

Dr. August Konkell, Proverbs, Session 2, Purpose of Proverbs, Exordium to Proverbs 1 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Konkell, Proverbs, Session 2, Purpose of Proverbs, Exordium to Proverbs 1, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. August Konkell's lecture on Proverbs focuses on the book's introduction and purpose. **He argues** that the initial verses are titles rather than purpose statements, emphasizing the importance of the "fear of the Lord" as the foundation of wisdom. **Konkell identifies three groups** of people: the wise (those who fear the Lord), fools (those who reject God's wisdom), and the callow (those who are susceptible to deception). **The lecture** explains how the book's wisdom is meant to guide the callow and help them avoid the pitfalls of folly. **Ultimately**, the lecture seeks to illuminate the meaning and application of Proverbs for a modern audience.

2. 13 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Konkell, Session 2 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Psalms & Wisdom → Proverbs).



**Konkell_Prov_Session
n02.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Konkel, Proverbs, Session 2, Purpose of Proverbs, Exordium to Proverbs 1

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpt of Dr. August Konkel's lecture on Proverbs:

Briefing Document: Dr. August Konkel on Proverbs - Session 2

Overview: This session focuses on understanding the purpose of the book of Proverbs as outlined in its introduction (exordium) and the key concepts necessary for interpreting its wisdom. Dr. Konkel emphasizes the structure of the text, the intended audience, and the foundational importance of the "fear of the Lord."

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. Structure and Titles:

- Dr. Konkel argues against the common interpretation of the introduction to Proverbs as a direct purpose statement. Instead, he proposes that the text begins with a title, "The Proverbs of Solomon," followed by distinct purpose statements.
- He identifies multiple titles within the book, marking distinct sections: "The Proverbs of Solomon" (1.1, 10.1), "the words of the wise," "the Proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah collected," "the words of Agur," and "the words of Lemuel." He emphasizes that these titles are deliberately retained.
- Konkel believes that "The Proverbs of Solomon" is the title for the entire book and that the subsequent verses contain the purpose statements.

1. Purpose Statements and Intended Audience:

- Dr. Konkel posits that the purpose statements that follow the title are, "To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight, to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity; to give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth" (Proverbs 1:2-4).
- He argues that these purpose statements point to the audience who will hear, acquire understanding, know proverbs and axioms, and understand the words of the wise and their riddles.
- The primary audience of Proverbs are "the wise"—those who are willing to listen to its instruction, regardless of their level of experience.

- He states, "the audience of the book, the people that it is addressed to, are the ones who are called wise because they will hear. They are wise because they acquire understanding..."

1. **The "Fear of the Lord" as the Foundation of Wisdom:**

- The "fear of the Lord" is presented as the essential prerequisite for wisdom and understanding the book of Proverbs.
- Konkel notes that the Hebrew word "Rosh," used in the phrase "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," encompasses three meanings: the point of beginning, essence, and quality.
- He references Proverbs 9:10, where a different Hebrew word, "Tikila," which means "first," emphasizes that the fear of the Lord is the starting point for wisdom.
- He states, "the starting point of wisdom is the fear of the Lord. And until we start with that attitude, until we have that disposition, we won't be listening to Proverbs."

1. **Understanding "Fear":**

- The "fear of the Lord" is more than just reverence; it encompasses an understanding of God's majesty, holiness, and power of judgment.
- He uses the examples of Mount Sinai and Isaiah's vision to illustrate this understanding:
- Mount Sinai: "when the majesty of God appeared on the mountain, the people fell back...they would violate the majesty and the holiness of God."
- Isaiah's Vision: "Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips..."
- Fear involves recognizing human frailty and dependence on God as the source of life.

1. Three Categories of People in Relation to Wisdom:

- **The Historically Wise:** Those who preserved the instruction of wisdom in texts like Proverbs. They transmit wisdom.
- **The Literary Wise:** The intended audience of Proverbs, the readers who seek God's guidance and understand how to relate to God, His world, and others. This is the category to which we belong as readers of the book.
- **The Fools:** Those who reject the revelation of the wise and follow a path that leads to death, believing they know what is good and deciding what is good. They are not necessarily unintelligent, but morally perverse due to rejecting God's wisdom. "There's a way that seems right to a person, and its end is death."
- **The Gullible:** Those who are "in the balance" regarding the fear of the Lord; they acknowledge it but have not yet learned to follow its principles. They especially need the instruction of Proverbs. "it is especially these that need the instruction of Proverbs..."

Key Quotes:

- "I think that part of the purpose of Proverbs is giving the youth the gullible craftiness, and the subject is the wise, that is the people who are reading the book."
- "The starting point, and this isn't the endpoint, but the starting point of wisdom is the fear of the Lord. And until we start with that attitude, until we have that disposition, we won't be listening to Proverbs."
- "There's a way that seems right to a person, and its end is death."

Conclusion:

Dr. Konkel's lecture emphasizes that understanding the book of Proverbs begins with understanding its structure, its intended audience, and the foundational principle of the "fear of the Lord." He highlights that the book is not meant for those who reject God's wisdom (the fools), but rather for those who are willing to listen, learn, and are striving to move away from gullibility, so that they may acquire true wisdom. The lecture encourages a posture of reverence and dependence on God as the basis for understanding and applying the wisdom found in Proverbs.

4. Study Guide: Konkel, Proverbs, Session 2, Purpose of Proverbs, Exordium to Proverbs 1

Proverbs Study Guide: Session 2

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. According to Konkel, what is the primary title for the book of Proverbs, and why is this significant for understanding the book's purpose?
2. How does Konkel explain the purpose of the four infinitive statements found in the introduction to Proverbs?
3. Who are the "wise" in the context of Proverbs, according to Konkel, and what is the prerequisite for being considered wise?
4. Explain the different meanings of the Hebrew word "Rosh" as it relates to the "fear of the Lord."
5. What is the significance of the Hebrew word "Tikila" in relation to the beginning of wisdom?
6. According to Konkel, how does the book of Proverbs characterize "fools," and what is their primary error in thinking?
7. How does Konkel define the concept of "fear of the Lord," and what examples does he use to illustrate this?
8. What are the three groups of people that Konkel identifies in Proverbs, and how are they distinguished?
9. How do the "fools" relate to the "tree of knowledge of good and evil" from Genesis, according to Konkel?
10. Why does Konkel suggest that the "gullible" or "callow" group of people are a primary target audience for the book of Proverbs?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Konkel argues that the primary title for the book of Proverbs is "The Proverbs of Solomon." This is significant because he believes that the purpose statements that follow in the introduction should be understood as being subordinate to this title, rather than as modifying it.

2. Konkel interprets the four infinitive statements as emphasizing the purpose of the book. He says these statements precede their subject, "the wise," for emphasis in the Hebrew language. The book will impart wisdom and understanding to the wise.
3. The "wise," according to Konkel, are not necessarily those with a lot of experience but anyone willing to listen to the instruction of Proverbs. The prerequisite for being wise is having the "fear of the Lord."
4. The Hebrew word "Rosh," relating to the "fear of the Lord," has three senses: temporal (the point of beginning), essence (the chief part), and quality (the best part). Konkel believes all three meanings are intended.
5. The Hebrew word "Tikila," found in Proverbs 9:10, means "first" and it reinforces the idea that the fear of the Lord is the absolute starting point for wisdom, not just one aspect of it.
6. Fools are characterized as morally perverse individuals who may be intelligent but lack a proper sense of values, especially regarding God's wisdom. Their primary error is rejecting divine wisdom and thinking they can determine good and evil themselves.
7. Konkel defines "fear of the Lord" as more than just reverence. It includes an understanding of God's majesty, divinity, and power, and a recognition of our dependence on God as the life-giver. He uses the examples of the encounters at Mount Sinai and Isaiah's vision to illustrate this.
8. The three groups of people Konkel identifies are the historically wise, the literary wise, and the fools/gullible. The historically wise are those who preserve the teachings; the literary wise are the readers of the book, and the fools and gullible individuals fall outside of wisdom.
9. Konkel connects the "fools" to the tree of knowledge because they claim to know everything, and they decide what is good or evil. They take part in the same claim to autonomy that is represented in the garden story.
10. Konkel suggests the "gullible" or "callow" are a primary audience because they acknowledge the "fear of the Lord" but have not fully embraced wisdom. The book aims to move them from a place of mere acknowledgment to active pursuit of wisdom.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the importance of titles in the book of Proverbs according to Konkel. How does he use them to establish the book's overall structure and purpose?
2. Analyze Konkel's interpretation of the "fear of the Lord" in Proverbs. How does he differentiate it from mere reverence, and what implications does this distinction have for how readers should approach the book?
3. Compare and contrast Konkel's description of the "wise" and the "fools" within the context of Proverbs. What are their distinguishing characteristics and how does the book of Proverbs address them differently?
4. Explain Konkel's understanding of the connection between the "tree of knowledge of good and evil" and the character of the "fool" in Proverbs. How does this tie into the theme of rejecting divine wisdom?
5. Konkel identifies three different groups that are in relation to the "fear of the Lord." Analyze the group he calls "callow" and their role in the context of the Book of Proverbs, what makes them a unique target of instruction?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Exordium:** The introductory part of a speech or written work, often used to establish the purpose or main themes.
- **Infinitive Statement:** A verb form that expresses an action or state without reference to a particular subject; in this case, related to the purposes of the book.
- **Rosh:** A Hebrew word that can mean beginning, essence, or quality. Konkel uses it in relation to "fear of the Lord."
- **Tikila:** A Hebrew word that always means "first," emphasizing the starting point of wisdom in Proverbs 9:10.
- **Literary Wise:** The group of people that Konkel identifies as the readers of the book of Proverbs who are in search of wisdom.
- **Historically Wise:** The group of people that Konkel identifies as those who preserve and pass down the instruction of wisdom, such as in the Book of Proverbs.
- **Fear of the Lord:** A concept that involves more than just reverence for God; it includes acknowledging God's majesty, divinity, power, and our dependence on Him.
- **Fools:** Individuals, according to Konkel, who reject the revelation of wisdom, especially that of God, and thus do not understand true values. They rely on their own sense of good and evil.
- **Gullible/Callow:** A term used by Konkel to describe those who acknowledge the "fear of the Lord" but have not yet embraced wisdom; they are in a state of needing further instruction.
- **Proverbs:** The literary genre that often embodies concise statements conveying general truths or pieces of advice, wisdom, or instruction.
- **Axioms:** A self-evident truth or principle that requires no proof.

5. FAQs on Konkel, Proverbs, Session 2, Purpose of Proverbs, Exordium to Proverbs 1, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on Proverbs

1. **What is the main purpose of the book of Proverbs according to this session?** The main purpose of Proverbs is to impart wisdom to its readers, particularly the young and gullible, enabling them to gain understanding, discern proverbs and axioms, and comprehend the words and riddles of the wise. The book aims to guide them towards a life that aligns with God's principles.
2. **Why is the title "The Proverbs of Solomon" important, and how does it relate to the rest of the book?** The title "The Proverbs of Solomon" is considered the overall title of the book, with other titles throughout the text being specific to various sections. It is not just the subject of the purpose statements that follow. Recognizing these as distinct titles is important to understanding the organization and authorship of the book. The overall title highlights that Solomon was the primary author, but other sources were also included.
3. **Who are considered "the wise" in Proverbs, and what is the prerequisite for attaining wisdom?** In Proverbs, "the wise" are not necessarily those with vast experience but rather anyone who is willing to listen to and learn from wisdom's instruction. The prerequisite for attaining wisdom is the "fear of the Lord," which is the starting point for all understanding. This fear involves a deep reverence and respect for God's majesty and power, and an understanding of human dependence on God.
4. **What does the "fear of the Lord" entail, and how does it relate to the beginning of wisdom?** The "fear of the Lord" is more than just reverence; it includes a profound understanding of God's divine majesty, holiness, and power of judgment. It is also acknowledging human frailty and dependence on God. This fear is the essential starting point for wisdom, meaning that you can't truly begin to gain wisdom without this foundational reverence for God. It is both a temporal starting point and the essence of wisdom.

5. **Who are the "fools" in Proverbs, and how do they differ from the wise?** The "fools" in Proverbs are not necessarily unintelligent people but are those who reject the revelation of the wise and have a morally perverse mindset. They do not have a proper sense of values or the right way in which thinking should be used. They are characterized by their rejection of God's wisdom and are on a path leading to death, according to Proverbs.
6. **Besides the wise and fools, what third group is discussed, and what do they need?** The third group is the "gullible," also described as "callow". These are individuals who know about the fear of the Lord but haven't yet learned what it means to follow it. They are in a state of balance regarding God. It is this group, more than any other, that need the specific instructions of Proverbs to acquire wisdom and understand the fear of the Lord better.
7. **What are the different types of "wise" figures mentioned in Proverbs?** Proverbs mentions two types of "wise" figures: historically wise individuals who preserved instruction (those whose words are in books like Proverbs) and the literary wise, who are the readers of Proverbs. The book is addressed to these literary wise, those who read Proverbs seeking to apply its wisdom to their lives.
8. **What is the significance of the "tree of knowledge of good and evil" in relation to the concepts in Proverbs?** The "tree of knowledge of good and evil" is used to illustrate the path of the fool. By claiming to know good and evil, and thus defining it for themselves, they reject God as the source of wisdom. It highlights the dangers of self-determination and rejecting divine guidance, and contrasts this to the humble dependence of the wise who adhere to Proverbs.