

Timeless Wisdom for Today's Worries:
The Bible: The Source of all Wisdom
Proverbs 1:20-33

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Introduction: Today, we begin a new series of teaching. Our Book of study for several weeks will be Proverbs. Proverbs is a fascinating book, but much different from every other book of the Bible in the “proverbial” style of the book. Almost every verse contains a sermon or a lesson. The book is packed with practical “timeless wisdom for today’s worries.” Today, our assignment is to see the credibility of the Word of God to speak to issues of our life. **Proverbs illustrates in a specific way the impact of the Bible upon our lives.**

Text: Wisdom calls out in the street;
she raises her voice in the public squares.
²¹ She cries out above the commotion;
she speaks at the entrance of the city gates:
²² “How long, foolish ones, will you love ignorance?
How long will you mockers enjoy mocking
and you fools hate knowledge?
²³ If you respond to my warning,
then I will pour out my spirit on you
and teach you my words.
²⁴ Since I called out and you refused,
extended my hand and no one paid attention,
²⁵ since you neglected all my counsel
and did not accept my correction,
²⁶ I, in turn, will laugh at your calamity.
I will mock when terror strikes you,
²⁷ when terror strikes you like a storm
and your calamity comes like a whirlwind,
when trouble and stress overcome you.
²⁸ Then they will call me, but I won’t answer;
they will search for me, but won’t find me.
²⁹ Because they hated knowledge,
didn’t choose to fear the LORD,
³⁰ were not interested in my counsel,
and rejected all my correction,
³¹ they will eat the fruit of their way
and be gluttoned with their own schemes.
³² For the turning away of the inexperienced will kill them,
and the complacency of fools will destroy them.
³³ But whoever listens to me will live securely
and be free from the fear of danger.”

Biblical scholar and professor emeritus at Regent College in Vancouver British Columbia has written a great little book entitled *How to Read the Bible for all Its Worth*. In this book, Fee describes the different genre of the Bible and gives insight as to how to interpret according to a book's genre. I steal that title today to help us to think about the Bible this morning.

Before we get to these keys, I want to start with four realities about the Bible that we draw from our text today.

Four Realities of the Word of God

1. The Word of God has never been so available as it is today. (1:20-23)

In Proverbs, wisdom is personified—that is wisdom is displayed as a living being. I believe that the intention of the author is to help us to see that the wisdom being described is God's wisdom. Where do we find the wisdom of God? *The Bible*. So, when we read in Proverbs about wisdom, we are really reading about the word of God—or the Bible.

The first point about the Bible is that it is available. "Wisdom calls aloud outside." The Bible is so available today. Not only in print, but in song and in the preached word by way of radio and television. Our Biblical illiteracy certainly is not because of the unavailability of the Bible—at least not in America.

2. The Word of God has never been so neglected as it is today. (1:24-25)

At the same time that the Word of God is available, it is also neglected. The Bible prophesies that this would be true. Paul warned Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:3-4, "³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴ and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables."

3. The Word of God has never been so patient as it is today. (1:26-30)

I think that you will agree with me that God has been patient with us. Proverbs 1:26-30 is not really a passage of patience, is it? But now, our Lord, for this time, is being patient with us? I warn us not to think that this patience will last forever.

4. The Word of God has never been so needed as it is today. (1:31-33)

We need God's Word. We don't need to know what a preacher says. We don't need to know what Oprah says. We don't need to know what the latest fad has to say. We need desperately to know what God says.

The Bible says in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,* ¹⁷ *that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*"

So, how do we read the Bible for all Its Worth.

Four Keys to Reading the Bible for all It's Worth

1. Believe that the Bible Really is God's Word!

Proverbs 30:5-6 ~ Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Do not add to His words or He will rebuke you, and you will be proved a liar.

C. H. Spurgeon said, "I would recommend you either believe God up to the hilt, or else not to believe at all. Believe this book of God, every letter of it, or else reject it. There is no logical standing place between the two. Be satisfied with nothing less than a faith that swims in the deeps of divine revelation; a faith that paddles about the edge of the water is poor faith at best. It is little better than a dry-land faith, and is not good for much."

2. Believe God wants to speak to you through His Word!

Proverbs 2:1-5 ~ (v.5) Then you will understand the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God.

John Bunyan, who wrote Pilgrim's Progress, testified, "Read the Bible, and read it again, and do not despair of help to understand something of the will and mind of God, though you think they are fast locked up from you. Neither trouble yourself, though you may not have commentaries and expositions; pray and read, and read and pray; for a little from God is better than a great deal from man." (From *Our Daily Bread* Devotional, August 12, 1992)

I have always told people, "When you are reading the Bible and you come across something that you don't understand, just keep reading, because eventually you will come to something that you do understand that God will use to speak to you."

3. Be Afraid of the consequences of not following God's Word!

Proverbs 13:13a ~ The one who has contempt for instruction will pay the penalty . . .

4. Believe in the benefits of obeying God's Word!

Proverbs 13:13b ~ But the one who respects a command will be rewarded.

Billy Graham said "Early in my ministry some intellectual theologians challenged me because they felt I was naive when it came to understanding the Scriptures. As I listened to them, I began to question what I believed. One moonlit night I walked into the woods and spread my Bible over the stump of a tree. 'Lord,' I said, 'I don't understand everything in this book. But I accept it by faith as your divine Word.' From that moment on, I've not had a doubt that the Bible is God's inspired Word. The Scriptures have remained my constant guide."

We must come ourselves to that point when we will say, "This is the Word of God. I do not understand yet all that it says to do, but as God gives me understanding, I will obey, because this is God's Word."

The Result: You will become a Proverbs 8:34 Bible Reader. That is, you will set up a daily watch for God's Word.

*Blessed is the man who listens to me,
Watching daily at my gates,
Waiting at the posts of my doors. Proverbs 8:34*

Conclusion: How to read the Bible for all it's worth? Someone said that the only time a person ever really reads for everything that it's worth is when that person is in love. Reading the Bible for all it's worth really shouldn't be a problem if we are in love with Jesus.