

Introduction to Wisdom

Proverbs 1:1-7

Introduction

What is Wisdom? God has a design plan, a 'how to' manual for how to live successfully throughout your one God-given life on earth. This design or blueprint is called Wisdom. Wisdom is God's manual, God's blueprint by which successful living in this world is possible.

Whenever we go against this divine design or the user manual of God, then we end up with hurt, pain, failure, and disaster. Wisdom is what is needed to live a successful life. Where does it come from?

Wisdom comes from God. There are five Wisdom books in the Bible that every believer should study, especially while they are still young, so that they may live a successful life. These books deal with specific areas where Wisdom is sorely needed. These books are called the Wisdom literature of the Bible. The problem is that:

- Many Christians never read, understand, know about, or apply its Wisdom in life.
- It is often difficult to unlock the Wisdom in these books if there is no one to guide you, or to make it simple, until you are able to do so on your own.

These Wisdom books cover the following:

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|------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| • Psalms | Wisdom in Worship | How to Worship and Pray |
| • Proverbs | Wisdom in Life | How to Act. |
| • Job | Wisdom in Suffering | How to Suffer. |
| • Ecclesiastes | Wisdom in Endeavour | How to find Meaning. |
| • Song of Songs | Wisdom in Love | How to Love. |

Wisdom for Life!**Proverbs 1:1-7****Introduction**

In this study, the focus will specifically be on the book of Proverbs, which contains 'Wisdom for Life', or wisdom to enable the believer to live life successfully in God's world.

The Proverbs are also part of the Scriptures that speak about Christ. After the resurrection, Jesus spoke to his disciples and said the following to them:

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

Luke 24:27

He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.

Luke 24:44-45

It is not always that easy to make this connection for a book such as Proverbs. It is easier to see the greater fulfillment in Jesus from the examples of Moses or David. So, how can we make this connection to Christ in the book of Proverbs?

Jesus is not only predicted in Proverbs, but also present there. Remember, if Proverbs is just a book of rules, do this and don't do that, there is nothing it can do for us. We need Jesus! What does the believer find about Jesus in the book of Proverbs?

According to Akin:

The Proverbs take the general principles of God's Law, the Ten Commandments, and give them eyes, ears, hands, and feet. The Law comes alive in the Proverbs as we see what obedience to the Law looks like in daily life—in the home, in business, in relationships, and so on. They flesh out the general principles of the Law in the specifics of everyday life, preparing the way for the literal fleshing out of God's law in Jesus' earthly life.

(Akin, 2017)

The Proverbs also find their fulfilment in the Discipleship Discourse, or better known as the Sermon on the Mount.

Study Questions

Note: Answer questions from the text.

Read Proverbs 1:1-7; Psalm 19:7-11

1. Which five areas of life are mentioned for which we need Wisdom?
1:2-5
 - 1.2 and
 - 1.3a and
 - 1.3b and
 - 1.4 and
 - 1.5 and
2. What is the meaning of prudence? 1:4
3. What will a truly wise (sagacious) person be able to gain? 1:6
4. Where does Wisdom ultimately originate from? Where does Wisdom begin and end? 1:7
5. What will a truly wise (sagacious) person do? 1:7
6. What is the way of the fool? 1:7

Reflection & Application

1. Can you think of some wise decisions all people, even non-believers, make in life, which will bring them blessings?
2. Where is ultimate Wisdom to be found? Romans 11:33-36
3. Can you truly experience the fullness of blessing without being in Christ? 1 Corinthians 1:22-24

Avoid Wicked Company**Proverbs 1:8-19****Introduction**

We are told many times, and in various places in the Bible, that we have to be careful of the company we keep.

In Proverbs 1 to 9, we find the repeated instruction of a loving father to his son. He provides him with wisdom in different areas of life, for example, handling money, relationships with women, keeping the right company, working hard, and so on.

Note the repeated phrase:

- 1:8 "Listen, my son, to your father's instruction..."
- 1:10 "My son..."
- 2:1 "My son, if you accept my words..."
- 3:1 "My son, do not forget my teaching..."
- 3:11 "My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline..."
- 4:1 "Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction..."
- 5:1 "My son, pay attention to my wisdom ..."
- 6:1 "My son ..."
- 7:1 "My son, keep my words ..."

Where should a person learn about this wisdom for life first?

Study Questions

Note: Answer questions from the text.

Read Proverbs 1:8-19

1. What is the responsibility of parents concerning their children gaining Wisdom? 1:8
2. What will this godly instruction and discipline be for you? 1:9

3. What is the difference between the father's discipline and the mother's instruction?
4. What does temptation do, and how should a wise person respond? 1:10
5. In 1:11-14, is the temptation specifically regarding thieves, or is this a parable with a wider meaning?
6. What else could be similar temptations to pursue ill-gotten gain?
7. What is the path of the wicked? 1:15-16
8. Is shedding blood only literal? 1:16 cf. James 5:4-6
9. What do people do when they plot wicked schemes in bad company? 1:17-18
10. What is the need or destiny for those who pursue ill-gotten gain? 1:19

Reflection & Application _____

In what manner does ill-gotten gain take your life? Romans 6:16; 1 Timothy 6:10; James 1:15

Heed Wisdom's Call**Proverbs 1:20-33****Introduction**

There is a golden chain that connects the Ten Commandments to the book of Proverbs, the Discipleship Discourse (Sermon on the Mount), and the Letter of James. This shows us what God is like and what God's standard of righteousness is. Do you know what the standard is? The standard of righteousness before God is perfection! This perfection you can never achieve by your own efforts.

Proverbs is not a book of rules that you slavishly follow to unlock certain blessings from God. You cannot keep the Proverbs, just as you cannot keep the Ten Commandments, or fulfil the standard set out in the Discipleship Discourse.

The only one who can do that and has done that is God's Son. Jesus is:

- The Greater Moses
- The Greater David
- As well as the Greater Solomon (Matthew 12:42)

Without Jesus as LORD of your life, this will remain but a dead book. It will simply contain many great ideas that you will never be able to fulfil. You cannot meaningfully apply any of the Wisdom teachings to your life without Christ!

That includes:

- Wisdom in worship from the Psalms.
- Wisdom in love from the Song of Songs.
- Wisdom in suffering from the Book of Job.
- Wisdom in meaningful living from Ecclesiastes.
- Wisdom in life or for life from the Proverbs.

All of them find their meaning in Christ!

Wisdom warns that we are heading for disaster because of our foolishness and brokenness. Wisdom pleads with us to repent. This passage is essential to rightly understanding the book of Proverbs and the biblical concept of wisdom.
(Akin, 2017)

In this section, we will look at the need for heeding Wisdom's advice.

Wisdom calls the simple, the fools and the self-confident to pay attention if they are to avoid disaster.

Study Questions

Note: Answer questions from the text.

Read Proverbs 1:20-33

1. Why is Wisdom called 'she'? 1:20-21
2. What is Wisdom doing? 1:20-21
3. What was Wisdom perplexed about? 1:22
4. What was Wisdom willing to do? 1:23
5. What is the fool's response to Wisdom's call? 1:24-25
6. What will the outcome be when trouble comes to the fool? 1:26-27
7. What will Wisdom's response be to the fool in times of disaster?
1:28
8. What is the reason for this? 1:29

9. What will inevitably happen to the wicked? 1:30-31
10. What will be the end for the fool? 1:32
11. What will be the outcome for the wise? 1:33

Reflection & Application _____

1. Does 1:32-33 mean that the fool or the wicked will not be able to live lives that seem to be successful in the eyes of the world?
2. Does 1:32-33 mean that the wise or the righteous will not experience sickness, pain, death, broken relationships, frustration, etc.?
3. How would you explain this quandary?

The Benefits of Pursuing Wisdom**Proverbs 2:1-22****Introduction**

Wisdom works! Blessed relationships and lives full of meaning ultimately come from one source. The Source of all wisdom is the LORD of all wisdom!

For example:

- Wisdom in Love.
- Wisdom in Endeavour.
- Wisdom in Suffering.
- Wisdom in Life.
- Wisdom in Worship.

Wisdom is presented here in Proverbs 1 to 9 as the instructions of a father to a son. It is also applicable from a mother to her daughter, or both parents to their children. For a person to live a good, blessed, and successful life, there are certain preconditions. They have to listen to, accept, obey, look for, and apply wise instruction.

It is important to note that everyone has had both a father and a mother. However, not everyone's parents can give godly instruction. This wise instruction applies to a godly father advising his son. What can we learn from the Wisdom literature in the Word?

Ultimately, this Wisdom mainly came from a special instrument of God, namely Solomon, but also from some others. It is God-inspired teaching on Wisdom. We know that in time Solomon drifted away and became an apostate, which is difficult to understand. However, the ultimate source of instruction on wisdom is God, personified in Christ.

To those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. **1 Corinthians 1:24**

In this section, we will study:

- The Preconditions for Wisdom. 2:1-5
- The Benefits of Wisdom. 2:6-8
- The Effect of Wisdom. 2:9-11
- The Protection of Wisdom. 2:12-19
- The Salvation of Wisdom. 2:20-22

Note the logic of the conjunctions in the passage! *If*, *then*, and *for*.

Study Questions

Note: Answer questions from the text.

Read Proverbs 2:1-22

1. Notice the three if statements or preconditions for blessing. What are they? Eight conditions are mentioned.

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2. What will be the result? *Then...* 2:5

3. What is the fear of the LORD? 2:5

4. Why will this happen? What will the LORD do? What six benefits are available? 2:6-8

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5. What will Wisdom do? Name five things. 2:9-11

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6. Who is the wicked? Wisdom will protect you from? Name six characteristics of the wicked. 2:12-15

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8. Wisdom will also save you from the adulteress, the wayward wife. Why does Solomon mention this example specifically? 2:16-17

9. What is the path of the adulteress? 2:18-19

10. Which path will Wisdom enable you to walk in? 2:20

11. What are the only two outcomes for the upright and for the wicked? 2:21-22

Reflection & Application _____

1. Is there anything such as free sex? 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Romans 1:24-27
2. What harm does sexual promiscuity cause? 1 Corinthians 6:12-20
3. Can you expect blessing for anyone who has been unfaithful to his/her marriage partner? 2:16-17

The Blessing of Wisdom**Proverbs 3:1-12****Introduction**

The acquisition and the practice of Wisdom bring with them many blessings in life. The opposite is, unfortunately, also true. When a young person discards wisdom and lives in foolishness, they suffer many consequences later in life.

This is true in all areas of life, such as relationships, finances, work, health, stewardship of resources and happiness.

In this section, we find the next two '*my son*' statements.

3:1 "My son, do not forget my teaching..."

3:11 "My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline..."

Notice once again the conjunctions. Do not, but, for, then (3:4, 10)

Notice the *do not, but* contrast in this passage (3:1, 7, 11). This technique is used extensively in the Discipleship Discourse as well. This same kind of contrast is repeatedly used by Jesus in the Discipleship Discourse, Matthew 5:1-7:29, "Do not..., but..."

Study Questions

Note: Answer questions from the text.

Read Proverbs 3:1-12

1. What does the father want his son not to do? 3:1
2. What would be the results if he did? 3:2
3. Is this a blanket promise or a principle? Or is there something else as well, such as quality of life? 3:2

4. What do love and faithfulness around the neck and heart signify?
3:3
5. “You will win favour with God and men.” Who else is this used of?
3:4
6. What is the wise course of action to take in contrast with the foolish action we should not take? 3:5
7. Is there any area in your life where you should work things out on your own, or are all things spiritual? 3:6
8. Reflect on the command, “Do not be wise in your own eyes, *but* fear the LORD.” 3:7
9. In what will the fear of the LORD result? 3:8
10. Why must we **honour the LORD** with our best? What will happen if we do? Is this a legalistic principle, and if not, what does it mean?
3:9-10 cf. Psalm 37:4
11. What is the LORD’s discipline or rebuke? 3:11
12. What does discipline indicate? 3:12 cf. Hebrews 12

Reflection & Application

1. Why do we have to honour God with our firstfruits and our wealth?
3:9-10
2. What if the wicked seem to prosper? Psalm 73; Hebrews 12:5-11
3. Is 3:9-10 just an Old Covenant principle, or does it apply under the New Covenant as well? 2 Corinthians 9:6-8; 10-11

The Value of Wisdom**Proverbs 3:13-20****Introduction**

Godly Wisdom brings blessing. If we live in God's world created according to God's perfect design and plan, then our lives will be so much better. The reason is that our bodies and existence in God's design are meant to be a perfect fit for this world. As we have been made in the image and likeness of God, it stands to reason that if we follow our Creator's instruction, we will live successful lives in this world.

In the Discipleship Discourse, Jesus teaches that if God has given us the greater things, such as our bodies and lives and salvation, will he not also give us the lesser things? Such as food, clothing, shelter and a meaningful existence.

Study Questions

Note: Answer questions from the text.

Read Proverbs 3:13-20

1. How will you define blessing? 3:13 cf. Numbers 6:24-26
2. Why is the one who finds Wisdom blessed? What are the benefits of Wisdom? 3:14
3. How precious is Wisdom? 3:15 cf. Psalm 19:10
4. What does Wisdom have to do with long life and riches? 3:16

5. What does Wisdom have to do with pleasant ways and peace? 3:16
6. What is Wisdom to those who lay hold of her? 3:18 cf. Psalm 1:3
7. How did the LORD create or establish the earth and the heavens? What does this mean? 3:19
8. Why is Wisdom to live in this world so important? 3:19
9. What does “*by his knowledge the deeps were divided, and the clouds let drop the dew*” refer to? 3:20

Reflection & Application _____

1. Why is this imagery of a *tree of life* used? What is the tree of life? How does this connect with Wisdom? Genesis 1; Revelation 22;
2. Compare the Value of Wisdom with the description in Job 28:28
3. How is Jesus the fulfilment of Wisdom? 1 Corinthians 1:21-24
4. What benefits does Jesus, the wisdom from God, bring? 1 Corinthians 1:30

5. Does the thinking and wisdom of the world have anything better to offer? Colossians 2:8, 20
6. Is Wisdom just an understanding or a set of ideas, or what does it mean? Psalm 19:7-11

Description	Benefit
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Discernment, Kindness, and Generosity**Proverbs 3:21-35****Introduction**

We need discernment to live successful lives in this world. There are many situations, challenges and decisions that face us. We do not always know a clear path forward.

We need God's wisdom so as to make a wise decision. When we trust in ourselves instead of God, that is when we make bad decisions. We also need to love others when God blesses us with abundance and share what we can.

Study Questions

Note: Answer questions from the text.

Read Proverbs 3:21-35

1. How often must one think of and preserve sound judgement and discernment? Why is this so important? 3:21
2. It is something that is visible to others. What will sound judgement and discernment do for you in your life? What will it show to others? What is the idea of an ornament? 3:22
3. What will the future hold when we keep sound judgement and discernment as our priority? 3:22-24
4. What if a sudden calamity or disaster strikes? 3:25

5. In whom will we trust? In the self, or God? Who is sovereign over your life? Is there anything that will take God by surprise in your life? 3:26
6. When God blesses you with good things, what is the right response towards others? 3:27-28 Cf. Job. 31:16-23
7. If you plot harm towards your neighbour, can God be on your side? Does this happen in the church? 3:29 Job 31:29-32
8. Do we envy powerful businessmen who have made a lot of money in our society? How should Christians view these men? 3:31; Psalm 73
9. How does the LORD view perverse and upright men? What will the outcome be for them? Name the contrasts. 3:32-35

Wicked

Upright

3:32 .....	.....
3:33 .....	.....
3:34 .....	.....
3:35 .....	.....

Reflection & Application _____

Compare the ideas in this passage with Psalm 73, where Asaph is contemplating the lives of the wicked.

1. What does Asaph initially think? 73:3-12

2. When does his thinking about the wicked change? 73:17
3. What is their ultimate destiny? 73:18-20; 27
4. What does your life show to others? 2 Corinthians 3:2-3

The Acquisition of Wisdom**Proverbs 4:1-9****Introduction**

Listen to a godly father's sound instruction to gain understanding. Lay hold of the godly father's words, and you will live.

Wisdom will protect you and watch over you.

Wisdom, i.e., YAHWEH's wisdom, is supreme.

Even if it costs you everything, get understanding.

Esteem her, and she will exalt you.

She will bless you and crown your life.

Study Questions

Note: Answer questions from the text.

Read Proverbs 4:1-9

1. What is a father's discipline? Note that the same word is used in 1:8. What will be the benefit of this discipline?
2. What will the godly God-fearing father be able to provide to his children? 4:2
3. Where did his father learn these things? What does it say for broken homes where a loving, godly father is absent? 4:3-4
4. What does he mean by "you will live"? Will you not live anyway? 4:4

5. How important is this instruction for gaining wisdom and understanding in a person's life? 4:5
6. What will wisdom do for the one who receives it? 4:6
7. How precious is wisdom? Is there anything more precious? 4:7
8. If you treasure, esteem and embrace wisdom, what will she do for you? 4:8
9. What will your life be like? 4:9

Reflection & Application _____

1. How important is a father's godly and wise instruction?
Psalm 78:1-7
2. Notice the beautiful passage in Job 28:1-28 on the value of Wisdom.
3. Is the pearl of great price, the treasure in the field, wisdom, or the kingdom? Are they the same, and if not, how are they connected?
cf. Matthew 13

Avoid the Way of the Wicked**Proverbs 4:10-19****Introduction**

The importance of godly fathers cannot be underestimated.

The importance of wise and godly instruction will save a child from many heartaches.

The blessings that accompany those holding on to wise and godly instruction are many.

The success of one's life depends on whether we follow this.

Study Questions

Note: Answer questions from the text.

Read Proverbs 4:10-19

1. Will all children who accept what their godly fathers teach them live long lives? What about those who don't have fathers? 4:10
2. What will a wise and godly father do for his child? 4:11
3. What will be the result for your life? Will it be a good life? 4:12
4. How important is this wise instruction? 4:13
5. What must you never do? 4:14-15 Psalm 1
6. What characterises the lives of the wicked? 4:16-17

7. What happens to the righteous as their life unfolds? 4:18

8. How does the life of the wicked develop? 4:19

Reflection & Application _____

1. How important are fathers in their children's lives? What happens when fathers are absent, or spiritually dead?

2. Why is this teaching and instruction so difficult to follow in life? What role does the lure of the pleasures and sins of the world have to play in the life of a young man or woman walking in wicked ways?

Guard the Mind and the Life**Proverbs 4:20-27****Introduction**

Guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. Everything flows from the heart. If the source is polluted, it will bring death and corruption to everything else. Out of the heart, Jesus tells us, comes all kinds of evil. If the heart is pure, it will water your life and bring about blessings and fruit.

"Nothing outside a man can make him 'unclean' by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him 'unclean'." He went on: "What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean'. For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean'."

Mark 7:15, 20-23**Study Questions**

Note: Answer questions from the text.

Read Proverbs 4:20-27

1. The father again addresses his son. What does the son have to do? Where must his father's instruction be? 4:20-21
2. Why is this important? 4:22
3. Why is the heart so important? 4:23 cf. Mark 7:20-23
4. Why is wholesome talk so important, and corrupt talk so dangerous? 4:24 cf. Philippians 4:8; James 3:2-8

5. Why is what you look at so important? 4:25 cf. Matthew 5:29; 6:22-23

6. Why is where you go so important? 4:26

7. What is the summary of these things? 4:23-27

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Reflection & Application _____

1. What is the progress from temptation to death? James 1:12-15

2. Why is speech so important?

Marital Faithfulness: Forsake Lust**Proverbs 5:1-23****Introduction**

The book of Proverbs is full of parables and metaphors. In this passage, the writer speaks of the intimacy of marriage and compares it to a spring, or a cistern filled with water.

By this parable, he tells us that sexual intimacy is for the confines of marriage. It is not something one shares with many people. Sexual intimacy is something one shares with one person, and it is private.

The blessing is for the 'owner' of the enclosed garden.

"You are a garden locked up, my sister, my bride; you are a spring enclosed, a sealed fountain. Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates with choice fruits, with henna and nard, nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with every kind of incense tree, with myrrh and aloes and all the finest spices."

Song of Songs 4:12-16

It is a private and undefiled spring, meant for blessing between husband and wife.

Study Questions

Note: Answer questions from the text.

Read Proverbs 5:1-23

1. Another 'my son' statement from the father. Which words are used to describe different facets of Wisdom? 5:1-2
2. What does the adulteress promise? 5:3
3. What is actual outcome of such a relationship? 5:4

4. Where will it all end? 5:5
5. What is the warning of the godly and wise father to his son? 6:7-10
6. What will one always regret in the end? 6:11-14
7. Is the writer speaking about water or something else? 5:15-16 cf. Song of Songs
8. For whom is this water exclusively? 5:7
9. What is the father's prayer for his son? 5:18
10. How much can a man or a woman expect from godly and exclusive love in marriage? Will one never get tired, or will love always entail excitement? 5:19
11. What is unthinkable for a wise man to do? 5:20
12. Why is this so foolish? 5:21
13. What will be the end result of marital unfaithfulness? 5:22-23

Reflection & Application

1. Is polluted water or a contaminated spring a delight to anyone who drinks from it?
2. What will immorality and promiscuity do to the purity and enjoyment of sexual love?

Avoid Surety; Shun Laziness**Proverbs 6:1-19****Introduction**

In this section, we find the eighth 'my son' statement. Only a foolish person provides surety for a neighbour, or even a family member. It is seldom a wise thing to do.

Laziness is a foolish characteristic as well. The young man is directed to the ways of the ant. The ant is always busy at work. It knows it has to store up food for lean times.

The sluggard, on the other hand, will never provide and always rests. Poverty will come upon such a person. The scoundrel is always plotting evil, stirring up dissension. Disaster will overtake him.

Proverbs speaks of seven things that the LORD hates.

Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, a hand that sheds innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that rush to evil, a lying witness, a man who stirs up dissension.

Proverbs 6:16**Study Questions**

Note: Answer questions from the text.

Read Proverbs 6:1-19

1. Why must believers avoid standing surety for others? 6:1-3
2. How urgent is it to free yourself from this? 6:4-5
3. How is sloth not only unwise, but also dishonouring to God? 6:6-9

4. What will happen to the lazy person? 6:10-11
5. Why must the wise person be able to detect the scoundrel and the villain? Are believers sometimes gullible? 6:12-13
6. What do these people do in the gathering of believers? 6:14-15
7. Name the seven things that the LORD hates? 6:16-19

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Reflection & Application _____

1. Why are surety, sloth, and the deceiver mentioned together in this section?
2. Why does he mention these seven things specifically? 6:16-19

The Cost of Adultery**Proverbs 6:20-35****Introduction**

In this passage, we find the ninth 'my son' statement. Keep your father's commands and your mother's teaching. This is a repetition of a previous instruction, "Bind them upon your heart and fasten them around your neck." They will guide you on your way when awake. They will provide sound sleep.

One area of this teaching is to keep away from the immoral woman. Do not be seduced by her ways. If you ask or wonder why, consider the following rhetorical question: "Can you scoop fire in your lap and not be burned?" is self-evident. No one will escape untouched by adultery. Whoever commits adultery destroys himself. His shame will never be wiped away. The revenge of the jealous husband will be his lot.

Study Questions

Note: Answer questions from the text.

Read Proverbs 6:20-35

1. What is the call from the parents to their child with regard to their Discipline, teaching, and correction? 6:20
2. Which aspects of your life should wisdom cover? 6:21-22
3. Why is this so important? 6:23-24
4. What is the danger of lust? 6:25-26

5. What is the answer to this riddle? 6:27-28
6. What will be the result? 6:29
7. What is different with regard to stealing when one is hungry, to adultery when one is lustful? 6:29
8. What is the result, and what is worse than blows and disgrace? 6:32-33
9. What happens to the adulterer when found out? 6:34-35

Reflection & Application _____

1. Has anyone in the history of mankind ever committed adultery and gotten away with it?
2. Has anyone ever received a blessing from an adulterous relationship?
3. What will always be the outcome of adultery?

Sexual Temptation and Sin**Proverbs 7:1-27****Introduction**

Sexual temptation is prevalent and extremely dangerous. The fool is the one who is caught in this trap. This is not a specific person called **her**. This is a pronoun referring in general to the adulteress, the person who entices you to sin, such as the porn site on the internet. Just like Wisdom and Foolishness are personified as female entities in Proverbs, Adultery and Temptation are compared to a woman, always on the prowl, always looking for victims.

She promises much blessing and enjoyment; even uses religious words. The lure is always that no one will know and that you will get away with it. However, the outcome is always the same. Pain, shame, broken relationships and, ultimately, death. This path is a highway to the grave.

Adultery and sexual sin are so serious that the writer, in this case Solomon, spends a large part of his instruction dealing with this issue in Proverbs 1 to 9.

1. Proverbs 5:1-23

Drink water from your own cistern... 5:15

See also Proverbs 5:18-19, 22

2. Proverbs 6:20-35

Notice also how it continues the teaching found in the preceding section: Proverbs 6:23 "For these commands are a lamp, this teaching is a light, and the corrections of discipline are the way to life..."

This is in contrast to the adulteress who:

Proverbs 6:26 "preys upon your very life."

See also Proverbs 6:27-28, 32

3. Proverbs 7:1-27

This is the third section dealing with this sin and the tenth "my son..." instruction. 7:1

What are these sections about? The answer is given in v. 5.

They will keep you from the adulteress, the one who will attempt to seduce you. Wisdom will safeguard you from the lure of sexual temptation and sin.

Study Questions

Note: Answer questions from the text.

Read Proverbs 7:1-27

1. How must a son treasure his father's teachings? 7:1
2. How **close** must these instructions be and what will be the result? 7:2-3
3. What must the faithful son do? What will this protect him from? 7:4-5

Notice also **the family role wisdom** will play in your life... 7:4
Kinsman, sister

Note: The focus in this part of the Proverbs is on **adultery**. However, this teaching applies and can apply to any form of sexual temptation and sin. Whatever sexual sin is involved, it is also a form of adultery. Breaking the trust between you and your current spouse if you are married, or breaking the trust with your future spouse, you hope will marry one day.

4. What happens to the foolish young man as well as simple young woman? 7:6-9
5. What did the writer observe? Where is sexual temptation to be found? 7:10-12
6. Is she religious? 7:13-14

7. What did she promise? 7:15-18
8. With which other persuasive words was he led astray? 7:19-21
9. What will be the outcome? 7:22-23
10. What is the ultimate destination of the immoral person? 7:24-27

Reflection & Application ---

1. There is a pattern to sexual temptation and sin to be recognised. What is this pattern? Think of a suitable word to describe the respective verses.

The Pattern of Sexual Temptation

- | | | |
|-----|-------|---------|
| 1. | ..... | 7:6-7 |
| 2. | ..... | 7:8 |
| 3. | ..... | 7:9 |
| 4. | ..... | 7:10-12 |
| 5. | ..... | 7:13-14 |
| 6. | ..... | 7:15-16 |
| 7. | ..... | 7:17 |
| 8. | ..... | 7:18 |
| 9. | ..... | 7:19-20 |
| 10. | ..... | 7:21 |
| 11. | ..... | 7:22 |
| 12. | ..... | 7:23 |

2. What must you do when tempted? 1 Corinthians 6:18-20
3. If you do not and continue on the path of sexual sin, what will happen? Ephesians 5:3-5; Proverbs 7:27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10
4. Ultimately, what is immorality at its core? 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8
5. Why can a true believer not continue on this route?
1 Corinthians 6:11
6. What will you never get away with? 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

The Qualities of Wisdom**Proverbs 8:1-21****Introduction**

If we need Wisdom for life, will we be able to find it? Is it not hidden and difficult to find?

If we need wisdom to find life, will one be able to find it? Where is Wisdom present and what does she have to offer? How precious is Wisdom? What does it mean to fear the LORD? It means to shun evil.

What does Wisdom offer kings and rulers? For those who have found her, what benefit will they gain? Kings, rulers and countries that have been ruled by the LORD's Wisdom have been blessed in the past, are being blessed in the present and will be in future.

Just think of Egypt under Joseph, Israel under David and Solomon, and Babylon under Daniel.

When we deal with life choices such as:

- Choosing the company we keep
- Acquiring wisdom
- Avoiding the way of the wicked
- Guarding the mind
- Faithfulness and the danger of lust
- Sloth, surety, discord
- Money
- Adultery
- Sexual conduct

Study Questions

Note: Answer questions from the text.

Read Proverbs 8:1-21

1. Is Wisdom readily available and able to be found? 8:1

2. Where is Wisdom to be found? 8:2-3
3. Why does Wisdom cry out? 3:4-5
4. Is Wisdom's guidance worth having? 8:6-8
5. Why are Wisdom's words true and precious to the discerning?
8:9-11
6. Where is the dwelling or source of Wisdom? 8:12
7. What is the test of whether you possess Wisdom? 8:13
8. What will Wisdom do for you? 8:14-16
9. Whom does Wisdom love? 8:17
10. What are the blessings of Wisdom? 8:18-19
11. Whom does Wisdom accompany? 8:20-21

Reflection & Application

1. When a nation applies Biblical wisdom, to some extent, even if their rulers are not Christian believers, will they still receive blessings? Think of some examples since the spread of Christianity.
2. The land of Egypt under Joseph's management? Genesis 41:38-39

Note:

Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-Paneah. **Genesis 41:45**
The meaning of Zaphenath-Paneah is "the god speaks, and he lives."

3. The Assyrians and Nineveh under Jonah's preaching?
4. The Babylonian Empire under Daniel's influence? Daniel 1:19-20; Daniel 4:34-37; Daniel 5:11, 14

The Origin of Wisdom**Proverbs 8:22-31****Introduction**

Where does Wisdom come from? Some in more liberal circles claim that Wisdom is a person, called Lady Wisdom. Some of those attempting to be more biblical even try to make the case that Wisdom could be the pre-incarnate Christ.

Although it is true that Wisdom certainly finds its ultimate fulfilment in Jesus, or in Christ, it is problematic to equate the Son with the first of YAHWEH's works.

God the Son was not created. Therefore, he cannot be the first of YAHWEH's works (8:22).

Therefore, Wisdom must be the divine plan and design of God. One could say Wisdom is YAHWEH creating the universe with his mind. God is the source of all Wisdom (Romans 11:33-36)

Study Questions

Note: Answer questions from the text.

Read Proverbs 8:22-31

1. Where did Wisdom originate? 8:22
2. How old is Wisdom? 8:23
3. Is Wisdom eternal, or does Wisdom have a beginning? 8:24-25
4. What is Wisdom? 8:27-29

5. What does this mean? 8:30-31

Reflection & Application _____

1. If everything in this universe is created according to God's divine design and wisdom and perfect plan, what would it mean for us to live by this wisdom? What could we expect?

Note: Think of a motor vehicle when abused or not used according to the designer's specification.

2. What can we expect of work, relationships, marriage, finance, sex, love towards our neighbours, love towards the LORD, the created order, animals, plants, the oceans, if we treat all of these according to God's good design?

Wisdom's Offer of Truth and Life**Proverbs 8:32-36****Introduction**

Which two things do wisdom offer? To the man who listens and watches at Wisdom's doorway. Whoever finds Wisdom finds favour from the LORD and finds life.

The opposite is also true. The one who fails to find Wisdom harms himself and loves death.

Study Questions

Note: Answer questions from the text.

Read Proverbs 8:32-36

1. When will 'sons' be blessed? 8:32
2. What does Wisdom have to offer? 8:33
3. Where will we find the blessed person? 8:34
4. What blessing does Wisdom bring about? 8:35
5. However, what happens if someone does not find Wisdom? 8:36

Reflection & Application _____

1. What are the two outcomes?
2. Compare with Matthew 7:13-27.

The Invitations of Wisdom and Folly**Proverbs 9:1-18****Introduction**

Wisdom and Folly are personified as two women. Wisdom is a female noun, and so is folly, so it makes sense to present them as two women. Both clamour for attention and offer blessings. However, what they deliver in the end cannot be more different.

חִכְמָה (*chokmah*)

Meaning: *wisdom - noun common feminine singular absolute*

בְּסִלּוּת (*kesiluth*)

Meaning: *stupidity - noun common feminine singular absolute*

Study Questions

Note: Answer questions from the text.

Read Proverbs 9:1-18

1. Where is Wisdom's house? What is the meaning of the pillars, the food, and the servants? 9:1-2
2. To whom is her invitation? 9:3-4
3. What is the reward? 9:5-6
4. Must you correct a fool? And how about a wise man? 9:7-8

5. Can you instruct a wise man? 9:9
6. What is the beginning of Wisdom? 9:10
7. What will be the reward? 9:11
8. Who is the other woman? Why does she choose her vantage point well? 9:13-14
9. What does Folly actively and constantly do? 9:15-16
10. What is the lure of foolishness? 9:17-18

Reflection & Application _____

Which two constant calls are there?

The Necessity of Wisdom**Proverbs 1-9**

Wisdom is necessary to live successfully in God's world. God designed the world according to his infinite Wisdom and Goodness, and when he had finished bringing it into existence, he called it very good. In this perfect world, he placed the first man and woman created in his image and likeness. Our first parents brought sin and brokenness into this world, yet still, much of its goodness and all of its divine design remains. God raised up men who would speak from God to instruct human beings in his ways and wisdom. We have five of these Wisdom books, giving us instruction on every aspect of human existence.

The book of Proverbs specifically guides us in Wisdom for life. If we fear the LORD and take his instruction seriously, then we can live successful lives in this world. The reason we fail so often and so regularly is not because we do not have the wisdom and instruction of God available, but because we often do not read the Proverbs, do not take it to heart, do not apply it, or do not understand it.

May we as believers seriously study the Wisdom books, namely Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, and Job, and our lives will be so much more blessed.

Appendix:

Rescue Those Being Led to Death!

Proverbs 24:10-12

A Call to the Church in an Age of Child Sacrifice

Genesis 25:23–24; Psalm 139:13–16; Proverbs 24:10–12; Matthew 1:18–20

Since 1 February 1997, abortion on demand has been legal in South Africa. Although precise statistics are difficult to obtain, conservative estimates place the number of unborn children killed since then at well over two million. This figure should stagger the conscience. Yet abortion has become so normalised, so sanitised by language and law, that much of society—and tragically, much of the church—has learned to look away.

Abortion is not merely a political issue. It is not a legal issue first. It is not even primarily a social issue. Abortion is a **gospel issue** because it reveals what a society believes about God, humanity, sin, sacrifice, and authority. It exposes who we believe has the right to live and who may be killed.

At the centre of the Christian faith stands a holy sacrament: the Lord's Supper. When Jesus took the bread, He declared,

"This is my body, given for you."

Those words define Christianity. The Son of God offered His own body in death so that guilty sinners might live. He bore judgment so that others might be spared. Baptism testifies to the same truth, proclaiming that sin is washed away only through the blood of Christ.

Modern secular culture proclaims a rival creed using the same words: *"This is my body."*

But here the meaning is radically different. It means autonomy without submission, freedom without responsibility, desire without restraint. It declares, *"I will use my body as I see fit."* When sexual activity results in conception and new life, the same creed is repeated with lethal consequences: *"This is my body,"* now meaning,

"I will do with the child in my womb as I choose."

In this sense, abortion has become the central sacrament of secular humanism. It is the ritual by which autonomy is preserved at the cost of innocent blood.

Marriage, Sex, and the Rejection of God's Design

The marriage covenant, recognised across Scripture, exists for three fundamental purposes: lifelong companionship between a man and a woman, sexual intimacy within a faithful and exclusive bond, and the procreation of children. These purposes are not cultural inventions; they are divine design.

Yet modern society openly rejects all three. Companionship is replaced with convenience. Fidelity is replaced with experimentation. Children are no longer received as blessings but viewed as burdens. Sex is pursued without covenant, without commitment, and without consequence—until consequence arrives in the form of pregnancy. Then the child must be removed.

Within this worldview, abortion is not tragic—it is necessary. If sex exists for pleasure alone, children are obstacles. If personal fulfilment is supreme, unborn life is expendable. The logic is cold, but consistent.

The contrast with Christianity could not be more severe. Christ offers His own body in sacrifice to remove sin and guilt. Secular humanism offers the body of the unborn child so that sin may continue unchecked, adding bloodguilt to rebellion.

A Crisis of Courage in the Church

Proverbs 24:10 confronts the church with uncomfortable clarity:

“If you falter in times of trouble, how small is your strength!”

These are times of trouble. The abortion industry is protected by law, celebrated by culture, and defended with moral outrage against anyone who questions it.

Many Christians sense the evil of abortion instinctively, yet remain paralysed. Difficult hypothetical scenarios are raised—rape, deformity, danger to the mother, and poverty. These cases are emotionally powerful,

but they are statistically rare. The overwhelming majority of abortions occur because of lifestyle choices and economic pressure.

The question must be asked honestly: if these rare cases were removed, would we oppose abortion without exception? Or are they used as moral cover for silence?

Some claim abortion is not a gospel issue, while racism is. Yet both rest on the same deadly assumption: that certain human beings are not fully human. History bears witness to where such thinking leads. Slavery, genocide, and apartheid all began with the same lie. Abortion is no different; only the victims are hidden.

The root of abortion is the sexual revolution. When sex is reduced to self-gratification, pregnancy is always a problem. Society's solution is not restraint, repentance, or responsibility, but saturation—earlier exposure, explicit education, contraception, and chemical abortifacients. This approach has not reduced abortion. It has fuelled it. It is as effective as pouring petrol on a forest fire.

Many believers will never face an unwanted pregnancy personally. Yet they remain silent, unwilling to risk reputation, relationships, or comfort. Scripture, however, does not permit neutrality. God's command extends beyond the already born to those still hidden in the womb.

Rescue Those Being Led Away to Death

Proverbs 24:11 is not ambiguous:

“Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter.”

When a woman enters an abortion clinic, a human being is about to die. There is no neutral language that can soften this reality. The child cannot flee. The child cannot resist. The child will be killed.

Attempts to deny the humanity of the unborn collapse under scrutiny. If the unborn is not alive, why must it be killed? If it is not human, why does it grow, respond, and develop exactly as humans do? *Foetus* simply means “baby.” An embryo is a human being at an early stage of development—no less human than a toddler or a teenager.

Scripture affirms this truth without hesitation. In Matthew 1, Joseph is told that what is *conceived* in Mary is from the Holy Spirit. Life is recognised from conception.

Both Jewish and Christian teaching have consistently upheld this reality. To end the life of a child in the womb is not healthcare—it is child sacrifice.

Christians are therefore commanded to act. Silence is not compassion. Ignorance is not innocence. We must speak, learn, inform others, and confront lies with truth. Political solutions alone cannot fix a spiritual rebellion. Laws may restrain behaviour, but only the gospel transforms hearts.

This includes care for mothers. Christians must plead for life, support women in crisis, offer adoption, provide practical help, and intercede fervently for mercy. To pray for healing while refusing to speak is hypocrisy.

You Cannot Say You Did Not Know

Proverbs 24:12 issues a final warning:

“If you say, ‘We knew nothing about this,’ does not He who weighs the heart perceive it?”

Ignorance is no longer possible. Conscience itself testifies against us.

For those who have participated in abortion—directly or indirectly—there is both warning and hope. Abortion is a grievous sin rooted in the suppression of truth, as described in Romans 1. Yet forgiveness is available through Christ for those who repent. Bloodguilt can be washed away, but it cannot be denied.

God will not be mocked. He sees through every excuse, every euphemism, and every silence. The unborn child is made in His image. To destroy such life invites judgment. Scripture is clear that bloodshed pollutes the land and brings consequences.

The Gospel Demands Abolition, Not Compromise

Christians are not called to manage abortion, regulate it, or make peace with it. We are called to abolish it. While ending abortion is not the content

of the gospel, it is a necessary implication of the gospel. Christ commands His followers to teach obedience to all He has commanded.

The darkness of child sacrifice cannot be overcome by political activism alone. It requires the light of the gospel. Any movement detached from Christ will fail, and any false gospel will only deepen deception.

The Son of God appeared to destroy the works of the devil. His church must follow Him—even when it costs comfort, reputation, and safety.

To remain silent is to falter.

To speak and act is obedience. The command is unmistakable:

“Rescue those being led away to death.”

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