



**PROVERBS SMALL GROUP SERIES
LESSON 2**

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PROVERBS - SMALL GROUP SERIES

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 2: GROW IN WISDOM

Bible: Proverbs 10:1 -19:29

LESSON 1 SUMMARY

Today we are in week two of the four-part series on the Book of Proverbs.

Although Solomon was the primary author of the book, he is not the sole author. A man (sometimes called an oracle) named Agur wrote chapter 30, and King Lemuel wrote chapter 31.

While we cannot fully detail all the teachings from Proverbs in just four weeks, we will look at some of the key points of wisdom that Solomon shared to promote Godly living.

In Lesson 1, we learned that Proverbs does not tell a story that occurs in chronological order. It is a book of teachings on the principles of wise living.

Some of the themes include obtaining wisdom, right living, the path of the wicked, adultery, the protection of wisdom, and consequences of rejecting wisdom.

In Lesson 1, we learned that Solomon focused his attention on showing his children the importance of seeking wisdom.

We saw how he sought the Lord for wisdom as a young king who needed to know how to rule God's people. He then shared the wisdom he had learned from his father with his own children. He offered the benefits and warnings of living with and without wisdom.

As we move through this next section of Proverbs, we will see that there is more to being wise than just seeking wisdom at a young age.

In Lesson 2, Solomon continues teaching on wisdom and moves from seeking wisdom to growing in wisdom. In chapters 10-19, Solomon continues his fatherly advice to treasure wisdom.

Discussion Questions

1. How is the path of *folly* described in **Proverbs 1-9**?

Why do you think this path appeals to people?

What are the consequences of following this path?

2. How is the path of *wisdom* described in **Proverbs 1-9**?

What is the appeal of following this path?

What are the consequences of following this path?

3. Can you identify a time in your life when you made a deliberate choice about which path to follow? What factors influenced your decision?

LESSON

As we grow and mature, there are things we've heard and learned that stick with us.

In chapter 10, Solomon offers words of wisdom as a foundation for life. These are words that no doubt he wants his children to cling to and take with them as they grow into adulthood.

Read Proverbs 10:27-32

27 Fear of the Lord lengthens one's life, but the years of the wicked are cut short.

28 The hopes of the godly result in happiness, but the expectations of the wicked come to nothing.

29 The way of the Lord is a stronghold to those with integrity, but it destroys the wicked.

30 The godly will never be disturbed, but the wicked will be removed from the land.

31 The mouth of the godly person gives wise advice, but the tongue that deceives will be cut off.

32 The lips of the godly speak helpful words, but the mouth of the wicked speaks perverse words.

Solomon ends chapter 10 by comparing Godly actions and wicked actions. He states the way of the Lord is right and uses the conjunction *but* to show what the opposite effect would be.

In chapter 10, Solomon moves through different themes throughout the first 20 verses of the chapter.

In verses two through four, he centers his focus on wealth and hard work. In verses six through seven, he discusses the fate of a righteous life versus a wicked life.

Verse eight refers to a willingness to receive wisdom versus someone who speaks without wisdom.

Multiple verses throughout chapter 10 deal with our words and speaking in wisdom.

These verses are sectioned between 10 and 21.

Verses 24 through 30 deal with following wisdom's path to a good life rooted in the Lord versus the life of the wicked that will be destroyed.

We see in these verses like so many others, that although there is no plot and action from characters, there are multiple themes throughout his teachings.

At the core of all these is the understanding that a fear of the Lord as the beginning of knowledge and wisdom.

The language Solomon uses in these verses is clear. We see positive words associated with following the Lord, and we see negative and dark language for the way of the wicked.

He paints an intentional picture of God's way versus our way.

We live in a Burger King culture, where "you can have it your way." But as we see in God's word, that is not true in life.

For the life of a believer, the way of the Lord is what's right.

Solomon wanted his children to know—in the same way that God wants us to know—that anything opposite Him will lead to destruction.

In verse 31, Solomon paints a vivid picture describing what happens when we do not speak wisely but with deception.

He says our tongues will be cut out.

God has made it very clear throughout His word that there are consequences for disobedience.

Solomon is showing us that we need to move from obtaining wisdom to growing in that wisdom to maintain an obedient life.

Chapter 11 gives advice on daily living, good business practices, and how to engage with other people.

In many families, communities, and cultures of the 21st-century, these conversations do not take place. Youth are often thought of as being too young and inexperienced to understand such complexities.

But that is not always the case. Around the world, there are hundreds of children, teens, and young adults running businesses, nonprofit organizations, and making an impact in their communities and beyond.

As Christ-followers, we have an additional advantage. We have the giver of all wisdom on our side. We learned last week that, if we ask, God will grant us wisdom. Therefore, age should not be a limitation on our ability to seek and grow wisely.

Solomon understood that wisdom learned at a young age grows and develops as a person ages.

Giving a child a strong foundation on the front end can reduce a life of heartache on the back end.

There must be a willingness to receive wisdom, accept it, and live according to it. Many people are surrounded by wisdom and knowledge daily but do not live in such a way as to benefit from its power.

That is not the life Solomon wanted for his children, and it is not the life God wants for His people.

Chapters 12 and 13 go back to the pattern of Proverbs. Here we have a comparison of wicked living and godly living. Both chapters begin with a statement regarding love and acceptance of discipline and a warning to not despise correction.

Solomon reminds us that we cannot get so wise that we think we can't be corrected or learn anything new.

Throughout both chapters, we see the blessings of growing to love wisdom and walking in it and the consequences of rejecting discipline and instruction and the path that leads to.

Summary of Proverbs 14-16

Here in **Proverbs 14:1-12**, Solomon says:

1 A wise woman builds her home, but a foolish woman tears it down with her own hands.

2 Those who follow the right path fear the Lord; those who take the wrong path despise him.

3 A fool's proud talk becomes a rod that beats him, but the words of the wise keep them safe.

4 Without oxen a stable stays clean, but you need a strong ox for a large harvest.

5 An honest witness does not lie; a false witness breathes lies.

6 A mocker seeks wisdom and never finds it, but knowledge comes easily to those with understanding.

7 Stay away from fools, for you won't find knowledge on their lips.

8 The prudent understand where they are going, but fools deceive themselves.

9 Fools make fun of guilt, but the godly acknowledge it and seek reconciliation.

10 Each heart knows its own bitterness, and no one else can fully share its joy.

11 The house of the wicked will be destroyed, but the tent of the godly will flourish.

12 There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death.

In this chapter, we see wisdom personified again. This time wisdom has a counterpart: folly.

Both are used to illustrate how wisdom will build up a person's life and how living in folly or wickedness will destroy a person's life.

In verse 12, Solomon points out that there's a path that seems right to each person. However, we know that what seems right to us does not always equal righteousness in the eyes of God.

He encourages us time and time again to not follow our understanding but to seek the understanding of the Lord.

The world we live in today is filled with people who are choosing a "path" that seems right to them.

However, if individuals have their own standards of right, then no one is wrong.

Solomon urges his child to not fall into the trap of deception. There is a true way that is right, and it is the path of the Lord.

Solomon goes on in verse 27 to highlight a benefit of following the Lord. He says that the fear of the Lord brings security, not only for that person, but the children will be secure as well.

Some of what Solomon talks about is the combination of generational wisdom and living by God. His father king David was a man after God's own heart. He was not a perfect man, but he recognized and revered God.

He lived in awe-inspiring fear of the Lord and passed that same instruction on to his children.

This is the goal of the Christian household: to teach the word of God to the next generation encouraging them to not only live in the wisdom of the Lord for themselves but to share it with those around them.

Chapters 15 and 16 close out the section with a couple of comparisons of living a life and wisdom with God.

Chapter 16 takes a narrower focus. In the first nine verses Solomon speaks about the sovereignty of God. He then moves on to kingship in verses 10 through 15, and then at the end of the chapter he describes the multiple types of wicked people we may encounter in life.

Solomon also teaches on pride versus humility and the benefits of understanding. On multiple occasions, he warns against leaning on our own understanding and rejecting wisdom. When we are too proud, we think we don't need to learn anything more and that leads to destruction.

Discussion Questions

1. Why is it hard to trust God's way of living life more than your way? Share a time when you did live your way instead of God's way. How did it turn out?
2. What are wisdom and understanding better than getting in **Proverbs 16:16**? Why do you think Solomon made this statement?
3. According to **Proverbs chapter 15**, how is wisdom demonstrated? Share examples of what this looks like at your age.

Summary of Proverbs 17 - 19

We conclude Lesson 2 with chapters 17 through 19. The core principle and theme are still the same: get wisdom and get understanding.

In each of these chapters, Solomon does not seek to gain wisdom to boast or brag or to put others down.

His purpose for seeking wisdom is so that he can live a righteous life before God.

As Christ-followers and children of God, that should be our goal as well. Not to gain wisdom to rule over others.

But to use our wisdom for the benefit of others.

We should live our lives in such a way that it becomes a drawing factor leading others to a relationship with God.

When we speak to people, there should be evidence that we know who God is.

Regardless of our age, we can behave wisely.

If we go back to the definition of wisdom from week one, “wisdom is the application of knowledge,” so the things that we learn in our youth group, at church, and in our families, we apply it to our day-to-day life.

Throughout these chapters, Solomon is giving us practical examples of what it looks like to live a life of wisdom grounded in God.

Just before concluding **chapter 19**, Solomon makes it very plain in verses **20-23** about growing in wisdom.

20 Get all the advice and instruction you can, so you will be wise the rest of your life.

21 You can make many plans, but the Lord's purpose will prevail.

22 Loyalty makes a person attractive. It is better to be poor than dishonest.

23 Fear of the Lord leads to life, bringing security and protection from harm.

We are encouraged to get all the instruction we can to live a wise life.

We can plan our lives (and there's nothing wrong with planning), but we cannot forget that God is in control and His will for us is what's best.

Solomon reminds us that it is better to make our plans with the wisdom of God instead of trying to do it on our own.

The respectful fear of God, not one rooted in terror, is life-giving. It brings life and protects life all at the same time.

Solomon recognized all the wealth in the world cannot compare to the wisdom of the Lord.

He's encouraged his children as well as us to grow in wisdom, see the question, and in the next chapters of scripture, to live in wisdom.

Regardless of our age in life, we are never too young or old to make wise choices that honor God.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you think it's a good idea to think before you act? Why or why not? Share a time when you really messed up and did something stupid. What happened? What did you learn from the experience?
2. In **Proverbs 18:24** NLT, it says "There are 'friends' who destroy each other, but a real friend sticks closer than a brother." Explain what this verse means. Why do you think the words 'friends' is in quotes?
3. **Proverbs 19:21** talks about making plans for your life. Have you prayed to God about His plan for your life?

If yes, do you have a clear understanding of His direction for you?

If not, challenge yourself to pray and ask God to give you wisdom about your life.