

THE BEGINNING OF ALL KNOWLEDGE

The Book of Proverbs

The Righteous and the Wicked

A WORKING STRATEGY

Based on your brainstorm ideas last week this was the “working strategy” that you came up with for reading/understanding Proverbs. Remember the goal of this strategy was to effectively answer the question: *How can we read/study/use Proverbs in such a way that it helps us become more like Christ?*

Revised Order of List

- * Know what to do w/individual verses
- * Compare to other Scriptures
- * Structure of the Book of Proverbs
- * Identify the nature of a Hebrew proverb

- △ Resolve contradictions
- △ Answer basic questions (5 “W’s”)
- △ Identify the nature of specific proverb
- △ Identify any hidden meaning: figures of speech, cultural customs, unique syntax etc.

- What does this have to do with my life (generally—what is true about this proverb for anyone)
- Open debate (specifically—how does this proverb speak to specific situations in my life.)

Working Revisions

- * OK for now

- △ Formulate the “cumulative weight” of what Proverbs teaches by examining all of the representative proverbs on a given topic paying attention to key themes and how they are repeated in order to formulate a comprehensive principle which they teach

- Do a better job of relating specific proverbs to other parts of scripture (e.g. how does scripture define “gossip” and what else in the bible will help us stop engaging in it?)

Corrections to Consider:

- We still haven’t nailed down a general pattern for moving from standard/principle (what we should be doing) to means for meeting the standard (how scripture enables us to live up to “what” we should be doing). Starting to work with the Sin, Cross/Redemption, New Identity model.

WHAT IT TAKES TO REALLY GET AHEAD IN LIFE

Leadership God's Way

12:24 The hand of the diligent will rule, while the slothful will be put to forced labor.

17:26 To impose a fine on a righteous man is not good, nor to strike the noble for their uprightness.

18:13 If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.

18:15 An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.

18:17 The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him.

24:10 If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small.

27:21 The crucible is for silver, and the furnace is for gold, and a man is tested by his praise.

Cumulative Weight Principles

According to Proverbs, a leader should: work hard, not penalize people for being honest, listen to others because she/he knows they don't know everything and there are 2 sides to every story, be able to stand up to pressure and praise.

The Measure of True Success

12:3 No one is established by wickedness, but the root of the righteous will never be moved.

28:12 When the righteous triumph, there is great glory, but when the wicked rise, people hide themselves.

13:5 The righteous hates falsehood, but the wicked brings shame and disgrace.

16:3 Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will be established.

17:27 Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding. 28 Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent.

19:8 Whoever gets sense loves his own soul; he who keeps understanding will discover good.

28:13 Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.

Cumulative Weight Principles

According to Proverbs, people who are successful by God's standards have these qualities: they are godly, they are honest, they commit/submit everything they do to God, they use words with restraint and are even tempered, they seek what is right and admit mistakes.

Rolling Up Our Sleeves

21:25 The desire of the sluggard kills him, for his hands refuse to labor. 26 All day long he craves and craves, but the righteous gives and does not hold back.

28:19 Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits will have plenty of poverty.

Cumulative Weight Principles

According to Proverbs, we are to be characterized by diligence rather than laziness.

GETTING DOWN TO THE NITTY-GRITTY

You need to chose an area of your “job” (parenting, managing a household, going to school all count) which frequently presents difficulties for you. You need to be specific; it could be a person you have a hard time with, a situation that is difficult, something about yourself that causes problems with others, a situation where you don’t know what to do etc.

The difficult area of my “job” is: _____

Next you need to review the cumulative weight principles and decide which one(s) most directly apply to your situation.

- work hard, diligence rather than laziness**
- not penalize people for being honest**
- listen to others because she/he knows they don’t know everything**
- there are 2 sides to every story**
- stand up to pressure and praise**
- godliness**
- honesty**
- submission of work to God**
- restrained words and even tempered**
- seek what is right**
- admit mistakes promptly**

The cumulative weight principle which most directly applies to the difficult area of my “job” is: _____

Based on my difficult situation and the instructions from Proverbs, what do I need to do, change, get better at, eliminate or seek help with? _____

What are likely to be the consequences of doing this? _____

Now that you have a handle on where God wants to work in your life, and what he would like to do, what are the day to day steps that you are going to need to implement so that he you will be able to follow him more closely.

Where is my sinfulness or brokenness hindering my ability to respond to this situation as God would have me?

Have you confessed this to God and asked for help?

How does Christ's work on the cross speak to my sinfulness in this situation?

What are some passages which help me see Christ more clearly in a way that helps me with this particular issue?

How does my status as a son or daughter of God impact my view of myself, God or the situation?

What changes will my sonship/daughtership require of me?

Now that you have a game plan for how to handle the "job" issue, how will you practice God's presence at work so that you are able to do what God would like you to do? _____
