



Proverbs 1: Introduction

Proverbs - Background

- Proverbs is a compilation of hundreds of bite-sized proverbs.
- It begins with an introduction (chapters 1-9).
- It ends with a conclusion (chapters 30-31).
- Most of the book is linked with Solomon.
- But Proverbs 22:17 also refers to the “sayings of the wise,” and 24:23 mentions additional “sayings of the wise.”

Proverbs - Background

- In the Old Testament, Solomon is the person most associated with wisdom. He is the author of most of the wisdom literature in the Old Testament (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon).
- First Kings says Solomon's wisdom was greater than anyone in the ancient world. Sages from all over came to learn from him.
- It also tells us that Solomon's wisdom was so great because it came from God.

At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, “Ask what I shall give you.” And Solomon said, “You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you.

1 Kings 3:5–6

And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day. And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered

1 Kings 3:6–8

or counted for multitude. Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?" It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. And God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the

1 Kings 3:9–11

life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other

1 Kings 3:12–13

king shall compare with you, all your days. And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days.” And Solomon awoke, and behold, it was a dream. Then he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.

1 Kings 3:14–15

And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding beyond measure, and breadth of mind like the sand on the seashore, so that Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all other men . . . and his fame was in all the surrounding nations.

1 Kings 4:29-31

He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005. He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall. He spoke also of beasts, and of birds, and of reptiles, and of fish. And people of all nations came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and from all the kings of the earth, who had heard of his wisdom.

1 Kings 4:32-34

THE WISDOM OF KING SOLOMON



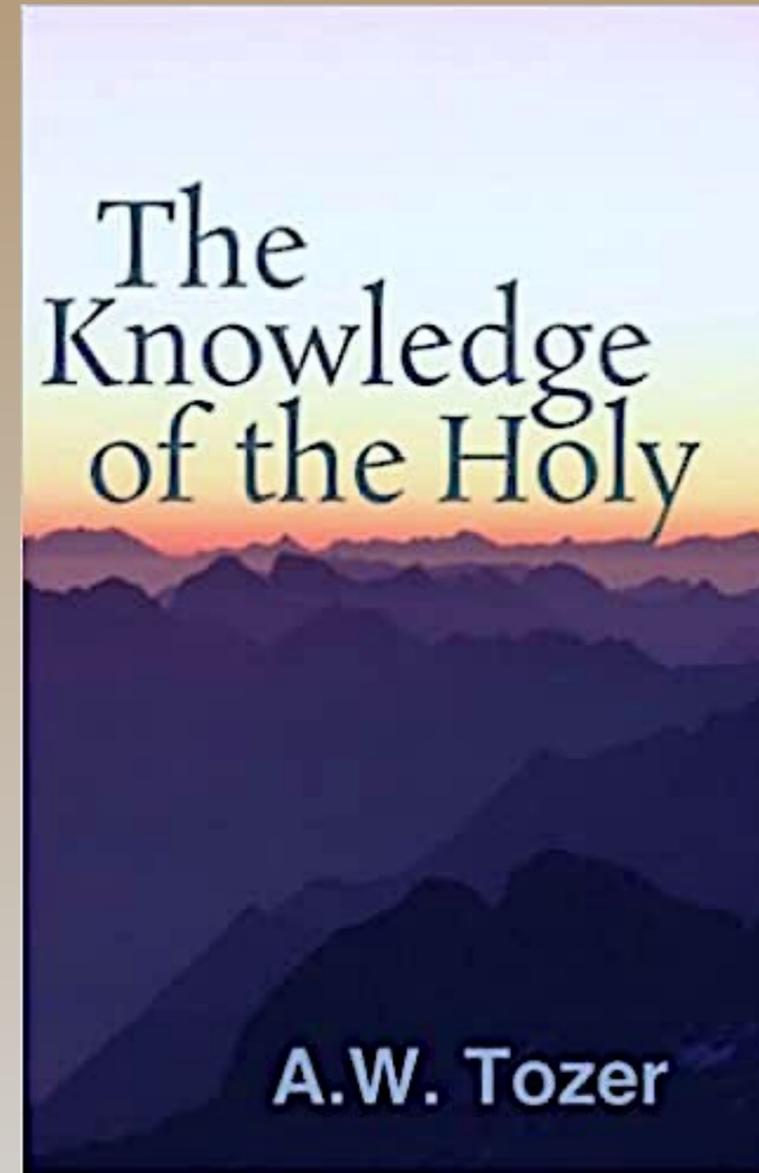
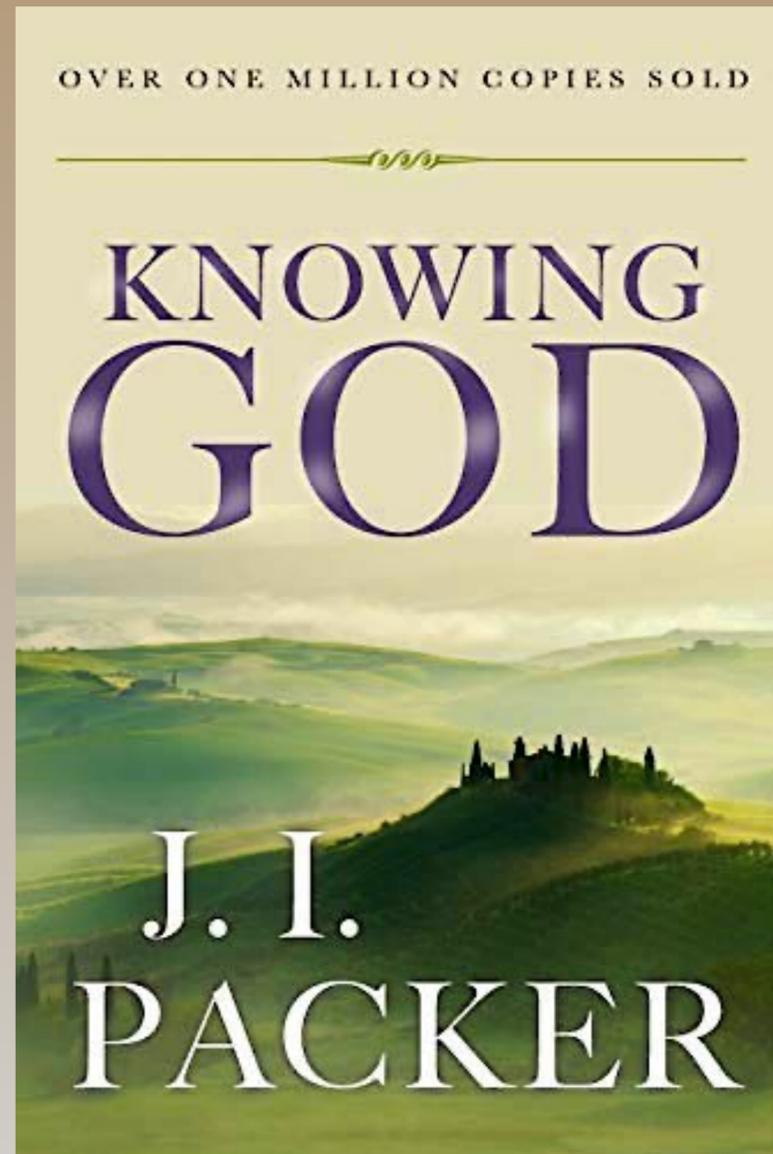
Proverbs - Wisdom

- God's wisdom is not like human wisdom. Human wisdom leads to selfish ambition, but God's wisdom leads to humility, peace, and mercy (James 3:13–17).
- God's wisdom makes even the greatest human wisdom look like foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:18–31). His thoughts are higher than our thoughts (Isaiah 55:8–9; Jeremiah 51:15–17).
- God alone is the source of true wisdom (Proverbs 2:6).

Proverbs - Wisdom

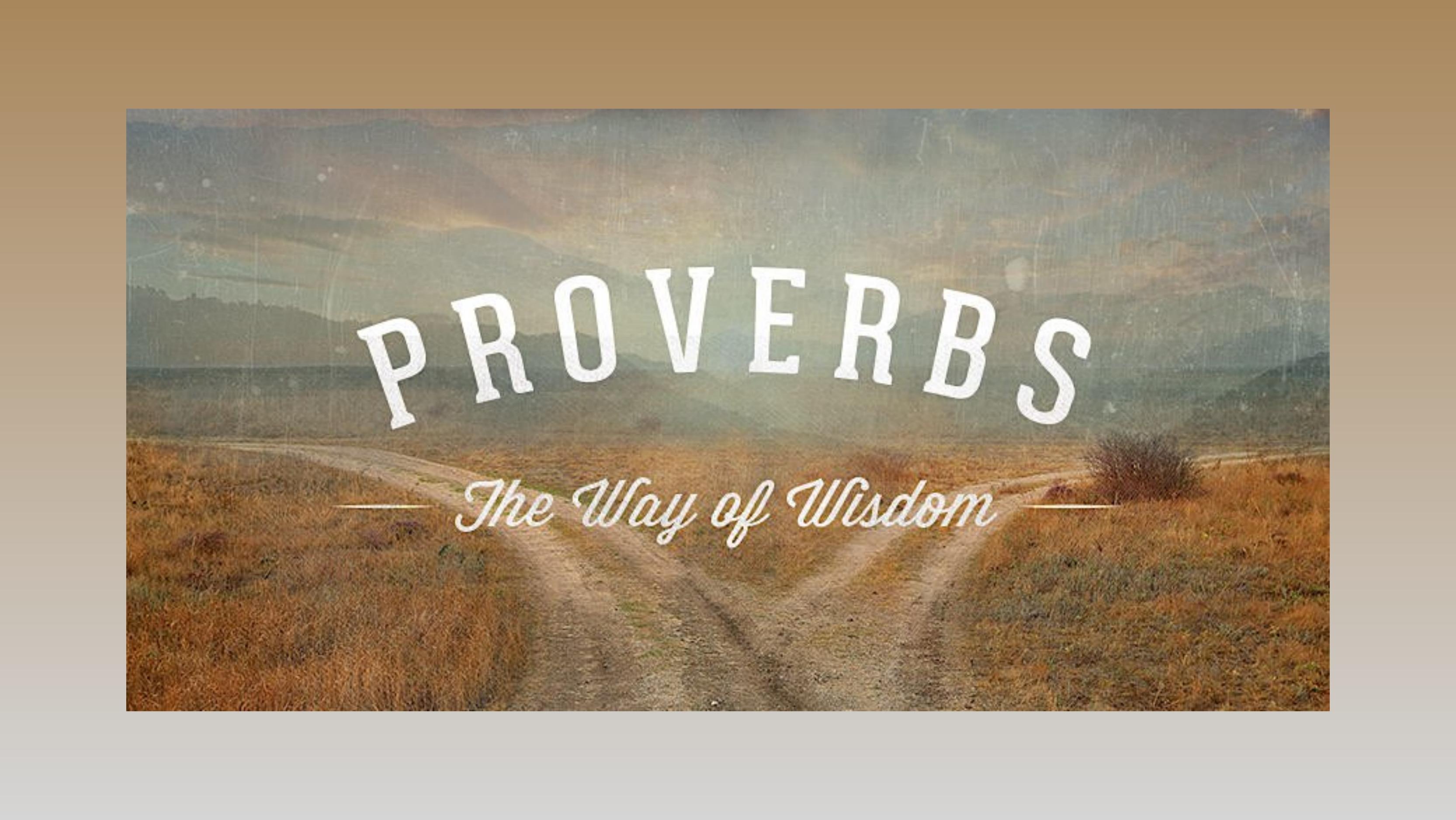
- J. I. Packer: “In the Holy Scriptures, wisdom, when used of God and good men, always carries a strong moral connotation. It is conceived as being pure, loving and good.”
- A. W. Tozer: “Wisdom is the power to see, and the inclination to choose, the best and highest goal, together with the surest means of attaining it. Wisdom is, in fact, the practical side of moral goodness. As such, it is found in its fullness only in God. He alone is naturally and entirely and invariable wise.”

Proverbs - Wisdom



Proverbs - Wisdom

- All Christians have the gift of “wisdom from above” by the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us (John 3:1–8).
- The Spirit gives us the wisdom of God “in words not taught us by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual” (1 Corinthians 2:12–14).
- James promises us that any time we lack wisdom, all we have to do is ask God and “it will be given him” (James 1:5).

A landscape photograph featuring a dirt road that winds through a field of dry, golden-brown grass. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains under a sky with soft, grey clouds. The overall tone is serene and contemplative.

PROVERBS

The Way of Wisdom

The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel:

To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight, to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity;

Proverbs 1:1-3

to give prudence to the simple, knowledge
and discretion to the youth

Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and
the one who understands obtain guidance,
to understand a proverb and a saying,

Proverbs 1:4-6

Proverbs 1:1-6

- Proverbs is a collection of sayings.
- Proverbs are short one-line or two-line sayings that are easy to memorize and therefore repeat to others.
- Solomon addressed Proverbs to his son (1:8), though it was to all of his “children,” the whole nation of Israel.
- The Proverbs contain mnemonic and poetic devices that help readers commit them to memory.

Proverbs 1:1-6

- The Proverbs are practical advice, not abstract theology or narrative.
- Because of the nature of proverbs, we must be careful when applying them to our modern daily lives.
- They are often simple or overstated, so we need to be careful not to read too much into them and make them say things they don't intend to say.

Proverbs 1:1-6

- The proverbs are not promises of success.
- “The fear of the Lord adds length to the life, but the years of the wicked are cut short” (Proverbs 10:27) is not a guarantee that you will live a long life if you follow Jesus.
- “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6) is not a guarantee that your children won’t walk away from the Lord.

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

Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake
not your mother's teaching, for they are a graceful
garland for your head and pendants for your neck.

Proverbs 1:7-9

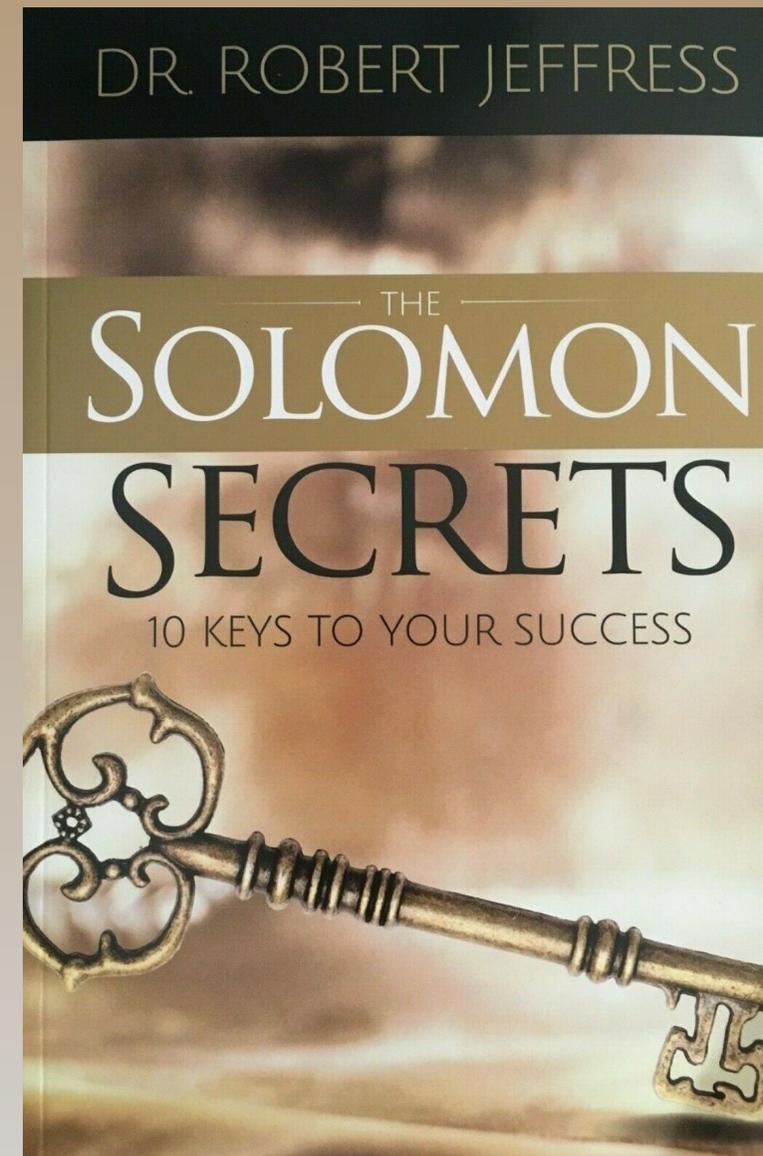
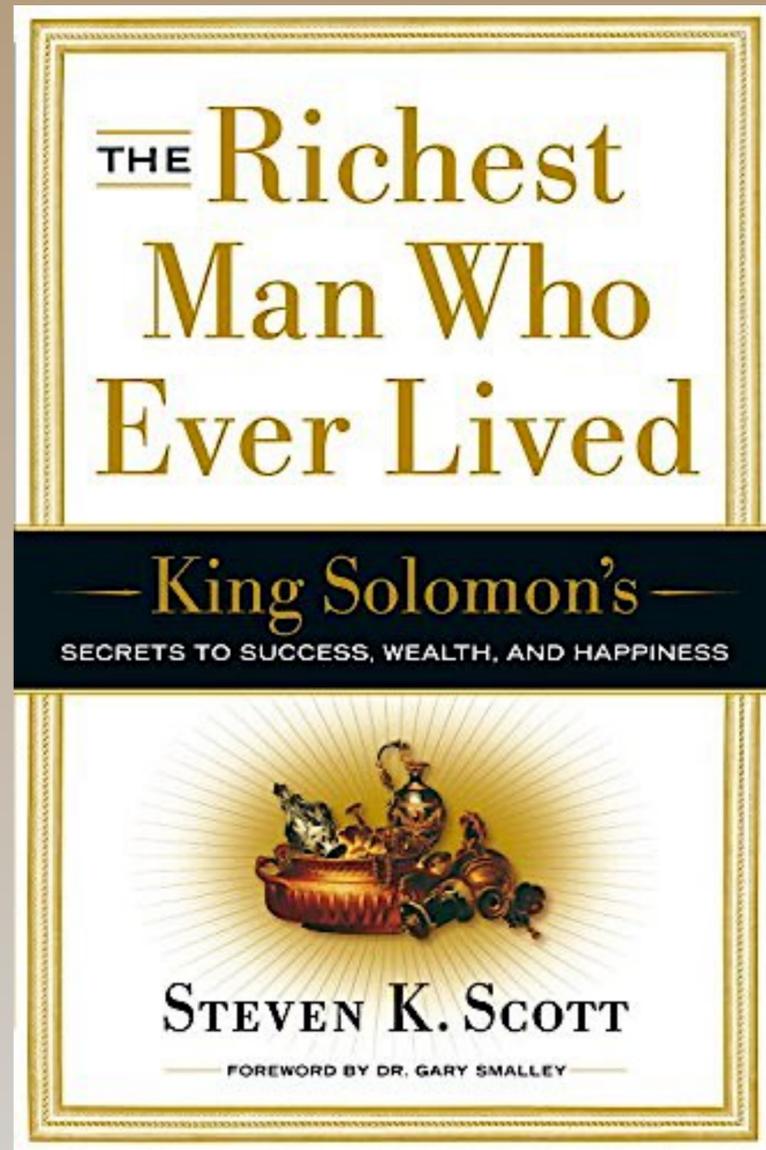
Proverbs 1:7–9

- The proverbs are rooted in the “fear of the Lord.”
- This means having reverence for God.
- It is understanding that God is God, and we are not.
- Proverbs 1:7 says “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge,” while Proverbs 9:10 says the exact same thing but uses the word “wisdom” instead.

Proverbs 1:7–9

- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom because wisdom begins with a proper relationship with God, which leads to a moral lifestyle.
- We start with a relationship with God and as we walk with Him.
- In Proverbs, fearing God is connected to knowing God (2:4–5) and results in hating evil (8:13). It also produces confidence (14:26), humility (3:7), and contentment (15:16).

Resources



Ask Kerby



What should we think about the current cases of censorship?

Does the Bible say anything about free speech?

Current Examples of Censorship



Joe Rogan and Bernie Sanders

Whoopi Goldberg, Sara Haines, and Joy Behar



Censorship

- The issue of free speech and censorship is larger than these examples.
- Glenn Greewald laments that the left “are obsessed with finding ways to silence and censor adversaries. Every week, if not every day, they have new targets they want de-platformed, banned, silenced, and otherwise prevented from speaking or being heard.”
- The left’s “preferred censorship tactic was to expand and distort the concept of ‘hate speech’ and even falsely claim that the First Amendment doesn’t protect hate speech.”



Censorship

- The First Amendment does protect “hate speech” and most every other kind of speech, except such things as: obscenity, defamation, blackmail, and incitement to violence.
- But the left discovered that the “hate speech” argument wasn’t broad enough, so they began to censor “misinformation” or “disinformation.”
- While the “censorship impulse” affects both Christians and non-Christians, liberals and conservatives, the most recent polls show that the liberal elite and Democratic voters are more supportive of Big Tech and the government censoring speech and information.

Legal Issues

- “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”
- Freedom of speech means having the right to speak without governmental restriction or censorship.
- But private companies (Spotify, Facebook, Twitter, ABC) are not the government and thus have freedom to censor.

Social Issues

- Liberal ideal: “I disagree with what you say, but I will defend your right to say it.” A paraphrase of Voltaire from biographer Evelyn Beatrice Hall.
- Liberals and conservatives promoted free speech and robust debate. But the left (different from liberals) no longer promotes free speech.
- Dennis Prager: “The left controls universities. There is little or no dissent allowed at universities. The left controls nearly every ‘news’ medium. There is little or no dissent in the mainstream media — not in the ‘news’ sections and not in the opinion sections. The left controls Hollywood. No dissent is allowed in Hollywood.”

Biblical Issues

- Although the Bible doesn't advocate for nor prohibit free speech, it does provide biblical principles about speech.
- First, we have freedom in Christ (John 8:31-36; Galatians 5:1).
- Second, the Bible condemns lying, deception, filthy language, and slander (Exodus 20:7-16; Leviticus 19:11; Ephesians 4; Colossians 3:8-9; Titus 3:2).
- Third, we are to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15 and 29:1).
- Fourth, we should speak out against evil (Esther 4:14; Ephesians 5:11; Romans 12:21; 2 Timothy 4:2-4).

Application

- I believe Christians should be against “the cancel culture,” whether it is Christians being cancelled or others in society.
- We should be willing to listen: “Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry” (James 1:19). We should listen because we may learn something from other people (Philippians 2:3).
- We should not get angry: “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Proverbs 15:1) and “The quiet words of the wise are more to be heeded than the shouts of a ruler of fools” (Ecclesiastes 9:17).

Resources

