

A People of the Book
8-Year Curriculum
Year 7 Quarter 3

A Study of
Selected Texts from

Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon

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Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon

2013 Quarter 3

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Introduction to Solomon, Proverbs – Purpose and Theme

In this quarters study we will be going over the books of Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes. All three of these books are written by the same author – King Solomon. King Solomon was the wisest man to ever live, he had wisdom granted by God (1 Kings 3:9-12, 2 Chr. 1:10-12, and 1 Kings 4:29-31).

1Kings 3:9-12 ⁹ Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?" ¹⁰ The speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. ¹¹ Then God said to him: "Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice, ¹² behold, I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you. NKJV

2 Chr. 1:10-12 ¹⁰ Now give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of Yours?" ¹¹ Then God said to Solomon: "Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked riches or wealth or honor or the life of your enemies, nor have you asked long life—but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself, that you may judge My people over whom I have made you king— ¹² wisdom and knowledge are granted to you; and I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings have had who were before you, nor shall any after you have the like." NKJV

1 Kings 4:29-31 ²⁹ And God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding, and largeness of heart like the sand on the seashore. ³⁰ Thus Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the men of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt. ³¹ For he was wiser than all men—than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was in all the surrounding nations. NKJV

In our study of these books we must always remember that knowledge is not wisdom. So while we have made great strides; as mankind in our increase in knowledge of things; that does not mean that we have increased in wisdom.

As the one leading the class, I ask that you join me in studying the text for each week, preparing, and coming ready to share and discuss your thoughts on the lessons. I make no assertions that I have an adequate level on wisdom to present all that God has placed in these three books. However, through our combined wisdom we will gain much, much more than relying upon me to 'teach' you. We each will see these topics from our view and in doing so may provide a view that allows the others in the class to see God's Word as we never had before.

Overview:

Solomon

Almost all of the knowledge we know about Solomon comes from the Bible in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles. There is very little other evidence of his reign or accomplishments. However, recently in Jerusalem they have uncovered some remains believed to be the Wall of Solomon and a city which contained stables for 450 horses and chariots.

His parents were King David and Bathsheba. While he was not David's oldest son, David had promised Bathsheba that Solomon would be made king. This promise created problems when David's elder son Adonijah declared himself king. As king David approached the end of his life, his two closest advisors, Joab son of Zeruiah and priest Abiathar sided with Adonijah. As a result Adonijah pronounced himself as king. Bathsheba reminded David of the promise he had made that Solomon would become king. As a result King David anointed Solomon at the spring of Gihon to be the next king while David was still alive. Upon hearing that David had made Solomon king Adonijah feared for his life and begged Solomon to spare it. Solomon later believed that Adonijah threatened to take over the kingdom so Solomon sent a messenger and had Adonijah killed. As a dying promise David made Solomon promise to kill Joab and Shimei, in doing so the last opposition to Solomon's reign was overcome.

Solomon was the third king of the United Monarchy and the last king to rule over the Kingdom of Israel before it split into the northern (Kingdom of Israel) and southern (Kingdom of Judea) kingdoms. He reigned for a period of 40 years (I Kings 11:42) from 970 to 931 BC. His kingdom extended from the Euphrates River in the North to Egypt in the south. His most significant achievement was the building of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. He also built a royal palace, a city wall, a citadel (Millo), a palace for the daughter of Pharaoh, as well as numerous cities for chariots and storage. He acquired great wealth, I Kings states that he owned 12,000 horses with horsemen and 1,300 chariots.

Solomon's downfall came as a result of his involvement with many foreign wives. He allowed these wives to worship other gods and as a result was he allowed himself to be pulled away for the one and only true God (I Kings 11). God had appeared to Solomon twice (I Kings 11:9) to warn him of what that this would happen. But because God loved Solomon's father David he did not take the kingdom from Solomon while he was alive. God created several adversaries for Solomon; Hadad the Edomite, Rezon son of Eliadah, and Jeroboam son of Nebat.

Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon

Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon are all part of the Old Testament (OT) that is referred to as Wisdom literature. The Wisdom books represent a shift from the Historical literature written by Moses. The Wisdom literature books are made up of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. These books contain some of the most beautifully-written sections of the entire Bible, although they can be a challenge to read straight-through in the way one might approach the clear narratives of the Bible's historical books. While many books of the Old Testament give us a historian's view of God's people and their experiences, the wisdom books provide us with a more pastoral glimpse at the state of their hearts. We see that despite the gap of time that separates us from ancient Israel, the Israelites grappled with the same faith issues that we do today; they asked tough questions about sin and suffering; they experienced joy and confidence in God's love; they looked for God in life's pleasures and trials alike; they sometimes entertained doubts and they looked to God for help both physical and spiritual.

Beyond that, the wisdom books show us that God values and responds to these myriad questions and prayers. We can take comfort that no experience in our lives, whether wonderful or terrible, can place us outside the love and understanding of a gracious God.

Week 1

Proverbs

The phrase “Proverbs of Solomon” is more a title than an absolute statement of authorship (Pr. 1:1). Solomon is the clearly the author of the specific sections of the book; Chap 1-9, 10:1-22:16, and Chap 25-29: it is most likely that he is only the compiler of the sayings in Chap 22:17-24:34. These “says of the wise” were from unknown men before his reign, but Solomon had the wisdom to know the truths that they presented. The section of Chap 25-29 was added after Solomon’s death by King Hezekiah. Chapter 30 reflects the words of Agur and chap. 31 the words of Lemuel, who perhaps was Solomon. Solomon most likely authored his proverbs before his heart was turned away from God (1 Kin. 11:1-11), since the book reveals a godly perspective and is addressed to the “naïve” and “young” who need to learn the fear of God.

We will spend a majority of the quarter in our study of Proverbs. The book of Proverbs is difficult to summarize to a specific story line or character. Instead the entire focus of the book is centered on wisdom. This wisdom was as true in the day of Solomon as it is for us today. The importance of studying the Godly wisdom provided in Solomon is that it points us to the fulfillment of wisdom that can only be completed by seeking Christ. Proverbs tells us—and repeats it—that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (1:7; 9:10). Our fear of God’s wrath and justice is what drives us to Christ, who is the embodiment of God’s wisdom as expressed in His glorious plan of redemption for mankind. In Christ we find the treasure of wisdom;

Colossians 2:3 ³in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge NKJV

The answer to our search for wisdom, the remedy for our fear of God and the solutions to eternal life that we so desperately need are in Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:30 ³⁰ But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption— NKJV

The wisdom discussed in Proverbs is wisdom that can only be gained by our drawing closer to Christ is in contrast to the foolishness of the world which encourages us to be wise in our own eyes. Proverbs clearly illustrates that the world’s way is not God’s way and will ultimately result in our eternal death.

Proverbs 3:7 ⁷ Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil. NKJV

Proverbs 14:12 and 16:25 There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death. NKJV

The book of Proverbs provides practical common sense approaches on how to deal with the many complex daily struggles we all face. It is the best “how-to” book ever written. It covers a wide range of matters pertaining to personal conduct, sexual relations, business, wealth, charity, ambition, discipline, debt, child-rearing, character, alcohol, politics, revenge, and godliness. If we follow the wisdom provided in Proverbs we are told that we will be blessed with: with long life (9:11); prosperity (2:20-22); joy (3:13-18); and the goodness of God (12:21).

Week 1

The word Proverb mean “to be like”. Solomon was blessed by the wisdom of God to provide us with simple (human) language and comparisons that Solomon uses to express the wisdom of God. He did this through what appears on the surface to be simple “pithy” sayings or statements that express the core of God’s wisdom. But if we are willing to listen to what is provided in Proverbs we will find that there is no limit to the wisdom we can gain. We are provided with the insight of the Sage (or wise man) as he gives his wise *Counsel* (Jer. 18:18; Ezek. 7:26). This wisdom can be hard to understand at times through just a simple glance and requires an active desire to understand (Prov. 1:5-6).

There are 3 major groupings of these topics / themes in the book of Proverbs, they are:

1. Man’s Relationship to God
2. Man’s Relationship to Himself
3. Man’s Relationship to Others

The overall theme of Proverbs is found in the first seven verses:

Proverbs 1:1-7

¹ The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel: ² To know wisdom and instruction, To perceive the words of understanding, ³ To receive the instruction of wisdom, Justice, judgment, and equity; ⁴ To give prudence to the simple, To the young man knowledge and discretion— ⁵ A wise man will hear and increase learning, And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel, ⁶ To understand a proverb and an enigma, The words of the wise and their riddles. ⁷ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction. NKJV

We will build our understanding of the entire book after we come to understand Solomon’s opening verses on wisdom.

Week 1

Questions:

Please provide script / verse references for your answers.

- 1. Proverbs was written entirely by King Solomon? True or False**

- 2. King Solomon was the first born of David and entitled to the throne? See II Sam 3:2, 5:14, 15, 12:24**

- 3. From where are we told how King Solomon gained his wisdom?**

- 4. Where is the purpose of the book of Proverbs found? What things will you gain through a study of Proverbs?**

- 5. What is the fear of the Lord produce? (vs. 7)**

Thought Questions:

1. From Eph. 5:15-17 – What happens if we do not seek to be wise?

2. What is wisdom, and why is it so valuable?

3. What does it mean to you to fear the Lord?

Listen to Parents; Beware of Evil Companions; Heed the Call of Sophia

(Read Prov. 1:8-33)

Listen to Parents (Prov. 1:8-9)

Prov. 1:8,9 My son, hear the instruction of your father, And do not forsake the law of your mother; ⁹ For they will be a graceful ornament on your head, And chains about your neck. NKJV

This admonition is also repeated in Prov. 4:1, 6:20, and 23:22.

Prov. 4:1 Hear, my children, the instruction of a father, And give attention to know understanding; NKJV

Prov. 6:20 My son, keep your father's command, And do not forsake the law of your mother NKJV.

Prov. 23:22 Listen to your father who begot you, And do not despise your mother when she is old. NKJV

Why is it so important that we listen to our parents? What is it that they have to offer in the way of wisdom that Solomon wants to point this out?

Knowledge – Our parents have a knowledge about each of us that is greater than any other earthly being. They have fed us, clothed us, and even changed our diapers. They took care of us when we could not take care of ourselves. They watched us grow and observed how we respond to all of our issues and victories. They know us personally.

Experience – Our parents already have life experiences that we are going to face. They have been where we are and they are now where we are headed.

Parents are like Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) in the military.

NCOs are older, more experienced, more likely battle-hardened.

They have survived what the new recruits have yet to experience.

It is folly for a new recruit not to listen to their NCO.

Children with parents are blessed to have advice from those who have already traveled the same road, only farther down the path.

Wisdom – As mentioned last week we all gain wisdom from those around us. Our parents are one of the greatest source of our wisdom. They have the unique ability to pass on the wisdom of our grandparents and great grandparents.... As we grow older most of us come to appreciate the wisdom and advice of our parents. How many of us thought that we knew everything and our parents knew nothing when we were teenagers? Then as we began to experience life on our own it amazes us how much our parents knew, how wise they are. Our parents have the accumulated wisdom of generations.

Week 2

Prov. 4:1-4 *Hear, my children, the instruction of a father, And give attention to know understanding; ² For I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake my law. ³ When I was my father's son, Tender and the only one in the sight of my mother, ⁴ He also taught me, and said to me: "Let your heart retain my words; Keep my commands, and live. NKJV*

Only the foolish and immature despise the advice and counsel of their parents.

Prov. 15:5 *A fool despises his father's instruction, But he who receives correction is prudent. NKJV*

The beauty of listening to our parents has many benefits. We all have observed children that respect and listen to their parents, it always leaves a warm feeling in our hearts. That is what vs. 9 is explaining that the reward of listening to and respecting the wisdom of our parents is like a crown. How often do we go around trying to improve how we appear simply to impress others in an earthly fashion? Think of how much better we would look to others if we expressed the respect for the wisdom of our parents?

As Christ increased in wisdom, He also increase in favor with God and Man. This clearly shows the wisdom of Proverbs 3:1-4.

My son, do not forget my law, But let your heart keep my commands; ² For length of days and long life And peace they will add to you. ³ Let not mercy and truth forsake you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart, ⁴ And so find favor and high esteem In the sight of God and man. NKJV

Lastly, the Bible clearly illustrates the terrible consequences of disrespecting our parents.

Prov. 30:17 *The eye that mocks his father, And scorns obedience to his mother, The ravens of the valley will pick it out, And the young eagles will eat it. NKJV*

Beware of Evil Companions (Prov. 1:10-19)

So now that we understand that we need to fear the Lord (Prov. 1:7) and respect our parents, what about our relationships with our friends? As parents / adults we have given this advice to our children countless times. Is it any less applicable to us now that we are adults? In reading our Bibles to whom do we most often read about that is dealing with sin? Is it in children or adults? We have the knowledge of good and evil as adults but we often times fail to utilize the Godly wisdom needed to avoid the temptations in front of us.

Prov. 1:10-19 *My son, if sinners entice you, Do not consent. ¹¹ If they say, "Come with us, Let us lie in wait to shed blood; Let us lurk secretly for the innocent without cause; ¹² Let us swallow them alive like Sheol, And whole, like those who go down to the Pit; ¹³ We shall find all kinds of precious possessions, We shall fill our houses with spoil; ¹⁴ Cast in your lot among us, Let us all have one purse"— ¹⁵ My son, do not walk in the way with them, Keep your foot from their path; ¹⁶ For their feet run to evil, And they make haste to shed blood. ¹⁷ Surely, in vain the net is spread In the sight of any bird; ¹⁸ But they lie in wait for their own blood, They lurk secretly for their own lives. ¹⁹ So are the ways of everyone who is greedy for gain; It takes away the life of its owners. NKJV*

Week 2

Solomon is speaking here specifically to his sons, but remember Solomon was presenting the wisdom of God to them. How much better would our struggles with sin be if we took the advice of Solomon as if it were our own parents speaking to us? The best way to avoid or tempted by sin to separate ourselves from those that practice it.

1. The dangers of evil companions is that they persuade through enticement. They offer easy gains; wealth without work, pleasure without commitment, companionship without cost.
2. Evil companions ignore the cost of sin.
 - a. Evil companions will eventually turn one another.
 - b. If they will sin with you, how do you know they will not sin against you?
 - c. They will be companions only as long as it benefits themselves.
 - d. Only in the movies and television do the evil companions stick together.

The solution to evil companions is to not listen to them (Prov. 1:10) and to stay away from them (Prov. 1:15).

Heed the Call of Sophia (Prov. 1:20-33)

Sophia is the Greek word for wisdom. So here Solomon wants to illustrate that wisdom is personified as a woman. Sophia's plea is made publicly, it is made to those that need her, and that those that hear would be filled with her wisdom. Sophia also makes a warning to those that refuse to hear. There will be no help once calamity comes and those who fail to heed will suffer the fate of their folly. From Sophia (wisdom) we learn that wisdom is like the grace of God. Opportunities will not last forever and a time will come when it will be too late.

Prov. 1:20-33 Wisdom calls aloud outside; She raises her voice in the open squares. 21 She cries out in the chief concourses, At the openings of the gates in the city She speaks her words: 22 "How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? For scorners delight in their scorning, And fools hate knowledge. 23 Turn at my rebuke; Surely I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you. 24 Because I have called and you refused, I have stretched out my hand and no one regarded, 25 Because you disdained all my counsel, And would have none of my rebuke, 26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your terror comes, 27 When your terror comes like a storm, And your destruction comes like a whirlwind, When distress and anguish come upon you. 28 "Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me. 29 Because they hated knowledge And did not choose the fear of the Lord, 30 They would have none of my counsel And despised my every rebuke. 31 Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way, And be filled to the full with their own fancies. 32 For the turning away of the simple will slay them, And the complacency of fools will destroy them; 33 But whoever listens to me will dwell safely, And will be secure, without fear of evil." NKJV

Questions:

Please provide script / verse references for your answers.

- 1. What are the instructions of your father and mother like?**
- 2. What three things can we hope to gain by listening to the instructions of our parents? (Look at Prov. 4)**
- 3. In the Old Testament times the value of respecting parent was so high valued that what was the punishment for failing to obey or curse your parents? (Lev. 20:9 and Deu. 21:18-21)**
- 4. What two things did Solomon state as actions to take regarding evil companions?**
- 5. What is the ultimate cost of walking with evil companions? (vs. 1:19)**
- 6. What does Sophia represent in verses 20-33?**
- 7. To whom does Sophia call? What does each type of individual represent?**

Benefits of Diligently Seeking Wisdom (Proverbs 2) and Folly Of The Fool (Read Proverbs Chapter 2 and 26:1-12)

In studying the first chapter of Proverbs we learned the importance of being willing to listen to wisdom as it is presented **TO** us. That counsel came in the form of fearing God, listening to parents, avoiding evil companions, and listening to Sophia (wisdom) while there was still an opportunity.

In our study of Chapter 2 we are presented with the importance of our actively **SEEKING** wisdom. So while there is wisdom that we can gain in a passive manner, to truly gain wisdom we cannot passively wait for it to present itself.

There are distinct qualities of a diligent search of wisdom. We will look at two distinct views; the view of how Solomon explains the search and how we as Christians today should be seeking wisdom.

Qualities from Solomon’s view of seeking wisdom.

1. It requires a willingness (Prov. 2:1)
 - a. To be receptive to the words of others
 - b. To treasure (highly value and remember) commands of wisdom
2. It requires an engagement (Prov. 2:2-3)
 - a. Of the ear (willing to hear wisdom)
 - b. Of the heart (willing to understand)
 - c. Of the mouth (willing to cry out for discernment and understanding)
3. It requires a high estimation (Prov. 2:4)
 - a. Seeking and searching
 - b. With the same fervor as seeking for silver and other hidden treasures

Thus a diligent search for wisdom requires an “all out” effort on our part.

Qualities from the Christian view point of today on how we should search for wisdom.

1. It requires hearing the Word of God
 - a. **Note:** “Incline your ear to wisdom” (Prov. 2:2)
 - b. Listening to preachers and teachers carefully (with all readiness) (Act 17:11)
 - c. Studying the Bible on your own (searching the Scriptures daily) (Act 17:11)
2. It requires meditating upon the Word of God
 - a. **Note:** “apply your heart to understanding” (Prov. 2:2)
 - b. Taking time to reflect and ponder on the Word (cf. Phil. 4:8)
 - c. Like the Psalmist sung of his meditations (cf. Psa. 119:97-100)
3. It requires diligent prayer for wisdom
 - a. **Note:** “cry out for discernment...lift up your voice for understanding” (Prov. 2:3)

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- b. We must ask in prayer with faith (James 1:5)
- c. We must persist in our asking (cf. Mt 7:7-11)
- 4. It requires the same effort others expend seeking for material wealth
 - a. **Note:** “seek her as silver...as for hidden treasures” (Pro 2:4)
 - b. In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3)
 - c. Here’s a simple test to see if you are expending the proper effort to seek wisdom:
 - i. If you worked as hard for your employer as you do seeking for God’s wisdom...
 - ii. ...would you have your job very long?

Finding God’s wisdom today requires the same diligence it did in Solomon’s day.

So what are benefits of spending such effort in searching for wisdom? The answer to that is found in verses 5 – 22.

1. KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND HIS PROTECTION...

- a. You will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God
 - i. That fear of the Lord which is the beginning of knowledge (Prov. 2:5a; cf. Prov. 1:7)
 - ii. That knowledge of God, whose storehouse of wisdom and understanding He gives to the upright (Prov. 2:5b-7a)
- b. You will have God’s providential protection guiding your life
 - i. He is a shield to those who walk uprightly (Prov. 2:7b; cf. 30:5)
 - ii. He guards the paths of justice (which the righteous take) (Prov. 2:8a; cf. Psa. 23:3)
 - iii. He preserves the way of His saints (Prov. 2:8b; cf. Psa. 121:5-8)

-- What a blessing to go through life with God at your side!

2. MORAL DISCERNMENT FOR LIVING...

- a. You will have great understanding
 - i. Of righteousness and justice (Prov. 2:9a)
 - ii. Of equity (fairness) and every good path (Prov. 2:9b; cf. David’s prayer, Psa. 143:8-10)
- b. You will have great discretion
 - i. Once wisdom enters your heart and knowledge is pleasant to you (Prov. 2:10)
 - ii. They will preserve and keep you (Prov. 2:11; cf. 6:22-23)

-- What a blessing to go through life with God’s wisdom at your disposal!

3. DELIVERANCE FROM EVIL MEN...

- a. Who speak perverse things (Prov. 2:12; e.g., Ac 20:30)
- b. Who leave upright paths, walk in the ways of darkness (Prov. 2:13; e.g., 2 Pet. 2:20-22)

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- c. Who rejoice in doing evil, delight in the perversity of the wicked (Prov. 2:14; cf. 10:23)
- d. Whose ways are crooked, and devious in their paths (Prov. 2:15; e.g., 1:10-19)

-- Wisdom can deliver us from evil men and their evil ways!

4. DELIVERANCE FROM IMMORAL WOMEN...

- a. The seductress flatters with her words (Prov. 2:16; e.g., 7:5-21)
- b. The adulteress who forsakes her husband and covenant with God (Prov. 2:17; cf. Mal 2:14)
- c. Whose house and paths lead to death, and the place of no return (Prov. 2:18-19; cf. 9:13-18)

-- Wisdom can deliver us from immoral women and their destructive ways!

5. ENABLEMENT FOR RIGHTEOUS LIVING...

- a. To walk in the way of goodness and keep to righteous paths (Prov. 2:20; cf. Psa. 23:3,6)
- b. To be upright and blameless, to dwell and remain in the land (Prov. 2:21; cf. Psa. 37:3)
 - c. Unlike the wicked and unfaithful, cut off and uprooted from the earth (Prov. 2:22; cf. Psa. 37:37-38)

-- Wisdom can empower us to live more blessed, if not longer, lives on this earth!

Questions:

Please provide script / verse references for your answers.

- 1. As described in Proverbs what are the 4 actions required to obtain God's wisdom?**
- 2. We need to have the same diligence today in searching for wisdom as man did in the time of Solomon? True or False?**
- 3. What are the benefits of so diligently searching for wisdom?**
- 4. Solomon in 2:1 does what with God's word?**
- 5. We should seek wisdom as if it were what type of earthly things?**
- 6. Who are the upright mentioned in vs. 7?**
- 7. How does wisdom enter? (vs. 10)**

Thought Questions:

- 1. What things make up the heart mentioned in vs. 2:10?**

- 2. What are some of the characteristics of a fool (One who is not wise)? (vs. 26:1-12) What other verses are there in Proverbs that speak about the description of a fool?**

- 3. If we understand that searching and seek for wisdom is so important to our spiritual wellbeing. What do you plan to do in the upcoming week to start your search?**

Fatherly Counsel for Godly Living (Proverbs 3), Wisdom Regarding Marriage (Read Proverbs Chapter 3)

In this week's study we will focus upon the thoughts of Proverbs with regard to advice from a father to his son. As well as review some wisdom about marriage and family issues. We will not have the opportunity to look at all the book of Proverbs has to offer regarding these issues and I encourage you to on your own study and meditate more on these subjects. You will find that Proverbs is a great resource for all points of your family life whether it is just starting to date, marriage (young or old), or raising a family.

In chapter 3 Solomon imparts three major thoughts to his son.

1. Six keys for a good life (Prov. 3:1-12)
2. Praise and illustrations of the value of wisdom (Prov. 3:13-24)
3. Six negatives for a wise life (Prov. 3:25-35)

We will also look at marriage in how to select a wife or husband from the view point of wisdom. And how we as husbands or wives can be the ideal spouse.

Then lastly we will look at our family relationships in providing for a family and raising children.

Six keys for a good life.

In the first 12 verses of chapter 3 we are presented with 6 keys for a good life, if we take the time to understand each of these keys it will solve a majority of the daily struggles we encounter. So the key to a Good Life for –

A Long and Peaceful Life – Heed the guidance of our parents (Prov. 3:1-2), we find this though again presented by Paul in Eph. 6:1-3.

Eph. 6:1-3 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: ³ "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." NKJV

There are many things that are good in this world, many worthy causes and events to get wrapped up in. Diet and exercise are important, but none of them promise a return. If we follow and obey our parents we have a promise that we will live longer and have more opportunities to serve God.

Popularity – (Prov. 3:3-4) – By having the quality of truth and mercy (enduring qualities) we will be truly popular to the right kind of people because they create an endearing attitude. Sure the world would tell you that these things do not matter, that it is more important to have good looks, intelligence, or athletic ability. All of these things fade in

Week 4

time except that we can continue to increase our ability to practice truth and mercy. The qualities of truth and mercy are greatly valued by God (Mt 5:7, 37)

Mt 5:7 Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy. NKJV

Mt 5:37 But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one. NKJV

Successful Ventures – (Prov. 3:5-6) – When the Lord directs our path He has the ability to make it smooth or straight. Who of us truly believe that we have the ability to impact our destiny? But God does and He wants to help us, all we need to do is get out of the driver's seat and let Him take control. If we trust in God with all our heart He will direct our path as shown in Psa. 37:3-6, 23-24, 34-36, acknowledge God in all our ways (James 4:13-16), and not lean on our own limited understanding (Prov. 28:26)

Psa. 37:3-6 Trust in the Lord, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.

⁴ Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. ⁵ Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass. ⁶ He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, And your justice as the noonday. NKJV

Psa. 37:23-24 The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, And He delights in his way.

²⁴ Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the Lord upholds him with His hand. NKJV

Psa. 37:34-36 Wait on the Lord, And keep His way, And He shall exalt you to inherit the land; When the wicked are cut off, you shall see it. ³⁵ I have seen the wicked in great power, And spreading himself like a native green tree. ³⁶ Yet he passed away, and behold, he was no more; Indeed I sought him, but he could not be found. NKJV

James 4:13-16 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; ¹⁴ whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. ¹⁵ Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that." ¹⁶ But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. NKJV

Prov. 28:26 He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, But whoever walks wisely will be delivered. NKJV

Good Health – (Prov. 3:7-8) – There are countless medical studies that have been done that show the negative effects to one's health as a result of anxiety and stress. Some estimates are that 50% of all illnesses be psychosomatic (Of or relating to a disorder having physical symptoms but originating from mental or emotional causes.). The body's immune system is certainly weakened by anxiety and stress. And what about the untold physical costs of sin? To mention just a few, consider the effects of drunkenness leads to cirrhosis of the liver and promiscuous behavior leads to STDs. Yet if we truly fear the Lord we can be freed from much of the anxiety and stress. As a result we will have better health as discussed in (Prov. 14:27), it is a Godly directed wellness plan when we develop a fear of the Lord.

Prov. 14:27 The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, To turn one away from the snares of death. NKJV

Prosperity – (Prov. 3:9-10) – There are many examples in the OT that show when the people of Israel failed to follow God’s commands regarding giving (tithes) and putting God first that they suffered hardship. (Mal 3:8-12, Hag. 1:6-11) We see very similar warning in the NT (Mat. 6:31-33, II Cor. 9:6-9). All these point to the fact that when the Lord receives our first fruits of our time, energy, and money we will ultimately be blessed beyond what we could ever hope to gain through our own means.

Mal 3:8-12 “Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings. ⁹You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation. ¹⁰Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this,” Says the Lord of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it. ¹¹“And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,” Says the Lord of hosts; ¹²“And all nations will call you blessed, For you will be a delightful land,” Says the Lord of hosts. NKJV

Hag 1:6-11 “You have sown much, and bring in little; You eat, but do not have enough; You drink, but you are not filled with drink; You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; And he who earns wages, Earns wages to put into a bag with holes.” ⁷ Thus says the Lord of hosts: “Consider your ways! ⁸Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified,” says the Lord. ⁹“You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?” says the Lord of hosts. “Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house. ¹⁰Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit. ¹¹For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands.” NKJV

Mat 6:31-33 “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³²For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. NKJV

2 Cor. 9:6-9 But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. ⁹As it is written: “He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever.” NKJV

Accepting the Lord’s Discipline – (Prov. 3:11-12) – We must understand that even the righteous suffer. As we just learned in our study of Job, God’s ways are not our ways. While we may not understand why things happen we can know that God has our best interest in mind. We must also understand that the good outcome of this discipline may not be rewarded in our lifetime. If we are willing to allow it the hardship has the ability to produce fruits of holiness and righteousness (Heb. 12:10-11). God disciplines us because He loves us as His children (Heb. 12:7-9).

Week 4

Heb. 12:10-11 *For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. ¹¹ Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. NKJV*

Heb. 12:7-9 *If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? ⁸ But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. ⁹ Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? NKJV*

The Value of Wisdom.

In the verses 13-24 Solomon praises and gives illustrations of what wisdom accomplishes. What is important to remember is that we should have the same high estimation of the value of wisdom. We have that same divine wisdom available today to guide us in our lives, that same wisdom Solomon speaks of has the ability to fill us with grace and security. We can learn of the value of wisdom by how it is seen from different viewpoints.

From the view of Solomon – (Prov. 3:13-18) – Solomon had enormous wealth and power yet he tells us that true happiness can only be found in wisdom. All the wealth that he possessed paled in comparison to the value of wisdom. And to truly enjoy life and live it to the fullest he knew that he had to seek wisdom. Remember Solomon was the wisest man ever to live and in that wisdom he reminds us that true wisdom is to seek God.

Seen in God's use of wisdom – (Prov. 3:19-20) – Wisdom is so important to God that He used it in creating the world (Gen. 1:1, 6-9), even beauty and harmony are made possible by the use of wisdom (Prov. 8:22-31).

Gen 1:1 *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. NKJV*

Gen 1:6-9 *Then God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." ⁷ Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. ⁸ And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day. NKJV*

Prov. 8:22-31 *"The Lord possessed me at the beginning of His way, Before His works of old. ²³ I have been established from everlasting, From the beginning, before there was ever an earth. ²⁴ When there were no depths I was brought forth, When there were no fountains abounding with water. ²⁵ Before the mountains were settled, Before the hills, I was brought forth; ²⁶ While as yet He had not made the earth or the fields, Or the primal dust of the world. ²⁷ When He prepared the heavens, I was there, When He drew a circle on the face of the deep, ²⁸ When He established the clouds above, When He strengthened the fountains of the deep, ²⁹ When He assigned to the sea its limit, So that the waters would not transgress His command, When He marked out the foundations of the earth, ³⁰ Then I was beside Him as a master craftsman; And I was daily His delight, Rejoicing always before Him, ³¹ Rejoicing in His inhabited world, And my delight was with the sons of men ⁹ Then God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear"; and it was so. NKJV*

Week 4

Seen in what wisdom can do for us – (Prov. 3:21-24) – Through wisdom we not only have many things promised for this life, but more importantly wisdom has the ability give life to our soul. Jesus understood this and sought to share this wisdom with His disciples (John 10:10, 15:11). Wisdom can allow us to walk safely in this world and to sleep soundly. You know that if an individual promised you all the things that wisdom could offer us we would jump at the chance to take it, this wisdom has been here all our lives. All we need to do is seek it.

John 10:10 *The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. NKJV*

John 15:11 *“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. NKJV*

Six Negatives for a Wise Life

In the verses last 11 verses (25-35) of chapter 3 Solomon presents 6 negative points of wisdom that we must observe for a wise life. By negative I mean things that these are of the “Do Not” types of wisdom. This is the wisdom of God that by not doing these things, then the positive is able to enter our lives. Keeping ourselves free of the 6 things allows our lives to be filled with positives.

Do Not Be Afraid – (vs. 25, 26) – The wisdom of the Lord will provide us with confidence and is able to keep us from harm (Prov. 14:26). Also fear should let us know that our faith is weak. (Mat. 8:26)

Prov. 14:26 *In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, And His children will have a place of refuge. NKJV*

Mat. 8:26 *But He said to them, “Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?” Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. NKJV*

Do Not Deny Good – (vs. 27) – As Christians we are more blessed with things that matter than anyone else in this world. We have an obligation to share that good with those around us, to fail to do so is sin (Rom 13:8, 1 John 3:17, and Jam. 4:17).

Rom 13:8 *Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. NKJV*

1 John 3:17 *But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? NKJV*

Jam. 4:17 *Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin. NKJV*

Do Not Delay Good – (vs. 28) – While it is important as noted above to Not Deny Good, it is also extremely important to not delay in doing good. We never know when we will have another opportunity. (Prov. 27:1) Typically what is it that causes us to hesitate? Do we believe that it is not important, yet we see from the wisdom of Solomon that good is so important. Our purpose on this earth is to spread the goodness of Christ. We should never delay in showing it.

Week 4

Prov. 27:1 *Do not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring forth. NKJV*

Do Not Devise Evil – (vs. 29) – Do you want to live next to someone that you cannot trust? So as a Christian we have all the more responsibility to be a neighbor that shows the light of God. Our example in how we live is looked at by all that we come in contact with. And ultimately God hates those that are divisive. (Prov.6:16-18).

Prov. 27:1 *These six things the Lord hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: ¹⁷A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, ¹⁸A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, NKJV*

Do Not Strive Without Cause – (vs. 30) – Strife escalates if it is left unchecked (Prov. 17:14 and 18:6). And a person who is full of strife typically has a poor reputation (Prov. 25:8-10), we should let God handle the situation (Rom. 12:18-21). How can we ever expect to bring others to Christ if all we present to other is an attitude of strife?

Prov. 17:14 *The beginning of strife is like releasing water; Therefore stop contention before a quarrel starts. NKJV*

Prov. 18:6 *A fool's lips enter into contention, And his mouth calls for blows. NKJV*

Rom. 12:18-21 *If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. ¹⁹Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. ²⁰Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." ²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. NKJV*

Do Not Envy Oppressors – (vs. 31-35) – To envy a man of violence is admitting that what he does is something that you approve of. As we saw in Prov. 1:15-18 an oppressor will eventually get caught within their own snare. God will curse those who are wicked and perverse (Prov. 21:12). It maybe the Lord who avenges what you do to the poor (Prov. 22:22-23). If we walk through our lives in a manner that is upright, just, humble, and wise the Lord will bless us.

Prov. 22:22-23 *Do not rob the poor because he is poor, Nor oppress the afflicted at the gate; ²³For the Lord will plead their cause, And plunder the soul of those who plunder them. NKJV*

Prov. 21:12 *The righteous God wisely considers the house of the wicked, Overthrowing the wicked for their wickedness. NKJV*

Wisdom Regarding Marriage

Proverbs has a great deal about how to select the right mate to spend our lives with. It also has several words of wisdom regarding what will happen should you fail to make a wise choice. These verses in the following discussion are part of what is considered a topic view of Proverbs. The verses are not all contained in the same chapter but are found in various locations throughout the book... Let's begin our search for wisdom on marriage.

In this next section due to the quantity of verses I made the choice for sake of space not to include the scriptures from the book Proverbs. However please do not miss the chance to gain the wisdom from Solomon that God wants to share with you by not looking each of them up. You will be richly blessed if you take the time to read each one of them.

Selection of a Wife – It is important to make the right choice (Prov. 12:4). When a husband makes the correct choice in his wife it will greatly enhance his life, but the wrong choice will destroy him from the inside out. The greatest folly is to think that you will be able to easily correct this mistake. Divorce is not an easy solution – God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16, Matt. 19:8-9). And even if divorce is a viable option if there are children involved this woman will always be the mother of your children. So how do you select a good wife?

Mal. 2:16 *“For the Lord God of Israel says That He hates divorce, For it covers one’s garment with violence,” Says the Lord of hosts. “Therefore take heed to your spirit, That you do not deal treacherously.” NKJV*

Matt 19:8-9 *He said to them, “Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. ⁹ And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.” NKJV*

Seek help from God – God has more ability to influence this most important event in our lives men than we know. Why would we not ask God for guidance in looking for a wife or to have the right woman enter our lives? (Prov. 19:14)

Do not place priority on good looks alone – Not that beauty is not important, but we all have the wisdom to know that it is only skin deep and temporary. Is beauty the foundation upon which we want to build a lifelong relationship with? This is one of the greatest lies that Satan has sold the world. (Prov. 31:30)

Instead, look for these characteristics in a woman:

Fear of the Lord – As we learned in our first lesson this type of woman possesses the beginning of wisdom. If we are going to spend the rest of our life with this woman shouldn't we share it with someone who is on the same path to eternity with us, help us reach that goal? (Prov. 31:30 – See above)

Week 4

Discretion – A wife that has the ability to do the right thing at the right time will bring you honor even when you are not there. I do not have too much to say about this verse lest I get into trouble I will just say, it does not matter how pretty of a wife you have or how beautiful she can be made up. If she lacks discretion.... Well draw your own conclusions. (Prov. 11:22)

Wisdom – If we marry a woman that has wisdom she will have the ability to build a good home. (Prov. 14:1)

Avoid a woman who is argumentative – It is just better to be single than to be married to the wrong person. (Prov. 21:9, 19) Several additional picturesque descriptions of a contentious woman are found in the following verses. (Prov. 19:13, 27:15-16)

Selection of a Husband – Just as important as the woman a man selects for a wife, is the man a woman picks for a husband. Again Proverbs provides some insightful wisdom on what to look for or avoid. A woman can know a man's character by making a few observations. How does he treat animals (Prov. 12:10)? Does he listen to the advice of others (Prov. 12:15)? What type of company does he keep (Prov. 13:20)? Is he quick tempered (Prov. 14:29)? How does he make money (Prov. 15:27)? Does he feel like he always has to put in his "two cents" worth (Prov. 17:27-28)? Does he have compassion for the poor (Prov. 12:13)? If you can look at these areas and find a man that is committed to the wisdom found here he is striving to follow God.

There are several types of men you should avoid. A womanizer (Prov. 6:27-29), if a man is willing to flaunt God's will before he is married, what assurances are there that he will not flaunt God's will after he is married? When you marry a quick tempered man he is likely to cause you to also become quick tempered (Prov. 22:24-25), remember we are all usually on our best behavior prior to getting married. Or is he drinker? (Prov. 23:29-30) Alcohol has destroyed many good men. Also most men have a tendency to become verbally and physically abusive after drinking.

The ideal man will be a husband that values his wife highly (Prov. 18:22; 19:14). He realizes that she is a gift from God. He also gives his wife her due (Prov. 31:31), by allowing her opportunities to develop her own abilities. She is not just an additional person in the family to have to provide for. Husbands have you praised your wife like you should? Solomon tells us that we should praise our wife profusely (Prov. 31:28b-29), we must never take her for granted. A great husband trusts his wife implicitly (Prov. 31:11) and regularly demonstrates this willingness to trust her in areas such as her intelligence, faithfulness, and abilities. And most of all an ideal husband will be content with his wife's love (Prov. 5:15-21).

Questions:

Please provide script / verse references for your answers.

- 1. What are 6 key areas for having a good life as we have learned from Proverbs Ch. 3?**
- 2. God used wisdom in creating the world? True or False?**
- 3. What 6 “Do Not” things does wisdom tell us to do?**
- 4. What type of men should a woman avoid?**
- 5. What type of woman should a man avoid?**
- 6. What will the ideal husband do for his wife?**

Childhood Memories of a Wise Man; The Two Paths; Somatic Therapy for Wise Living (Proverbs 4)

(Read Proverbs Chapter 4)

As we study this week we need to recognize that the first 9 chapters of Proverbs was Solomon pleading with his children to seek wisdom. As we study chapter 4 specifically this week we will see how Solomon uses three different appeals to wisdom for his children. The first is in verses 1-9 Solomon tells of how his father David taught him. Verses 10-19 is his second appeal where he describes wisdom as two paths. And finally the third appeal is in verses 20-27 where by the use of metaphors of body parts Solomon instructs on wisdom.

Childhood Memories of a Wise Man

As we look at the first 9 verses let's look at four different principles in raising children to be godly and seekers of wisdom.

Solomon was taught by his father – King David had accepted his responsibility as a father to teach his children (Prov. 4:3-4). This responsibility has been given to all fathers by God (Eph. 6:4). This responsibility cannot be passed on to anyone else, the church, or school. These things can be used as aids not crutches. Only a father can truly teach his children as God intended (Deu. 6:6-9). A godly father will create a household where God's word permeates the household. When a father fails to teach his children about God he will be held accountable (I Sam. 3:10-13). And when the father fails to teach about God someone else has to do it. (II Tim. 1:5, 3:15).

Prov. 4:3-4 When I was my father's son, Tender and the only one in the sight of my mother, ⁴ He also taught me, and said to me: "Let your heart retain my words; Keep my commands, and live. NKJV

Eph. 6:4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord. NKJV

Deu. 6:6-9 "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. NKJV

I Sam 3:10-13 Now the Lord came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel answered, "Speak, for Your servant hears." ¹¹ Then the Lord said to Samuel: "Behold, I will do something in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. ¹² In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. ¹³ For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them. NKJV

II Tim 1:5 when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also. NKJV

II Tim 3:15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. NKJV

Week 5

Solomon was taught while tender – If we hope to have a lasting impact on our children we must teach them while they are young. Our children are always watching and learning by the example that we lead. What is more important to their eternal life than to show and teach them about God? This shown in verse 3.

Solomon was taught by an anxious father – While it is implied by the phrasing and punctuation in the verses (Prov. 4:5-6), we all understand that the things we are passionate about are the things we care about the most. It is also the things that our kids tend to reflect from us in their lives. As parents and fathers are we passionate about God and seeking his wisdom? If we are not how can we expect our children to be? Or are we anxious about the wrong things?

Prov. 4:5-6 Get wisdom! Get understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth. ⁶ Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you; Love her, and she will keep you. NKJV

Solomon was taught the important things – In verses 5 thru 9 we see that Solomon is taught to value and understand the importance of wisdom. David was able to teach his son that it was a principle of life. Remember that Solomon was wise even before he asked God for wisdom (2 Chr. 1:7-10). We all must appreciate the benefits of wisdom, but we must also teach it to our children. (Prov. 4:5-9)

Prov. 4:5-9 Get wisdom! Get understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth. ⁶ Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you; Love her, and she will keep you. ⁷ Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding. ⁸ Exalt her, and she will promote you; She will bring you honor, when you embrace her. ⁹ She will place on your head an ornament of grace; A crown of glory she will deliver to you.” NKJV

2 Chr. 1:7-10 On that night God appeared to Solomon, and said to him, “Ask! What shall I give you?” ⁸ And Solomon said to God: “You have shown great mercy to David my father, and have made me king in his place. ⁹ Now, O Lord God, let Your promise to David my father be established, for You have made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. ¹⁰ Now give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of Yours?” ¹¹ Then God said to Solomon: “Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked riches or wealth or honor or the life of your enemies, nor have you asked long life—but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself, that you may judge My people over whom I have made you king— ¹² wisdom and knowledge are granted to you; and I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings have had who were before you, nor shall any after you have the like.” NKJV

The Two Paths

As we look at verses 10 – 19 Solomon teaches that there are two distinct paths in life. The path of Wisdom and the path of Wickedness. Just like paths that we drive, these two different paths lead to different experiences and destinations. Another thing about a path is that it has a starting point, the path itself, and an ending. So the example of the path is a metaphor as well. We start on it, either wisdom or wicked and we progress along it. Getting wiser or more wicked as we go until we reach the paths end. As Christians we begin the path of wisdom as babes, but we are designed to grow (1 Pet 2:2) through grace and knowledge (2 Pet 3:18). The path is not always easy and some will fail (2 Pet 1:8-9). By following Jesus our light (John 8:12) we will draw near to the light which for Christians is the end of the path (Heb. 4:14-16, John 14:21, 23)

1 Pet 2:2 as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, NKJV

2 Pet 3:18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen. NKJV

2 Pet 1:8-9 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. NKJV

John 8:12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." NKJV

Heb. 4:14-16 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. NKJV

John 14:21, 23 He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."... ²³ Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. NKJV

The Path of Wisdom – Solomon lets us know that you can be taught wisdom and that learning wisdom will lead you onto the correct path (Prov. 4:11). We have already learned that wisdom can lead to a longer life because you are typically blessed with better health, but it is stated here again (Prov. 4:10). By following the path of wisdom you will be able to walk and run without fear of falling (Prov. 4:12). But in order to be on the path of wisdom we must make the choice to grasp it and follow it (Prov. 4:13).

Prov. 4:10-13 Hear, my son, and receive my sayings, And the years of your life will be many. ¹¹ I have taught you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in right paths. ¹² When you walk, your steps will not be hindered, And when you run, you will not stumble. ¹³ Take firm hold of instruction, do not let go; Keep her, for she is your life. NKJV

The Path of The Wicked – The best way to avoid the path of the wicked is to not even get on it. That path should be avoided. There is very forceful admonitions to getting onto that path (Prov. 4:14-15). This gives the illustration that this is a slippery path that once on you may not have the ability to remove yourself from. Some of the reasons to avoid this

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path are that we will become obsessed with doing evil (Prov. 4:16). Sin is addictive and enslaves (John 8:34) and it dulls our senses, thereby requiring even more to satisfy our needs (Eph. 4:19). It will ultimately lead to a life of wickedness and violence, ruining our relationships with God, others, or self (Prov. 4:17).

Prov. 4:14-17 Do not enter the path of the wicked, And do not walk in the way of evil. ¹⁵ Avoid it, do not travel on it; Turn away from it and pass on. ¹⁶ For they do not sleep unless they have done evil; And their sleep is taken away unless they make someone fall. ¹⁷ For they eat the bread of wickedness, And drink the wine of violence. NKJV

John 8:34 Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. NKJV

Eph. 4:19 who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. NKJV

The Two Paths Contrasted – The Bible over and over again contrasts the difference between light and darkness. We all understand what the value of light is, the first thing we do when entering a dark room is to turn on a light. Why? Because we want to be able to see. Wisdom is the light of that makes our path bright, it allows us to see (Prov. 4:18). Just as we do not want to stumble around in a dark room, we should not want to take a path that is dark as a result of lack of wisdom (Prov. 4:19). This is the beauty of Proverbs! How can you argue with such a clear contrast as illustrated by the wisdom of God as given to us by Solomon?

Prov. 4:18-19 But the path of the just is like the shining sun, That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day. ¹⁹ The way of the wicked is like darkness; They do not know what makes them stumble. NKJV

Somatic Therapy For Wise Living

In the final 7 verses of this chapter Solomon shifts to using Somatic examples. Somatic means to "of or relating to the body", so here he discusses through the functions of our various body parts to give examples of how we should seek wisdom.

Our Ears – Have you ever had difficulty hearing something? What is your first action? We turn to be able to hear it better. If we want to "hear" wisdom we will need to listen intently or incline our ears to hear for it (Prov. 4:20). And just as we studied above if we are striving to stay on the path of wisdom we need to be leaning to hear wisdom. So when we do hear it we need to receive it in a ready manner (Act 17:11).

Prov. 4:20 My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings. NKJV

Acts 17:11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. NKJV

Our Eyes – Our eyes are amazing organs! They see so much of what is around us, both near and far. But the things that our eyes focus on are the things that we truly see. Our eyes need to be focused on wisdom (Prov. 4:21). Have you ever tried to look at something out of the "corner of your eye", were you able to see it clearly? Probably not, we should be so focused on wisdom that we are looking straight at it (Prov. 4:25, 1 Tim. 4:13). But the eyes also have the ability to see things that they should not see, for these type of things we

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should use turn away or close our eyes and not linger upon them, because the eye is a conduit to your soul (Matt 6:22-23).

Prov. 4:21 *Do not let them depart from your eyes; Keep them in the midst of your heart; NKJV*

Prov. 4:25 *Let your eyes look straight ahead, And your eyelids look right before you. NKJV*

1 Tim 4:13 *Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. NKJV*

Matt 6:22-23 *“The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! NKJV*

Our Heart – The heart often refers to our center or being. It is so important that we must be diligent in keeping our heart properly aligned with wisdom (Prov. 4:21b, 23). Just as having a healthy heart is important for a long life, properly meditating on wisdom can result in our spiritual heart being well (Mark 7:21-23, Phil. 4:8).

Prov. 4:21b *Keep them in the midst of your heart; NKJV*

Prov. 4:23 *Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life. NKJV*

Mark 7:21-23 *For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, ²² thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. ²³ All these evil things come from within and defile a man.” NKJV*

Phil 4:8 *“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. NKJV*

Our Mouth and Lips – To be the example of wisdom that we should be our speech should be pure and free of deceit (Prov. 4:24). Additionally, we should seek to avoid being around situations where perverse things are being spoken. We should not use our mouths to lie or otherwise mislead (Eph. 4:25, 29), when we do so we do not spread wisdom.

Prov. 4:24 *Put away from you a deceitful mouth, And put perverse lips far from you. NKJV*

Eph. 4:25, 29 *Therefore, putting away lying, “Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,” for we are members of one another... ²⁹ Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. NKJV*

Our Feet – Do we have a goal of where we are going spiritually? Do we ponder on where our spiritual life is and how to improve it, or do we just put on spiritual foot in front of the other? We should reflect upon where our spiritual life is headed (Prov. 4:26, 27). If we let wisdom guide our feet we are letting God be in control He will lead us in the path of wisdom (Ps. 37:23, Matt 6:13, 1 Cor. 10:13, 2 Pet. 2:9).

Prov. 4:26, 27 *Ponder the path of your feet, And let all your ways be established. ²⁷ Do not turn to the right or the left; Remove your foot from evil. NKJV*

Ps. 37:23 *The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, And He delights in his way. NKJV*

Matt 6:13 *And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. ¹NKJV*

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1 Cor. 13:13 *No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. NKJV*

2 Pet 2:9 *then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment NKJV*

Questions:

Please provide script / verse references for your answers.

- 1. What are the 3 different ways that Solomon teaches wisdom in Ch. 4?**
- 2. What are the 4 things that Solomon remembers about his childhood in vs. 1-9?**
- 3. How many paths are there for us to take spiritually? What are they?**
- 4. What are some of the body parts that Solomon uses to explain how to deal with wisdom?**
- 5. What are some examples of how our eyes should seek wisdom?**
- 6. When is the best time to teach our children about wisdom from the example Solomon provides?**

Thought Questions:

1. **Solomon provided two examples of how he was taught wisdom by his father by teaching with an anxiousness and the important things. What things can we as parents do today to put these actions into our teaching of our children?**

2. **What things have you benefitted from in your life by walking on the path of wisdom? What are some things that you would be willing to share to help others on their walk?**

3. **In the examples of various parts of the body used by Solomon to seek wisdom. Which one of them is your strength and which one is your weakness? What can you do this week to strengthen the weak one?**

The Perils of Adultery (Proverbs 5)

Surety, Sloth, Scoundrels, and Strumpets (Proverbs 6 & 7)

(Read Proverbs Chapters 5, 6, and 7)

Solomon has already warned in his discussions on wisdom about the perils of immoral women in Proverbs Ch. 2 and how behavior can lead you down the path of evil. But because of the importance of these topics he repeats them again in chapters 5, 6, and 7. These were serious problems in the day of Solomon and is no less serious today.

Perils of Adultery

Promise of Adultery – Satan would want you to believe that adultery has great promise, but that promise is a false promise (Prov. 5:3). The enticements of adultery involve flattery (Prov. 2:16, 6:24, and 7:21). We must always remember that Satan will do all he can to make things that we should not do as tempting as possible, we should never underestimate his ability (Gen 3:6). The real promise of adultery is this it will end in sharp bitterness (Prov. 5:4) and death followed by condemnation (Prov. 5:5, Heb. 13:4). So the ways of adultery are unstable and unknowable (Prov. 5:6).

Prov. 5:3-6 For the lips of an immoral woman drip honey, And her mouth is smoother than oil; ⁴ But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, Sharp as a two-edged sword. ⁵ Her feet go down to death, Her steps lay hold of hell. ⁶ Lest you ponder her path of life—Her ways are unstable; You do not know them. NKJV

Prov. 2:16 And To deliver you from the immoral woman, From the seductress who flatters with her words. NKJV

Prov. 6:24 To keep you from the evil woman, From the flattering tongue of a seductress. NKJV

Prov. 7:21 With her enticing speech she caused him to yield, With her flattering lips she seduced him. NKJV

Gen 3:6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. NKJV

Prov. 5:4-6 But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, Sharp as a two-edged sword. ⁵ Her feet go down to death, Her steps lay hold of hell. ⁶ Lest you ponder her path of life—Her ways are unstable; You do not know them. NKJV

Heb. 13:4 Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge. NKJV

Price of Adultery – The price of adultery is huge. We all know that nothing is free and we frequently discuss the price paid for this or that. What is important for our understanding is that we are able to explain the cost of adultery to all that we know. Sure for many involved in this study adultery may never be an issue. But, what if you by learning the wisdom that Solomon presents on the subject are able to help someone? Adultery will cost your wealth (Prov. 5:7-10), physical health (Prov. 5:9, 11), mental health (Prov.

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5:12-13), and your reputation (Prov. 5:14, 6:27-35). Yes you can obtain forgiveness for this sin (1 Cor. 6:9-11), but the effects of adultery may continue for the rest of one's life.

Prov. 5:7-14 Therefore hear me now, my children, And do not depart from the words of my mouth. ⁸ Remove your way far from her, And do not go near the door of her house, ⁹ Lest you give your honor to others, And your years to the cruel one; ¹⁰ Lest aliens be filled with your wealth, And your labors go to the house of a foreigner; ¹¹ And you mourn at last, When your flesh and your body are consumed, ¹² And say: "How I have hated instruction, And my heart despised correction! ¹³ I have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, Nor inclined my ear to those who instructed me! ¹⁴ I was on the verge of total ruin, In the midst of the assembly and congregation." NKJV

Prov. 6:27-35 Can a man take fire to his bosom, And his clothes not be burned? ²⁸ Can one walk on hot coals, And his feet not be seared? ²⁹ So is he who goes in to his neighbor's wife; Whoever touches her shall not be innocent. ³⁰ People do not despise a thief If he steals to satisfy himself when he is starving. ³¹ Yet when he is found, he must restore sevenfold; He may have to give up all the substance of his house. ³² Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; He who does so destroys his own soul. ³³ Wounds and dishonor he will get, And his reproach will not be wiped away. ³⁴ For jealousy is a husband's fury; Therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. ³⁵ He will accept no recompense, Nor will he be appeased though you give many gifts. NKJV

1 Cor. 6:9-11 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals,^[a] nor sodomites, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. NKJV

Prevention of Adultery – The best method of avoiding the temptation of adultery is presented in the last verses of Chapter 5. Love your spouse. Rejoice about the love that you share with each other. It takes work to make a marriage work (Prov. 5:15-19). As husbands we should love our wives live Christ loves the Church (Eph. 5:25, 28), as wives must learn to love their husbands (Titus 2:3-4). And more importantly if we love God as we should we will recognize that while we believe that we could potentially hide if from others God knows our actions (Prov. 15:3) and he will judge us for them (Prov. 5:21-23, Heb. 13:4). If we are devoted to God we can avoid the temptation of adultery (Gen 39:7-10) and we will be blessed (Gen 39:21, 41:50-52).

Prov. 5:15-23 Drink water from your own cistern, And running water from your own well. ¹⁶ Should your fountains be dispersed abroad, Streams of water in the streets? ¹⁷ Let them be only your own, And not for strangers with you. ¹⁸ Let your fountain be blessed, And rejoice with the wife of your youth. ¹⁹ As a loving deer and a graceful doe, Let her breasts satisfy you at all times; And always be enraptured with her love. ²⁰ For why should you, my son, be enraptured by an immoral woman, And be embraced in the arms of a seductress? ²¹ For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, And He ponders all his paths. ²² His own iniquities entrap the wicked man, And he is caught in the cords of his sin. ²³ He shall die for lack of instruction, And in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray. NKJV

Eph. 5:25, 28 And Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her. NKJV

Titus 2:3-4 the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things— ⁴ that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children. NKJV

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Prov. 15:3 *The eyes of the Lord are in every place, Keeping watch on the evil and the good. NKJV*

Heb. 13:4 *Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge. NKJV*

Gen. 39:7-10 *And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me." ⁸ But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. ⁹ There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" ¹⁰ So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her. NKJV*

Gen 39:21 *But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. NKJV*

Gen 41:50-52 *And to Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him. ⁵¹ Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh. "For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house." ⁵² And the name of the second he called Ephraim. "For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction." NKJV*

Surety, Sloth, Scoundrels, and Strumpets

Surety – (Prov. 6:1-5) Warns us not to take on responsibility for someone else's liability. If you should then you must work to get free of the responsibility as quickly as possible, even to the point of humbling yourself and pleading to be released. Solomon warns of this again in later verses (Prov. 11:15, 17:18). Why is this so important? You may be helping them to buy something that is not in God's will for them, or you might be encouraging them to be a spendthrift or even a gambler. Additionally, if they default on the loan you become responsible for it and it may affect your friendship. You would be better to simply give them the money personally (Mat 5:42).

Prov. 6:1-5 My son, if you become surety for your friend, If you have shaken hands in pledge for a stranger, ² You are snared by the words of your mouth; You are taken by the words of your mouth. ³ So do this, my son, and deliver yourself; For you have come into the hand of your friend: Go and humble yourself; Plead with your friend. ⁴ Give no sleep to your eyes, Nor slumber to your eyelids. ⁵ Deliver yourself like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, And like a bird from the hand of the fowler. NKJV

Prov. 11:15, 17:18 He who is surety for a stranger will suffer, But one who hates being surety is secure. NKJV

Matt. 5:42 Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away. NKJV

Sloth – (Prov. 6:6-11) The warning here is for those that would prefer to sleep than work. Solomon uses the ant as an example of always working, not needing to be overseen or managed, and even in harvest (Prov. 30:25). If we are lazy we are stealing from ourselves and will ultimately end up in poverty (Prov. 10:4, 13:4, and 20:4). Being busy allows us to be the Christian example we should be to the world and to our fellow Christians (Rom 12:9-21). How can we expect to be lazy in one area of our lives and then busy for the Lord?

Prov. 6:6-11 Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, ⁷ Which, having no captain,

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Overseer or ruler, 8 Provides her supplies in the summer, And gathers her food in the harvest. 9 How long will you slumber, O sluggard? When will you rise from your sleep? 10 A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to sleep— 11 So shall your poverty come on you like a prowler, And your need like an armed man. NKJV

Prov. 10:4 He who has a slack hand becomes poor, But the hand of the diligent makes rich. NKJV

Prov. 13:4 The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; But the soul of the diligent shall be made rich. NKJV

Prov. 20:4 The lazy man will not plow because of winter; He will beg during harvest and have nothing. NKJV

Rom 12:9-21: Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. 10 Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; 11 not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12 rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; 13 distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. 16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. 17 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. 20 Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. NKJV

Prov. 13: The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; But the soul of the diligent shall be made rich. NKJV

Scoundrels – (Prov. 6:12-19) Here the warning is against someone that attempts to deceive others by their actions. In last week's lesson we learn about how to use body parts to gain wisdom, this is someone that does the opposite. They have perversity in their hearts and devise evil continuously. Upon this type of person calamity and destruction will come quickly. This is because God hates such behavior, it goes against everything that God represents. It is a lie, it destroys our relationship with others and therefore ability to teach God to others.

Prov. 6:12-19 A worthless person, a wicked man, Walks with a perverse mouth; 13 He winks with his eyes, He shuffles his feet, He points with his fingers; 14 Perversity is in his heart, He devises evil continually, He sows discord. 15 Therefore his calamity shall come suddenly; Suddenly he shall be broken without remedy. 16 These six things the Lord hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: 17 A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, 18 A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, 19 A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren. NKJV

Strumpets – (Prov. 6:20-7:27) As we close our lesson for the week, we see the warning in the remaining verses of chapters 6 and of chapter 7 against harlots or promiscuous women. If we listen to our parents and keep them in our hearts we will always have their wisdom with us where ever we go. It requires a respect of our parents for this to be of meaning. Oh what a blessing it is to have Godly parents! Are your examples as a parent something that will guide them in their ways? We are warned that getting involve with this

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type of woman has a burning effect, there is nothing more painful than a burn, even after removing the heat the pain continues. While Solomon here is speaking specifically with regard to a woman the lesson that we can also take is the lust of the flesh, it has the ability to destroy in a most painful way.

Prov. 6:20-7:27 *My son, keep your father's command, And do not forsake the law of your mother. ²¹ Bind them continually upon your heart; Tie them around your neck. ²² When you roam, they^[a] will lead you; When you sleep, they will keep you; And when you awake, they will speak with you. ²³ For the commandment is a lamp, And the law a light; Reproofs of instruction are the way of life, ²⁴ To keep you from the evil woman, From the flattering tongue of a seductress. ²⁵ Do not lust after her beauty in your heart, Nor let her allure you with her eyelids. ²⁶ For by means of a harlot A man is reduced to a crust of bread; And an adulteress will prey upon his precious life. ²⁷ Can a man take fire to his bosom, And his clothes not be burned? ²⁸ Can one walk on hot coals, And his feet not be seared? ²⁹ So is he who goes in to his neighbor's wife; Whoever touches her shall not be innocent. ³⁰ People do not despise a thief If he steals to satisfy himself when he is starving. ³¹ Yet when he is found, he must restore sevenfold; He may have to give up all the substance of his house. ³² Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; He who does so destroys his own soul. ³³ Wounds and dishonor he will get, And his reproach will not be wiped away. ³⁴ For jealousy is a husband's fury; Therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. ³⁵ He will accept no recompense, Nor will he be appeased though you give many gifts. 7 My son, keep my words, And treasure my commands within you. ² Keep my commands and live, And my law as the apple of your eye. ³ Bind them on your fingers; Write them on the tablet of your heart. ⁴ Say to wisdom, "You are my sister," And call understanding your nearest kin, ⁵ That they may keep you from the immoral woman, From the seductress who flatters with her words. ⁶ For at the window of my house I looked through my lattice, ⁷ And saw among the simple, I perceived among the youths, A young man devoid of understanding, ⁸ Passing along the street near her corner; And he took the path to her house ⁹ In the twilight, in the evening, In the black and dark night. ¹⁰ And there a woman met him, With the attire of a harlot, and a crafty heart. ¹¹ She was loud and rebellious, Her feet would not stay at home. ¹² At times she was outside, at times in the open square, Lurking at every corner. ¹³ So she caught him and kissed him; With an impudent face she said to him: ¹⁴ "I have peace offerings with me; Today I have paid my vows. ¹⁵ So I came out to meet you, Diligently to seek your face, And I have found you. ¹⁶ I have spread my bed with tapestry, Colored coverings of Egyptian linen. ¹⁷ I have perfumed my bed With myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. ¹⁸ Come, let us take our fill of love until morning; Let us delight ourselves with love. ¹⁹ For my husband is not at home; He has gone on a long journey; ²⁰ He has taken a bag of money with him, And will come home on the appointed day." ²¹ With her enticing speech she caused him to yield, With her flattering lips she seduced him. ²² Immediately he went after her, as an ox goes to the slaughter, Or as a fool to the correction of the stocks, ²³ Till an arrow struck his liver. As a bird hastens to the snare, He did not know it would cost his life. ²⁴ Now therefore, listen to me, my children; Pay attention to the words of my mouth: ²⁵ Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways, Do not stray into her paths; ²⁶ For she has cast down many wounded, And all who were slain by her were strong men. ²⁷ Her house is the way to hell, Descending to the chambers of death. NKJV*

Prov. 10:4 *He who has a slack hand becomes poor, But the hand of the diligent makes rich. NKJV*

Prov. 13:4 *The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; But the soul of the diligent shall be made rich. NKJV*

Prov. 20:4 *The lazy man will not plow because of winter; He will beg during harvest and have nothing. NKJV*

Questions:

Please provide script / verse references for your answers.

- 1. What are the 4 things that Solomon says are the cost of adultery?**
- 2. What are the ways that you can prevent being tempted by adultery?**
- 3. What does adultery promise? What does it actually do?**
- 4. What is surety? Why does Solomon's warning against it?**
- 5. Why is laziness spoken of so harshly by Solomon?**
- 6. What are the 7 things that God hates?**

Thought Questions:

- 1. Why is it important for us to understand the promises, price, and how to overcome adultery?**
- 2. What things have you done lately to express to your spouse your love for them? What things are you going to commit to doing in the future?**
- 3. Is it wrong to lend money? Is it okay to lend money to family members? What should be your expectations if you do? What are some lessons you have learned in lending money that could help others?**

Wisdom's Plea To Be Heard (Proverbs 8)

Two Invitations (Proverbs 9)

(Read Proverbs Chapters 8 & 9)

Again in chapters 8 and 9 Solomon personifies wisdom as a woman. In chapter 9 Solomon compares two types of women – Lady Wisdom and Woman Folly. Are we beginning to understand the impact that women can have in our lives? God understands the importance of women, it is amazing that mankind is still trying to figure it out. But in this study – What does the woman of wisdom have to say? Why should we listen to her?

Wisdom's Plea to Be Heard (Chapter 8)

The Plea of Wisdom

Wisdom desires to be heard, it cries out with an uplifted voice (Prov. 8:1). She is out in the open, on a hilltop, along the paths, where paths meet, and even at the gates of the city (Prov. 7:12, 8:2, 3). We have the wisdom of God, we should be willing share this wisdom everywhere we go and at any time. We must speak it boldly, not in a manner that offends but in such a way as is illustrated by the woman of wisdom. Wisdom wants to be heard by all, it is to be shared by the sons of all men, simple ones and fools (Prov. 8:4, 5). And in sharing wisdom will impart great things. Things that are excellent and right, truth and righteousness, even the plain things; but best of all wisdom imparts things that are greater than the riches of this world (Prov. 8:6-11).

Prov. 8:1-11 Does not wisdom cry out, And understanding lift up her voice? ² She takes her stand on the top of the high hill, Beside the way, where the paths meet. ³ She cries out by the gates, at the entry of the city, At the entrance of the doors: ⁴ "To you, O men, I call, And my voice is to the sons of men. ⁵ O you simple ones, understand prudence, And you fools, be of an understanding heart. ⁶ Listen, for I will speak of excellent things, And from the opening of my lips will come right things; ⁷ For my mouth will speak truth; Wickedness is an abomination to my lips. ⁸ All the words of my mouth are with righteousness; Nothing crooked or perverse is in them. ⁹ They are all plain to him who understands, And right to those who find knowledge. ¹⁰ Receive my instruction, and not silver, And knowledge rather than choice gold; ¹¹ For wisdom is better than rubies, And all the things one may desire cannot be compared with her. NKJV

Prov. 7:12 At times she was outside, at times in the open square, Lurking at every corner. NKJV

The Value of Wisdom

In verses 12-21 we see that wisdom has two values to add to our lives. It can teach us by what she possess and what she gives. When we look at what wisdom possess we see that we should be possessing prudence, knowledge, and discretion. We should have a fear for the Lord, which prompted her to hate pride, evil, and a perverse mouth. And lastly we should have a wisdom that possess counsel and sound wisdom, understanding and strength (Prov. 8:12-14). Wisdom also gives things. Wisdom gives to those in authority the ability to rule with justice. She also gives to all that love wisdom – riches, honor, righteousness, justice, and wealth (Prov. 8:15-21). Why would we not want to

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listen wisdom?

Prov. 8:12-21 *"I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, And find out knowledge and discretion. ¹³ The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate. ¹⁴ Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom; I am understanding, I have strength. ¹⁵ By me kings reign, And rulers decree justice. ¹⁶ By me princes rule, and nobles, All the judges of the earth. ¹⁷ I love those who love me, And those who seek me diligently will find me. ¹⁸ Riches and honor are with me, Enduring riches and righteousness. ¹⁹ My fruit is better than gold, yes, than fine gold, And my revenue than choice silver. ²⁰ I traverse the way of righteousness, In the midst of the paths of justice, ²¹ That I may cause those who love me to inherit wealth, That I may fill their treasuries. NKJV*

The Possession of Wisdom

Wisdom is a possession of God. Not just something He is, but if we understand that wisdom is so important to God that it is as shown in these verses as something He strives to have. Now I know that God is all powerful and all knowing; I am simply pointing out that if wisdom as important to Him as this, it should cause us to want it all the more. God had in His possession wisdom even before the creation of the world. It is God's possession of wisdom that enabled Him to perform the miracles that we still do not understand.

Prov. 8:22-31 *"The Lord possessed me at the beginning of His way, Before His works of old. ²³ I have been established from everlasting, From the beginning, before there was ever an earth. ²⁴ When there were no depths I was brought forth, When there were no fountains abounding with water. ²⁵ Before the mountains were settled, Before the hills, I was brought forth; ²⁶ While as yet He had not made the earth or the fields, Or the primal dust of the world. ²⁷ When He prepared the heavens, I was there, When He drew a circle on the face of the deep, ²⁸ When He established the clouds above, When He strengthened the fountains of the deep, ²⁹ When He assigned to the sea its limit, So that the waters would not transgress His command, When He marked out the foundations of the earth, ³⁰ Then I was beside Him as a master craftsman; And I was daily His delight, Rejoicing always before Him, ³¹ Rejoicing in His inhabited world, And my delight was with the sons of men. NKJV*

The Blessedness of Wisdom

As we close chapter 8 we see the blessedness of wisdom for those who are willing to keep her ways. We are encouraged because of these blessings to listen to her instructions and be wise, not seeking to avoid it. Also we see that we must be willing to listen intently, for if we do we will find life. But most importantly we will find favor of the Lord.

Prov. 8:22-36 *"Now therefore, listen to me, my children, For blessed are those who keep my ways. ³³ Hear instruction and be wise, And do not disdain it. ³⁴ Blessed is the man who listens to me, Watching daily at my gates, Waiting at the posts of my doors. ³⁵ For whoever finds me finds life, And obtains favor from the Lord; ³⁶ But he who sins against me wrongs his own soul; All those who hate me love death." NKJV*

Two Invitations (Chapter 9)

The Invitation of Lady Wisdom

The Lady Wisdom makes an invitation to us. She does this by preparing, making a plea, and a promise. In her preparations we see how she has built a beautiful house with pillars. There are 7 pillars in this house, consider the 7 qualities that James describes (Jam. 3:17). She has prepared a great feast with great care and then presented it in a beautiful display. Lady Wisdom has made a great effort. She then makes a plea to be heard, invites the simple and those lacking in understanding. She only invites those that will benefit from joining her. She puts forth a great effort to have attendees. Lady Wisdom is willing to make a promise. Her promise is that those that attend to her will have understanding, long life, and be benefitted (Prov. 9:1-12).

Prov. 9:1-12 Wisdom has built her house, She has hewn out her seven pillars;² She has slaughtered her meat, She has mixed her wine, She has also furnished her table. ³ She has sent out her maidens, She cries out from the highest places of the city, ⁴ “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!” As for him who lacks understanding, she says to him, ⁵ “Come, eat of my bread And drink of the wine I have mixed. ⁶ Forsake foolishness and live, And go in the way of understanding. ⁷ “He who corrects a scoffer gets shame for himself, And he who rebukes a wicked man only harms himself. ⁸ Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you; Rebuke a wise man, and he will love you. ⁹ Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; Teach a just man, and he will increase in learning. ¹⁰ “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. ¹¹ For by me your days will be multiplied, And years of life will be added to you. ¹² If you are wise, you are wise for yourself, And if you scoff, you will bear it alone.” NKJV

James 3:17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. NKJV

The Invitation of Woman Folly

Look at how the foolish woman contrasts with Lady Wisdom. She makes no preparations. Her approach to invite is to be loud and seductive. She has no feast. In making her invitation plea she sits around and she calls at those that pass by. And her promise is a false promise, her house is full of dead or leads to death (Prov. 9:13-18 2:18-19).

Prov. 9:13-18 A foolish woman is clamorous; She is simple, and knows nothing. ¹⁴ For she sits at the door of her house, On a seat by the highest places of the city, ¹⁵ To call to those who pass by, Who go straight on their way: ¹⁶ “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here”; And as for him who lacks understanding, she says to him, ¹⁷ “Stolen water is sweet, And bread eaten in secret is pleasant.” ¹⁸ But he does not know that the dead are there, That her guests are in the depths of hell” NKJV

Prov. 2:18-19 For her house leads down to death, And her paths to the dead; ¹⁹ None who go to her return, Nor do they regain the paths of life. NKJV

Questions:

Please provide script / verse references for your answers.

- 1. In chapter 8 what 4 subjects / things does the woman of wisdom have to say?**
- 2. In wisdom's efforts to be heard what does she do and to whom does she do it?**
- 3. Who is blessed by the woman wisdom?**
- 4. What are the names of the two different women of chapter 9?**
- 5. What are some of the things that the woman wisdom prepares?**
- 6. What might the 7 pillars of the woman wisdoms house represent? See James 3:17**

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A Topical Study from Proverbs

Wisdom Regarding Riddles

(Read Proverbs Chapter 30)

In our final week in the study of Proverbs we will shift gears. While the first 9 chapters of the book better lend themselves to a textual study, the remaining chapters are more to in the form of various topics. This week we will have a topical study on the wisdom of riddles. We find in verse 1:6 that one of the purposes of the book of Proverbs is so that we can better understand the riddles of wisdom. King Agur in Chapter 30 has several numerical sayings that we will consider as riddles and attempt to gain wisdom. King Agur provides us with a series (tetrad – meaning 4) of statements present 3 elements to emphasize the fourth. In order to help us understand them we will approach each by forming them as an actual riddle. This form of teaching was common among the Jewish teachers. Jesus used this similar wise saying method in the Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount. (Matt. 5:3-6 and 7-10)

Matt 5:3-10 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted. 5 Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth. 6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled. 7 Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy. 8 Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God. 9 Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God. 10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. NKJV

What are Four Classes of Evil Doers? (Prov. 30:11-14)

This riddle is about a generation of various forms of unwise behaviors or sins that can be uniquely permeated by a whole society or a period of time.

Prov. 30:11-14 There is a generation that curses its father, And does not bless its mother. ¹² There is a generation that is pure in its own eyes, Yet is not washed from its filthiness. ¹³ There is a generation—oh, how lofty are their eyes! And their eyelids are lifted up. ¹⁴ There is a generation whose teeth are like swords, And whose fangs are like knives, To devour the poor from off the earth, And the needy from among men. NKJV

Those that despise their parents...

This is such an evil action that it was punishable by death (Ex. 21:17, Prov. 20:20, 30:17) and was included in the commands with how to deal with violence. There is a common saying that when the family structure breaks down then society will soon follow. The wisdom of God was to have children obey their parents.

Ex 21:17 “And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. NKJV

Prov. 20:20 Whoever curses his father or his mother, His lamp will be put out in deep darkness. NKJV

Prov. 30:17 The eye that mocks his father, And scorns obedience to his mother, The ravens of the valley will pick it out, And the young eagles will eat it. NKJV

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Those that are blind to their faults...

God has the ability to see into our hearts and weigh our spirits (Prov. 16:2). Even though a man can be blind to his faults God sees them and knows our true motives. We need to understand this so that we can always seek forgiveness as Paul did (1 Cor. 4:4). If we fail to do this we will never be in a condition to receive God's mercy and grace.

Prov. 16:2 All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, But the Lord weighs the spirits. NKJV

1 Cor. 4:4 For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. NKJV

Those that are arrogant...

An arrogant individual feels that they have no need for God. They are proud of their own accomplishments and look to God with disdain (Prov. 21:4).

Prov. 16:4 A haughty look, a proud heart, And the plowing of the wicked are sin. NKJV

Those who consume the poor...

While all of the previous things are evil and will result in punishment, God is offended by those that mistreat the poor (Prov. 14:31). This goes beyond the evil of the others because this evil is now longer simply between them and God. This is the worst class of evil.

Prov. 14:31 He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker, But he who honors Him has mercy on the needy. NKJV

What things are never satisfied? (Prov. 30:15-16)

In this riddle we see examples that illustrate covetousness and greed.

Prov. 30:15-16 The leech has two daughters—Give and Give! There are three things that are never satisfied, Four never say, "Enough!": ¹⁶The grave, The barren womb, The earth that is not satisfied with water—And the fire never says, "Enough!". NKJV

The Leech...

This represents greed, it can never be satisfied. Are we a people that are never satisfied, it is vanity (Ecc 5:10). The leech is so greedy that it will never let go until it has consumed all that the host has to offer and it dies.

Ecc. 5:10 He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; Nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity. NKJV

The Grave...

The grave (death) consumes all. No one, save Jesus has ever returned from the grave. Death is never satisfied and will never be full. Satan will do all he can to get all that he can to join him in eternal destruction. A covetous man is one who has eyes that are never satisfied (Prov. 27:20).

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Prov. 27:20 *Hell and Destruction are never full; So the eyes of man are never satisfied. NKJV*

1 Cor. 4:4 *For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. NKJV*

The barren womb...

The woman who cannot have children will never feel complete or satisfied. Consider Rachel and what she said to Jacob, she would have rather died than not have children (Gen. 30:1).

Gen. 30:1 *Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister, and said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die!" NKJV*

The earth...

Here we see another example of greed that can never be satisfied. This is an example of how dry earth absorbs rain. Sure it may rain on the land, but it wants rain again in a short while. We understand the parallel story that Jesus discussed concerning the water of life (John 4:13-14).

Prov. 14:31 *He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker, But he who honors Him has mercy on the needy. NKJV*

John 4:13-14 *Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." NKJV*

The fire...

A fire continues to consume until all that is combustible is gone. It leaves waste in its path. Ultimately those that fail to follow God's will be consumed by such a fire (Is. 30:33).

Is. 30:33 *For Tophet was established of old, Yes, for the king it is prepared. He has made it deep and large; Its pyre is fire with much wood; The breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, Kindles it. NKJV*

John 4:13-14 *Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." NKJV*

What things are a wonder to behold? (Prov. 30:18-20)

In this riddle we see five images that illustrate the ultimate wonder of adultery that ultimately claims innocence.

Prov. 30:18-20 *There are three things which are too wonderful for me, Yes, four which I do not understand: ¹⁹ The way of an eagle in the air, The way of a serpent on a rock, The way of a ship in the midst of the sea, And the way of a man with a virgin. ²⁰ This is the way of an adulterous woman: She eats and wipes her mouth, And says, "I have done no wickedness." NKJV*

The way of an eagle in the air...

While the way that any bird flies is beautiful, but an eagle exceeds all others in how it flies in the air. It flies swifter and higher than any others. But once it has passed through would you ever know that it was there?

The way of a serpent on a rock...

In our day and time the example might have used glass or something else very smooth. How is it that a serpent can find a grip on such a smooth surface? Or in sandy soil not leave a trail. Again once a serpent has passed by would you ever know if it leaves not trail?

The way of a ship in the sea...

What a marvel is a ship in the sea. It is supported by it, the ship weathers the storms. The ship is able to go here and there and yet it leaves no beaten path that it has traveled.

The way of a man with a virgin...

This image illustrates the countless ways that men over time have courted or lured women to them. The path to each woman's heart is unique, but there is never a trail left that can be followed.

The way of an adulterous woman...

So are the ways of an adulterous woman. Men need to be aware that this type of woman will tempt you with beauty, attraction, or wonder. She will leave you with nothing when she is gone. The parallel for us today is that Satan uses all of these tricks and more to tempt us to go against God's will, then in the end we will be left with nothing and lost (2 Thes. 2:9-11).

2 Thes. 2:9-11 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,¹⁰ and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.¹¹ And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie NKJV

What things cause turmoil? (Prov. 30:21-23)

In this riddle we see four scenarios that illustrate things that contribute to social chaos. But they all stem from pride.

Prov. 30:21-23 For three things the earth is perturbed, Yes, for four it cannot bear up:²² For a servant when he reigns, A fool when he is filled with food,²³ A hateful woman when she is married, And a maidservant who succeeds her mistress. NKJV

A servant when he reigns...

Being unfit for it through his education, not having been trained up in and learned the arts of government and maxims of it; and through the disposition of his mind, which

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is mean, abject, and servile; and as he has been used himself when a servant, so he will use others and through his circumstances, being poor, he will take oppressive methods to become rich; and being raised from a low estate, he is the more imperious, proud, and haughty; all which and more make his reign intolerable.

A fool when he is filled with food...

So was Nabal at his feast, when he behaved so intolerably in his cups towards David and his messengers, that he determined on his destruction, had not Abigail interposed, (1 Sam 25:10-11) ; and there are many such fools, who having their bellies full of food, and their heads full of liquor, are very overbearing in company, and give their tongues such a loose as is very disturbing: or this may intend such fools, or wicked men, who are full of wealth and riches, and being purse proud, are exceeding haughty and insolent; set their mouths against the heaven, and blaspheme God that is in it; and their tongues walk through the earth, and spare none, but lash all in an insufferable manner. These disquiet families, neighborhoods, communities, and commonwealths (Ps. 73:7-9)?

1 Sam 25:10-11 Then Nabal answered David's servants, and said, "Who is David, and who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants nowadays who break away each one from his master.

¹¹ Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers, and give it to men when I do not know where they are from? NKJV

Ps. 73:7-9 Their eyes bulge with abundance; They have more than heart could wish. ⁸ They scoff and speak wickedly concerning oppression; They speak loftily. ⁹ They set their mouth against the heavens, And their tongue walks through the earth. NKJV

A hateful woman when she is married...

Odious (hateful) for her person, her ugliness, and the deformity of her body; or rather for the ill qualities of her mind, this type of woman while single, tries to conceal them this hate she has for herself. But, once married, hides them no longer; but becomes imperious, proud, scornful, and malicious, and behaves in an ill natured way to her husband and all about her, to such a degree, that there is no bearing the place where she is.

A maid servant who succeeds her mistress...

When a maid succeeds her mistress it makes her insufferably proud and vain; she marries her master after the death of her mistress, and so coming into her place enjoys all she had, but only her wisdom and humility; which being wanting, she behaves in such a manner as to make the whole family uneasy. This might be exemplified in the case of Hagar, the bondmaid of Sarah, a type of those that are under the law of works, and seek the inheritance by it; and who trust in themselves that they are righteous, and despise others (Gen. 16:4-6).

Gen 16:4-6 So he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress became despised in her eyes. ⁵ Then Sarai said to Abram, "My wrong be upon you! I gave my maid into your embrace; and when she saw that she had conceived, I became despised in her eyes. The Lord judge between you and me." ⁶ So Abram said to Sarai,

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“Indeed your maid is in your hand; do to her as you please.” And when Sarai dealt harshly with her, she fled from her presence. NKJV

What things are little but wise? (Prov. 30:24-28)

In this riddle we see four different types of God’s creations that we could do well to draw wisdom from. Remember God created the world using wisdom, therefore all around us if we seek we can find the wisdom of God. Another thing to draw from this that all of these creatures are relatively small, but they have great wisdom to offer. We need to understand that in the work of the Lord even the small (or seeming insignificant) have great value. This is one of my favorite of the riddles.

Prov. 30:24-28 There are four things which are little on the earth, But they are exceedingly wise: ²⁵ The ants are a people not strong, Yet they prepare their food in the summer; ²⁶ The rock badgers are a feeble folk, Yet they make their homes in the crags; ²⁷ The locusts have no king, Yet they all advance in ranks; ²⁸ The spider skillfully grasps with its hands, And it is in kings’ palaces. NKJV

The ant...

Far from it; what is weaker than an ant? A multitude of them may be destroyed at once, with the crush of a foot. Pliny calls it "minimum animal", the least animal; and the Arabians use it as a proverb, to call a weak man one weaker than an ant. Yet they build granaries with great art and wisdom, carry in grains of corn with great labor and industry, in the summer season, when others rest, and they lay them up against winter. We can learn from the wisdom of the ant! We must always be working for the correct things, just as the ant, so that we will be ready when the time comes (Matt. 6:19-20).

Matt 6:19-20 Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. NKJV

The rock badgers...

We do not know for sure what Solomon was referring to by “rock badger”, it could have been rabbits, mountain mice, or bear mice. But the point remains that all three of these animals are weak yet they manage to create homes for themselves in rock cliffs. They do what they must to survive (Ps 104:18). How many times do we get frustrated because when doing the work of the Lord we think it is too hard (Rom 8:31)?

Ps 104:18 The high hills are for the wild goats; The cliffs are a refuge for the rock badgers. NKJV

Rom. 8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? NKJV

The locusts...

These are small creatures also, yet very devouring ones; and consume the fruits of the earth, wherever they come and light (Ex. 10:13-15); they are very numerous, and move in large bodies, and yet with great regularity and order; which shows the wisdom there is in them by natural instinct, though they have no king to command, guide. I have never seen a band of locust but I do know that when they join together in a band

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that they act in a manner of unity that makes them a formidable group. They are an emblem of unity, concord, and harmony, when they move from place to place, they move in a body, in a very regular manner; in precise order, everyone in his proper place. A truly unified group. They demonstrate for us the power that we can have if we work together in unity of spirit in serving God as Jesus prayed that we would (John 17:11).

Ex. 10:13-15 So Moses stretched out his rod over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind on the land all that day and all that night. When it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. ¹⁴ And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and rested on all the territory of Egypt. They were very severe; previously there had been no such locusts as they, nor shall there be such after them. ¹⁵ For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every herb of the land and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left. So there remained nothing green on the trees or on the plants of the field throughout all the land of Egypt. NKJV

John 17:11 What Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. NKJV

The spider...

This is the last of the small creatures, yet there is so much to learn from the spider. Consider the thread that it spins. Scientist today are still studying for its capabilities. Have you ever looked at a spider's web and noted the exactness with which it is created? Each is unique in usage of the space and design; and it accomplishes it all in such a short period of time. The spider is no respecter of persons, it will make a web in a rich man's house or a poor man's house. It designs its webs for what they are intended, to provide itself with food. How often does man attempt to spin webs of their own designs through cheating and lying, but catches nothing.

What things are majestic? (Prov. 30:29-31)

In the last of the riddles topic we come to things that are majestic. Let us consider from each what it is that causes them to be majestic and the lessons we can apply from them each.

Prov. 30:29-31 There are three things which are majestic in pace, Yes, four which are stately in walk: ³⁰ A lion, which is mighty among beasts And does not turn away from any; ³¹ A greyhound, A male goat also, And a king whose troops are with him. NKJV

A lion...

What is stronger than a lion, or more courageous and undaunted? It walks with great majesty, very slowly, step by step. Ancient philosophers observed this about lions; they do not go out of its way for any creature it meets with; nor does it hasten its pace when pursued, nor show the least sign of fear; nor does it turn its back to any. Jesus was consider the Lion of tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5). is often used to illustrate Christ.).

*Rev. 5:5 But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the **Lion** of the tribe of **Judah**, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals. NKJV*

A Greyhound...

The actual meaning of the word here is “girt at the loins”, so it could mean a hunting type of dog (greyhound), or a strutting rooster, or a war horse. Regardless of what specific animal is meant, the implication is how it moves in its walk. From Job (Job 39:19-25) we see an example of how a war horse responds to confrontation / battle. For me the example is how our spiritual lives are a battle against Satan. Are we as committed with the strength that we have through God to stand firm in the fight?

Job 39:19-25 The “Have you given the horse strength? Have you clothed his neck with thunder? ²⁰Can you frighten him like a locust? His majestic snorting strikes terror. ²¹He paws in the valley, and rejoices in his strength; He gallops into the clash of arms. ²²He mocks at fear, and is not frightened; Nor does he turn back from the sword. ²³The quiver rattles against him, The glittering spear and javelin. ²⁴He devours the distance with fierceness and rage; Nor does he come to a halt because the trumpet has sounded. ²⁵At the blast of the trumpet he says, ‘Aha!’ He smells the battle from afar, The thunder of captains and shouting. NKJV

A male goat...

What things can we learn from the male goat? The male goat walks before the flock, his beard and stately manner make him easy to recognize (Jer. 50:8). From Daniel we can see that kings and rulers were illustrated as male goats (Daniel 8:5, 11). The example here is that there is a natural order to life that is needed. To have a group (flock) that has no leader results in confusion and chaos. Someone has to take charge to ensure that there is order.

Jer. 50:8 “Move from the midst of Babylon, Go out of the land of the Chaldeans; And be like the rams before the flocks. NKJV

Dan. 8:5 And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. NKJV

Dan. 8:11 He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down. NKJV

A king with his troops...

And finally the mighty king. In the first three we noted majestic qualities, but it is in the final and 4th example that we see the true majesty. Here a king in who’s kingdom there is no insurrection, no opposition; who is not to be resisted or withstood; a lawful king, in the lawful administration of government, who rules in the fear of God, and according to his word, and the good and wholesome laws of a nation, ought not to be resisted, (Rom. 13:1-2); and a powerful, successful, and victorious king cannot be resisted, withstood, and prevailed over; he drives all before him, and subdues all under him, as David, Cyrus, Alexander, and others. But among all these there is no better example than Christ. Consider Christ; the King of kings; against whom there is no rising, before whom none can stand, against whom the gates of hell can never prevail; who, even in his death on the cross, conquered all enemies; destroyed Satan; abolished death, the last enemy; and delivered his us. He then sends us forth in the ministry of

the Gospel.

Rom. 13:1-2 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. ²Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. NKJV

Questions:

Please provide script / verse references for your answers.

- 1. From what verse in Proverbs chapter 1 are we told that we would learn from “The words of the wise and their riddles” (NKJV)?**

- 2. In Prov. Ch. 30 we see six different comparisons (riddles) of groups of things. What are the riddles for these 6?**

- 3. What are the 4 things that are little but wise? (vs. 24-28)**

- 4. What are 4 things that are majestic? (vs. 29-31)**

- 5. In vs. 31 in the NKJV a greyhound is stated. What other animals could it possibly be? What does is the actual meaning of the word translated as greyhound mean?**

- 6. Why is it important that we take the time, even if it is difficult at times to understand books like Proverbs to study them? See Rom 15:4 and 1 Cor. 10:11**

Introduction to Ecclesiastes – Purpose and Theme

(Read Ecc. Ch. 1 – 6:9)

Ecclesiastes

Vanity, vanity all is vanity. The writer of the book wants us to understand that the entire purpose of Ecclesiastes is to impress upon us that without seeking to do God’s will in our lives that EVERY thing is simply vanity. Vanity means emptiness, lacking in content, or like a puff of wind. The word vanity appears 35 times in 29 verses throughout the book of Ecclesiastes. Another important phrase to watch for in our study is “under the sun”, this phrase appears 29 times in 27 verses. The importance here is that on earth if we leave God out of the equation then life is truly vanity. If we include God in our lives than this life under the sun can have real value and meaning. Ecclesiastes has the answer we all ask ourselves at least once in our live... “Is it all worth it?” What we will learn through our study in Ecclesiastes will help us all be able the better answer that question (Ecc. 12:13).

Ecc. 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man’s all. *NKJV*

The name Ecclesiastes means preacher. But it is more than just an individual who is telling the assembly from an elevated, authoritarian position. The root meaning of the word more expresses that the preacher is so wise that those assembled seek to hear his teachings so that they can learn from them. They have placed him in this position as preacher, not the other way around. This is further confirmed by the author not identifying himself, he wants to be known for the wisdom presented, not because of his position. The writer of the book is expressing to the assembled words of wisdom and understanding to encourage them to seek God to make their lives meaningful. As we study we need to ensure that we view the book for this focus. The increased materialistic society we continue to see only temps more individuals to seek the vain things of this world.

While the writer never identifies himself as King Solomon, there is several references that could point to Solomon as the writer. It discusses his wisdom (Ecc. 1:16), building activities (Ecc. 2:4-6), wealth (Ecc. 2:7-9), and activities after writing the book (Ecc. 12:9-10). All we know for certain is that it was written by “the son of David, king of Jerusalem” (Ecc. 1:1). The traditional view is that Solomon is the author and if that is the case than the book was most likely written around 945 BC. If the writer is Solomon as we have studied in the book of Proverbs Solomon possessed wisdom given by God, beyond what any other man will ever possess.

Ecc. 1:16 communed with my heart, saying, “Look, I have attained greatness, and have gained more wisdom than all who were before me in Jerusalem. My heart has understood great wisdom and knowledge”. *NKJV*

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Ecc. 2:4-6 I made my works great, I built myself houses, and planted myself vineyards. ⁵ I made myself gardens and orchards, and I planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. ⁶ I made myself water pools from which to water the growing trees of the grove. NKJV

Ecc. 4:7-9 I acquired male and female servants, and had servants born in my house. Yes, I had greater possessions of herds and flocks than all who were in Jerusalem before me. ⁸ I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the special treasures of kings and of the provinces. I acquired male and female singers, the delights of the sons of men, and musical instruments of all kinds. ⁹ So I became great and excelled more than all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me. NKJV

Ecc. 12:9-10 And moreover, because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yes, he pondered and sought out and set in order many proverbs. ¹⁰ The Preacher sought to find acceptable words; and what was written was upright—words of truth. NKJV

Ecc. 1:1 The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. NKJV

There are two main messages in the book. The first is stated in the prologue “All is vanity” (Ecc. 1:3). The writer expresses how he has found that all is vanity through a search and by way of his counsel and wisdom. The second is the importance of serving God throughout life. (Ecc. 11:9-12:1). This second message is directed at the young of the assembly.

Ecc. 1:3 What profit has a man from all his labor In which he toils under the sun? NKJV

Ecc. 11:9-12:1 Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, And let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; Walk in the ways of your heart, And in the sight of your eyes; But know that for all these God will bring you into judgment. ¹⁰ Therefore remove sorrow from your heart, And put away evil from your flesh, For childhood and youth are vanity. ¹² Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, Before the difficult days come, And the years draw near when you say, “I have no pleasure in them”: NKJV

Chapter 1

In this chapter the author identifies himself, theme, and underlying question of the book. He reviews the various cycles of life. Despite our belief that something is new, it is only because we don't remember the past. In reality there is nothing new under the sun. In this chapter he explores futility observed in the cycles of life and futility of human wisdom.

Chapter 2

This chapter finds the preacher trying to find satisfaction in the pleasures of anything found under the sun. He seeks to find a meaning in life through these pleasures, expending great amounts of wealth on whatever his heart desired. He labored, creating great works, only to find them vanity. And ultimately comes to the worldly conclusion that you might as well do all you can to enjoy life if you are not going to live it for God. (Ecc. 2:24-25). But he recognizes that even all that is acquired by an ungodly individual will ultimately end up in the in the hands of a godly individual (Ecc. 2:26).

Ecc. 2:24-25 Nothing is better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also, I saw, was from the hand of God. ²⁵ For who can eat, or who can have enjoyment, more than I? NKJV

Ecc. 2:26 For God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy to a man who is good in His sight; but to the sinner He gives the work of gathering and collecting, that he may give to him who is good before God. This also is vanity and grasping for the wind. NKJV

Chapter 3

In the first two chapters the preacher describes the extent of his searches to find meaning and purpose in life. In this chapter (and the next 3) we see the preacher share his observations learned from these searches. He starts by telling us that everything has a time and place (Ecc. 3:1). This causes him to question why if there is a time and reason for everything why can man not figure out what God does (Ecc. 3:11). In his searching he draws the conclusion that injustice seems to prevail everywhere. Again he questions how God can allow this to happen. Then lastly he questions how man is different from animals, can you see a soul go up to heaven (Ecc. 3:21)? His ultimate conclusion is that basically man should enjoy life (Ecc. 3:22).

Ecc. 3:1 To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven. NKJV

Ecc. 3:11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end. NKJV

Ecc. 3:21 Who knows the spirit of the sons of men, which goes upward, and the spirit of the animal, which goes down to the earth? NKJV

Ecc. 3:22 So I perceived that nothing is better than that a man should rejoice in his own works, for that is his heritage. For who can bring him to see what will happen after him? NKJV

Chapter 4

As we continue with the preacher in observations in this chapter we find that he

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continues to search for man's purpose under the sun. First he questions; with all the oppressive situations that exist is it just not better to be dead (Ecc. 4:2-3)? Next he considers the vanity of skillful work (Ecc. 4:4-6), isolation Ecc. 4:7-12), and popularity (Ecc. 4:13-16). Just as we saw in our study of Job, for us to truly understand the wonder and impact of God in our lives sometime we need to understand what it would be like without Him in it. The preacher is headed on a journey in trying to understand that. Remember as well that these are questions that our fellow man frequently asks us when we share God with them. Do our lives reflect to others the preacher's attitude of what life has to gain to live on this earth without God?

Ecc. 4:2-3 Therefore I praised the dead who were already dead, More than the living who are still alive. ³ Yet, better than both is he who has never existed, Who has not seen the evil work that is done under the sun. NKJV

Ecc. 4:4-6 Again, I saw that for all toil and every skillful work a man is envied by his neighbor. This also is vanity and grasping for the wind. ⁵ The fool folds his hands And consumes his own flesh. ⁶ Better a handful with quietness Than both hands full, together with toil and grasping for the wind. NKJV

*Ecc. 4:7-12 There is one alone, without companion: He has neither son nor brother. Yet there is no end to all his labors, Nor is his eye satisfied with riches. But he never asks, "For whom do I toil and deprive myself of good?" This also is vanity and a grave misfortune. **The Value of a Friend** ⁹ Two are better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor. ¹⁰ For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, For he has no one to help him up. ¹¹ Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; But how can one be warm alone? ¹² Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken. NKJV*

Ecc. 4:13-16 Better a poor and wise youth Than an old and foolish king who will be admonished no more. ¹⁴ For he comes out of prison to be king, Although he was born poor in his kingdom. ¹⁵ I saw all the living who walk under the sun; They were with the second youth who stands in his place. ¹⁶ There was no end of all the people over whom he was made king; Yet those who come afterward will not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and grasping for the wind. NKJV

Chapter 5

Now we see the writer having questioned what are the purposes of numerous things that we all face in this world. He pauses to provide insight on how to approach God in worship. We must use caution when we approach God so that we do not do so in a manner that is disrespectful of God's awesomeness. There is also advice on how we make vows. We need to also ensure that when we make commitments (vows) we are doing so understanding that God has set the example in how He keeps His promises. We are God's children and therefore should reflect His values in how we commit to things (Jam. 1:26). And how we need to appreciate the limitations of riches, and how the ability to enjoy them is a gift from God.

Jam. 1:26 If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. NKJV

Chapter 6

In the last of the chapters where the preacher discusses the observations he has come to in searching everything under the sun, he reflects upon the limitations of riches. He

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describes a sad, but very common situation: a man blessed with riches, wealth, and honor (Ecc. 6:2) so that he has all that he desires; yet God does not let him have it, and it is consumed by someone else. His reflections lead him to conclude that while a man's labor might feed his mouth it does not really satisfy the soul. It is better to enjoy what you have than to labor in vanity and grasping for the wind. And then ultimately coming to the conclusion that all the wealth in the world amounts to vanity. Only through God is the question answered.

Ecc. 6:2 A man to whom God has given riches and wealth and honor, so that he lacks nothing for himself of all he desires; yet God does not give him power to eat of it, but a foreigner consumes it. This is vanity, and it is an evil affliction. NKJV

Questions:

Please provide script / verse references for your answers.

- 1. What are the verses that tell us about the author of Ecclesiastes? Do we clearly know who the author is?**
- 2. What are the two key word or phrases found in the book?**
- 3. What are the main point of chapter 1?**
- 4. What examples are provided in Ch. 1 that show the futility observed in the cycles of life? (vs. 4-7)**
- 5. What things did the preacher accumulate during his search of meaning? (Ch. 2)**
- 6. What were the conclusion the writer drew from the accumulation of great wealth? (vs. 2:10-11)**
- 7. When the preacher reflected upon all the labor he had done he became troubled (vs. 2:19-21). What was it that troubled him?**

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- 8. In Ch. 3:10-11 the preacher states that he has seen 4 things. What are they?**

- 9. What does the writer conclude is the reason that God has made what He does unchangeable? (vs. 3:14)**

- 10. What two things did the preacher not regarding oppression? (vs. 4:1)**

- 11. What is the value of friendship (vs. 4:9-12)?**

- 12. What are the two things we are told concerning vows (vs. 5:4-5)?**

- 13. What is the frequent consequence of having an abundance of wealth?**

- 14. Why will a person blessed by God not dwell unduly on the days of his life (vs. 5:20)?**

- 15. What is man unable (without help from God) to determine (vs. 6:12)?**

Thought Questions:

- 1. What is presented concerning riches in Ecc. Ch 1 -6 that most caused you to reflect upon for your life?**
- 2. What were the key things that you learned from the preachers observations of life that helped you?**
- 3. What did you take away from Chapter 3 about everything having its time?**

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The Preacher's Counsel for Life

(Read Ecc. Ch. 7 – 12)

In this week's study of Ecclesiastes we will be focusing on what the preacher (the writer of the book) provides counsel for life. In last week's lesson we saw how the preacher had presented his observations from all that he had done to find meaning under the sun and come to the conclusion that it was all vanity. There is nothing in the world that has the ability to complete a man's soul. In these last 6 chapters through a mixture of proverbs and narration he provides counsel. In other words, while life under the sun is vanity, how then should we live?

The preacher, with his personal experiences and God-given wisdom, has demonstrated that, yes, life from an earthly perspective alone ("live under the sun") is truly vanity! But he has also declared that by fearing God and keeping His commandments one can endure the many vanities and perplexities of life, all the while enjoying the good things in life that God gave us! May we like the preacher, then, continue to seek out "acceptable words", "words of truth" (Ecc. 12:10) that will serve as goads to direct us, and as well-driven nails with which to build our lives.

Especially those truths from Jesus, who has come and spoken words designed to help us weather the storms of life (Matt 7:24-25). With the help of the teachings of Ecclesiastes and the Savior, we can find hope in this vain world in which we live.

Ecc. 12:10 The Preacher sought to find acceptable words; and what was written was upright—words of truth. NKJV

Matt 7:24-25 Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. NKJV

Chapter 7

This chapter has two major focuses. The first half deals with counsel for better living and covers it with a series of comparisons. In the second half of the chapter the preacher offers counsel for balanced living. The second half contains some difficult statements which need to be understood in their context, and in context of the Bible as a whole. For example there is a warning on the forgiveness of our own offensive language so we should forgive others who offend us (Ecc. 7:21-22). It appears that the preacher is mainly warning against extremism, and against the presumption that one can find the answer to every question in life.

Ecc. 7:21-22 Also do not take to heart everything people say, Lest you hear your servant cursing you. ²² For many times, also, your own heart has known That even you have cursed others. NKJV

Chapter 8

The objective that the writer is focusing upon in this chapter is to glean wisdom for enduring evil and oppressive governments. One of the vanities of life is living in circumstance over which we have little control. He uses the example that we have little control as to the kind of government ruling the country in which we live. The preacher observed that evil men are often in positions of power, and offers his counsel for enduring such vanity. The message is to be patient, while judgment against such evil may be delayed it will come in its own time. In the meantime, it is best to fear God. We are given similar message in the NT (1 Pet. 2:13-17). The other vanity that we have no control over is how the righteous sometimes suffer while the wicked prosper. The conclusion here is that it is best to seek to enjoy what good God gives in one's labor under the sun. Even the wisest man is unable to discern all that God is doing, no matter how hard he tries. Note as you study this chapter the similarity between the preacher's conclusions and the book of Job. Both conclude that man will never be able to discern all the work of God.

1 Pet 2:13-17 Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, ¹⁴ or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. ¹⁵ For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men— ¹⁶ as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. ¹⁷ Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. NKJV

Chapter 9

In chapter 9 the preacher reflects upon the inevitability of death, and the uncertainty of life. It does not matter who you are or what you accomplish in life we all will experience one thing the same – death. Typically we are then forgotten shortly thereafter. Should we despair? No, the preacher again encourages us to live joyfully, especially with the wife of our youth, and to work diligently in what time we have in this life. Once we die, we will not be able to continue our efforts in the grave. He also observes that time and chance happens to all, and that evil times come suddenly. That uncertainty of life can be softened with the aid of wisdom. Thus the words of the wise should be heard, even when spoken softly, or coming from a poor man.

Chapter 10

The preacher continues to share wisdom that can help endure the many vanities in life. This chapter is filled with preverbal statements, in which he first deplores folly and the affect it can have on one's reputation. The preacher also describes how folly is often manifested in government, and in one's life and labors. The land suffers when governed by foolish men, and labor is made even more difficult. Yet wisdom can bring success to one's endeavors, and blessings to the land when found in the conduct of those who lead.

Chapter 11

In this chapter the preacher begins with encouraging benevolence and diligence as ways to guard against the uncertain future. By casting our bread upon the waters, willing to offer servings to many, and not withholding our hands in the evening, our benevolence may

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serve us well in the future should evil befall us. Likewise, things may happen beyond our ability to control or comprehend, but diligence in sowing seed and being mindful of the dark days to come can help to prepare us for their coming. This chapter also introduces counsel from the preacher designed especially for the young. The young man is encouraged to rejoice, letting his heart cheer him. He is told to walk in the ways of his heart and in the sight of his eyes, yet with the knowledge that God will hold him accountable for all that he does. So remove sorrow. But also put away evil during the fleeting years of childhood and youth.

Chapter 12

The final chapter begins with a continuation of advice directed to the young. They are told to remember God in their youth, before difficult days come in which there will be found little pleasure. Such days are described through a series of illustrations that depict the feebleness of old age and eventual death. When the inevitable happens, the body will decay back to dust, and the spirit will return to God who gave it. The preacher brings his sermon to a close by restating his theme: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." An epilogue is added that informs the reader of the work the preacher continued to do after concluding his search for the meaning of life. Because of his wisdom, he still taught the people and sought to set in order many proverbs. He sought to find acceptable and upright words, words of truth. Such words of the wise and scholarly are described as goads and well-driven nails, given by on Shepherd. One is to be admonished by these words, yet be aware that there is no end to the making of many books, and much study is wearisome to the flesh.

Finally, we are told the "grand conclusion" of the whole matter. The writer ends his search for meaning by concluding that the whole purpose for man's existence is to fear God and keep His commandments. That is because God will bring into judgment everything we have done.

Questions:

Please provide script / verse references for your answers.

- 1. In the lists of comparison we see a comparison between sorrow and laughter. What is the conclusion to which is better (vs. 7:3)? Why?**
- 2. What is a wise thing not to say? (vs. 7:10)**
- 3. What two things did the preacher see in the days of his vanity (vs. 7:15)?**
- 4. According to the preacher is there anyone who has not sinned (vs. 7:20)?**
- 5. What was it that the preacher found? (Ch. 7:26)**
- 6. What are the main points of Chapter 8?**
- 7. What is said of those who are given to wickedness?**
- 8. What did the preacher conclude about a sinner whose days are prolonged?**
- 9. What did the preacher conclude after diligently observing the business that is done on the earth?**

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- 10. What observations were made in chapter 9 regarding the value of wisdom?**
- 11. The preacher gives counsel to the living. What are the reasons he gives for such counsel?**
- 12. When does the fool display his folly to everyone (vs. 10:3)?**
- 13. What four illustrations appear to depict the lack of wisdom in business (vs. 10:8-9)?**
- 14. What is the evidence of laziness and idleness (vs. 10:18)?**
- 15. Why are we encouraged to cast your bread upon the waters (vs. 11:1)?**
- 16. What are two examples of things that are inevitable (vs. 11:3)?**
- 17. What are young men encouraged to do (vs. 11:9)?**

18. What advice is given to the young person (vs. 12:1)?

19. What four illustrations are used to depict the decaying of the body (vs. 12:6)? What are the body parts associated with each illustration?

20. What is the conclusion offered after the writer finishes his search for meaning (vs. 12:13)?

21. Why is this the conclusion (vs. 12:14)?

Thought Questions:

1. **In what ways does wisdom help us deal with the vanity of this world?**
2. **What things do you draw from the conclusion that good things happen equally to the good and evil?**
3. **What do you think the saying in chapter 10:3 means?**
4. **What does it mean to you to “Fear God and keep is commandments, for this is the whole of what man is about”?**

Introduction to Song of Solomon – Purpose and Theme

(Read Song of Solomon Ch. 1 – 3)

Song of Solomon – The Courtship

Song of Solomon or Song of Songs is believed to be written by Solomon, he is mentioned 7 times by name in the book. In view of his writing skills, musical giftedness (1 Kings 4:32) there is little doubt that Solomon is the author. Based upon the opening verse of the book as “Song of Songs” it is most likely that it indicates that this is the best of Solomon’s songs. It was most likely written at some point during Solomon’s 40 year reign as king. Because of the mention of cities in both the northern and southern in the book it was most likely written before the United Kingdom was divided, which occurred after Solomon’s reign ended. This book is also considered to be part of the wisdom literature of the Bible. Song of Solomon is recognized by the Jews as a part of their sacred writings and is included among the OT books of the Megilloth, or “five scrolls”. The book of Song of Solomon is read during Passover.

1 Kings 4:32 He spoke three thousand proverbs, and his songs were one thousand and five. *NKJV*

There are two people that dominate this true life, dramatic love song. Solomon who appears as “the beloved” is mentioned 5 times. The second is the Shulamite maiden whose specific identity is never mentioned. We do know that she was most likely Solomon’s first wife (Ecc. 9:9), before he sinned by adding 699 other wives and 300 concubines (1 Kings 11:3). Based upon other information it appears that the setting of the book was in both rural and urban locations. Part of it takes place in the northern hill country (Song 6:13), here Solomon was most likely a vine grower and shepherd (Ecc. 2:4-7). And then there are scenes that take place at Solomon’s abode in Jerusalem. Based upon the mention of two spring time periods (Song 2:11-13, 7:12) it is reasonable to believe that the period of time covered is 1 to 2 years.

Ecc. 9:9 Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun, all your days of vanity; for that *is* your portion in life, and in the labor which you perform under the sun. *NKJV*

1 Kings 11:3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. *NKJV*

Song 6:13 Return, return, O Shulamite; Return, return, that we may look upon you! **The Shulamite** What would you see in the Shulamite— As it were, the dance of the two camps. *NKJV*

Ecc. 2:4-7 I made my works great, I built myself houses, and planted myself vineyards. ⁵I made myself gardens and orchards, and I planted all *kinds* of fruit trees in them. ⁶I made myself water pools from which to water the growing trees of the grove. ⁷I acquired male and female servants, and had servants born in my house. Yes, I had greater possessions of herds and flocks than all who were in Jerusalem before me. *NKJV*

Song 2:11-13 For lo, the winter is past, The rain is over *and* gone. ¹²The flowers appear on the earth; The time of singing has come, And the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. ¹³The fig tree puts

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forth her green figs, And the vines *with* the tender grapes Give a *good* smell. Rise up, my love, my fair one, And come away! *NKJV*

Song 7:12 Let us get up early to the vineyards; Let us see if the vine has budded, *Whether* the grape blossoms are open, *And* the pomegranates are in bloom. There I will give you my love. *NKJV*

At first glance the song appears to be a simple love song between two people. But if a more in-depth approach is taken there are evidences that as Solomon wrote this he was comparing a relationship between God and His people. It may have been intended to use the illustration of a courtship and marriage to show the joining of the Jewish nation to God. Solomon may have wrote this during the time when the Temple was approaching completion and to become the center of Israel's worship. We have several examples of how God viewed the Israelites as a maiden (Jer. 2:2), and His love for them (Deu. 7:6-8). The covenant between Israel and God showed that from the view of God it was a marriage (Jer. 31:32).

Jer. 2:2 "Go and cry in the hearing of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the Lord: "I remember you, The kindness of your youth, The love of your betrothal, When you went after Me in the wilderness, In a land not sown. *NKJV*

Deu 7:6-8 "For you *are* a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. ⁷The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; ⁸but because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. *NKJV*

Jer. 31:32 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. *NKJV*

So now that we can see that there may be more to Song of Solomon than just a simple love story of two people, let's consider the following.

There is no mention of God in the entire book, except in a poetic form when the description of "a most vehement flame" (Song 8:6). Why would a very religious king during a very religious time not mention God? Unless in writing it Solomon wanted the reader to know that the entire song was about God and the love of God.

As we read we will see that the view point is from the view of the woman. So if the song has the deeper meaning of Israel's relationship with God, then Solomon is using the relationship as seen from the view of Israel towards God. Also the Shulamite woman is somewhat demeaned in the song in a manner that is more understandable if viewed that she represents a fallen Israel.

There are two nightmares experienced by the woman, again if we consider the song to be a more in-depth representation of God and Israel, than what it means has more significance. The lesson appears to be designed to teach the dangers of withholding love

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from the beloved (God). It tends to have more meaning than simply Solomon arrogantly speaking about his own personal relationship with his wife.

There are several other minor considerations. The woman is twice represented as coming from the wilderness, just as Israel did. If the Song of Solomon is just an illustration of the love of two people how did it become such an important religious meaningful book for the Jewish people? It is included in the Passover service as one of the Holy Writings, it had to have an important religious lesson to those that first hear it or they would have rejected it. Consider the people of the time of Solomon when this was written, all the nations around Israel worshipped idols. They had their songs and rituals. The Song of Solomon may have been written to help the Israelites better understand their God.

So with all this in mind of the potential deeper depth of meaning as we study see if the figures represented in the Song can be considered as follows:

Characters	First Significance	Second Significance
Solomon – The Shepard King	God	Christ Jesus
The Young Maiden	Believing Israel	The Church
The Daughters of Jerusalem	The Subject Nations	Unbelieving Israel / Nominal Christians
Solomon’s companions	Heavenly beings	Heavenly beings
The watchmen	The prophets	Faithful preachers
The younger sister	Believers among subject nations	The Gentiles / Weaker Christians

Chapter 1

This is the opening of the story, from it we learn several things have already happened. At some point in the past the Shulamite maiden has meet a young shepherd, who has all indications of wealth so she believe him to be a shepherd prince. She has been invited to a banquet where she will again meet the one with whom she has fallen in love with. She wants to be drawn away by him. The same occurs to Israel as is said by the Psalmist so that they may have an acceptable obedience so that they are drawn to God. (Ps. 119:32). She desires to be with him, as Israel desired to be brought from the wilderness (Jer. 2:2-3), we are to desire to have a close intimate relationship with God (Rom. 7:4). The maiden recognizes that she is different than the other young women. But she recognizes that difference makes her special. We as the church are also unique, but we are made special by the love of God (Eph. 5:25-27) and made beautiful by holiness (Ps. 96:9).

Ps. 119:32 I will run the course of Your commandments, For You shall enlarge my heart. *NKJV*

Jer. 2:2-3 “Go and cry in the hearing of Jerusalem, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord: “I remember you, The kindness of your youth, The love of your betrothal, When you went after Me in the wilderness, In a land not sown. ³ Israel was holiness to the Lord, The firstfruits of His increase. All that devour him will offend; Disaster will come upon them,” says the Lord.” *NKJV*

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Rom. 7:4 Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. *NKJV*

Eph. 5:25-27 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. *NKJV*

Ps. 96:9 Oh, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness! Tremble before Him, all the earth. *NKJV*

We also see how the maiden asks the prince to overlook her appearance, for she believes that because of the sun she is not beautiful. She also recognizes that she has failed to do what she should to have kept her beauty. There are many parallels for this with Israel (Is. 1:6, 5:1-7) and for us as well (1 John 1:8, 10)

Is. 1:6 From the sole of the foot even to the head, *There is* no soundness in it, *But* wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; They have not been closed or bound up, Or soothed with ointment. *NKJV*

Is. 5:1-7 Now let me sing to my Well-beloved A song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard: My Well-beloved has a vineyard On a very fruitful hill. ² He dug it up and cleared out its stones, And planted it with the choicest vine. He built a tower in its midst, And also made a winepress in it; So He expected *it* to bring forth *good* grapes, But it brought forth wild grapes. ³ “And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, Judge, please, between Me and My vineyard. ⁴ What more could have been done to My vineyard That I have not done in it? Why then, when I expected *it* to bring forth *good* grapes, Did it bring forth wild grapes? ⁵ And now, please let Me tell you what I will do to My vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it shall be burned; *And* break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. ⁶ I will lay it waste; It shall not be pruned or dug, But there shall come up briars and thorns. I will also command the clouds That they rain no rain on it.” ⁷ For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts *is* the house of Israel, And the men of Judah are His pleasant plant. He looked for justice, but behold, oppression; For righteousness, but behold, a cry *for help*. *NKJV*

1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. *NKJV*

Then we see where she has she has to search for her prince and in doing so wandered to place that she should not. Again we see examples of Israel (1 Kings 22:17, Ez. 34:5), and us today needing to seek out God (Mat. 11:28-30)

1 Kings 22:17 Then he said, “I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd. And the Lord said, ‘These have no master. Let each return to his house in peace’”. *NKJV*

Ez. 34:5 So they were scattered because *there was* no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered. *NKJV*

Matt 11:28-30 Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light. *NKJV*

Finally we see the couple together at the king’s table. Here as she is seated at the king’s table we can reflect upon how God wanted Israel to be with Him (Deu. 12:7). Jesus is regularly depicted as calling us to eat and drink with Him, so that He might feed us with

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spiritual nourishment (John 6:35). We even see this is the institution of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:23-26). The king compliments the maiden on her beauty, God saw Israel as the apple of His eye (Deu. 32:10), and we the Church are the chosen people of Christ (1 Pet 2:9).

Deu. 12:7 And there you shall eat before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice in all to which you have put your hand, you and your households, in which the Lord your God has blessed you. *NKJV*

John 6:35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. *NKJV*

Matt 11:28-30 Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light. *NKJV*

1 Cor. 11:23-26 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, "Take, eat, this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." ²⁵ In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. *NKJV*

Deu. 32:10 He found him in a desert land And in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; He encircled him, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. *NKJV*

1 Pet 2:9 But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. *NKJV*

Chapter 2

As we begin this chapter we continue with the couple sharing compliments and expressing their love for each other. As Solomon expresses his love for the maiden we can see an example of how God has often pleaded with His people of Israel (Ex 19:5-6), He wanted them to know the love that He has for them (Jer. 31:3). Jesus tells us that He sees us as His special chosen ones and has brought us out of darkness (1 Pet 2:9) and then placed us as a light to the world (Matt. 5:14-16).

Ex. 19:5-6 *Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. ⁶ And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel. *NKJV**

Jer. 31:3 *The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you. *NKJV**

1 Pet 2:9 But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. *NKJV*

Matt 5:14-16 You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. *NKJV*

In verses 8 to the end of the chapter we see how the young maiden's beloved seeks her

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out and calls her to come away with him. While she does not respond, for it would not have been proper for a maiden of her quality to go off alone, she delights in the assurance it brings her of their love. But, that night the fact that she has had to gently rebuff him results in her having a nightmare that she has lost him. Her dream commences a desperate journey to seek him out. This is like God's love for Israel. How often He called their name (Is. 50:2). How often He sought them and looked for them (Jer. 7:13, 35:17). Just as when spring returned and the king to be with the maiden, so God wanted to be with His people (Hos. 6:1-2) We today are much the same Christ sought us out before the beginning of time (Eph. 1:4). He calls to all to experience the rebirth that comes through Him (John 1:12-13) and enjoy the continual spring time with Him (Rom. 12:2).

Is. 20:2 Why, when I came, was there no man? Why, when I called, was there none to answer? Is My hand shortened at all that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver? Indeed with My rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness; Their fish stink because there is no water, And die of thirst. NKJV

Jer. 7:13 And now, because you have done all these works," says the Lord, "and I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you did not hear, and I called you, but you did not answer. NKJV

Jer. 35:17 Therefore thus says the Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Behold, I will bring on Judah and on all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the doom that I have pronounced against them; because I have spoken to them but they have not heard, and I have called to them but they have not answered. NKJV

Hos. 6:1-2 Come, and let us return to the Lord; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. ²After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight. NKJV

Eph. 1:4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. NKJV

John 1:12-13 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: ¹³who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. NKJV

Rom 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. NKJV

Chapter 3

On the night following her rebuff her loved one the young maiden has the first of two nightmare in the Song of Solomon. She fears that she has lost her love because of her response to him. In her dream she commences a desperate journey to seek him out. In the dream she leaves the comfortable country home, and went into strangeness and foreignness of the city. But search as she would she still did not find him. Eventually, she is discovered wondering the streets by the watchmen on their rounds, and she pleads with them to know if they have seen her loved one. She ultimately finds him and refuses to release him until she is taken to the only place she feels safe, her mother's home. The maiden need not have feared that her beloved would forget her, arrangements are made and she is gathered for the wedding. Like the wedding precession, when we become Christians and join the bride (Church) of Christ we are made pure and without blemish (Eph.

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5:26-27), we are placed in heavenly places (Eph. 2:6), and transported to the very splendor of His kingdom (Col. 1:13). Our escort is a powerful armed guard (Heb. 1:14, 2 Kings 6:17).

Eph. 5:26-27 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. NKJV

Eph. 2:6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, NKJV

Col 1:13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love. NKJV

Heb. 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? NKJV

2 Kings 6:17 And Elisha prayed, and said, "Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." Then the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. NKJV

Questions:

Please provide script / verse references for your answers.

- 1. What is the book of Song of Solomon about?**
- 2. Where is the maiden from? Do we know who she was?**
- 3. How many songs did Solomon write (1 Kings 1:42)?**
- 4. How does the Shulamite maiden describe herself? What is the meaning of the description?**
- 5. What does Solomon compare the maiden to in 1:9?**
- 6. The maiden describes Solomon as being like an apple tree in verse 2:3. Why is an apple tree better than other trees?**
- 7. Who does the maiden meet in her dream while searching the city?**
- 8. How many men are with Solomon when he comes to pick up his bride? What type of men are they?**

Thought Questions:

- 1. What things are “dark but lovely” in your relationship with God?**
- 2. Solomon compares the maiden to what in verse 1:9? Is this a compliment why or why not?**
- 3. As we have learned God and Christ see us as beautiful as Solomon considered the maiden. In what ways are you beautiful in the sight of God?**

Song of Solomon – Wedding, Lost and Found

(Read Song of Solomon Ch. 4 – 8)

Chapter 4

In chapter 4 we see the bridegroom give a speech concerning his bride's beauty. And see the anticipation of their time together. As Solomon describes the joy that they will share he describes a place equivalent to heaven on earth. So does our Lord, having united us with Himself (Rom 6:5), invite His people up into the equivalent of Heaven itself to share with Him in His glory (Eph. 2:4-6, Phil. 3:20, Col 1:13, 3:1-3).

Rom 6:5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness of His resurrection*. *NKJV*

Eph. 2:4-6 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus. *NKJV*

Phil. 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. *NKJV*

Col 1:13. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love. *NKJV*

Col. 3:1-3 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ²Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. *NKJV*

The bridegroom reveals the depth of his love for his bride. And we as Christians can be sure of how much greater is our Lord's love for us, for He delights in us and in what He sees in us as we grow in Him. He knew from the beginning of time that we would be His (Eph. 1:4, 5:27, Col. 1:22, 1 John 3:1-3). Solomon delights in the purity of his bride and gives an illustration of a garden that his enclosed so no one else can enter. This is what our lives should be for our Lord, and it is how He wants us to be, with our lives wholly separated in spirit from all that is outside so that they may only produce for His pleasure (Eph. 1:12, Phil 1:10-11)

Eph. 1:4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. *NKJV*

Eph. 5:27. that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. *NKJV*

Col 1:22. in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight. *NKJV*

1 John 1:1-3. That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life— ² the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us— ³ that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you

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also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.
NKJV

Eph. 1:12. that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. *NKJV*

Phil. 1:10-11 that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, ¹¹ being filled with the fruits of righteousness which *are* by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. *NKJV*

Chapter 5

Now we come to the second nightmare. In it we see that some of the passion has gone from the marriage and when the groom comes to the door she refuses to open it. She then regrets this decision and repents, going again into the city to find him. She again meets the watchmen, but this encounter they consider her a loose woman. She begs for help but none is found. Then she remembers the attractions of her husband and shout them to the Daughter of Jerusalem.

How easily our love for our Lord can slip in a similar way. We realize that to serve the Lord requires effort and commitment on our part. We then lose heart and do the follow Christ in the manner that we should. Then when we realize that we have erred it is sometimes too late. It is a reminder that we can do nothing without Him (John 15:5). We come to realize as we suffer that Christ has so much to offer, His blood, wisdom, and knowledge (1 Pet 1:19, Col. 2:3)

John 15:5 I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. *NKJV*

1 Pet. 1:19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot
NKJV

Col. 2:3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. *NKJV*

Chapter 6

As the nightmare continues she gains the assistance of the daughters of Jerusalem in searching for her husband. And in answering their question she realizes that she knows where her husband is, he is in the place where he first sought her out. At this point the nightmare ends and her beloved welcomes her back with the same love that he showed on their wedding night.

For us when we come to the realization that we need to return to Christ we know where we can find Him, He is tending His sheep (John 21:15-17, 1 Pet 5:2). We learn that even when we sin, God is always willing to welcome us back (1 John 1:8-10).

John 21:15-17 So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." ¹⁶ He said to him again a second time, "Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." ¹⁷ He said to him the third time, "Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus

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said to him, “Feed My sheep”. *NKJV*

1 Pet. 5:2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly. *NKJV*

1 John 1:8-10 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. *NKJV*

Chapter 7, 8

Once they have been re-united the couple rejoices in finding each other. They recognize that they were meant for each other and satisfy each other completely. She loves him so much that she even feels limited by what she can do as a wife, wishing that she was even more. As they return to Jerusalem they pass an apple tree, here Solomon asks his wife a question and she learns to lean upon him. His wife asks that she set a seal on his heart and arm in order to demonstrate that both his love and strength belong to her. We see how they work together as one to deal with family matters. And lastly we see the importance is keeping the marriage pure.

Compare this to how Paul tells in 1 Cor. 12:12-27 of the importance of each member of the church. Every part of the body is beautiful and important. Happy are we when our whole delight is in Christ and His love for us, and when it is God Who is in all our thoughts. We too as we return to face the world after being alone with Him must recognize that we must constantly lean upon His arm, and must look to the strength and life gained from Him, while we are in the world.

Questions:

Please provide script / verse references for your answers.

- 1. What does the groom describe his bride's eyes, hair, and teeth like?**
- 2. What is within the garden?**
- 3. Why does the bride not open the door in the second nightmare?**
- 4. Do the watchmen treat her the same in the second nightmare as the first?**
- 5. What cause the Daughters of Jerusalem to come to her aid?**
- 6. Where does she find her husband?**
- 7. Why does she want her husband to be like her brother?**
- 8. What does she want Solomon to wear on his heart and arm?**

Thought Questions:

- 1. In what ways does the second nightmare illustrate what happens when we turn away for God?**
- 2. How does the bride finding her husband and being reunited parallel how God feels when we repent of our sins and return to him?**
- 3. What have you done lately to rejoice in your relationship with God?**
- 4. What did you learn for the Song of Solomon to improve your marriage relationship?**

A People of the Book

8-Year Curriculum

	January - March	April - June	July - September	October - December
2007	<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Genesis</i>	<i>Galatians & Ephesians</i>	<i>Isaiah</i>
2008	<i>Exodus</i>	<i>I & II Timothy, Titus</i>	<i>Hebrews</i>	<i>Minor Prophets I (Hosea-Obadiah)</i>
2009	<i>Mark</i>	<i>Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy</i>	<i>Romans</i>	<i>Jeremiah & Lamentations</i>
2010	<i>I & II Thessalonians</i>	<i>Joshua, Judges, Ruth</i>	<i>James, I & II Peter</i>	<i>Minor Prophets II (Jonah-Habakkuk)</i>
2011	<i>Luke</i>	<i>I & II Samuel</i>	<i>I Corinthians</i>	<i>Daniel</i>
2012	<i>Acts</i>	<i>Special Study: The Foundations (Psalm 11:3)</i>	<i>Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther</i>	<i>Minor Prophets III (Zephaniah-Malachi)</i>
2013	<i>Gospel of John, I, II, & III John</i>	<i>Job</i>	<i>Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon</i>	<i>Psalms</i>
2014	<i>Philippians, Colossians, Philemon & Jude</i>	<i>Kings & Chronicles</i>	<i>Revelation</i>	<i>Ezekiel</i>
2015	<i>II Corinthians</i>			

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