

The Wise and the Wicked
Proverbs Chapter One
Berean Baptist Church
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INTRODUCTION

Proverbs are short, powerful statements of truth; they teach the doctrine of life.

Pursue wisdom in the fear of the Lord and avoid the greedy, violent, secret path of sinners because it leads to destruction!

Proverbs 1:1-4 The Power of the Proverbs

The proverbs have the power of wisdom, instruction, and understanding. They have the power to give a young person “life experience” without all the pain that comes from making mistakes. They also have the power to teach “subtlety to the simple.”

“subtlety” is the ability to do things that take clever skill, either good or bad. The promise is that by the proverbs the simple can be made skillful at life. The proverbs can also give a young person “life experience” without all the pain that comes from learning things the hard way.

“The Simple” is one of the recurring characters in Proverbs. He is neither very bad nor very good, he is just immature. If he will receive instruction he will become wise, but if not, he will become a fool.

Notice how closely the Holy Spirit links wisdom, knowledge, and discretion with justice, judgment, and equity (level dealing). There is no hard separation between practical skill, intellectual knowledge, and moral understanding. The wise person must have all three and Proverbs is the way to this wisdom.

Commit yourself to humbly receiving the wisdom of God. Long term simplicity is not a virtue.

Proverbs 1:5-9 The Wise

Here we meet another main character in the Proverbs: “the Wise.” Proverbs speaks of Wisdom as a person that we should listen to. This is a literary method to make the instructions of wisdom more compelling, but it also suggests a deeper truth: wisdom is personal.

Jesus is the Word of God as a person (John 1:14) and in him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col 2:3). The character “Wisdom” in proverbs reflects Jesus who would come 1000 years later.

Vs 5-6 The wise know that path of wisdom is hearing and learning. And once the wise person learns and becomes a man of understanding...he will seek out those who can teach him more! The wise person in Proverbs is constantly learning, listening, and seeking knowledge from others.

Vs 7 Wisdom in a human life starts with the fear of God, but the Fool (more about him later) will not be taught. This “fear” is reverent, humble submission to the words of God. The path to wisdom starts with humility before God as illustrated by Solomon's prayer in 1 Kings 3:5-12.

Vs 8 The instructions of a wise father and mother are as precious as status and wealth. Solomon's father was David and his mother was Bathsheba (2 Sam 12:24). These were far from perfect, but God still used them to teach their son the wisdom of this book.

Be wise, seek and receive instruction from the Word of God! Remember also that instruction may even come from imperfect people!

Proverbs 1:10-19 The Wicked

Vs 10 Simplicity leaves a person open to temptation.

Vs 11-13, 19 Notice how the desire for easy money and violence go together! The wicked are on the path of evil, blood-shed, and secret plots to destroy the innocent.

Vs 17 Secrecy is also a feature of wickedness. Wisdom teaches us that if dealings must be kept secret, they may not be wise. A great practical test for good choices is this: "would I want other people to know that I do this?" If the answer is "no!", then you need to reevaluate your choices.

Vs 18 But this is also a path of *self*-destruction! "...own blood...own lives..." One of the greatest, most repeated lessons in the Bible is that the wicked destroy themselves (Prov 26:27, Prov 28:10, Psl 17:15-16, Psl 35:8, Psl 141:10). Sinners will be judged by God and that judgment starts when sinners begin to destroy themselves by their own sin.

Stay off the wicked path because it is a path to your own grave! Know the wicked path and wicked people by their markers: greed, violence, secrets.

Proverbs 1:20-33 The Better Way: Wisdom

Vs 20-21 As the simple are being led down the path of evil and death, Wisdom cries out for them to turn to life.

Vs 22-23 Wisdom seeks to turn the simple from their simplicity and the scorers from their scorning. There is hope for the simple, but scorers will not hear reproof even if they want knowledge (Prov 14:6, 5:12).

Vs 24-32 Wisdom laughs at the self-inflicted pain of those that will not hear. And if they turn to wisdom when it is convenient for them, not when she calls, but when they feel like it...Wisdom will not answer them. Those who reject Wisdom when she calls will "eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them."

See again the self-destruction of evil.

Vs 33 There is great hope in Wisdom, *but you must turn to her when she calls!*

CONCLUSION

You must pursue wisdom! It is never too late or too early. The difference between the wise and fool is not how much they know but how willing they are to learn.

Pursue to Wisdom in the fear of the Lord and avoid the greedy, violent, secret path of sinners because it leads to destruction!