

INTRODUCTION:

Goals:

- Provide an introduction to the Bible's wisdom literature
- Cover practical topics that can be immediately applied
- Provide biblical materials for training children
- Suggest homework for further study

Topics:

- May
 - Introduction to summer program
 - Introduction to Proverbs
 - Study of wisdom
 - What is wisdom?
 - How do you get wisdom?
 - Why is wisdom important?
 - What happens if you ignore or mock wisdom?
- June (Substance Abuse)
- July (Speech)
- August (Anger)

Format:

- Meet one Saturday each month for two hours (8-10)
- Start in one large group for 20-30 minutes
- Divide into smaller groups for in depth discussion
- Give homework for additional study

ONE GROUP:

Q – What are Proverbs? Hebrew poetry

Q – What is the purpose of Proverbs? – to give practical wisdom for living

Q – What is the form of a Proverb?

- Brief, vivid, striking word picture (memorable)
 - 10:26 (651) "Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is the lazy one to those who send him"
 - 11:22 (652) "As a ring of gold in a swine's snout so is a beautiful woman who lacks discretion" (note: Jews despised pigs)
- Sentence-sayings, probability statements (no 100% guarantee)
 - 10:2a (651) "Ill gotten gains do not profit" (sometimes they do profit)
 - 10:4b (651) "The hand of the diligent makes rich"
 - In agri. econ. diligence pays (bigger crops/herds)
 - Farmers don't eat all their gain (Am.'s spend all they make)

- Compelling (gain discernment)
 - God's people are to be discerning
 - 1 Ki 3:9 (368) "So give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?"
 - Ezek 44:23 (858) "Moreover, they shall teach My people the difference between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean."
 - Culture lacks discernment
 - No absolutes
 - Shades of gray
 - Emergent church (arrogant to say you know what Bible says)
 - Mt 13:23 (945) "and the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty."

Q - Who was the author? Solomon, King of Israel, Son of David (1:1)

Q – How wise was Solomon? The wisest man in the world

- 1 Ki 3:12 (368) "Behold, I have done according to your words. Behold, I have given you a wise and discerning heart, so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you."

Q – Did Solomon always live wisely? No

- 1 Ki 11:1-6 (380) But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites – from the nations of whom the Lord had said to the children of Israel, "You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not fully follow the Lord, as did his father David.
- 1 Ki 11:11-13 (380) Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, "Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son. However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen."

Q – Can we ever be content that we are wise enough? No, consider Solomon

Q – Who taught Solomon wisdom? King David (ultimately God)

- Prov 4:3-5 (646) “When I was a son to my father, tender and the only son in the sight of my mother, then he taught me and said to me, let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments and live; acquire wisdom! Acquire understanding! Do not forget nor turn away from the words of my mouth.”

Q – Did David teach all his sons? No

- 1 Ki 1:5-6a (363) “Now Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, “I will be king.” So he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen with fifty men to run before him. His father had never crossed him at any time by asking, “Why have you done so?”

Notes:

- Adonijah and his older brother Absalom were both born in David’s youth
- When they were young David was a warrior (hiding in caves from Saul)
- David was involved with survival and career (didn’t teach sons)
- David learned something from his sin with Bathsheba (better father to Solomon)

SMALL GROUPS:

Q – What is wisdom?

Proverbs 1:7 (644) The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Proverbs 8:13 (649) The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate.

Proverbs 9:10 (650) The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

Answer:

- Wisdom is “the fear of the Lord”

Notes:

- Practical wisdom could be defined as: knowledge + understanding + doing
 - Know truth, see where it applies & actually obey
 - Wisdom honors & obeys God
- Examples: licensing of doctors, lawyers, engineers, ...
 - Tested on: knowledge, understanding, & correct application
- Church example:
 - Believers are to know God’s Word, see where it applies, & obey it
 - All three components must be present or we act foolishly, not wisely

Q - What is the “fear of the Lord”?

Job 28:28 (561) And to man He said, “Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.”

Ps 33:8 (585) Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.

Ps 128:1 (636) Blessed is every one who fears the Lord, who walks in His ways.

Ps 147:11 (643) The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy.

Ecc 12:13-14 (677) Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.

Mt 10:28 (941) And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Answer:

- An attitude of trust, awe, honor, and obedience toward God

Q – How do you get wisdom?

Proverbs 2:1-5 (645) My son, if you receive my words, and treasure my commands within you, so that you incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding; yes, if you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding, if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.

Proverbs 2:6 (645) For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.

Proverbs 3:5-12 (645) Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones. Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine. My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor detest His correction; for whom the Lord loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights.

Proverbs 4:23-27 (647) Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life. Put away from you a deceitful mouth, and put perverse lips far from you. Let your eyes look straight ahead and your eyelids look right before you. Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established. Do not turn to the right or the left; remove your foot from evil.

Answers:

- Wisdom comes from God
- Wisdom is not easily obtained, it is not automatic for believers
- To obtain wisdom you must:
 - Be attentive, listen to instruction
 - Make it your purpose to grow in wisdom
 - Pray to God for wisdom and understanding
 - Seek earnestly and diligently for wisdom (like silver and gold)
 - Treat wisdom as a precious thing (treasure)
 - Trust the Lord
 - Be humble
 - Depart from evil
 - Honor the Lord
 - Submit to correction and discipline
 - Honor God by what you think, say, watch and do

Notes:

- Wisdom (“fear of the Lord” attitude) is a choice
- Adam & Eve choose foolishly in the Garden of Eden
- We often choose foolishly
- Followers of Christ are expected to choose wisely

Q – Why is wisdom important?

Proverbs 1:4-5 (644) To give prudence to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel.

Answers 1: (Everyone needs wisdom)

- The simple (naïve) need wisdom
- The young need wisdom
- Even the wise need wisdom

Notes:

- The simple and young need training in wisdom for their own protection
- Training in biblical morality is essential (many traps will catch a youth)
- Military recruits aren’t sent to battle until thoroughly trained

Proverbs 9:1-6 (650) Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn out her seven pillars; she has slaughtered her meat, she has mixed her wine, she has also furnished her table. She has sent out her maidens, she cries out from the highest places of the city, “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!” As for him who lacks understanding, she says to him, “Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. Forsake foolishness and live, and go in the way of understanding.”

Proverbs 9:13-17 (650) A foolish woman is clamorous; she is simple, and knows nothing. For she sits at the door of her house, on a seat by the highest places of the city, to call to those who pass by, who go straight on their way: "Whoever is simple, let him turn in here"; and as for him who lacks understanding, she says to him, "Stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant."

Answers 2:

- There are only two paths in life
- We are called daily by both wisdom & folly
- Traits of wisdom:
 - Has built a luxurious house
 - Has prepared everything for a luxurious feast
 - Slaughtered her meat
 - Mixed her wine
 - Furnished her table
- Traits of folly:
 - Clamorous, simple, ignorant
 - Has prepared nothing
 - Has nothing to offer (deceptive)
- Both women call to those who pass by

Proverbs 1:32-33 (645) For the turning away of the simple will slay them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them; but whoever listens to me will dwell safely, and will be secure, without fear of evil.

Proverbs 2:21-22 (645) For the upright will dwell in the land, and the blameless will remain in it; but the wicked will be cut off from the earth, and the unfaithful will be uprooted from it.

Proverbs 3:33-35 (646) The curse of the Lord is on the house of the wicked, but He blesses the home of the just. Surely He scorns the scornful, but gives grace to the humble. The wise shall inherit glory, but shame shall be the legacy of fools.

Proverbs 4:18-19 (647) But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is like darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble.

Proverbs 8:34-36 (650) Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoever finds me finds life, and obtains favor from the Lord; but he who sins against me wrongs his own soul; all those who hate me love death.

Answers 3:

- There are consequences to each path
- The consequences of each path are vastly different
- God has designed moral laws as well as physical laws

Proverbs 1:33 (645) But whoever listens to me will dwell safely, and will be secure, without fear of evil.

Proverbs 2:7-20 (645) He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk uprightly; He guards the paths of justice, and preserves the way of His saints. Then you will understand righteousness and justice, equity and every good path. When wisdom enters your heart, and knowledge is pleasant to your soul, discretion will preserve you; understanding will keep you, to deliver you from the way of evil, from the man who speaks perverse things, from those who leave the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness; who rejoice in doing evil, and delight in the perversity of the wicked; whose ways are crooked, and who are devious in their paths; to deliver you from the immoral woman, from the seductress who flatters with her words, who forsakes the companion of her youth, and forgets the covenant of her God. For her house leads down to death, and her paths to the dead; none who go to her return, nor do they regain the paths of life. So you may walk in the way of goodness, and keep to the paths of righteousness.

Proverbs 3:13-18 (646) Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding; for her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, and her gain than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies, and all the things you may desire cannot compare with her. Length of days is in her right hand, in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who retain her.

Proverbs 3:34-35 (646) Surely He scorns the scornful, but gives grace to the humble. The wise shall inherit glory, but shame shall be the legacy of fools.

Proverbs 8:10-11 (649) Receive my instruction, and not silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold; for wisdom is better than rubies, and all the things one may desire cannot be compared with her.

Proverbs 8:19 (649) My fruit is better than gold, yes, than fine gold, and my revenue than choice silver.

Answers 4:

- Many benefits flow from wisdom (probability statements, not guarantees)
 - Safety, peace, contentment, confidence, length of days, riches, avoidance of major moral problems, glory
- Wisdom is better than any material wealth (gold, silver, jewels)

Q – What happens if you ignore or mock wisdom?

Proverbs 1:20-31 (644) Wisdom calls aloud outside; she raises her voice in the open squares. She cries out in the chief concourses, at the openings of the gates in the city she speaks her words: “How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? For scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge. Turn at my rebuke; surely

I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you. Because I have called and you refused, I have stretched out my hand and no one regarded, because you despised all my counsel, and would have none of my rebuke, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your terror comes, when your terror comes like a storm, and your destruction comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you. Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently, but they will not find me. Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord, they would have none of my counsel and despised my every rebuke. Therefore they shall eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled to the full with their own fancies.”

Answers:

- Wisdom will ignore you
- Wisdom will mock you

Homework:

- Read 1 ch. of Proverbs each day (for example: ch. 5 on 5th of the month)
- Read Ecclesiastes:
 - Ecclesiastes is the last writing of Solomon
 - Solomon explains the futility of pursuing worldly pleasures
 - Identify futile pursuits in your life that you want to abandon
 - Pray for wisdom to see how to change your life to avoid being tempted
- Memorize Proverbs 1:7 & 14:34
- As you read Proverbs memorize verses that are particularly meaningful to you. Put them into practice in your life, and share them with others when appropriate.

Proverbs 1:7 (644) The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Proverbs 14:34 (655) Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.