

Life-Study of Proverbs – Review

Coming to Proverbs to Cultivate our Regenerated New Man

Proverbs in Hebrew is *mishle*, meaning “similitudes, proverbs, parables,” to represent **general truths**. This book consists of words of wisdom **teaching** people **how to behave and how to build up their character in the human life**.

Proverbs are a **subsidiary** to the law and helps God’s people to keep the law. Proverbs stresses **wisdom that man receives of God** through his contacting of God and that **teaches man how to behave in his human life**. The book of Proverbs is a particular book among the books of the Bible. Whether it is really good or not depends upon what kind of reader you are.

If you are an **ethical** person with a strong mind and have a desire to be perfect as a genuine moral person, surely this book would help you to make a success in your pursuit of perfection. If you are a person who is a **law-keeper**, surely you will appreciate all the proverbs in this book as words of wise men, thinking that they could help you to be a good or even better law-keeper. If you are a person who **loves the Lord and pursues Christ**, not self-perfection, and who loves the Lord’s word in the entire Bible and reads it with a praying spirit, not for the seeking of the doctrine of letter but for seeking the Spirit and word of life, not to get any help for self-cultivation but for the nourishment of your spirit that you may live a Christian life which is perfect not in human virtues but in the divine virtues which are the expressions of the divine attributes, then this book will render you nuggets and gems to strengthen your life of pursuing Christ for the fulfillment of God’s economy in producing and building up the Body of Christ.

The Principles for Man to Live a Proper Human Life

The first principle for man to live a proper human life is **revering God**. To revere God is to consider and regard Him in everything, never forgetting that He is the wonderful God who has created us. To revere God is to **fear God**. The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge and wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. To revere God is also to **trust in Him**. In all our ways we should acknowledge Him, and He will make our paths straight. To revere God means that we also **honour God**.

The second principle is **needing wisdom**. Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, for her profit is better than the profit of silver, and her income is better than gold. We should **not let wisdom depart from our sight**, but we should keep sound wisdom and discretion. The wise will inherit honour, but fools increase their own disgrace. We should **get wisdom and not forsake her**. In certain portions of Proverbs the wisdom of God is personified. This personification of God’s wisdom is the second of the Trinity, the Son of God. Christ is the personified wisdom of God.

The third nugget, the third principle, is the **honouring of one’s parents**. After God, we should **respect** our parents, having **regard** for them, **honouring** them, and **obeying** them. We should hear the instruction of our father and not reject the teaching of our mother.

Finally, the fourth nugget is to **hold marriage in honour**. In order to live a proper human life, we must hold marriage in honour. In holding marriage in honour, man’s faithfulness is the base and the woman’s virtues are the building up.

Using Proverbs for Building Up the New Man

Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs are placed at the end of the section of the law, just before the prophets. They belong to the section of the law. In particular, **Proverbs may be considered a subsidiary, or a helper to the law**. Solomon, the writer of these three books, was the last writer in this section. Of these three books, the first is on the real wisdom; the second, on vanity; and the third, on satisfaction.

Proverbs gives us wisdom to be a proper person and to do the right things. But for whom is this wisdom given, and how should this one use it? To use the book of Proverbs properly, we must know God's economy. A great part of God's economy is His redemption. In God's redemption the first part is to terminate, to destroy, the fallen old man. The second part is to rescue what was created by God, the God-created humanity. In the third part of His redemption, God uplifts the redeemed God-created humanity.

God's redemption is according to His economy. In one sense, God's redemption has already been accomplished, but the application, or the practice of God's redemption requires a long process. It takes time in God's economy for us to experience the redemption in Christ's death, in Christ's resurrection, and in the all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit. Redemption in its entirety was accomplished by God in an instant, but in practice and application redemption is still not finished. We have not yet been fully redeemed, but we are on the way. This is God's economy. Our God is omnipotent, yet for us He has to be very patient and do things slowly.

According to His economy Proverbs should not be used to build up the old man. The big proverbs, like nuggets, and the small ones, like gems, are for us to build up our new man. While we are still living in this body, we need Proverbs to give us instruction on how to live rightly in so many aspects, in order to build up our new man. (Life-Study of Proverbs)