

The Lakeview Lamp

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” - Psalm 119:105

December 2, 2007

Four Reasons Why Every Young Person Should Read Proverbs

Mark Roberts, edited

Proverbs is a book that I am convinced every young person should read at least once a year. Why do I say that? What can you expect to find in **Proverbs** if you set out to read it?

You should know that **Proverbs** contains exactly what its name implies: proverbs. Proverbs are short, concise messages of general truth. I hasten to add “general” because proverbs must not be held to be always true or to be speaking of every situation or circumstance possible. We understand this with our own home-spun proverbs. For example, we say “He who hesitates is lost,” but we also say “Look before you leap!” Which is it? The answer, of course, is the situation must determine which wise thought best fits that circumstance. Similarly, with God’s proverbs we must be careful not to misapply them by making them universal statements of truth for all time and all people. For example, **Proverbs 22:6** announces, *“Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.”* That is generally true, but we should not use that verse to indict every parent with a rebellious child! So when we read **Proverbs**, we are reading the words of Solomon, the wisest man ever, written by the pen of inspiration, to teach us general principles of the wise way of living. If that doesn’t sound all that interesting, let me deliver now on my promise to give four reasons why young people need to be reading **Proverbs**.

First, the **Proverbs** come from the wisest man who ever lived. Solomon was given wisdom by God beyond anything any other human has ever known (cf. **1 Kings 3:11-13**). If the wisest person ever known were to offer you free advice, would you at least listen to it? Here is someone who has tried and done nearly anything and everything possible (read **Ecclesiastes**). His insights not only represent God-given wisdom but are topped with the clarity that comes from living in a very real world. I am amazed at how young people will rush to the latest self-help book fad or read Dear Abby every day for advice but forsake the greatest wisdom ever put on paper: Solomon’s! Young person, read **Proverbs** and learn what the wisest man of all time said about life.

Second, young people should read **Proverbs** because that is what it is about: life. Solomon discusses how to get along in the best possible way in this world. This is not doctrinal stuff, there is no discussion of angels, what propitiation means, or why all men need a Savior. These are vital topics but they are left to other writers by Solomon. If you want to know how to get rich (**Prov. 13:4**), what kind of woman not to marry (**Prov. 25:24**), when you shouldn’t try to cheer someone up (**Prov. 25:20**), or the value of your reputation (**Prov. 22:1**), and much, much more you should read **Proverbs**.

When reading **Proverbs** remember that not all of the book contains short, concise statements. **Proverbs 1:1-7** discusses the value of wisdom, and then chapters one through nine praise wisdom and talk about how to get it and live it. This material is very powerful but is not in the form of “one liners” that make us smile and think and then realize truth. In other words, they are not as “proverbial” as we might expect in **Proverbs**! The first section of proverbs begins in chapter ten and runs through 22:16. Here are the rapid fire, succinct statements of truth we love and that can teach us so much about how to live well in this life. Those proverbs are broken at the end of chapter twenty-two through chapter twenty four with longer discussions of the way of wisdom. Chapter twenty-five starts again with those powerful short proverbs and they continue through the book’s end. It is all very helpful material if we want to know how to live life. Since young people haven’t lived much of life and too often don’t want to listen to mom and dad, they should read these wise words – it’ll be to their own benefit to do so!

Thirdly, young people should read **Proverbs** because proverbs are short and easy to understand. No one has any difficulty understanding what Solomon means when he says “*Seldom set foot in your neighbor’s house, lest he become weary of you and hate you*” (**Prov. 25:17**). Too often young people disdain Bible study because they read a book that may be well past their ability to understand and comprehend (like **Revelation** or **Daniel** or **Romans**). Try **Proverbs**, especially the sections that just contain proverbs. You will be amazed how relevant and practical and easy to grasp these statements are. You will also be amazed how true they are —and how you are helped to live in a better way by them.

Finally, every young person should read **Proverbs** because they are individual in nature. Much of the New Testament is addressed to churches and details the work of God’s people together. This is highly important material, but it is easy to read such passages while thinking of “them” and what “they” ought to be doing. Such is impossible with **Proverbs**, for it is focused entirely on the individual. This is not about what Israel ought to do or what the church ought to do but what *you* ought to do. These general statements of truth are adaptable and applicable to all people in all places at all times, but their message is to be heeded one person at a time. Read **Proverbs** and you will find that you are challenged to acquire wisdom and live in a better way than the slothful, the lazy, and the wicked. You will be changed by what you read in **Proverbs**!

We are so blessed to have **Proverbs**. Most of Solomon’s wisdom would be lost to us if it were not for the books he authored. Some find **Ecclesiastes** a bit cynical and hard to understand. **Song of Solomon** is about the joys of wedded love. However, **Proverbs** is easy to read, speaks directly to our hearts, and fits every person’s life, young or old. I recommend you read this grand old book that your love for truth and wisdom and the ways of the Lord would increase!

Family News

Today marks the **39th anniversary** of the church here at Lakeview.

Cynthia Borders, Carol Roy's (who used to worship here) mother, died yesterday in Bowling Green, KY. Visitation will be today 6-9pm at the Johnson Vaughan Funeral Home (BG), with funeral Monday at 11am.

Metty Fain remains in Highland Manor Nursing Home; Room B2; 215 Highland Circle Dr; Portland, TN 37148.

Elmo Ferrell remains in room 101-A at NHC. He looks good but does not feel good.

Gladden Gibson, an elder of the church in Oak Grove, FL, and father of a friend of Troy and Jennifer, is at the point of death.

James Hunt is now in room 4305 at Centennial, hoping to get his chest tube out so he can return home for his final days.

Laura Reed died yesterday at her granddaughter's home. There will be no services, and her body will be taken to KY. In lieu of flowers, make donations to Sumner Hospice.

Jessica Stubblefield will be going home from treatment for nights starting tomorrow. This will continue for one to two weeks when she will then return home.

Robert Wray has been moved to McKendree Manor, room 287, in Hermitage (4347 Lebanon Rd., 871-8200), with multiple health issues.

Out of town, traveling, or visiting: None known.

New Reports from men we support: Gary Hunt (NY), Allen Malone (Indonesia).

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"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks" (1 Thes 5:16-18).