

Dr. Elaine Phillips, OT History, Lit., and Theology, Lecture 24

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Well, good morning, the peace of Christ be with you.

Audience: And with you.

Thank you. I hope you've enjoyed "Calvin and Hobbes" for the morning. There's a serious message behind this. So let me simply emphasize as I said before--I hate to repeat myself, but, I've found out that that sometimes it is a little bit valuable: Please, please, please, as you're writing this one-page paper, it should start out as a four or five page paper, as you write down everything that you think you know. Then cut it down and get rid of all the excess verbiage. Most of us write way too much because we've been taught in high school to write me a five-page paper and so you're fluffing and adding and so forth to get five pages. Now I want you to really write a concise, excellent, well-structure, thoughtful, provocative, whatever you call it. Just write me a good paper out of that. Carrie is going to change the format of her review session just a little bit for tomorrow night and she invites you to come by during that hour. She'll read your papers, and have a look at them and kind of give them a fine-tooth-comb. Carrie's been through a number of classes with me so she knows what one-page papers are supposed to look like. So, if you want to take advantage of that it's 7 o'clock tomorrow night in Chase 26.

And this is still a little bit echoey, isn't it? The sound? Are you getting too much? I'm feeling like it's too... reverberating. Is that any better? Okay we can adjust it if we need to.

Any questions on the papers? Make sure, as I said last week at some point when I was talking about them- make sure you consult the sources and resources in the library. They've got whole shelves of commentaries that are in the Library. Don't use Matthew Henry Commentary that's online. Matthew Henry's lovely for some things but not for this paper. And other things that are online, you don't really want to be using them. I'm sorry to tell you, but, use the library. It won't kill you. Yes, Suzanna. [*Student question regarding Paper format*] Yes, it's a good question. I do want you to think in paragraphs. One whole

page, because of what you're doing in this paper, there's going to be some sub-issues that you're addressing, obviously, no matter what Proverb it is that you've chosen. So, I would suggest just sort of as a rule of thumb, your paper should have three or four good, solid paragraphs in it. So, thank you. Good question. **[Student Question]** Yes, you want this to be double spaced. Single-spaced would allow you to get a whole lot more on the page but that's not what we're looking for, we're looking for conciseness. Yes, Kate. **[Student Question]** All that "stuff" that I tell you to do- Steps 1, 2, 3, 4 and so forth. You take notes on this, you take notes on that, you tell me what you think about this, and you tell me what the commentaries say- All that you get to turn in along with the one-page paper. Am I not speaking English? You're looking puzzled. Okay.

You don't have to type it out. I said in my e-mail, you can hand-write all that stuff and just bring it to class on the due-date if you want to. If you're turning your paper in on-line, make it one document. If you've used this stuff and by the way, it wouldn't hurt you to use this "stuff" already typed into your computer because then you just cut and paste and, you know, shuffle it around a little bit, rather than dealing with handwritten notes. But, it's up to you. I just want to emphasize, I want the final paper, but I want to see the preliminary work as well because part of the grade is based on that.

Yes, Ginger. **[Student Question]** Yeah, you're final paper, your "exhortation," whatever you want to call it, is going to be based on everything that you've been both researching and thinking about and putting those together. Good. Ask them now.

Go ahead Kaitlin. **[Student Question]** Yes, you know, that's part of your preliminary work. So show me your first draft or drafts, that's fine too. I'll look at them and see where you were before you ended up at that final paper. Everything that you do that is part of your process of doing this paper, I want to see. And the more that's there, even if your final paper is sort of lacking something here and there, if I see that it's in the preliminary work that'll help you.

One last chance? Questions? Well it's time to sing together. Let's go on to Psalm 51 again. I gave you the English translation here just in case you've got time to look at that

while you're singing. Or, if you're not singing, you can focus on the English because it's a great way to start our day together.

[Singing]

Father in heaven, thank you so much for your goodness to us. Thank you that we've had the gifts and the privileges of being able to get up this morning, have food, have warmth and security, enjoy this opportunity to study, and have friends. Lord, in all these things we're mindful that we do take them for granted but they are coming from your hand and so we're grateful for that. We're thankful for your Word. We're thankful for this part of it that we're going to study today and we earnestly pray together Lord, that you would help us to think carefully and clearly. May your Word be living and active in our hearts and even active today to trim out some things that are displeasing to you. Lord, refine us, we pray, and teach us, prepare us to be better servants in your Kingdom. As we pray for these things we would also ask for our leaders, both at local levels and national and international spheres. They need Your wisdom Lord. We pray that, in your grace and mercy, give it to them. Father, we ask these things in Christ's name, with thanksgiving. Amen.

Well, We are going to pick up with wisdom literature today. Specifically, after a couple introductory comments we are going to focus on the book of Proverbs. As you know if you downloaded the lecture outline, just a little bit by way of review, because it doesn't hurt to do that to kind of see how this is going to work. Remember when we were dealing with the historical material when we got to David and that was a really appropriate time to take a little bit of a tangent and look at the Psalms because so many of them are associated with the name of David. So we picked up some poetic material in that context. Now, as we move on to Solomon, what was Solomon known for? Besides wisdom. Four W's. **[Student Response]** Women, Wealth, Worship and Wisdom. Helpful kinds of things, and of course today, because Solomon's name is associated with three of the four books that we think of as wisdom texts, we are going to again take a turn out of the historical materials and spend some time on wisdom literature.

Ah, just a quick review, what are the characteristics of Hebrew Poetry? What's the primary characteristic of Hebrew Poetry? **[Student Response]** Parallelism. It's parallelism. Good. What three kinds of parallelism did we sort of land on when we were talking about? **[Student Response]** You want to pass the buck, okay. Synthetic means what? Let's get that one nailed down. **[Student Response]** Right, first line, added, added, added to. And what are the other two? **[Student Response]** Antithetical, right, which means the first line has the opposite stated in the next line following. And as I said to you as we were talking about this it's in the book of Proverbs, particularly starting with chapter 10 and going through about chapter 15 that we have our big collection of antitheses. And that's no accident because one of the functions of the book of Proverbs is to teach the student, and we are going to say more about that in a moment, to teach the student discernment. There's no better way to teach discernment than to say, "On one hand you have this, and on the other hand, you have this." Think, "Which one's better, okay." And so your antitheses work that way.

What's the third kind of parallelism? Another one that starts with syn... **[Student Response]** That's a kind of a Psalm, put that behind you. Just sort of cordon that off over here. But we've got antithetical, what's the opposite of antithetical in terms of our kinds of parallelism? **[Student Response]** Synonymous, right, right, yes. Okay. The first line is repeated but with different terminology, so that you have conceptual ideas that are being presented twice. And then of course, as we said, that helps us in our learning prospect. So synonymous, antithetical and synthetic; those are the three basic ones and as we said when we were talking about Hebrew Poetry there are combinations of those and there are other kinds of parallelism but these will serve us for now quite well.

What are the things that we want to do before we jump right into Proverbs? Spend a little bit of time talking about wisdom in its wider context. Because it is not only the biblical material that has "wisdom literature," every culture that you look at that has a literary traditional corpus has something that falls into this general category of Wisdom Literature because there are some things about being human that cause us to think, and

ponder, and wrestle, and make choices, and want to do it the best way possible. Because of course, we want to have some sense of guidance and direction in our lives.

So I have just listed a couple of things that are going to shape how we think about wisdom at large. The first is: the human desire. You know we can't do this but we often think we can. And we have been given intellectual capabilities that allow us to deal with the things that are part of our environments and part of our worlds. So the whole human desire and tendency to want to be as much as possible in control, right? Gain mastery of life through the power of reason. You know God has given us our minds for a purpose and we are supposed to be using them. In fact, using your mind is one of the most spiritual things you can do because it is God's gift. And so within this understanding that God, of course, is sovereignly in control of how everything unfolds, there is a place for using our mental capabilities and to our best as possible, as best as we possibly can, making the choices that make the most sense. So that is one of the things that's going to shape this whole discussion of wisdom in the broader sense. I put all of the rest of them out here as well.

Towards achieving that end, accepting instruction is very significant. If you have read the assignment in *Old Testament Parallels* for today the sayings of Amenemope those are instructional just as the book of Proverbs is instructional. And we know how important it is to receive instruction. What's the main focus in Proverbs, it is the father talking to his child. "My child this, this and this, listen to the instruction of your mother, heed the teaching of your father, store up those commands in your hearts." Alright, so the instruction is important, and that leads you right on into bullet number three, which is: Passing this material along. Tradition and things that are traditional ought not to be anathema to each successive generation, sometimes we tend to think so, "Oh that's just traditional, you know, I want something new." Don't think that way. That which comes down through tradition is of the utmost value especially in helping us to think and think well and to think clearly about how we live our lives.

Bullet four is also extremely interesting particularly with regard to Proverbs, because as you read through the Proverbs you're going to see that each one of them is a tiny

little slice. In some cases they are characters of human nature, and in other cases they are little bits of advice, and in other cases they are observations about how things work. Of course, each one can only encompass so much content. And so there are going to be other angles and of other facets. Think of a diamond and think of shining light through your diamond. And you're going to see as it comes out on the other side different colors coming out, right? And in some ways you are going to have the same things happen with wisdom literature. Each little gem, especially in the book of Proverbs is going to contribute something interesting.

Let me give you, probably the classic example of this. You've got to turn to Proverbs 26 for this one. If you've got your Bibles, you can do that. And I'm going to read- and we're going to do a little third grade exercise here, for those of you who have your Bibles. For those of you who don't, you don't have to worry about doing what I'm asking you to do but if you've got your Bible, get your hand ready, and slap it down right under verse 4 of chapter 26, alright? Under verse 4. I'll let you get to chapter 26 first. Got it covered up? This is the exercise. Okay, Chapter 26 verse 4 says, "Do not answer a fool according to his folly or you yourself will be just like him" (NIV). In other words, if someone is ranting and screaming and raving at you, don't rant and scream and rave back. You've lowered yourself to that level. That's a great piece of advice, isn't it? Isn't it a good piece of advice? One that most of us could take pretty seriously because usually when someone is really angry at us the whole decibel level of what we say in response, it inches up there. Great advice.

Remove your hand and let me read verse 5. "Answer a fool according to his folly, or he's going to be wise in his own eyes." Now, that doesn't mean you scream back at him, but it means that you're going to engage with that person and make sure that that person is not allowed to go on thinking his folly and his foolish thoughts. And so, two pieces of advice, and as you look at them both and you look at the situations in which we find ourselves on a daily basis, it takes a whole lot of discernment and wisdom to figure out which one of those applies right here and now. Right? And so this is a small illustration of

what I'm trying to say there in the fourth bullet. We've got a wonderful resource in our wisdom literature for sorting through how to think about particular situations. But, it takes a good deal of discernment, and I'm going to talk about discernment a little bit later on, as we think about how to apply these Proverbs to life.

Well, those things so far have focused primarily on Proverbs, but as we get especially into the book of Job, and you know this well because Job, of course, because even if you haven't read the whole book seriously we know what the main point is: Job is suffering unjustly. And when we have to deal with suffering, and extensive suffering, and suffering that we just don't understand, and when we have to deal with the prospect of death and mortality, which is not only in the book of Job, but in the book of Ecclesiastes. The author of Ecclesiastes is coming to grips with death.

Those two are important pieces of wisdom literature as well. Now those are our biblical wisdom pieces but every other culture is going to have to wrestle with these same things. "The Sufferer and His Friends" is a piece of Mesopotamian literature, has the same kinds of things as Job. Because every place you go, people are human, they're fallible, they're finite, and they are wrestling with these things. So those are the universal aspects of wisdom that we want to have kind of in the background as we talk through our literature, our biblical wisdom literature.

Just a couple of things to say in this regard, I mentioned this already, some of the texts that you are reading in the *Old Testament Parallels* will give you a little window into this, but there's lots more for the reasons I've just articulated. Human kind wrestles with these questions. Now here we've basically got a review of what I've just said as I was talking through some of those previous bullets, and you'll want to know these things, the things that characterize each of the biblical wisdom texts.

First of all, Proverbs is practical. One of the excellent Old Testament commentators who's also written a small commentary on Proverbs has said, "Proverbs is godliness in working clothes." And that's exactly what it is. It describes us as we are when we get up early in the morning, as we are. Well, this is sort of taking a principle and applying it: As

we're driving down the road and we're tempted towards road rage or something like that, Proverbs is, "Putting godliness into working clothes."

It's looking at it and as I'm going to say in a moment, it also caricatures us at our worst sometimes, and pokes fun, and we're supposed to take lessons from that as well. Job and Ecclesiastes wrestle with these issues I've been mentioning: suffering, death. And because we don't know a lot about what's beyond and we don't know the "Why's" in so many of these cases that the questions that come up, so that they are classed as being speculative wisdom literature or philosophical.

And then finally Song of Songs interestingly enough, did not used to be classified as wisdom literature. For quite some time, it was just thought of as, lyric poetry. But it has slowly moved over into the category of wisdom literature. Why do you think that's true? We're going to spend Friday talking about Song of Songs, part of Friday. Why do you think Song of Songs is in wisdom literature? If you've read it, your first take on it is going to be, "Oh, really?" What's the main topic of Song of Songs, one word? That starts with "L." It's "Love" isn't it? And it's love between two people who are enamored, they're enraptured, they're just ecstatic over each other. Of all places in our lives, that's where we need to be wise. Right? And so we're going to talk about some of those things that we learn from those wonderful, ecstatic poems that are the Song of Songs. And that's Friday.

Alright, a couple more things to do by way of introduction, before we get into Proverbs itself, given what I've just said to you in this broad span of material that comes under the umbrella of biblical wisdom literature. You know, how on earth for we define wisdom? Well of course, the starting point is what we see not only in Proverbs 9:10, but in also in Job 28:28 and somewhere in Psalms that I can't remember just off the top of my head, but it's a recurring theme. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." And that obviously is going to be a helpful principle as we're talking about biblical wisdom. It's the fear of the Lord. Because if we don't have that we are in bad shape, and the biblical fool, if you've read Dr. Wilson's material for today, the worst of the biblical fools is a *nabal* who's name underlies, the biblical name "Nabal" and we remember him from being

Abigail's husband who was a hardened fool. Alright? Rejecting God and rejecting God's instruction. So this is a very helpful starting point.

But we're going to push it a little bit further. I've called this the challenge of defining biblical wisdom, and it's a challenge because, picking up on what we've just said, and adding to it a little bit, you know, if wisdom is one of the characteristics of God, those of you who know catechisms, probably not too many do anymore, but you know one of the things we learn from the Westminster Shorter Catechism, those of us who grew up in the Presbyterian context, is that wisdom is one of those central characteristics of God. Okay? "In his [God's] being wisdom, power, justice, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth," that's how that line goes. Wisdom is a characteristic of God. How do you define a characteristic of God who's infinite? And utterly pure and holy and infallible? You know, how do our minds wrap around that? Good question! Part of our challenge.

Secondly, picking up on what I just said, as we look at even these four biblical wisdom texts, they do have that wide range of content and intent, for that matter. So you've got Proverbs; basic, practical advice, and we're going to look at that shortly. You've got observations about human nature, but you've got this wrestling with the unanswered questions. How do you get a definition that encompasses all of that? Well, two authors, I've recommended to you before in this context I believe. A book that I use in Introduction to Biblical Studies, which Bible majors take, and it's by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stewart, both of whom used to be, as they began writing the first edition of this text, professors up at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. They have come up, and this is actually Doug Stewart's definition because he wrote the Old Testament sections, with a fairly good definition and I rather like it, even though they changed it in the second and third editions. I'm going back to the first edition because this is a great definition. "It's discipline" Ok? Wisdom doesn't come just sort of happily floating down into our brains, it's the discipline of applying truth to life in the light of experience. And of course our experiences encompass our wrestling with death when we encounter it friends or family or whatever. It encounters our dealing with suffering of every kind. It also means that we work very hard

to know truth, and I'll talk more about that in a moment. So it's "the discipline of applying truth to our own lives in light of our experiences." I think it's a fairly decent definition. And I might ask you to know that. So get the red flags up there, alright? This is one you might want to memorize.

The contrast, and we're going to talk about types of fools a little bit later on, but biblical folly or foolishness has nothing whatsoever with intellectual capacity, it has everything to do with whether or not we accept or reject God's instruction. That's why the book of Proverbs over and over and over again says, "Store up my commands, accept my instruction. Seek, look for, search for" and all of these things are part of the process in taking in God's instruction. That's what a wise person will do. A foolish person, "Ah, later, not for me, I'm a little bit better than that. That's not what we want to be doing."

Any questions for me, so far, before we move on? Yes, Rebecca. **[Student question]** Yeah, good, so how is it that Solomon can write, given his relationships with multiple women, write such strong statements against the adulterous? Particularly in the first section of Proverbs. Yeah, it's a great question and you could probably say the same about Ecclesiastes. In that book, you see him being very strong because he's been through experiences. Yeah I think the definition here works with him. In light of his experiences, he has some pretty powerful things to say, some of us have to learn the hard way about what's wise, and I would suggest that maybe Solomon is speaking out of some very painful experiences and his life has been changed and he's grown sadly wiser. That's certainly the case, I would suggest, with Ecclesiastes. If we're going to say that Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes, we'll talk about that later. But yeah, it's a great question. I'm going to come back a little bit to Solomon in a moment, but it's a very good question.

Anything else before we go charging on? Just a little bit of a note, this picks right up on our Solomon question, as we read 1 Kings 4, and I'm actually going to go back to that for a moment, so if you've got that text still handy, it won't hurt to take a quick run to 1 Kings chapter 4 that we've already looked at, but I want to review it from another perspective now. This is after Solomon's prayer for wisdom to rule his people, and it's after

that test case that indicates that he does have wisdom, justly, to rule his people. Then at the end of chapter 4 we have the following statements, starting with verse 29, “God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight and a breadth of understanding as measureless as sand on the seashore.” Now look at Verse 32, “He spoke 3,000 proverbs, his songs numbered to 1,005.” Well, you know, that gives you some sense of this manifold output that he’s doing from a literary perspective, 3,000 proverbs! Do you know how many are in the book of Proverbs? It’s not 3,000. Guess. I sat down and counted them up one time, as if I had nothing else better to do. There’s slightly over 900. Slightly over 900 Proverbs in our book that has 31 chapters, right? So, there’s a whole vast array out there of additional things that Solomon was composing. Likewise, Psalms, he’s writing Psalms. Not only that, so he’s a poet of the best kind, right? “He described plant life from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the walls.” You know those are two things that are saying, “from the greatest to the least” because the cedars of Lebanon were monstrous and of course, the hyssop is a tiny little plant. So Solomon knows his plants, he’s a botanist. He’s taken his Core curriculum in the Natural Sciences, if I may be so rude to suggest it like that. He talks about animals and birds, reptiles and fish. This is a man who’s liberally educated if you want to look at it that way, and he’s going to use that knowledge. Especially when you read the last chapters of Proverbs, that set up simile after simile after simile after simile. And we know what those are, “this is like this,” and “This is like this”, establishing comparisons that really are used to teach something. Solomon uses these aspects of the natural realm to make moral applications. And so he’s drawing two very significant spheres together.

Alright, so we have Solomon teaching all of this material. When you read Proverbs 25 verse 1, it says, “The men of Hezekiah gathered together the Proverbs of Solomon.” Now I am going to say why I think that is the case in a moment. But, just recognize that you know there is a process here of compiling this book. It isn’t just that Solomon sort of dictated the whole thing and then we got it. He’s written all of these proverbs, the men of Hezekiah are going to do something to bring them into a structured literary whole.

Then there are some later additions that show up right at the end of the book. King Lemuel is apparently one of them. What we have in chapters 30 and 31 seem to be some later additions. We don't really know when, but here is a little chart that might help us, we think. Here it is right here. Let's look at this for a moment. We've studied David and we've studied Solomon. We haven't gotten into divided kingdom yet but we will, Lord willing, after Easter. But in 931 B.C. the kingdom does indeed split into North and South. So you've got two basic kingdoms going along. The Northern Kingdom primarily is going to be apostate, primarily. About 200 years after this split in the Kingdom we have a very critical thing happening because the Assyrians come along and they take away the Northern Kingdom entirely and they lay siege to Jerusalem. A guy named Sennacherib, we're going to be talking about it later on. When that happens let me suggest to you that these men of Hezekiah that are mentioned in chapter 25 are well aware that their national heritage from the human perspective is being threatened. And what do you do when you think you are going to lose your whole heritage, the literary heritage? Why you make certain to archive it, don't you? So maybe what the men of Hezekiah were doing was very carefully writing these things down that they wanted to have preserved in case the Assyrians would take them all away and wipe out their kingdom.

A quick footnote here, which has nothing to do with the Old Testament. You are all aware of the Holocaust and the horrors of the Holocaust and the fact that the Jewish community in Warsaw, the famous Warsaw Ghetto was pretty much wiped out of existence. Now there's a long, long, long story behind all of that. Millions of people gone, but here's the fascinating thing: you had a remarkable cultural center in Warsaw. They were giving symphony concerts in that ghetto because there were so many artistically talented people and the other thing that has happened, it has just come out now. It has been sort of under wraps because the texts were written in Yiddish and Polish, the Warsaw Ghetto Community knew what was going to happen to them. They archived, they wrote their own history of their suffering and their demise. And they hid, hid it under the buildings that were there. And of course those buildings were demolished, this is Warsaw

and only after the war was over were they able to excavate and dig up those things. They've been, as I said in Polish, there in Polish and Yiddish, so they've been archived in Poland. But now they're coming out and it is brilliant historiography. The people that are writing this thing, knowing that their end was forthcoming, were careful to document it. Really careful to document it.

I am suggesting that that's a more contemporary slice of what we see going on in Hezekiah's day. Because they didn't know that God was going to deliver them, God does. Sennacherib doesn't take Jerusalem at that point. Jerusalem is going to fall later on. But perhaps that is what the men of Hezekiah are doing. Well, at any rate, between that time in the fall of the Southern Kingdom in 586 to Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians we have some additions to the book of Proverbs. As I said a moment ago, we don't exactly know when they happened. But that gives us an idea that the Holy Spirit has used a long process to bring this book to us. It's not just Solomon's composition at one point in time.

Nick go ahead [**Student Question**] Should you memorize this chart? The chart will show up again when we start looking at Prophetic literature here. Just know the principle behind it. Okay, so if you want to, think in terms of the span of time. That is what I really want you to see. I want you to see the span of time between Solomon himself and what takes place when these things are copied by the men of Hezekiah. If that helps a little bit.

Okay, we need to carry on--A basic structure of the book of Proverbs. You may be thinking as you dip into Proverbs, "There is no structure here at all." Well, there is. There is and we want to look at it. I should say this by the way: Sitting in the back of the room we have an authority on the book of Proverbs, so I am nervous to be giving this lecture. Dr. Hildebrandt knows Proverbs inside and out. He is not talking up here because he would be doing it in about 6 or 7 lectures.

At any rate we have an introduction. And were going to look at this. So, back to the text again. You know, Proverbs as I have been trying to tell you is an instructional book, it's an educational book. So just like every class this one included has a syllabus that has course objectives, at least every class should have a syllabus that has course objectives.

Basically in verses 2 through 6 we read the course objectives. Let's look at them. Here's your course objectives for the book of Proverbs and that lifelong instructional course. "For attaining wisdom and discipline, for understanding words of insight, for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life." This is a lifelong course, isn't it? As you look at these objectives, doing what is right and just and fair, giving prudence—an interesting word. Do you remember Genesis 3, verse 1 and the serpent who has cleverness, craftiness, *arumim*. The serpent is *arum*. That's this word right here. In this case giving a good sense of how you assess life, cleverness, "prudence to the simple. Knowledge and discretion to the young, let the wise listen and add to their learning. Let the discerning get guidance for understanding proverbs and parables," not only those basic things of life, which are absolutely essential, moving into the more fun parts of the intellectual game— if you will. You know understanding proverbs and parable sayings and riddles of the wise you might say for understanding quantum physics, those things that are just beyond most of our minds. And yet, those who do quantum physics find them wonderful, wonderful explorations in terms of the nature of the universe. So that's our introduction to the book. And it lays out the course of study if you want to think of it that way.

Then we have in chapters one through nine we have a unit that sits by itself. Because the father repeatedly here praises the value of Wisdom. Now, one of the things that we notice in this whole section is, as Rebekah pointed out earlier, warnings against the adulteress. Wisdom as a characteristic is personified by a woman. And if you have read the text you know that. It shows up in several different places in this chapter. But its opposite, Lady Wisdom's opposite is Folly and also in several different places in this chapter we see her coming through with one of her most hideous characteristics and that is the adultery — that she leads people into because folks are so easily trapped by that "stuff." Young men are being warned by the father over and over again, stay away from this. It looks enticing, it looks like something you want, it's going to bring you down to the depths of Sheol. I just want to look at a couple of places in this section, all though I would encourage you to go back to them. Just to see how Lady Wisdom operates, right? Chapter 1, verse 20—

“wisdom,” that’s Lady Wisdom, “calls aloud on the street; she raises her voice in the public squares.” All right, just transfer yourself down to the Boston Commons. Okay, and try to decide if you like this picture of Lady Wisdom on the Boston Commons. “At the head of the noisy street she cries out, on the gateway of the city she makes her speech.” Here comes the speech. Lady Wisdom on her soapbox, right opposite Park Street Church– “How long will you simple ones, love your simple ways? How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge? If you had responded to my rebuke, I would have poured out my heart to you. I would have made my thoughts known to you but since you rejected me when I called, since no one gave heed when I stretched out my voice, since you ignored”- Just sort of an ongoing rejection here, isn’t it? “Since you ignored all of my advice I will laugh at your disaster. I will mock when calamity overtakes you.” Verse 29, “Since they hated knowledge and did not chose to fear the Lord, since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke, they will eat the fruit of their ways, and be filled with the fruit of their schemes. The waywardness of the simple will kill them, the complacency of fools will destroy them.”

Not exactly politically correct, would you say? There’s a very interest commentary on Proverbs, written by, I think it is Kenneth Aiken in the Daily Study Bible series. He takes this passage and says this goes totally contrary to what we in our trying to make God nice, like to think about it. But he says if the Church doesn’t regain a sense of the urgency of this chapter, the church is going to be utterly ineffective. We need to have a sense of urgency for people who are going their ways right on down to the depths of Sheol. So, I just leave that for you.

In a little bit of a different tone that’s picking up on chapter one. Let’s look at chapter 8 because we have wisdom coming through again here. And here there is something quite remarkable happening. Starting with verse 22, that’s the wisdom and creation bit. This is a challenging passage but I want you to just see something as I read parts of it. “The Lord possessed me at the beginning of his work before his deeds of old. I was appointed from eternity. From the beginning before the worlds began” and it describes

wisdom's functions as the whole creative process unfolds and it's a beautiful description.

Alright, "I was there when he set the heavens in place"— Verse 27 "When he established the clouds above"— Verse 28. Now verses 30 and 31, "I was the craftsman at this side" That by the way is masculine singular noun, for those of you that like these kind of things, "I was filled with delight day after day." That happens to be masculine plural verb form. "Rejoicing always in his presence" A feminine singular participle. Isn't this exciting? We are seeing multiplicity in the God head here, reflected just in the verb forms and the noun form with the craftsman. Something about the richness about God the Creator in those participle forms are masculine plural, feminine singular. "Rejoicing always in his presence, rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in human kind." Talking about wisdom's activity with God and creation. In other words, as part of our Trinitarian God. Paul picks up on this in Colossians chapter 1 when he talks about Jesus Christ who is there right at the beginning of creation— before Him, by Him, through Him— all things were created. Paul's going back, I would suggest, to this particular thing.

One more thing that I want to say about chapters 1 through 9, then we have to go streaming right along. We have seen both wisdom and the adulteress in these chapters and now they are brought face to face with each other in chapter 9. Right, face to face with each other: "Wisdom has built her house, hewn out seven pillars, prepared her meat, mixed her wine and she sends out an invitation and she says— let the simple come and eat here, come eat, drink, leave your simple ways— find out what life is all about. Oh, and then she goes onto say, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." That's coming from her mouth. Again personifications.

Dame folly, verse 13 "The woman folly is loud, she is undisciplined and without knowledge, she sits at the door of her house (she doesn't stand, she sits). She calls out to those who pass by." But notice her invitation starts out the same way. Did you notice that when you read it? Dame folly starts out the same way as Lady Wisdom. "Let the simple come in here to those that lack judgment." If we don't have our thinking straight we can be very easily enticed by folly whose going to have a very nice appealing invitation, it is going

to look good on the surface. And we can go through example, example, after example of people that have gone on that track. Thinking it sounded good to start with.

But notice what she goes onto say, “Stolen water is sweet and food eaten in secret is delicious.” In other words, those things that are part and parcel of wrong choices in life— theft, adultery, those are probably being illustrated by the food eaten in secret being delicious. “Little do they know that the dead are there and her guests are in the depths of Sheol.” That pathway down, I know we use the famous slippery slope illustration, but it is there. That pathway down is a slow one and it’s those choices that we make, choice by choice by choice of things that just look enticing, look easy, look like they’re going to satisfy us in a very unsatisfactory way. And of course, the end is a very sobering one. Well we need to go on, that’s the first part.

[Student Question] Yes, does the adultery warning in here have multiple levels of application, is that kind of what you are saying? So it is not only against physical adultery but against idolatry which is adultery? Absolutely. When you look at the marriage covenant made at Sinai, which we have talked about. That’s God and his people and it’s a covenant, it’s a marriage covenant, so idolatry is ripping that apart and likewise Christ and his bride the Church, the same thing for the New Testament believers, absolutely. And Colossians chapter 3 tells us greed is idolatry. There’s all kinds of things that are going to be tearing at those threads that are the fabric of our relationship with Christ, yes— good question.

A couple more things on structure, in chapters 10 through 22 we have primarily single verses that are making points. Now having said that, notice my sub-points here. First of all, as I said a moment ago, well 15 minutes ago, the first 6 chapters, 10 through 15, are lots of antithetical parallelisms that are very, very effective in teaching discernment. I am going to say more about those in a moment.

Right at the beginning of those, isn’t it interesting as you read Chapters 10 through 12— righteousness, righteousness, righteousness. It’s the theme; it’s the steady drumbeat through those chapters. Because that of course is foundational to all the rest of

this teaching. And it is one verse after another that is focusing on that. There are other thematic emphases as well, I just give you one example here and that is in chapter 16. We do see a fairly steady drum beat here on kings and rulers and how they should be functioning. Lovely proverbs in chapters 10 through 22. I encourage you to read a proverb a day for the rest of your lives and just soak it up. Think about it. You're writing papers on one, but of course there are 899 left to go.

Chapters 22:17 through 24:34 are a little bit of a separate kind of a category. And they are the proverbs that are paralleled to a good degree in this Egyptian text that you are reading called the sayings of Amenemope. And formally these are different as well. They're longer, they're not just single verses with this line and this line and then it's kind of over with. They're longer developments. Probably the classic one is the remarkable description of someone that has drank too much. If you haven't come across that yet, go and read it. It's a long description, a sad description.

Well then after chapter 24 we do have further collections of Solomon's proverbs and I mention the fact that they are going to be edited in Hezekiah's time, sayings from these two characters Agur and Lemuel, who are interesting by the way, we don't have time to spend time with them, but they are fascinating.

Then, right at the end of chapter 31, the last 22 verses is our acrostic. If you've been in any kind of woman's seminar or woman's Bible class, no doubt you've had this portion of Scripture held up to you as the ideal. Because of course, this is the virtuous woman: The Eshet Hayal as she's called in Hebrew, who does everything and does it right, her children rise up to call her blessed, she's up early in the morning, she's weaving, spinning, doing everything and not only that, she teaches Torah, faithful instruction, the word is Torah, the word is on her lips and you're thinking, "I can't ever be that." We can aspire to it, but I think there's something bigger going on here and I've tried to note it. In the beginning of this text we saw this sobering emphasis on the adulterous, and folly as an adulterous as well and I would suggest that the closure is designed specifically to be the counter to that. The adulterous is the threat, folly is the threat, she's going to threaten the lives of people who

are God's people. But here's the anecdote, and wisdom is now being personified I would suggest at the end of the book, sure it's something that we women and men by the way, can live up to this too, and I think that comes under the umbrella of seeing this as wisdom at the closure of the book. Now, that's way too fast, but that gives us maybe a little bit of the sense of the structure.

We need to go on, there's still so much to do. This is the fun part of the lecture for today. It really is, and I'm going to tell you a little story to get into this. Years ago, probably 20 years ago, a 6-hour seminar on the book of Proverbs and I thought, "Ah, how am I going to do that!" And it occurred to me that maybe it would be helpful if I could draw some of the proverbs, because they are indeed, when you read these proverbs, a lot of them are just funny, you've got to use your imagination, they are tremendous verbal caricatures. They poke fun at people, like you and me. And so, I thought I can draw some of these proverbs, and if I have somebody to do it for me who's a good artist, that will just make it a wonderful presentation. I went to one of the dear friends, who really is a good artist and I said "Cely I need some help and I explained to her what I needed to have, and she thought for a minute and she looked at me and said "You don't need me to do this, you need to have really bad art, that's going to get the people's attention... you draw it." She's right.

[Laughter] And so I did. And so I've saved those little overhead transparencies for the last 20 years and so I just last fall imported them into my PowerPoint some of them, not all of them. So, you get to look at these and try to figure out what they're saying, alright? This is our little entertainment for the morning. What's the top one? It's a fountain. What do you think the message of Proverbs is? **[Student Response]** We're in spread, yes, that's true, and fountains spread. Somebody look it up real fast. We only want the first half of it, chapter 10 verse 11... Yes, Mary. **[Student Response]** Yes. "The mouth of the righteous is the fountain of life." In other words, someone who is speaking properly is going to spread all the wonderful things that water brings to people. New life, etcetera. That's kind of nice.

How about this one down here? Don't look yet, what do you think it's saying? Okay, I know the art is bad but you can, I mean, please, what is this? **[Student Response]** That's

fire! Splendid. Alright. And before the fire is green stuff and behind it is, scorched earth, right. What does the proverb say? Who's got it? Go ahead Suzanna. Yes, “a scoundrel plots evil and his, or her speech, is like a scorching fire.”

Well you know look at that, it's... Try and use your imagination. If you don't like art, try and make your own. Behind the words of somebody who is intentionally cruel is utter devastation. And you can see that here—scorched, burned up. Lots of things we can say about that.

Want a couple more? You're going to get them whether you like 'em or not. Words not only spread, they penetrate. Proverbs has a lot to say about the power of words, doesn't it? Lots to say. What's happening here? Yeah I know you got the last one but what's this one... this is a little bit... This is bad art, I told you. What's happening? Say it again? The person is eating something. He's supposed to have a little smile on his face. And where's that something landing? His inmost parts. Now, find the Proverb. What does it say? It's 18:8, in case you can't read it. Trevor? Well, that, yes, but you may not be thinking of exactly the same one that this one is. Go ahead Kristen. Yes, did you all hear that? "The words of a gossip are like choice morsels"- oh we just love to hear them, they go down to a person's inmost parts and don't think for a moment that they don't change your perceptions of that person forever. Okay? Words penetrate and they have a remarkable ability to change how we think about people. Notice it is said twice 26 and 22 same thing. Get the picture? Something about this is very, very important to know.

And, the last one. Well, of course what's happening to that poor fellow? **[Student Response]** His innards are being eviscerated by a sword, right. “Reckless words pierce like a sword, reckless words pierce like a sword. But the tongue of the wise brings healing” to the other half of that.

You want a couple more? You're going to get 'em. That one's really bad. Oh, you know this one? **[Student Response]** Like a... it's a pig, that's very good. How do you know it's a pig? It's got a curly tail, yeah. Say it again? **[Student Response]** Chris do you have it? No? Chelsea? Yes, “So a woman without discretion is like a pig with a gold ring in its

snout.”

How about that one? Somebody look up 13:9. Obviously there's a contrast here, isn't there? Because there's a light on the one hand and there's a snuffed-out light on the other. What's the moral lesson? What are we seeing? Who's got it? Mary? **[Student Response]** Yes, "The light of the righteous", my translation says, "shines brightly" but this is fine- what are you reading? **[Student Response]** Oh, okay good. It's probably closer. At any rate, "the lamp of the wicked is snuffed out." So here we go. Shines brightly or rejoices- the lamp of the wicked is snuffed out.

As you read Proverbs I encourage you to do it- draw some of them. You might remember them better. Alright, a couple more things we need to do. Coming back to our definition, when we're talking about preverbal wisdom, it really does involve a chosen lifestyle. And again, this picks right up on our definition, it involves the powers of observation, capacities and intellect to evaluate, and the effort of the will to apply truth: the discipline of applying truth to life in light of experience. That's exactly what we're seeing. We got to use our minds to do it, we have to use our wills to apply it, alright? And, memory. Memorizing scripture is one of the most important things you can do, believe it or not.

Now, a couple more things that we need to go through here. Some related concepts. In Proverbs, you're going to see not only the word "wisdom," you're going to see the following words and oftentimes they are overlapping as part of these synonymous parallelisms in the way they work. "Knowledge," we can spend the rest of our lives learning about what it is that God has created because Solomon, for example, is going to use lots and lots and lots of imagery from the world in which he lives. So it's not just knowledge of God's word, it's knowledge of all of God's truth. "Discipline," a great Hebrew word which can be translated as: instruction, training, reproof, correction or chastisement, it's one word: it's *musar*. But depending on its context it has a really wide range.

But the thing to keep in mind is what I've just told you here. Most of these involve a

little bit of pain of one kind or another. That's part of the learning process. Going through some pain. Whether it's the pain of reproof and the embarrassment of that or the pain of just sitting down and learning something and taking some time to learn it. Or, the outright chastisement of that little figure in the book of Proverbs called the "Rod," because Proverbs has a good deal to say about the "Rod" of discipline... and I don't think it's figurative.

“Understanding,” the Hebrew word for it is a word that means to discern between, *binah* is the word. It comes from the form *bin*, which means between. So *binah* is going to have this sense of figuring out between this option and that one. "Discretion" our proverb that we just looked at--"A woman without discretion..." In other words, the ability to think really carefully and evaluate what's going on and then of course make the right choices as opposed to the wrong ones.

Then here's our *arum* word again. There's a place for being clever and shrewd, lest we get taken in by scam artists. To use a contemporary issue. Okay? You've got to be pretty sharp to avoid those kinds of things.

Well let me take two minutes more of your time and encourage you to read this passage. The bad art has sort of taken the place of reading Proverbs 4:9 but it's a wonderful passage that says, "Embrace wisdom above all else, though it costs you all you have, get wisdom," because wisdom will protect and wisdom will guide. Now, I'm going to stop with that. You've got two more things in your lecture outline but they are self-explanatory. One talks about the biblical words for “fools” and that's where Dr. Wilson's book comes in eminently handy because he lays them all out for you so you can know those. And then finally, the last thing talks about conceptual parallelisms. Parallelism on a big scene, not just two lines but the conceptual parallelism between humility and pride, drunkenness and sobriety, truth, falsehood, etcetera, etcetera. So look at those and you'll be in fine shape. And, Lord willing, we're going to do Job on Wednesday. Again, in one day it's a travesty.