

INTRODUCTION:

- 1) TODAY WE WILL CONTINUE OUR STUDY OF UNDERSTANDING GENRES BY LOOKING AT *WISDOM LITERATURE*

THINGS WE WILL LOOK AT IN THIS LESSON:

- 1) DEFINING AND UNDERSTANDING THE PURPOSE OF WISDOM LITERATURE
- 2) PROVERBS: THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF WISDOM LITERATURE
- 3) JOB, ECCLESIASTES, AND SONG OF SOLOMON
- 4) KEYS TO INTERPRETING WISDOM LITERATURE

PART 1 – DEFINING AND UNDERSTANDING THE PURPOSE OF WISDOM LITERATURE:

Q 1) WHAT DOES WISDOM LITERATURE FOCUS MOSTLY ON?

A)

Q 2) WHAT ISSUES DO THE WISDOM BOOKS TREAT?

Q 3) WHAT ARE THE TWO PURPOSES OF PROVERBS?

PART 2 – PROVERBS: THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF WISDOM LITERATURE:

Q 4) WHAT IS THE FIRST RULE FOR INTERPRETING PROVERBS?

EXAMPLE 1) INTERPRETING A PROVERB BY ITS FORM...

*A gossip betrays a confidence;
so avoid anyone who talks too much.
—Proverbs 20:19*

Line 1: “A gossip betrays a confidence;”

Line 2: “so avoid a man who talks too much” (Proverbs 20:19).

**TO INTERPRET PROVERBS, FIRST COMPARE THE LINES TO SEE
IF ONE LINE CLARIFIES THE OTHER.**

EXAMPLE 2) SAME THOUGHT IN PARALLEL LINES...

*My son, keep your father’s command
and do not forsake your mother’s teaching.
—Proverbs 6:20*

Line 1: “My son, keep your father’s commands”

Line 2: “and do not forsake your mother’s teaching” (Proverbs 6:20).

IN THIS FORM, LINE 2 REPEATS THE IDEA OF LINE 1, USING DIFFERENT WORDS.

EXAMPLE 3) CONTRAST IN PARALLEL LINES...

*A wise son brings joy to his father,
but a foolish son brings grief to his mother.
—Proverbs 10:1*

Line 1: “A wise son brings joy to his father,”

Line 2: “but a foolish son [brings] grief to his mother” (Proverbs 10:1).

IN THIS FORM, THE SECOND LINE USES A CONTRAST, TO CLARIFY THE FIRST LINE.

EXAMPLE 4) COMPARISON IN PARALLEL LINES...

Remove the dross from the silver, and a silversmith can produce a vessel;

remove wicked officials from the king's presence, and his throne will be established through righteousness.

—Proverbs 25:4-5

Line 1: (Example) “Remove the dross from silver, and out comes material for the silversmith;”

Line 2: (Main truth) “remove the wicked from the king’s presence, and his throne will be established through righteousness” (Proverbs 25:4–5).

IN THIS FORM, ONE LINE IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE OTHER LINE.

EXAMPLE 5) COMPLETION IN PARALLEL LINES...

Do not make friends with a hot-tempered person, do not associate with one easily angered,

or you may learn their ways and get yourself ensnared.

—Proverbs 22:24-25

Line 1: (Truth) “Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man; do not associate with one easily angered.”

Line 2: (Reason) “For you may learn his ways.”

IN THIS FORM, THE SECOND LINE COMPLETES AND BUILDS ON THE FIRST LINE.

EXAMPLE 6) A GROUP IN PARALLEL LINES...

There are three things that are too amazing for me, four that I do not understand:

the way of an eagle in the sky,

the way of a snake on a rock,

the way of a ship on the high seas,

and the way of a man with a young woman.

—Proverbs 30:18-19

IN THIS FORM, THESE PROVERBS OFTEN USE THE PATTERN OF THREE PLUS ONE.

Q 5) WHAT IS THE SECOND RULE FOR INTERPRETING PROVERBS?

EXAMPLE 7) THE BEST TIME TO APPLY EACH PROVERB...

Proverbs 26:4—“Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will be like him yourself.”

Proverbs 26:5—“Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes.”

A PROVERB MAY BE TRUE IN ONE CASE, BUT NOT FOR ANOTHER.

Q 6) WHAT IS THE THIRD RULE FOR INTERPRETING PROVERBS?

EXAMPLE 8) MAJORITY AND MINORITY PROVERBS...

Majority—General Rule	Minority—Exception to Rule
“Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth” (Proverbs 10:4).	“Better a little with the fear of the Lord, than great wealth with turmoil” (Proverbs 15:16).
“He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord” (Proverbs 18:22).	“Better to live in a corner of the roof than to share a house with a quarrelsome wife” (Proverbs 21:9).
“When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise” (Proverbs 10:19).	“Better open rebuke (feelings that can be seen) than hidden love” (Proverbs 27:5).

IN THE PSALMS WE SEE FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE OR WORD PICTURES THAT COMPARE AND CONTRAST THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED.

Q 7) WHAT IS THE FOURTH RULE FOR INTERPRETING PROVERBS?

EXAMPLE 9) PROVERBS 18:21...

*The tongue has the power of life and death,
and those who love it will eat its fruit.*

—Proverbs 18:21

Other verses that help us understand “life” and “death” in the tongue:

Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching.

— Proverbs 1:8

My son, if sinful men entice you, do not give in to them. If they say, “Come along with us; let’s lie in wait for innocent blood, let’s ambush some harmless soul; let’s swallow them alive, like the grave, and whole, like those who go down to the pit; we will get all sorts of valuable things and fill our houses with plunder; cast lots with us; we will all share the loot”—my son, do not go along with them, do not set foot on their paths; for their feet rush into evil, they are swift to shed blood. How useless to spread a net where every bird can see it! These men lie in wait for their own blood; they ambush only themselves! Such are the paths of all who go after ill-gotten gain; it takes away the life of those who get it.

— Proverbs 1:10-19

My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you peace and prosperity.

— Proverbs 3:1-2

For the lips of the adulterous woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil; but in the end she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave.

— Proverbs 5:3-5

“Now then, my children, listen to me; blessed are those who keep my ways. Listen to my instruction and be wise; do not disregard it. Blessed are those who listen to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway. For those who find me find life and receive favor from the Lord.

— Proverbs 8:32-35

The tongue of the righteous is choice silver, but the heart of the wicked is of little value. The lips of the righteous nourish many, but fools die for lack of sense.

— Proverbs 10:20-21

With their mouths the godless destroy their neighbors, but through knowledge the righteous escape. A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy person keeps a secret.

— Proverbs 11:9, 13

Evildoers are trapped by their sinful talk, and so the innocent escape trouble.

— Proverbs 12:13

