

"Living Wisely"

A Series on the Wisdom Literature of Scripture  
(Proverbs, Ecclesiastes & Job)

## **PART ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **About Wisdom Literature:**

There are three books of the Bible that would later come to be called the "wisdom literature." These three books are the books of *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes* and *Job*. Each of these books explores the same basic theme and tackles the same basic question—what does it look like to live a good life?

**The wisdom books of the Old Testament offer three different perspectives on how to live well in God's good world. They reveal the collected wisdom of generations of godly people, and invite us to consider the complexity and simplicity of living wisely.**

### **Genres in the Wisdom Series:**

Prose Discourse

Essay

Poetry

Wisdom

### **Proverbs:**

This book is the accumulation of wisdom from generations of godly insightful people. It promotes a life of virtue and "fear of the Lord," so that you can truly experience the good life.

### **Ecclesiastes:**

In this book we hear the skeptical voice of "the teacher." He observes that living by the book of Proverbs doesn't always bring positive results. Sometimes life is hard and defies neat explanations. How do you live with that tension, and still strive for wisdom?

### **Job:**

How do you trust God even when life isn't fair and you suffer for no good reason? Job's story invites us to consider what it means that God runs the world by wisdom, and how this truth can bring peace in dark times.

## **PROVERBS**

The book of Proverbs is a guide for every person in every season on how to live well in God's good world.

Biblical Wisdom Literature is different from the rest of The Bible in that:

-Exploring How to Live Well in God's World

-Wisdom is not LAW (thou shall or thou shalt not)

-Wisdom is not PROPHECY (thus says the Lord)

-Wisdom is the accumulated insight of God's people through generations

-Proverbs = Probabilities (Fear of God & Wisdom- Things will go Great/No Fear of God & Foolishness- Things will go Poorly)

-Proverbs does NOT equal Promises (No Guarantees in Life- what Ecclesiastes and Job are all about)

-Proverbs focuses on the general rule but not the exceptions (Ecclesiastes and Job). Life is too complex for simple formulas and that is why we need all the wisdom books together to get the bigger picture.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction."

Proverbs 1:7 ESV

"Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord, would have none of my counsel and despised all my reproof, therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way, and have their fill of their own devices. For the simple are killed by their turning away, and the complacency of fools destroys them; but whoever listens to me will dwell secure and will be at ease, without dread of disaster."

Proverbs 1:29-33 ESV