



# BIBLE

STUDENT BOOK

▶ **8th Grade | Unit 7**

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# BIBLE 807

## The Book of Proverbs

INTRODUCTION | **3**

### **1. THE LITERARY DESIGN OF PROVERBS** **5**

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THE LITERARY FORMS IN PROVERBS | **6**

THE OUTLINE OF PROVERBS | **14**

THE OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSES OF PROVERBS | **17**

SELF TEST 1 | **21**

### **2. THE NEW TESTAMENT AND PROVERBS** **25**

---

PROVERBS AND THE NEW TESTAMENT | **26**

PROVERBS AND THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS | **30**

PROVERBS AND THE EPISTLE OF JAMES | **33**

SELF TEST 2 | **34**

### **3. THE KEY THEMES IN PROVERBS** **39**

---

THE KEY PHRASE IN PROVERBS | **39**

THE REPETITIONS IN PROVERBS | **41**

THE STUDY OF KEY THEMES IN PROVERBS | **43**

SELF TEST 3 | **46**



**LIFEPAC Test is located in the center of the booklet.** Please remove before starting the unit.

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# The Book of Proverbs

## Introduction

Without question, Proverbs is the unique book of the Bible for the teenager. King Solomon addressed youth frequently. He treated problems of youth with a sensitivity only experience gives. God inspired Solomon's proverbs so that He could teach attitudes and behavior essential to happiness and could exercise His wisdom as presented in Proverbs.

Bible scholars call Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job, *The Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament*. After checking in the concordance, you will understand why. The words *wise* and *wisdom* appear more often in these three books than in all thirty-six of the remaining Old Testament books together.

Upon closer observation in the concordance, you will also see *wise* and *wisdom* listed considerably more often in Proverbs than in Ecclesiastes and Job combined. Study the word *wisdom* in Proverbs and you will discover that it means *moral integrity* and not mere skill or intelligence. The usage and definition of wisdom makes Proverbs the divine book of God's wisdom.

The purpose of this LIFE PAC® is to introduce you to a life-long companionship with Proverbs and to prepare you for your own profitable study of Proverbs. Your goal should be to benefit from the guidance of God's book of wisdom.

You should approach this study of God's Word with Solomon's prayer and James' confidence. In 2 Chronicles 1:10 Solomon prayed "Give me now wisdom and knowledge..." In James 1:5 we read, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

## Objectives

**Read these objectives.** The objectives tell you what you will be able to do when you have successfully completed this LIFE PAC. When you have finished this LIFE PAC, you should be able to:

1. Identify which of five literary forms a given proverb may exhibit.
2. Outline the book of Proverbs.
3. Describe the objectives of the book of Proverbs.
4. Explain how New Testament writers used Proverbs.
5. Relate how Paul used Proverbs in writing Romans.
6. Identify how James used Proverbs in writing his Epistle.
7. Define the meaning of the phrase *fear of the Lord*.
8. Categorize the six repetitions in the book of Proverbs.
9. Summarize three methods of studying Proverbs.

# 1. THE LITERARY DESIGN OF PROVERBS

The book of Proverbs includes a collection of thirty-four **proverbial** poems and over five hundred **proverbs**. Each poem and proverb communicates its own message without the help of the others. Unlike the rest of Scripture, you do not always need to refer to the context of a proverb to understand it correctly.

The length of the poems and proverbs vary. For example, King Solomon used twenty-two verses for his poem in chapter 2 and only six verses for the one found in Proverbs 6:6–11. He used

only one verse to express each of the proverbs in Proverbs 10–22. However, in Proverbs 25:2–7 he took six verses to record one proverb.

To fully appreciate the Proverbs, you need to understand the literary forms used in the book. You also need to understand how the book is organized and why God included it in the Bible. In this section of the LIFEPAK, you will learn five literary forms of proverbs. You will also learn the book's outline and its instructional objectives.

## SECTION OBJECTIVES

**Review these objectives.** When you have completed this section, you should be able to:

1. Identify which of five literary forms a given proverb may exhibit.
2. Outline the book of Proverbs.
3. Describe the objectives of the book of Proverbs.

## VOCABULARY

**Study these words to enhance your learning success in this section.**

**appendix** (u pen' diks). Material added to the end of a book.

**contrasting** (kon' trast ing). Different or opposite in meaning.

**metaphor** (met' u fôr). A figure of speech in which one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness between them.

**motto** (mot' ô ). A short statement of an aim or ideal used as a guiding principle.

**parable** (par' u bul). A short story teaching a spiritual or moral principle.

**parabolic** (par u bol' ik). Having the form or style of a parable.

**parallelism** (par' u lel iz um). A pattern of similarities in two or more clauses.

**proverb** (prov' érb). A short, pointed expression of a moral lesson.

**proverbial** (pro vèr' bēul). Belonging to a proverb.

**simile** (sim' u lē). A figure of speech comparing two different things usually with the help of *as* or *like*.

**sluggard** (slug' urd). A habitually lazy person.

**synonymous** (si non' u mus). Alike in meaning.

**Note:** All vocabulary words in this LIFEPAK appear in boldface print the first time they are used. If you are unsure of the meaning when you are reading, study the definitions given.

**Pronunciation Key:** hat, āge, cāre, fār; let, ēqual, tērm; it, Īce; hot, ōpen, ōrder; oil; out; cup, pūt, rŭle; child; long; thin; /ʒh/ for then; /zh/ for measure; /u/ represents /a/ in about, /e/ in taken, /i/ in pencil, /o/ in lemon, and /u/ in circus.

## THE LITERARY FORMS IN PROVERBS

Bible scholars list Proverbs with the *Poetical Books* as well as with the *Wisdom Literature* of the Old Testament. Along with the Psalms, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon, Proverbs exhibits the characteristics of Hebrew poetry. You will appreciate and understand a proverb much more by recognizing its poetical characteristics.

**Moral lessons.** A **proverb** is a short, pointed, poetic expression of a moral or ethical lesson. A proverb teaches the difference between good and bad character and conduct. A psalm is also a poetic expression; but it is a poem usually dealing with prayer, praise, or worship to God. The book of Psalms contains a collection of poems, many of which are suitable for singing in worship. We can think of the Psalms as God's hymn book. In contrast, the book of Proverbs instructs us how to behave and how to get along with other people. Proverbs teaches humility, honesty, trustworthiness, truthfulness, patience, purity, and many other virtues. We can think of Proverbs as God's handbook for good character and conduct.

**Pattern of similarities.** If Proverbs and Psalms qualify as Old Testament poetical books, they should bear some similarities; and they do. Rhyme and rhythm are important characteristics of English poetry; however, the Old Testament poets used neither. When writing poetry, David and Solomon depended on **parallelism** for poetic expression, as did the other Old Testament poets.

Read Psalm 8:1–9 and Proverbs 11:1–9.



*Parallelism* is defined as a *pattern of similarities in two or more clauses*. The poet expresses an idea in the first line, then enlarges it by various literary techniques in the succeeding line or lines. The second line may repeat the idea of the first with different words. The second line may state an opposite idea or may complete a figure of speech. The second line may simply conclude the sentence started in the first line. God led in the choice of poetic form used by the Hebrews. Parallelism is not lost in translation, whereas, rhyme and rhythm usually are lost. Because parallelism survives translation, everyone can experience the power of the Hebrew poetic form in whatever language he reads.

As you study the examples of parallelism on the following page, note the similarities and differences.



### Parallelism in Psalm 13

- Psalm 13:1  
(First line) *How long wilt thou forget me,  
O Lord? for ever?*
- Psalm 13:2  
(Second line) *How long shall I take counsel  
in my soul,*  
(Third line) *Having sorrow in my heart  
daily?*  
(Fourth line) *How long shall mine enemy  
be exalted over me?*
- Psalm 13:3  
(First line) *Consider and hear me, O Lord  
my God:*  
(Second line) *Lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep  
the sleep of death;*
- Psalm 13:4  
(Third line) *Lest mine enemy say, I have  
prevailed against him;*  
(Fourth line) *And those that trouble me  
rejoice when I am moved.*
- Psalm 13:5  
(First line) *But I have trusted in thy  
mercy;*  
(Second line) *My heart shall rejoice in thy  
salvation.*
- Psalm 13:6  
(Third line) *I will sing unto the Lord,*  
(Fourth line) *Because he hath dealt bounti-  
fully with me.*

### Parallelism in a Proverbial Poem Proverbs 6:6-11

- Proverbs 6:6  
(First line) *Go to the ant, thou sluggard;*  
(Second line) *Consider her ways, and be wise:*
- Proverbs 6:7  
(First line) *Which having no guide,*  
(Second line) *Overseer, or ruler,*
- Proverbs 6:8  
(First line) *Provideth her meat in the  
summer,*  
(Second line) *And gathereth her food in the  
harvest.*
- Proverbs 6:9  
(First line) *How long wilt thou sleep, O  
sluggard?*  
(Second line) *When wilt thou arise out of thy  
sleep?*
- Proverbs 6:10  
(First line) *Yet a little sleep, a little slumber,*  
(Second line) *A little folding of the hands to  
sleep:*
- Proverbs 6:11  
(First line) *So shall thy poverty come as  
one that travelleth,*  
(Second line) *And thy want as an armed man.*

### Parallelism in a Proverb Proverbs 15:1

- Proverbs 15:1  
(First line) *A soft answer turneth away  
wrath:*  
(Second line) *But grievous words stir up  
anger.*



## Parallelism in Psalms and Proverbs





**Complete these statements.**

- 1.1 The book of Proverbs contains a. \_\_\_\_\_ proverbial poems and  
b. \_\_\_\_\_ proverbs.
- 1.2 The three books of *Wisdom Literature* in the Bible are a. \_\_\_\_\_, b. \_\_\_\_\_,  
and c. \_\_\_\_\_.
- 1.3 The four *Poetical Books* of the Old Testament are a. \_\_\_\_\_, b. \_\_\_\_\_,  
c. \_\_\_\_\_, and d. \_\_\_\_\_.
- 1.4 A poetic expression of praise or worship to God is called a \_\_\_\_\_.
- 1.5 By contrast, a a. \_\_\_\_\_ is a short, pointed expression of a  
b. \_\_\_\_\_, or ethical, c. \_\_\_\_\_.
- 1.6 Proverbs is God's handbook for good a. \_\_\_\_\_ and  
b. \_\_\_\_\_.
- 1.7 Parallelism is a poetic a. \_\_\_\_\_ of b. \_\_\_\_\_ in two or more  
clauses.

**Complete this activity.**

- 1.8 Rewrite the following proverbs in their two line form as in the previous illustration.
  - a. Proverbs 19:8 "He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul: he that keepeth understanding shall find good."  
(First line) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Second line) \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Proverbs 17:17 "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."  
(First line) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Second line) \_\_\_\_\_



**Two-line proverbs.** The basic and most often used pattern of the Biblical proverb consists of two lines. The two lines or clauses have parallel ideas. This study will be limited to five forms of parallelism used in the two-line pattern.

The **synonymous** parallelism occurs when the second line or clause repeats the thought expressed in the first line but in different words. The word *synonymous* means *alike in meaning*. The lesson of the second line is nearly the same as the first. The poet used different words in the second to help teach the lesson of the first.



**Using your Bible complete these activities.**

**1.9** Rewrite Proverbs 16:28 in its two-line pattern.

First line \_\_\_\_\_

Second line \_\_\_\_\_

**1.10** Complete the following sentence.

In Proverbs 16:28, a. \_\_\_\_\_ and a b. \_\_\_\_\_

are synonymous and c. \_\_\_\_\_ and d. \_\_\_\_\_

are synonymous.

**Contrasting** parallelism results from stating an idea in the first line and its opposite in the second line. One line may express a thought in a positive way and the other line a parallel thought in a negative way. The truth of the first line is expanded by a contrary truth in the second. One hundred forty-five of the 184 proverbs in Proverbs 10–15 exhibit the contrasting form of parallelism. The following examples illustrate contrasting parallelism.

#### **Proverbs 15:1**

(First line) *A soft answer turneth away wrath:*

(Second line) *But grievous words stir up anger.*

#### **Proverbs 16:18**

(First line) *Pride goeth before destruction,*  
(Second line) *And an haughty spirit before a fall.*

*Pride and haughty spirit* are synonymous, and *destruction* and *fall* are synonymous.

#### **Proverbs 17:21**

(First line) *He that begetteth a fool doeth it to his sorrow:*

(Second line) *And the father of a fool hath no joy.*

*He that begetteth* and *father* are synonymous; *Sorrow* and *no joy* are synonymous.

*Soft answer* is the opposite of *grievous words*, and *turneth away wrath* is the opposite of *stir up anger*.

#### **Proverbs 15:2**

(First line) *The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright:*

(Second line) *But the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.*

*Wise* is the opposite of *fools*, *knowledge* is the opposite of *foolishness*, and *useth...aright* is the opposite of *poureth out*.



**Using your Bible complete these activities.**

**1.11** Rewrite Proverbs 11:1 in its two-line pattern.

First line \_\_\_\_\_

Second line \_\_\_\_\_

**1.12** Complete the following sentence.

In Proverbs 11:1 a. \_\_\_\_\_ is the opposite of a *just weight* and *abomination to the Lord* is the opposite of b. \_\_\_\_\_.

**Parabolic** parallelism compares the subject of the first line with the subject of the second line by employing a **simile** or a **metaphor**. A simile is a figure of speech which compares two different things usually with the help of *as* or *like*. For example in Proverbs 26:1, “As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool.” A metaphor is a figure of speech in which one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness between them. Proverbs 26:27 states, “Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him.” The actions of digging a pit and rolling a stone are compared to someone causing mischief. Mischief recoils on the perpetrator causing him trouble. The word *parabolic* is the adjective form of the noun **parable**, a New Testament Greek term. Literally, the word means to *compare*. Parabolic parallelism compares one kind of object or idea with another. Our Lord Jesus taught lessons about heavenly things by comparing them with earthly things. Solomon also used the parabolic

technique in teaching righteous, moral conduct. The following proverbs illustrate parabolic parallelism.

**Proverbs 25:25**

(First line) *As cold water to a thirsty soul,*

(Second line) *So is good news from a far country.*

Receiving good news from a place hard to communicate with gives the feeling of refreshment and invigoration that cold water gives us when we drink it to slack our thirst. This proverb employs the simile.

**Proverbs 27:3**

(First line) *A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty;*

(Second line) *But a fool's wrath is heavier than them both.*

The emotional state of anger is compared to the physical weight of stone and sand. This figure of speech is the metaphor.



**Using your Bible complete these activities.**

**1.13** Rewrite Proverbs 26:14 as shown in the previous illustrations.

First line \_\_\_\_\_

Second line \_\_\_\_\_

**1.14** Write whether this figure of speech is a simile or metaphor. \_\_\_\_\_

Single-sentence parallelism does not set up a comparison between the first and second lines as do synonymous, contrasting, and parabolic parallelism. The second line simply completes the sentence started in the first line and keeps the pattern of the two-line proverb while doing so. The poet did not have enough room in the first line to complete the message of the phrase. He continued on to the second to complete the sentence. Examples of this form follow.

### Proverbs 18:10

(First line) *The name of the Lord is a strong tower:*

(Second line) *The righteous runneth into it, and is safe.*

### Proverbs 18:9

(First line) *He also that is slothful in his work*

(Second line) *Is brother to him that is a great waster.*

In both of the preceding proverbs, the second line continues the sentence without a comparison between them.



### Using your Bible complete these activities.

**1.15** Rewrite Proverbs 27:1 as shown in the previous illustrations.

First line \_\_\_\_\_

Second line \_\_\_\_\_

**1.16** Describe the form of parallelism the poet uses in Proverbs 27:1, either synonymous, contrasting, parabolic, or single sentence. \_\_\_\_\_

Numerical proverbs state a number in the first parallel line and increases it by one number in the second line. Only one (Proverbs 30:24–28) of the six numerical proverbs does not follow this formula. All but one (Proverbs 6:16–19) appear in Proverbs 30. A seventh takes the form of a poem (Proverbs 30:7–9). They appear in Proverbs 6:16–19; 30:15–17; 30:18–20; 30:21–23; 30:24–28; and 30:29–31. Study this example of a numerical proverb.

### Proverbs 6:16–19

(first line) *These six things doth the Lord hate:*

(second line) *Yea, seven are an abomination unto him:*

(third line) *A proud look, a lying tongue,*

(fourth line) *And hands that shed innocent blood,*

(fifth line) *An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations,*

(sixth line) *Feet that be swift in running to mischief,*

(seventh line) *A false witness that speaketh lies,*

(eighth line) *And he that soweth discord among brethren.*



**Complete this activity.**

**1.17** Read Proverbs 30:15–17; 30:18–20; 30:21–23; 30:24–28; and 30:29–31. Describe in complete sentences what is being taught in the proverb

a. Proverbs 6:16–19 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

b. Proverbs 30:15–17 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

c. Proverbs 30:18–20 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

d. Proverbs 30:21–23 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

e. Proverbs 30:24–28 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

f. Proverbs 30:29–31 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Proverbial chain.** Occasionally, proverbs with similar topics appear together in short series. Four proverbial chains appear in the second collection of Solomon’s proverbs (Proverbs 25:1), “...which the men of Hezekiah ...copied

out.” The topics include the Fool (Proverbs 26:1–12), the **Sluggard** (Proverbs 26:13–16), the Whispering Talebearer (Proverbs 26:20–22), and the Malicious Person (Proverbs 26:23–28).

## SELF TEST 1

Match these items (each answer, 2 points).

- |       |   |    |             |
|-------|---|----|-------------|
| 1.01  | _____ a pattern of similarities                 | a. | motto       |
| 1.02  | _____ a short story teaching a spiritual lesson | b. | appendix    |
| 1.03  | _____ Hebrew word for proverb                   | c. | parabolic   |
| 1.04  | _____ to be different or opposite               | d. | proverb     |
| 1.05  | _____ alike in meaning                          | e. | mashal      |
| 1.06  | _____ a short moral lesson                      | f. | parallelism |
| 1.07  | _____ having the form of a parable              | g. | contrasting |
| 1.08  | _____ a short statement of an aim               | h. | proverbial  |
| 1.09  | _____ added to the end of a book                | i. | parable     |
| 1.010 | _____ belonging to a proverb                    | j. | synonymous  |
|       |   | k. | metaphor    |

Write true or false (each answer, 1 point).

- 1.011 \_\_\_\_\_ Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, and Esther are the “Poetical Books” of the Old Testament.
- 1.012 \_\_\_\_\_ A proverb teaches the difference between good and bad character and conduct.
- 1.013 \_\_\_\_\_ Parallelism is rhyme and rhythm.
- 1.014 \_\_\_\_\_ Parallelism is a pattern of similarities.
- 1.015 \_\_\_\_\_ The basic pattern of the Biblical proverb consists of two lines.
- 1.016 \_\_\_\_\_ In synonymous parallelism, the first and second lines are opposite in meaning.
- 1.017 \_\_\_\_\_ In contrasting parallelism, the first and second lines are nearly the same.
- 1.018 \_\_\_\_\_ Parabolic parallelism has three lines.
- 1.019 \_\_\_\_\_ In single-sentence parallelism, the second line simply completes the sentence started in the first.
- 1.020 \_\_\_\_\_ Numerical proverbs have a number in the first line which is made one larger in the second.

**Write the correct letter and answer on each line** (each answer, 2 points).

- 1.021** Numerical proverbs state a number in the first line and increase it by \_\_\_\_\_ in the second.  
a. three                      b. two                      c. one
- 1.022** When two or more proverbs with similar topics appear together, they are called a proverbial \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. parallelism              b. chain                      c. simile
- 1.023** The literal meaning of *mashal* which is translated *proverb* is \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. to rule                      b. to be like                      c. example
- 1.024** Similes make comparisons by using \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. "like or as"              b. nouns                      c. "either, or"
- 1.025** Metaphors assume the \_\_\_\_\_ is understood.  
a. parallelism              b. subject                      c. likeness
- 1.026** Personifications transfer the characteristics and abilities of \_\_\_\_\_ to something.  
a. a person                      b. an animal                      c. a vegetable
- 1.027** Literal language speaks \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. figuratively              b. long                      c. directly

**Rewrite these proverbs in their two-line form** (each answer, 2 points).

- 1.028** (10:12) "Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins."

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- 1.029** (18:15) "The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge." \_\_\_\_\_

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- 1.030** (10:7) "The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot."

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Complete these activities (each answer, 3 points).

**1.036** Identify each of the preceding proverbs (numbers 1.028-1.035) as to their type of parallelism by writing *synonymous*, *contrasting*, *parabolic*, or *single-sentence*.

a. Proverbs 10:12 \_\_\_\_\_

b. Proverbs 18:15 \_\_\_\_\_

c. Proverbs 10:7 \_\_\_\_\_

d. Proverbs 27:8 \_\_\_\_\_

e. Proverbs 22:2 \_\_\_\_\_

f. Proverbs 19:5 \_\_\_\_\_

g. Proverbs 20:20 \_\_\_\_\_

h. Proverbs 28:15 \_\_\_\_\_

**1.037** List the three major sections of the outline of Solomon's proverbs.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

<b>74</b> / <b>93</b>	<b>SCORE</b> _____	<b>TEACHER</b> _____	initials	date
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