

WISDOM

"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom." (4:7)

INTRODUCTION—*"In the Bible, wisdom is always God-oriented and practical. It is not entirely coextensive with knowledge, for a knowledgeable person may be very deficient in wisdom. Wisdom is the right use of one's knowledge, insight and skill to the glory of God. It originates in the fear of the Lord (Prov. 1:7; 9:10; cf. Job 28:28; Psa. 111:10). Thus the Bible defines wisdom in terms of one's relationship with God rather than formal education or attainments before men (cf. James 3:13-18). Worldly wisdom is knowledge apart from divine revelation and is often God-opposing in nature. True wisdom is the ordering of one's life by God given counsel." (Rubel Shelley, A Book By Book Study of the Old Testament, p.81).*

I. WISDOM ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE

- A. Definition: *"Wisdom... enables one to turn every good thing in life to its rightful purpose. It is something more than wit, shrewd common-sense, or even worldly prudence. It is something more than intellectual excellence, in that it implies a spiritual and moral quality of heart, will and life; and is the practical application of knowledge to its best ends." (Maurice A. Meredith, Studies In Proverbs, p. 9).*
- B. Wisdom is not something to do, rather it is a **way** of doing things. Wisdom is finding, in **your own circumstances**, any specific opportunity to use a proverb—then following through in your actions with what was before only a general principle or abstract idea.

II. DISCOURSE ON WISDOM (Proverbs 1-9)

- A. The Call of Wisdom (1:20-33; 8:1-11; cf. 15:24). What is the price for the rejection of wisdom? For acceptance?
- B. The Value of Wisdom (2:1-9; 3:13-18; 8:10-11; 16:16; 24:13-14). What do the proverbs say about godly wisdom? What is more precious for daily living?
- C. The Security of Wisdom (2:10-22; 3:21-26; 4:1-9). How does wisdom keep one secure and protected? From what things does wisdom protect us?
- D. The Rewards of Wisdom (3:13-18; 8:32-36).
- E. The Way of Wisdom vs. the Way of Folly (9:1-18; 19:8). To whom do wisdom and folly both call out and summon? What does each individually have to offer us?
- F. God's Relation to Wisdom (3:19-20; 8:22-31). Describe God's relationship with wisdom. What does that tell us about our source for acquiring such wisdom?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—

- 1) *What is wisdom (in your own words)?*
- 2) *Where does wisdom originate (2:6)? How is wisdom acquired... what is necessary on our part (1:7; 9:10)? Explain.*
- 3) *Does **having** wisdom guarantee we will **live by** wisdom? What else does wisdom need besides knowledge?*

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- 4) *Someone has suggested seven pillars which uphold wisdom (9:1; 1:2-6). Explain each of these pillars and describe what each contributes to wisdom:*
- *Understanding –*
 - *Knowledge –*
 - *Prudence –*
 - *Shrewdness –*
 - *Instruction –*
 - *Discretion –*
 - *Perception –*
- 5) *Who can benefit most from the wisdom contained within this book... the simple and inexperienced or the mature (cf. 1:4-5)?*
- 6) *List some of the rewards of wisdom (3:13-18; 8:32-36).*
- 7) *Is the wise man the man who knows it all, or the man who knows he does not know it all (3:5-7; 13:1; 26:12)?*
- 8) *The wise man knows how to acquire wisdom in anything. Along with God's help, where else does he turn (13:20; 10:8)?*
- 9) *Elaborate on the importance of the Divine wisdom, which is related in the book of Proverbs, to our personal lives. Compare any New Testament references to wisdom that you can find.*