

Proverbs: Lessons from God's World (Proverbs 25:1–28)

Author: Dr. August Konkel

Session 15

Sponsored by Biblicalelearning.org by Ted Hildebrandt

Keywords

Proverbs 25, Hezekiah, Solomon, wisdom, humility, dispute resolution, self-control, slander, confidentiality, mercy

Abstract

In this lecture, Dr. August Konkel examines Proverbs chapter 25, focusing on the collection transcribed by King Hezekiah's scribes nearly 250 years after Solomon. He contrasts the mystery of divine knowledge and the vast universe with the practical, limited perspective of human understanding. The lesson highlights the order of a good society, emphasizing genuine character, personal humility, cautious dispute resolution, and self-control. Ultimately, Dr. Konkel demonstrates how discretion, well-timed words, and showing mercy to adversaries serve as essential protections for healthy relationships and peaceful communities.

Outline

I. Introduction to the Collection of Hezekiah (Proverbs 25:1)

- A. Context of Proverbs collections associated with royal courts
- B. Transcription by Hezekiah's men (~700 BC), roughly 250 years after Solomon's era (~931 BC)
- C. Character and scope of Hezekiah's thematic compilation compared to Solomon's 375 proverbs

II. The Order of a Good Society: Divine Knowledge and Human Governance (Proverbs 25:2–7)

- A. The mystery of divine knowledge and human limitations
 - 1. Human scientific observation vs. cosmic vastness (e.g., Hawking, Einstein, Psalm 19)
 - 2. The glory of God in concealing mysteries, prompting humble human exploration
- B. The king's capacity, discernment, and unsearchable mind
 - 1. Discerning interpersonal matters vs. inscrutability of royal thoughts
- C. Refining character and practicing humility
 - 1. Smelting dross from silver to purify society and establish moral dignity
 - 2. Warning against self-promotion; accepting lower places to avoid humiliation

III. Resolving Disputes and the Power of Communication (Proverbs 25:8–15)

- A. Caution, privacy, and confidentiality in conflict
 - 1. Risks of hasty litigation; preference for direct, private reconciliation and mediation (aligning with Jesus' teaching)
 - 2. Intimacy of divine knowledge (Psalm 139) requiring self-examination of motives

3. Duty of preserving confidentiality during personal disagreements
- B. Constructive speech, fitly spoken words, and appropriate correction
 1. Well-timed words ("apples of gold in settings of silver" / "words on wheels")
 2. Timely and understandable correction valued above superficial compliments or destructive criticism
 3. The medium as the message (Marshall McLuhan)—communicating to strengthen relationships

IV. Practical Wisdom for Daily Relationships and Personal Conduct (Proverbs 25:16–28)

- A. Moderation and relational boundaries
 1. Exercising caution when making promises, especially to children
 2. Practicing social moderation to avoid overstaying welcome with neighbors
- B. Overcoming hostility and verbal corruption
 1. Responding to enemies with unexpected mercy ("heaping coals of fire")
 2. Destructive nature of slander—mixing truth with deceptive omission to cause harm
- C. Domestic tranquility, good news, and personal self-control
 1. Priority of a contented home over a wealthy, contentious household
 2. Refreshing impact of long-awaited good news
 3. Uncontrolled emotion like a city broken down without protective walls