

PROVERBS

If you like witty observation and wise sayings, you will enjoy the book of Proverbs. This is 31 chapters of accumulated spiritual wisdom. It has been associated with King Solomon, the ruler and son of King David who loved and tried to practice wisdom. The final form as we have it in the Bible was likely finished in the Fourth Century before Jesus' birth.

I recommend reading one chapter per day. Along the way, you will likely find verses that you already know. You may enjoy keeping track of all the verses, phrases and ideas which you already know.

Many verses have become general proverbs in English language such as:

- Pride goes before a fall. ***Proverbs 16:8.***
- A gentle (or sweet) word turns away anger. ***Proverbs 15:1.***
- Spare the rod and spoil the child. ***Proverbs 13:24.***
- A cheerful heart is good medicine. Or Laughter is good medicine. ***Proverbs 17:22.***

I urge you to look up the complete verses. The original is more profound and helpful.

The goal of Proverbs is a successful life. There is an underlying message that reverence for God and obedience of God's laws is good for you. If you want a rewarding, meaningful, and prosperous/peaceful life, you will follow God's ways.

- ***Proverbs 3:5-6:*** "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding." In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.
- ***Proverbs 22:6:*** "Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it."

Wisdom literature is not salvific. In other words, it has little to say about how God saves and rescues us from our own foolishness, limited abilities, or sin. As Christian Lutherans, we emphasize that we are saved by God's grace. We are not saved by wisdom. Now that we are saved, this collection of wisdom is good for us.

Wisdom appears as a concept and also as a person in this book. Wisdom speaks. Wisdom acts. Wisdom is presented as a woman. *Does not wisdom call, does not wisdom raise HER voice?* ***Proverbs 8:1.***

Wisdom is present at creation. *The Lord created me at the beginning of his work...when he established the heavens, I was there.* ***Proverbs 8:22-31.***

The Greek word for wisdom is Sophia. This is one of the feminine descriptions of God in the Bible. Some early Christians, including Theophilus of Antioch, who introduced the word "Trinity" to describe God, connected Jesus with Logos and with Sophia. Others associate Wisdom with the Holy Spirit.