

I. Introduction. v. 1-4

A. God offers you wisdom in the book of Proverbs.

1. What is wisdom? Skill for living. 1:2
2. Wisdom is gained through discipline. 1:3 Js. 1:5
3. Wisdom is in relationship to God. 1:7
4. Wisdom appeals to all kinds of people. 1:22-23,4,5 8:5 9:4,6

B. This chapter is packed with truth -- a crash course in success.

C. Listen to what God is teaching you. v. 1-4, 13, 21

1. Your propensity to forget is a moral flaw, not merely a mental infirmity. v. 1a 2:17 Dt. 8:11f
2. Covenant obedience, kindness and truth must be internalized. v. 1b,3 4:23 Je. 31:33 Ezek. 36:26-27
3. The result will success in your relationships with God and men. v. 2,4

II. Four ways to act wisely towards God. v. 5-12

A. Trust the LORD. v. 5-6 16:20 29:25 Jer. 17:5-8

1. Entirely: *with all of your heart.* v.5a
2. Exclusively: *do not lean on your own understanding.* v. 5b 14:12 28:26 29:25 Is. 53:6 Ps. 146:3 Isa. 31:1
3. Extensively: *in all your ways acknowledge Him.* v. 6a

B. Fear the LORD. v. 7-8

1. Do not be wise in your own eyes. v. 7a 26:12 Is. 5:21 Jer. 9:23-24
2. The fear of the LORD will keep you from evil. v. 7b 1:7

C. Honor the LORD from your wealth. v. 9-10 Ex. 23:19a Dt. 18:4 26:1-2, 9-11

1. Give God the first and the best of your resources. v. 9 I Co. 16:2 Mk. 12:44
2. How much should you give? I Co. 16:2
3. Then God will honor you. v. 10 Dt. 28:8f Mal. 3:10 He. 6:10 Phi. 4:10 II Co. 9:6 I Sam. 2:30 Mt. 6:33,20

D. Embrace the LORD's discipline. v. 11-12 Heb. 12:1-12 Rev. 3:19 Ps. 89:30-34

1. Why does God discipline us? Heb. 12:11 5:8
Our suffering is instructive and corrective, not punitive. II Co. 5:21
2. Don't respond sinfully to affliction. v. 11
3. Honor God by welcoming chastisement. v. 12 Heb. 12:9-11 Ps. 119:67,71
4. Because we are sons, He doesn't let us get by with much. v. 12 13:24 22:15 29:15

III. Three ways to act wisely towards men. v. 27-35

A. Repay your needy neighbor. v. 27-28 Ro. 13:7-8

1. Pay your debts immediately. Dt. 24:14-15 Js. 5:4
2. Return what you have borrowed.
3. You also owe him love. 11:26 Ro. 13:8 1:14 Job 31:16 Ja 1:27 Ga. 6:10
4. Don't delay or make excuses. Ps. 37:21 Js. 4:17 Mt. 15:5

B. Don't harm your innocent neighbor. v. 29-30

1. Don't slander him with gossip. 20:19
2. Don't cheat him financially. 20:10,14
3. Don't strive against (sue) him. 25:8 17:14 I Co. 6:1-8 Ro. 12:18 Mt. 5:29f

- C. Don't envy your wicked neighbor. v. 31-35 23:17 24:1,19 Psalm 73:1ff 37:1ff
1. His crimes will not pay. v. 32a, 33a, 34a, 35b 6:16-19 Js. 5:1f Ps. 73:17.
 2. God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. v. 32b, 33b, 34b, 35a Mt. 5:3 Js. 4:6 I Pet. 5:5

IV. If you act wisely towards God and men you will succeed in life. v. 2,4,14-26,32-35

- A. The wise are greatly blessed. v. 2,4, 14-26
1. You will enjoy a long, healthy, peaceful and pleasant life. v. 2, 6, 8, 16a,17-18 Ps. 16:11 1:3 Gen. 2:9 Rev. 22:2,14 Jer. 17:7-8 II Chron 13:18 Isa. 40:3
 2. You will enjoy the favor of God and men. v. 4, 35a Luke 2:52
 3. You will enjoy material prosperity. 10, 16b
 4. You will enjoy spiritual blessings which surpass earthly treasures and pleasures. v. 14-15 Mt. 6:20.
 5. You will partake of the same wisdom displayed by the LORD in creation. v. 19-20 8:22f
 6. You will be protected from trouble and fear. v. 22-26
 7. You will be privy to the intimate counsels of God. v. 32b Amos 3:7 Ps. 25:14
 8. You will be honored by God. v. 35a
- B. Does Proverbs promise too much?
1. The wise do not always enjoy material wealth and long life. The wicked sometimes prosper. v. 31 Ps. 73:1ff 37:1ff Job 1:1ff
 2. Proverbs contains maxims which describe the way life generally works in God's world. These are not promises which can be unconditionally "claimed".
 3. Proverbs reflects the covenant blessings and curses to the nation of Israel under the Old Covenant. v. 33 Lev. 26:3ff Dt. 28:1ff
 4. Proverbs portrays the ultimate (eschatological) blessings to the righteous and curses upon the wicked in God's kingdom. v. 33-35,18 2:21-22 23:17-18 12:28 Ps. 37:29 Mt. 5:5 Rev. 22:14
 5. What Adam and Eve lost, Jesus has regained. v. 18 Gen. 2:9 Rev. 22:2,14 2:7

V. Concluding Applications: Christ has come to give us wisdom and life.

Discussion Questions.

1. Evaluate yourself according to the four ways in which we should act wisely towards God (3:5-12). In which areas would you like to see growth?
2. Evaluate yourself in light of the three ways in which we should act wisely towards men (3:27-35). Can you think of a neighbor with whom you need to act more wisely?
3. In what sense are the blessings of wisdom conditional? In what sense are the blessings unconditional?
 - a. What earthly blessings have you enjoyed through living wisely?
 - b. What consequences have you suffered because of your folly?
4. In what sense did the curses of foolishness fall upon Christ? v. 33 Gal. 3:13
5. Trace the theme of the tree of life through the Bible and draw some conclusions about the significance of the reference to it in 3:18. Gen. 2:9 Jer. 17:7-8 Rev. 22:2
6. How does Christ make us wise?