

Title: EVERYDAY THEOLOGY, PROVERBS.  
(Chatham, NJ; 01/27/08, AM) [D – Literary Form]

Theme: The Book of Proverbs teaches us practical theology in the areas of discipline, marriage, and speech.

Purpose: To enlighten the audience about what Proverbs says in the three areas above.

Introduction:

1. Preachers sometimes avoid Proverbs because they don't think it is theological enough.
2. It contains advice related to the everyday affairs of life, and I say it is permeated with the most practical of all theologies: how to live your life, to put theology into flesh and blood existence.
3. These are things God cares about, and they are the kinds of things that the New Testament letters contain in its "how to live" sections.
4. The proverbs are short, pithy statements of advice (4:14; 4:24).
5. Sometimes they are simple observations without the advice (17:1).
6. They are eminently hierarchal: the wise seek to enlighten the foolish, and parents expect children to listen.
7. Wisdom is something passed on from one person to another, born out of experience and received wisdom.
8. Although Proverbs aren't written in narrative form, there is always a story, or context, or experience behind them. (For example we have probably known people who have lived lives devoid of contentment because they thought the "grass was greener on the other side of the fence.")
9. It is this behind-the-scene narrative that explodes the proverb into meaningful advice.
10. Three areas of concern are found both in Proverbs and in the letters: discipline, marriage, and speech. (Maybe I've bitten off more than I can chew.)

I. Discipline.

A. In the New Testament.

1. Paul disciplined his body, 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.
2. 2 Timothy 3:16 – Scripture trains us in righteousness.
3. Grace is not license, rather it teaches us "to say no," Titus 2:11-12, to renounce worldly passions and to live in a self-controlled way (a fruit of the Holy Spirit, by the way).

B. Proverbs contains a lot of the background for this.

1. The man led into adultery "dies from lack of discipline," (5:23).
2. Rejecting discipline is foolish (12:1).
3. Death awaits the one who will not be disciplined (15:10).

C. Have you seen the experience behind any of this?

1. Nolan Ryan's story and how he persevered in his pitching career.
2. Ryan is in the hall of fame: high number of strikeouts and 6 no-hitters.
3. His attention to the mechanics of pitching is the stuff of pitching legend.
4. He also claims that he discovered the weight room, and a disciplined regimen kept him in MLB longer than he could have imagined.
5. His biography narrates the story of several other pitchers who had to quit because they didn't train themselves enough to stay strong and fit.

6. That story can be multiplied many times over. Either in sports or some other endeavor, we can find the people who failed because they hated discipline.
7. Satan sometimes simply wages a war of attrition; he wears out the saints (Daniel 7:25) who haven't the discipline to continue. Watchman Nee applies this to our need to be disciplined in prayer.

## II. Marriage; Specifically Faithfulness in Marriage.

### A. The New Testament.

1. Let marriage be honored and undefiled, Hebrews 13:4.
2. Peter and Paul both give directives for the institution of marriage.
3. Jesus warns against the lust that breeds adultery, Mt. 5:27-30.

### B. The warnings and blessings from Proverbs.

1. Adultery lacks sense and destroys the participant, 6:32.
2. All of us are painfully aware that there are many reasons besides adultery that destroy marriages.
3. Adultery tops the list because it is the ultimate act of faithlessness and betrayal.
4. All of chapter 5 is a warning against being seduced by it.
5. Proverbs 7:25 says to keep your heart from the ways of the adulteress.

### C. There is a story repeated over and over again, Proverbs 7.

1. Think about what Solomon sees out of the window of his house, 7:6ff.
2. An unwise man (lacking sense, 7) is seduced by a wayward woman (10-21).
3. This story climaxes in destruction and ruin (22-23, 27).
4. Such stories are endless; the seducer could easily be male in any one of them.
5. When Proverbs says don't be "intoxicated with a forbidden woman," (5:20) and "Rejoice in the wife of your youth," (5:18), he speaks with the wisdom of having seen destruction caused by unfaithfulness.
6. A wise person remains faithful to their spouse.

## III. The Proper Use of Words, the Power of Speech.

### A. In the New Testament.

1. The tongue is hard to control, James 3:1-12.
2. However, without control one's religion is worthless, James 1:26. Talk about theology having a practical application!
3. Words are important to the growth of the community, Col. 3:16, and should be used for building up not tearing down, Ephesians 4:29.
4. Names do hurt; words build up or words destroy.

### B. The Proverbs on Speech and Words.

1. Words can heal, 12:25 & 16:24.
2. They can destroy, 16:27. (15:1 illustrates both.)
3. Proper words are associated with wisdom, 15:2.
4. The right words at the right time are valuable, 25:11-12.
5. Too many words indicate foolishness, 18:2 (also Ecc. 5:2-3).

### C. We could overdo stories about words and speakers.

1. On the lighter side, consider the parrot in Quebec (photocopy).

2. On the more sinister side, you know how words can mask the truth (*Salvo*, summer '07, 69).
3. Words are important. How we use them is significant. Controlling our speech is a major theological concern.

Conclusion:

1. I commend to you the Book of Proverbs for a lifetime of study and thought.
2. I heard of one family that read a chapter a day at dinner for many years.
3. If you've not been tantalized with the power and importance of what the Book of Proverbs has to offer, then let us end with the reading of these words, Proverbs 3:13-18.