

## The Beginning of Knowledge

### Proverbs 1:1-9

- Our theme of the day is the same as the headline just above this section in the Bible
- That headline is added by the publishers, of course, to give us a preview of the text
- And to summarize its content
  
- Our passage of scripture for the day is an introduction to Proverbs
- It focuses on some repeated themes throughout that book
- And contains a key verse, which is helpful to keep in mind as we read on
  
- Proverbs is a wisdom and knowledge-focused book
- That is why our theme "The Beginning of Knowledge" works so well for the beginning of Proverbs
- We'll be in Proverbs 1:1-9 today
  
- We get into the meat of Proverbs right away
- There is only one verse about the author
- Then we begin discussing wisdom and understanding
- Which, readers of the full book, will find is a recurring theme
  
- I found the words "understand" or "understanding" mentioned 61 times in proverbs
- A search found the word "wise" 65 times
- And "wisdom" I found 48 times
- That's not to mention the word "knowledge"
- Or "learning" or "instruction"
- Which are mentioned here, and in many following verses too
  
- What does that mean?
- Well, among other things, it means God wants us to know what He says
- And He wants what He says to change us
- To give us perspective for living in a manner that is consistent with what He says
  
- Let's begin our text...

### Proverbs 1:1-2

- 1 The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel;
- 2 To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;

- These are the Proverbs of Solomon
- So, what do we know about Solomon?
- A few verse in 1 Kings 4 give us a thumbnail sketch...

29 And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore.

30 And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt.

31a For he was wiser than all men;

34 And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.

- The wisdom which Solomon had, we saw from the beginning, was from God
- That which is not from God cannot be called wisdom
- And that which we call "worldly wisdom" is no wisdom at all
- For it is from man
  
- And those things which Solomon knows, from God, he determines to share with us
- Along with instruction
- This kind of instruction could be a correction
- At the least, it is a way of informing someone about the right way
- Cautioning them against the wrong way
  
- He also wants us to understand words of insight
- That is, to have discernment
- And as we continue in the text, we find the details of what Solomon means...

Proverbs 1:3-4

3 To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;

4 To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.

- I think a restatement of these verses from the ESV might help us here...

"to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity; to give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth"

- These are key attributes for anyone who wants to live a successful life
- One that can be called successful by God's definition
- We need to deal wisely with the circumstances we encounter
- Have a grasp on righteousness
- Understand justice - not the world's definition, but God's definition
- Be informed on equity, which is another word for uprightness or straightness
  
- These Proverbs will help us with that
- They can provide direction for obtaining prudence
- Even for those who are simple, naïve, or even foolish
- And they inform the young man, giving opportunity for discretion, where once there was none
  
- Such is the potential of these words of scripture in Proverbs
- But how does one take them from simple words to meaningful outcomes?
- The next section helps...

## Proverbs 1:5

5 A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:

- The man who is wise, has heard, but continues to hear
- That means more than just listening
- It means to be attentive
- To give careful attention
  
- And when this kind of attention is given, it results in learning
- That is receiving an insight
- Allowing it to sink in deep enough to be acted upon
- This will be in addition to previous hearing and learning and acting
  
- And the man who has previously understood, but continues to understand
- Seeks out those who are wise
- Who have embraced that which God says
- And he listens to them and acquires what they have (that's what shall attain means)
  
- There is something more, something deeper than just reading these Proverbs
- A person must embrace them
- Must act upon them
- Must put them to work in life
  
- Our text goes on...

## Proverbs 1:6

6 To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.

- A restatement of the verse might be helpful in this case too...

"These sayings will help you understand proverbs, stories with hidden meanings, words of the wise, and other difficult sayings."

- There are things any reader will need to be diligent to work through
- Meaning will not always spring forth immediately
- Understanding takes work
- God provides strength to do the work
- But it is not without effort
  
- Where does one start in this effort?
- The next verse will be a big help...

## Proverbs 1:7

7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

- Knowledge like that which we've spoken of today
- Can only begin with a proper understanding of God
- A proper acknowledgement of who He is
- A proper reverence for Him
- Which comes from Biblical truth
  
- To fear Him is to see Him
- Who He is and what He can do
- That produces reverence
- For no man can see Him (through scripture) Him
- And lack reverence
- Such is the nature of God
  
- Know Him, fear Him first
- This will begin our journey of knowledge
  
- Fools do the opposite
- They reject knowledge of Him
- Despise the wisdom He dispenses in liberal portions
  
- Things get really practical as the text continues...

#### Proverbs 1:8-9

8 My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:  
 9 For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.

- The rubber meets to road as a son listens to His father
- As a daughter listens to her mother
- And any child takes to heart the words of their parent
  
- Particularly, when a parent speaks Biblical wisdom, this is critical
- Parents care for their children
- Seek to help their children
- Christian parents point them to God
- Give them the words of God
  
- Begin there
- Begin with what you know to be wise
- To be from God
- Understanding who He is
- Fearing Him