

And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore. And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men... and his fame was in all nations round about. And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five.... And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.

— 1 Kings 4:29-34

## APPENDIX A

# THE SAYINGS OF SOLOMON

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Some consider the Bible to be rather dry, ethereal, theological rhetoric. But in his collection of proverbs, Solomon reveals a knack for presenting God's wisdom in neat, smartly wrapped packages.

Proverbs is among my favorite books in all of Holy Writ. Primarily a collection of short, pithy sayings, the book abounds with practical Scriptural wisdom unfettered by time — the contents of these pages are as profoundly relevant today as when they were penned around the tenth Century B.C. And its thirty-one chapters are perfectly suited to daily Scripture readings.

The book is largely a survey of moral teachings based on the inspiration of the Author of Life and underscored by the life experiences of those who authored its contents. Solomon published the bulk of the text, but the work concludes with wisdom from Kings Agur and Lemuel.

### HOW TO STUDY PROVERBS

Proverbs is perhaps better suited for subject study than for verse-by-verse analysis. Though clear divisions appear in its text (instruction to sons in the first seven chapters and the personification of Wisdom in chapters eight and nine, for instance), the book's content is difficult to outline. The apparent lack of rigid structure, however, is certainly not an incrimination against the quality or quantity of the practical godly wisdom contained within its pages.

**The Tools.** In my own study, two tools have proven to be invaluable aids in the seeking of truth from the sayings of Solomon: an unabridged concordance and a thorough thesaurus.

The concordance is an indexed itemization of words occurring in Scripture. If you were trying to remember a particular verse that your pastor used in last Sunday's discourse but could recall only a major word or two from the quotation, then you might turn to one of those words in the concordance and scan through the verses presented until you found your target.

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If you were interested in learning what Proverbs teaches about money and had only a concordance, then you might reach the premature conclusion that your study would be a short one — the word *money* is found only once in the entire book. This is why the second tool, the thesaurus, is an asset. Simply defined, a thesaurus is a treasury of words (*thesaurus* derives from the Greek word *thesaurizo* — treasury — used eight times in the New Testament). For a given word, the thesaurus presents a number of synonyms — words with the same or similar meanings. A good thesaurus will also present related or contrasting words.

Using these tools together should result in a treasury of proverbial wisdom.

**Search and Sort.** Begin your study in Proverbs by compiling a list of words relating to a particular subject. To target *money* in a thesaurus, for instance, would result in such words as *rich(es)*, *wealth*, *poor*, *poverty*, *greed(y)*, *gain*, *treasure(s)*, *usury*, *substance*, *want*, *silver*, *gold*, *revenue(s)*, *much*, *little*, and so on. You may wish to increase the scope of your study by searching for each of these words as well. Soon you will likely have a long list of money-related words: your small investment in research will have paid big dividends in substantially broadening the base for your Scripture study.

Next, open your concordance and begin the somewhat tedious task of compiling a collection of verses containing the words in your list. Record them on paper — you might even consider a separate slip of paper for each verse (or passage).

After collecting your verses, sort each one by category. Consider each proverb and try to determine its central thought (realizing, of course, that you will be unable to *pigeonhole* every verse). When you've made a first attempt at categorizing all

of the verses, make another. And another. As you read and reread and prayerfully consider each verse, you will begin to form a number of distinct *piles* of verses. Congratulations — several Biblical principles have emerged before your very eyes!

This could be a fun learning exercise to share with your children!

**Understanding Proverbs.** Finally, as you read Proverbs, consider a teaching technique used repetitively throughout the book. The *couplet* — a unit of verse consisting of two successive lines, often rhyming and containing the same meter — has for centuries been a favored teaching tool of the Jewish people. Proverbs contains hundreds of these gems, though they seldom rhyme (in English, at least). Three types of couplets stand out to me: those that compare two thoughts, those that contrast two thoughts, and those that complete a single thought.

*Comparative* couplets form analogies. They typically contain such key phrases as *like...so* and *like...as*. Solomon writes in 26:20, for example, that gossip requires a fueling agent in much the same way that fire does: “Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: **so** where there is no talebearer, the strife

*ceaseth.*”

Such phrases as *better...than* or *x...but...y* often indicate *contrastive* couplets — those that draw a clear distinction between two objects or ideas. Proverbs 27:7 exemplifies the contrastive couplet: “The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; **but** to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.”

*Completive* couplets simply complete a thought by extension or amplification. *And*s and *for*s are often the clues, as in “The liberal soul shall be made fat: **and** he that watereth shall be watered also himself” (11:25).

What type of couplet is “It is **better** to dwell in a corner of the housetop, **than** with a brawling woman in a wide house” (21:9)? Ask yourself this question of each proverbial couplet — your understanding will be enhanced.

### THE SAYINGS OF SOLOMON

While in your own personal study you might arrange the verses differently (there is definitely overlap in principles and in verses), Table A-1 summarizes the principles that emerge for me.

**Table A-1. The Sayings of Solomon**

Principle	Reference	Quotation
<b>1. Trust in the Lord rather than in riches.</b>	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.
	10:15	The rich man's wealth is his strong city: the destruction of the poor is their poverty.
	11:28	He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.
	18:10-11	The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe. The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit.
<b>2. Do not make the increase of riches your passion.</b>	1:10-19	...so are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; which taketh away the life of the owners thereof.
	15:27	He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live.
	21:6	The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.
	22:16	He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want.
	23:4-5	Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom. Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.
	28:8	He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor.
	28:20	A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.
	28:22	He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.
<b>3. God provides work as the primary</b>	10:4-5	He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.

<i>means to gain wealth.</i>	12:11	He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding.
	12:27	The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious.
	13:4	The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.
	13:11	Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase.
	19:15	Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.
	20:4	The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.
	20:13	Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread.
	24:30-34	I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man
	See also	6:6-11, 10:16, 12:24, 14:4, 16:26, 18:9, 19:24, 21:5, 21:25-26, 22:13, 22:29, 26:13-16, 27:28, 28:19, 30:25
<p><b>4. Wisdom and righteousness should guide the management of material wealth.</b></p> <p>Wisdom personified speaks here...</p> <p>And again here...</p>	3:13-15	Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.
	8:10-11	Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.
	8:17-21	...Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver.... That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures.
	10:2-3	Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth from death. The LORD will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish: but he casteth away the substance of the wicked.
	15:6	In the house of the righteous is much treasure: but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.
	16:8	Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right.
	16:16	How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!
	22:1	A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.
	28:6	Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich.
	See also	10:16, 11:4, 11:6, 11:18, 13:18, 13:25, 15:16, 19:1, 20:15, 22:4, 24:3-4, 30:7-9
<p><b>5. Demonstrate mercy, kindness and liberality to the poor.</b></p>	14:21	He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.
	14:31	He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor.
	19:17	He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.
	21:13	Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.
	22:16	He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want.
	22:22-23	Rob not the poor, because he is poor: neither oppress the afflicted in the gate: For the LORD will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them.

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	28:27	He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.
	31:20	She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.
	See also	17:5, 18:23, 22:2, 29:7
<b>6. The Lord rewards generous, liberal giving.</b>	3:9-10	Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.
	11:24-25	There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.
	22:9	He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.
<b>7. Honor your obligations, but avoid indebtedness.</b>	3:27-28	Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.
	22:7	The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.
<b>8. Don't assume responsibility for the debts of another.</b>  Surety is the assumption of an uncertain obligation: personal endorsement of a debt creates surety. Cosigning is the classic modern-day example...	6:1-5	My son, if thou be surety for thy friend, if thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger, Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth. Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself, when thou art come into the hand of thy friend; go, humble thyself, and make sure thy friend. Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids. Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler.
	11:15	He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it: and he that hateth suretyship is sure.
	17:18	A man void of understanding striketh hands, and becometh surety in the presence of his friend.
	22:26-27	Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts. If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee?
	See also	20:16, 27:13
<b>9. The wasteful spender is a poor steward.</b>	21:17	He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.
	21:20	There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up.
	23:20-21	Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh: For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.
	29:3	Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father: but he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth his substance.
<b>10. Money attracts many "friends."</b>	14:20	The poor is hated even of his own neighbour: but the rich hath many friends.
	19:4	Wealth maketh many friends; but the poor is separated from his neighbour.
	19:6-7	Many will entreat the favour of the prince: and every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts. All the brethren of the poor do hate him: how much more do his friends go far from him? he pursueth them with words, yet they are wanting to him.
<b>11. Planning and saving are wise.</b>	6:6-8	Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.
	13:22	A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.
	21:5	The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness; but of every one that is hasty only to want.
	27:23-24	Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds. For riches are not for ever: and doth the crown endure to every generation?

	30:25	The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer;
	31:16	[The virtuous woman] considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.
	See also	19:14, 20:21