The Proverbs
Lesson #1 The Purpose of Proverbs

Proverbs 1:1-6

The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel.
To know wisdom and instruction, to discern the sayings of understanding,
To receive instruction in wise behavior, righteousness, justice and equity;
To give prudence to the naive, to the youth knowledge and discretion,
A wise man will hear and increase in learning, and a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel,
To understand a proverb and a figure, the words of the wise and their riddles.

What is a proverb?
-sentences of ethical and spiritual wisdom
-short statements expressing a general moral/spiritual truth or rule of conduct, often of metaphorical nature in the form of simile’s and parables.

What is the purpose of the proverbs?
1. To know wisdom and instruction
2. To discern the sayings of understanding
3. To receive instruction in wise behavior, righteousness, justice and equity
4. To give prudence to the naive
5. To give to the youth knowledge and discretion
6. To increase the wise in wisdom, learning and understanding
7. To understand a proverb and a figure, the words of the wise and their riddles

Is there anything that stands out to you in this 7-fold purpose of the proverbs?
Would you say there is a spiritual “progression of purpose” that flows from the proverbs that God wants us to be aware of? If so, what is it? How would you explain it?

Let’s dig into this 7-fold purpose of the proverbs.

1. To know wisdom and instruction:
-to recognize, be acquainted with, and to understand how wisdom and instruction are to be applied in our everyday lives.

2. To discern the sayings of understanding:
-to rightly distinguish and consider the words/sayings of intelligence.

3. To receive instruction in wise behavior, righteousness, justice and equity:
-to take hold of/take possession of instruction, correction, and discipline concerning proper behavior such as righteousness (what is right or just), justice (judgment), and equity (equality, impartiality, fairness).

4. To give prudence to the naive:
-to equip the simple (foolish) and unskilled in wisdom and shrewdness.
5. To give to the youth knowledge and discretion:
   - to equip the young with discernment, perception, and skill.

6. To increase the wise in wisdom, learning and understanding:
   - to add to and further develop those who have already been exercised in their mental and spiritual faculties.

7. To understand a proverb and a figure, the words of the wise and their riddles:
   - to be able to discern parables and riddles, the deep and perplexing sayings and questions of life.

In your own words, how would you express the “progressive purpose” of the proverbs?

In conclusion; the proverbs help us to know and recognize wisdom and instruction. By knowing we are better able to discern and rightly consider the sayings/words of understanding. When we have knowledge and discernment, we are ready to receive wise instruction which leads to a life of moral uprightness. When we have truly received, we are then ready and able to give of ourselves to others, specifically the next generation. This giving/passing on leads to an increase, both materially and spiritually in the lives of both giver and receiver. The journey through this “progressive purpose” of the proverbs is to attain to a true and experiential understanding of the deep and perplexing questions of life put forth by God Himself. The proverbs equip us to live and experience the heart and mind of our Creator with the rest of His creation in practical and meaningful ways.