

# THE BIBLE

## in a nutshell

### *Proverbs - Part 2*

—by Peter Hammond



*"Does not wisdom cry out, and understanding lift up her voice? She takes her stand at the top of the high hill, aside the way, where the paths meet, she cries out by the gates, at the entry of the city, at the entrance of the doors...all those who hate me love death."*

Proverbs 8:1,36

In Proverbs, wisdom is presented as a wonderful woman, who we should love, court, make a beloved member of our family and be faithful to for life.

*"Does not wisdom cry out, and understanding lift up her voice? She takes her stand*

#### **Avoid foolishness**

Folly is depicted as a prostitute, who by smooth talk entices and seduces men with tempting offers. Folly will destroy your livelihood and integrity. Foolish ideas are dangerous and destructive.

Proverbs presents wisdom and folly as primarily moral choices. There are many people who might be intellectually astute, but morally very foolish. Choose wisely how you will live.

*at the top of the high hill, aside the way, where the paths meet, she cries out by the gates, at the entry of the city, at the entrance of the doors...all those who hate me love death."* Prov 8:1,36.

In Proverbs 9:1-12, we read of the wise woman building her house through knowledge and understanding.

#### **Everything has consequences**

The Book of Revelation also contrasts the two women in conflict: The bride of Christ and the harlot of Babylon. The Bible frequently confronts us with choices: Life or death? Light or darkness? Heaven or hell? What we sow is what we reap. Everything

## Wise Choices

Proverbs advises the young: Obey your parents. Seek wisdom. Guard your heart. Be faithful to your spouse. Do not get into bad company. Do not commit adultery. Do not take out loans. Do not be lazy. Avoid foolish people. The lives of the godly and the lives of the wicked are contrasted.

The reoccurring themes of Proverbs are: Seek wisdom. Avoid bad company. Do not fall into the trap of immorality. Avoid laziness. Be humble. Be loyal. Fear God. Righteousness is defined as humility in self, justice for others and the fear of the Lord. There are numerous synonyms used in Proverbs used to describe wisdom: prudence, sensible, judicious, appropriate, careful, discreet and discerning.



## Morality in action

Proverbs presents wisdom and folly as primarily moral choices. There are many people who might be intellectually astute, but morally very foolish. Many know the truth in their head, but do not make wise choices in their lives. You can be mentally clever, but morally foolish.

## Revelation and Divine vision

*"Where there is no vision the people perish."* This is not just speaking about a vision of life. Many people think of a vision as what they would like to do, but it is God's Revelation. *"Where there is no Revelation, the people cast off restraint, but happy is he who keeps the Law."* Prov 29:18.



has consequences. Every thought, action, even attitude, has consequences.

### More precious than rubies

The wife you chose will have great consequences. Proverbs concludes with the

row to his parents. *"...he who trusts in himself is a fool, but he who trusts in wisdom is kept safe."* Prov 28:26.

### Types of fools

The stars of the fools show are exhibit (A):

in Proverbs is the sin of the tongue. Words can cut deep. Words can be **careless, clumsy** and **cruel**. A person's sense of worth can be ruined by words. Even our physical health can be affected by words. Our beliefs, convictions and attitudes can be formed by words. For good or ill, words can have an enormous effect. Amongst the seven »

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acrostic chapter 31, describing the good wife, mother, neighbour and trader, who is vital to good, stable, healthy family life, and who is *"more precious than rubies."*

### Foolishness described

There are over seventy Proverbs which describe what a fool is like. A fool is: ignorant, obstinate, arrogant, reckless, rash, careless, wasteful, irresponsible, inexperienced, aimless, gullible, complacent, insolent, flippant, sullen, boorish, boring, argumentative, quick tempered, opinionated, loud, selfish and unteachable.

Fools prefer **fiction** to reality, **fantasy** to fact. They prefer **illusions** to truth and **make-belief** rather than history. They prefer **amusement** to education. The fool is both **disturbing** and **dangerous**. He brings sor-

**the scoffer** – cynical and critical of everything and everybody, except himself.

Exhibit (B): **the sluggard**, the slothful, lazy man who is hinged to his bed. He tosses and turns and gets no further than a door swinging on its hinges. *"He who is slothful in his work is bother to him who is a great destroyer"* Prov 18:9. *"Like a bad tooth or a lame foot is reliance on the unfaithful in times of trouble."* Prov 25:19.

### Sins of the tongue

One of the key subjects





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### *Proverbs - Part 2*



*"He who guards his lips guards his soul, but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin." Proverbs 13:3*

abominations most hateful to God listed in Proverbs 6, four are sins of the tongue.

#### Limitations of words

Proverbs also shows that words have their limit. **Words are no substitute for deeds.** The tongue cannot alter facts. Denial and imaginative excuses do not change reality. Words cannot compel people to respond. Even the best teacher cannot teach a disinterested student. Only the malicious would pay any attention to gossip.

#### Profitable speech

Proverbs advocates four categories of speech:

- **Honest words** - the straightforward yes, or no.
- **Few words** - the less said, the better.
- **Calm words** - that should refresh and encourage.
- **Appropriate words** - which are suited to the situation, edifying and constructive.

Wise words need time for reflection first.

We should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to be angry. *"He who guards his lips guards his soul, but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin."*

Prov 13:3.

What we say flows from what we are. Our speech reflects our character. *"If you falter in times of trouble how small is your strength."*

Prov 24:10. *"Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing."* Prov 12:18.

gent work and wise choices. A true friend will be **loyal, honest and courteous.**

*"Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."*

#### Study this great book

There are 31 Chapters of Proverbs, one for

**There are 31 Chapters of Proverbs, one for every day of the month. Reading a chapter of Proverbs is a great way to start any day. It speaks much about relationships - the basic building block of society.**

#### Love in action

Discipline is a loving act. Foolishness is bound up in the heart of the child. Children are naturally foolish and need encouragement to be wise. If you do not promptly punish your children when they do wrong, then you do not love them. Proverbs plainly runs counter to the humanistic philosophy prevalent today!

We are to foster wise habits in our children at an early age, teaching them a Christian work ethic that they may learn to enjoy the sense of accomplishment that can only come from hard, dili-

every day of the month. Reading a chapter of Proverbs is a great way to start any day.

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh and strength to your bones."* Prov 3:5-8. ■

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## The family unit

Proverbs speaks much about relationships, especially concerning the family, the basic building block of society. The husband and wife are to be united in loving partnership to share their children's training and faithfully discipline their children. The husband and wife must be moral, faithful and loyal. The person who strays from marriage and commits adultery loses honour and liberty, throwing away their life, courting social disgrace and physical danger. An adulterer commits moral suicide.



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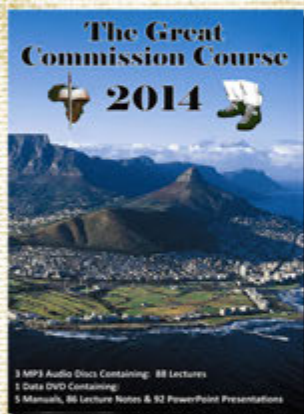
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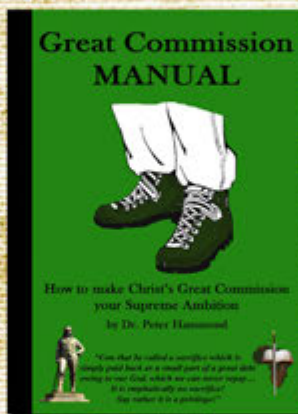
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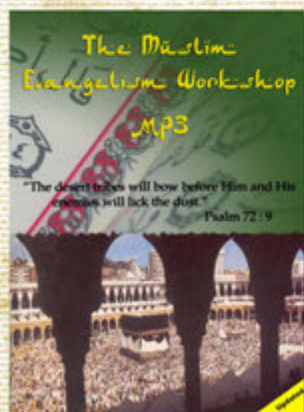


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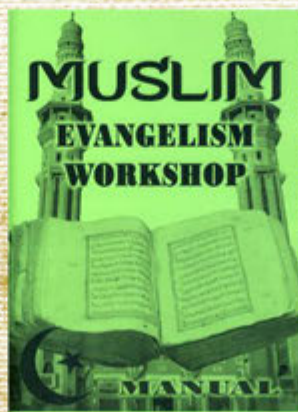


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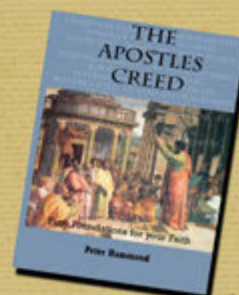
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