitimate authority.
 - ii) We must have the courage and backbone to say "No" a thousand times a week. (MacDonald)
 - b) Sinners desire the destruction of the innocent. (1:11-17)
 - i) Beware of being bored with a sheltered life and the proposed excitement of something daring.
 - (1) It is attractive to hear someone call you to take control of your circumstances and become a person to contend with. (J. Kitchen)
 - ii) Note 3 typical temptations from "the gang" (Moody Bible Commentary)
 - (1) The recruiter offers a sense of easy wealth.
 - (a) Ironically, they have to work extremely hard at sinning.
 - (2) The gang offers a sense of power.
 - (a) Ironically, they will destroy themselves.
 - (3) The recruiter offers a sense of belonging.
 - (a) Ironically, they have an equal share of guilt. (Heb. 4:13)
 - c) Sinners will self-destruct because of their sin. (1:18-19)
 - i) Sin blinds the sinner.

Proverbs 1:20-33

- 1) Wisdom makes her public appeal—1:20-21
 - a) It was an exceedingly rare thing for a woman to do such a thing in public.
 - i) Cf. 3:16-18; 4:3-6; 8:1-21, 32-36; 9:1-6; 14:33
 - b) Wisdom is not for the few; it is not found only in esoteric (limited, confidential) places. No! Indeed, wisdom cries out loudly in all sorts of prominent public places where everyone can hear and responds. No one can (legitimately) complain that wisdom is inaccessible to him. (Jay Adams)
 - c) Wisdom is making her appeal where she is most needed; in the strategic places of life.
 - d) “Wisdom” probably refers to those through whom wisdom is providentially taught in their culture: the Spirit, prophets, priests, parents, etc.
- 2) Wisdom appeals to the easily influenced with a sobering question—1:22
 - a) The threat is for *the easily influenced* to be compared with *scorners* (cynical, defiant “free thinkers”) and *fools* (morally insensitive).
- 3) Wisdom commands the easily influenced to turn to wisdom—1:23
 - a) Wisdom is resolved to reveal herself to the one who responds. But who will do so?
- 4) Wisdom issues a warning concerning the consequences of rejecting wisdom—1:24-33
 - a) Being abandoned in the time of difficulty—1:24-27
 - i) Note the synonyms for the foolish rejection of wisdom: refused, did not pay attention to wisdom’s efforts, ignored wisdom’s counsel, unwilling to accept wisdom’s rebuke. (1:24-25)
 - (1) The picture is of one blindly marching toward a precipice, yet resolutely refusing all offers to help him turn back from his impending doom. (Kitchen)
 - ii) Note the synonyms for the unmanageable difficulties of life: calamity, terror, destruction, distress, anguish. (1:26-27)
 - b) Being allowed to suffer the destructive consequences of one’s unwise choice—1:28-33
 - i) Choose wisdom before it is too late. (1:28)
 - ii) Note the synonyms for rejecting wisdom: hated knowledge, did not choose the fear of Yahweh, wanted none of wisdom’s counsel, despised wisdom’s rebuke. (1:29-30)
 - iii) The easily influenced will pay the staggering consequences of their sinful actions (1:31)
 - (1) Every man is free to make his own choices in life, but he is not free to choose the *consequences* of his choices. (MacDonald)
 - iv) The easily influenced will turn to *something*, but sadly it is not wisdom. (1:32; cf. 1:23)
 - (1) This is what some call “poetic justice.”
 - v) Wisdom reminds the easily influenced of the security and tranquility she has to offer (which they reject by not choosing wisdom). (1:33)
 - 5) May we now take wisdom’s hand and learn from her! (Kitchen)

Proverbs 2:1-22

- 1) The search for wisdom—2:1-4 *If you ...*
 - a) If # 1—Place a high value on wisdom—2:1-2
 - i) What?—2:1
 - (1) Illustration of Moses' mother hiding him (Ex. 2:2) (cf. Ps. 119:11)
 - ii) Why?—2:2
 - b) Because if # 2—Make a passionate effort for wisdom—2:3
 - c) If # 3—Have a consuming concentration on wisdom—2:4

- 2) The rewards of wisdom—2:5-22 *Then...*
 - a) Then # 1—A right understanding of God—2:5-8
 - i) What?—2:5
 - (1) The more we grow in our fear of Yahweh, the more we see our need for the fear of Yahweh. (Phillips)
 - ii) Why?—2:6-8
 - (1) Note what Yahweh treasures (cf. 2:7 with 2:1)

 - b) Then # 2—A right understanding of God's ways—2:9-11
 - i) What?—2:9
 - ii) Why?—2:10-11 *Because ...*

 - c) Three purposes of a right understanding of God and God's ways—2:12-22
 - i) Negative
 - (1) *To deliver you...*—2:12-15 wrong **male** company and wrong paths
 - (2) *To deliver you...*—2:16-19 wrong **female** company and wrong paths
 - (a) From whom?—2:16-17
 - (b) Why?—2:18-19
 - ii) Positive
 - (1) *In order that you...*—2:20-22 right men and right paths
 - (a) What?—2:20
 - (b) Why?—2:21
 - (i) Because of the reward to the righteous—2:21
 1. "The land" is most likely the Land Israel was promised by Yahweh.
 - (ii) Because of the reward to the wicked—2:22

 - 3) Summary and applications
 - a) If we are to be the people God wants us to be in our private and public lives, we must be people of wisdom and people who know/fear their God.
 - b) If we are Biblically wise, it will transform the company we keep and the way we live.
 - c) Biblical wisdom comes from our responsible effort and the graciousness of God.

Proverbs 3:1-20

The Value of Skillful Living

Introduction: Thanks to David Dorsey for the basic concepts of this outline. **Heart:** The heart is the center and seat of one's inner life, including mind, emotions, and will. The word of God is to penetrate, subdue and rein in every cognition of our brain, every flame of passion and tongue of temper that leaps from the fire of our affections, and every choice both contemplated and embraced. Such unilateral submission of all I am to God's word requires that constant vigil be kept over my heart. (Kitchen)

- 1) Six good, general consequences of skillful living—3:1-12
 - a) First pair—3:1-2
 - i) **Commands:** do not forget instruction, keep commands
 - ii) **Reward:** fullness (quantity) and completeness (quality) of life
 - (1) Those who kick up their heels against parental discipline invite illness, accidents, tragedies, and premature death. (MacDonald)
 - b) Second pair—3:3-4
 - i) **Commands:** demonstrate loyal-love and truth toward others, bind them, write them
 - ii) **Reward:** favor/grace and a good reputation for one's understanding
 - c) Third pair—3:5-6
 - i) **Commands:** trust in Yahweh, lean not on your own understanding, know Yahweh
 - ii) **Reward:** a passable life path toward moral and spiritual success
 - d) Fourth pair—3:7-8
 - i) **Commands:** do not impressed with your own wisdom, fear Yahweh, depart from evil
 - ii) **Reward:** physical and emotional refreshment
 - (1) Biblical living tends to be healthy living.
 - e) Fifth pair—3:9-10
 - i) **Command:** honor Yahweh
 - ii) **Reward:** material and financial prosperity
 - f) Sixth pair—3:11-12 (cf. Heb. 12:5-6)
 - i) **Commands:** do not despise Yahweh's discipline, do not detest Yahweh's rebuke
 - ii) **Reward:** Yahweh's loving corrective discipline
- 2) Concluding statement—3:13
 - a) Skillful living and spiritual understanding bring genuine, inner joy.
- 3) Seven supporting assertions for the value of skillful living—3:14-20
 - a) Skillful living is better than the best material gains—3:14
 - b) Skillful living is better than anything you may desire—3:15
 - c) Skillful living generally improves the quantity and quality of life—3:16
 - d) Skillful living is marked by pleasantness and completeness—3:17
 - e) A deliberate commitment to skillful living brings refreshment and inner joy—3:18
 - f) Skillful living reflects the skill of Yahweh's creative work—3:19
 - g) Skillful living and knowledge reflect the skill and knowledge of Yahweh's providence—3:20

Proverbs 3:21-35

Seven Important Don'ts in Dealing Wisely With Others

- 1) The safety that wisdom brings—3:21-26
 - a) Don't let wisdom and discretion escape from your sight—3:21-24
 - i) Keep wisdom close at hand every day. This is not optional.
 - ii) Wisdom makes one conspicuous in a world of fools.
 - b) Don't be inappropriately afraid of a guilty conscience—3:25-26
 - i) Some day we will realize more fully all we have been saved from as well as saved to. (MacDonald) Cf. Ps. 3:5; 4:8.
 - ii) Note the repetition of "keep" in 3:21 and 3:26.

- 2) The social behaviors that wisdom impacts—3:27-31
 - a) Sins of omission—3:27-28
 - i) Don't withhold help from the needy—3:27 (cf. 1 John 3:17-18)
 - (1) But what about someone taking advantage of you? Cf. Prov. 1:3
 - ii) Don't delay helping the needy—3:28
 - (1) Wages that have been earned, debt that is due, tools that have been borrowed, etc.
 - b) Sins of commission—3:29-30
 - i) Don't plan to harm your unsuspecting neighbor—3:29
 - ii) Don't be contentious with your neighbor—3:30 (cf. Rom. 12:18)
 - (1) There is already enough strife in the world without needlessly going around to stir up more! (MacDonald)
 - c) Don't envy the wicked person—3:31

- 3) The motivations for dealing wisely with others—3:32-35
 - a) Note the 4 contrasting sets of possibilities

| God's Judgment | God's Blessing |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| The perverse are repulsive to Yahweh | The upright enjoy Yahweh's confidential secrets |
| The wicked receive Yahweh's curse | The just enjoy Yahweh's blessing |
| The scornful receive Yahweh's scorn | The humble enjoy Yahweh's grace |
| The fools receive shame/dishonor | The wise enjoy glory/honor |

- b) Yahweh will address the wicked and the righteous in just the right time and in just the right way.
 - i) Remember James 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5

Proverbs 4:1-9

Lessons to Solomon's Sons from Grandpa David on Wisdom

- 1) Instructions from father—4:1-2
 - Note the shift to plural “sons”
 - a) What?
 - i) Listen to the corrective discipline [*musar*] of your father and pay attention in order to gain understanding
 - b) Why? because the instruction your father is giving is good/sound
 - c) What? Don't abandon your father's instruction [*torah*]

- 2) Instructions from grandfather through father—4:3-9
 - a) Solomon relates part of his upbringing in the home of David and Bathsheba—4:3-4a
 - i) With David: a son, a student (“he taught me”) (cf. Deut. 6:6-9)
 - ii) With Bathsheba: tender and precious
 - iii) Authority and affection should and can dwell in the same house.
 - iv) Solomon reminds his sons that he has once been where they are now.
 - b) David taught Solomon the following principles regarding wisdom—4:4b-9
 - i) 13 urgent restatements—4:4b-8
 - (1) Stated positively—4:4b-5b
 - (a) Embrace your father's words—4:4b
 - (b) Obey your father's commands—4:4c
 - (c) Live (with all the blessings of wisdom; cf. 3:1ff)—4:4d
 - (d) Acquire wisdom [*hokmah*]
—4:5a
 - (e) Acquire understanding [*binah*]
—4:5b
 - (2) Stated negatively—4:5c-6a (there are dangers in your quest for wisdom)
 - (a) Neglect/distraction: do not forget your father's words—4:5c
 - (b) Willful rejection:
 - (i) Do not turn away from your father's words—4:5d
 - (ii) Don't abandon wisdom —4:6a
 - (3) Restated positively—4:6b-8
 - (a) Love wisdom—4:6b
 - (b) Acquire wisdom [*hokmah*]
—4:7a
 - (c) Acquire understanding [*binah*]
—4:7b
 - (d) Cherish/treasure wisdom—4:8a
 - (e) Embrace wisdom—4:8b
 - ii) The rewards of responding rightly to wisdom—4:8-9
 - (1) Hold her high: you will be exalted
 - (2) Hold her close: you will be honored
 - (3) Wisdom gives favor and honor
 - (a) The opposite is also implied: a foolish, unwise life is dishonorable, unattractive, and shameful. (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

There must be a deliberate decision to pursue wisdom. It does not come accidentally.

Proverbs 4:10-19
Lessons on Wisdom

- 1) Listen to God's wisdom which comes through your father—4:10-13
 - a) The importance of carefully appropriating what one has heard—4:10
 - b) A wise father seeks to disciple his sons in skillful living and in conformity with God's standards—4:11
 - i) But in the end, each child, having gotten his legs under him, must take the actual steps down the right path.
 - ii) This is why a wise child brings joy to his parents.
(1) cf. 10:1; 15:20; 23:15, 24; 27:11
 - c) The spiritual stability that comes from listening to your father—4:12
 - i) Wisdom will help you to avoid situations that might lead to danger and a premature death.
 - ii) You can confidently and safely walk, and even run, on the path of wisdom.
 - d) Recognize the priceless value of wisdom and make the appropriate effort—4:13
 - i) Too many people want wisdom without putting in the necessary effort. It is similar to attempting to ride a bicycle without the bike being in motion.

- 2) Exercise wisdom concerning the two possible paths—4:14-19
 - a) The path of the wicked—4:14-17
 - i) Stay away from it—4:14-15
 - (1) Note the synonyms for the responsibility to avoid: do not enter, do not walk, avoid, do not go on, turn away from, pass on
 - (a) Opportunities for sin are abundant and must be aggressively shunned.
 - (2) Note the synonyms for the spiritual dangers: wicked, evil
 - (3) The abortion of sinful desires is the only abortion that is acceptable to God.
(cf. James 1:14-15)
 - ii) Be aware of its character—4:16-17
 - (1) Note the synonyms: evil, stumbling (cf. 4:12), evil, violence
 - (2) Two characteristics:
 - (a) The restless sleep of those addicted to wickedness (4:16) is contrasted with the pleasant rest which comes from wisdom (cf. 3:24).
 - (b) The wicked have evil and violence on their menu as a source of motivation and strength. (4:17)
 - (i) This reveals how deeply engrained wickedness is in the human heart.
 - b) The path of the just contrasted with the road of the wicked—4:18-19
 - i) Just: the secure clarity resulting from the brightness of the morning sun—4:18
 - (1) Progressive illumination, understanding, and insight
 - (2) Every day of faithfulness becomes another advancement in understanding God's purposes. (Kitchen)
 - ii) Wicked/guilty: the insecure calamity resulting from the dangerous darkness of the deepest night—4:19 (cf. 4:12)

Which path will you take?

Proverbs 4:20-27

Lessons on Wholistic Wisdom

Introduction: Solomon gives his sons a series of commands, mixed with reasons for those commands. Note how one's entire body is involved in the pursuit of wisdom. (ear [20], eyes [21], flesh [22], heart [23], lips [24], eyelids [25], feet [26], hands and feet [27])

- 1) The first set of commands—4:20-22 (contrasted with spiritual ADD)
 - a) The **IMPORTANCE** of concentration—4:20-21
 - i) Pay **exclusive** (to my words) attention—others beside your parents are competing for your attention (cf. 4:1; 5:1)
 - ii) Pay **deliberate** (incline your ear) attention—recognize that your flesh does not always want to listen to your parents (cf. 1:24; 2:2; 5:1, 13; 22:17)
 - iii) Pay **focused** (do not let them depart, keep them) attention—it is easy to be distracted from what your parents are trying to teach you (cf. 2:1; Ps. 119:11)
 - iv) Pay **vigilant** (in the midst of your heart) attention—don't allow your parents' teaching to become of secondary importance
 - b) The **ADVANTAGES** of concentration—4:22
 - i) Life and overall health (physical, emotional, spiritual) are normal by-products of living skillfully before God. Sin often produces guilt, stress, and some illness.
 - ii) Who can calculate the physiological, emotional, and psychological devastations that sin brings? (Kitchen)
- 2) The second set of commands—4:23-27
 - a) Concerning your **heart**—4:23
 - i) Your entire inner self (mind, emotions, will, desires/intentions, values, beliefs) matters to God.
 - ii) All of life's activities originate from, and are produced by, the human heart. God begins with the inner man and works outward. (cf. Mark 7:21-23)
 - (1) The fear of Yahweh works its way out from the heart in behavior; it does not work its way into the heart by behavior. (Phillips)
 - iii) The concern for the keeping of our heart should transcend any other self-protecting act. (Stevenson) We often worry more about protecting our reputation/public image than our heart.
 - b) Concerning your **speech**—4:24
 - i) Your speech reflects the presence or absence of wisdom.
 - c) Concerning your **focus**—4:25
 - d) There are plenty of shiny things to distract us from what is really important. Believers must have tunnel vision in the pursuit of wisdom.
 - i) Cf. Luke 9:51; Phil. 3:14; Heb. 12:1-2
 - e) Concerning your **obedience**—4:26-27
 - i) Obedience must be intentional; it is rarely, if ever, accidental. Developing wisdom will take a lifetime; it is not simply a one-time decision.
 - ii) In order to stay on the path of righteousness, one must remove his foot from evil. (cf. 3:7)

There is nothing of greater value on this earth than the condition of your heart. (Kitchen)

Proverbs 5:1-14 Warnings About Sexual Immorality/Infidelity

- 1) **Information:** internalizing your father's teaching protects you from potentially dangerous women—5:1-6
 - In light of 5:18, some suggest Solomon's sons are already married.
 - a) This enables you to judge wisely, objectively, and knowledgeably—5:1-2
 - i) This ability is desperately needed in dealing with members of the opposite gender.
 - b) This helps to protect you from deceitfully dangerous women—5:3-6
 - i) She verbally presents herself as something invitingly pleasant—5:3
 - (1) Honey—the sweetest substance of their culture
 - (2) Olive oil—the smoothest substance of their culture
 - ii) She disguises her bitter unpleasantries—5:4
 - (1) Wormwood—the bitterest substance of their culture
 - (2) Sword—unavoidably painful and deadly
 - iii) She is deadly to those who interact with her—5:5
 - iv) She does not ponder her life's wheel ruts—5:6a (cf. 4:26)
 - Most versions translate this to refer to the woman's lack of pondering.
 - (1) She has habits she doesn't want to think about.
 - v) She wanders from the rutted path—5:6b (cf. 4:27)
 - vi) She is ignorant of her life and its end—5:6c
- 2) **Motivation:** internalizing your father's teaching protects you from numerous potential regrets—5:7-14 (note the shift to plural "sons")
 - a) Things you must do to avoid regrets—5:7-8
 - i) **Don't turn away:** internalize the teaching of your parents—5:7
 - ii) **Do turn away:** deliberately avoid the presence of dangerous women—5:8 (contrasted with 7:6-23) (see also 1 Cor. 6:18; 2 Tim. 2:22)
 - b) Things that may happen to you—5:9-11 (ruinous consequences of being a fool)
 - i) Social ruin—5:9
 - ii) Financial ruin—5:10
 - iii) Physical ruin—5:11 (cf. 3:8; 4:22)
 - c) Things that you may say—5:11-14 (regrettable recognition that one has been a fool)
 - i) Acknowledgment of one's painful suffering—5:11
 - ii) Acknowledgment of one's hostile foolishness—5:12 (cf. 8:13; 15:5)
 - iii) Acknowledgment of one's deliberate disobedience—5:13 (cf. 2:2; 4:20; 5:1; 22:17)
 - (1) If we so desire, we can find other voices that we think are more pleasant to listen to than that of instruction.
 - iv) Acknowledgment of one's public humiliation—5:14
 - (1) Having suffered social, financial, and physical ruin

Proverbs 5:15-23
The Pleasures of Sexual Fidelity

- 1) Satisfy your thirst at home with your own wife—5:15-20
 - The Bible does not deny the reality of human sexual passions, but it clearly teaches that they must be fulfilled at the right source.
 - Note the synonyms for sources of water: cistern [*bor*], well [*be'er*], fountains/springs [*ma'yan*], streams [*peleg*], fountain [*maqor*]
 - i) There is both private and public access to water sources. Don't confuse the two.
 - a) The illustration of enjoying a satisfying, refreshing drink—5:15-18
 - i) The first two commands: **exclusivity**—5:15-17
 - (1) Why seek temporary satisfaction with dangerous women, who have likely been with multiple men, when you can enjoy someone far more satisfying?
 - (2) Don't waste your God-given reproductive desires and powers. What is private ought not to be shared with strangers.
 - ii) The third command: **enjoyment**—5:18
 - (1) Sexual delight is God-given, contrary to the misconceptions of many.
 - b) The illustration of enjoying a delicate, graceful beauty—5:19-20
 - i) Delightful intoxication—5:19
 - (1) If you are not intoxicated with your wife's pleasures, you will be intoxicated with your own sinful foolishness. We make choices about what we think will satisfy us. We are not simply slaves to our hormones or desires.
 - ii) Probing question—5:20
 - (1) The alternative to fidelity to one's wife is both foolish and unsatisfying.
 - (2) Wisdom is demonstrated by faithfully and exclusively embracing your wife.
- 2) Summary principles that warn against violating your father's teaching—5:21-23
 - a) The omniscience and justice of Yahweh—5:21 (cf. 5:6)
 - i) Even when those paths to a secret rendezvous are thought to be hidden behind closed doors (and private browsers). Sin is never secret. (cf. Jer. 16:7; Heb. 4:13)
 - b) The entangling addiction of sin—5:22
 - i) Stopping a habit is far more difficult than starting one. Sin is rarely, if ever, "just this once."
 - ii) The lack of discipline and self-control in the area of sexual gratification is destructive.
 - c) The devastation of foolish decisions—5:23
 - i) Not because he has not been instructed but because he has refused to internalize the instruction his father gave him.
 - ii) You will either be righteously led astray into pleasure by your wife (cf. 5:19) or you will be sinfully led astray to destruction by someone not your wife. (cf. 5:20, 23)

Proverbs 6:1-19

Warnings Against Foolish People

- 1) The **impulsive, financial** fool—6:1-5
 - a) Don't be careless about legally agreeing to pay your friend/neighbor's high-interest loans that they are unable to repay—6:1-2 (cf. 11:15; 17:18; 22:26-27)
 - i) Don't make impulsive promises that expose yourself or your assets to situations that are completely outside of your control.
 - b) But if you have already done so, it is desperately urgent that you humbly get out of the dangerous agreement as carefully and quickly as possible—6:3-5
 - i) Note the 6 commands: do this, deliver yourself, humble yourself, plead, do not give, deliver yourself
 - c) Helpful insights:
 - i) You might be helping him to buy something which it is not God's will for him to have. You might be encouraging him to be a spendthrift or even a gambler. If he defaults and you have to pay for something that is not your own, friendship will end and bitterness begin. (William MacDonald)
 - ii) Does this preclude co-signing an auto loan for a young family member? Not necessarily. Yet, before entering into such an arrangement, one should always carefully study the person's character and survey their plan for repayment as well as one's own ability to take on the financial burden, if necessary. (John Kitchen)
 - d) Consider also: Philemon 1:19 and Hebrews 7:22.
- 2) The **irresponsible, lazy** fool—6:6-11 (cf. 10:5; 24:30-34; 26:13-16)
 - The ant only appears in the Bible here and in 30:25.
 - a) Three commands are given: go, consider, be wise
 - b) The ant is described—6:7-8
 - i) Take the initiative (be an industrious self-starter) plus have the necessary discipline, teamwork, and foresight to work a project through to the end without direct supervision. Those who act only when commanded do not possess wisdom.
 - c) The danger of not showing initiative is stated—6:9-11
 - i) What seems so innocent now will leave you defenseless when poverty comes to ruthlessly attack you later. (cf. 24:33-34)
 - d) The lazy one is contrasted with the upright (15:19) and the righteous (21:25-26).
- 3) The **destructive, troublemaking** fool—6:12-19
 - a) The troublemaker (a nefarious revolutionary) is described—6:12-15
 - i) His character is both worthless and wicked—6:12a
 - ii) His persuasive communication is both verbal and non-verbal—6:12b-13
 - iii) His conduct is perverse and evil, causing controversy and discord—6:14
 - iv) His own ruinous disaster will be both unexpected and irreparable—6:15
 - b) The troublemaker is included in seven things that disgust Yahweh—6:16-19
 - i) Sin involving body parts from top to bottom—6:16-18
 - (1) Arrogant ambition, deceptive speech, unjustified violence, evil imagination, eager to cause harm
 - ii) 2 types of people—6:19
 - (1) A perjuring witness and a disruptive troublemaker (cf. 6:12-15).

Proverbs 6:20-35
Warnings Against Sexually Immoral Women

1) Introduction—6:20-24

- a) Responsibilities of young men—6:20-21
 - i) Treasure what your parents have told you until it becomes a part of who you are.
 - ii) God's guidance is often through the commands of one's parents.
- b) Results of obedience to your parents—6:22-23
 - i) Wisdom grants authoritative guidance, secure protection, and meditative reminders.
 - ii) It is far better to be intimate with wisdom than with an immoral woman.
- c) Real danger is a potential—6:24
 - i) Note the repetition of "keep" (cf. 6:22, 24)

2) Main theme—6:25 (cf. James 1:13-15)

- a) Active: do not lust after/covet her in your heart (cf. Ex. 20:17; Prov. 4:23; Matt. 5:28)
 - i) External beauty does not always travel with Godward inward character.
- b) Passive: do not be let her captivate you
 - i) You must remain on the defensive in order to survive.

3) Supporting reasons—6:26-35 (cf. 2:18-19; 5:5-6, 22-23; 7:22-27; 9:18)

- a) Two potential dangers: unmarried and married sexually immoral women—6:26
 - i) The costly consequences of adultery are higher than the cost of paying for a prostitute.
 - ii) Too often people respond with, "But it won't happen to me."
- b) Inevitable punishment of adultery—6:27-29
 - i) Rhetorical questions drive the point into the heart.
- c) Inexcusable sin of adultery—6:30-32
 - i) Understanding the reason for a sin is not the same as excusing that sin.
 - ii) One can never successfully rationalize the sin of adultery.
 - iii) A thief may eventually make complete restitution, but an adulterer can never completely remove the consequences of his sin.
- d) Self-destruction explained—6:33-35
 - i) Potential physical injuries and lasting social scorn and reproach are likely consequences.
 - ii) Jealous husbands know little of lenient mercy or acceptable compensation for their loss. They only desire the harshest penalties.

Proverbs 7:1-27

Avoiding the Sin of Sexual Immorality

- 1) **The father's introduction—7:1-5** (cf. 2:16-19; 5:1-23; 6:20-35)
 - a) **Influence:** guard and treasure his precious teaching.
 - i) This influence is to be both *external* (fingers) and *internal* (heart).
 - b) **Exclusivity:** you will be intimate with either wisdom or the immoral woman, but you cannot do both at the same time.
 - c) **Words:** you will listen to someone's words: either your godly father (7:1-2) or the immoral woman (7:5).

- 2) **The father's drama—7:6-23**
 - This drama assumes that the son is currently on the right path. There is no rebuke.
 - How vividly this is painted on the canvas of the imagination. (Kitchen)
 - a) The victim is observed—7:6-9
 - i) The gullible one lives without being appropriately cautious. He either did not see or did not care that he is in the wrong place at the wrong time.
 - ii) He takes no deliberate steps to avoid her neighborhood.
 - b) The predator is observed—7:10-20
 - While he appears to be aimless, she is not.
 - i) Her external and internal description—7:10-12
 - (1) Her clothing, her heart, her lack of restraint, her goal
 - ii) Her seduction—7:13-20
 - (1) She shocks him (impudently takes the initiative)—7:13
 - (2) She deceives him (with religious concepts)—7:14 (cf. Lev. 3; 7:11-21)
 - (3) She flatters him (with empty words)—7:15
 - (4) She appeals to him (pleasures of sight, smell, and touch)—7:16-18
 - (5) She reassures him (attempts to eliminate the sense of guilt)—7:19-20
 - c) The consequences are observed—7:21-23 (will he fall for her trap?)
 - i) The illustration of 3 oblivious animals: ox, deer, and bird
 - ii) The oblivious animal does not know he stands in the crosshairs. (Kitchen)

- 3) **The father's conclusion—7:24-27**
 - a) Guard your heart from her—7:24-25a (cf. 7:1-5)
 - b) Stay away from her—7:25b (cf. 7:6-20)
 - c) Look beyond her—7:26-27 (cf. 7:21-23)
 - i) There are many victims: many, countless
 - ii) There are many consequences: slain, laid low, killings, Sheol, death

- 4) **Additional thoughts:**
 - a) Contemporary Western culture, which glamorizes sex without restraints, rejects this wisdom from Proverbs by ignoring immorality's devastating effects on people's lives. (MBC)
 - b) A young man involved in illicit sex may die from punishment meted out by an angry husband, or from poverty, or from venereal disease, or from spiritual and emotional anguish. (BKC)
 - c) The point of the warning is to prevent such a course from starting. (NET)

Proverbs 8:1-36
Wisdom Speaks Again (part 1)

Introduction: shown in stark contrast with the immoral woman of chapter 7

- 1) The eagerness of wisdom—8:1-11
 - a) Introduction—8:1-3
 - i) It was an exceedingly rare thing for a woman to do such a thing in public.
 - ii) Wisdom is unmistakably obvious and eagerly accessible to all who are genuinely willing to listen/submit.
 - b) Exhortations—8:4-11
 - i) Exhortation # 1—8:4-9
 - (1) The what?—8:4-6
 - (a) Wisdom appeals to both the gullible and the rebel.
 - (2) The why?—8:7-9
 - (a) Wisdom advances honesty and reliability.
 - ii) Exhortation # 2—8:10-11
 - (1) The what?—8:10
 - (a) Determine what is most valuable to your soul.
 - (b) Wisdom may be widely accessible, but it is by no means cheap. (Garrett)
 - (2) The why?—8:11
 - (a) Wisdom is priceless.
- 2) The display of wisdom—8:12-31 (note the abundance of personal pronouns)
 - a) Wisdom displayed **in** history—8:12-21
 - i) Wisdom's inseparable companions: prudence, knowledge, and discretion—8:12
 - ii) Wisdom's Godward hatred/rejection: rooted in the awe of Yahweh—8:13
 - (1) Wisdom rejects the characteristics of fools.
 - iii) Wisdom's competent possessions: successful decision-making—8:14
 - iv) Wisdom's public activity: in the political & judicial realms—8:15-16
 - (1) This is one reason we look forward to the Millennial Kingdom. (Isa. 11:1-4)
 - v) Wisdom's genuine benefits—8:17-21
 - (1) Heartfelt satisfaction—8:17
 - (2) Things more valuable than wealth—8:18-19
 - (3) Habitual righteous decisions—8:20-21
 - (a) If sin is involved, then wisdom has not been followed. (NET)

Proverbs 8:1-36
Wisdom Speaks Again (part 2)

- 1) The eagerness of wisdom—8:1-11
- 2) The display of wisdom—8:12-31
 - a) Wisdom displayed **in** history—8:12-21
 - b) Wisdom displayed **before** history—8:22-31
 - i) Wisdom **predates** creation—8:22-26
 - This section is used by some in their attempt to prove that Jesus is a created being, and thus either not God or not fully God.
 - While this passage presents wisdom as a person who was born as God's daughter; it is **not** referring to the pre-incarnate Christ. While there are similarities between Christ and Lady Wisdom, Christ is superior to wisdom.
 - (1) Yahweh's wisdom predates creation. Thus, God's wisdom is eternal, not something He lacked but eventually acquired. He has always exercised wisdom. He is the source of wisdom.
 - (2) Wisdom is foundational to all the actions of God.
 - ii) Wisdom is **present at** creation—8:27-31
 - (1) Wisdom present on creation days 1-3—8:27-29
 - (a) God wisely made the firmament and the horizon—8:27
 - (b) God wisely controls the seemingly uncontrollable water—8:28-29
 - (2) God takes pleasure in wisdom and wisdom takes pleasure in God's creative work—8:30-31
 - iii) **Question:** If God exercised wisdom before and during creation, how do we think we can function in this life without pursuing and acquiring wisdom?
- 3) Final advice from wisdom—8:32-36
 - a) The introduction—8:32
 - i) "Therefore", in light of her display detailed in 8:12-31
 - b) What genuine listening looks like in real life—8:33-34
 - i) Displayed in a diligent eagerness to be wisdom's companion.
 - c) Why is the one who listens to Wisdom considered blessed?—8:35-36
 - i) Positively: what genuine blessedness/happiness looks like in real life—8:35
 - (1) **Question:** Do you want God's favor/approval?
 - ii) Negatively: the self-destructive consequences for not listening to wisdom—8:36
 - (1) Whoever tries to live without wisdom is inviting all kinds of disaster into his life. (NET)

Proverbs 9:1-12 Wisdom's Feast

Introduction: This begins the conclusion of the introduction. Note the parallel meals offered by these 2 different women (9:1-6 & 9:13-18). In between stands the typical responses of young men (9:7-12).

- 1) Preparations for Wisdom's feast—9:1-6
 - a) The preparation for potential rich nourishment of one's soul—9:1-3
 - i) An industriously constructed massive mansion, a meticulously prepared and extravagantly attractive meal, and an indiscriminate public invitation.
 - b) The invitation—9:4-6
 - i) The gullible/inexperienced/vulnerable and those lacking sense/judgment are invited. Though they have not yet chosen a life of wisdom, neither have they turned aside to foolishness. Perhaps there is hope for them?
 - (1) The guests' deficiency is their only qualification. (Kidner) The invitation for this banquet is not prepared based upon what a person has, but on what a person lacks. (Kitchen)
 - (2) Do you recognize your need?
 - ii) Those who need her the most are the ones who are invited. Will they listen? Will they appropriate and internalize her teaching? Will they make a decisive decision to pursue wisdom (9:6)?
 - iii) Wisdom offers life with no mention of pleasure; folly offers pleasure with no mention of death. (Allen Ross)
- 2) Your response to reproof reveals which woman you listen to—9:7-12
 - a) A comparison of the responses to correction/constructive criticism—9:7-9
 - i) The unteachable scoffer/wicked—9:7-8a (cf. 1:22, 29-30; 13:1; 15:12)
 - (1) Shame/insults, rejection, harm, hatred
 - ii) The teachable wise/just/righteous—9:8b-9
 - (1) Appreciation, increase in wisdom and learning
 - b) The theme of Proverbs—9:10 (cf. 1:7)
 - i) Awe/reverence and knowledge of Yahweh is the prerequisite for wisdom and understanding. There is a clear connection between genuine, submissive worship and the acquisition of wisdom.
 - c) The consequences of a wise response—9:11-12
 - i) Length of life—9:11
 - (1) Wisdom enables one to avoid things that tend to shorten one's life
 - ii) Personal responsibility—9:12
 - (1) No one can acquire wisdom for you. You are responsible for your own actions and attitudes.
 - (2) The acquisition of wisdom brings with it a sufficient satisfaction.

Something further: Consider making a chart to compare and contrast the two meals and invitations offered by these two women.

Proverbs 9:13-18 A Banquet of Fools

Introduction:

- 1) Preparations for Wisdom's feast—9:1-6
- 2) Your response to reproof reveals which woman you listen to—9:7-12
- 3) The "banquet" of fools—9:13-18
 - a) She lacks the ability and desire to prepare—9:13-15
 - i) She is boisterous/riotous/restless, gullible (like her intended guests), and morally ignorant.
 - (1) Quietness is characteristic of the wise because strife and arguing often accompany loudness. (FBS)
 - ii) Rather than industriously building a house, she is lazy. She seems to sitting on a pretend throne, giving the appearance of authority.
 - iii) She seeks to appeal to the same potential audience as wisdom.
 - iv) She offers immediate gratification whereas Wisdom offers long-term satisfaction. (BKC)
 - b) Her counterfeit competing invitation—9:16-17 (the pretentious imposter)
 - i) Notice how she imitates the invitation of wisdom. Cf. 9:4, 16
 - ii) Rather than preparing a meal, she now offers to others what cost her nothing. Note how her paltry meal compares with the lavish feast of Wisdom.
 - iii) Where the wisdom of God is rejected, the appeal of folly is taken up unexamined because it appeals to pride and independence. (Kitchen)
 - iv) The greater the risk, the more intense the momentary thrill, but also the more damaging the long-term effects. (Kitchen)
 - v) Remember the wise counsel of 4:15, 25-27.
 - c) The consequences of eating the "fast food" of foolishness—9:18
 - i) The wise will contemplate the consequences of thoughts, appetites, and actions.
 - ii) She delivers death to those who ordered pleasure off of her menu.
 - iii) Many will "digest" in hell what they have "eaten" on earth. (Ross, EBC)

Thus the stage is set for the practical, topical clusters of teaching in Proverbs 10-31 which is aimed at those who have made the choice of pursuing Wisdom.