

My wife has several nice necklaces. One of them is very special. It is a beautiful thin gold chain with 7 little lady bugs on the chain. Each lady bug has a different color from the others. When she wears it, it makes her stand out and very attractive. Whenever she wears it, someone notices it and praises her. Proverbs 1:8-9 says “Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching. They will be a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.” Proverbs are sayings or advices that are usually true but not 100%. Do you think someone wearing necklace can always make that person more noticeable and attractive?

Reading and understanding the content in the book of Proverbs often require historical background and cross-referencing other parts of the Bible. In verses 8-9, wearing the garland (headpiece) and the chain at that Old Testament period symbolizes honor. Other people would notice the wise choices and actions of those who listen to parents which likely display internal beauty and integrity as one notices people wearing fine jewelry that reveals physical beauty today. At that time period, not all people that wore garland and chain means they were honored or respected but in general it was true. Verse 9 is just an illustration of a likely outcome of people that listen to their parents.

Furthermore, one shall be aware of and be able to tell which verse is a command, which one is a promise and which one is a proverb in this book. Honor your parents is a command (Exodus 20:12). Proverb 1:9 is a proverb that is telling the likely outcome of listening to parents, and it is not a promise. A God’s promise is a 100% truth and always kept by God. Some contents in the book of Proverbs are God’s promises but most are proverbs/sayings.

There are 5 books in the Bible categorized as the Wisdom book: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs. God inspired King Solomon to write most of the chapters in Proverbs. Solomon was regarded as a very wise person in the Bible. A proverb is often a short statement, but some can be a parable or poetry that contain clever illustrations or explanations.

The main theme of Proverbs is wisdom. Wisdom is the God given ability to wisely apply knowledge, experience and judgement. As a note, the word wisdom and knowledge were used interchangeably in this book. The word knowledge mainly means wisdom here, and it does not have the same meaning as we usually define it as a basic fact or information.

1. **The benefits of having wisdom (Proverbs 1:1-7)**

Verse 1 is about God inspired King Solomon to write this chapter. Verses 2 to 6 describes the benefits.

a. **Benefits**

Helps us to understand words of insight; teaches us to acquire a disciplined and prudent life; leads us to have fair, honest and good judgement; have knowledge and discretion; increases our learning; provides us guidance and approach; helps us understand proverbs, parables, sayings and riddles.

A person with wisdom shows in his/her actions and not just having knowledge in his mind. In the New Testament, James 3:17-18 show some examples of actions by applying Godly wisdom.

b. **Fear of the Lord is the way**

Verse 7 tells us how to obtain wisdom that is to have fear of the Lord. In fact, this verse is a promise – As long as we fear God and seek Him, we will obtain wisdom to live a Godly life. Other parts of the Bible such as Matthew 7:7, Deut. 4:29 and Proverbs 2:1-5 support that.

2. **Warning against enticement and reject wisdom (Proverbs 1:8 - 1:33)**

These verses warn us to resist enticement from ungodly people and events. Further, it warns us not to reject wisdom from God. God want us to have wisdom and thus to fear Him so that we can receive and obtain it. More discussion on wisdom when we study Proverbs 8.

3. **How to get wisdom from the fear of the Lord (Proverbs 2:1-6)**

The steps start with you: accept God's words, store up His commands, and turn your ear (heart) to seek wisdom and apply it. You need to be wholeheartedly like cry out and seek it like find treasure. Then you are there.

Fear of the Lord means total submission to God and all His teaching and revelation, and then you will have wisdom. This is a promise as other parts of the Bible confirm that.