



**PROVERBS SMALL GROUP SERIES  
LESSON 3**

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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 3: LIVE IN WISDOM

Bible: Proverbs 20:1 - 24:34

### WEEKS 1 & 2 SUMMARY

Two weeks ago, we began a journey into wisdom through the words of King Solomon to his children.

Solomon made it clear in the first seven verses of chapter 1 that his purpose for writing Proverbs was to instruct his child.

In lesson one, we learned to seek wisdom in chapters 1 through 9.

Last week, in chapters 10 through 19, we saw examples of what it means to grow in wisdom and live according to God's word.

We learned that rejection of wisdom leads to destruction but holding wisdom close is life-giving.

Solomon showed believers what can happen when we surrender and humble ourselves before wisdom.

When we allow the fear of the Lord to be our foundation, we build our lives on solid ground.

This foundation covers all aspects of life. Our values, behavior, understanding of life, and exhibiting Godly behavior. It is recognizing who God is and surrendering to His will over our own.

### Discussion Questions

1. Are there any proverbs from Lessons 1 or 2 that you would like to have clarified or discussed in greater detail?

2. **James 1:5** NLT says, “If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking.”

How does this scripture passage from the New Testament relate to the Proverbs in the Old Testament?

3. What are some reasons why people do not seek God for wisdom? Name other people, places, or things people turn to instead of God for wisdom and instruction?

## LESSON

### Summary of Proverbs 20-21

Solomon does not waste any time in chapter 20. He comes right out and warns against the deception of drunkenness.

In the United States, drinking among teenagers is a serious problem. Maybe it was a problem during Solomon's time, too. Whatever the case, he found it necessary to include this instruction.

He says that wine is a mocker, meaning that drinking wine makes a fool out of you or makes fun of you by causing you to behave in a way contrary to God.

He goes on to say that people who are led away by drunkenness are not wise.

Solomon compares living in wisdom to living on our own accord. Some of the topics he addresses are

- Laziness
- Lending and business practices
- Revenge

In **Proverbs 20: 24-27**, we take a closer look at the blessings of the Lord guiding our path.

*24 The Lord directs our steps, so why try to understand everything along the way?*

*25 Don't trap yourself by making a rash promise to God and only later counting the cost.*

*26 A wise king scatters the wicked like wheat, then runs his threshing wheel over them.*

*27 The Lord's light penetrates the human spirit, exposing every hidden motive.*

In verse 24, we are reminded that God is in control, and He is the one guiding your steps. Solomon asks why we try to understand everything as we navigate life.

Does this mean that obtaining wisdom is pointless, and we shouldn't get understanding?

Of course not.

God does not contradict Himself. He told us to seek wisdom and understanding and to use it to trust Him.

When we try to figure out all the answers and do it all on our own without seeking God, we are wasting our time and energy.

Solomon reminds us in verses 26 and 27 that the wise scatter the wicked and the Lord's light will expose any unsure motives.

Seeking God's wisdom, growing in wisdom, and living in wisdom brings us closer to God.

Verse 25 says we should not make rash promises to God because this is a trap. In other words, we are setting ourselves up to fail when we don't think before we speak.

We should not make promises to the One who is the Promise Keeper without taking the time to realize what we are saying and what it will cost us to keep the promise.

In chapter 21, Solomon continues his instruction on living a life of wisdom. He uses various examples of actions that are pleasing to the Lord versus the actions of the wicked and sinful.

Solomon leaves no area of life off the table in his instructions to his children.

This is a lesson for us today. When instruction has godly roots, we can address the difficult topics that we often shy away from with youth.

The problem with ignoring sensitive topics is that we run the risk of surrendering God's way to the way of the world.

Verses 20-27 provide a wide variety of topics Solomon uses to teach on how to live in wisdom according to the Word of God.

*20 The wise have wealth and luxury, but fools spend whatever they get.*

*21 Whoever pursues righteousness and unfailing love will find life, righteousness, and honor.*

*22 The wise conquer the city of the strong and level the fortress in which they trust.*

*23 Watch your tongue and keep your mouth shut, and you will stay out of trouble.*

*24 Mockers are proud and haughty; they act with boundless arrogance.*

*25 Despite their desires, the lazy will come to ruin, for their hands refuse to work.*

*26 Some people are always greedy for more but the godly love to give!*

*27 The sacrifice of an evil person is detestable, especially when it is offered with wrong motives.*

*28 A false witness will be cut off, but a credible witness will be allowed to speak.*

Solomon begins this section by dealing with the wise and the wealthy. This message is to not foolishly spend every dime you get but to be wise in your purchases.

Next, he goes on to speak of conquest and strength as well as the strength of guarding our tongues and keeping our mouths shut.

For many teens and young adults, verse 23 may be one of the most difficult of all. This is not because they cannot guard their tongues. It is because the desire to have the last word is so strong.

A wise person knows when it is better to let the silence speak.

Christ is the greatest example of this during His death on the cross. He could have spoken, but He made the choice not to.

His silence spoke volumes and showed strength beyond what anyone could imagine.

In this section, Solomon speaks on laziness, greed, false motives, and false witness. He covered everything in his instructions.

Solomon is a great example of how God's people should use the wisdom that we obtain.

He freely shares what he has learned with his children.

He then wants them to teach the next generation. As recipients of God's wisdom, one of our goals should be to share that wisdom with others.

Many times, we share wisdom not in what we say, but in how we behave.

Someone may not understand why we choose to keep silent instead of getting the last word.

Someone else may not realize the importance of saving an allowance instead of spending.

But through you and me, they can witness the wisdom of God and come to know it for themselves—but only if we willingly share our knowledge.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Read **Proverbs 20:11**. What does a child's behavior tell us about that child? Is this verse only for children or can it apply to adults as well? Give examples.
2. Does this apply to adults?
3. How does a person stay out of trouble according to **Proverbs 21:13**? Do you believe this is true? Explain why or why not.

### **Summary of Proverbs 22-24**

This section begins with the standard two-line style of comparing a positive lifestyle trait to the consequence or a negative one.

But halfway through the chapter, the writing style changes. Solomon goes back to the standard lines of text.

He pauses to give a reminder of the reason he is sharing his words of wisdom.

Verses 17-21 states:

*17 Listen to the words of the wise; apply your heart to my instruction.*

*18 For it is good to keep these sayings in your heart and always ready on your lips.*

*19 I am teaching you today—yes, you—so you will trust in the Lord.*

*20 I have written thirty sayings for you, filled with advice and knowledge.*

*21 In this way, you may know the truth and take an accurate report to those who sent you.*

He wants to be sure his children know the purpose of his writings. He wants them to listen to his words of wisdom so they can apply them to their hearts and be ready to speak them.

His teaching has a purpose—that they will grow trust in the Lord.

He says I have written all these things to you with one purpose: that you may know and share the truth.

The message hasn't changed for us today. We are to take the teachings of Solomon and applying the advice and knowledge to our lives.

We are to hold on to the truth and wisdom and share it with others we encounter in our everyday lives.

Solomon's words of wisdom for a practical living get very specific in chapter 23. He moves from two-line teachings to small stanzas in lines of three or four to make his message clear.

He starts by instructing on table manners and proper behavior when meeting with royalty or nobility.

Starting in verse four he talks about wealth and what happens when it becomes our goal.

Solomon continues his course of teaching for daily living and then makes a dramatic pause in the middle of chapter 23. Starting at verse 22, he says

*22 Listen to your father, who gave you life and don't despise your mother when she is old.*

*23 Get the truth and never sell it; also get wisdom, discipline, and good judgment.*

*24 The father of godly children has cause for joy. What a pleasure to have children who are wise.*

*25 So give your father and mother joy! May she who gave you birth be happy.*

We conclude lesson 3 with chapter 24. Solomon gives more words of wisdom for daily living.

These teachings have several words of caution using “don’t” statements. His focus is on the treatment of others including the unjust, evildoers, and your enemies.

The teachings in this chapter cover a wide variety of topics from envy, strength, helping the unjust, etc.

The common thread that holds them all together is doing what is right, pleasing the Lord, and holding on to wisdom.

**Proverbs 24:5** NLT says, “The wise are mightier than the strong, and those with knowledge grow stronger and stronger.”

From the beginning of the book, Solomon has made his purpose clear. We are to seek wisdom, grow in wisdom, live in wisdom, and endure in wisdom.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. **Proverbs 22:6** is a frequently quoted verse for parents about raising their children. What does this verse mean to you?
2. In your own words, explain what Solomon means in **Proverbs 23:15-16**. What connection is he making between his child and himself?
3. Compare **Proverbs 1:1-6 to 22: 17-21**. How are these verses similar? How do these verses show the sincerity and seriousness of Solomon about the teachings to his children?