

The Beginning of Knowledge

Proverbs 1

The Beginning of Knowledge Introduction

The Beginning of Knowledge Introduction

- According to the [International Publishers Association](#) there are over [2 million books](#) published each year.

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- China publishes the most with 444,000 titles in 2013.
- The USA is second at 305,000.
- The UK publishes nearly 3 books per 1000 people, the most per capita worldwide.

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- So we're getting smarter, right?
- Maybe not – as evidenced by [the Darwin Awards](#).

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- September 2014:
- A factory worker in India joined a White tiger for lunch at the Delhi zoo.
- He climbed over the protective fence, then swam across the moat to Tiger Island.
- It ended as you might expect.

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- April 2014 Honorable Mention:
- **Six days** before his scheduled release, a convict broke out of a Portland jail.
- He **enjoyed twelve hours of freedom** before being apprehended at a nearby Jack in the Box.
- He had already served **97% of his sentence**.

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- With so much information, why aren't we all getting smarter?
- Why is so much damage still caused by human error or basic human malice toward others?
- Information isn't enough.

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1. Solomon's desire for understanding.
2. **Proverbs 1** and the "beginning of knowledge."
3. Wisdom in the NT.

Solomon's Desire for Understanding

Solomon's Desire for Understanding

- Read **1 Kings 3:3-15**.
- Key verse: **1 Kings 3:9**
- **Understanding requires more than information.** We need to know what to do with the information that we have.

Proverbs 1 The Beginning of Knowledge

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- Ancient cultures each had their collections of wisdom literature.
- Israelite wisdom is **similar** to that of Egypt or Babylon – but it is **not the same**.

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- Similarities:
 - Success in family life.
 - Success in human interactions.
 - Success at work or one's profession.
 - Success in battle

Proverbs 1 The Beginning of Knowledge

- Primary difference:
 - Ancient cultures didn't normally associate religion with moral right and wrong.
 - Religion was all about appeasing the gods.

Proverbs 1 The Beginning of Knowledge

- Primary difference:
 - Israelite knowledge, wisdom or understanding begins with the fear of the Lord.
 - Knowing and understanding right from wrong is central to Israelite wisdom.
 - It is understanding the character of God.

Proverbs 1:1-6

Proverbs 1:1-6

- Wisdom is needed for the young and the simple.
- It is also for the wise – to make them wiser.
- One of the goals of the **Book of Proverbs** is to get us thinking about the right thing to do in any given situation.

Proverbs 1:7

Proverbs 1:7

- This is the key verse Proverbs.
- Fear of the Lord is not a starting point that we leave behind.
- No matter how much we learn, we must remain true to the source of all knowledge.

Proverbs 1:7

Job 28:28 (ESV) Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding.

Psalms 111:10 (ESV) The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!

Proverbs 1:7

Proverbs 9:10 (ESV) The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

Proverbs 15:33 (ESV) The fear of the LORD is instruction in wisdom, and humility comes before honor.

Proverbs 1:7

The phrase the fear of the Lord recurs frequently throughout Proverbs. It ... does not mean the dread ... or the terror ... of God. Rather, it means reverent and humble submission to the revealed will of Yahweh, which is accompanied by worshipful adoration of him.

*– Dr. Tewoldemedhin Habtu,
Africa International University, Nairobi, Kenya*



Proverbs 1:7



Knowledge, then, in its full sense is a relationship, dependent on revelation and inseparable from character.

– Derek Kidner, (1913 – 2008), Warden of Tyndale House, Cambridge

Proverbs 1:7



When we fence off (as we must) limited fields of knowledge for special study, the missing context must be remembered, or our knowing is precocious and distorted, as at the fall, and we end by knowing less, not more.

– Derek Kidner, (1913 – 2008), Warden of Tyndale House, Cambridge

Proverbs 1:7

- If we want to be wise, we will want to know God's thoughts about everything that matters to us.
- We will also want to stay close to him, no matter how much we learn in our chosen fields of learning.

Proverbs 1:8-9

Proverbs 1:8-9

- Israelite culture was family-centered.
- The thought was that children should learn from their parents how to serve God properly and live to please him.

Proverbs 1:8-9

The reason why the son should listen is given in 1:9. He is reminded of the beauty and delightfulness of a life lived in obedience to parents in his immediate context and to the Lord in the long run. Such teaching is almost unknown today, when each generation feels obliged to repudiate the beliefs of its parents.

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Proverbs 1:8-9

- The point is not simply to make us faithful to our family's traditional values.
- The point is to encourage continuing faithfulness to God.
- This didn't happen after Solomon.

Proverbs 1:8-9

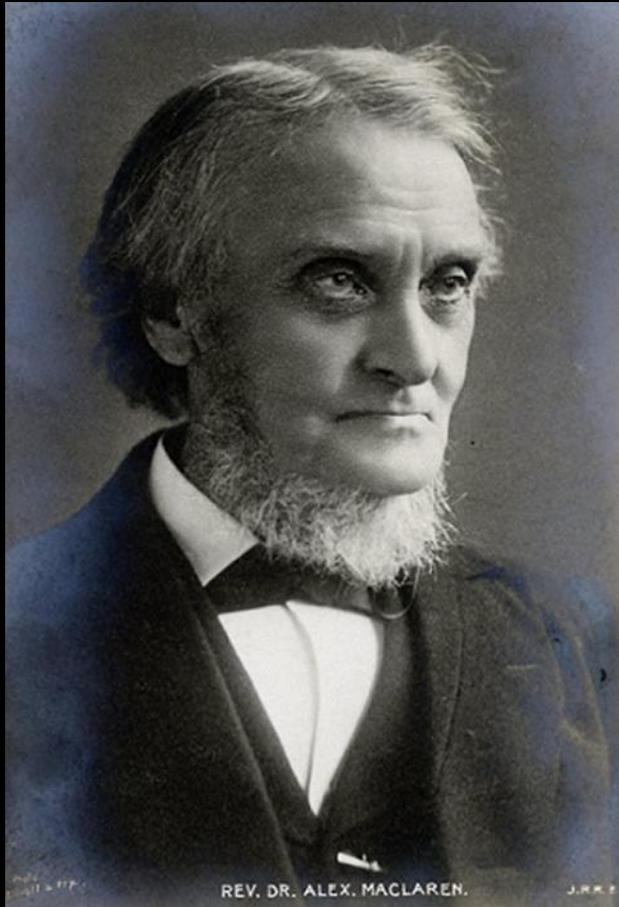
- The godly need to pass on their beliefs, but often fail.
- The ungodly are often more successful – especially at leading by example.

Proverbs 1:10-19

Proverbs 1:10-19

- This example serves for any type of sin.
- Sin tempts us but is usually self-destructive – whether violence or greed or anything else.
- The father warns the son that if he chooses the wrong friends, they will lead him to do wrong things.

Proverbs 1:10-19



He is not a very wise man who ties his gold round him when the ship founders. He is not parted from his treasure certainly, but it helps to sink him. We may get what we want by sinning, but we get also what we did not want or reckon on.

– Alexander Maclaren (1826 – 1910)

Proverbs 1:10-19

- The end of a foolish course is not always obvious from the beginning.
- Some form of bait lures us into the trap.
- Wisdom sees the trap as well as the bait.

Proverbs 1:20-33

Proverbs 1:20-33

- Wisdom is a teacher that is constantly looking for students.
- Are we willing to learn?

Proverbs 1:8-9

Whereas the parents were imparting wisdom in the confines and privacy of the home, wisdom utters her clarion call in a public place. The writer is emphasizing that wisdom has strategically positioned herself where her message can be heard by as many as possible as clearly as possible.

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Africa International University, Nairobi, Kenya*



Proverbs 1:20-33

- This is much like Christ's commission that we go out and make disciples of all nations.
- Consider the church in Thessalonica.

Proverbs 1:20-33

1 Thessalonians 1:8–10 (ESV) ⁸ For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. ⁹ For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Proverbs 1:20-33

- Wisdom will help us replace foolish tendencies and desires with a love for the living God.

Proverbs 1:20-33

The evil is taken out of things for those whose hearts are full of God ... Put away sin from your heart, and let it be filled with Love and Faith, and behold all things will become new. They will lose their evil semblance, because you will look at them with new eyes.

– F. B. Meyer (1847 – 1929)



Proverbs 1:20-33

- Those new eyes are what wisdom can give us.
- Now for a quick look into the New Testament.

Wisdom in the New Testament

Wisdom in the New Testament

- Jesus claimed to be superior to Solomon.

Matthew 12:42 (ESV) The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

Wisdom in the New Testament

- Paul called Jesus the very wisdom of God.

1 Corinthians 1:22–25 (ESV) ²² For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Wisdom in the New Testament

- James sounds like he is thinking of Solomon's request.

James 1:5 (ESV) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

Wisdom in the New Testament

- Finally, James gives us an important description of the wisdom that comes from God.

James 3:17-18 (ESV) ¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸ And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

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Conclusions

The Beginning of Knowledge Conclusions

- **Understanding requires more than information.** We need to know what to do with the information that we have.
- Wisdom is not only knowing how to succeed. It is understanding the character of God.

The Beginning of Knowledge Conclusions

- Understanding God's character is one of the goals of the **Book of Proverbs**.
- It should get us thinking about the right thing to do in any given situation.
- That knowledge begins with the fear of the Lord – reverent, worshipful submission to him.

The Beginning of Knowledge Conclusions

- A close connection with God will provide a good foundation for all of our endeavors.
- It will help us to know wise from foolish behaviors.
- It will help us never to win a Darwin Award.

The Beginning of Knowledge Conclusions

- Finally, godly wisdom will be **centered on Jesus**.
- He, as the very wisdom of God, will be the one through whom we relate to God the Father.

The Beginning of Knowledge Conclusions

- He also connects us in Christian fellowship with one another.
- As we exercise **wisdom from above**, we become more and more like him.