

Faith Lutheran Church + Grand Blanc, MI + www.faithgb.org

Bible Reading Journey

Key Study Points by Rev. Dr. Todd Biermann

Each day, using the notes on this page:

- Pray for Spirit-filled insight as you read God's Word.
- Look for Law and Gospel themes that point us to Jesus.
- Apply the readings to your life.
- Pray to Jesus, as the readings inspire you, for yourself, your family, your church and your world.

Historical Context: Most of the proverbs were written by King Solomon during his reign, between 971 & 931 BC. Some were recorded by wise men in the time of King Hezekiah, between 715 & 686 BC.

Law & Gospel Themes:

Law & Gospel are clearly expressed in the theme of Proverbs which is repeated throughout, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge [GOSPEL]; fools despise wisdom and instruction [LAW]." "Fear," in this context, is a rich word that includes fright, awe, reverence & trust. (SEE LSB p. 1001) The wicked are called to turn (1:23), or repent, that

they might receive words of forgiveness & be made righteous. Trust, relying fully on God's grace, must replace sinful reason.

Adultery is one of the most foolish ways of the wicked. Wisdom is associated with the Spirit & the pre-incarnate Christ (8:32). (SEE LSB p.1012) Arius (4th ct.) wrongly understood 8:32 as saying Jesus was created & not eternal God.

Life Application Starters:

How do many (you too) mistake human reason for true wisdom that makes us righteous? Do you properly fear God in the full sense? How does our practice of Confession &

Absolution impart wisdom? Why are the Spirit & Jesus necessary for wisdom? Why is adultery, & all the sexual sins that go with it, so utterly foolish?

Prayer Starters: That we would humbly receive God's Word of discipline, repent of trusting in our sinful reason & receive the gifts of wisdom & righteousness by the work of the Holy Spirit & for Jesus' sake. For proper fear of the LORD including genuine fear, awe & trust. To see & flee the foolishness of adultery & all the evils that go with it. In praise of our eternal, Triune God.

Daily Readings and notes:

Monday: Proverbs 1:1-3:35

Tuesday: Proverbs 4:1-27

Wednesday: Proverbs 5:1-6:35

Thursday: Proverbs 7:1-27

Friday: Proverbs 8:1-36

Saturday: Proverbs 9:1-18

December Memory Verses:

Proverbs 1:7, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction."

Proverbs 3:5f, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."

Proverbs 14:12, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death."

Proverbs 31:30, "Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised."

Ecclesiastes 12:13, "The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."

Authors of Proverbs: King Solomon, men of King Hezekiah, Agur, King Lemuel

Date: Mostly 971-931 BC, Some ~700 BC

New Insights:

Questions to Pursue Further:

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Law & Gospel Themes: This week highlights specific proverbs of Solomon found in 10:1-22:16. The first (through 17:6) focus on what a father should teach his son. The rest warn against foolishness & give practical advice. "The way of the LORD is a stronghold to the blameless [Gospel], but destruction to evildoers [Law]." (10:29) Trust in riches is foolish. Hastily acquired wealth is

quickly lost. The wise appreciate reproof and discipline. God is omnipresent and omniscient (15:3). God's judgment is more penetrating than our shallow and sinful self-evaluation. (16:2) Silence is a virtue of the wise. (18:2) A wise and prudent wife is a gift from the LORD.

Life Application Starters: Martin Luther notes that the proverbs are a fitting handbook or prayerbook for daily usage by the righteous. (SEE p.996) How do God's Words both condemn and comfort the wise? How do God's teachings about material

riches contrast the thoughts of foolish men? Why is it necessary to evaluate yourself according to the external Law of God and not just practice self-evaluation? What are the virtues of silence?

Prayer Starters: The proverbs in this section are an excellent source of daily prayer. One could pray many of them by starting, "Lord, teach me that...." For the conviction of these proverbs to drive us to the grace of Jesus. For strength to change our ways in line with these proverbs once we have been forgiven. To value wisdom over wealth.

Daily Readings and notes:

Monday: Proverbs 10:1-11:31

Tuesday: Proverbs 12:1-13:25

Wednesday: Proverbs 14:1-15:33

Thursday: Proverbs 16:1-17:28

Friday: Proverbs 18:1-19:29

Saturday: Proverbs 20:1-21:31

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Historical Context: Most of the proverbs were written by King Solomon during his reign, between 971 & 931 BC. Some were recorded by wise men in the time of King Hezekiah, between 715 & 686 BC. Ecclesiastes was written by Solomon near the end of his reign (~931 BC).

Law & Gospel Themes:

The wise parent will train a child in godly wisdom (and penitent faith in Jesus) from infancy (SEE 22:6, 23:13f, 29:15, 29:17). 23:11 speaks prophetically of Jesus, the Redeemer of orphans. Pure science is a wise endeavor as it discerns God's glory (SEE 25:2) Companions shape us, for good & bad, as iron

sharpens iron (27:17). 31:10-31 beautifully describes a godly, wise woman. Ecclesiastes shows the end of a wise life marked by fear of God & obedience to His commandments. Fools who ignore this are destined to a life of vanity now & hell for eternity.

Life Application Starters:

Children who learn godly wisdom have a great defense against Satan's temptation as they mature. How does a denial of God as Creator lead to foolish postulates & poor science? Why is fellowship with other Christians so important? What does Pr.

31 teach the Christian woman? How does knowledge apart from the fear of God lead to despair (SEE Ec. 1:18)?

Prayer Starters: For parents who will discipline their children with godly wisdom & children who will cherish it. That the young will not abandon godly wisdom for sinful science & knowledge. For all Christians to cherish the blessing of fellowship with each other. For women to learn wisdom from God & His Word such as found in Pr. 31. That we will enjoy a meaningful life through humble fear of God & obedience to His Word.

Daily Readings and notes:

Monday: Proverbs 22:1-23:35

Tuesday: Proverbs 24:1-25:28

Wednesday: Proverbs 26:1-27:27

Thursday: Proverbs 28:1-29:27

Friday: Proverbs 30:1-31:31

Saturday: Ecclesiastes 1:1-2:26



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Author of Ecclesiastes: King Solomon **Date:** ~931 BC, near the end of Solomon's reign

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Historical Context: King Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes near the end of his reign (~931 BC) and Song of Solomon near the beginning of his reign (~970 BC).

Law & Gospel Themes:

Man's weak endeavors must yield to the immutable will of God. It's vanity to ignore this. Our work to save ourselves will fail. Serving our gracious God is our cause for joy. Two are better than one in marriage, church & all of life, esp. when Jesus is in the middle (Ec. 4:9-12, 9:9). Humble sorrow that leads to confession & faith in Jesus makes us truly glad (Ec. 7:3). Kings & government are for our good in this life (Ec. 7&8).

Physical strength & accumulated riches are lost by time & chance (Ec. 9:11). God alone controls our eternal spiritual destiny (Ec. 12:7). Book knowledge must yield to godly wisdom (Ec. 12:11-14). Prov. & Ecc. provide wisdom that leads to the joy of a bride as expressed in Song of Solomon. Israel, now the Church, is the beloved bride of Christ.

Life Application Starters:

How have you experienced the vanity of trying to find happiness apart from God? How can work, marriage, parenting, citizenship and church life always be enjoyable even

if they're not always fun? How can painful sorrow be a source of joy? How can sensuality in marriage direct us in faith to Jesus? How does sex outside of marriage hinder faith in Jesus?

Prayer Starters: To give up our vain pursuit of empty pleasures to the exclusion of joy in the Lord. For lasting joy in all earthly relationships as they follow God's wisdom. For godly scientists. For humble sorrow over sin that leads to the lasting joy of forgiveness for Jesus' sake. That marriage will be cherished as an image of Jesus & His love for us.

Daily Readings and notes:

Monday: Ecclesiastes 3:1-4:16

Tuesday: Ecclesiastes 5:1-6:12

Wednesday: Ecclesiastes 7:1-8:17

Thursday: Ecclesiastes 9:1-10:20

Friday: Ecclesiastes 11:1-12:14

Saturday: Song of Solomon 1:1-3:11



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