**THE NATURE OF WISDOM**

1. Three books are commonly known as “wisdom books”: Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes.
2. Also, a number of psalms can be classified as wisdom literature, and many put Song of Songs (aka Song of Solomon) in the wisdom category.
3. “Wisdom is the ability to make godly \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_in life.”
4. Wisdom exists when a person thinks and acts according to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_when making choices in life.
   1. So, a person can \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_in wisdom by acting more in line with truth.
5. Since wisdom is about making right choices and we make choices about everything in life, wisdom deals with all of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
6. “the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom” (Prov. 9:10, Ps. 111:10)
7. Wisdom as the Bible defines it is more about our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_toward God than about our intellect or cleverness.
   1. Thus, the only good choices are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_choices.
8. So, wisdom literature deals with people and their \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_– how well they make godly choices and whether they are learning to apply God’s truth to life.
9. Wisdom was taught by “wise men” in ancient Israel. But, wisdom has always been taught more often at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
   1. It can also be gained through discussion with colleagues.
10. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_was the medium for OT wisdom. Remember the poetic devices! (Especially parallelisms – synonymous, antithetical, synthetic – metaphors, acrostics, alliteration, and numerical sequences)
    1. This made for easy \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_of wisdom literature.
11. Wisdom’s limit is in its proper use. It must be subordinated to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_to God.

ABUSES OF WISDOM LITERATURE

1. People often read these book in bits and thus fail to see that they have an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_message.
   1. Teaching a piece of wisdom out of its greater context can lead to misapplication.
2. People sometimes misunderstand wisdom terms, categories, styles, and literary modes which leads to misuse.
3. In Job especially, people fail to follow the line of argument resulting in citing as wisdom what was intended as showing an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_understanding of life.

**WISDOM IN PROVERBS**

1. Proverbial wisdom concentrates mostly on practical attitudes and behavior in everyday life: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. There is sharp contrast between choosing a life a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_and choosing a life of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
   1. Look to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_what is called folly and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_what is called wisdom.
3. Specifically \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_language is seldom used in Proverbs.
   1. This helps avoid the harmful tendency to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_everything.
4. From the Hebrew term for proverbs, we see that a proverb is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_expression of a truth.
   1. The briefer a statement is, the less likely it is to be totally precise and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_applicable.
5. English example of a proverb equivalent: “Look before you leap!”
   1. Concise, easy to memorize, figure of speech, not exact
6. Proverbs do not state everything about a truth, but they point \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_it.
   1. Consider Prov. 6:27-29 & 16:3

**HERMENEUTICAL GUIDELINES FOR PROVERBS**

1. Proverbs are not legal \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_from God!
   1. They state a wise way to approach practical goals but in terms that cannot be treated like a divine warranty of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
   2. Remember, there is wisdom literature (e.g., Ecclesiastes & Job) that teaches that there is little that is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_about the good or bad events that occur in life.
   3. Consider: Prov. 22:26-27 & Prov. 29:12
2. Proverbs must be read as a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
   1. Each inspired proverb must be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_with others and understood in comparison with the rest of Scripture.
   2. The more in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_one reads a proverb, the less clear its interpretation may be.
   3. Sometimes the proverbs are even collected in groupings to be read all together.
3. Proverbs are worded to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, not to be theoretically \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
   1. No proverb is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_statement of truth.
   2. Proverbs try to impart knowledge that can be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_rather than a philosophy that can impress a critic and be lived by in any and every circumstance.
   3. E.g., acrostic in Prov. 31:10-31
4. Some proverbs need to be “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” to be appreciated.
   1. Many proverbs express their truths according to practices and institutions that no longer exist.
   2. We must “translate” them to their \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_equivalents.
   3. Consider: Prov. 22:11 & Prov. 25:24

SOME RULES

1. Proverbs are often parabolic (i.e., figurative, pointing beyond themselves).
2. Proverbs are intensely practical, not theoretically theological.
3. Proverbs are worded to be memorable, not technically precise.
4. Proverbs are not designed to support selfish behavior – just the opposite!
5. Proverbs strongly reflecting ancient culture may need sensible “translation” so as not to lose their meaning.
6. Proverbs are not guarantees from God but poetic guidelines for good behavior.
7. Proverbs may use highly specific language, exaggeration, or any variety of literary techniques to make their point.
8. Proverbs give good advice for wise approaches to certain aspects of life but are not exhaustive in their coverage.
9. Wrongly used, proverbs may justify a crass, materialistic lifestyle.
10. Rightly used, proverbs will provide practical advice for daily living.

**WISDOM IN JOB**

1. The book of Job is a carefully structured \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_between Job and his well-meaning but desperately wrong “comforters.”
2. The dialogue’s goal is important: to establish convincingly in the mind of the reader that what happens in life does not always happen either because God \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_it or because it is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
3. The wisdom given in the end of the book when God addresses Job and his friends is that God’s choices are always \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_to ours; his ways are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_than our ways.

**WISDOM IN ECCLESIASTES**

1. This book is a wisdom monologue that often puzzles Christians and seems to be both self-contradictory and even contradictory with the rest of Scripture at times.
2. It is important for us to have an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_for reading Ecclesiastes, for even scholars are divided on its overall meaning.
   1. Some take it as “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_wisdom,” regarding an outlook on life that should be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (apart from the last few verses).
   2. Others take it \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, as an expression of how one should \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_under God in a world in which all will die in the end.
3. Our understanding hinges on our understanding of the Hebrew word *hebel* (translated “vanity”, “meaningless”, “futility”) which literally means “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” or “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” which is used 37 times in this book.
4. What is the wisdom teacher’s intent of this word?
   1. This depends on which view (positive or negative) you take of the overall meaning.
5. Either way, this speculative wisdom book lacks the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_of God’s ways that the rest of Scripture has.
   1. It must certainly be read with that in mind.

**WISDOM IN SONG OF SONGS**

1. This book is a lengthy \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_written in the style of ancient Near Eastern lyric poetry (or lyric wisdom).
2. It is considered wisdom literature because it deals explicitly with a category of wisdom found in the proverbs: the “wise choice” of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_fidelity.
3. God created love and romance as part of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_human design.
4. This book shows that true romance can be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_to God’s glory in keeping with his original \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
5. It is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_intended to be allegory for God’s love for us.