

ALL YOUR HEART—ALL YOUR WAYS
PREACHING THROUGH THE BIBLE: PROVERBS
Proverbs 3:5-6

I. INTRODUCTION

A. TITLE

1. HEBREW

- *Mishle Shelomoh* = Proverbs of Solomon—**1:1**
- Named for Solomon—they *main* but *not* only contributor

2. SEPTUAGINT—TWO TERMS

- *Paroimiai Solomontos* = Proverbs of Solomon

3. LATIN

- *Liber Proverbiorum* = Book of Proverbs

4. RABBINICAL WRITINGS

- *Sepher Hokhmah* = Book of Wisdom

B. TYPE OF LITERATURE

1. PLACE IN HEBREW CANON

- a. One of eleven books in the ‘Writings’—*Ketuvim*
- b. **Second** in *Ketuvim* order—after Psalms, Proverbs—before Song of Solomon and Ruth

2. GENRE

- One of **five poetic** books—Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon
- One of **three wisdom** books—Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes

3. MEANING OF ‘PROVERB’

- a. Hebrew = *mashal* = ‘comparison’, ‘similar’, ‘parallel’
- b. Using a comparison or figure of speech to provide a terse and meaningful point
- c. Practical observation about real life—based on knowledge and experience
- d. A statement that illustrates a timeless truth

C. PURPOSE

1. TWO-FOLD PURPOSE STATED AT BEGINNING—**1:2-6**
 - a. To **know** wisdom and instruction—i.e. to **receive** imparted wisdom—**1:2a, 3-5**
 - To **know** wise behavior—righteousness, justice, equity
 - To make the **naïve** prudent—for **youth** to grow in discretion
 - To make **wise men** wiser—to grow in wise counsel
 - b. To **discern** sayings of understanding—i.e. to **understand** wisdom—**1:2b, 6**
 - To understand—proverbs and their interpretation (‘figures’)
 - To understand—words of the wise
 - To understand—riddles (‘dark sayings’)
2. WHAT IS THIS ‘WISDOM’?
 - a. **Wisdom** (*hokmah*—**1:2**) = ‘skill’—[ability to apply knowledge]
 - b. ‘Skill’ comes from **instruction** (*musar*—**1:2**) = ‘discipline’ [rigorous study/application]
 - c. Disciplined study/teaching—focuses on **knowledge** (da’ath—**1:7**)—that is practical
[*True* knowledge is to know not just information—but to know and fear God Himself]
 - d. So—**wisdom** is practical **knowledge** appropriated through **disciplined** study/application

D. AUTHORS

1. KING SOLOMON—THE PRIMARY AUTHOR

a. **Chapters 1-29**—Solomon wrote or passed down all this material—attributed in 3 places

- **1:1**—*The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel*
- **10:1**—*The proverbs of Solomon*
- **25:1**—*These also are proverbs of Solomon*—transcribed by Hezekiah’s men

b. Some rabbinical scholars attribute **chapters 30-31** to Solomon—using a pseudonym

2. AGUR—SON OF JAKEH

- Unknown author—**chapter 30**

3. KING LEMUEL

- Unknown author—**chapter 31**

E. STRUCTURE

1:1-6	INTRODUCTION
1:7—through chapter 9	SOLOMON’S FATHERLY ADVICE TO HIS SON [YOUTH] Ten sets of “ <i>My son</i> ” exhortations on various subjects
Chapters 10-24	375 PROVERBS RECORDED BY SOLOMON
Chapters 10-18	Contrast the Godly and the Wicked
Chapters 20-23	Conduct of a godly life
Chapter 24	Instructions and Warnings
Chapters 25-29	SOLOMON’S PROVERBS COPIED BY HEZEKIAH’S MEN
Chapters 25-26	Relationships with others
Chapters 27-29	Instructions and Warnings
Chapter 30	AN ORACLE BY AGUR

Chapter 31

KING LEMUEL'S WORDS

31:1-9

His mother's oracle/teaching to Lemuel

31:10-31

The Virtuous Woman—full acrostic of all 22 Hebrew letters

F. DATE OF COMPOSITION AND EDITING

1. CHAPTERS 1-24—BEFORE SOLOMON'S DEATH—931 BC
2. CHAPTERS 25-29—HEZEKIAH'S SCRIBES—230 YEARS LATER (715-686 BC)
3. CHAPTERS 30-31—UNCERTAIN

G. KEY THEMES

1. THE **FEAR OF THE LORD** IS THE BEGINNING OF **KNOWLEDGE**—**1:7a**
2. THE **FEAR OF THE LORD** IS THE BEGINNING OF **WISDOM**—**9:10**
3. **FOOLS** DESPISE WISDOM AND INSTRUCTION [DISCIPLINE]—**1:7b**

H. BIBLICAL CONTEXT

1. ABOUT 16 PROVERBS—QUOTED OR PARAPHRASED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT
2. JAMES—IN ITS PRACTICAL APPLICATION—THE NT MOST SIMILAR IN TONE

II. BIBLICAL TEXT

Pr 3:5-6—*Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.* [KJV]

Pr 3:5-6—*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.* [NIV]

Pr 3:5-6—*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.* [NASB]

III. BACKGROUND

A. THE WISE PERSON AND THE FOOL

1. THE FOOL KNOWS **ABOUT** GOD—BUT DOES **NOT FEAR** GOD

- a. He is not ignorant—but self-sufficient
- b. He is not a philosophic atheist—disbelieving in God’s existence
- c. He is a practical atheist—living as though God does not exist

1. **Psalm 9**

- All the thoughts of the wicked are “There is no God”—**v 4**
- **But** he affirms God’s existence in his claim “God has forgotten”—**v11**
- And saying God will not hold him accountable—**v13**

2. **Ps 36:1**

- He is ungodly of heart—“there is no fear of God before his eyes”

d. Summarized in two Proverbs

Pr 28:25-26—*An arrogant man stirs up strife, but he who trusts in the Lord will prosper. He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but he who walks wisely will be delivered.*

Pr 26:12—*Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.*

❖ **Bottom line—the fool is self-sufficient—and not God-dependent**

2. THE WISE PERSON *REALLY* **KNOWS** AND **FEARS** GOD

- a. This is the beginning of knowledge—and wisdom
 - **1:7**—*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge*
 - **9:10**—*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding*

b. Such wisdom brings true knowledge—**2:1-6**

1. To discern the fear of the Lord
2. To discover the knowledge of God
3. In turn—the Lord gives wisdom

➤ From His mouth come [true] knowledge and understanding

❖ **Bottom line—the wise person is not self-sufficient—but depends on the Lord**

3. APPLICATION—**Pr 3:7**

- Do **not be wise in your own eyes**
- **But fear the Lord and turn away from evil**

B. CONTEXT

1. FRAMEWORK OF **3:5-12**

- Trust the Lord—**vv5--6**
- Fear the Lord—**vv7-8**
- Honor the Lord with your wealth—**vv9-10**
- Embrace the Lord's discipline—**vv11-12**

2. RECIPROCAL CONNECTION BETWEEN **VERSES 5 AND 6**

- To trust God [and not lean on self]—is to acknowledge Him [and let Him lead you]

C. OUTLINE

- **Entirely** trust God—**v5a**
- **Exclusively** trust God—**v5b**
- **Extensively** trust God—**v6a**

- Because God is **trustworthy**—v6b

IV. EXPOSITION

A. ENTIRELY—TRUST GOD—WHOLE-HEARTEDLY

❖ *Trust in the Lord with all your heart*

1. TRUST

- a. **Depend**—to lean on—put full body weight upon—rely wholly upon
- b. **Humility**—to lie helplessly face down—relinquish—**Jer 12:5—Ps 22:9**
- c. **Confidence**—to confide in—set one’s hope upon—**Ps 37:3**
- d. **Commit**—to put one’s welfare in another’s hands—**Ps 37:5**

2. HEART

- a. Center of being and personality
- b. Center of mental faculties—the mind and will

3. TRUST WHOLEHEARTEDLY

- a. With **all your being**—with full force of whole mind and will
 - *Love the Lord your God with all your heart . . .*
- b. Confident in **God as the ultimate source** of all wisdom and power—in all things
- c. **Totally abandon** any hint of self-reliance
- d. Rely solely on **God’s grace**—not on your own ingenuity and ‘power’ and works

4. ONE GOAL OF PROVERBIAL INSTRUCTION

- **Pr 22:19**—*So that your trust may be in the Lord, I have taught you today, even you.*

5. PROMISES

- **Pr 28:25**—*But he who trusts in the Lord will prosper*
- **Ps 37:3-5**—*Trust in the Lord and do good; Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He will do it.*

6. THE COST OF TOTAL TRUST

- Give up the ‘security’ of self-dependence
- Addressed **verse 5b**—which expresses **verse 5a** negatively

B. EXCLUSIVELY—TRUST GOD

❖ *Lean not on your own understanding*

1. LEAN

- a. To use something—or someone—for support
 - **2 Sam 1:6**—Saul leaning on his spear
 - **2 Kgs 5:18**—Syrian king leaning on Naaman’s arm—typical gesture in public
- b. Similar to ‘trust’—‘rely on’
 - **Is 10:20**—returning remnant will not rely on human rulers—but only the Lord

2. UNDERSTANDING

- a. Insight—gained from knowledge
- b. One goal of **Proverbs**—to discern sayings of understanding—**1:2** and **2:3**
 - So—understanding is not bad in itself—but how we use it!
- c. ‘Understanding’—also implies application of knowledge—for **moral** standards

3. NOT ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM

- a. We are to use our minds—but depend on God’s guidance for applying knowledge

b. Not allowing knowledge to develop into pride

▪ **Jer 9:23**—*Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom*

4. PRINCIPLES

a. Don't rely on self in making decisions—but consult God and His word!

▪ *There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death*—**14:12**

▪ *He who trusts in his own heart is a fool*—**28:26**

b. Don't just give lip service to this principle—but be *totally* committed to it

▪ If we *say* we rely on God, but depend on *ourselves*—we are double-minded

▪ **Ps 119:113**—*I hate those who are double-minded*

▪ **Mt 6:24**—*No one can serve two masters*

c. Be careful—not to be improperly influenced by other people

1. Test the counsel of others against the word of God

2. Be courageous to risk disapproval of others—when they go against God's word

Pr 29:26—*The fear of man brings a snare, but he who trusts in the LORD will be exalted*

C. **EXTENSIVELY**—TRUST GOD

❖ *In all your ways acknowledge Him*

1. ALL YOUR WAYS

○ In every aspect of life—actions—behavior—thoughts—undertakings

○ In every sphere of life—home—work—school—church

○ In aspect of life—education—career—finances—friendships

○ In spiritual life and secular life

○ In big things—and little things

2. ACKNOWLEDGE

a. Literally—to ‘**know**’ Him

- Not simply intellectual knowledge of His existence
- Not simply admitting/affirming His existence
- But intimate knowledge of His Person and Character and Will
- To have fellowship with Him

b. To take notice of Him—to remember Him

- Regard His presence—be aware of Him—do not ignore Him

c. To consider Him and His word

- To reflect upon His ways and will—so they affect our ways and will

d. To follow Him

- Acknowledge by action—doing what He commands—going where He says

D. BECAUSE GOD IS TRUSTWORTHY

❖ *And He will make your paths straight*

1. HE IS TRUSTWORTHY TO FOLLOW

○ Divine Guide—Who knows the Way

○ God of our Fathers—Who has proven His faithfulness

**Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land.
I am weak, but Thou art mighty;
Hold me with Thy powerful hand.
Bread of Heaven, Bread of Heaven,**

Feed me till I want no more;
Feed me till I want no more.
Open now the crystal fountain,
Whence the healing stream doth flow;
Let the fire and cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through.
Strong Deliverer, strong Deliverer,
Be Thou still my Strength and Shield;
Be Thou still my Strength and Shield.

2. HUMANS ARE NOT CAPABLE OF GUIDING THEMSELVES ALONE

Jer 10:23—*I know, O Lord, that a man's way is not in himself, nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps.*

3. HE

a. This is *emphatic*—**He!**

b. Lord of all creation—Who made the way—the only One who can make it straight for us!

4. YOUR PATHS

a. All your paths—steps—ways

b. He walks with you—wherever you go

c. Not just the major highways—but every winding path—and crossroad!

5. MAKE YOUR PATHS STRAIGHT

a. **Ahead** of you—He **clears** the way ahead

Ex: Pathfinder

b. The '**straight**' way—is the '**right**' way—His *righteous* path

Ps 5:8—*O Lord, lead me in Your righteousness, because of my foes; make Your way straight before me.*

Ps 23:3—*He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake*

- c. Also means ‘plain’—‘clear’—or ‘smooth’ way
 - 1. The ‘**smooth**’ way—is not necessarily the ‘easy’ way—but the ‘clear’ way
 - 2. He **clears** obstacles—makes the way plain—so we can *see* the way—to doing His will
 - 3. He **directs our paths**—also shows us *which* way—the direction of His will for us
- d. Purpose
 - 1. So—we can walk the **right** way—not deviating right/left from His word—**Josh 1:7**
 - 2. So—we can **please** Him—and **prosper** by staying in His will
- e. Promises
 - 1. **Implied**—He walks with—and ahead of us!
 - 2. **Explicit**—if we trust and walk with Him—we become **pathfinders** too!
 - a. He prepared the straight-way for His Son

Is 40:3—*A voice is calling, ‘Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.*
 - b. His Son—Jesus—*became* the **Way**—*I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life*—**Jn 14:6**
 - c. If we follow Him—we too prepare the way of the Lord—for others to follow