

# **Dr. August Konkell, Proverbs, Session 2, Purpose of Proverbs, Exordium to Proverbs 1 Podcast Audio Overview**

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All right, everybody. Welcome back. Today, we're going to be taking a deep dive into the book of Proverbs.

Now, I know what you might be thinking. Proverbs, isn't that like all about a penny saved is a penny earned and stuff? But let me tell you, there's a lot more to it than meets the eye. We've got some seriously insightful stuff from Dr. August Konkell, who has really dug deep into this book.

And what we're going to be exploring today is not just the content of these Proverbs, but also who this book was really written for and what its purpose is. Yeah. Yeah.

One of the things that I find really fascinating about Proverbs is the way it's structured. It's not just one long lecture. Right, right.

It's got all these different sections. You've got the Proverbs of Solomon. You've got the Words of the Wise.

You've even got stuff from Agur and King Lemuel's mom. King Lemuel's mom. Yeah.

She gets a whole section in there. That's amazing. It's kind of cool, right? It's like they just gathered all these little nuggets of wisdom from different sources and kind of put them all together in this almost like a wisdom library.

That's a great way to put it. A wisdom library. Yeah.

So it's not this daunting, massive scroll that you've got to decipher. Exactly. I can dip in.

I can find what I need. Right, right. You can browse.

Browse the shelves. Now, speaking of dipping in, one of the things that Dr. Konkell emphasizes is this idea of the fear of the Lord as the foundation of wisdom. I think for a lot of us, when we hear fear of the Lord, we might think of fire and brimstone and judgment and all that kind of stuff.

Right. But that's not really what we're talking about here, is it? No, no, not at all. I think a better way to understand it is like, think about Isaiah's vision of God.

Oh, yeah. Where he's completely overwhelmed and cries out, "Woe is me." Yeah.

It's about recognizing that there is a power and wisdom that is way bigger than us. Right. And that's where true wisdom begins.

It's recognizing that we don't have all the answers. So it's not so much terror as it is like awe. Yeah.

Awe. Like a deep respect. Exactly.

Recognizing that there's something much greater than ourselves at play. Yeah. And that we need to kind of lean on that.

Lean on that. Yeah. So when Isaiah freaks out seeing God, that's kind of the fear that we're talking about.

Right. Right. It's that sense of, like, whoa, I am not in control here.

Okay. All right. So that makes a lot more sense.

So we've got this idea of the fear of the Lord as the foundation, but then who are these wise folks that Proverbs keeps talking about? Yeah. Is it just like this elite group of geniuses? Well, you know, Dr. Konkel actually makes a distinction between different kinds of wise people. Okay.

So you've got the ones who actually wrote the Proverbs, right? Okay. So the original sages. Yeah.

The OG wise people. And then you've got those who study them. Right.

Like us. Exactly. Like all of us listening right now, we're engaging with this wisdom.

Trying to be wise. Exactly. But then you also have the, you know, those who reject wisdom altogether.

The fools. Right. The fools.

But here's the thing. And this is, I think, really encouraging. Proverbs isn't just for, like, you know, the super intelligent elite.

Okay. It's for anyone who's open to learning and applying these, like, nuggets of wisdom. So it's more about a willingness to learn than it is about, like, your inherent IQ.

Exactly. It's about your posture. Are you open? Are you humble? Are you willing to learn? So it's almost like Proverbs is specifically speaking to those who are still figuring things out.

Oh, absolutely. In fact, you know, it even uses terms like gullible. Gullible.

Okay. Yeah. To describe its target audience.

I mean, let's be real. We've all been there. We've all been there.

Making those rookie mistakes. But Proverbs is there to kind of guide us through those early stages. Okay.

So being wise isn't about having all the answers. It's more about being humble, open to learning, and willing to put in the work. Exactly.

But what about intelligence? Does Proverbs just throw smarts out the window? Not necessarily. Actually, one of the ways Proverbs defines fools is that they lack more than just intelligence. Okay.

They lack a moral compass. So it's not just about being clever. It's about having a solid ethical foundation.

Exactly. You can be smart, but if you don't have that moral grounding, you're going to make bad decisions. Exactly.

Yeah. And I think there's a proverb, isn't there, that says something like there's a way that seems right to a person, but its end is death. Yeah.

Proverbs 14.12. It's a powerful reminder that our own reasoning can be flawed. Right. And it ties back to that fear of the Lord idea.

Right. Recognizing that there's a higher standard of right and wrong. Exactly.

True wisdom comes from aligning ourselves with that higher standard. So it's not just about what seems good to us in the moment, but about what ultimately leads to life and flourishing. Precisely.

And that's a concept that has implications for all areas of our lives, from our relationships to our work to how we handle our money. But I think maybe before we dive into all that, it's good to just pause for a second. Yeah.

Let all this sink in a little bit. Okay. So we've talked about the foundation of wisdom, that fear of the Lord, and how Proverbs is for everyone.

But how does all this ancient wisdom actually play out in our lives today? How do we take these Proverbs and make them work for us in the 21st century? Yeah. That's the million-dollar question. Right.

Right. And one of the things that really struck me as I was going through Proverbs is how practical it is. Okay.

There's so much advice in there about work, relationships, money, you name it. It's almost like a life coach in a book. So it's not just like these lofty philosophical ideas.

No, not at all. It gets down to the nitty-gritty. Okay.

Well, give me an example. What's one area where Proverbs gets really practical? Well, one that comes to mind is the contrast between diligence and laziness. Oh yeah.

I've seen those Proverbs on all those motivational posters, right? Exactly. Go to the ant, you sluggard. That's the one.

But what's the deeper message behind that? Well, I think it's more than just working hard for the sake of working hard. Proverbs actually connects diligence with prudence, foresight, and ultimately success. There's this one verse, Proverbs 21.5, that says, "The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty."

So it's not just about grinding it out. It's about being smart about it too. Yeah, exactly.

Having a plan, thinking things through, being intentional. And that makes me think of another proverb about seeking wise counsel. Right.

Proverbs 15.22, without counsel, plans fail, but with many advisors, they succeed. It's like you can't do it all on your own. Exactly.

You need that outside perspective. You need people to challenge you, to help you see things from a different angle. Yeah.

And that ties back to humility, doesn't it? A wise person is willing to admit they don't know everything. Absolutely. They're eager to learn from others.

So it's not about having all the answers. It's about being open to learning and growing, even if that means asking for help. Exactly.

And, you know, this actually leads us to another really fascinating dimension of wisdom in Proverbs. It's focus on relationships. Oh, yeah.

Proverbs has a lot to say about that. It does. And it's not just about romantic relationships either.

It talks about friendships, family relationships, even dealing with difficult people. Well, give me an example. Like, what's a proverb that really stands out to you in that area? Okay.

This one always gets me. Proverbs 18.24. A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. Oh, yeah.

That's a good one. It's like, it's not about having a ton of friends. It's about having those deep, meaningful connections.

Exactly. Quality over quantity. And then on the flip side, Proverbs also warns against, like, gossip and slander.

Right. Proverbs 16.28. A perverse person stirs up conflict, and a gossip separates close friends. Ooh, that's a convicting one, especially in today's world where it's so easy to spread rumors online.

It is. Words have power, and we need to use them carefully. So it's not just about avoiding gossip.

It's about actively building others up with our words. Yes. And, you know, speaking of building others up, Proverbs also talks a lot about generosity and compassion.

Oh, yeah. There are some great Proverbs about giving to the poor. Right.

Like Proverbs 22.9. Whoever has a bountiful eye will be blessed, for he shares his bread with the poor. It's not just about looking out for number one. It's about caring for others.

Exactly. And it's not always easy. No, definitely not.

Especially when we see people making choices that, like, we don't agree with. Right. But even then, Proverbs challenges us to be compassionate.

Proverbs 24.17 says, Do not gloat when your enemy falls. When he stumbles, do not let your heart rejoice. OK, that one's tough.

It's like so easy to get that I told you so feeling. It is. But Proverbs is calling us to a higher standard, to have empathy and understanding even for our enemies.

So it's about recognizing that we're all human. We all make mistakes. Exactly.

We all need grace. And, you know, this actually connects to another really important theme in Proverbs. Self-control.

Oh, yeah. Self-control. That's a big one.

It is. And it's not just about, like, saying no to that extra slice of cake. It's about mastering our emotions, our desires, our reactions.

As Proverbs 16.32 says, Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city. It's a powerful image, right? It is. It's like conquering yourself is even more challenging than conquering a city.

Exactly. And Proverbs emphasizes this in all areas of life, from our relationships to our finances to our physical health. It's about making choices that are in line with our long-term goals, even when it's hard.

So it's about playing the long game, not just going for the quick fix. Exactly. And this brings us back full circle to that foundation of wisdom, the fear of the Lord.

Right. Recognizing that we are accountable to something greater than ourselves. Yes.

It's about living with purpose, integrity, knowing that our choices have eternal consequences. Wow. This has been such an eye-opening exploration of Proverbs.

It's incredible how these ancient teachings are still so relevant today. It is. And it's a reminder that wisdom isn't something we just acquire overnight.

It's a lifelong pursuit. A journey. Exactly.

A journey of learning, growing, and applying these timeless principles to our lives. Well said. And speaking of applying these principles, there's one area I'd love to dig into a little bit more.

Proverbs has a lot to say about food and drink, doesn't it? Oh yeah, it does. And I think there's some really interesting stuff there, especially in light of our modern-day obsession with food and indulgence. Okay.

Well, let's dive into that. Okay. So Proverbs and food, where do we even begin? Well, there's that one about honey.

Oh yeah. Proverbs 25.16. If you find honey, eat just enough. Too much of it and you will vomit.

I mean, talk about a vivid image. It's like Proverbs doesn't shy away from the good stuff. No, it embraces the measures of life.

But it also knows when to pump the brakes. Exactly. It's about balance.

Enjoy the honey, but don't overdo it. Right. And I think that applies to so much more than just food.

Oh, absolutely. Like money, possessions, even relationships. Yeah.

It's like anything that has the potential to take over. Consume you. Exactly.

Proverbs is saying, "Hey, enjoy these things, but don't let them control you. It's about being in the driver's seat." Yes.

Making intentional choices, aligning your actions with your values. So it's not about deprivation. No, not at all.

It's about finding that sweet spot. Exactly. And that sweet spot might look different for everyone.

Right. What's just enough honey for me might be way too much for you. Exactly.

It's about knowing yourself, knowing your limits, and having the self-control to stop before you go overboard. And that takes us back to, like, that whole idea of the fear of the Lord, doesn't it? It does. Because when you have that foundation, when you recognize that you're accountable to something greater than yourself.

It gives you a different perspective. It does. You're less likely to get swept away by those, you know, those cravings or those impulses.

You're playing the long game. Exactly. All right.

But I think it's important to acknowledge that, you know, living out the wisdom of Proverbs, it's not always easy. Oh, yeah, for sure. I mean, life happens.

We make mistakes. We fall short. Right.

But I think that's where the encouragement of Proverbs really comes in. Okay. How so? Well, it's like Proverbs acknowledges our humanity.

It doesn't expect us to be perfect. Okay. So it's not about beating ourselves up when we mess up.

No, it's about grace. It's about getting back up and trying again. Like Proverbs is the ultimate cheerleader for those of us who are, you know, still figuring things out.

Exactly. It's like, hey, you trip. It happens.

Dust yourself off. Learn from it. Keep moving.

Love that. So it's not about perfection. It's about persistence.

Exactly. And remembering that wisdom is a journey, not a destination. It's something you cultivate over a lifetime.

Right. Every experience, every decision, every, you know, every little bit of honey you encounter along the way. It's a chance to grow.

It is. All right. Well, I think that about wraps up our deep dive into Proverbs.

Wow. From the purpose of the book to practical tips on everything from diligence to relationships and even honey consumption. We covered a lot of ground.

We did. And I have to say, I feel like I've learned a lot. Me too.

And I hope our listeners have as well. You know, Proverbs is such a rich and rewarding book. It is.

And I think the more we dig into it, the more we'll discover it's like timeless wisdom and how it can really apply to our lives today. Exactly. So to everyone listening, don't let this be the end of your exploration of Proverbs.

Yeah. Keep seeking that wisdom. Absolutely.

And until next time, thanks for joining us on this deep dive. See you all next time.