

The background of the cover features a close-up, slightly blurred view of an open Bible with yellowed pages. A brass lamp with a glowing green light is positioned in the upper right corner, casting a soft glow over the scene. The overall color palette is muted, with greys, yellows, and greens.

# **GREAT THEMES OF PROVERBS**

A Thirteen Lesson Bible Study by Jeff S. Smith



# INTRODUCTION

The thirty-one chapters of the Proverbs provide a cache of invaluable and timeless wisdom from the mind of the Lord. The book identifies itself as being for the young, but the instruction found within its pages are fit for those of any age who desire to follow the paths of righteousness and avoid the pitfalls of foolishness. The Proverbs are intensely pertinent in this age of temptation and declining morality. The young will find answers and the old will find validation provided each hunger and thirst after the right way to go. Volume 2 in this series covers the pithy proverbs categorically, touching on subjects as diverse as family, sobriety, the tongue, sexual immorality and self-control.

## SYLLABUS

1. Wisdom.....	1
2. Family.....	3
3. Spirituality .....	5
4. Sobriety .....	7
5. Humility.....	9
6. Tongue .....	11
7. Sexual Morality .....	13
8. Industry.....	15
9. Integrity .....	17
10. Friendship.....	19
11. Self-Control.....	21
12. Reproof.....	23
13. Review.....	25

**Copyright**

- This Title is Copyright © 1997, Jeff S. Smith, All Rights Reserved
- All scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

# Lesson I: *Wisdom*

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction (Proverbs 1:7).*

1. As this study begins, the student is challenged immediately to commit himself to the pursuit of wisdom and knowledge (Proverbs 1:1-7). According to verse 5, what will a wise and understanding man do? How will he or she accomplish these objectives?

2. In your own words, define the “fear of the Lord.”

3. Does Proverbs 1:20-33 seem to indicate that wisdom is nearly impossible to obtain or always present to be grasped by those interested? According to verses 26-29, what will wisdom do to those who reject it?

4. Read Proverbs 2:1-22. What is the implication of verse Second regarding man’s responsibility in the search for wisdom?

5. What will wisdom accomplish for man, especially the young (verses 10-12)?

6. The pride of man often gets in the way of the quest for wisdom (3:1-8). What decision must a person make regarding his own opinions and the revealed will of the Lord, according to verses 5-7?

7. What role does wisdom play in planning for eternity (3:13-18)?

8. What makes wisdom the principal thing (4:1-13)?
9. Wisdom's house is sound and well constructed (9:1-6). Consider the sermon by Jesus in Matthew 7:24-27. How might wisdom be applied to life in order to construct a sound "house" (cf. Proverbs 10:23-25)?
10. What is the difference in speech between the wise and foolish (10:14)?
11. Why is soul-winning evidence of wisdom (11:30)?
12. When it comes to sin and temptation, wisdom is the ability to avoid the snares of death (13:13-14). What does First Corinthians 10:13 identify as the wisest means to avoid such a fall?
13. Sometimes wisdom is confused with humanistic pragmatism, a form of morality which values feelings over facts and allows for situation ethics and "little white lies" (14:6-8). Does the Holy Spirit allow that deceit might be a mark of wisdom under the right circumstances?
14. The New Testament tells us to give people the benefit of the doubt and avoid jumping to conclusions about them (14:15-19; First Corinthians 13:4-7). How is the line drawn then between this attitude and sheer gullibility?
15. A man who always insists on having his way will alienate his friends and loved ones (18:1). He will ignore the counsel and concerns of others to his own detriment. What do the following New Testament passages say about influence?
- Matthew 5:13-16:
  - Romans 14:7:
  - First Corinthians 15:33:

## Lesson 2: *Family*

*A wise son makes a glad father, But a foolish son is the grief of his mother (Proverbs 10:1).*

1. What does it mean to “inherit the wind” (Proverbs 11:29) List two ways that the following people can trouble their houses (cf. Proverbs 14:1).

- Fathers/Husbands:
  
  
- Mothers/Wives:
  
  
- Children:

2. In what way is an excellent wife the crown of her husband (12:4; cf. 31:23)?

3. What wisdom does God offer husbands and wives who are engaged in a disagreement over some matter (17:14; cf. Ephesians. 4:26)?

4. (18:22) This proverb almost always seems very evident on the wedding day, but can be forgotten over time. How can husbands keep it before them always and improve their marriages in so doing (cf. 19:14; Ephesians 5:25-29)?

5. What can we do with this passage to keep it practical (Proverbs 31:10-31)?

6. In your own words, explain Proverbs 17:1.

7. So much of a parent's happiness is wrapped up in the behavior of his or her children (Proverbs 10:1). In rather general terms, how do children cause their parents gladness or grief?

8. Which father shows greater love for his child—the one who disciplines a wayward son promptly or the one who grows tolerant of a child's errors and eliminates all negative responses in favor of totally positive reinforcement (13:24; cf. Proverbs 22:15)?

9. What effect should discipline have on a child (22:6, 23:13-14; Hebrews 12:7-11)?

10. What is the effect on a child when the parent refuses to correct him or waits to do so until the child reaches his teen years (19:18)?

11. What is a child's responsibility to his parents later in life (19:26; cf. 28:24; Matthew 15:3-6, First Timothy 5:4, 16)?

12. What makes a woman "contentious" (21:9, 19)?



6. How do we see the pure goodness in God's nature when it comes to his habit of blessing his people (Proverbs 10:22; cf. James 1:13-17)?
  
7. How did Jesus teach the same thing as Proverbs 11:24-26, according to Paul, speaking in Acts 20:35?
  
8. What is the potential danger attached to riches (Proverbs 11:28)?
  
9. Being consumed with money and things often leads to physical and emotional problems, attached to this weakness of faith (Proverbs 12:25). In your own words, summarize the teaching of Jesus on this matter in Matthew 6:25-34.
  
10. Richness and poverty are usually confused to the human perspective (Proverbs 13:7). Consider Revelation 2:9 and determine how the saints in Smyrna were rich in God's eyes, but not man's. Consider Revelation 3:14-17 and determine how the Laodicean saints were poor in God's eyes, while rich in their own.
  
11. What is envy (Proverbs 14:20)? What does it cause (James 3:14-16)?
  
12. Explain the wisdom of asking God to give neither riches nor poverty (Proverbs 30:7-9).
  
13. Money can't buy happiness (Proverbs 15:16-17). What comes closer?
  
14. How do people use lies today to get treasures (Proverbs 21:6)?
  
15. What happens to a man's priorities when getting rich is most important (Proverbs 28:20; cf. Proverbs 23:4)?



7. Some people have a tremendous weakness for alcohol, which they must constantly battle and overcome in order to live a holy life. What benefit would following verse 31 give such a person?

8. Proverbs 23:32 tells us that alcohol in the glass is like a snake in the grass, which suddenly strikes with great fury. Name some unexpected consequences of alcohol abuse.

9. Verse 33 points to the effects of lowered inhibitions through alcohol use. Name some of the results when inhibitions are eliminated through intoxication.

10. Explain the characteristic of alcohol use described in verses 34-25.

11. For whom does the writer reserve alcohol use (Proverbs 31:4-7)?

12. Consider First Peter 4:1-5. Peer pressure is one of the chief reasons that people take their first drink. What do young people often imagine about the use of alcohol?

13. How are older people influenced to drink, at least socially?

14. Does verse 3 sanction social drinking?

15. What is the surest way to guard against becoming an alcoholic?

# Lesson 5: *Humility*

*God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6)*

1. List at least four sources of sinful pride of life.
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
2. To what does pride lead (Proverbs 11:2)? How?
  
3. Consider Acts 5:1-11. How did pride play a factor in the actions and downfall of Ananias and Sapphira (cf. Proverbs 25:14)?
  
4. How do some people honor themselves (Proverbs 12:9; cf. Proverbs 14:3; First Corinthians 13:4, First Timothy 2:9)?
  
5. How does pride lead to strife (Proverbs 13:10; cf. Mark 10:35-45)?
  
6. Wisdom states that humility precedes true honor (Proverbs 15:33). The proud may receive earthly accolades, but heavenly rewards are reserved for the humble. Explain how the parable of the Pharisee and publican illustrates this distinction (Luke 18:9-14).

7. Explain the meaning of Proverbs 16:18-19.

8. What do the following passages say about arrogance (Proverbs 20:6)?

- Galatians 5:24-26:
  
- Galatians 6:3:
  
- Second Timothy 3:1-2, 5:
  
- First Corinthians 3:18:
  
- Romans 12:16:

9. What was the source of the Laodiceans' pride (Revelation 3:17-18)?

10. What is a "haughty look" (Proverbs 21:4)?

11. Jesus turned Proverbs 25:6-7 into a parable in Luke 14:7-11. What point was he attempting to make?

12. How does Proverbs 25:27 relate to Christ's teaching in the sermon on the mount (Matthew 6:1-7)?



7. How does man distinguish between “what is acceptable” and “what is perverse” (Proverbs 10:30-32)?
8. How do we know which words in our languages are perverse or dirty?
9. Read Ephesians 4:25-32. How does verse 29 help us to make the distinction between language that is corrupt and that which is good?
10. Often, gossip statements are actually true, at first, but should have been concealed instead of revealed (Proverbs 11:13). What does a true friend, brother, or neighbor do when he finds someone involved in iniquity, instead of gossip (cf. Proverbs 16:27-30 and James 5:19-20)?
11. What tempts people to lie (Proverbs 12:17-22)?
12. What should be our attitude toward all lies, even the little “white” ones (Proverbs 13:5)?
13. What punishment awaits the liar (Proverbs 19:5; Revelation 21:8)?
14. How can our words build up or tear down the wayward and weak (Proverbs 15:4; cf. Proverbs 16:24)?
15. What is the difference between flattery and genuine compliments (Proverbs 20:19)?
16. What does the Bible say about flattering oneself (Proverbs 27:2)?

# Lesson 7: *Chastity*

*For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality (First Thessalonians 4:3).*

1. How does the seductive woman entice the foolish man (Proverbs 2:10-11, 16-19)?
  
2. How might he have been preserved and kept?
  
3. Sometimes fornication and adultery are excused as “one night stands” or “flings.” Is it reasonable to believe that sin in moderation will do no damage? Why or why not?
  
4. List at least four negative effects of fornication and adultery.
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
  
5. What does the writer mean by describing the immoral woman as forsaking the companion of her youth and forgetting the covenant of her God?
  
6. A great enticement of the immoral woman is in the immediate pleasure of fleshly indulgence (Proverbs 5:1-6). What does the writer ask the young man to consider instead?
  
7. What example does Moses offer in this regard (Hebrews 11:24-26)?

8. The wisdom of Proverbs 5:7-14 was practiced by Joseph in Potiphar's house and recommended by Paul in Second Timothy 2:22. What is it?
9. What are some things that people do which bring them nigh unto sexual temptation? Name at least four.
- a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
10. What is meant by drinking water from your own cistern (Proverbs 5:15-20)?
11. Is it proper to suggest that a wife belongs to her husband (First Corinthians 7:1-4)? Why or why not?
12. Is it also possible for a man to be the seducer and one who tears a woman away from righteousness (Proverbs 6:20-29)?
13. What is the attire of a harlot (Proverbs 7:1-20)? Explain Proverbs 11:22.
14. Can "strong men" disregard these warnings because they are just too spiritually strong to succumb to any woman's enticements (Proverbs 7:21-27; cf. First Corinthians 10:12)?
15. Is sexual chastity also a consideration for the mind (Proverbs 16:3)? How (cf. Matthew 5:27-30)?
16. How does one overcome these temptations of the mind?
17. How does the seductress increase the unfaithful among men (Proverbs 23:26-28)?

## Lesson 8: *Industry*

*If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat (Second Thessalonians 3:10).*

1. What lesson does the writer illustrate with the ant (Proverbs 6:6-11)?
2. What is wrong with sleeping (cf. Proverbs 20:13)?
3. A situation ethics argument contends that stealing is okay if a man is starving (Proverbs 6:30-31). Does the Bible concur?
4. What is the answer to this situation (Ephesians 4:28)?
5. Whose hand makes rich (Proverbs 10:4-5)? What does this mean?
6. What do people—employers especially—think of a lazy man (Proverbs 10:26)? Explain (Proverbs 18:4).
7. How can frivolity get in the way of hard work (Proverbs 12:11)?
8. Nowadays education is extremely important in landing a good job (Proverbs 12:24). Explain how this proverb might inspire a student in a trade or profession to be more serious about his studies.
9. Is a man's desire for a better life enough (Proverbs 13:4)? What about prayer and hope for a better job (Proverbs 21:25-26)?

10. Explain this proverb about industry (Proverbs 14:4).
  
11. How might this proverb affect the level of work we give on the job (Proverbs 14:23)? Compare to Colossians 3:22-25.
  
12. Perhaps this proverb illustrates the habit some have of starting something and not finishing it (Proverbs 19:24). Why is this dishonorable?
  
13. What does the lazy man deserve from his fellows when he has no harvest due to sloth (Proverbs 20:4; cf. Proverbs 30:15 and Second Thessalonians 3:7-11)?
  
14. Is it right, though, to assist a poor person, in despair not because of laziness, but illness, handicap, age or some other like cause?
  
15. What is Christ's attitude about those who will not help those in need, according to the following passages?
  - a. Matthew 15:1-9:
  
  - b. First Timothy 5:8:
  
  - c. First John 3:17-18:
  
16. What does haste make (Proverbs 21:5)?
  
17. What excuses do lazy people make to avoid work (Proverbs 22:13)?
  
18. How can one take industry to the other extreme (Proverbs 23:4-5)?
  
19. What is the lesson here, in a single word (Proverbs 27:23-27)?

## Lesson 9: *Integrity*

*Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. Let all that you do be done with love (First Corinthians 16:13-14).*

1. Integrity is abundantly a matter of relationships with other people that reflect the influence of our relationship with God (Proverbs 3:27-30). What would it say about me if I had the power to help someone but refused?
2. Consider First John 3:16-17. How does the love of God abide in someone who shuts up his heart to a brother in Christ?
3. What warning did Jesus issue about being angry without a cause (Matthew 5:21-22)? How is this conflict best resolved (Matthew 5:23-25)?
4. Why would somebody envy an oppressor (Proverbs 3:31-35; 23:17-18)?
5. In order to maintain one's integrity, how much would he be permitted to flirt with the ways of evil (Proverbs 4:14-19)?
6. How does this passage describe a person who has no integrity (Proverbs 6:12-19)? How does Proverbs 25:26 describe one who falters under stress?
7. Name some specific situations in which we have opportunities to show integrity in the marketplace (Proverbs 11:1).
8. What lofty promise does this proverb make to a man with integrity (Proverbs 11:3-11)?

9. How does showing mercy do good for the soul of the merciful (Proverbs 11:16-21, Matthew 5:7)?
10. What should be our example for extending mercy (Colossians 3:12-13)?
11. How do people sometimes act dishonestly at work or in school (Proverbs 13:11)? What is the result in the end (cf. Proverbs 20:17)?
12. What distinctions does God make regarding a worshiper's integrity (Proverbs 15:8-9)?
13. Who gets to decide what is integrity and what is wrong (Proverbs 16:2)? How is it communicated to us?
14. Is getting rich sufficient justification for compromising one's integrity? How are tempted to compromise our integrity to get ahead?
15. Consider Revelation 3:16-18. Were the Laodiceans rich? Explain.
16. What does it mean to "walk in integrity" (Proverbs 20:7)?
17. By what are people judged—their intentions or results (Proverbs 20:1)?
18. Explain this Proverbs 20:14.
19. What happens to a man with integrity who is falsely accused (Proverbs 26:2; First Peter 4:13-16)?

# Lesson 10: *Friendship*

*Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. For even Christ did not please himself (Romans 15:2-3).*

1. What can happen when we choose our friends poorly (Proverbs 1:8-19)?
  
2. Consider First Corinthians 15:33-34. What deception are we to avoid?
  
3. What are some guidelines to use in choosing friends (Proverbs 12:26)?
  
4. What are some other bad habits that Christians can learn from ungodly friends (Proverbs 22:24-25; cf. Proverbs 24:1-2)?
  
5. How does love cover others' shortcomings (Proverbs 10:12; cf. First Corinthians 13:4-7)?
  
6. How valuable is a friend who always tells you that you are right, even when you are horribly wrong (Proverbs 15:22; cf. Proverbs 27:9)?
  
7. What should be our attitude toward those who would be our enemies, according to the following passages (Proverbs 16:7)?
  - a. Matthew 5:43-48:
  
  - b. Romans 12: 18-21:
  
  - c. Acts 7:57-60:

8. What is a “fair weather friend” (Proverbs 17:17)?
9. What does a true friend provide in times of adversity, according to the following passages?
- a. Galatians 6:1-2:
  - b. First John 3:16:
  - c. First John 3:17:
10. What does it take to make friends (Proverbs 18:24)?
11. What does it take to be a true friend to someone stumbling into sin (Proverbs 24:11-12; cf. Proverbs 27:6)?
12. Explain Proverbs 25:17.
13. Explain Proverbs 26:18-19.
14. Explain Proverbs 27:17.

## Lesson II: *Self-Control*

*But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified (First Corinthians 9:27).*

1. What leads to straying from righteousness (Proverbs 5:21-23)? What causes death?
  
2. The writer is explaining the self-destructive nature of sin. How are the following sins self-destructive?
  - a. Alcohol abuse:
  
  - b. Sexual immorality:
  
  - c. Uncontrolled anger:
  
3. What is the allure of stolen water and secretly eaten bread (Proverbs 9:13-18)?
  
4. How does the lottery fit this description?
  
5. How do people sometimes lose self-control with animals (Proverbs 12:10)? On what basis would it matter how we treated animals (cf. Gen. 1:26 and First Corinthians 4:2)?
  
6. Why is self-control necessary to avoid choosing the way that only seems right, but is actually wrong (Proverbs 14:12; cf. Matthew 7:13-14)?

7. How did the man who is slow to wrath get such great understanding (Proverbs 14:29; cf. 18:13 and James 1:19-20)?
8. How should one answer a person who is hot with anger and making accusations or threats against us (Proverbs 15:1-2)? What is the worst thing we can do in such situations (cf. 26:4)?
9. Vengeance is often the first impulse when we are wronged (Proverbs 15:18, 19:11). What is a better response (cf. Romans 12:17-21)?
10. To what two things does James compare the ability to rule one's spirit (Proverbs 16:32; James 3:3-5)?
- a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_
11. There are times when we don't know the right thing to say and times, when feeling the need to say something, we end up saying the wrong thing. What is the advice of (Proverbs 17:27-28)?
12. Who is honorable in God's sight: the man who picks a fight and then stands up to fight them or the man who refuses to engage in such a thing and walks away (Proverbs 20:3)?
13. There are some fights that require us to stand up, though (Proverbs 24:10; First Corinthians 16:13). A lack of self-control, when faced with an unpopular or seemingly impossible conflict, will often cause people to crawl away and concede defeat. What is the fate of cowards, according to Revelation 21:8?
14. Explain Proverbs 26:17 (cf. Second Thessalonians 3:11-12).
15. Is it possible to have too much of a good thing (Proverbs 25:16)? Explain.

## Lesson 12: *Reproof*

*Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins (James 5:19-20).*

1. How is true love expressed at times (Proverbs 3:11-12)?
2. What would be true of parents if they refused or neglected to discipline their children (cf. Ephesians 6:4 and Hebrews 12:7-10)?
3. What is the goal of divine discipline (Hebrews 12:11)?
4. What action did the apostle Paul recommend for a member of the Corinthian church who had not repented of his sin (First Corinthians 5:1-13)? What was the stated goal of this action (verse 5)?
5. Did this action apparently work (Second Corinthians 2:6-11)?
6. What sin did Paul accuse the Corinthian church of (First Corinthians 5:1-2)?
7. What becomes of someone who refuses genuine and deserved rebuke (Proverbs 5:11-14)? Why?
8. Read Mark 10:17-25. For what cause did Jesus rebuke the rich young ruler? How did the ruler respond? What fate did he thus choose?
9. How do scoffers respond to deserved rebuke (Proverbs 9:7-12)? How do wise men respond? How did Simon the sorcerer respond (Acts 8:18-24)?

10. What is true of someone who hates being corrected (Proverbs 12:1)?
11. Read Galatians 6:1-2. What is true of someone who is willing to correct a friend who needs it?
12. Why is a friend who tells us the uncomfortable truth so valuable (Proverbs 13:17-18; cf. Proverbs 20:30)?
13. Are strong words sometimes necessary to correction (Proverbs 15:10)? How?
14. What is true of a man who appears to accept correction, but never really overcomes his problem (Proverbs 19:19 and 26:3-12; cf. Proverbs 29:1)?
15. Read Matthew 18:15-17. What steps should be taken when a brother has personally offended you?
- a.
  - b. If he does not repent ...
  - c. If he does not repent ...
  - d. If he does not repent ...
16. How do you answer those who claim that love is only expressed by “positive” things and not correction (Proverbs 27:5)?
17. What happens when we confess our sins, instead of covering them up or denying them (Proverbs 28:13; cf. First John 1:9)?

## Lesson 13: *Review*

1. What is labeled here “the beginning of knowledge” (Proverbs 1:7)? Why (cf. 16:6; Hebrews 12:28-29)?
2. How does immorality often appeal to a foolish person (Proverbs 2:16-19)? How did Moses see through the thin veneer of sinful temptation (Hebrews 11:24-26)? How can we rise above the appeal of sin (Second Corinthians 4:16-18)?
3. How does God chasten his children (Proverbs 3:11-12; cf. First Corinthians 11:28-32, James 5:19-20, Hebrews 12:3-11)?
4. What is the principal thing (Proverbs 4:7-9)? What is one important factor in getting it (James 1:5-8)?
5. How is sin usually self-destructive (Proverbs 5:21-23)?
6. What are the seven things that God hates (Proverbs 6:12-19)?
7. Why is it so foolish to deceive ourselves into thinking that sin won’t harm us (Proverbs 7:21-23; cf. Genesis 3:1-7, Romans 6:23, Galatians 6:7-9)?
8. What makes laziness so distasteful (Proverbs 10:26; cf. Second Thessalonians 3:10-11)?
9. How does Proverbs 11:22 affect a person’s dress (First Timothy 2:9-10)?

10. Does this passage make allowance for “little white lies” or times in which necessity outweighs precept (Proverbs 12:22)?
11. Does a father show love by refusing to punish his children when they are wrong (Proverbs 13:24)? What does he show (cf. Ephesians 6:4)?
12. List some ways modern women tear down their houses (Proverbs 14:1).
13. How should we answer a person who is trying to pick a fight with us (Proverbs 15:1; cf. James 1:19-20)?
14. How can our thoughts destroy us (Proverbs 16:3; Matthew 5:28, Hebrews 4:12)?
15. What is one mark of wisdom revealed here (Proverbs 17:27-28)?
16. What are some of the negative consequences of alcohol abuse (Proverbs 20:1)?
17. Explain Proverbs 22:6.
18. How do we obtain truth (Proverbs 23:23; John 8:31-32, Second Timothy 3:16-17)?
19. What New Testament couple committed this sin (Proverbs 25:14)?
20. What was wrong with that generation (Proverbs 30:1-14)?



Revised July 14, 2014 7:10 AM

Copyright © 1997

Jeff S. Smith

All Rights Reserved

[www.electronicgospel.com](http://www.electronicgospel.com)

Reproductions may be freely made and used, provided proper credit is given to the author and no charge is ever made in association with this material without the express written consent of the author.