

## PROVERBS

### Keeping the “Big Picture” in View

Our passage of study introduces another extended discourse on the blessings of wisdom, the way of life based upon the fear of the Lord (1:7). We have seen in past studies the genuine riches that wisdom brings, the confidence that wisdom gives, and the satisfaction that wisdom offers to the one who treasures her above all else. The hardship and loss that await those who are self-confident and inattentive to wisdom have been clearly portrayed. The thrust of the book thus far has been to sink wisdom’s arrows deeply into our often unwise and unresponsive hearts, bringing sharp urgency to its claims and demanding a commitment to fear the Lord and seek His ways. As Proverbs 4:1-2 signals that the author is reaching into his quiver for yet another needed exhortation to heed wisdom, it is appropriate to pause and consider once again our approach to Proverbs. What is the purpose of the book, and how must that relate to its application in our lives?

*Renew 1.1* described three main characteristics of the Book of Proverbs: 1) Proverbs deals with our relationship with God in practical terms, 2) Proverbs addresses issues of character, and 3) Proverbs reveals that what is right is also what is good. The author, King Solomon, seeks to relay the wisdom that he has received from the Lord (1 Kings 4:29-34) to his son, or as expressed in Proverbs 4:1, “children”, those who follow in his line, and seek to please the Lord by live according to His instruction. The “big-picture” purpose of the book is that the covenant people of God would walk in the fear of the Lord and keep the law that they had received from the Lord at the time Proverbs was written, thus accomplishing God’s purpose for Israel to display His holiness to the

surrounding nations. This should not lead us to believe that Proverbs is inapplicable to the believer who is in Christ, the Righteous One who fulfilled the Law.

It was the fear of the Lord that was jettisoned in the Garden for the petty substitute of personal importance. As all things are united in Christ (Eph. 1:10) and redeemed from the effects of the curse, beginning with those chosen in Christ and ultimately extending to the furthest corner of the physical universe, it is the fear of the Lord – the recognition and reverence of God as He truly is – that is to be continually restored in the hearts of men. It is this appropriate fear of the Lord that tips the arrows sent with severest love and care by King Solomon in this book.

A tendency which we must carefully recognize and correct is an individualistic approach to Proverbs. It is almost second-nature for us to think: “wisdom + application = a better life for me.” Certainly, Proverbs contains rich promises for individuals, but the end of wisdom is far greater than personal blessing. As we seek to apply the wisdom of Proverbs to our lives, the redemptive purpose of restoring reverence and awe of God in man’s heart and relationship between the Creator and the Creation must not be forgotten. When you walk in wisdom, you display life as it is intended to be lived, and you are a testimony to the triumph of the Lord Jesus Christ. Proverbs is practical, and it is by practical application that the “big-picture” purpose is accomplished. It is with this in view that we must “give attention to know understanding” (3:1).

**Proverbs 4:1–2 (NKJV) — 1** Hear, my children, the instruction of a father, And give attention to know understanding; **2** For I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake my law.



---

## LOOK CLOSELY

---

## *Review*

**Proverbs 4:1–2 (NKJV)** — 1 Hear, my children, the instruction of a father, And give attention to know understanding; 2 For I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake my law.

Look back at the first 3 chapters and write down the references for each clear command or instruction.

Now go back and consider the support given to the command or instruction. Make a list of what is said about the Lord that supports the command. Make a list of the practical benefits that support the command.

How does the support for the command encourage you to obey it?