

## Lesson #16

**PREPARATION FOR LESSON** read Proverbs 1, 2, 3, 9, 11, 15, 31**BACKGROUND**

**Author and Date:** most of the proverbs were written by Solomon when he was 40 yrs. old, after 20 yrs as king c. 950 BC  
 Agur wrote 1; Lemuel is Bathsheba's name for Solomon, meaning *belonging to God*. 2 Sam. 12:25  
 After Solomon's death, all the proverbs were stored with the rest of Jewish history.  
 200 years later, 725 BC, Levite scribes took some of them and arranged them by topic. 25:1  
 They became another of the Jewish sacred books, the book of Proverbs.

**Theme:** Proverbs or wise sayings; there are 915 of the 3000 that Solomon wrote. 1 Kings 4:32

**Purpose:** To teach 3 categories of Jewish young men about godly wisdom: the wise, the foolish and the simple.  
 If they accept godly wisdom, they can grow up to be godly fathers and leaders.  
 Young men need instruction when they are still teachable.  
 Solomon writes the young men because they so often strayed from their Jewish faith and training.  
*My son* does not mean biological son; as king, he is writing to the sons (young men) of Israel.

**OUTLINE**

Explanation of godly wisdom 1 - 9  
 What it is 1:7  
 Why Jewish youth need it 2 - 8  
 How they get it 9:10  
 Application of godly wisdom 10 - 31

**INTRODUCTION**

**Jewish Wisdom Literature** has its own style of writing

It uses lots of picture language and repetition.  
 It uses 6-8 different words to mean the same thing; the words are meant to be used interchangeably.  
 It uses personification: *trees clap their hands or sing for joy*; wisdom speaks as tho she were a woman.  
 It gives instruction on a topic in brief segments.  
 It sometimes gives instruction as tho it were from a father and mother to their son. 1:8  
 It uses circular writing: the chapter or book ends the way it began; this is important to understanding Prov. 31.  
 It is written in poetry form

**Jewish Poetry and parallelism**

The **major** idea or thought is in the first line; it is reinforced in the second line by 1 of 4 ways:  
 Repetition 2:11      Completion 3:6      Comparison 15:17      Contrast 11:1  
*Rhetoric is art to the people of the Middle East. Proverbs...imagery and exaggeration are commonplace.*  
*Language is poetry, writing is art...* Insight, 4 Mar. '91

**Topics** to consider for personal study

Friends / relationships	Fear of God	Pride
Value of discipline	Qualities of a wise person	Humility
Tongue / speech	Money / riches	Gossip
Lying		

**DEFINITIONS** for **this** book only

**Proverbs** are wise teachings; they are statements that are generally true, but they are not promises. cf. 22:6

**Wisdom** means godly wisdom – having God's perspective; doing things God's way and wanting the things God wants. It is being in tune with God. Godly wisdom is all about God.

**Wisdom, knowledge, perception, insight, discretion, understanding, prudence** are used interchangeably.  
 In this book they all mean *godly* wisdom.

**Wise** means those who accept God's ways and have godly wisdom.

**Fool/foolish** means those who reject God's ways; they do not have godly wisdom and do not want it.

**Simple** means those who are undecided about God's ways; they do not have godly wisdom, but might want to get it.

**Fear of the Lord:** awe and reverence for God as a Person and literal fear of His consequences for disobedience.



## DEVELOPMENT OF OUTLINE

### Explanation of godly wisdom 1 – 9 (for the young men of Israel)

**What it is:** it is all about God; the guiding force of this wisdom is the fear of the Lord, meaning... awe and wonder of God Himself; fear of His consequences if there is disobedience 1:7

**Why they need it:** To make good choices by knowing what is right and what is wrong 2:10-12  
To enjoy God's blessings and use them wisely. 3:13-18  
To have inner peace in the midst of chaos. 3:21-23  
To protect themselves from temptations and enticements of the world.  
Wisdom, folly and adultery are pictured as women who have influence over those around them

**How they get it** 9:10

They must know and learn what God is really like (His character); they must develop knowledge of God.  
Until they know His character, they will never have His values.  
They must also be afraid to disobey because of the consequences.

### Application of godly wisdom 10 – 31

Solomon's wise teachings will help them develop more wisdom and show them how to use it in their daily life.

## EXPLANATIONS

**Circular form of writing** ties the book of Proverbs together.

Solomon **begins** with his **father's** teaching on how to be a godly **man** 4:3-27

He **ends** with his **mother's** teaching on how to be a godly **king** 31:1-9

He **begins** by telling Jewish young men to **seek** godly wisdom

he used the picture of **Lady** Wisdom

He **ends** by telling them to **seek** a godly wife

he uses the picture of the **Woman** of Valor

He **begins** and **ends** the book saying the key to godly wisdom and a godly life is *the fear of the Lord* 1:7; 31:30

**Chapter 31:10-31** is an acrostic poem based on the Hebrew alphabet of 22 letters. Each verse begins with a consecutive letter.

**A** wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. Vs. 10

**B**ehold, her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. Vs. 11

**G**ood she brings him, not harm, all the days of his life. Vs. 12

**D**iligently selecting wool and flax, she works with eager hands. Vs. 13

### How to find a godly wife

He is not telling youth to find a wife based on how much she can do. They are to look for 8 qualities in her life.

- She is a **woman of valor**, meaning strong in character and a leader in some area of life. Vss. 10, 29
- She is the other half of a **team**; she has input; her opinion is respected; her husband praises her and provides for her. As she encourages him, he responds and develops himself. Vss. 11, 12, 20
- She has **gifts and ability** and has developed them; the examples show all the potential areas a woman can work in.
- She is **creative** in some area of life: in the home, business venture or finances.
- She has **initiative** to see what needs to be done; she finds a way to get it done herself or using others.
- She **speaks** with **wisdom** knowing when and when not to speak; she validates and encourages others.
- She is a woman of **character** with inner beauty; she has **self-esteem**, **strength** and **dignity**.
- She has a deep **knowledge of God** that has developed her into a woman of valor; she fears the Lord. Vs. 30

**31:18** *She sees that her trading is profitable and her lamp does not go out at night*

Her profitable trading allowed her to buy a good supply of oil so she could keep the lamp burning all night and have security in the home.



**31:18** *She sees that her trading is profitable and her lamp does not go out at night (continued)*

For the Jews, a burning lamp or candle represented God's presence.

*She keeps the lamp burning* is Jewish picture language to say she sets the spiritual tone in the family.

Thru her influence, the presence of God dominates the home and is felt by those around her.

Among the Jews, the wife is called the *center-piece of the home*; the home is her domain.

## **APPLICATION**

### **God's concept of women; His role for them**

Whether married or not, God wants women to be women of valor, strong in character and leadership.

They have the privilege of setting the spiritual tone in the family.

Thru their influence, the presence of God should be sensed by those around them.

Are we as women living up to our potential? Can others describe us as godly women?

### **God's desire for men and women of faith is that they develop godly wisdom**

It begins with knowledge of God.

We need to learn, study and understand what God is like, being amazed at His character and qualities.

It will lead to seeing things as God sees them and being in tune with His desires.

We will have clarity to know right from wrong based on His standards.

The world and its enticements will not be as attractive.

We will have inner peace even with uncertainty and chaos around us.

It will give us the ability to be godly in an ungodly world.

