

May 28-June 3

## **Week 22**

After finishing Song of Solomon this week, we will primarily focus on the book of Proverbs. These proverbs present guidelines for the way life should be lived. Proverbs should not be read as promises but rather as guidance: this is how life works.

The book of Proverbs follows this structure:

- Proverbs 1:1-7 is the preamble to the book.
- Proverbs 1:8–9:18 is the prologue, consisting of ten lessons from a father to a son.
- Chapters 10 and following are an extended collection of wise sayings that deal with a wide range of topics, all of which seek to teach us how to live effectively in the world.

As you read Proverbs, you may be tempted to hurry over these brief, loaded statements. Each day slow down and think deeply about at least a couple of the verses, perhaps even turning them into prayers for wisdom.

---

**Day 1**

**Read Song of Solomon 5:2-8:14; Psalm 45**

**Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 57**

Today we conclude Song of Solomon. Continue to follow the conversation between the young man and his lover. Notice especially the powerful figurative language. The images are different than those we would use in our culture. Today a young man wouldn't tell his wife, "Your hair is like a flock of goats, your belly is a mound of wheat, and your neck is like a tower" (see 6:5; 7:2,4). Yet in that culture these would have been great compliments. The key is to ask how each image communicated a picture of striking beauty.

Psalm 45 is a royal wedding psalm. Interestingly, verses 6-7 are applied in Hebrews 1:8-9 to Jesus's rule of the universe. Notice that the King is addressed as God, and the psalmist says God has anointed him. This psalm, then, applies ultimately to Jesus, who fulfills the role of the ultimate heir to King David.

*What insights does this psalm give you about Jesus as our King?*

---

**Day 2****Read Proverbs 1-4****Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 58**

Proverbs 1:1-7 is the preamble to the book of Proverbs, and 1:8–9:18 is the prologue, which consists of ten lessons from a father to a son. In all of these lessons the father addressed his son and admonished him to pay careful attention to his instructions, teachings, and words. Today we read the first seven of these lessons.

*See if you can find the first seven of the father's lessons.*

*Notice especially how wisdom is personified in these chapters. Meditate on a brief passage from this section, thinking about how you might live more wisely today.*

---

**Day 3****Read Proverbs 5-8****Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 59**

Today we read lesson eight through the beginning of lesson ten in the book's prologue. A large part of this passage deals with the devastating dangers of adultery and seduction. Notice especially the safeguards against falling into temptation that the father offered the son.

*By what are you most likely to be seduced this week?*

*How might you use these safeguards to keep from falling?*

---

**Day 4**

**Read Proverbs 9-12**

**Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 60**

At the end of lesson ten, both Wisdom and Folly call out to the inexperienced person (see Proverbs 9). Both are trying to draw a person in. Wisdom is given more space here, and the result of listening to her is life. The foundation of a life lived wisely is fear—a deep reverence—of the Lord (see Proverbs 9:10).

In Proverbs 10–12 we begin a collection of proverbs from Solomon. Read these proverbs as general guidelines for the way life should be lived.

*Which of these guidelines do you most need today?*

---

**Day 5**

**Read Proverbs 13-16**

**Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 61**

Notice two things about the proverbs in today's reading.

1. The vast majority of the proverbs in chapters 13–15 are antithetical, first presenting a truth, then a second truth that contrasts with the first in some way. For instance, notice the contrast between the wise son and the mocker in Proverbs 13:1. Both statements are true, but they contrast with each other.
2. Certain themes are treated again and again.

*Which of these themes resonates with you at this time in your life?*

---

**Day 6****Read Proverbs 17-20****Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 62**

Notice that while we still find antithetical proverbs here, most of the proverbs in this section include a double statement of a truth, with both statements making the same point. For example, look at Proverbs 17:2:

A prudent servant will rule over a disgraceful son  
and share an inheritance among brothers.

The ideas that a wise servant will rule and share among the biological children in a home both point to a reward of wisdom. Wisdom elevates a person in status.

Also notice that these proverbs speak to a variety of issues: the condition of the heart, wisdom versus foolishness, the power of words, discipline in speech, family relationships, business dealings, conflict, the value of a good spouse, integrity, kindness, and many others.

*Choose one of these areas and track it through these chapters.*

*How might you apply the wisdom of these proverbs today?*

---

## **Day 7**

### **Reading Summary for Week 22**

The transition from David to Solomon included a change in the poetic style that each king favored.

- David wrote “the most delightful of Israel’s songs” (2 Samuel 23:1), and so he was the noted composer of many psalms and hymns to God.
- Solomon was “wiser than anyone” and “spoke 3,000 proverbs” (1Kings 4:31,32). Thus he was known for his wisdom poetry, the foundation for the book of Proverbs. These provided positive and negative principles for successful relationships, whatever the situation.

### **Prayer/Meditation**

Heavenly Father, I praise you for the gift of romantic love. Thank you for the glorious celebration of intimacy in marriage expressed in the Song of Solomon. And Lord, help me live according to true wisdom. I want to live this day not by my own wisdom but according to what you have revealed. Let me never forget that, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (Proverbs 9:10). Amen.

---