Sanctification in Proverbs: 
How the Literary Structure Provides a Rubric for Spiritual Growth

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I. THE PLACE OF PROVERBS IN BIBLICAL WISDOM

A. Toward a Canonical-Theological Reading of Proverbs

B. Creation Theology in Biblical Wisdom as Foundation for God’s Redemptive Work

C. Sanctification in Proverbs as Knowledge of the Holy One

II. THE LITERARY MACRO-STRUCTURE OF PROVERBS

A. The Seven Pillars of Wisdom: Seven Collections

B. The Incremental Program of Wisdom in Proverbs

III. OUTLINE AND PURPOSE OF THE BOOK: TITLE AND PREAMBLE (PROV 1:1–7)

A. Chiastic Structure Focusing on Righteousness and Justice as the Goal for the Inexperienced, Future Leader

B. Five Infinitives: The Key to the Purpose of Proverbs

1. To know wisdom and correction (v. 2a)
2. To understand words of insight (v. 2b)
3. To receive correction so as to gain insight (v. 3a)
4. To provide cunning to the naïve, inexperienced youth (v. 4)
5. To understand proverbs, interpretive allusions, sayings, and riddles of the wise (v. 6)
C. The Theme of Proverbs: The Fear of the LORD (Prov 1:7)

IV. INTRODUCTION TO WISDOM AS CHARACTER FORMATION: PROLOGUE (PROV 1:8–9:18)

A. The Domestic Educative Setting of the Prologue
B. The Father’s Ten Lectures and Lady Wisdom’s Five Excurses
C. The Prologue as Initial Steps in Character Formation


A. Section A: Antithetical Proverbs Contrasting the Righteous/Wise from the Wicked/Foolish (Prov 10:1–15:33)
B. Section B: Synthetic Proverbs Focusing on God’s Sovereignty and the Righteous/Wise King (Prov 16:1–22:16)


A. Identity and Function of “The Wise” in Proverbs
B. Admonitions from the Wise as a Corrective to Impulsive Youth and a Foundation for Pious Vocational Wisdom


A. Section A: Emblematic and Monitory Proverbs Outlining Proper Conduct in a Royal Context (Prov 25:1–27:27)
   1. The Royal Court and Conflict (25:1–28)
   2. Fools and Sluggards (26:1–28)
   3. Friendship and Honor (27:1–22)
   4. Attention to Detail (27:23–28)
B. Section B: Antithetical Proverbs Outlining Proper Conduct in a Royal Context (Prov 28:1–29:27)
   1. Torah (28:1–28)
   2. Justice (29:1–27)

VIII. CUMULATIVE WISDOM: THE WORDS OF AGUR (30:1–33) AND LEMUEL (31:1–31)
   A. Agur and the Riddles of the Wise (Prov 30:1–33)

   B. Lemuel and the Exaltation of Wisdom (Prov 31:1–31)

IX. CONCLUSION: SANCTIFICATION IN PROVERBS
   A. Incremental Growth in Wisdom as a Mirror for Progressive Sanctification

   B. Application of Proverbs Toward a Biblical Theology of Sanctification