

Purpose of Proverbs

Fred R. Coulter—July 21, 2012

We're working on a project for the youth: the book of Proverbs. The reason is because the book of Proverbs is meant to give instruction to young people so that they can program and train their minds to know right from wrong, good from evil, and to know the things that will make them successful in life.

I've done a series on it: *Who Controls Your Mind?* I've used the book of Proverbs. That becomes the question for all young people. When you leave the strict control of your fathers and mothers and you're out on your own, a little at a time—and that becomes more and more—you have to make choices about what you're going to do. You have to make choices about who your friends are. You have to make choices about what you say, what you believe, and all of these things. I have not met anyone yet who says, 'I want to ruin and destroy my life.' But a lot of young people do because of the influences of today.

The influences of today come in many, many forms: through radio, television, cell phone, CDs, music—which is included in all of those—plus musical concerts. When the age of between 15-16 comes, the individual begins to think more like an adult because the frontal cortex has been developing. But it's just starting and it's not completed in its physical form until age 24. At age 24 then, you are now ready to really begin learning as an adult.

A lot of people don't like to understand this, but look at how many have ruined their lives because of making wrong choices as teenagers, especially those who get involved in drugs, those who get involved in gangs, those who get involved in things that you know and I know. Just like young people when they get out from under the control of their parents and get with their friends. They begin to go along with the crowd.

You do things that you know—I did, everyone of us here as adults did—your parents don't approve of. So, the key becomes for every youth:

- How do I run my life and make the right choices?
- How can I make my life a success rather than go along with the crowd and my friends?

When they are taught today, they are taught there is no God. They are also taught that the Bible is just a 'book of literature,' rather than the Word of God. So they are missing two great things:

1. knowledge of their Creator

They're running around here trying to live their lives.

2. the knowledge of God is available to them, especially for the youth beginning in the book of Proverbs

Gilibaldo Elizondo is one of those working for our Spanish-speaking brethren and there were seven children in the family. In the book of Proverbs there are 31 chapters, so here's what the Elizondo family did: The father had them read aloud in his presence--they would take turn reading the verses—one chapter a day, which meant that in a month they would go through the whole book of Proverbs.

Not one of them has left the Church. Not one of them has ruined their lives. In talking to them, Randy Vild, who is our editor for Church at Home, talked to one of the daughters and she said, 'We read the book of Proverbs everyday, all the time.' What I would like to do, I would like you to have you read the book of Proverbs.

As I've been going down to Southern California, that's what I've been doing. I just finished it my last time down there. It's all done. Now Randy is editing it for two forms:

1. On a CD so it can be listened to, it can be loaded up on a hand-held device. It can be played on a computer. It can be played on a CD player.
2. He's doing a DVD, as well, not only with the reading, but that the pages will turn. He's doing it in high definition.

We want to set that up with the sermons that I have done on Proverbs and also the thing, *Who Controls Your Mind?* I'll give you a clue. Ask yourself: Do I control my mind? If you have songs ringing through your head all the day because you're listening to music, do you really control your mind? *or* Does the music?

The reason that this is so important is because the most important thing that anyone can do—whether a child, and the Proverbs says even a child is known by his doing, whether it is good or whether it is not—a youth, or an adult is this: **How do you behave yourself when no one is around to supervise you?** Remember this, when you come into a room all by yourself and shut the door, that's who you are. That's important!

Proverbs 4:11: "I have taught you in the way of wisdom..." That's what everyone wants to do. They want to be wise and educated. There's a way. If you don't have the Proverbs, you won't be wise.

“...I have led you in the right paths. When you go, your steps shall not be hampered, and when you run, you shall not stumble” (vs 11-12).

I don't know how many friends that you may know who got themselves in trouble with the police, with their parents, that are on drugs. They are absolutely obsessed with music. All of these things affect the mind. Remember, *you are at the most important part of programming your mind!* This is why the Proverbs is so important. Because if there's one thing you want to program right, it's not your computer. Yeah, get that right, but program your mind to know right and wrong, good and evil.

Verse 13: “Keep hold of instruction; do not let go; keep her, for she *is* your life. Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not into the way of evil *men*. Avoid it; do not go in it; turn from it, and pass on! For they do not sleep except when they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away unless they cause *some* to fall, For they eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence” (vs 13-17).

That's when they really give themselves over to the evil and make themselves evil by practicing evil. Because ‘as you think in your heart, *so are you.*’ As you program your mind, that's how you're going to live.

Verse 18: “But the path of the just *is* as the shining light, that shines more and more to the perfect day. The way of the wicked *is* as darkness...” (vs 18-19). There's a new movie out, *The Dark Knight Rises*. How did that start out? In Aurora, Colorado, it started out pretty bad: killed 12 people and wounded 58! Isn't that interesting—darkness. Who is the author of darkness? *Satan!* Who is the author of light? *God!*

“...they know not at what they stumble” (v 19). In other words, their lives are such that they don't know how to live and nothing goes right and they don't know how to make it go right.

Verse 20: “My son... [applies to daughters, as well] ...attend to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Let them not depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart, For they *are* life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh” (vs 20-22).

- everyone wants to be healthy
- everyone wants to be smart
- everyone wants to be successful

Why not? *Because they have never been taught the right way!* They have never understood the importance of putting right things in their minds.

Here's a key. If there's any one thing in anybody's life—this applies to all ages, v 23:

“**Above all guard the door of your mind...**” When you were a child, your parents did that for you. Now when you're older, *you have to do it yourself*. So ask yourself:

- What is my mind on?
- What do I think about?
- Who are my friends?
- What do they do?
- How do they influence me?
- What movies do I watch?
- Who are my idols?
- Who do I try and mimic in my life, whether boy or girl?

“...guard the door of your mind with diligence... [you have to be at it all the time] ...for out of it *are* the issues of life” (v 23).

When an event happens, like it did up in Aurora, they say, ‘I wonder what happened? I wonder what led him to do this?’ They get reports and I heard on the radio coming down on the news, some of the neighbors say, ‘He was a nice all-American boy.’ But something happened to where he did not choose to do right. And, of course, what he planned, with all the ammunition, with all of the armored clothes that he was wearing, the guns that he had, the way that he booby-trapped his apartment, *it was planned.*

What was it? What was the turning point with him that he let something into his mind that caused him to do it? *I don't know!* Maybe a year ago it would never have come into his mind. We don't know the circumstances. But think about the friends you have. Any of them die in car wrecks? Any of them overdose on drugs? Any of them belong to gangs? They're held captive by gangs? You've got to think of that. That's why it says: “**Above all guard the door of your mind...**” You have to be your own mental policeman.

Another thing to guard against is *emotion*. You need to begin training yourself now to not make decisions based upon feelings and emotions. Then you add sex into it and you have like in some communities, 75% of the children are born out of wedlock. How do you think they're going to turn out?

“...for out of it... [your mind.] ...*are* the issues of life.... [they affect you from now on] ...Put away from you a deceitful mouth, and devious lips put far from you. Let your eyes look right on, and let your eyelids look straight before you. Ponder the path of your feet, and all your ways *will be* established. Do not turn to the right hand nor to the left; remove your foot from evil” (vs 23-27).

The important thing is on major issues, remember: *Don't let anyone pressure you into*

doing something that is not right! Because they do, and you're going to regret it. It does affect your life.

Let's see something here very interesting, as well. This is why we're doing the book of Proverbs for the youth, because today *they need education in God's way* and they need it in a form that they can have ready. They need it where they can listen to it. The book of Proverbs is very important from this point of view: While it brings out God and effects of good and evil, it's not dealing in heavy doctrine. Heavy doctrine would be what people would consider 'religious.' But when you're young, you need to learn how to train your mind to *think* and you don't need the heavy doctrine.

This is why God designed it for the youth. Let's see a couple of interesting things here in the first chapter. As we do, I want you to think about your life growing up, if you're older than 60, and those who are not. I want you to think about the friends you have had growing up. I want you to think about where they are now.

- What have they done with their lives?
- How has it turned out?
- Do you know anyone in prison?
- In youth correction?
- In drug rehab?
- In sex rehab?
- *Think about it.*

One time a decision came along and they had to make and they didn't have the tools to make it. Here's what the Proverbs are for.

Proverbs 1:1: "The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel: To know wisdom and instruction..." (vs 1-2).

- Do you want to be wise?
- Don't you want to be smart?
- Don't you want to understand instruction?

...to perceive the words of understanding; to receive the instruction of wisdom, righteousness, and judgment, and equity" (vs 2-3). All the things you need

- to think
- to make right decision
- to know right and wrong
- to keep yourself from making bad decisions

Verse 4: "To give prudence to the simple..." Who are the simple? The simple are the ones who need their minds programmed. This doesn't mean the simpleton, someone who's mentally deficient.

"...knowledge and discretion to the young man.... [specifically made for young people] ...A wise man will hear and will increase learning, and a

man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsel" (vs 4-5).

I'll never forget, I joined the army and they shipped me down to Fort Ord, right over here near Seaside, California. Of course, you go through everything you go through. The first thing they do is they run you into the barber for a haircut. They always do this. Everybody has their hair at varying lengths and how he wants to wear it. The barber says, 'How would you like your hair cut?' Some said, 'A little here, don't take too much off the back,' and so forth. So, they go zoom, zoom, zoom—there you go, next! All the recruits get the recruit haircut.

Then we have a big welcoming assembly. The general of Fort Ord comes on the stage, and, of course, he's got all of these ribbons and his uniform and his hat; he's very important and looks very impressive. He came out and he welcomed us. He said, 'I want you to remember one thing.' At that time I was 18. He says, 'I want you to remember this. *A wise man learns from his mistakes. A wiser man learns from the mistakes of others.*' Did I remember that? *Yes, I did!* That's what the book of Proverbs is for.

Verse 6: "To understand a proverb and its interpretation, the words of the wise, and their dark sayings." The dark says are those things that cause men of understanding to learn from the unknown, like a researcher.

- You want to learn?
- You want to be wise?
- You want to understand?

Verse 7 tells you right here: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge..." You have to fear God. Remember, ***God created everything!***

The other night Dolores and I were watching a program on the core of the earth; quite a program. Everybody thinks they are so wise and smart and understand so many things. I was looking at that and they are able through the electrical, technical, and digital equipment that they have to send probing waves down through the middle of the earth so they know what it is.

The core of the earth is almost like a miniature sun captured with everything over the top of it. But it's made of iron and nickel. It's constantly moving and sending out magnetic waves that go clear out beyond the earth and act as *a shield* for the earth. So that when they have solar flares, and those things come from outer space toward the earth, this pushes them aside.

Here we are walking on the face of the earth, what do we know? *Nothing!* After watching that I thought, who really, really with all the education

anyone can get, who really, really knows anything? Yet, between the ages of 16-24 you know everything in the world—isn't that true?

This is why the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge! Have you ever had someone lie to you directly? *Of course!* How did you feel? Have you ever had someone betray you by lying? Have you had a friend that always told the truth to everyone, including his mother and father, including friends? *No!*

Why do I bring that up? *Because that's important!* The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, **because God cannot lie!** God's Word is His Truth. So, if you fear the Lord and know His commandments and won't transgress those commandments, you're going to keep yourself in very good stead. God will bless you.

Verse 7: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, *but* fools despise wisdom and instruction." If you don't believe that, go onto your television set and watch either NatGeo (National Geographic) or CNBC. NatGeo will give you the inner workings of prisons. Why are they in prison? *Because they didn't fear the Lord and they despised wisdom and instruction!*

I remember our son David was driving a Corvette one time and he was driving from Los Angeles back to Hollister. I think he was about 19 at the time. He wanted to see how fast he could drive, so he got it up—80, 85, 90, 95, 100—he's passing everything along the way—105-110-115. He didn't know it, the helicopters were watching him and the highway patrol cars were going up to the other intersection. He was going along and having a ball, flying up the road at 135 mph right on Highway 5. Since he didn't see any highway patrol, who's going to chase him at 135 mph. They knew he had to get gas, so the helicopters were watching.

So, when he pulled over to get gas, guess what? They all came in, frisked him, put him on the ground, handcuffed him, and took him off to jail! He had to do 18-months of highway cleanup, plus a hefty fine.

When you despise wisdom and instruction and you go your way.... There's another story of another man I know, he must have about 8 or 10 at the time. There was a gas can here with the top off and he had some matches. He was going to do a very bright thing. He said, 'I wonder what would happen if I dropped it into the gas?' He lit the match and he dropped it down and it went out just as it dropped into the open gas can. He was spared!

Think about some things that you have done. This is not true confession time. We don't need to

know it. Think about some things that your friends have done where they did not follow instruction.

Verse 8: "My son, hear the instruction of your father and forsake not the law of your mother." There is one commandment that's important to understand—the fifth commandment—honor your father and your mother that your days on the earth may be long. Everyone wants to live a long time—right? *Yes!* That's how to do it, so here it is right here.

First thing boys are warned against is gangs, right here in the book of Proverbs. What's the biggest problem with youth crime today? *Gangs!* For some it's very hard to resist, because they bring pressure on you. They entice you with different things.

Verse 10: "My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent. If they say, 'Come with us, let us lie in wait for blood; we will watch secretly for the innocent without cause' (vs 10-12). That's what gangs do—don't they? *Yes, indeed!* They steal, they kill. They have gang fights—right? *Yes!*

Verse 12: "Let us swallow them up alive as the grave, and whole, as those who go down into the pit. We shall find all precious substance; we shall fill our houses *with* plunder; Cast in your lot among us, and let us have one purse.' My son, do not walk in the way with them! Keep back your foot from their path, for their feet run to evil and make haste to shed blood" (vs 13-16).

Have you ever heard of the MS-13 gang? You only get recognition to start joining it if you mug someone. Then you can come in as a new recruit. In order to go up the ladder, then you must do more and more violent crime. In order to be accepted by the top of the MS-13 gang so you can be on the inner circle of the local gang, you've got to kill somebody.

If they would have had this education, ***if*** they would have followed what's in the Bible, that wouldn't have happened. But they reject it. So, it's up to every youth, every adult, every person ***to learn the way of God and to live it!***

Another thing is important: Do not seek instant success. You must build to it. Prov. 2 tells us how to build for success.

Proverbs 2:1: "My son, if you will receive my words and treasure up my commandments within you... [I want you to notice how this comes along. This becomes very important.] ...so that you incline your ear to wisdom and apply your heart to understanding; yea, if you cry after knowledge *and* lift up your voice for understanding" (vs 1-3).

What does all of this show? *This shows you have to put yourself out to really want it!* If you can, do it! But here's how to do it, v 4: "If you seek her as silver and search *for* her as for hidden treasures." Make your life's occupation from age 13 to 19 to become as educated as you can. Sometimes that means you have got to have education that now you can get online because they're not teaching it in the schools.

Jonathan has been very good with his children. He has made sure they have studied. He's made sure they've gone to school. They have been very successful up to this point. But they've had to work hard, they've had to study hard. This is what it's all about here when it says seek it in this manner.

Verse 5: "Then... [if you're doing these things] **...you shall understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.**" And who can give greater knowledge than God? *No one!* All of the intellect and the elite of the world claiming to know so many things, but rejecting God, what do they know? *They know nothing!* God says they're fools.

Verse 6: "For the LORD gives wisdom... [through His Word] ...out of His mouth *comes* knowledge and understanding." That's what these words are from God.

Some people would say, 'Well, if God would come down and tell me to do it, I would do it.' ***He already did and He's recorded it and it's in the Bible!*** So if you want to know what God wants you to do, there it is—read it.

Like one man said, 'Well, if God would come down and tell me to keep the Sabbath, I'd keep it.' *God did!* He came down on Mount Sinai and He told all the children of Israel: Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it Holy. It's written there. So that's why God has it written and preserved.

Think about this. There are two kinds of successful people in the world:

1. First kind: you can get an overview of that by watching *American Greed* on CNBC.

They appear successful, but they lie and cheat and steal and connive and they always get in deeper and deeper and deeper.

2. The other kind of successful people are those who:
 - learn of God
 - know His ways
 - know His commandments
 - live according to His Truth
 - live good, sound, strong, God-fearing honest lives

They are successful! They may not be rolling in dough. They may not have a lot of money. They may not have a lot of possessions. But if they know God and know His Word and live their lives the correct way—according to the Word of God and all the basis found here in Proverbs—God gives them wisdom and righteousness.

What we're going to do with this project then is we have our six youth Proverb books to go with it. We're going to combine the reading of the book of Proverbs with a calendar schedule of what to read on what day. There will be the CD audio. There will be the digital DVD, hand-held device, iPad—all of this sort of thing.

This will be one way that we can help the young people that want to!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Proverbs 4:11-27
- 2) Proverbs 1:1-8, 10-16
- 3) Proverbs 2:1-6

Also referenced:

Sermon Series: *Who Controls Your Mind?*

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