

## **Poetry – Lesson #3: “Proverbs: Wisdom Through Precept”**

*“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. Hear, my son, your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching; indeed they are a graceful wreath to your head and ornaments about your neck.”*

*Proverbs 1:7-9*

*“Trust in the LORD and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.”*

*Proverbs 3:5-6*

### **I. Types of Hebrew Poetry: Type 3 – Didactic Poetry**

Proverbs presents us with the third kind of Hebrew poetry, the **DIDACTIC POEM**. In the Book of Job we saw Dramatic Poetry where the events are recounted in a poetic structure. In Psalms, we saw writings that were originally set to music, thus the term “Lyric”. This third type of Hebrew poetry is primarily **teaching** general principles gained from observing life. In the Proverbs we see the contrast between those who fear God and those who don’t, between the wise and the foolish, the righteous and the wicked.

### **II. Three Key Aspects of Hebrew Poetry:**

- **Parallelism** – An idea in one statement is repeated in some form in the next. It can be repetition, contrast or explanation of the original idea. – ex. *Prov. 1:7* – fearing God vs. despising instruction
- **Figures of Speech** – Language that express an idea in comparative terms with another thing. – ex. *Prov. 1:8* – Parent’s instruction like a headdress or necklace
- **Acrostic Poems** – A rare device where the writer starts each verse or series of verses with a different letter of the Hebrew letter in alphabetic order – ex. *Ps. 119*

**III. Overview** – The book of Proverbs was written and compiled during the time of and may have been written by King Solomon. There are some Proverbs that are written by others (Hezekiah, Agur, Lemuel) but Solomon’s wisdom which God gave him is preserved here. The Proverbs are short memorable sayings that relate to the practical matters of life. The Hebrew title of the Book (“mashal”) means, “parallel”, “similar” or “comparison”. It is helpful to look at Proverbs topically and see what the book says about different matters of life. Much of Proverbs is written as a father would instruct a young son but the principles contained therein are applicable to people in every time and place.

**EXAMPLES:** What does Proverbs say about topics that are important for us to learn?

The Tongue: (Prov. 18:1, 12:18, 15:4, 18:8, 29:5, 10:21, 11:9, 16:27-28, 10:11, 15:2; 14:23, 26:23-28, 12:17, 14:5, 16:13, 10:14, 15:1, 15:23)

Hard Work: (Prov. 6:6-19, 15:1-2, 26:13-16)

Humorous?: 11:22, 19:24, 23:13,35, 24:33, 25:24, 30:15, 21-23)

**Conclusion:** “As suggested by the title and the meaning of the term *proverb*, the theme and purpose of the book is wisdom for living through special instruction on every conceivable issue of life: folly, sin, goodness, wealth, poverty, the tongue, pride, humility, justice, family (parents, children, discipline), vengeance, strife, gluttony, love, laziness, friends, life, and death. No book is more practical in terms of wisdom for daily living than Proverbs. “

Hampton Kealthy