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Wisdom

Pride

Humility

Diligence

Nov '07

Welcome!

Thanks for taking the time to add to your wisdom by doing this four week study from Proverbs. Battling our way through today's culture can be difficult and treacherous without all of the wisdom and information available to us through God's word. After a brief introduction and background of Proverbs, we will address four important areas requiring wisdom; the need for wisdom; pride and humility; diligence in our everyday life; and the four tongues that Proverbs addresses. By no means is this short study, all you need to know from Proverbs. Hopefully, it will give you a taste of the vast nuggets of wisdom available to us as we navigate through life.

The word proverb comes from a verb meaning "to be like, to be compared with, to be parallel, to be similar. Essentially a proverb crystallizes an experience or observation. Without doubt wisdom is the theme that weaves its way through the book of Proverbs.

Interestingly, the main word for wisdom in Hebrew is 'hokmah', which refers to a craftsman using their skills such as sailors, singers, counselors, etc. Similarly, a person who possesses 'hokmah' in his spiritual life and relationship to God, is one who is both knowledgeable and experienced in following God's way. Biblical wisdom essentially involves skill in the art of Godly living.

To understand a proverb it helps to realize that most are written in the form of a couplet and are constructed in three ways:

<u>Type</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Key Word</u>
Contrasting	Meaning and application come from the differences or contrast between the two statements of the proverb	"but"
Comparing	Meaning and application come from the similarities or comparison between the two statements of the proverb	"as/also" "better/than"
Complementing	Meaning and application come from the way the second statement complements the first	"and"

This four week study of Proverbs is only to provide a taste of the wisdom that is contained in the book. Interestingly, the book of Proverbs is as relevant today as it was in 700 BC. Even though the times have changed, people are essentially the

same. These God inspired authors recorded wisdom that is as timeless today as it was 2,000 plus years ago for issues such as temptations, fears, problems, needs, and desires.

Use this limited study to spur your desire to become more skilled in the art of Godly living by becoming a student of the wisdom contained in this valuable and entertaining book of the Bible. Enjoy!

Welcome and Introductions – 5 Minutes

Action Step: What specific action did you take to apply what we learned in our previous study? Have you assimilated one key thought from our discussion and applied it to your life on an every day basis? If so, have you seen positive results? Explain.

If you did not, why not?

If you did not take one thought for personal application what kept you from applying the Word of God in your life? Explain.

Proverb Introduction

Note to Leader: Since this is the first session for this four part study, you may wish to review the cover page as an introduction to Proverbs and their relevance to us today.

Ice Breakers

Who is the wisest person you know?

What makes a person foolish or wise?

Who is someone you feared growing up?

Bible Study – 20 minutes

Read Proverbs 1: 1-19

Why did Solomon write Proverbs? Hint: The reasons are covered in the first 7 verses of Chapter 1.

Solomon discusses three types of individuals relevant in his proverbs. List and discuss?

Where does wisdom come from?

In verse 8, Solomon instructs us to listen to our father's and mother's instruction, but the question is why would he do that? (Hint: Nothing like wisdom that comes from the pitfalls of experience!) Did you heed his advice about listening to your parents? Why not? Would you expect your children to heed your advice? Do you plan on reading and showing this verse to your children?

Explain how fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.

Read Proverbs 1:8-19

Lesson One, Continued

In the beginning of Proverbs, Solomon admonishes us to not be enticed by sinners and throw your lot with them. Hopefully, we are not ‘way layers’, waiting to do evil, so what is he really saying to us today? (Hint: Is he asking us to check our friends and acquaintances on the grid of Godly character before getting too far involved) Discuss how that happens to us today. What should it be in the market place?

Application

Explain why and how the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge and wisdom.

What does it mean to fear the Lord? (Hint: Be in awe, high regard, ultimate respect, not afraid)

Do you have that respect; that awe? Explain.

Discuss the benefits of living wisely in today’s culture and your strategy for leading your family through the minefields the deceiver has laid out for us. Be specific about a game plan for leading a life based on God’s wisdom.

Define the plan of discipline needed to insure success. How will you carry this out? Explain.

Will you commit today to live a life based on the wisdom of God?

Prayer Requests – 5minutes

Mid-Cities Community Church
Proverbs: Wisdom for Life
Lesson One
Wisdom' Benefits

Welcome and Introductions – 5 Minutes

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Ice Breaker

Name a famous person is considered proud?

Now, name a famous person who is considered humble?

Bible Study – 20 minutes

Pride is defined in our Bible concordance as “an excessively high opinion of oneself; conceit”, but our culture today seems to recognize and promote that behavior. But in Galatians 6:4, it says, “then he can take ‘pride’ in himself”.

Explain the contrast between conceit and trusting in doing what is right.

Read Proverbs 11:2

With pride comes what?

Describe an instance in your life or that of a public figure where this truth came to pass.

Discuss what the result would have been if humility would have described someone’s attitude instead of pride.

Read Proverbs 13:10

Do you agree that pride breeds quarrels? Of the fruit that Christ expects for us to produce (Galatians 5:22), quarrels is not listed. What is the antidote to a quarrel? Explain.

Read Proverbs 15:33

Nothing negates pride as clearly as an attitude of humility. Discuss Proverb 15:33

Lesson Two, Continued

Read Colossians 3:23

We work as unto the Lord, but discuss why it is important to congratulate another person when recognition is warranted.

Application

Read Proverbs 16:5, 16:18, 18:12, 29:23

Over and over again, these proverbs explain that pride will lead to destruction and humility leads to honor.

Knowing pride brings destruction and doing something about a prideful attitude is easier said than done, discuss how the members in your group can help each other rid this attitude from their life.

Giving someone license to speak accountability into your life, is the beginning to receiving wisdom (Proverbs 13:10).

Will your group make a pact to hold each other accountable?

Prayer Requests – 5minutes

Proverbs: Wisdom for Life
Lesson Two
Pride and Humility

Welcome and Introductions – 5 Minutes

Action Step: What specific action did you take to apply what we learned in our previous study? Have you assimilated one key thought from our discussion and applied it to your life on an every day basis? If so, have you seen positive results? Explain.

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Ice Breaker

What do you think when someone says “he is a diligent person”?

Name someone that exemplified or did not exemplify diligence?

Bible Study – 20 minutes

Diligence- earnest, hardworking, dutiful, careful, persevering in doing good.

Proverbs makes it clear that diligence-being willing to work hard and do one’s best at any job given to him-is a vital part of wise living. We work hard not to become rich, famous, or admired (although those may be by-products), but to serve God with our very best during our lives. Let’s read and discuss those proverbs that confirm that diligence is a Godly command and that not being diligent has its own reward!

Read Proverbs 10:4, 10:5, 10:26

Of these three proverbs, discuss the one that is most meaningful to you.

We have all seen examples of people with lazy hands, and those that are diligent. Discuss examples of each of these where the person’s motives were contrary to God’s word. Example, the lazy person may refer to Matthew 6:26, and think God provides even for the lowly sparrow, so he will certainly provide for me and think there is no need to work, but not read verse 27 that God is referring to worry.

Discuss the person who works diligently but with impure motives and appears ‘successful’.

Can you relate to either? Can you give an example and explain the consequences of your actions?

Read Proverbs 13:4, 14:23, 15:19, 18:9, 19:15, 19:24, 20:4, 20:13

Lesson Three, Continued

Each of these proverbs presses home the point that a ‘ sluggard ’ will not profit unless he is diligent in his work and other areas of his life. Diligence and profit are not just terms for work and money. Discuss other areas of our daily lives in which diligence is essential.

Application

Read Proverbs 21:5; 21:17; 21:25, 26; 22:13; 28:19

Think through areas and select the one that convicts you. We have areas in our lives (money, work, family, church, etc.) where we are not as diligent. Is this the same as being lazy?

The real test is to accept the challenge and begin in one area of our life and make a change! Which area challenges you? Will you admit to the other members in your group your challenge and allow them to hold you accountable?

Memory Verse

Pick one of the verses above, memorize it, and come into agreement with God’s word!

Prayer Requests – 5minutes

Mid-Cities Community Church
Proverbs: Wisdom for Life
Lesson Three
Diligence and Laziness

Welcome and Introductions – 5 Minutes

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Ice Breaker

How many in your group studied Robert Morris' book, "The Power of Your Words"?

Share a time when your words got you in trouble or someone misinterpreted that led to a funny incident or worse really hurt someone's feelings.

Bible Study – 20 minutes

Read Proverbs 18:21

Proverbs highlights the fact that what we say affects people more than any other action we take. As a result, Proverbs classifies the use of our tongues in four different ways; the controlled tongue; the caring tongue; the conniving tongue; and the careless tongue. At every opportunity, we as faithful followers of Christ must be diligent (have you heard that word before?) in how we speak. Our lesson this week focuses on those verses that we can refer regularly to encourage and not discourage, to speak life and not death.

The Conniving and Careless Tongue

Take turns reading the following proverbs out loud:

Read Proverbs 6:12-14; 8:13; 16:28; 18:8; for a Conniving Tongue

Read Proverbs 10:18, 32; 11:9; 12:16, 18; 15:4 for a Careless Tongue

Isn't it interesting that man has not learned much in the 2,000 plus years about how we talk about other people (gossip) and the effect that it has on our relationships. Discuss Proverbs 16:28 and its ramifications to all of today.

When is a little gossip warranted? Was there gossip in your group before you started the lesson? Gossip is so sly and deceiving that before we know it, we have 'murdered' someone with our tongue, all for the amusement of having something to say!

Can you relay an event that did just that and the consequences as a result?

Lesson Four, Continued

Proverbs 10:18 is truly a serious statement and should make each of us examine our hearts and motives. But is it not like God to put the antidote in the next proverb (10:19). Discuss how each of these proverbs touches your lives.

Application

The Controlled Tongue

Read Proverbs 11:12, 13; 12:16; 13:3, 15:1,4, 28; 16:23; 17:14, 27, 28, 21:23, 24:26

List and discuss the traits of the man who controls his tongues as outlined in each proverb.

A true test of the man who has control of his tongue is found in 15:1. What does your tongue say when someone in heavy traffic cuts you off?! Do you say “Bless You” and go on, or do you say, “xcjwrso’ you!!!! and shake your fist? Honest answers, please!!!!

The Caring Tongue

Read Proverbs 10:32; 12:18, 25; 15:23; 16:24; 25:15; 27:9

Take one of these proverbs and make it yours. Internalize it, memorize it, learn it, allow it to become a part of you for thirty days and recount the results with your spouse and your group members. See what happens when we truly speak life and not death to others. Find out from real everyday experience that you are the one that has changed when we find and speak good and not ill of others. God Bless!

Prayer Requests – 5minutes

Other Proverbs for further study of the tongue: 10:11, 20, 31; 12:6, 17-19; 13:2; 14:3; 19:5, 28, 25:11, 27:2, 5, 14, 17, 29:9

Mid-Cities Community Church
Proverbs: Wisdom for Life
Lesson Four
Four Tongues