

This study has been entitled: “**Proverbs for Life**,” for several reasons. **Mainly** because this brief study is calling all readers to **a life-long pursuit of living a life that is pleasing to the Lord Jesus Christ**.

Proverbs for Life. Let us break this down.

First, with Arkansas legislators in mind, **Proverbs for Life** is primarily a study of Proverbs for leaders, for life. The Word of God accompanied by the testimony of the Holy Spirit to its authenticity, brings the truth and grace we need to both believe and be saved. Eternal life is in view, this transforming grace from God speaks not only to the new birth, but also to the quality of the believer’s life, including its duration. All whom the Father gives to the Son are kept. The Great Shepherd loses not one of His sheep.

Second, **Proverbs for Life** will involve exploring the book of Proverbs with a view toward gaining a working knowledge of the book: its contents, its authors, its historical and theological themes, with the aim of equipping the reader to better understand and apply the wisdom found in the book of Proverbs to everyday life, which in turn impacts every relationship and the quality of one’s ministry.

Third, **Proverbs for Life** must include the necessary requisite **Fear of the LORD**, as the call to true wisdom is a call to know and rightly respond to the very source of wisdom and life. In the New Testament we understand this to include genuine faith in the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, however the Fear of the LORD, is a theme throughout the book of Proverbs. It is worth emphasizing because it is “the beginning of wisdom.” This is clearly more than mere intellectual ascent to certain doctrines, creeds, or historical facts about **who** Jesus is, and **what** His death accomplished. The fear of the LORD is a distinguishing mark of genuine faith which ought to mark every believing leader.

Fourth, Proverbs for Life is relational. A right relationship to God similarly leads to right relationships with all other people. This would include those above you, below you, your colleagues, parents, spouse, children, business partners, employees, customers, fellow commuters, constituents etc. It will also include all who know and love the Lord, as well as those who may be running away from God, and those who may be adversarial to you because you not only believe but are also committed to actively living out your faith. Therefore, the concept of “Proverbs for Life” also embodies the concept of life-on-life ministry.

To assist with all these objectives, I will highly encourage participation, as God has given each believer gifts to employ, for the building up of the body of Christ. So, while we major in a clear study and exposition or explaining of the biblical text of the book of Proverbs, I really look forward to hearing from each of you, as many as are willing, to share how God has used you in a unique way to glorify Him and make an eternal life-on-life difference.

The Beauty of Proverbs

The beauty of Proverbs is that it is like a hinge to the rest of the scripture. You can easily read and become familiar with this book over a relatively short period of time, and you will find that it is easy to take a truth found in proverbs and move easily to a portion of Scripture that expounds further on a particular biblical or theological theme, truth, admonition, or promise etc. Thus, the book of Proverbs will become increasingly useful to you, as you become more and more familiar with it.

The Whole Counsel of God

The Apostle Paul in Acts 20:27 wrote: “For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.”

Some versions write “the whole counsel of God” (ESV), or “the whole will of God” (NIV), or “whole purpose of God” (NASB).

The Apostle Paul was stating that he was innocent of the blood of all men, because in his ministry to all people he presented the entire plan and purpose of God for man’s salvation in all its fullness, from creation, to salvation, to how to live godly in Christ Jesus. He provided a great model of how to faithfully conduct ministry and gave instruction to the churches as to how this works. Proverbs is part of the whole counsel of God, and time in this book will prove invaluable for ministry. When I want to minister to my children, it is a great go to. You can serve your children and grandchildren and all people well, by equipping them with the biblical knowledge, understanding, wisdom and discernment found within the book of Proverbs. At the same time, it will keep you sharp and reveal areas for improvement. Proverbs will provoke you to love and good deeds, it will spur growth in your relationship to God and remind you how to live and interact rightly with all people.

Pray for God to Use This Time

Pray that God will help us make the most of this time together. This is a special time in your life as a state leader.

I will leave you with a few Proverbs to whet your appetite for more:

Proverbs 2: 6-7: 6. *For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.* 7. *He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity.*

Proverbs 3:5-6: 5. *Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding.* 6. *In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.*

Proverbs 13:20 *He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.*

Proverbs 16:3 *Commit your works to the Lord and your plans will be established.*

The Apostle Paul wrote in **1 Timothy 4:7 *Train yourself for the purpose of godliness.***

Training requires effort but is the best way to see results in any endeavor.

In the first chapter of *Disciplines of a Godly Man*, R. Kent Hughes lists several people throughout history that achieved the greatest of all time standard in their day. What did they all have in common? Hard and smart work.

The effort you invest will enable you, with God's help, to make significant spiritual gains.

Other than showing up and participating as you feel led, there will be little work required on your part. I will have resources that I will recommend to help you make greater gains, then perhaps after the legislative session we can dig deeper via zoom, or if you feel inspired to dig deeper on your own you can prepare some studies of Proverbs for the people God has given you to serve. Either way, let us pray for one another to be faithful, and teachable by God, as we seek to grow in Christlike service to God and people.