

## Introduction to the Book of Proverbs

A *proverb* is a short, usually two-line saying used to express an important truth or piece of advice. It is intentionally short and intentionally memorable. It is something that has been passed from one generation to the next. For example, “A penny saved is a penny earned” or “an apple a day keeps the doctor away.”

*Wisdom* is more than intellectual knowledge; it is knowing what is right, pure, loving and good. Wisdom is the practical side of moral goodness. It is not only knowing what is right, but applying it. Two sayings about wisdom are “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” and wisdom begins with the proper relationship with God through faith.

*Proverbs are not legal guarantees from God.* They are designed to share the contrast between Wisdom and Folly. Specifically, between living the life of Wisdom or living the life of Folly. They are worded to be memorable, not theoretically correct.

*Proverbs are Hebrew poetry,* although they lack rhyme and rhythm. They are based on parallelism and intensification. Here are the distinct types of parallel proverbs.

1. Synonymous Parallelism – Different facets of a larger truth; the statements build upon each other (e.g., “Discretion will watch over you; understanding will guard you.” —Proverbs 2:11).
2. Antithetical Parallelism – The second line is opposite or in contrast to the first line. The second line aims to view the truth from a different angle, intensifying it and driving the truth home (e.g., “A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother.” —Proverbs 10:1).
3. Emblematic Parallelism – One line or sentence illustrates or clarifies the other with a word picture, intensifying it (e.g., “Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to those who send him.” —Proverbs 10:26).
4. Synthetic Parallelism – The second line brings to completion or expands the idea of the first line (e.g., “In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths.” —Proverbs 3:6).

*Biblical wisdom is the skill and art of godly living.* Godly living requires the ability to apply wisdom in your life in order to make right/wise choices. This enables the believer to discriminate between what is right and wrong, wholesome and damaging, important and unimportant, wise and foolish. THIS IS A HIGH PRIORITY FOR EVERY BELIEVER!

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