

Dr. August Konkell, Proverbs, Session 15, Lessons from God's World, Proverbs 25:1-28 Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Konkell, Proverbs, Session 15, Lessons from God's World, Proverbs 25:1-28, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This is a lecture by Dr. August Konkell on Proverbs 25:1-28, focusing on lessons from God's world. **Konkell discusses the historical context of the proverbs**, noting their compilation centuries after Solomon's reign under Hezekiah. He **analyzes various themes** within the chapter, such as the limits of human knowledge, the importance of humility and genuine character, resolving disputes peacefully, and the power and impact of words. **Konkell uses examples and illustrations** from his personal experiences and other biblical texts to enrich his interpretation, emphasizing the practical application of these proverbs to daily life. Finally, **he highlights the importance of considering the entire picture** when dealing with disputes, avoiding gossip and slander.

2. 12 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Konkell, Session 15 – 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
15.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Konkel, Proverbs, Session 15, Lessons from God's World, Proverbs 25:1-28

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from Dr. August Konkel's lecture on Proverbs 25:1-28, as presented in the provided excerpt:

Briefing Document: Dr. August Konkel on Proverbs 25

Introduction

This document summarizes the key themes and insights from Dr. August Konkel's Session 15 lecture on Proverbs, specifically focusing on Proverbs 25:1-28. Konkel frames this section of Proverbs as a collection transcribed during the reign of King Hezekiah, roughly 250 years after Solomon, from whose wisdom they originate. The lecture explores various aspects of life and society as presented in this specific chapter, offering a blend of practical advice and theological reflection.

Key Themes and Ideas

1. The Nature of Knowledge and Humility:

- **Limited Human Understanding:** Konkel emphasizes the limitations of human knowledge, particularly in the realm of scientific inquiry. He contrasts the vastness of the universe with our limited ability to comprehend it, stating, "Frankly, they're based on very limited observations that we have as humans on all sorts of things that we don't know." He uses the examples of Stephen Hawking's changing theories about the universe and Einstein's relativity to illustrate how our understanding of fundamental concepts like time and distance is not absolute. Konkel argues that scientific inquiry should lead to a recognition of God's mystery and glory.
- **God's Mystery and Glory:** Konkel highlights the proverb: "It is the glory of God to hide things." He interprets this to mean that God's ways are often beyond human comprehension, encouraging a sense of humility and wonder rather than arrogant certainty.
- **King's Discernment:** The lecture contrasts the limits of human understanding with the king's capacity for discernment, particularly in matters of human relationships. This suggests a practical knowledge is more valuable than striving for complete understanding of the universe.

- **Importance of Genuine Character:** The pursuit of knowledge is secondary to the need for genuine character. Just as gold and silver must be refined, so too society must root out corruption. Similarly, humility is necessary for true dignity. "What we need to have, if we're going to have dignity, is humility."

1. Navigating Disputes and Relationships:

- **Prudence in Conflict:** Konkel warns against hasty involvement in arguments and legal disputes, "Be careful about getting into an argument with your neighbor and be careful about going to court, because it may not turn out like you think." He advocates for a more biblical approach to conflict resolution, urging individuals to first seek reconciliation through direct dialogue and mediation before resorting to more formal means like legal action.
- **Importance of Mediation:** Konkel emphasizes the value of a neutral third party to facilitate reconciliation. He shares a personal anecdote of a time when his mere presence helped two feuding families resolve their issues.
- **Self-Reflection:** Konkel draws on Psalm 139 to emphasize the importance of self-examination. While the Psalmist initially believes he knows God's enemies, he ultimately asks God to search him to identify any potential wrong within himself. This connects to the proverb's call for humility and careful self-assessment.
- **Confidentiality:** The lecture also emphasizes the importance of keeping sensitive information private in order to prevent harm.

1. The Power and Proper Use of Words:

- **Words as Art:** Konkel interprets the proverb about "apples of gold in settings of silver" as a metaphor for the power of well-chosen words. He highlights the idea of a word "on its wheels" to show its mobility, it is something that can change its setting and meaning and circumstances. He compares the visual picture to the ornamental pillars with pomegranates in the temple, indicating that the right word is beautiful and perfectly situated.
- **Correction and Criticism:** Konkel differentiates between compliments and criticism, stating that while both have their places, effective correction is more valuable than affirmation. He acknowledges the difficulty in knowing when correction is useful, emphasizing that criticism that will not be understood should be avoided.

- **The Medium is the Message:** Konkel references Marshall McLuhan to emphasize that the way a message is delivered greatly influences its reception, "the way in which the message is given is a whole part of the message itself."

1. **Practical Advice for Daily Life:**

- **Keeping Promises:** The lecture stresses the importance of being careful with promises, especially to children, and being aware of the implications of one's word.
- **Moderation and Respect:** The importance of not overstaying one's welcome, and not becoming a burden to others is stressed. "Don't make your neighbor wish that you were leaving."
- **Mercy as Revenge:** Konkel discusses the concept of heaping "coals of fire" on one's enemy by showing them kindness and mercy, showing how it disorients and changes them.
- **Contentment and Peace:** A contented home, Konkel states, is better than a wealthy but unhappy home. This stresses the importance of harmonious relationships over material possessions.
- **Self-Control:** Finally, the lecture emphasizes the crucial role of self-control, comparing lack of self-control to a defenseless city. This highlights that self-control is the greatest form of protection.

Conclusion

Dr. Konkel's lecture provides a thorough exploration of Proverbs 25, highlighting timeless wisdom on a range of topics from the nature of knowledge to interpersonal relationships. He blends theological insights with practical advice, encouraging a humble approach to knowledge, skillful communication, and a commitment to fostering healthy relationships within society.

4. Study Guide: Konkel, Proverbs, Session 15, Lessons from God's World, Proverbs 25:1-28

Proverbs Chapter 25 Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 complete sentences.

1. According to the lecture, when were the proverbs in chapter 25 collected and by whom?
2. What does the lecture suggest about the relationship between scientific knowledge and the mystery of God as described in Proverbs?
3. How does the lecture describe the difference between the knowledge humans possess and the knowledge that God possesses?
4. According to the lecture, what is the purpose of removing "dross" from silver and gold and how does that relate to society?
5. What advice is given regarding resolving disputes within a community of believers?
6. What is the significance of Psalm 139 in relation to the themes explored in Proverbs 25, according to the lecture?
7. How does the lecture explain the proverb about "apples of gold in settings of silver" in relation to the power of words?
8. What is the lecturer's position on the use of criticism and how should correction be approached?
9. What does the lecture say about the importance of keeping promises, particularly with children?
10. What metaphor is used to describe a lack of self-control, and why is it a powerful image?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The proverbs in chapter 25 were collected around 700 BC by the men of Hezekiah, the king of Judah, approximately 250 years after the time of Solomon. These men transcribed and passed along traditional proverbs associated with Solomon's wisdom.

2. The lecture suggests that scientific knowledge is limited and should inspire awe and a recognition of God's mystery, not arrogance. We should observe God's glory in the heavens, according to Psalm 19, and recognize the limits of human understanding.
3. Humans have very limited knowledge, based on their relative perspective, while God's knowledge is absolute and mysterious. The lecture emphasizes that while we are meant to probe and explore the world, our understanding is never complete.
4. The purpose of removing dross is to purify valuable metals, and this is analogous to the process of removing corruption from society. This process is necessary to ensure that both the silver or gold, and society, can have dignity.
5. The lecture advises that disputes should initially be resolved privately between the individuals involved. If that is unsuccessful, then mediation by others within the community should be sought before resorting to legal action, as legal solutions are not always the best.
6. Psalm 139 illustrates the comprehensive and intimate knowledge God has of each individual, which is a contrast to our limited human knowledge. This supports the idea that we must look to God to see our own pain or wrongness and seek to conform to him.
7. The proverb of apples of gold in settings of silver signifies the impact and beauty of well-chosen words. It emphasizes that a word fitly spoken is like a beautiful, mobile, and effective work of art, and has great power to affect the circumstances around it.
8. While affirmation and encouragement are important, criticism should be used sparingly and only when it will be understood by the recipient. Correction is a step up from simple affirmation, but only if it can be received.
9. Promises should be made carefully, as they carry significant weight, especially with children who are particularly attuned to such pronouncements. We should make sure we do what we say and try not to make promises that cannot be kept.
10. A lack of self-control is compared to a city without walls, highlighting the vulnerability that results when one cannot manage their emotions. A city without walls is easily over taken, and so the same is true of a person who cannot control their emotions.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the interplay between human wisdom and divine mystery as presented in Proverbs 25, using examples from the lecture to support your argument.
2. Analyze the importance of conflict resolution, the use of speech, and the power of words as explored in Proverbs 25 and discussed in the lecture. How do these topics relate to building and maintaining healthy relationships?
3. Considering the lecture's emphasis on humility, character, and genuine relationships, how can the wisdom of Proverbs 25 be applied in contemporary society?
4. How does the lecture use the themes of divine wisdom and human limitation to encourage introspection and the seeking of spiritual insight? What specific examples are used to build the argument?
5. Compare and contrast the different types of proverbs discussed in the lecture, such as those related to self-control, the power of words, and societal relationships. How do these diverse proverbs contribute to the overall wisdom of the collection?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Transcribed:** Copied or written down. In this context, it refers to the act of writing down or recording the proverbs of Solomon by the men of Hezekiah.
- **Dross:** The impurities or waste material separated from metals during the smelting process. Metaphorically, it refers to the corrupting influences within an individual or society.
- **Mediate:** To intervene in a dispute to bring about a settlement.
- **Etse:** The Hebrew word for pain. As discussed in the lecture, it is a pain or sorrow associated with being in the wrong.
- **Confidentiality:** The act of keeping information private and not disclosing it to others who do not have a right to know.
- **Slander:** To make a false and damaging statement about someone. In the lecture, slander is differentiated from gossip, suggesting it has some basis in truth, but is used to convey a negative meaning.
- **Mercy:** Compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone who has harmed or wronged you.
- **Self-control:** The ability to control one's emotions, desires, or actions.
- **Hezekiah:** King of Judah, during whose reign the proverbs in chapter 25 were collected and transcribed, approximately 250 years after Solomon.
- **Solomon:** King of Israel, known for his wisdom, to whom many of the proverbs in the book are attributed.

5. FAQs on Konkel, Proverbs, Session 15, Lessons from God's World, Proverbs 25:1-28, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on Proverbs 25:1-28

- **What is unique about the collection of Proverbs in chapter 25?** The proverbs in chapter 25 are attributed to Solomon, but it is stated that they were transcribed by the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah, around 250 years after Solomon's reign. This collection, therefore, is seen as a later compilation of traditional wisdom. While associated with Solomon's wisdom, they are organized and passed down at a later time. This indicates the process and historical context of the book of Proverbs.
- **What is the significance of the proverb about God hiding things?** The proverb stating that "it is the glory of God to hide things" emphasizes the limits of human knowledge. It suggests that despite our attempts to understand the universe and its origins, there remains a level of mystery that is beyond human comprehension. It is through this mystery that we should recognize God's glory. This idea also serves as a reminder that what we "know" is from a limited perspective as opposed to the kings who can discern things, and know things about people.
- **What does the text say about how to resolve disputes with others?** The text warns against immediately resorting to legal action when in conflict with a neighbor. It encourages direct communication and reconciliation between the involved parties, and, if necessary, the inclusion of mediators before involving external authorities, such as the courts. This approach echoes a principle of resolving conflict within the community. The speaker describes mediating a conflict where just the presence of a neutral person caused the families to reconcile.
- **How does Psalm 139 relate to the themes in Proverbs 25?** Psalm 139, with its emphasis on God's complete knowledge of each individual, mirrors the proverbs' message about humility and self-awareness. It demonstrates that while we may think we know ourselves and our enemies, we are called to ask God to search our hearts to uncover any hidden or unrecognized faults. The Psalmist declares he knows who the enemies of God are, but then prays to God to search him because there is a possibility that his enemies may not be God's enemies. In short, we don't know who we truly are, or who others are, and we need God to help us.

- **What is meant by the proverb comparing a well-spoken word to "apples of gold in an engraving of silver"?** This metaphor, using a beautiful and intricate image of the temple's ornamental pillars, suggests that a word spoken at the right time, and in the right way, can have a powerful and positive impact. The "word on its wheels" describes the mobile nature of words, implying that words have to move and change according to the circumstances. Like an apple of gold on a silver lattice it brings beauty and value to the entire situation, just as the right word in the right place does.
- **What does the text advise regarding the use of criticism?** The text acknowledges that while criticism may sometimes be necessary, it must be given with care. It also warns that criticism must be expressed so that it strengthens the relationship. It should be done in a way that the person is able to understand and benefit from it, rather than it being used in a way that will lead to anger or resentment. Therefore, the method in which a message is delivered is an intrinsic part of the message itself. If there is no potential for the criticism to be understood, there is no point in making it.
- **What advice is given regarding the importance of relationships and self-control?** The text gives several pieces of advice regarding relationships: to be careful about making promises, not to overstay one's welcome, and to practice mercy as a means of reconciliation with those who have done wrong. Self-control is compared to having strong defensive walls around a city and is essential for maintaining a stable and well-ordered life. Lacking it leaves us vulnerable and unable to maintain good relationships.
- **What does the text say about the nature of slander?** Slander is described as speech that isn't entirely false, which makes it dangerous. There is always some truth in slander, but that truth is used to create a negative impression of someone that is not the whole picture. The speaker suggests that it conceals part of the overall picture. Slander is not the same as gossip because while there is some overlap in their usage, slander is malicious, and tends to be rooted in some level of truth, whereas gossip does not have that pre-requisite.