

Cornhill Scotland Book in a Day:

Proverbs

Session 1: Who is Proverbs for?

Discussion:

Let's begin by setting the scene. What have you heard about the book of Proverbs? What kind of a book is it? Have you read it recently? And if you did, what did you especially enjoy? What makes Proverbs a difficult book to read? What makes it a difficult book to teach?

Introduction

a. An under-appreciated book

- i. A not-especially-wise book?
 - "Wisdom literature"
 - Proverbs 30
 - "Axiom"
- ii. A not-very-easy book
 - A book that isn't very easy to read
 - A book that isn't very easy to preach

b. An agenda for today: to persuade you that this book might be quite useful for us

- Useful to *read*
- Useful to *teach*

The aim of this session is to get clear on who Proverbs is for... and how that makes it for us.

But where should we start?

1. A Book to Make You **Wise**

Groupwork:

Read through Proverbs 1:1-7, which many describe as the prologue to the book of Proverbs. How does this opening paragraph introduce what follows? What does the book promise? What do you think it means? Why should anyone want to read it?

a. A clear agenda

1:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

b. A clear starting point

1:7

c. A clear context

1:1

1:3

d. A clear method

1:2, 1:6

But what does that mean?

2. A Book to Make _____ Wise

*The big question: **who** needs this wisdom?*

What kind of wisdom are we talking about?

Who is this book best for?

Groupwork:

Skim through the book. Can you find any more titles like 1:1? Make a note of them here:

What do those titles suggest about the book?

Now skim through chapters 1-9, 22-24 and 31. Jot down every reference you can to 'my son.'

Who is addressing this son? What might you conclude about who the book is for?

Now look more carefully at 1:1-7, 1:20-33, 9:1-18. What do these passages add to our perception of who this sort of book might be for?

a. A starter for 10: Proverbs is for the **simple**

b. Pushing a bit harder: Proverbs is for **sons**

i. A very rough (and uncontroversial) structure of Proverbs

Structural Marker	Section	Working Title
		Instructions
		Solomon I
		Words of the wise
		More words of the wise
		Solomon II
		Agur
		Lemuel

ii. A shape to the book

Chapters 1-9: From a father to his son(s)

Chapters 10-22: The proverbs of Solomon

Chapters 22-24: From a father to his son again

Chapters 25-29: More proverbs of Solomon

Chapter 31: From a mother to her son

iii. The obvious point: Proverbs is for **sons**

But that raises the question: what kind of 'son'?

c. Proverbs is for **Israelite** sons

i. Imagery

Groupwork:

Look up Proverbs 4:1-4, 6:20-24 and 7:1-5 and compare them with Deuteronomy 4:1-10, 6:1-9, 8:5-6 and 11:18-21. What do you notice about the similarities? If this is the father-son relationship in view, what does it mean for the target audience of Proverbs?

ii. Structure

Exhortation to hear and obey	Commandments/proverbs	Eschatological conclusion
Deuteronomy 1-11	Deuteronomy 12-28	Deuteronomy 29-34
Proverbs 1-9	Proverbs 10-29	Proverbs 30-31

iii. Context

Deuteronomy 4:6; 6:20-25; 32:6, 21, 28, 29

OK, so that's quite straightforward then. And **this**: *Hear, My Son: Teaching and Learning in Proverbs 1-9* NSBT 4 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1997).

But wait!

d. Proverbs is for **royal** sons

Groupwork:

From the skimming we've already done, what hints have we had that Proverbs might be interested in training princes? What difference does that make to how we think about its wisdom?

i. The Headings

1:1, 10:1, 25:1, 31:1

ii. The promise

o Righteousness, justice and equity

1:3

2:9

- o Proverbs 8

iii. The plot

"In the first eight chapters of Proverbs, two women are presented: Dame Folly and Lady Wisdom. The Prince, Solomon's son, must decide which he will embrace as his bride. At the end of the book, we learn that the Prince has resisted the temptations of Dame Folly. Proverbs 31 describes the superhuman labors of the "excellent wife," and we know the Prince has chosen well, for he has made Lady Wisdom his queen."¹

A callow young prince, needing to choose between two consorts (1-9)



The proverbs (10-29)

A king, who has made wisdom his wife (31)²

c. Having your cake and eating it

i. A Royal Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy 17

ii. Which means that this is a book for **Israelites**...

- o The Israelite King as an ideal Israelite
- o The 'Son' and 'sons' in Proverbs 1-9
- o Proverbs and the internalization of the Law

iii. But it really is a book about **rule**

- o What a human being is...
- o ... but especially the wisdom of kings

Discussion: How does all this orientation help explain the value of learning from Proverbs? What are the big things we should be praying as we come to it? Why might we want to keep coming back to it?

iv. A book about **ministry** (and how not to wreck it)

¹ From Peter Leithart's *Wise Words*, quoted on *The Gospel Coalition* website.
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/the-dramatic-structure-of-proverbs/> Accessed 07/06/2018.

² The astute amongst you will have noticed that this doesn't account for chapter 30. We'll come back to this. One of the things that we'll want to notice is that Proverbs 30-31 pair well with Proverbs 1-9 as a whole.

Session 2: What kind of wisdom does Proverbs teach?

Discussion:

Have a think about the following statements. Which of them have you heard before? Which of them are true? Which of them are helpful for understanding Proverbs? Why might people think them?

"Proverbs is basically like a fireside chat."

"Wisdom is about living life skilfully."

"Hebrew wisdom is essentially about EQ."

"Wisdom is essentially about the choice between the fear of the LORD and idolatry."

"Proverbs is full of rules of thumb: generally true principles for living the good life."

"The closing chapters of Proverbs reveal the book's inadequacy. Rules about cutlery and contradictory proverbs about fools are so banal."

Introduction

a. What we've seen already:

- i. A book to make sons wise
- ii. A book to make *us* wise

b. What we need to address now

- a. What do we mean by *wise*?
- b. And how does that shape the book?

The aim of this session is to get clear on what 'wisdom' Proverbs teaches – and why we might need it.

1. The Flavours of Wisdom in Proverbs

Groupwork:

Go back to 1:1-7, and reread it. Think about what these verses lead us to expect about the wisdom that the book is going to teach us. What are the main synonyms for wisdom here? Are there any clues about the content of wisdom? Does anything in these verses look like a definition of wisdom?

Now imagine that you had to define the sort of wisdom Proverbs teaches by dipping into some of the material. Take a look at the following passages. What might they lead you to conclude about what wisdom is? Can you fill out the table below?

Passage	3:1-10	7:1-27	9:1-18	15:20-33	24:3-20	29:1-26	30:1-19
Wisdom is...							

a. A starter for 10: Proverbs is not all the same

- i. Different genres
 - Instructions: "Hear, my son..."
 - 'Enconia'
 - Sentence proverbs
 - Antithetical proverbs
 - Non-antithetical proverbs
 - Acrostic compositions
 - Numerical sayings

... that fit into 2 main types

- Extended poems
- Sentence proverbs

But it's worth noticing that different types of writing do different things...

- ii. Because it is actually teaching different types of wisdom

Groupwork:

Compare Proverbs 1:20-33 with Proverbs 15:20-33. Imagine that you were asked to give a talk on each of these passages: which would be easier to write a talk on? How hard do you have to think to understand the basic thrust of each passage?

- Sometimes the choice between wisdom and folly is a basic matter of orientation
 - Fear of the LORD vs. idolatry
"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Proverbs 1:7)
 - Faithfulness vs. adultery
"Say to wisdom, "You are my sister," and call insight your intimate friend, to keep you from the strange woman, from the foreign woman with her smooth words." (Proverbs 7:4-5)
- Sometimes the choice between wisdom and folly is a matter of humility and pride
 - "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."
(Proverbs 16:18)
 - "Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him." (Proverbs 26:12)
 - "If you have been foolish, exalting yourself, or if you have been devising evil, put your hand on your mouth." (Proverbs 30:32)
- Sometimes the choice between wisdom and folly is a matter of goodness vs. wickedness
 - "Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the LORD understand it completely." (Proverbs 28:5)

"Like a roaring lion or a charging bear is a wicked ruler over a poor people."
(Proverbs 28:15)

- Sometimes the choice between wisdom and folly is a choice between acting with sense and being an idiot
"Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding." (Proverbs 17:27)
"A brother offended is more unyielding than a strong city, and quarrelling is like the bars of a castle." (Proverbs 18:19)
- Sometimes the choice between wisdom and folly is about having the courage to act in a difficult world
"If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small. Rescue those who are being taken away to death; hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter. If you say, "Behold, we did not know this," does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it, and will he not repay man according to his work." (Proverbs 24:10-12)

So I think we should be suspicious of any attempts to reduce it all down to one of these types:

"Wisdom is basically EQ"

"Wisdom is a matter of rules of thumb"

"Wisdom is basically the choice between the fear of the LORD and idols"

iii. And wisdom isn't always about choosing to do the right thing

1. *Many Proverbs can be converted into rules*

13:1: A wise son hears a father's instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.

14:7: Leave the presence of a fool, for there you do not meet words of knowledge.

2. *But many can't be converted into rules*

13:7: One pretends to be rich, yet has nothing; another pretends to be poor, yet has great wealth.

13:8: The ransom of a man's life is his wealth, but a poor man hears no threat.

17:8: A bribe is like a magic stone in the eyes of the one who gives it; wherever he turns, he prospers.

19:7: All a poor man's brothers hate him; how much more do his friends go far from him!

3. *In other words, this is about learning to think / to understand, not just learning to do*

So how do we make sense of this? And what does it have to do with Proverbs' agenda?

2. A reminder from the start of the book: wisdom is for kings

a. The hints in Proverbs

- "Righteousness, justice and equity"
- "Solomon, the Son of David, the King of Israel"
 - 10:1
 - 25:1
 - 31:1
- Proverbs 8

b. An initial sounding from Kings: what did wisdom help Solomon do?

Groupwork:

Read 1 Kings 3. What does the chapter teach us about **why** kings need wisdom? How does the end of the chapter show us what wisdom is able to do?

3. A clue from the structure of the book: an overview of kingship

a. The data

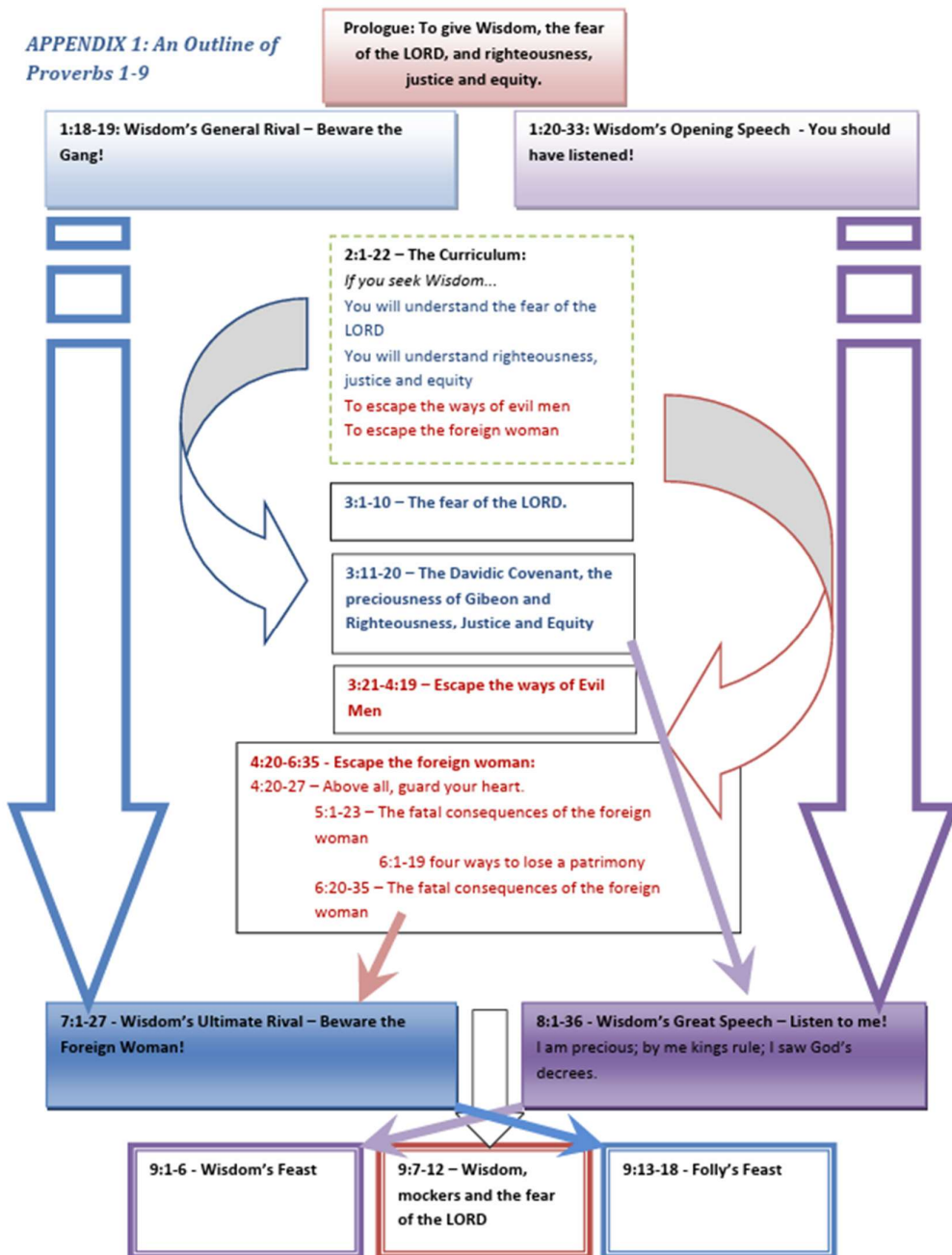
- i. Three **kingly** titles
 - **David** and Solomon
 - **Solomon**
 - Solomon, collected by the men of **Hezekiah**
- ii. A prophetic, "kingless" chapter 30

b. What the named kings have in common

- i. Three famously wise fathers
- ii. With three famously foolish sons
- iii. In this order
 - David
 - Solomon
 - (Rehoboam)
 - Hezekiah
 - (Manasseh)

c. Where the three named kings differ: three different ways to lose the kingdom

1. David to Solomon: choose faithfulness not adultery, the fear of the LORD not idolatry



- The basic choice
- The main villain(ness): **the foreign woman**

2. Solomon to Rehoboam: don't be an idiot!

10:1-12:28	A wise son	Righteousness and wickedness
13:1-15:19	A wise son	Wisdom and folly
15:20-17:1	A wise son	Humility, counsellors and answering well
17:2-24	A shameful son	Folly, fighting and mockery
17:25-19:12	A foolish son	Fools, pride, quarrels and speech
19:13-25	A foolish son	Counsel and discipline
19:26-22:16	A shameful son	Quite a lot of stuff, but ending with foreign women, foolish children and oppressing the poor

(An interlude: learn to be wise, and your hope won't be cut off)

23:17-18; 24:14

3. Hezekiah to Manasseh: don't be wantonly wicked!

Proverbs 28-29

3. Drawing things together

a. An overview of Davidic wisdom

David to Solomon	Proverbs 1-9
Solomon to Rehoboam	Proverbs 10-22
In the light of the divided kingdom (positive)	Proverbs 22-24
In the light of the divided kingdom (negative)	Proverbs 24b
Hezekiah to Manasseh	Proverbs 25-29
Exile	Proverbs 30
Beyond?	Proverbs 31

b. (At least) 3 ways to lose a kingdom

- The Solomon way
- The Rehoboam way
- The Manasseh way

c. What wisdom is: what you need to build the kingdom

- A basic choice of orientation
- The ability to understand people and judge rightly
- Rejecting wickedness as a way to get things done
- A basic self-knowledge
 - Your limits
 - Humility

d. Why this is helpful to us: how **not** to wreck your ministry

Session 3: How does Proverbs teach wisdom?

Discussion:

Have you ever heard any of Proverbs taught before? Which bit did you hear? Which bit would you most like to teach? Which bit would you find hardest.

Introduction: why is Proverbs in proverbs?

- a. Teaching Proverbs: the 'easy' bit and 'Solomon's wall'
- b. Poetry and Proverbs
 - i. What Proverbs is
 - ii. What the prologue tells us to expect
- c. What Proverbs is and what we want

So why is Proverbs in proverbs?

The aim of this session is to understand *how* the genre of Proverbs actually teaches us to be wise.

1. Hebrew Parallelism and the Solo Proverb

- a. How parallelism works³
 - Something about A, something about B
 - A *means* B?
 - A < B (or better: "A, what's more, B")
 - Grammar and syntax
 - Vocabulary

And especially:

- Meaning
- b. Parallelism and Proverbs
 - Parallelism and memory?
 - Proverbs, Parallelism and *thinking*
 - A < B and *tasty* proverbs
 - When A isn't < B

³ If you're interested in thinking more about the way parallelism works, a good starting point is *The Art of Biblical Poetry* by Robert Alter. Alter isn't a Christian, so if you read this book, you shouldn't expect it to be friendly to Christian OT interpretation. But it is all in English, and it's a good introduction to Hebrew poetry. He knows his stuff. And he's a good exegete, and he's done lots of interesting work on OT translation.

Groupwork:

Think about some of these proverbs:

- 11:8: The righteous is delivered from trouble,
and the wicked walks into it instead.
- 11:10: When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices,
and when the wicked perish there are shouts of gladness.
- 11:14: Where there is no guidance, a people falls,
But in an abundance of counsellors there is safety.
- 12:1: Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge,
but he who hates reproof is stupid.
- 12:10: Whoever is righteous has regard for the life of his beast,
but the mercy of the wicked is cruel.
- 13:17: A wicked messenger falls into trouble,
but a faithful envoy brings healing.
- 15:2: A soft answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger.
- 15:8: The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD,
but the prayer of the upright is acceptable to him.

How do the comparisons between A and B encourage reflection? Can you see any of the A < B pattern?

The punchline: These paralleled proverbs are thoughtful – and they train you to think.

c. Disjointed (or Gapped) Proverbs⁴

A disjointed proverb is a one where A and B don't initially seem to match – for example:

The righteous hates falsehood (lit: a deceitful word),
But the wicked brings shame and disgrace.

- **Righteous** and **wicked** are obviously opposites
- But a **deceitful word** and **shame and disgrace** aren't
 - One is a description of bad behaviour
 - The other is a consequence / outcome

So, there's an implication that requires reflection:

- **The wicked** love a **deceitful word**, and that in turn **brings shame and disgrace**
- **The righteous** hate a **deceitful word**, and consequently avoid **shame and disgrace**

⁴ This phrase (and lots of the following examples) is borrowed from Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 10-31*, Anchor. Like Alter, Fox is a Jewish commentator (so certainly not an evangelical). He's not interested in the big picture (I am), and he's not interested in Jesus (I am!), but... on the stuff we're thinking about this week – how to read individual proverbs and small sets – he's probably the best out there.

But, that requires you to supply a connection that isn't initially there – in other words, it requires you to *think*.

"If read carefully, then, the gapped proverbs not only transmit packets of truths, they *train* the reader in a mode of thinking: identifying behaviours, and associating them with their consequences. In other words, they train the reader to think like a sage."⁵

Groupwork:

Pick as many of the following proverbs as you have time to think through:

10:13: On the lips of him who has understanding, wisdom is found,
but a rod is for the back of him who lacks sense.

12:11: Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread,
but he who follows worthless pursuits lacks sense.

12:20: Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil,
but those who plan peace have joy.

13:19: A desire fulfilled is sweet to the soul,
but to turn away from evil is an abomination to fools.

14:17: A man of quick temper acts foolishly,
and a man of evil devices is hated.

27:6: Faithful are the wounds of a friend,
profuse are the kisses of an enemy.

28:25: A greedy man stirs up strife,
but the one who trusts in the LORD will be enriched.

What's the "mismatch" between A and B? How should we fill out A and B to make them match? Is there anything else "smart" or playful that is going on in terms of the connections in this proverb?

Revisiting the prologue – *words* and wisdom

The point: the individual proverbs train you to think.

- *You won't make any headway with Proverbs until you take the time to take the individual proverbs seriously...*
- *... and taking the individual proverbs seriously is going to require a bit of thought.*

But is that all there is to it?

⁵ Fox, 498.

2. Proverb Pairs and Clusters

a. Is there arrangement in Proverbs 10-29?

- No, not at all!
- Yes, intricately, everywhere (e.g. Skehan)
- Yes, everything in Proverbs is sectioned up into 8-15 verse units (Waltke, Garrett, Murphy, Koptak, Lucas)
- Yes, but only at the micro level, and not all the time (e.g. Fox)
- Yes, at the micro level and also at the macro level – but maybe not in between (e.g. Ansberry)

b. What everyone agrees on: proverb pairs

E.g. 26:4-5

Answer not a fool according to his folly,
Lest you be like him yourself.
Answer a fool according to his folly,
Lest he be wise in his own eyes.

E.g. 18:10-11

The name of the LORD is a strong tower,
The righteous man runs into it and is safe.
The rich man's wealth is his strong city,
And like a high wall in his imagination.

E.g. 15:8-9

The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD,
but the prayer of the upright is acceptable to him.
The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD,
but He loves him who pursues righteousness.

The point of proverb pairs

Memory?

Connection (i.e. *thinking*)

Nuance

Joined-up life

Groupwork:

Look at the following proverb pairs:

14:20-21; 14:29-30; 16:18-19; 18:18-19; 21:30-31; 25:11-12; 25:13-14; 25:16-17; 25:25-26; 27:5-6

How do the two proverbs in each pair work together? What do you get from having a proverb pair that you wouldn't necessarily get if you just had one of them (think in terms of either nuance, or joined-up-ness, or both)?

The point: paired proverbs train you to think.

c. Proverb Clusters

Some examples:

- Generosity (11:24-28)
- The heart (15:11-15)
- The LORD (16:1-9)
- The King (16:10-15)
- The Fool (26:1-12)
- The Sluggard (26:13-16)

The point of proverb clusters

Memory?

Big picture scene-changing?

16:1-15

Connection

Group Work:

Look more closely at 26:1-12, and try to think...

What do you get by having all these proverbs about the fool in a cluster that you wouldn't get if they were scattered apart?

Can you see any smaller scale connections between the proverbs in this cluster?

Why do you think the list ends with 26:12?

What is 26:2 doing there? How does it reinforce the point of that particular proverb? Look at 11:22. How does the placement of that proverb have a similar effect?

Summary: The point of connections in proverbs

The point: clustered proverbs train you to think.

d. Proverb 'paragraphs'

These are distinct from 'clusters' of proverbs – because unlike clusters they're not straightforwardly on **one** theme.

Nevertheless, commentators (e.g. Waltke, Lucas, Garrett, Koptak, Murphy) argue that the sentence proverbs are *grouped* into little sets that are connected by chiasms, hookwords, inclusios etc.

E.g. 10:1-5

A wise **son** makes a glad father, but a foolish **son** is a sorrow to his mother.

Treasures gained by wickedness *do not profit*, but righteousness delivers from death.

The LORD does not let the righteous go hungry, but he thwarts the craving of the wicked.

A slack hand causes *poverty*, but the hand of the diligent makes *rich*.

He who gathers in summer is a prudent **son**, but he who sleeps in harvest is a **son** who brings shame.

Groupwork:

One little 'gathering' of proverbs that a number of the commentaries think is a set is Proverbs 14:8-15. Can you see why they think this?

Can you spot any other similar 'sets' in the chapter?

Think about the implications of this level of structuring...

... what might make you (or anyone else, for that matter) suspicious about these sorts of sets?

... what might make it a bit more believable?

Conclusion: *How Proverbs works*

a. How the introduction works – and why we need that

b. How the sentence proverbs work – and why we need that too

Session 4: When will we learn to be wise?

Introduction: what we've seen so far

- a. Who Proverbs is for: Israelite **sons** and a royal **Son** who want wisdom to build a house
- b. What Proverbs offers: **wisdom** to keep you from making a wreck of your house...
 - i. Wisdom instead of idolatry and adultery (don't be Solomon!)
 - ii. Wisdom instead of stupidity and strife (don't be Rehoboam!)
 - Wisdom to act
 - Wisdom to *judge*
 - iii. Wisdom instead of wickedness and pride (don't be Manasseh!)
- c. How Proverbs teaches wisdom
 - i. Basic orientation (which is like sermons)
 - ii. Patterns of thinking (which isn't)

But we haven't talked much about **Jesus**. And we haven't talked about the **conclusion**.

1. Orientation: a double conclusion to the book

a. Paired chapters...

Proverbs 30: ⁶	Proverbs 31:
30:1 – An oracle	31:1 – An oracle
30:1-6 – Reflections on the failure to find the son	31:1-9 – Reflections on the role of the wise son, to a son
30:7-33 – The 123s of the failure to find wisdom (and the wait)	31:10-31 – The ABCs of wisdom for the king
30:22, 27, 28, 31 – 4 references to the king	31:1, 3, 4, 4 – 4 references to the king
30:32 – Cover your mouth	31:8-9 – Open your mouth (c.f. 31:26)

b. ... that take us back to 1-9

"In the first eight chapters of Proverbs, two women are presented: Dame Folly and Lady Wisdom. The Prince, Solomon's son, must decide which he will embrace as his bride. At the end of the book, we learn that the Prince has resisted the temptations of Dame Folly. Proverbs 31 describes the superhuman labors of the "excellent wife," and we know the Prince has chosen well, for he has made Lady Wisdom his queen."⁷

⁶ This table is taken from *Be Wise My Son and Make My Heart Glad*, which is the published version of Chris Ansberry's PhD thesis.

⁷ From Peter Leithart's *Wise Words*, quoted on *The Gospel Coalition* website.

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/the-dramatic-structure-of-proverbs/> Accessed 07/06/2018.

A callow young prince, needing to choose between two consorts (1-9)



The proverbs (10-29)

A king, who has made wisdom his wife (31)

Groupwork:

Compare Proverbs 30:1-6 with Proverbs 9:7-12. What do you notice about the two passages when you read them together? Why is that striking given everything we've had in between? How might it modify the quote above?

Now compare Proverbs 31:1-9 with what we saw this morning in Proverbs 1-9. How is this section **similar** to chapters 1-9? How is it **different**? How might that fit with the quote above?

So how does that function as the end of the book?

2. Proverbs 30-31 as a call to (in)action

Groupwork:

Read through Proverbs 30. How does this chapter encourage us to be humble in our pursuit of wisdom? Think especially about 30:7-33 – how do these proverbs encourage us to remember our limits? Have a go at filling out the table below.

	Theme	Is it about limits? Y/N
30:7-9		
30:10		
30:11-14		
30:15a		
30:15b-16		
30:17		
30:18-19		
30:20		
30:21-23		
30:24-28		
30:29-31		
30:32-33		

Now read through **Proverbs 31:1-9**. How does this chapter encourage us not to be paralyzed by our limits? Why does that matter?

- a. In other words, the purpose of Proverbs is that you...
.... Learn wisdom

... Learn the limits of your wisdom

... Learn to put what you have learnt to use

b. Two lessons we probably need to learn

i. Limiting wisdom

ii. Avoiding paralysis

3. Proverbs 30-31 as a **promise**

a. My suggestion: a sense of story

b. Revisiting 30:1-6 at the end of that story

- Who is speaking?
30:1 and the 'riddles of the wise'
- What have they failed to learn?
30:2-3 compare 9:10

Proverbs 30 and Deuteronomy 32?

Proverbs 30 and Luke 10-12?

- What's the answer?

Groupwork:

Compare Proverbs 30:5-6 with Psalm 18:30 / 2 Samuel 22:31. What do you notice? Think about what these psalms are about. Why do you think Proverbs quotes them here? How does this follow on from Proverbs 30:4?

c. Revisiting 30:7-33 at the end of that story

- Yes, it's about the limits of wisdom
- But it's also about some other things...

Groupwork:

Take another look at Proverbs 30:11-14, 17, 20. What do you think these proverbs are about? Why might they belong here in the flow of the book?

Now look at Proverbs 30:24-28. What do you think we're meant to be learning from this saying? Why does it belong here in the flow of the book?

- d. Revisiting Proverbs 31 at the end of that story
 - o Yes, it's an invitation...
 - o But it's still about a **king**...
 - o ... and it's introduced as an 'oracle'
 - o ... and he is called 'my son'
 - o And he is married to wisdom
 - o The strong woman: 31:3 and 31:10
 - o Opening the mouth: 31:9 and 31:26
 - o The fear of the LORD and righteous judgment: 31:9 and 31:30
 - o Building a house
 - o The significance of *ending* with a king – Lemuel vs. the Bible Project

4. Bringing promise and call together

- a. Reflecting on wisdom, our hope is in the **promise** and not in man's history of wisdom
- b. Reflecting on the promise, we can recognise our limits and then speak up

Appendix: Proverbs in the New Testament

Proverbs quote	New Testament use
3:11	Hebrews 12:5
3:34	James 4:6
	1 Peter 5:5
10:12	James 5:20
	1 Peter 4:8
11:31	1 Peter 4:18
22:8	2 Corinthians 9:7
24:12	<i>Matthew 16:27</i>
	<i>Romans 2:6</i>
25:21	Romans 12:20

Proverbs 30 in Luke 10-11?