

## Introduction to Proverbs

### Author and Date

[Proverbs](#) itself mentions Solomon (reigned c. 971–931 BC) as the author or collector of its contents ([1:1](#); [10:1](#)), including the proverbs copied by Hezekiah's men ([25:1](#)). There are also two batches of sayings from a group called "the wise" ([22:17–24:22](#); [24:23–34](#)), and "oracles" from Agur ([30:1–33](#)) and Lemuel ([31:1–9](#)). No author is named for the song in praise of the excellent wife that ends the book ([31:10–31](#)).

### The Gospel in Proverbs

The book of [Proverbs](#) is one of the "many ways" God spoke ([Heb. 1:1](#)), leading us to his only Son Jesus. What stands out about the book of [Proverbs](#) is its gracious offer of divine wisdom for foolish and weak people.

The book of [Proverbs](#) is an outpouring of grace from God. Again and again, the author appeals to the reader as his dear "son" ([Prov. 1:8, 10, 15; 2:1; 3:1, 11, 21; 4:1, 10, 20; 5:1, 7, 20; 6:1, 3, 20; 7:1, 24; 19:27; 23:15, 19, 26; 24:13, 21; 27:11](#)). This book breathes with the Spirit of adoption ([Rom. 8:15](#)). We may therefore study [Proverbs](#) not to earn a sonship still out of reach but to bear witness to a sonship already given.

The rest of the Bible makes clear that Jesus is the one who perfectly embodies this unique wisdom. According to the Old Testament, the Messiah would be anointed with "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD" ([Isa. 11:2](#)). According to the New Testament, Jesus is God's gift of wisdom to sinners ([1 Cor. 1:30](#)). Solomon was a genius, but Jesus was greater than Solomon ([Matt. 12:42](#)). He amazed people with his wisdom ([Matt. 13:54](#)). To this day, he counsels his church through his Word ([Rev. 3:18](#)). The wisdom of Jesus can be hard to accept, since it led not to popularity but to a cross ([1 Cor. 1:18–25](#)). But if we will humbly receive the divine wisdom hidden in Christ ([Col. 2:2–3](#)), the book of [Proverbs](#) will open up as a powerful word from our Wonderful Counselor ([Isa. 9:6](#)).

Through the book of [Proverbs](#) God our Father guides his children into practical sanctification. But the book offers far more than handy tips. [Proverbs](#) provides profound wisdom *given by God* for our complex decisions ([Prov. 2:6](#)). Thus, its wisdom is a provision of grace, enabling us to navigate the problems and perils of life with a fatherly guidance we have not earned nor can provide by our own devices. Because this wisdom is "from above" ([James 3:15–17](#); cf. [Prov. 3:19; 8:22–31](#)), we will have to rethink our lives with humble reverence before God ([Prov. 1:7; 9:10](#)). We will even have to "call out for insight," seeking it like silver and searching for it as for hidden treasures ([2:3–4](#)). But we have the privilege of asking a willing God who delights to provide what

## Week 5: February 28 – March 5

### Weekly Overview

we need (cf. [2:5-7](#); [22:4](#); [James 1:5](#)), helping us to understand that the sanctification taught in this book is a gift of God that will ultimately be understood as having been won for us already by Jesus ([1 Cor. 1:30](#)). Through his Spirit, Jesus shares it freely with the undeserving. Thus, we can pursue his wisdom with every expectation of gaining it as our own.

The way to read the book of [Proverbs](#) is to slow down and prayerfully think it through, one proverb at a time. Consider what each instruction reveals of God's nature by what he values and instructs. Then consider what each proverb reveals about human frailty and need by the instruction we require. Such careful reflection will reveal much about the grace humanity requires, which God will ultimately provide in Christ. Reading this unusual book is more like savoring a piece of hard candy than gulping down a mouthful of fast food. But to those who accept the way God has chosen to speak here, he makes this priceless promise: "Wisdom will come into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul" ([Prov. 2:10](#)).

### Outline

#### **Introductory Chapters ([1:1-9:18](#))**

- Title, goal, and motto ([1:1-7](#))
- A father's invitation to wisdom ([1:8-9:18](#))

#### **[Proverbs](#) and Sayings ([10:1-31:31](#))**

- [Proverbs](#) of Solomon ([10:1-22:16](#))
- The thirty sayings of "the wise" ([22:17-24:22](#))
- Further sayings of "the wise" ([24:23-34](#))
- Hezekiah's collection of Solomon's proverbs ([25:1-29:27](#))
- The sayings of Agur ([30:1-33](#))
- The sayings of King Lemuel ([31:1-9](#))
- An alphabet of womanly excellence ([31:10-31](#))