

The Proverbs is a collection of sayings full of meaning and wisdom. We could say they are words which are to rule and govern the life. But these are not sayings of human wisdom, rather they are divine sent from heaven to earth.

**Several of the Proverbs are quoted in the New Testament**

Proverbs 1:16	Romans 3:15
Proverbs 3:11,12	Hebrews 12: 5,6; Revelation 3:19
Proverbs 3:34	James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5
Proverbs 11:31	1 Peter 4:18
Proverbs 25:21,22	Romans 12:20
Proverbs 26:11	2 Peter 2:22

There are various outlines proposed for the collection of the Proverbs. We should be careful (as in all of Scripture) of thinking every single Proverb applies to “us.”

As we will see, some Proverbs are for a ruler, others are general, and still others are for all men.

**Outline of The Proverbs**

There are many outlines we could follow. Dr. Charles Ryrie, the Ryrie Study Bible, presents an outline that is rather straight forward and gives the reader the sense that all of the Proverbs are for everyone. Dr. Harold Wilmington, The Outline Bible, does a little better as he ascribes some of the Proverbs as being directed to Solomon’s son, Rehoboam. Dr. Kenneth Hanna does not attempt in his outline to define who various Proverbs may be directed to but simply divides them into sections like “1:8-9:18: Admonitions”, “10:1-22:16: Couplets”(Proverbs 13:4: The soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat), “22:17-24:34: Thirty Sayings”, etc. We will most likely look at all of these outlines as we move through the book. Perhaps one of the most helpful in seeing the depth of the outline so we know who the various Proverbs are directed is Dr. E.W. Bullinger’s outline. I’ve condensed it and simplified it here:

A.	<b>Proverbs 1:6-9:18:</b> Proverbs for <b>Solomon</b> .
B.	<b>Proverbs 10:1-19:19:</b> Proverbs for <b>all</b>
C.	<b>Proverbs 19:20-24:34:</b> Proverbs for <b>Solomon</b> .
D.	<b>Proverbs 25:1-26:28:</b> Proverbs for <b>all</b> .
E.	<b>Proverbs 27:1-29:27:</b> Proverbs for <b>Solomon</b>
F.	<b>Proverbs 30:1-31:31:</b> The Words of Agur and The Words of king Lemuel.

In this session we will look at the first six verses. I have outline them as:

- 1:1: Title.
- 1:2-4: Purpose.
- 1:5-6: Expectation.

Verse 1—

**The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel.** This is the title of the entire book. It does not mean that every proverb in the book was “of” Solomon. Some were written by others such as Proverbs 30: **The words of Agur the son of Jakeh**, and Proverbs 31: **The words of king Lemuel**. The word **Proverb** means *a short pithy saying*. Verse 6 calls them **dark sayings**, which just means *difficult sayings, or riddles*. What are the characteristics of these *dark sayings*?

Dr. Kenneth Hanna describes the characteristics and purposes of The Proverbs:

### Characteristics

1. A proverb **is brief**: They say the most in the fewest possible words.
2. A proverb **is concrete**: In other words, vivid, real, and specific. They deal in the actual not the abstract. They make use of figures of speech that arrest our attention.
3. A proverb **is universal**: They are true to life. They are generalizations that are supported by common observation and experience (and as noted above can be for a ruler, or simply general in nature, or for all men).
4. A proverb is **timeless, yet timely**: They transcend generational gaps, communicating to young and old, ancient and modern.

### Purpose

The purpose of The Proverbs is,

Verses 2,3,4—

1. **To know wisdom and instruction.** Or, one who is able to take correction. That kind of a person is wise. It is interesting this is first since it is likely one of the most abused. Taking correction means one has to be able to listen and even be able to logically think through the correction, instead of arguing and never discovering the truth. That really what the next purpose is about,
2. **To perceive the words of understanding.** To perceive is to *consider*. One cannot understand until he or she can take time to consider the instruction given to them. Of course, that is what the Proverbs will help one do.
3. **To receive the instruction of wisdom.** The Hebrew word **wisdom** here is different than the word wisdom in verse 2. In verse 2 *wisdom* is a noun, here it is a verb. So, take action receive it, get it in all aspects of life.
  - a. **Justice**: What is right or normal. It carries the idea of weights and measures. Carrying things out fairly.
  - b. **Judgment**. If there is one thing we need today it is leaders, and people of all walks of life who understand judgment. This word has the idea of order, perhaps even “law and order.”
  - c. **Equity**. This means setting things aright, or upright. Not crooked. Maybe equality.
4. **To give subtilty to the *simple*.** Even those whom the world deems simple or foolish can take heed to The Proverbs. In doing so they can gain prudence in all walks of life and shrewdness in dealing with others. And finally,
  - a. **To the *young man* knowledge and discretion.** It is interesting that the instruction for the young man is next to the simple. Sometimes this word **discretion** is translated as *thought*. It

really can mean something good or bad. We will see examples of young men without discretion in our study through the Proverbs.

### **Expectations**

What should we expect the result to be after realizing the purposes in verses 2-4?

Verse 5—

1. **A wise man will hear, and will increase learning.**
2. **A man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels**

Verse 6--

**To understand a proverb, and the interpretation:** In short, The Proverbs is the source for all wisdom.

We will see if these characteristics and purposes hold true as we make our way through the book.

### **Background on Solomon | The Author and Compiler of The Proverbs**

1. The text of Proverbs specifically names Solomon as the author three times (1:1; 10:1; 25:1). We will see from some of the proverbs that he not only authored, but he compiled many of them as well.
2. Solomon was the second son of David and Bathsheba after their first son died (2 Samuel 12:24-25).
3. He was appointed to the throne as king of Israel after David's death and reigned 40 years (970-930 BC).
4. Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river (the Euphrates) unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life. (1 Kings 4:21). He was highly regarded in his own nation and among the nations.
5. His wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the men in the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt (1 Kings 4:29-34).

This is the man whose Proverbs we will examine over the next several weeks.