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## Seven Principles of Anatomical Pedagogy in Proverbs: A Hermeneutic Study of Numerical Proverbs Based on Proverbs 6:16-19

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### Abstract

*The pedagogical elements in the Book of Proverbs are essential as primary teaching materials for wisdom seekers. Interestingly, in Proverbs 6:16-19, these elements are organised based on the anatomy of the human body-eyes, tongue, hands, heart, and feet-which concludes with a full description of false witness. Some previous studies have only focused on the structure of Proverbs 6 in the context of the prologue of Proverbs 1-9 without examining its pedagogical elements. Therefore, this study aims to explore the pedagogical principles in Proverbs 6:16-19 as important lessons for a life pleasing in the eyes of God, which is unique as it refers to the anatomy of the human body. Through hermeneutic analysis of the Wisdom Literature Subgenre, this study found several main points, namely: First, the synthetic parallel structure in verse 16 emphasises God's hatred and dislike of sin; Second, seven pedagogical principles based on the numerical anatomical arrangement, namely: humility, honesty, compassion, purity, wisdom, justice, and unity. The results of this study serve as a warning for the faithful to apply these pedagogical principles as moral and ethical values.*

Keywords: Proverbs, Numeric, Pedagogy, Anatomy, Character Building

### INTRODUCTION

Numerical proverbs, as found in the wisdom literature of the Hebrew Bible, offer a unique structure and depth of meaning that sets them apart from other forms of proverbs. Greenstein writes that numerical proverbs are only found in Proverbs 6:16-19 in conjunction with Proverbs 30:18-31. Numerical proverbs portray the writers' uniqueness and skill, making it easier for readers to remember the advice given on character building.<sup>1</sup> Sinulingga added that numerical literary forms in the Bible are found in Job 5:19-22 and Amos 1:3-2-8.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Labuschagne also explains that the purpose of numerical proverbs in Proverbs 6:16-19 contains advice and warnings. The emphasis on

<sup>1</sup> Edward I. Greenstein, "Finding One's Way in Proverbs 30:18-19," in *Marbeh Hokmah*, vol. 13 (Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 2019), 261-268, <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9781575063614-021/html>.

<sup>2</sup> Risnawaty Sinulingga, *Tafsiran Alkitab Kontekstual-Oikumenis Bag 1 (Amsal 1-9)* (Jakarta: Gunung Mulia, 2017), 292.

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God's disgust with sin and transgression reminds readers to take good care of their character.<sup>3</sup> Luo himself emphasizes in his research that the element of rhetorical pedagogy in this text is a form of specific teaching to believers to be of good character and prudence. Luo sees this exhortation as referring to the essence of God's knowledge and wisdom as a King who has a personal relationship with His people.<sup>4</sup> Waltke also writes that "numerical proverbs" are a distinct literary form that plays an essential role in conveying wisdom through a structured and unequivocal presentation of ideas.<sup>5</sup> MacLaughlin, also explains that using numbers or numeric often accompanies the pedagogical principles in proverbs.<sup>6</sup> Greenstein, Labuschagne, Luo, MacLaughlin, and Waltke's explanations have shown the uniqueness of Proverbs 6:16-19 as a pedagogical exhortation for believers to be of good character. The numerical-anatomical elements used are related to the seven pedagogical principles found in this text, as the numerical elements reveal change and improvement for the better, which coincides with the pedagogical principles, which encapsulate profound moral and ethical teachings and highlight to character formation. This correlation is the interesting significance of this study of the numerical-pedagogical structure of Proverbs. This structure not only aids memorization but also serves to intensify the moral urgency of the message.

Using anatomical references in Proverbs 6:16-19 is significant, as it clearly shows the moral and spiritual danger these behaviors represent. "Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises evil, feet that run to evil" are not merely symbolic; they are physical manifestations of ethical and spiritual corruption. Liphadzi points out the pedagogical principle that emerges in the collection of Proverbs 1-9 through the advice of a parent advising his children, which refers to the phrase "O my son" in Proverbs 6:1.<sup>7</sup> Hogg, who specifically examines Proverbs 6:16-19, explains that the list of things hated by God, namely "eyes," "tongue," "hands," "heart," and "feet" are separate clauses, each with its verb, whose grammatical subject seems to relate to the subject of the description in Proverbs 6:12-15 which also lists the anatomical parts of the human body that do evil deeds. Hogg adds that Solomon's deliberate repetition shows how the importance of righteous behavior by all parts of the human body represents the whole of life in God's eyes.<sup>8</sup> Hogg also explained that Proverbs 1-9 is a wisdom narrative with many symbols and moral and ethical meanings. Proverbs 6:16-19 is one of the most

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<sup>3</sup> Casper J. Labuschagne, "Numerical Features of the Book of Proverbs A New Approach to Its Structural Design," *Journal University of Groningen* 8, no. 1 (2016): 1-26.

<sup>4</sup> Dali Luo, "PROVERBS 16:1-15: AN INVITATION TO ADOPT THE ROYAL WAY OF LIFE," *ProQuest LLC* (Trinity International University, 2020), 167-170.

<sup>5</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs Chapter 1-15 (The New International Commentary on the Old Testament)*, ed. R. K. Harrison and Jr Robert L Hubbard (Grand Rapid Michigan/Cambridge U.K.): William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014), 322-323.

<sup>6</sup> John L. McLaughlin, "Wisdom from the Wise: Pedagogical Principles from Proverbs," in *Religions and Education in Antiquity* (Leiden Netherland: BRILL, 2022), 29-54, [https://brill.com/view/book/edcoll/9789004384613/B9789004384613\\_003.xml](https://brill.com/view/book/edcoll/9789004384613/B9789004384613_003.xml).

<sup>7</sup> A. E. Liphadzi, "Do Not Forsake My Teaching: Child-Rearing in Proverbs 1-9," *TAPPI Journal* (Potchefstroom campus of the North-West University, 2019), 46.

<sup>8</sup> James Edward Hogg, "Prov. 6:16-19 ('Six Things,' Etc)," *The American Journal of Semitic Languages (AJSL)* 35, no. 1 (2021): 264-267.

important parts because it contains symbols of advice based on the anatomy of the human body.<sup>9</sup> The phrase false witness, according to Rostasperti, is an expression combining all the components of the anatomical parts of the body that have been described into a human character that often destroys relationships. This physical categorization reflects a human being who is not pleasing to God.<sup>10</sup> According to McLaughlin, this imagery is crucial in understanding the pedagogical function of the text, as it connects moral failings with the human body, thus making something abstract, concrete, and easy to understand.<sup>11</sup> Longman says the book of Proverbs often uses bodily imagery to convey moral lessons, facilitating understanding and making teaching more impactful.<sup>12</sup> Corley also explains the use of anatomical numerical proverbs is also found in Ben Sira, which provides a beautiful example of didactic narrative in a long poem or hymn (44:1-50:24).<sup>13</sup> The research of Liphadzi, Hogg, Rostasperti, McLaughlin, Longman, and Corley emphasizes that anatomical pedagogy refers to how biblical texts use parts of the human body as teaching tools to communicate ethical and moral principles. The body becomes a teaching tool, with each part representing a particular vice or virtue.

Although some of the above researchers have examined it, the pedagogical elements emphasized have not been comprehensively explained. The correlation between pedagogy and the characteristic use of the anatomical parts of the human body has also not been explained well. For this reason, the main objective of this study is to identify and analyze seven principles of anatomical pedagogy as uniquely presented in Proverbs 6:16-19. These principles will be examined through a hermeneutical lens to uncover the significance of their symbolic, theological, and ethical meanings. The study will involve carefully reading the text, supported by analysis of related Bible verses and interpretation of the text. The results of this study serve as a warning for believers to follow the principles of pedagogy as moral and ethical values.

## METHOD

The method used is a hermeneutic subgenre of wisdom literature that involves a literary analysis of the text, focusing on its numerical structure, grammar and allusions, as well as the pedagogical values emphasised in the text.<sup>14</sup> The research will also examine the appearance of symbols of anatomical parts of the human body that have symbolic

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<sup>9</sup> Norman C. Habel, "The Symbolism of Wisdom in Proverbs 1–9," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 26, no. 2 (April 5, 2022): 131–157, <https://doi.org/10.1177/002096437202600201>.

<sup>10</sup> Sergio Rotasperti, *Metaphor in Proverbs -Supplements to Vetus Testamentum*, ed. Christl M. Maier, Volume 188. (Leiden - Boston: Brill Publishing, 2021), 149.

<sup>11</sup> John L. McLaughlin, "Wisdom from the Wise: Pedagogical Principles from Proverbs," in *Religions and Education in Antiquity*, ed. Alex Damm (Leiden Netherland: BRILL, 2018), 29-30, <https://brill.com/view/title/34058>.

<sup>12</sup> Tremper Longman III, *Proverbs - Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms*, ed. Tremper Longman III (Grand Rapid Michigan: Baker Academic Publishing Group, 2017), 101 [www.bakeracademic.com](http://www.bakeracademic.com).

<sup>13</sup> Jeremy Corley, "A Numerical Structure in Sirach 44:1-50:24," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 69, no. 1 (2023): 43–63, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43725894>.

<sup>14</sup> Farel Yosua Sualang, "Prinsip-Prinsip Hermeneutika Genre Hikmat Dalam Kitab Amsal: Suatu Pedoman Eksegesis," *Jurnal PISTIS* 1, no. 1 (2019): 93–112, <https://osf.io/preprints/inarxiv/xmk6h/>.

meanings. Specifically, some of the steps taken in this study are, *first*, structural analysis of the text of Proverbs to understand the flow and sequence of the moral message conveyed by the author; *second*, lexical analysis to interpret symbolic and figurative phrases related to human body parts to better understand the meaning of the text contained in the numerical proverbs of Proverbs 6:16-19; *third*, numerical analysis, which is a hermeneutical approach to the numerical proverbs, to identify the meaning of the seven sins as pedagogical units; and *fourth*, presenting the results of research that discuss the parallelism of synthesis and seven pedagogical principles in Proverbs 6:16-19, as a reference for learning for every believer. The results of this study provide practical guidance for character development according to God's will.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### Structure Analysis

The structure of Proverbs 6 presents a series of different yet interconnected pieces of advice, offering guidance on various aspects of wisdom and folly. Koptak writes that the text is divided into several sections, each addressing a different area of moral behavior or practical wisdom. In terms of flow, the narrative moves from the problem of financial entanglements to laziness and destructive behavior to, finally, a warning against adultery.<sup>15</sup> Nielson adds that throughout this section of Proverbs 6, Solomon uses vivid imagery, a contrast between wisdom and folly, and an urgent tone of parental advice. The purpose of the narrative within the structure of Proverbs 6 is to guide the reader (often referred to as "my son") to live a life with wisdom, integrity, and respect for God's moral order.<sup>16</sup> According to Wilson, Proverbs 6 is divided into two parts: Proverbs 6:1-19, which describes the personification of folly into several concrete examples of folly and warning against them, and Proverbs 6:20-35, which talks explicitly about warnig against adultery.

Thus, verses 1-5 speak of financial foolishness with one's neighbor; verses 6-11 address laziness; verses 12-15 refer to troublemakers, while the numerical proverbs of verses 16-19 describe a wide variety of activities, culminating in conflict in society (verse 19).<sup>17</sup> Wilson continues that this next section of Proverbs continues what was discussed in Proverbs 5, which focuses on foolishness personified as an immoral woman. This will lead to a similar description in Proverbs 7. Although the definitions in each chapter vary in describing this adulterous woman, her role seems to be just as negative in each case as the emphasis in Proverbs on the "strange woman."<sup>18</sup> In this passage, the man is described explicitly as having committed adultery with this woman (v. 32), which made her husband very angry (v. 34). The woman was a married woman (verses 26, 29). The main lesson is

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<sup>15</sup> Paul Koptak E, *PROVERBS - The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapid Michigan: Zondervan, 2013), 195-198.

<sup>16</sup> Kathleen Nielson, *Proverbs For You* (Carol Stream Illinois: The Goodbook Company, 2020), 65-69.

<sup>17</sup> Lindsay Wilson, *Proverbs An Introduction and Commentary* (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries), ed. David G. Firth and Tremper Longman III, 17th ed. (Denver Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 111-115.

<sup>18</sup> Aska Aprilano Pattinaja and Farel Yosua Sualang, "'PEREMPUAN ASING' DALAM AMSAL 2:16, 5:20. 6:24. 7:5 DAN 23:27," *Vox Dei: Jurnal Teologi dan Pastoral* 5, no. 1 (2024): 15-36, <https://doi.org/10.46408/vxd.v5i1.494>.

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that adultery is so self-destructive that it makes no sense (v. 32).<sup>19</sup> This description emphasizes the woman's husband's role in demanding retribution more than in the previous chapters.

So, according to Waltke, we can explain the structure of Proverbs 6 as follows:<sup>20</sup>

- I. The Three Lesser Kinds of People (6:1-19)
  - A. Warning Not to Become a Guarantor (6:1-5)
    - Introduction: A Foolish Situation (6:1-2)
    - Contents: Urgent Advice to Resolve the Situation (6:3-4)
    - Conclusion: Lecture Summary (6:5)
  - B. Warning For The Lazy (6:6-11)
    - Exhortation to Learn Wisdom from Ants (6:6-8)
    - Condemnation of the Lazy (6:9-11)
  - C. Warning Against Rebellious People (6:12-19)
    - Seven Signs of a Rebel (6:12-15)
    - Seven Abominations to the LORD (6:16-19)
- II. The high price of an unchaste wife (6:20-35)
  - A. Introduction (6:20-24)
    - Prompts and Exhortations to Pay Attention (6:20-21)
    - Motivation (6:22-24)
  - B. Lesson (6:25-35)
    - Warning (6:25)
    - Exhortation 1: The Severe, Inevitable, and Endless Punishment of Adultery (6:26-33)
    - Exhortation 2: The Cheater Cannot Be Compensated (6:34-35)

It can be seen that Proverbs 6 is divided into two major sections, which speak of the appeal against the low character of man and the exhortation against the unfaithful wife. According to Sinulingga, some interpreters argue that Proverbs 6 is a continuation of the appeal from Proverbs 5:1-23 which includes a warning against prostitutes, which appears in Proverbs 6:20-35). However this appeal is abruptly interrupted by Proverbs 6:1-19, which includes a warning about being an insurer of others. This warning is meant to caution against being an insurer because it can trap and entangle oneself (vv. 1-5)<sup>21</sup>, advice on laziness (vv. 6-11), then advice on disruptive or rebellious behavior or character (vv. 12-15) and the last part of Proverbs 6:16-19 contains a specific warning on the seven

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<sup>19</sup> Lindsay Wilson, *Proverbs An Introduction and Commentary (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries)*, 116.

<sup>20</sup> Bruce K. Waltke and Ivan D.V. De Silva, *Proverbs: A Shorter Commentary* (Grand Rapid Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2021), 366-397.

<sup>21</sup> Well Therfine Renward Manurung and Farel Yosua Sualang, "Hikmat Berdiri Sebagai Hukum Perjanjian: Solusi Alternatif Untuk Penyelesaian Sengketa Keuangan Menurut Amsal 6:1-5," *TELEIOS: Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen* 3, no. 2 (2023): 100–113, <https://e-journal.stttransformasi-indonesia.ac.id/index.php/teleios/article/view/63>.

things hated by God.<sup>22</sup> This difference has led to the suggestion that Proverbs 6:1-19 and Proverbs 6:20-35 are from different sources and times. According to Murphy, it is suspected that the passages containing a variety of practical teachings originated in the royal period and were added later between the two educational materials compiled based on the challenges of prostitutes and foreign women in the post-exilic period.<sup>23</sup> Whybray also states that the evidence for this addition is the difference in the subject matter of verses 1-19 with the subject matter of prostitutes in Proverbs 5:1-23 with Proverbs 6:20-35, where this addition was made by the function of Proverbs 1-9 as an introduction to the whole Book of Proverbs, to show that this practical teaching, like many others in Proverbs 10:1-31:31, is also part of the divinely authorized wisdom teaching.<sup>24</sup> Murphy and Whybray's opinion is corroborated by McKane, who explains the difference in wisdom literature in Proverbs 6:1-19 and Proverbs 6:20-35.<sup>25</sup> This literary difference shows Solomon's knowledge and wisdom in understanding the reader's need for instruction and warning.

**Parallelism Structure**

Sinulingga writes that the passage in Proverbs 6:16-19 is almost the same teaching as Proverbs 6:12-15, but the learning is formulated in numerical form.<sup>26</sup> Specifically, in this study, the discussion of numerical proverbs appears in verses 16-19, discussing the seven things God hates. The main theme of this section is to present a list of abominations and sins that God hates. In verse 16, it can be seen that the form of numerical proverbs is written in parallelism synthetic parallelism, which develops the meaning in the first line with a clarified form in the second line and emphasizes the seven things that are highly hated and abhorrent to God.

**Table 1. Synthetic Parallelism of Proverbs 6:16**

Stich	Phrase
Stich A	These six things that the LORD hates Even
Stich B	seven things that are an abomination to His heart

It can be seen how *Stich A*, in this verse, explains the numerical number six (phrase a), followed by the emphasis that these six things are hated by God (phrase b). *Stich B* then talks about the theme in the first line, which is made clear in the second line, starting with the numerical number seven (phrase a') and continuing with the emphasis made clear that these things are not only hated but are an abomination to His heart (phrase b'). The numerical change from six to seven signifies a progressive increase in the

<sup>22</sup> Risnawaty Sinulingga, *Tafsiran Alkitab Kontekstual-Oikumenis Bag 1 (Amsal 1-9)*, 271-272.

<sup>23</sup> Roland E. Murphy, *Proverbs - World Bible Commentary*, 22nd ed. (Nashville: William B. Erdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 37.

<sup>24</sup> R. N. Whybray, *The Composition of the Book of Proverbs*, ed. David J. A. Clines and Philip R. Davies (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 2018), 24-25.

<sup>25</sup> William. McKane, *Proverbs: A New Approach. Old Testament Library*, 3ed ed. (Great Britain United Kingdom: SCM Press Ltd, 2017), 320-321.

<sup>26</sup> Risnawaty Sinulingga, *Tafsiran Alkitab Kontekstual-Oikumenis Bag 1 (Amsal 1-9)*, 173.

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anatomical parts of the human body. It climaxes with a personal character, incorporating all the anatomical parts that have been described. The pedagogical element is strongly felt in the structure of this narrative, where it describes the behavior of the wicked to a more explicit list of things that God hates. This literary device lists seven anatomical parts of the human body that emphasize the completeness of this warning (vv. 17-19). McKane notes the common elements conveyed: it has a tendency to annoy... it is characterized by assertiveness or malice or violence, and... It breaks the bonds of willingness and loyalty between fellow human beings."<sup>27</sup> McKane's statement refers specifically to the last part "sowing discord" which links back to the description of the wicked in verses 12-15, creating thematic continuity. Solomon intends to instill fear of divine judgment in his audience, emphasizing that certain sins, especially those that harm others and disrupt the harmony of society, are despicable in the eyes of God.

### **Lexical Analysis**

Lexical analysis is conducted to learn more about words' meaning, including the emergence of various figurative language in Proverbs 6:16-19. This analysis is necessary to understand the author's flow in addressing the main point he is trying to convey. This passage uses a distinctive numerical pattern known as "numerical proverbs," a common literary feature in Hebrew poetry, where the language is precise and rhythmic, following an enumeration pattern.

Garret writes that the medieval Church had a list of "seven deadly sins," which were pride, anger, envy, impurity, gluttony, sloth, and covetousness. Proverbs 6:16-19 is pertinent in providing a list that could be considered another version of the seven deadly sins. The first five things God hates are body parts arranged in a generally moving order from head to toe (eyes, tongue, hands, heart, feet), and the last two are specific types of people (false witnesses and troublemakers).<sup>28</sup> Therefore, verse 16 uses such strong language by saying that God "hates" these things.

### ***Lexical Elements in Proverbs 6:16-19***

*First, "Six things... seven hated things."*

This phrase introduces numerical escalation, a stylistic device that emphasizes the importance of the following list. Waltke underlines that using numbers (six, then seven) is typical in Hebrew wisdom literature, serving as a progressive or developing form of poetic emphasis.<sup>29</sup> The number "seven" often conveys the idea of completeness, indicating that the list represents a set of behaviors that God particularly hates. Wilson writes that a clue to reading numerical sayings is that the focus of the message is often on the last item mentioned. So, in the seventh sense here, sowing discord in society ties

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<sup>27</sup> William. McKane, *Proverbs: A New Approach. Old Testament Library*, 326.

<sup>28</sup> Duane A. Garrett, *NIV The New American Commentary - An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Song) Vol. 14*, ed. E. Ray Clendenen, Kenneth A. Mathews, and Davis S. Dockery (Nashville, Tennessee: B & H Publishing Group, 2013), 115.

<sup>29</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs Chapter 1-15 (The New International Commentary on the Old Testament)*, 325.

together the rest of the descriptions. Although initially a collection of unrelated descriptions, they can all be seen as contributing to the breakdown of harmony and healthy relationships God intended.<sup>30</sup> Interestingly, the word "abomination" is written in two options: according to the pronunciation of the word "qere" (תועבת- *tō-w-’ā-ḥat*) and according to the written form "khetib" (תועבות- *tō-w-’ā-ḥō-wṭ*) which is defined as something that causes hatred, disgust and revulsion. In this context, two meanings are emphasized, namely the ritual meaning, where God's disgust occurs when humans worship idols, thereby exalting God, and the ethical meaning, where God hates if the life and character of the people are divisive to bring destruction to harmony of life.<sup>31</sup> Harris explained that when referring to the existing grammatical composition of these two words, the form "qere" is more appropriate because it is a singular noun construct directly related to God who is disgusted with these seven sins. In translation, the word *tō-w-’ā-ḥat* is often used in the context of disgust at Israel's sexual immorality. This context also speaks of God's displeasure and hatred towards idols.<sup>32</sup> This warns believers to guard their lives well so that these seven sins are not present.

*Secondly, "Haughty eyes" (עֵינַיִם רָמוֹת - 'ê-na-yim rā-mō-wṭ).*

This Hebrew phrase means "haughty eyes" and refers to pride or arrogance. The word) רָמוֹת (*rā-mō-wṭ*) is a qal participle verb absolute feminine plural, which means to look up or look up bound to the preceding word "eyes."<sup>33</sup> According to Longman, the word "haughty" is often used in the Old Testament to describe an attitude of superiority and belittling, a violation of humility, a core value in wisdom literature.<sup>34</sup> "Eyes" are a metonymy of the adjective, the gaze that accompanies the attitude. Metonymy is the alteration of a noun (or idea); the use of a name for another thing with which it is associated or of which it is an attribute.<sup>35</sup> The word "haughty eyes" can be illustrated by its use in describing a proud and arrogant character. God does not tolerate anyone who thinks highly of himself and has such ambition. "Haughty eyes" are eyes that look up in pride. The word רָמוֹת (*rā-mō-wṭ*) means "to look up," often used of the eyes, which describes the opposite or contrast of looking down as a form of humility and respect. Thus, it refers to eyes that are full of pride.<sup>36</sup> The position of the eyes depicts an arrogant attitude of the heart that prides itself against anyone and everyone. Still, it reflects

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<sup>30</sup> Lindsay Wilson, *Proverbs An Introduction and Commentary (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries)*, 115.

<sup>31</sup> Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, with an Appendix Containing The Biblical Aramaic*, ed. Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A Briggs, 5th ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 2015), 1072.

<sup>32</sup> R. Laird Harris, Jr. Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (Vol. 2)*, ed. R. Laird Harris (Chicago: Moody Publisher Press, 2019), 976.

<sup>33</sup> William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapid Michigan: William B. Erdmans Publishing Company, 2019), 271, 335.

<sup>34</sup> Tremper Longman III, *Proverbs*, ed. Tremper Longman III (Grand Rapid Michigan: Baker Academic Publishing Group, 2006), 178.

<sup>35</sup> E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible: Explained and Illustrated*, ed. Galusha Anderson, *The American Journal of Theology* (London: Messrs. E & J. B. Young & Co., 2015), 540.

<sup>36</sup> Garrett, *NIV The New American Commentary - An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Song) Vol. 14*, 155.



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arrogance before God and refuses to reckon with one's limitations and mortality. Brown, Driven, and Bridge explain this phrase's meaning as eyes always looking up, thus looking down on others. The primary images of pride and arrogance are powerful in this phrase.<sup>37</sup> Evans notes that pride, or haughty eyes, is first on the list of sins God hates (6:17). Pride is usually the headwaters of other sins. When we think too highly of ourselves, we are tempted to do six different things that God hates (6:17-18), namely causing trouble among the brethren (6:19).<sup>38</sup> This pride is one of the characteristics that God hates the most. Pride makes a person forget God and put their hope in human strength.

*Third, the "lying tongue" (לִשׁוֹן שָׁקֵר - lə-šō-wn šā-qer).*

This phrase refers to deceptive speech, which is condemned repeatedly in Proverbs. The word "šā-qer" (שָׁקֵר) appears frequently in the Hebrew Bible to describe falsehood, often in a legal or moral context.<sup>39</sup> According to Bullinger, a "lying tongue" is a metonymy for one who does not value the truth.<sup>40</sup> The term is used for a false prophet who deceives (Jer 14:14) and a deceiver who betrays (Ps 109:2). The LORD hates deceptive speech because it is destructive (Prov 26:28). The intentional pairing of "lie" with "tongue" reinforces the idea of speech as a tool that can be used to harm if it is not based on truth.<sup>41</sup> Lying means twisting reality for one's purposes and demonstrates a refusal to submit to norms of right and wrong.<sup>42</sup> By lying, one seeks to rearrange not only individual facts but also one's place in the world and thus avoids living according to the standard rules of life.

*Fourth, the expression "hands that shed innocent blood" (יָדַיִם שֶׁפָּכוֹת דָּם נָקִי - wə-yā-da-yim, šō-pā-kō-wt dām- nā-qī).*

This phrase condemns violence against the innocent, with "shedding innocent blood" (יָדַיִם שֶׁפָּכוֹת דָּם נָקִי - wə-yā-da-yim, šō-pā-kō-wt dām- nā-qī) which is the standard Hebrew expression for wrongful killing or oppression. The word šō-pā-kō-wt is a qal participle verb, feminine plural absolute, which translates as "to pour out or pour out in anger." The word dām- is an absolute masculine singular noun, and the phrase nā-qī is an absolute masculine singular adjective. All three words are absolute or so-called free forms that can stand alone.<sup>43</sup> Thus, the interpretation is "innocent blood or pure blood." This explanation has illustrated that the emphasis of the numerical proverbs is on the decision to use one's hands to shed innocent blood or to commit murder, torture, and persecution of innocent

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<sup>37</sup> Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, with an Appendix Containing The Biblical Aramaic*, ed. Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A Briggs, 5th ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 2015), 926.

<sup>38</sup> Tony Evans, *The Tony Evans Bible Commentary*, ed. Holman, *CSB Bible* (Grand Rapid Michigan: B&H Publishing Group, 2019), 963-962.

<sup>39</sup> William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 383.

<sup>40</sup> E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible: Explained and Illustrated*, ed. Galusha Anderson, *The American Journal of Theology* (London: Messrs. E & J. B. Young & Co., 2015), 539-540.

<sup>41</sup> Garrett, *NIV The New American Commentary - An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Song) Vol. 14*, 88.

<sup>42</sup> Garrett, *NIV The New American Commentary - An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Song) Vol. 14*, 161-162.

<sup>43</sup> William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 381, 72, 245.

people. Holladay has emphasized the occurrence of injustice amid life.<sup>44</sup> The image of hands ( יָדַי- *yā-da-yim*) that shed blood emphasizes the physical act of violence, making it clear that God condemns not only intentions but also actions.<sup>45</sup> The hand as an instrument of murder is a metonymy of cause where the narrative mentions the cause, but the effect or result is intended.<sup>46</sup> This phrase describes a violent personality and one who is prone to murder, given the opportunity.

*Fifth, "The heart that devises evil plans" ( לֵב הָרַשׁ מְהַשְׁבֹּת אָוֶן - *lēb, ḥō-rēš maḥ-šā-bō-wt 'ā-wen;*).*

This phrase is an attributive genitive describing a heart that plans evil. Genitives indicate a grammatical function. In Hebrew rules, every noun after a construct or as the object of a preposition is a genitive. The meaning of the attributive genitive is that it explains or expresses the first noun in the bound form or construct, namely (*maḥ-šā-bō-wt*).<sup>47</sup> The heart, a metonymy of the subject, represents the will. Thus, it describes the evil plans that are the main focus possessed by the heart mentioned in the numerical proverbial advice.<sup>48</sup> So, this phrase emphasizes the heart with the will to always plan evil things. The Hebrew word for "heart" ( לֵב- *lēb*) in biblical literature often refers to the center of thought and will, not just emotions.<sup>49</sup> This phrase highlights the planned nature of evil actions, which are "devised" in the heart, where this numerical proverb describes the heart that plots evil plans (cf. Gen 6:5). The heart that does this is deceitful (Prov 12:20; 14:22). The term "plans" ( מְהַשְׁבֹּת *maḥ-šā-bō-wt*) indicates careful planning, which further emphasizes the deliberate nature of these sins.<sup>50</sup> This condition describes a vindictive and usury-seeking personality who does not care about anything except what benefits him.

*Sixth, "Feet that hasten to do evil" ( רַגְלַיִם מְהַרְרוֹת לַרְעָה לַרְעָה - *raḡ-la-yim ma-ma-hā-rō-wt, lā-rūš lā-rā-'āh*).*

This phrase uses bodily imagery to describe the eagerness or haste in committing sinful acts. The image of "hurrying" feet conveys impulsiveness and a lack of moral self-control. The term "evil" ( רַעָה- *lā-rā-'āh*) is used extensively in Proverbs to cover a wide range of sinful behavior, from injustice to acts of violence.<sup>51</sup> The word "foot" here is a synecdoche, a part of the whole. Synecdoche is the exchange of one idea for another related idea.<sup>52</sup> As a means of movement, feet represent the swift and vigorous action of the whole person to do something harmful. "Feet that hasten to do evil" shows a terrible

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<sup>44</sup> J Weingreen, *A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew*, 25th ed. (Oxford England: Clarendon Press, 2018), 25.

<sup>45</sup> William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 128.

<sup>46</sup> Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible: Explained and Illustrated*, 549.

<sup>47</sup> Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax, Vetus Testamentum* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 22-23.

<sup>48</sup> Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible: Explained and Illustrated*, 567.

<sup>49</sup> William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 172.

<sup>50</sup> Roland E. Murphy, *Proverbs - World Bible Commentary*, 72.

<sup>51</sup> Richard J. Clifford, *The Old Testament Library: Proverbs*, ed. James L. Mays, Carol A. Newsom, and David L. Petersen, 1st ed. (Louisville London: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 87.

<sup>52</sup> Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible: Explained and Illustrated*, 613.

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enthusiasm for the opportunity to sin and do evil. Such a person regards the opportunity to sin as a stroke of luck and a great chance to get away with breaking a rule and possibly getting something for nothing.

#### *Seventh, "False witness"*

This phrase describes an attempt to subvert justice in the court of law, while "the man who stirs up dissension," like the "scoundrel" in the previous section, seeks to break down the bonds that hold society together. The LORD hates perjury and false witness (e.g., Ps 40:4; Am 2:4; Mi 1:4). This is a direct violation of the law (Ex 20). The verb "pour out" ( יָפֹאֵר - *yā-pî-ah*) gives the image of a flood or stream of lies, indicating habitual dishonesty. The word *yā-pî-ah* is an imperfective hifil verb 3rd person masculine singular, which means to blow hard or explode. In the context of use, it refers to a lie that is told and has a damaging effect.<sup>53</sup> In ancient Israel, false testimony was a serious offense with social and legal consequences, emphasizing this sin's gravity.<sup>54</sup> Contention in Proverbs is associated with quarrelsome people (Prov 21:9; 26:21; 25:24) who are easily provoked to quarrel and conflict (Prov 15:8). The word "brother" ( בֵּן אָחִי - *bên 'a-ḥîm.*) refers not only to brothers but also to "family" and "communal."<sup>55</sup> Thus, this image of a false witness emphasizes those inherently antisocial for breaking bonds of friendship, promoting public injustice, and ultimately bringing the community into disarray. Koptak explains that the numerical pattern has a sense of enigma and emphasizes the last statement as a climax. In this case, the last two parts in this list of numerical proverbs are not body parts but people who are recognizable by their actions: "false witnesses" and "people who cause dissension." False witnesses indicate a legal background, perhaps a property dispute, which may also be a source of strife between brothers.<sup>56</sup> As such, the climax of this section brings the parts together into a terrible whole, repeating and intensifying the description of the scoundrel in Proverbs 6:12-15. The new twist in this anatomy of evil is that the entire body is not only dedicated to evil words and gestures but also to all forms of arrogance and falsehood, even bloodshed.

#### **Numerical Analysis**

The hermeneutical study of numerical proverbs, particularly in the context of Proverbs 6:16-19, involves a process of interpretation that seeks to uncover the deeper meaning behind the text. Thiselton notes that a text can be scrutinized based on its figurative language. The meaning must be drawn out to be explained.<sup>57</sup> This study will also use a hermeneutical approach to explore the seven principles of anatomical pedagogy outlined in Proverbs 6:16-19.

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<sup>53</sup> William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 289.

<sup>54</sup> Michael V. Fox, *The Anchor Bible Proverbs 1-9 A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Heaven London: Yale University Press, 2017), 178.

<sup>55</sup> William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 9.

<sup>56</sup> Koptak E, *PROVERBS - The NIV Application Commentary*, 204.

<sup>57</sup> Anthony C. Thiselton, *An Introduction to Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapid Michigan: William B. Erdmans Publishing Company, 2019), 76-77.

In Proverbs 6:16-19, the phrase "There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are abomination to Him" uses conjunctions to reflect an enumerative rather than an explicative function. This type of construction, known as numerical proverbs, is common in Hebrew poetry. The conjunction ( וְ-*wə*) between "six" and "seven" serves to strengthen or intensify the list, signaling a significant development, not to explain.<sup>58</sup> The conjunction "explanation" usually clarifies or explains what has already been stated. In this case, the conjunction "and" (or the implied relationship between "six" and "seven") is used to list offenses, not to clarify or explain one idea about another. The purpose of the conjunction here is to emphasize the completeness or seriousness of the offense through the increase from "six" to "seven."<sup>59</sup> Waltke notes that this numerical pattern is meant to draw the reader's attention and underscore the moral significance of the actions listed.<sup>60</sup> As such, the conjunction in this context is not explicative but marks a rhetorical shift in the text's structure rather than explaining a particular concept.

According to Roth, the literary form of numerical wisdom is also found in non-Israelite literature from Egypt and Mesopotamia. A similar numerical text is found in Ras Sharma's "two...whom Baal hates, three...." Particularly in the Akhikar text, numerical sentences show an increasing nature, such as two becoming three.<sup>61</sup> Using the seven, which often symbolizes completeness or perfection in biblical literature, suggests that these crimes represent a comprehensive list of behaviors that oppose God's nature and will.<sup>62</sup> According to Sinulingga, neither the number six nor seven is exact; it is a rhetorical expression of the number increasing from six to seven.<sup>63</sup> Fry, who specifically examines the wisdom literature of numerical proverbs, especially the numbers three and four, as well as six and seven, suggests that the use of increasing numbers is a pedagogical element to provide progressive teaching; for example, God's hatred increases together or in proportion to the increase of evil.<sup>64</sup> God's hatred is progressive, so from hatred, it turns into an abomination to God.

As Brueggemann notes, wisdom literature in the Bible is deeply concerned with character building and developing a life aligned with God's will.<sup>65</sup> The pedagogical principle of numerical proverbs in Proverbs 6:16-19 serves as a stern reminder of behaviors that disrupt society's social and moral order and, by extension, an individual's relationship with God. This study warns anyone to consider every act of moral ethics in

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<sup>58</sup> W. M. Roth, "The Numerical Sequence  $x/x + 1$  in the Old Testament" 12, no. 1 (2016): 300-311.

<sup>59</sup> W. M. Roth, "Numerical Sayings in the Old Testament," *Vetus Testamentum* 13, no. 1 (2015): 86.

<sup>60</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs Chapter 1-15 (The New International Commentary on the Old Testament)*, 325.

<sup>61</sup> W. M. Roth, "The Numerical Sequence  $x/x + 1$  in the Old Testament" 12, no. 1 (2016): 300-311; W. M. Roth, "Numerical Sayings in the Old Testament," *Vetus Testamentum* 13, no. 1 (2015): 86.

<sup>62</sup> Labuschagne, "Numerical Features of the Book of Proverbs A New Approach to Its Structural Design." 24-26.

<sup>63</sup> Risnawaty Sinulingga, *Tafsiran Alkitab Kontekstual-Oikumenis Bag 1 (Amsal 1-9)*, 293.

<sup>64</sup> E. Fry, "Translating Numerical Proverbs, Proverbs 6:16-19; 30:15-33," *The Bible Translator* 50, no. 4 (1999): 427-432.

<sup>65</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament (Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy)* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), 670.

life.<sup>66</sup> In today's world, where ethical boundaries are often blurred, the explicit depiction of what God hates in Proverbs 6:16-19 offers a necessary corrective to re-examine one's actions and attitudes based on divine standards.

### Synthetic Parallelism and Seven Pedagogical Principles in Proverbs 6:16-19

From the results of the analysis that has been carried out above, two essential things are obtained, namely:

First, the synthetic parallelism in Proverbs 6:16 emphasizes the essential point of the progressive development linking the numerical narrative and the development of God's response to the narrated transgressions and sins.

**Table. 2** Analysis of Relationship between Numerical Proverbs and God's Response

Line	Numerical Proverbs	GOD'S RESPONSE
<i>Stich A</i>	Six	Hated by the LORD
<i>Stich B</i>	Seven	An abomination to His heart

The table above represents how the shift in numbers from "six" to "seven" in Proverbs 6:16-19 is a significant literary device used to emphasize the gravity and completeness of the sin listed. The transition from six to seven in this passage highlights the intensification of God's emotional and moral response to sin, moving from hatred (six) to abomination (seven), signifying the profound nature of God's displeasure. The relationship between the numerical change and God's response to sin reveals the depth and progression of His moral opposition. The hatred God expressed towards the first six acts was already intense. Still, the seventh act, which generated conflict among the brothers, was considered an abomination because it attacked the essence of the community, sowing discord and division among those who should have lived in unity. The numerical progression from six to seven in Proverbs 6:16-19 increases the gravity of sin and reflects the increasing intensity of God's response to human evil. While God hates the first six sins, the seventh one triggers conflict at the level of abomination, indicating complete and ultimate rejection. In Biblical theology, God's heart is deeply grieved by sins that offend His holiness and damage relationships within His covenant community. By calling this final sin an abomination, the text conveys that such strife is a direct affront to God's purpose for human relationships.

Secondly, The seven pedagogical principles derived from the text—humility, honesty, mercy, purity, deliberation, justice, and unity—are illustrated through specific

<sup>66</sup> Aska Aprilano Pattinaja and Farel Yosua Sualang, "Rotan Dan Pembentukan Karakter: Sebuah Kajian Teologis Kata מִן שֵׁשׁ (Mu<sup>n</sup>-sa<sup>š</sup>) Dalam Amsal 23 : 13," *THRONOS Jurnal Teolog Kristen* 5, no. 1 (2023): 61–76; Aska Aprilano Pattinaja, Hemy Bernard Warikry, and Farel Yosua Sualang, "Anting Emas Di Jungur Babi: Analisa Penggunaan Kiasan Terhadap Pola Perkataan Item-Evaluasi Menurut Amsal 11:22," *LOGON ZOES: Jurnal Teologi, Sosial dan Budaya* 7, no. 1 (May 12, 2024): 1–16, <https://e-journal.stterikontritt.ac.id/logon/article/view/134>.

bodily references in Proverbs 6:16-19, each embodying a distinct moral or ethical failure. Here are the seven pedagogical principles derived from these numerical Proverbs:

***(1) Humility Defeats Pride***

Teach the value of humility, which is the opposite of "haughty eyes," which is symbolic of pride. Humility is at the heart of God's heart's desire. Pride leads to self-exaltation, but humility reflects a correct understanding of one's position before God and others. The impetus for practicing humility is recognizing one's dependence on God and showing respect to others.

***(2) Honesty Breeds Trust***

Emphasize the importance of honesty instead of the "lying tongue," which speaks of deceit as the essential foundation for personal, family, and community relationships. Lies erode trust, while honesty builds solid and healthy relationships. This value shows how honesty fosters trust. Everyone should have the principle that integrity in telling the truth is essential to maintaining God's order in personal and communal relationships.

***(3) Valuing Life Encourages Compassion***

The teaching of the sanctity of life and the importance of promoting peace as opposed to "hands that shed innocent blood" as a symbol of violence is essential in protecting the weak. God values life, and His people should reflect that by acting with compassion and concern for others. This value emphasizes empathy and conflict resolution to actively seek ways to protect and care for others, avoiding harmful actions that destroy lives physically or emotionally.

***(4) Purity of Heart Fosters Right Intention***

Cultivating a pure heart that seeks the truth is the opposite of "a heart that devises evil plans" or having evil thoughts. Having a pure heart is perfectly aligned with God's purposes. Evil plans start from the heart, but a heart set on God desires what is good, just, and proper. Purity of heart ensures one's motivations remain faithful and in line with God's will. This value motivates every believer to align their desires with God's will.

***(5) Choosing Consideration Over Impulse***

Deliberate and considerate actions are recommended instead of impulsive choices that lead to harm. This is the opposite of "hasty feet doing evil." God's people are to be wise, carefully considering the consequences of their actions. The warning in Proverbs 22:3 teaches that the actions of a foolish person will inevitably end in punishment. Develop the wisdom of not rushing into decisions but teach the value of patience and understanding.

### **(6) *Honesty Upholds Justice***

This value highlights the role of honesty in maintaining justice, both in personal behavior and broader social structures. Testimony or perjury (false witness) that tells a lie undermines justice, whereas truth strengthens the cause of justice. Emphasizing the importance of honesty in all dealings, mainly when it affects the rights and reputation of others, would be a critical moral and ethical value for forming one's character.

### **(7) *Community Building Unity***

This pedagogical principle emphasizes the importance of unity, peace, and reconciliation in building a solid and harmonious community. God values the bonds among His people and hates divisions that lead to strife. Every wise believer should seek peace and resolve conflicts with love and understanding.

## **CONCLUSION**

The emphasis on God's abhorrent response to transgression and sin, described in the antithetical parallelism of Proverbs 6:16, has provided seven pedagogical principles that focus on these virtues and integrity, based on an analysis of the anatomy of the human body, namely eyes - humility, tongue - honesty, hands - mercy, heart - purity, feet - wisdom, honesty and unity, emphasised in Proverbs 6:17-19. These seven values become important pedagogical principles for teachers and leaders to guide people toward a life reflecting God's "goodness." These principles are aligned with God's heart and serve as the foundation for moral and spiritual growth, emphasizing the importance of righteousness, justice, and peace in the lives of every believer. Through these virtues, each person can live in harmony with God and others, developing a community that reflects God's love and holiness. This research can be followed up by exploring other numerical narratives in the Bible, namely Proverbs 30:18-31, where this structure shows awe at the wisdom in creation and draws lessons from small but inspiring things, Job 5:19-22, where the numerical structure emphasises the overall protective power of God in the face of various adversities, giving confidence and peace to His people, and Amos 1:3-2-8, where the 'three, even four' structure emphasises the justice of God applied to all nations and the punishment meted out for unpunished sins, reminding everyone of the importance of living in justice.

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