

CHAPTER 1

Did You Hear God In The Street?

Introduction to the Book of Proverbs

Who wrote the book of Proverbs (Proverbs 1:1)? _____ Who was this man's father (1 Kings 2:1-3)? _____ Solomon had a godly father who feared the Lord and served the Lord well. When David was an old man he gave his son Solomon some very important advice (read 1 Chronicles 28:9):

- 1) **KNOW THE LORD**
- 2) **SERVE THE LORD**
- 3) **SEEK THE LORD (and do not forsake Him)**

After David died, Solomon became king over all of Israel. Later in his life Solomon fell into deep sin (see 1 Kings chapter 11), but when he began his reign as Israel's king his heart was right with God: "And _____ the LORD" (1 Kings 3:3). In 1 Kings 3:5 God made an amazing statement to Solomon. God said, "A _____ what I shall G _____ thee" (1 Kings 3:5). In other words, God said something like this: "SOLOMON, YOU ASK ME FOR SOMETHING AND I WILL GIVE IT TO YOU! WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO GIVE YOU? ASK WHATEVER YOU WISH!" If God were to say this to you, what would you want God to give you? What would you ask for? riches? long life? happiness? popularity? possessions? What did Solomon ask for (1 Kings 3:9-12)?

_____ Did God grant his request (1 Kings 3:12)?
 _____ What else did God give him as a bonus (1 Kings 3:13)?

_____ (Those who put first things first never lose out. See Matthew 6:33, "...and all these things shall be ADDED unto you.")

An example of Solomon's wisdom is given in 1 Kings 3:16-28. If you had been in Solomon's place would you have thought of this solution to the problem? _____ Did the Lord Jesus speak of the wisdom of Solomon in Matthew 12:42? _____ Was Solomon able to use his knowledge and wisdom to answer very difficult questions (1 Kings 10:1-3)? _____

Solomon was a man who had been given wisdom by God. Just as God gave the Apostle Paul much wisdom to write at least 13 New Testament books (see 2 Peter 3:15-16), even so God gave Solomon much wisdom to write three Old Testament books, including PROVERBS. The other two were Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon.

King Solomon wrote most of the book of Proverbs but not all of it. For example, the last two chapters in Proverbs were not written by Solomon (see Proverbs 30:1 and 31:1).

What Is A Proverb?

A Proverb is a short and wise saying which is used for a long time by many people. We have many common proverbs in English. Here are two examples:

1) "**Haste makes waste.**"

Can you think of times in your life when haste made waste?

2) "**Better safe than sorry.**"

This is a good rule for driving a car!

The book of Proverbs is a collection of short sayings. It is a book filled with wise sayings. Each chapter contains many proverbs. Usually each verse is a proverb in and of itself. Thus in Chapter 13 there are 25 verses and 25 proverbs. How many proverbs did Solomon speak (1 Kings 4:32)?
 _____ The book of Proverbs has many of Solomon's proverbs, but not all. (Solomon spoke 3000, but there are only 915 total verses in the book of Proverbs.) The Lord knew which proverbs should become a part of His Bible. See also Ecclesiastes 12:9 where we are told that Solomon "set in order many _____."

A proverb is a short saying. It is a truth said in a way that is easy to remember. It is easy to remember things that are short and clever. Also the proverbs are MORAL in their teaching. This means that each proverb makes it clear what is RIGHT and what is WRONG. Consider Proverbs 15:1. What is right? _____ What is wrong?

Consider Proverbs 15:18. What is right?
 _____ What is wrong? _____

A Biblical proverb is a short saying which should regulate and govern the life of a believer. The proverbs teach us how to live: what to do and what not to do. The theme of the book of Proverbs is WISDOM. What is wisdom? (Give a dictionary definition.)

Is there a difference between *knowledge* and *wisdom*? Can a person know many things and not be wise? _____ Can a person have knowledge but fail to use that knowledge and fail to put that knowledge to work? _____

The Greeks and Romans saw WISDOM as a very philosophical thing. They had their philosophies and lofty thoughts and ideas, but these had little to do with their daily life. To the Jews WISDOM was a very practical thing and it had everything to do with daily life. James speaks about WISDOM in James 3:17-18. Did James understand WISDOM as something very practical? _____ The book of Proverbs deals with PRACTICAL WISDOM--wisdom which is "down to earth" and which helps us in our day by day living.

Some wisdom is not practical at all. Some of the things that are taught in the colleges of our land are not very practical. Someone has said that a Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy) is one who learns more and more about less and less until he knows everything about nothing! This is not the kind of wisdom that we have in the book of Proverbs. The book of Proverbs hits us right where we live! [The above comment is not intended to make fun of the countless number of men and women who have responsibly earned their doctorate degrees by hard work and diligent study. The point is merely that head knowledge does not always translate into wise living.]

A Key Verse

A key verse in the book of Proverbs is found in the very first chapter, verse 7:

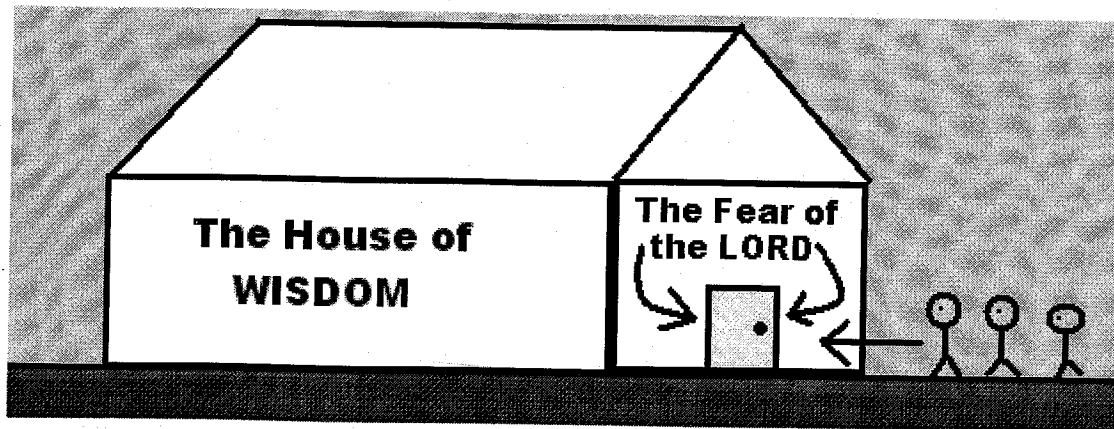
"The _____ of the LORD is the _____ of knowledge but _____ despise wisdom and instruction."

Can you find a similar verse in Proverbs chapter 9? Verse: _____

These verses speak of two kinds of people--those who fear God and those who do not:

THOSE WHO FEAR GOD	THOSE WHO DO NOT FEAR GOD
are afraid to displease God	care only about pleasing self
are aware and conscious of God	ignore God
include God in their thoughts & plans	leave God out of their thoughts & plans
respect and honor God because of who He is	try to pretend that God does not exist
take God's Word seriously	care nothing for God's Word

If a person wants true knowledge and wisdom, he must BEGIN with the fear of the LORD (Prov.1:7). The fear of the LORD is the door that leads into the house of wisdom:



A person cannot get into the house of wisdom unless he goes through the door! Have *you* entered the house of wisdom? Those who go into the house of WISDOM will find that the book of Proverbs is filled with much help and practical wisdom for daily living. Those who refuse to go into the house of wisdom will have little use for the book of Proverbs. To them it will be nothing more than a collection of brief sayings that mean very little. **TO KNOW WISDOM ONE MUST KNOW THE GOD OF ALL WISDOM!**

Did You Hear God in the Street?

Who Have You Been Listening To In The Street?

Consider PROVERBS 1:20-21. Who is crying out in the streets? _____ Wisdom is here "personified." This means that wisdom is described as if it were a PERSON. This PERSON is no one less than GOD HIMSELF. He is the ALL-WISE GOD who calls out and cries out in the street. Have you heard God in the street?

Sadly, most people have R_____ to listen to God in the street (Proverbs 1:24). What did they hate (Proverbs 1:29)? _____ What did they not choose (Proverbs 1:29)? _____

What are the consequences of *not* listening to WISDOM (Proverbs 1:26-28)? _____ What are the benefits of listening to WISDOM (Proverbs 1:33)? _____

Is God really ON THE STREETS? Have you met God on the streets? Can a person really find God there?

I know God is in church. That is a place of worship, and surely God can be found there. I know God can be found in the Bible. That is God's Holy Word. I know God is there. I know God is with our family when we have our time of devotions. I know God is in Sunday School class. He can be found in these places, but can God really be found in the streets?

The street is right where I live through the week. It is the place where my foot hits the road. The street is right out in the real world where I do my business, where I go shopping, where I go to school, where I go to my job, etc. Can I really find God in these places?

What good is a God who is only in church or in Sunday School? There are twenty-four hours in each day and seven days in each week. What percentage of the entire week do you spend in church? _____ We would be in trouble if that were the only place to find God. What good is a God who is only to be found in the Bible? You close the Bible and go off onto the streets of life (school, work, play) and God would no longer be there! NO, the Bible says that when you go out on the streets God is there and He is calling out to you.

Who else is in the streets (Proverbs 7:12)? _____ Does she also invite men to come to her (Proverbs 7:18)? _____ Should we listen to her (Proverbs 7:25)? _____

Who else cries out on the streets and invites men to *COME* (see Proverbs 1:11)? _____ Should we listen to these voices? _____

Who is crying out to men in Proverbs 8:1-4? _____
To whom is she calling (verse 4)? _____
Does that include you? _____

Compare Proverbs 9:4 with Proverbs 9:16. Are these verses identical? _____ Who is giving the invitation in verse 4? _____ in verse 16?

_____ WISDOM calls the simple to **forsake sin**; the foolish woman calls the simple to **indulge in sin**. Both are calling; both are inviting. WHO WILL YOU LISTEN TO? God is right there in the street calling to you. Have you been listening?

GOD WANTS TO BE VERY REAL TO YOU RIGHT WHERE YOU LIVE EVERY DAY OF EVERY WEEK!