



**PROVERBS SMALL GROUP SERIES
LESSON 1**

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FOCUS VERSE: *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”* Proverbs 9:10

Lesson 1: SEEK WISDOM

Bible: Proverbs 1:1 - 9:18

INTRODUCTION

The book of Proverbs, also known as the Book of Wisdom, was for the most part written by king Solomon. It is believed to have been written during his reign from 970 BC to 930 BC.

Solomon is the son of King David and Bathsheba and was the third king of Israel. He was also the last king of the united Israel.

The original language of the book is Hebrew and is reflected in the wording used in many chapters.

The book of Proverbs is unlike most other books in the Bible. It does not tell a story that occurs in chronological order. It is a book of wise sayings.

While some chapters may reflect a pattern and common theme, the typical story elements we are used to such as characters setting, a plot, etc., are absent from this book.

Proverbs may not have a storyline, but it does follow an outline.

- Chapters 1 to 9 - A father’s teachings to his son
- Chapters 10 to 24 - Proverbs of Solomon
- Chapter 25 to 29 - Proverbs of Solomon copied by men of Hezekiah
- Chapter 30 - Words of Agur
- Chapter 31 - Words of King Lemuel

Most of the chapters in Proverbs were written by King Solomon.

In the first seven verses of chapter 1, the purpose of the entire book is clear. Solomon wrote to provide instruction for Godly living to the next generation.

Who better to provide wisdom for a living, than the king who is known for being the wisest? Solomon recognized the importance of knowledge and wisdom.

His journey to gain wisdom began in 1 Kings chapter 3 where the Lord appeared to him in a dream and told him to ask for whatever he wanted the Lord to give to him.

Solomon was humble and acknowledged the Lord's kindness towards him and his father David. He also acknowledged that he was young and didn't fully understand how to carry out the responsibilities of being king:

7 "Now, Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. 8 Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. 9 So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?" 1 Kings 3:7-9

Solomon's request pleased the Lord, and He granted his request. Because his request was not anything selfish, the Lord blessed him with wisdom and the things he didn't ask for.

There's a lesson we can learn from Solomon in this situation.

WISDOM

In many cultures of the world, wisdom is associated with the elderly of society. When someone from a younger generation behaves wisely, he is said to be "wise beyond his years."

This statement implies that wisdom comes with age and life experience. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In the early 1970s *Schoolhouse Rock!* was launched on the US television network ABC. It was a series of animated musical educational short films/videos that aired on Saturday mornings. The core principle was "knowledge is power!"

Solomon believed that, too, and he believed that the earlier wisdom was taught, the better and more successful life a person would have.

Ask:

- How would you define knowledge in your own words?
- Do you think wisdom is different from knowledge? Why or why not?

According to *Oxford Languages*:

- *Knowledge* is defined as "facts, information, and skills acquired by a person through experience or education, the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject."
- *Wisdom* is defined as "the soundness of an action or decision with regard to the application of experience, knowledge, and good judgment."

The two definitions can be joined in one simple statement: wisdom is the application of knowledge.

These definitions do not list an age requirement. King Solomon believed in wisdom, and he believed it should be shared at a young age.

Ask:

- Do you think it is possible to have knowledge without wisdom? In other words, can you know the right thing to do, but not do it? Why or why not?
- Have you ever experienced this in your own life? Explain.

Proverbs portrays a conversation between Solomon and his son. He communicates the many benefits of wisdom to his son and cautions him about the dangers of not being wise.

As we read these words, we put ourselves in place of the son, and God as our father teaching us wisdom.

Read Proverbs 1:1-7

1 These are the proverbs of Solomon, David's son, king of Israel.

2 Their purpose is to teach people wisdom and discipline, to help them understand the insights of the wise.

3 Their purpose is to teach people to live disciplined and successful lives, to help them do what is right, just, and fair.

4 These proverbs will give insight to the simple, knowledge, and discernment to the young.

5 Let the wise listen to these proverbs and become even wiser. Let those with understanding receive guidance

6 by exploring the meaning in these proverbs and parables the words of the wise and their riddles.

7 Fear of the Lord is the foundation of true knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

The purpose for the entire book can be found in the first seven verses of chapter 1: to teach people wisdom and discipline.

He wants people to live disciplined and successful lives according to God's word.

He stated the fear of the Lord was the foundation of true knowledge.

Ask:

- What do you think Solomon meant when he said that “the fear of the Lord” is the foundation of knowledge (verse 7)?
- Are we supposed to be afraid of God? Why or why not?

The fear that Solomon mentions has nothing to do with being afraid or scared of God.

It’s about respecting and admiring God for who He is.

Knowing who God is and having respect for Him is the beginning of knowledge.

Applying that respect and knowledge of God in our day-to-day activities becomes wisdom.

Read Proverbs 1:8-10

8 Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching.

9 They are a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.

10 My son, if sinful men entice you, do not give in to them.

Ask:

- In your own words, what do you think Solomon is saying to us in verses 8-9?
- In your own words, what do you think Solomon is saying to us in verse 10?

Read Proverbs 2:1-6

1 My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you,

2 making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding;

3 yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding,

4 if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures,

5 then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

6 For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding

In this passage, Solomon writes about some ways we can find truth.

In verses 1-3 he says that we'll find wisdom if we want it and accept it when given.

If you're anything like me, you can sometimes be stubborn. When you're given good advice, you ignore it and do your own thing.

That's not wisdom.

Wisdom is both wanting to do what is right and then accepting the advice given rather than doing your own thing.

Easy concept to understand. More difficult to do it.

Verse 4 is about our attitude towards wisdom. If we want it just as much as we would want a lot of money or a hidden treasure... then we're getting somewhere. When we want wisdom that much, we'll find it.

Ask:

- What is something you really want right now (other than wisdom)?
- What would your life look like if you wanted wisdom that much?

Read Proverbs 3:5-7

5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

6 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

7 Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil.

The big idea in this passage is to ask God for help throughout your everyday life. Instead of doing everything the way you think it should be done, look for guidance from God.

You can ask for guidance through the Holy Spirit living inside you, and look to the Bible for help.

It's all about trusting that God knows the best way for us to live.

Ask:

- Is it easy or hard for you to trust that God's way is the best way? Explain.

Summary of Proverbs 4-6

Solomon begins a heartfelt conversation not just to “my son” as in other chapters, but this time he addresses it to “my children.”

He tells his children that he was once young, too. He shared the words that his father taught him and encourages them not to turn away from the words he is teaching.

These important conversations unfortunately do not happen often in our culture today. Sadly, they are happening in fewer and fewer Christian households.

Solomon encourages his children with a promise of long and good life if they listen to his teachings and hold on to his instruction.

Solomon is speaking from a place of experience. He is not only going by what his father King David told him but what he has lived out since receiving his own instructions.

God desires for us to live a long and good life. He wants us to take hold of His instructions, not as a way to restrict us, but as a way to guide us.

Solomon speaks to his “children” in the book of Proverbs, and God is speaking to us.

You may not have an earthly parent who has shared words of wisdom with you to guide you through life, but you have a heavenly parent who wants nothing but the best for you.

He wants us to trust Him.

Discussion Questions

1. Solomon tells his son wisdom will guard his life in **Proverbs 4:10-13**.

How can wisdom guard a person’s life? Share about a time that making a wise choice protected you.

2. Think about the wisest person you know. What advice have they given you that has been beneficial to your life? How does their advice compare to the wisdom King Solomon shares with his son? Explain any similarities or differences.

3. Identify the seven things listed in **Proverbs 6:16-19** that are detestable to the Lord.

What do these behaviors look like in our culture today?

How can wisdom keep a person from these behaviors?

Summary of Proverbs 7-9

The last three chapters of this section of Proverbs repeat some familiar themes.

Solomon repeats his warning against adultery. We see wisdom personified again in chapter 8, and he takes a closer look at wise living compared to reckless living in chapter 9.

Why does Solomon repeat himself?

In school, small children are often taught their letter sounds, math facts, etc., through repetition.

This is because as humans, we learn best when doing something repeatedly.

Solomon must have been aware of this concept because he repeated his warnings to his children. Most likely so they would not forget.

In chapter 8, wisdom calls out with a warning. Read verses **1-10**

1 Listen as Wisdom calls out! Hear as understanding raises her voice!

2 On the hilltop along the road, she takes her stand at the crossroads.

3 By the gates at the entrance to the town, on the road leading in, she cries aloud,

4 "I call to you, to all of you! I raise my voice to all people.

5 You simple people, use good judgment. You foolish people, show some understanding.

6 Listen to me! For I have important things to tell you. Everything I say is right,

7 for I speak the truth and detest every kind of deception.

8 My advice is wholesome. There is nothing devious or crooked in it.

9 My words are plain to anyone with understanding, clear to those with knowledge.

10 Choose my instruction rather than silver, and knowledge rather than pure gold.

The imagery that we see in these verses compares to what we saw in chapter 1.

Wisdom is like an old friend or grandmother, aunt, etc. who is calling out to you to listen to the words that she says.

Not only is Solomon giving strong instruction, but it is also noted by the punctuation that he uses

that there are several exclamatory statements in these verses. He is not just relating his instructions. We can also see that he is giving commands through the use of exclamation marks.

The imagery used in these verses shows wisdom calling out, urging us to choose her over everything else.

The world today has so many different things that are calling out for our attention.

The call can come in the form of music, television, social media, fashion magazines, etc.

Of all the things that are calling out to us, Solomon lovingly encourages us to hear and follow wisdom above all else.

Discussion Questions

1. Although Solomon's children may or may not have been at the age to marry, he still provided Godly instruction to them on the subject.

How can learning about marriage at an early age benefit people when they become adults?

What are some precautions you have been taught about marriage?

2. What can we infer about Solomon's love for his children through his teachings in the book of Proverbs?
3. Based on your personal experience and peer observation, identify the connection between family involvement and wise vs. unwise behaviors of youth.