



**PROVERBS SMALL GROUP SERIES
LESSON 4**

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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 4: ENDURE IN WISDOM

Bible: Proverbs 25:1 - 31:31

WEEKS 1, 2 & 3 SUMMARY

Four weeks ago, we began a series on Proverbs. We started with a father's advice to his son. The advice grew from an urgency to obtain wisdom and to grow and live in wisdom.

Our final lesson of the series focuses on enduring in wisdom. To endure means "to remain, to last."

In the final chapters of Proverbs, we will look at living a life that remains in wisdom. As we learned in the first lesson, King Solomon, who is known for being wise, wrote most of this book. Chapters 1 through 29 can be attributed to him.

This week, we will meet two additional authors who contributed to chapters 30 and 31 of the book of Proverbs.

Although the book has multiple authors, the common theme still holds true: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." **Proverbs 9:10**

Solomon wrote these teachings to instruct his children. As children of God, we recognize that these words along with the other 65 books of the Bible are His instructions to us.

Seek. Grow. Live. Endure. Wisdom and understanding are the goals.

Discussion Questions

1. As you think about what we have studied so far, what have you learned about being wise that you didn't know before? Has your perspective on what makes a person wise changed since the beginning of this series?
2. Are there any questions that you still have that you would like answered today?

3. Thinking about the life experiences you've had so far. What connections, if any, can you make regarding making wise choices and the consequences of rejecting wisdom?

LESSON

Summary of Proverbs 25 - 26

Chapter 25 begins a different set of Proverbs from Solomon. Although these are his writings, they were collected by the advisers of King Hezekiah.

It is said that these proverbs were collected under the direction of Hezekiah more than 270 years after Solomon's death.

Solomon is known for thousands of Proverbs, but we may never know all the God-inspired insights that he had to share.

The same sentence style is shown in this chapter as in previous ones. Like many of the previous chapters, Chapter 25 covers a variety of topics.

In the first seven verses, Solomon talks about the behavior of a king being just and fair.

Verses 8-10 caution us to not be so quick to sue someone because it might not end the way you think.

While there are not many young people filing lawsuits, this is a good lesson in conflict resolution, which is a skill lacking in many teens today.

In verses 11-15, Solomon's teachings move to give solid advice about trustworthiness, promise-keeping, and guarding our words.

Verses 16-27 offer advice on being kind, placing our trust in the right things, and caution against a gossiping tongue.

The chapter is concluded with a strong metaphor for self-control. Verse 28 states, "A person without self-control is like a city with broken-down walls."

A city whose walls are broken does not have any protection. In the same way, a person who has no self-control has no protection from themselves and everything around them.

Wisdom helps us to operate with self-control. Our wisdom comes from God. Therefore, we are not controlled by self; we are controlled by Him.

Chapter 26 gives a message of warning. It can be divided into three sections:

- Verses 1 to 12 - Fools
- Verses 13 to 16 - Laziness
- Verses 17-28 - Meddling

With everything at our fingertips today, it can be very easy to fall into the lazy trap out of convenience.

Solomon says that Godly living does not equal a lazy attitude.

Let's take a closer look at the section on lazy living:

13 The lazy person claims, "There's a lion on the road! Yes, I'm sure there's a lion out there!"

14 As a door swings back and forth on its hinges, so the lazy person turns over in bed.

15 Lazy people take food in their hand but don't even lift it to their mouth.

16 Lazy people consider themselves smarter than seven wise counselors.

Solomon gives four different examples of what a lazy person's attitude in life might look like.

In the first example, he paints a picture of a lazy person lying by saying there's a lion on the road.

The implication is that with the excuse of a wild animal in the road, the person doesn't have to go out.

In verses 14 and 15, we see the actions of a lazy person. He says the door swings back-and-forth, but the lazy person turns over in bed.

The door is for entering and exiting. So, while people are up and moving and going about getting things done, the lazy person just stays in bed.

A person that will pick up food but won't lift their hand to their mouth is lazy.

Solomon paints a clear picture of what this lifestyle looks like.

Whether in King Solomon's day or the 21st-century, the examples still hold true.

Wisdom is not always about the deep decisions we may face.

God calls us to be wise and seek His ways in ALL aspects of our lives.

Discussion Questions

1. Have do you ever been accused of being lazy by a parent or guardian? How does that make you feel? What are some of the reasons they make that statement? How can you change that perception others may have of you?
2. **Proverbs 25:8** talks about self-control. In your own words, explain what it means to have self-control.

How do wisdom and self-control work together?

What does that look like in the daily life of a believer?

3. **Proverbs 25:21-22** gives guidance on dealing with our enemies. Solomon is teaching us to treat them the opposite of how they may have treated us.

Do you think taking this approach to dealing with your enemies is wise or foolish?

What does Solomon say the Lord will do for those who show kindness to their enemies?

Summary of Proverbs 27-29

As we conclude the chapters from Solomon, he returns to a topic he spent a large amount of time on in the earlier chapters of Proverbs—wickedness and righteousness.

In **Proverbs 28: 1-7**, Solomon gives multiple examples of honest, wise living compared to the outcomes of wicked, foolish living.

1 The wicked run away when no one is chasing them, but the godly are as bold as lions.

2 When there is moral rot within a nation, its government topples easily. But wise and knowledgeable leaders bring stability.

3 A poor person who oppresses the poor is like a pounding rain that destroys the crops.

4 To reject the law is to praise the wicked; to obey the law is to fight them.

5 Evil people don't understand justice, but those who follow the Lord understand completely.

6 Better to be poor and honest, than to be dishonest and rich.

7 Young people who obey the law are wise; those with wild friends bring shame to their parents.

In verse seven, he specifically mentions young people who obey the law.

Doing what is right does not seem cool or popular, but there are benefits and blessings connected to it.

As a Christian youth, it can be even more challenging, but Solomon says we are wise when we obey.

Wisdom is not only limited to the decisions that we make but also the people we decide to be around. One thing is clear: living on the path of righteousness may mean that we must leave some people on the road of wickedness.

Otherwise, the “friends” or people we hang around that make unwise choices and who are living “wild” can disgrace themselves, you, your family, and most importantly, God!

Discussion Questions

1. Read **Proverbs 29:13**. What lesson is being taught in this verse? How does knowing this lesson impact the decisions you make?
2. **2 Timothy 1:7** NLT says, “For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.” Which verse in chapter 29 connects to this scripture?

How can you apply these truths to your life today?

3. Sometimes it is hard to know the right thing to do and the right thing to say. Solomon encourages us to seek God and get wisdom.

What does that look like for someone your age?

Summary of Proverbs 30-31

There is a clear contrast in authors starting in chapter 30. The language shifts from instruction to a child and takes a more personal stance.

This chapter is written by a man named Agur, the son of Jakeh. There is not much else known about him, and there is no other mention in the Bible of him.

Agur speaks in the first person using the word “I.” While the intended audience is clearly different, there is still a personal meaning to the message.

The purpose of his chapter is made clear in the first 3 verses.

1 I am weary, O God; I am weary and worn out, O God.

2 I am too stupid to be human, and I lack common sense.

3 I have not mastered human wisdom, nor do I know the Holy One.

Agur confesses that he is tired. He acknowledges that he does not know enough to master human wisdom. He does not approach his teaching with boasting but with humility.

He goes on to speak on the purity and integrity of God’s word. In verses 7-9 he makes a request of God.

7 O God, I beg two favors from you; let me have them before I die.

8 First, help me never to tell a lie. Second, give me neither poverty nor riches! Give me just enough to satisfy my needs.

9 For if I grow rich, I may deny you and say, “Who is the Lord?” And if I am too poor, I may steal and thus insult God’s holy name.

Agur requests two things from God before he dies.

He asked for help so that he would never tell a lie. He wanted to live an honest life.

That's an example we can follow.

The second was he didn't want to be rich, nor did he want to live in poverty. He wanted just enough to have his needs met.

What an amazing request!

Agur was focused on living a righteous life before God, and knew he could not do those things on his own.

In much the same way that Solomon knew he could not lead the kingdom on his own, Agur went to God for wisdom.

As Christians, we can make the same decisions as we navigate life and seek to live it in a Godly way.

In the remainder of chapter 30 he goes on to share words of wisdom, some even mirroring the two-sentence structure of Solomon used.

In the final chapter of Proverbs, we are introduced to another author, a king.

Chapter 31 is credited to King Lemuel, however, the message is clear that it was wisdom for him given by someone else.

At the beginning of verse one, we see these are teachings from a mother to her son.

The same way Solomon was giving teachings to his son, in verses 1-9, Lemuel's mother was teaching him about how to be a king and how he should behave.

Verse 10 begins with the infamous question that chapter 31 is known for, "Who can find a virtuous and capable wife?"

For the remainder of the chapter Lemuel's mother outlines the qualities and characteristics of a virtuous woman.

She is giving her son wisdom about the type of spouse he should look for: a woman who is trustworthy, and one who plans and prepares.

These attributes may be ascribed to women, but they are qualities all of us can strive toward.

Depending on the culture and part of the world you're in today, it is customary for parents or family to give input on relationships and selecting a spouse.

The Spirit of God is at work in the book of Proverbs.

Although there were three different authors, the common thread remains: "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

In verse 30, we see a powerful verse like other chapters.

"Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last; but a woman who fears the Lord will be greatly praised." **Proverbs 31:30** NLT.

Lemuel's mother is warning him not to be caught off-guard or deceived by a woman's charm or what she looks like. It is her fear of the Lord that makes her beautiful and praiseworthy.

Discussion Questions

1. There are many characteristics of a woman described in chapter 31. Many of them speak to what a virtuous woman does. In verses 25-27, we get a very clear picture of the character of a virtuous woman.

Explain what these verses mean in your own words.

Do you know any women who reflect these characteristics?

2. Have you ever been given relationship advice by a parent or guardian? Did you find their advice helpful?
3. This study has been jammed-packed with multiple words of wisdom. Identify three scriptures from the book of Proverbs that you will carry with you in the days and weeks ahead.

In what ways will your decision-making change after going through this study? How are you impact those around you with what you have learned?

SUMMARY

Proverbs is a book that is often quoted for its pearls of wisdom, especially the more famous verses on raising a child in the way they should go (**Proverbs 22:6**), trusting in God and not leaning on our own understanding (**Proverbs 3:5-6**) and of course the entire chapter that speaks on the virtuous woman (**Proverbs 31**).

But if you only focus on those verses, then you only get a portion of the multitude of teachings Solomon left behind.

Solomon is famous for his wisdom of being the key author in the book of Proverbs, but it is not the only book.

We can find additional pearls of wisdom in the Song of Solomon—sometimes called the Song of Songs—and Ecclesiastes.

Solomon modeled sound, godly parenting. He passed on the teachings of truth that he lived to his children. He recognized the importance of fearing the Lord and obtaining wisdom and understanding.

The depth of his belief in God's commands and keeping them as he lived life was evident in every Proverb he wrote to instruct his children.

His purpose for the book was clear. He wanted his children and others to be disciplined in the importance of gaining and maintaining wisdom.

Solomon emphasized that wisdom is something that should be pursued early in life. As we grow and mature our wisdom should grow and mature. He did not place age limits on a person's ability to become wise and make wise decisions.

Choosing to trust and fear the Lord is the best decision a person can make. Having a relationship with God is only the beginning of wise living.

Learning the principles of His word, living them out, and sharing that wisdom with others equal a successful life according to Solomon.

Many scriptures throughout the Bible are full of God's willingness to grant us wisdom if we only ask.

When Solomon became king, he was self-aware enough to recognize what he didn't know. He was humble enough to ask God for help with his shortcomings and gracious enough to share his blessing with others.