



STRUCTURAL INSIGHTS: PROVERBS 1:1-7



Author and Title

Pr 1:1 The proverbs of Solomon
the son of David,
king of Israel:

Purpose of this Book of Wisdom

2 To know wisdom and instruction,
To perceive the words of understanding,
3 To receive the instruction of wisdom,

Justice,
judgment,
and equity;

People and the Results of Wisdom

4 To give prudence to the simple,
To the young man

knowledge and discretion—

5 A wise *man* will hear and increase learning,
And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel,

6 To understand a proverb
and an enigma,
The words of the wise and their riddles.

Place to Begin

7 The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge,
But fools despise wisdom and instruction.

EXPLANATION

The Three Stages of Wisdom

Pr 1:1 The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel: **2** To know wisdom and instruction, To perceive the words of understanding, **3** To receive the instruction of wisdom, Justice, judgment, and equity;

- **Stage 1: "Knowing"** – discovering and getting information to influence the mind, heart, and your affections
 - **Wisdom:** This is knowledge from God. He is the source of all wisdom. It is an attribute of God.
 - **Job 9:4** *God is wise* in heart and mighty in strength. Who has hardened *himself* against Him and prospered?
 - **Ro 16:27** to God, alone wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.
 - **Pr 2:6** For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth *come* knowledge and understanding; **7** He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; *He is* a shield to those who walk uprightly;
 - **Jas 1:5** If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. **6** But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. **7** For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; **8** he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.
 - **Instruction:** This is wisdom gained from loving correction (error), rebuking (sinning), and exhorting (excel still more) as well as chastening and punishment by the world and the Lord.
 - **Pr 3:11** My son, do not despise the chastening (same word as instruction) of the LORD, Nor detest His correction; **12** For whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the son *in whom* he delights.
 - **2 Ti 4:2** Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

- **Stage 2: "Discern"** – Comprehend and apprehend, separate and systematize the wisdom information, recognizing God's wisdom and ways vs. man's knowledge and practices, etc. This discernment is a skill to develop.
 - **Note:** Seeing past the "grey" and understanding the difference between "black and white."
 - Good from the evil
 - Right from the wrong
 - Honor from dishonor
 - Understanding & rightly interpreting facts and/or a situation
 - Do you know the difference between good and evil?
 - Positive:
 - **Solomon: 1 Ki 3:9** Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?"
 - Negative:
 - **Je 4:22** "For My people *are* foolish, They have not known Me. They *are* silly children, And they have no understanding. They *are* wise to do evil, But to do good they have no knowledge."
 - Do you know the difference between right and wrong?
 - **Ho 14:9** Who *is* wise? Let him understand these things. *Who is prudent?* Let him know them. For the ways of the LORD *are* **right**; The righteous walk in them, But transgressors stumble in them.
 - Do you know the difference between behavior that is honorable or dishonorable?
 - **2 Ti 2:20** Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor.

- **Jn 8:49** Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me.
- **Stage 3:** "Receive" – to rightly apply God's wisdom to your life so that it is a pattern of your thinking and living
 - Different Hebrew word for wisdom in Proverbs 1:3 - (*haśkel*)
 - This word connects to action, wise manner, and conduct
 - **Da 1:17** As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.
 - i. Wise behavior has three components, and these link to the three stages of wisdom.
 1. Righteousness = know what is right /conform to God's standard
 2. Judgment = Perceive and determine what is right
 3. Equity = Receive, apply with the result of what is right & peaceable
- **Insight:** These three ideas establish what is moral. Moral behavior will meet these three conditions.
- This connection is made more explicit in Proverbs 2:
 - **Pr 2:1** My son, if you will receive my words And treasure my commandments within you ... **Pr 2:9** Then you will discern righteousness and justice and equity *and every good course*.
- **Application:** As you seek to know wisdom, this leads to knowing our King and Lord who is righteous, just, and equitable!
- **Insight:** Walking with God is how you acquire wisdom and prove you are applying wisdom.
 - **Ge 5:24** And Enoch walked with God; and he *was* not, for God took him.

- **Ge 6:9** This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God.

Reminder: Pr 1:4 To give prudence to the simple, To the young man knowledge and discretion— **5** A wise *man* will hear and increase learning, And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel, **6** To understand a proverb and an enigma, The words of the wise and their riddles.

I. Who is wisdom for?

- **Note:** This list not only represents stages of life but progression through each stage.
 - i. Simple/Naive → ① prudence/shrewdness to avoid evil and embrace the good/righteous [Know]
 - ii. Youth/Adolescence → ① Knowledge/ability (gained through experience) and ② discretion/plans to do good or the opposite, evil scheming (inner thoughts) [Perceive]
 - iii. Wise man / Man of Understanding → ① hear and ② increasing in learning (take in and own) ③ Acquire counsel/guidance ("pulling a rope, as in the steering of a ship") [Receive]
- **Question:** Is there any stage of your life where you do not need to keep acquiring the wisdom of God?
- **Question:** What is the origin of your wisdom?
 - **Correct:** God → Wisdom → Knowledge and Discretion
 - **Incorrect:** World → Knowledge & Discretion → Wisdom → God

II. Results/Outcome of Wisdom Known, Perceived, & Received

- a. Understanding a variety of expressed thoughts
 - i. **First Pair:** Short sayings
 - 1. Proverb → parable, witty statement

2. Enigma/Figure → paradoxes, memorable sayings that are elusive

ii. **Second Pair:** Longer sayings

1. Words of the wise → common sense
2. Riddle → sayings that require reflection and meditation

III. Foundation & Conclusion (Proverbs 1:7)

Review: Pr 1:7 The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge, *But* fools despise wisdom and instruction.

- a. [Wise, implied] → Fear of the Lord.
 - i. Beginning – first and finest, and foundational!
- b. [Fool] Despises (belittles) the Lord
 - i. The fool does not fear the Lord! Thus, the fool despises Him, His wisdom, and His instruction.
- c. Implied is that the Lord is the source of wisdom

Application: Pause...Pray...Obey...but Beware!

- **Jas 3:13** Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that* his works *are done* in the meekness of wisdom. **14** But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. **15** This wisdom does not descend from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, demonic. **16** For where envy and self-seeking *exist*, confusion and every evil thing *are* there. **17** But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. **18** Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Example:

Adam, Eve, and the Serpent/Devil (Negative)

- **Ge 3:1 (NASB)** Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'" **2** The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; **3** but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'" **4** The serpent said to the woman, "You

surely will not die! **5** "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." **6** When the **woman** [A] saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a [B] delight to the eyes, and that the [C] tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. **7** Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. **8** They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

- **1 Jn 2:16** (NASB) For all that is in the world, [A] the lust of the flesh and [B] the lust of the eyes and [C] the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. **17** The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

Solomon (Positive)

- **2 Ch 1:6** And Solomon went up there to the bronze altar before the LORD, which *was* at the tabernacle of meeting, and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it. **7** On that night God appeared to Solomon, and said to him, "Ask! What shall I give you?" **8** And Solomon said to God: "You have shown great mercy to David my father, and have made me king in his place. **9** Now, O LORD God, let Your promise to David my father be established, for You have made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. **10** Now give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of Yours?" **11** Then God said to Solomon: "Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked riches or wealth or honor or the life of your enemies, nor have you asked long life—but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself, that you may judge My people over whom I have made you king—**12** wisdom and knowledge *are* granted to you; and I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings have had who *were* before you, nor shall any after you have the like."

Rehoboam (Negative)

- **1 Ki 12:1** And Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king. **2** So it happened, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard *it* (he was still in Egypt, for he had fled from the presence of King Solomon and had been dwelling in Egypt), **3** that they sent and called him. Then Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying, **4** "Your father

made our yoke heavy; now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father, and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you.” **5** So he said to them, “Depart *for* three days, then come back to me.” And the people departed. **6** Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived, and he said, “How do you advise *me* to answer these people?” **7** And they spoke to him, saying, “If you will be a servant to these people today, and serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever.” **8** But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him, and consulted the young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him. **9** And he said to them, “What advice do you give? How should we answer this people who have spoken to me, saying, ‘Lighten the yoke which your father put on us?’” **10** Then the young men who had grown up with him spoke to him, saying, “Thus you should speak to this people who have spoken to you, saying, ‘Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make *it* lighter on us’—thus you shall say to them: ‘My little *finger* shall be thicker than my father’s waist! **11** And now, whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!’ ” **12** So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had directed, saying, “Come back to me the third day.” **13** Then the king answered the people roughly, and rejected the advice which the elders had given him; **14** and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, “My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!” **15** So the king did not listen to the people; for the turn *of events* was from the LORD, that He might fulfill His word, which the LORD had spoken by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat. **16** Now when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying: “What share have we in David? *We have* no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! Now, see to your own house, O David!” So Israel departed to their tents. **17** But Rehoboam reigned over the children of Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah. **18** Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who *was* in charge of the revenue; but all Israel stoned him with stones, and he died. Therefore King Rehoboam mounted his chariot in haste to flee to Jerusalem. **19** So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day. **20** Now it came to pass when all Israel heard that Jeroboam had come back, they sent for him and called him to the congregation, and made him king over all Israel. There was none who followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only. **21** And when Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he

assembled all the house of Judah with the tribe of Benjamin, one hundred and eighty thousand chosen *men* who were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, that he might restore the kingdom to Rehoboam the son of Solomon. **22** But the word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying, **23** “Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, to all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of the people, saying, **24** ‘Thus says the LORD: “You shall not go up nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel. Let every man return to his house, for this thing is from Me.” ’ ” Therefore they obeyed the word of the LORD, and turned back, according to the word of the LORD.

Jesus (Positive)

Lk 2:52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

PRACTICAL:

- **Prayer:** Ask God this week for understanding & applying His wisdom.
- **Devotion:** Start Reading the Book of Proverbs daily. See handout.