

# Proverbs:

An Introduction

# *Introduction to Proverbs*

- Genre of “Wisdom Literature” in OT

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WISDOM = *“skill in living life, in all its dimensions,  
horizontal and vertical”*

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## Structure of Proverbs

- I. Title, Introduction, and Theme (1:1-7)
- II. Invitation to Wisdom (1:8-9:18)
- III. Proverbs of Solomon I (10:1-22:16)
- IV. Sayings of the Wise (22:17-24:34)
- V. Proverbs of Solomon II (25-29, collected by Hezekiah's men)
- VI. Proverbs of Agur (30)
- VII. Proverbs of Lemuel (31:1-9)
- VIII. The Virtuous Woman (31:10-31)

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- Genre of “Wisdom Literature” in OT
- Types of “wisdom”
- Common abuses of Wisdom Literature
- Structure of Proverbs
- Purpose of Proverbs

*“to give instruction on living a life of true wisdom  
before God and man”*

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- Genre of “Wisdom Literature” in OT
- Types of “wisdom”
- Common abuses of Wisdom Literature
- Structure of Proverbs
- Purpose of Proverbs
- Interpreting the book

Principles vs. Promises

# *Introduction to Proverbs*

## **Rules for making proper use of Proverbs...**

*\*(Fee and Stuart, How to Read the Bible for all It's Worth, pp. 225-6)*

- 1) Proverbs are often parabolic (i.e. figurative, pointing beyond themselves)
- 2) Proverbs are intensely practical, not theoretically theological.
- 3) Proverbs are worded to be memorable, not technically precise.
- 4) Proverbs are not designed to support selfish behavior – just the opposite!
- 5) Proverbs strongly reflecting ancient culture may need sensible “translation” so as not to lose their meaning.
- 6) Proverbs are not guarantees from God, but poetic guidelines for good behavior.
- 7) Proverbs may use highly specific language, exaggeration, or any of a variety of literary techniques to make their point.
- 8) Proverbs give good advice for wise approaches to certain aspects of life, but are not exhaustive in their coverage.
- 9) Wrongly used, proverbs might justify a crass, materialistic lifestyle. Rightly used, proverbs will provide practical advice for daily living.

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