

## Reading Proverbs

### The Big Picture

1-9	Speeches: (1-7 from Father to Son, 8-9 from Lady Wisdom)
10-22:16	Proverbs of Solomon
22:17-24:22	Sayings of the Wise
24:23-34	More Sayings of the Wise
25-29	Proverbs collected during Hezekiah's time
30	Sayings of Agur
31	Sayings of Lemuel

### Main Themes in Proverbs

1. Creation: God has “wired” morality into the universe; life works according certain patterns of justice and recompense – Proverbs 1:20-33; ch. 8
2. Wisdom is rooted in the “fear of Yahweh” – 1:7, 9:10, 14:26-27, 19:23
  - “Fear” = healthy respect, awe, reverence that motivates obedience and makes disobedience undesirable.
  - The prerequisite of wisdom is the acknowledgment that God will uphold and enforce the moral nature of the universe.
  - Wise people seek out and live by these principles: 1:2-6
3. Justice and Retribution
  - The Righteous/wise are those who live in harmony with God, others, and the world (even animals! Prov 12:10)
  - The Wicked/foolish are those who disrupt that harmony on all levels of relationships.
4. Proverbs are by nature *general* and about *probabilities*: they present truth, but *not the whole truth* at once. **Proverbs are not promises!**
  - The application of Proverbs always *depends on the situation*.

*Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will be like him yourself.*

*Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes.* Prov 26:4-5

- They are reflections on how life *usually* works out . . . but not always. Proverbs may sometimes seem naïve, but they are presenting how life generally works in God's moral universe.
- We need the other wisdom books to gain a holistic perspective on life in our broken world: sometimes wisdom does not lead to success... (see Job and Ecclesiastes).

**EAT THIS BOOK**

