Proverbs
The Fountain of Life
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Proverbs 14:27 says, “The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life.” Just as a fountain has an origin, so do the principles of right living. In this study, teens are confronted with the character and wisdom of God in both His Person and in His created order. From this fountainhead pour waters that provide nourishment and strength for living. Without the source, the watercourses soon become barren beds of rocks.

Rules without principles are like leaves without trees. And principles without a vibrant relationship with God are like trees without roots. A leaf separated from the tree is useless, flying randomly about and eventually losing its life and decaying.

Each successive generation of Bible believers has passed on its rules, often without regard to the principles and the relationship from which those rules were derived. As a result, the new generation conforms outwardly to those rules but has no knowledge of the God who has established this created order. This failure to truly know God leads to inconsistency and randomness. Herein lies the importance of the book of Proverbs. It is preeminently a book of principles, revealing the character of God and providing the ground from which the principles of life are drawn. Distinctly suited to youth, Proverbs will prove a most beneficial study for people of any age and any culture.

Charles Bridges said of Proverbs and the young, “It takes them as it were by the hand, sets up way-marks to warn against coming danger and imminent temptations, and allures them into the bright ways of God by the most engaging motives.”

This study, Proverbs: The Fountain of Life, leads students through thirty-five lessons, teaching them many invaluable principles and encouraging them to walk in those “bright ways of God.” Rather than being a verse-by-verse study, these lessons approach the study of Proverbs topically in two major divisions: wisdom defined and wisdom applied to daily living.

The first eight lessons prepare the student for the practical studies that follow in subsequent chapters. Note the wide range of subjects taught in the second division. Perhaps no other book in all of God’s Word deals with so many areas that relate directly to life. A large portion of the material is devoted to a growing walk with God (the fruit of the Spirit) and to proper conduct toward others. These lessons offer opportunities for improvement in character and include special projects to help teenagers practice the principles.
FEATURES OF THESE MATERIALS

Although this study is strong in fact-finding research of the Bible (e.g., looking up Bible verses and finding key words and principles), the emphases of our lessons are to challenge young people to focus upon God and to help them apply His Word to their lives. Thus, an earmark of our studies is that they are life-related.

Reading Assignments

Every chapter of the student textbook begins with a brief introductory reading assignment that gives the student an overview of the lesson. Assign these readings as homework to be completed before you begin teaching the lecture materials. They will provide a springboard for the students’ listening, note taking, and discussing during the lecture periods. A Recommended Reading List is also included in the Student Manual and Teacher’s Manual for your use. You may use it as provided or as a guide in producing your own list. (Many of the application activities at the end of chapters of the student textbook assign students to read books included on this list.)

Discussion Topics and Activities

At the end of each chapter of the student textbook is a list of questions, discussion topics, and activities in a section titled “Developing the Ideas” that will help the student develop, review, think about, and apply the principles learned from the introductory readings and the teacher lectures. You may use all, a select few, or none of these activities as you deem appropriate for your students’ needs and according to the time you have available. You should feel free to modify or adapt any of these activities to your class’s needs and circumstances. You should also be free to come up with your own activities. Those listed are only suggestions.

Teacher’s Lecture Notes

The teacher’s manual is designed to help you prepare and present the truths of this study to your students effectively and easily. It provides everything you need to present a basic study of the featured topics, including appropriate Scripture references, explanatory notes, illustrative materials, and suggested activities (see the section at the end of each chapter in the student textbook). Various optional application activities and a recommended reading list offer the opportunity for you to expand the course beyond what is offered in the teacher’s manual. In this way, you can adapt what you have to meet the variable needs or time constraints of your unique classroom situation.

The materials presented here, however, are merely the superstructure, a basic guide. The individual teacher should feel free to add appropriate personal knowledge, illustrations, or activities to better meet the needs of his or her individual students.
Evaluation Techniques

The best teachers use a variety of evaluation techniques in measuring their students’ progress and understanding of the lessons. You should do the same with this study of Proverbs. Such techniques include chapter quizzes, Scripture memorization, various activities and/or writing assignments, and unit tests covering several related chapters.

If you choose, you may use the masters of the quizzes and unit tests to make copies for each of your students. A separate answer key is also provided for each quiz and test. Questions are derived from both the student readings and the teacher lectures. The quizzes comprise a variety of types of questions, including matching, short answer, multiple choice, true or false, and essays.

The course is divided into seven units, each of which has its own unit test ready for your duplication and use. Like the quizzes, each test offers a variety of types of questions.

You may assign your own point values to each item on the quizzes and tests and apply your school’s grading scale to them and any other assignments or activities you choose to use as evaluation tools.

Indexed Proverbs Project (Optional or Extra-Credit Project)

A unique and useful feature of the study is the indexed Proverbs project. In their first lesson, the teens are challenged to organize the entire book of Proverbs into subject categories. The directions for this long-term project are included in the student textbook. Please read and familiarize yourself with the project instructions before the first class.

Some of the students will need help with this project. Because many of the proverbs are hard to understand, the teens will not know under which categories to place them. Your understanding of the verses is important to the success of their efforts. Refer them to good commentaries for additional help.

The project itself is optional and can be omitted without disrupting the study content. However, if you decide to use this valuable exercise, you may want to follow one or more grading variations as explained in the following paragraphs. You may approach the implementation and grading of the project from a variety of angles.

Option 1—Grade each chapter’s indexing as it is turned in

This option would require a predetermined, chapter-by-chapter or unit-by-unit grading scale. For example, as they index each chapter, you might set the following grading scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verses indexed</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>95</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>75</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>70</td>
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Option 2—Grade by groups of chapters

For example, the first group of ten indexed chapters might be handed in and graded according to the following scale, which is in increments of five points for every ten verses indexed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verses indexed</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>190</td>
<td>95</td>
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<td>180</td>
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<td>90</td>
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Option 3—Award a specific number of points for the entire project as it is completed

This approach works best with motivated students. An average student will perform better if given deadlines and progress points throughout the year.

Option 4—Offer extra credit for all or part of the project

If you do not require the indexing as a regular requirement for the course, you might consider offering it as an extra-credit assignment with a specified value in extra credit points.

Extra Projects

Some lessons in the student textbook contain extra short-term projects, such as the “Producing Fruit” forms in Lessons 21-29. These projects will prove beneficial to your students. Use them as you see fit time permitting.

Teaching Aids

The lessons presented in this course are designed for use with a video projector or an overhead projector. The entire set of overhead transparency masters can be downloaded from our website, www.positiveaction.org. Digital slide shows and pre-printed overhead transparencies are also available for purchase. Visit our website for more information.

When you are preparing for the lesson, we suggest the following procedure.

- Read through the lesson (both the teacher’s lesson notes and the student textbook) and the quiz to familiarize yourself with the contents.
- Include any additional notes or comments you wish to make on the teacher’s notes.
- Teach the lesson. The slide shows or overhead transparencies will help the students fill in the blanks in their student books.
Remember that the teacher’s lecture is not to be so much a fact-finding and fact-learning process as it is a challenge to the lives of the students. They learn the facts and gain Bible knowledge through their homework assignments as they do the readings, fill in the blanks, and review their student outlines in their textbooks. The teacher’s lesson, while also presenting some factual information, should be a time for you to solicit feedback from the students, thus allowing you to assess both their understanding of the principles and their spiritual condition, and make appropriate practical applications of the lesson materials. Above all, the teaching time allows you the opportunity to encourage a God-focus among your students as they study His Word.

**Completed Pages from the Student Textbook**

Each teacher’s manual contains a complete copy of the student textbook pages with every answer filled in. This aid will certainly boost your teaching effectiveness while saving you valuable time.

**Scripture Memorization**

A Scripture memory course is also provided for your benefit. The following list of seventy “Scripture Memory Course References” allows for the memorization of two references and Scripture passages each week. This optional memory course is *not* linked to any specific lessons.

You can adapt the memory course in a variety of ways, including the following.

- Assign the verses you desire, and administer a quiz weekly, monthly, or every six or nine weeks.
- Make the verses part of the regular chapter quizzes, perhaps having the students write the verses on the back of their quizzes.
- Have a semester Scripture memory quiz in which the students match the references to the correct verses.

Adapt the Scripture memory course as necessary to make it work best for you.

**Scripture Memory Course References**

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<tr>
<td>2:22</td>
<td>10:12</td>
<td>14:12</td>
<td>17:22</td>
<td>22:24-25</td>
<td>26:20</td>
<td>29:1</td>
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<td>4:19</td>
<td>11:30</td>
<td>15:3</td>
<td>20:1</td>
<td>25:11</td>
<td>27:17</td>
<td>31:10</td>
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FORMAT AND GRADE LEVEL

The beauty of this Positive Action curriculum is its versatility and easily personalized design. Although the primary intent of this course is to be used at the twelfth grade level, it has been taught with splendid success in grades seven through twelve. Thus, it can be used in a single class of combined grades or for any single grade.

The Positive Action curriculum fits easily into any weekly format regardless of how many days per week your Bible class meets. The student textbook includes a section with each lesson that can be used as in-class work, as homework assignments, or as a combination of the two. The optional Application Activities (see the section at the end of each chapter in the student textbook titled “Developing the Ideas”), combined with the teacher’s own ideas and insights, make the course easily expandable.

In any case, you need to cover only one lesson per week. Assuming that your Bible class meets from three to five days per week, the following options are available.

Three-Day Option

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option A</th>
<th>Option B</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 1: Teacher’s lesson</td>
<td>Teacher’s lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 2: Teacher’s lesson</td>
<td>Go over student lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 3: Review/quiz</td>
<td>Review/quiz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Four-Day Option

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option A</th>
<th>Option B</th>
<th>Option C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 1: Teacher’s lesson</td>
<td>Teacher’s lesson</td>
<td>Teacher’s lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 2: Teacher’s lesson</td>
<td>Student lesson</td>
<td>Student lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 3: Student lesson</td>
<td>Student lesson</td>
<td>Indexed Proverbs/Scripture Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 4: Review/quiz</td>
<td>Review/quiz</td>
<td>Review/quiz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Five-Day Option

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option A</th>
<th>Option B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 1: Teacher’s lesson</td>
<td>Teacher’s lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 2: Teacher’s lesson</td>
<td>Teacher’s lesson/student lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 3: Student lesson</td>
<td>Student lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 4: Student lesson</td>
<td>Indexed Proverbs/Scripture/discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 5: Review/quiz</td>
<td>Review/quiz</td>
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As you preview the material, you will notice that there is ample material for a five-day class, especially if you add any material of your own (as we recommend you try to do, particularly examples and illustrations that will help make the principles practical for the students).
We have provided you with more material than you will need. However, do not think that you must cover all of the material if your situation does not allow enough time.

Adapt the study to your particular situation and needs. Above all, remember that you are not merely teaching a lesson; you are teaching individuals. Spend more time on the areas that meet the specific needs of your own students.

**ONE FINAL WORD**

As a Bible teacher, you have a great responsibility. To be an effective instrument in God's hands, you must adhere to the following expectations.

- Spend time developing a closer personal walk with God thorough devotions, prayer, and Bible study. The students will grow in the Lord only to the extent that you are growing.
- Ensure that your life is a godly example before the students at school, at church, at home, and in the community.
- Pray for your students.
- Show your students that you care for their spiritual welfare.
- Spend time mastering the teaching materials. Present a well-organized, well-prepared lesson.
- Recognize that your success as a teacher rests with God, for He is the One who communicates truth to the students’ hearts.

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Prov. 3:5-6).
Teacher’s Manual
LESSON OBJECTIVES

• To lay the foundation for the students to understand the purpose, organization, and expectations for the class
• To define wisdom
• To introduce the students to the key principles of understanding proverbs
• To explain the benefits of studying Proverbs
• To challenge the students to helmsmanship

TEACHER’S LESSON

This first lesson is an introduction to this year’s study. Use it as a means of familiarizing both yourself and the students with the following aspects of the course.

• The layout of their books
• How the course will be organized and taught
• What you expect from them (especially as regards quizzes, tests, daily lectures and discussions, the indexing of the Proverbs, and the memorization of Scripture)
• How you will present the lessons
• How their work will be evaluated at the end of each chapter (and possibly at other times throughout the year)

Lay the groundwork for the entire year by explaining thoroughly your expectations and how to do the long-term indexing assignment (see Chapter 1 of the student textbook). This important task may require most of the first class session. Use any remaining time to begin the lesson explanation. Assign as their first homework at least the reading of the introductory material of chapter one and the previewing of their textbooks.

OVERVIEW OF PROVERBS

Begin the lesson by reading aloud Proverbs 1:7 and 2:1-5. These two passages show the theme of Proverbs: “The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.” This theme will be discussed in detail later. Before going any further, give the students an overview of the book of Proverbs.

Proverbs consists of 31 chapters containing more than 900 proverbs. Three men wrote this collection: King Solomon (1:1), Agur (30:1), and King Lemuel (31:1). According to 1 Kings 4:32, Solomon spoke over three thousand proverbs. A proverb is a short sentence expressing in a few words a well-known truth.

The first nine chapters of Proverbs deal with the definition of wisdom and are constructed in paragraph form. The remaining chapters deal with the practice of wisdom and are less well organized, consisting
primarily of disconnected sentence-length proverbs. These proverbs, however, provide instruction in almost every area of life. (See the student text for a list of examples.)

**Ask:** Why do you think the use of proverbs was more important long ago than it is today? Discuss. Two possible answers are given below.

1. Books were rare (there were no printing presses in Bible times), so truths were taught by word of mouth. People tended to remember short lessons (e.g., proverbs and slogans) better.
2. People learned well by having comparisons to consider. A great truth was compared or contrasted with something common. (The Hebrew word for proverb is *mashal*, which means comparison.)

Read the following examples of proverbs:
- Proverbs 15:19
- Proverbs 16:24
- Proverbs 25:11-13

**MAIN OBJECTIVES OF PROVERBS**

Proverbs 1:2-4 suggests that the Lord has five main objectives for the study of the book, and to get the most profit from studying Proverbs this year, it is necessary to keep these objectives in mind.

**To Know God (v. 2)**

**Ask:** What is wisdom? Discuss.

Proverbs 1:7 says that to know wisdom is to have the fear of the Lord.

**Ask:** But what is it to fear the Lord? Discuss.

Proverbs 2:5 tells us that understanding the fear of the Lord comes when we grow in our knowledge of God. The word *fear* implies knowledge and awe or respect for the object being feared. Thus the fear of the Lord is the growing relationship between man and his Creator. This must be our thought as we read the Bible.

If we do not see the golden thread that delineates the godhead (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) throughout the Bible, we read the Scripture without the key. Unquestionably, God or Christ is the Sun of the whole Scripture system. Psalm 36:9 states that it is in God's light that we see light. Therefore, if you do not see the wisdom and glory of God in Proverbs, you will not truly receive the benefit for which the book was written.

**To Know the Word of God (v. 2)**

Read verse two again. This is but another way of saying that the intent of this book is to help one understand or perceive the Word of God.

**Ask:** But how can a study of Proverbs help one understand the rest of the Word of God? Discuss.

After getting the students’ ideas share the following.

1. It gives insight into the way God thinks and acts. Proverbs is truly the wisdom of God, and as we understand it we are gaining an understanding of God’s mind!
2. It teaches the fear of the Lord (v. 7). This is the beginning (principal part) of knowledge. A man who does not fear the Lord can never gain a full knowledge of the Word of God. Psalm 25:14 says He reveals His wisdom to those who fear Him!

To Know God’s Principles (v. 3)

Read Proverbs 1:3. Note that this verse does not simply say “to receive wisdom, etc.” but to help you “receive the instruction of wisdom (wise behavior).” That is, wisdom, justice (righteousness), judgment, and equity (fairness) have something to teach us!

Ask: What is it that we learn through these four teachers? Discuss.

We learn two things. First, we learn who God is. Second, we learn the principles upon which we are to walk and conduct our lives.

Read Proverbs 2:9. Here we are told that the same teachers mentioned in 1:3 are mentioned again. This time they are teaching us to walk in the correct path of life. Path means the direction we walk in our daily lives and the kinds of decisions we make. Thus, as we study this book, we learn to make right decisions in life. We learn the principles that should govern the choices we make.

To Smooth the Rough Edges of Life (v. 4)

Read Proverbs 1:4. The word prudence (subtlety) is an interesting Hebrew word that means naked or smooth. It is the same word that in Genesis 2:25 and 3:1 describes Adam and Eve as being naked (literally, smooth) and Satan as being subtle (or smooth). To be subtle means to be smooth and, when applied in a good sense, means to knock off the rough edges.

Proverbs is designed to knock off the rough edges of your life and give graciousness or smoothness to your character and actions. Some of you may be harsh, or perhaps you have a sharp tongue or a violent temper. Perhaps you have little patience with people, or maybe you are quick to criticize. This book will knock off such sharp edges and smooth out the ugly spots in your life.

To Give Purpose to Life (v. 4)

The word discretion means a plan or purpose and implies that one goal of this book is to aid young people in establishing a purpose for their every action. Teens are often impulsive by nature. What they do is often governed by feelings rather than by purpose. They act first and think later.

Wisdom, however, does not act that way. This book will help you purpose and plan before you act. Ezekiel called Daniel a “wise man” (Ezek. 28:3). We know from Daniel 1:4 that he showed this wisdom even as a young man. He also showed wisdom in preparing for the temptations of life. In Daniel 1:8, he resolved (purposed) not to defile himself with the meat from the king’s table. In other words, Daniel had already thought through a purpose and plan for his life, and when he faced temptation, he acted not on impulse but by a deliberate, premeditated plan.

Another meaning for the word discretion in Hebrew is meditation or thought. This book is designed to teach you to think through your life regarding your purpose and the various sins and temptations you will
face. It will help you establish a plan or purpose for overcoming and gaining victory over sins that tempt you. It will teach you to fear the Lord and protect your relationship with Him at all costs.

THE KEYS TO UNDERSTANDING PROVERBS

Ask: How can we study this book profitably? How can we get the most out of this year’s study? Discuss. After getting some answers from the students, continue with the following section.

Recognize Your Need (Phil. 3:12)

First, realize that you have not yet attained perfection and that you need this study. If you think you are already spiritual, or if you think you have already attained all the wisdom you need, you will get very little from this study.

Humility and a broken spirit are the prerequisites for profiting from God's Word. The Beatitudes (Matt. 5:1-12) teach that the Christian must have the following character traits in the order they’re listed here:

- Poor in spirit
- Mournful (over his spiritual poverty)
- Meek (as he realizes that he is nothing before God)

Only as Christians meekly recognize their need will they begin to hunger and thirst after righteousness. Challenge the students to cultivate a hunger and a thirst for God’s instruction and to develop a plan for growing in the knowledge of God.

Hear (Pay Attention) (Prov. 1:5; 2:1-2)

Hear, in this case, means to pay diligent attention to what is said and to apply it to your life. Bishop Hall said, “Indeed we must be hearers, ere we would be teachers. He gathers that heareth; he spends that teacheth. If we spend before we gather, we shall soon prove bankrupt.”

A good teacher is first a good learner, and a good learner is first a good listener. Remember, the lessons of this year are intended to make you wise. They are worth listening to intently.

Pray (Prov. 2:3)

Read Proverbs 2:1-4.

This passage gives several rules that, if followed, will make this study effective in your life. Hearing is mentioned in the first two verses. Next, Solomon instructs his son to pray if he would understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

Apply this rule every time you open your Bible: begin with prayer. Ask God to show you Himself as you read the Word. Ask Him to open your eyes and let you see the great truths and principles found in this book. God wrote it, and God alone can enable you to understand it (2:6). I cannot convince you of the value of this book; only God can do that. That’s why you must begin with prayer and ask for a hungry, thirsty heart. One who comes to this book thinking he can understand it through human wisdom alone is doomed to misinterpretation and error. Pray diligently for divine insight.
Dig (Prov. 2:4)

The riches of Proverbs do not lie on the surface; therefore, only those who dig into the Word are enriched. Not mere readers of the Word, but searchers of the Scripture are rewarded with true knowledge of God (John 5:39).

At first, these proverbs may seem to show you nothing, but if you dig beneath the surface through meditation, you will find that the mine beneath is inexhaustible. Digging involves taking each proverb and turning it over and over in your mind until you begin to see the rich content of its thought.

The wise student will learn to use meditation to give solid and fruitful meaning to these proverbs. But you will not dig until you are convinced that the truth to be found is worth more than silver and hidden treasures.

Gather (Prov. 2:2)

Applying one’s heart to understanding implies a gathering of other Scriptures in the Bible that deal with the same subjects. An enlarged Scripture study is necessary to understand this book. The Bible tells us to compare spiritual things with spiritual (1 Cor. 2:13). Scripture itself is the best illuminator of Proverbs, thus making God His own interpreter.

See Christ

After studying the book of Proverbs, Mary Jane Graham said that she was “delighted in the course of the study of the book of Proverbs to have Christ so much and so frequently before [her mind].” If this book is to have its intended impact upon your life, learn to focus on Him in every verse.

THE BENEFITS OF STUDYING PROVERBS

You can gain two major benefits from making the wisdom of Proverbs your own: personal growth and “helmsmanship.”

Personal Growth (Prov. 1:5)

Read Proverbs 1:5. You have a year of promise before you. God has promised growth to those who will hear these proverbs and apply the keys to understanding them. There is no excuse for being a spiritual midget or dwarf. If you do not grow this year, it is your own fault.

Helmsmanship (Prov. 1:5)

This verse says that the one who finds wisdom will gain the capability of guiding or “helmsmanship.” (A helmsman is someone with the skill, knowledge, and wisdom to steer a ship safely.) Thus, the Christian who meditates in this book will be able to steer his life and the lives of others aright.
ILLUSTRATING THE TRUTH

Read (or summarize) the following story aloud to the class.

Bill Borden used to ask, “Are you steering or drifting?” Then he would follow that question by asking, “Where are you headed, and who’s on board?” He believed that indecision leads to shipwreck. He challenged students with John 7:17: “If any man will [wills to] do His will, he shall know.”

Bill’s life was characterized by helmsmanship. Born in Chicago to millionaire parents on November 1, 1887, Bill and his mother attended Moody Church where Dr. R. A. Torrey was pastor. Bill grew up knowing the gospel and being grounded in the truth. He trusted Christ at an early age. When only eight or nine years old, he manifested a singleness of purpose when he wrote in childish style: “I what [want] to be an oneast [honest] man when I grow up, and true and loving, and kind and faithful man.” Already his mind was geared to helping others rather than living for himself.

He graduated from high school at the age of sixteen. Thinking that a trip would be of greater benefit to him than going straight into college, his parents took him on a trip around the world for the next year. He visited mission stations and became acquainted with strange cultures.

When he was eighteen, he entered Yale University. Shortly thereafter, his father died, making Bill a millionaire college freshman. During Bill’s first years at college, he was known for his boundless energy, fun-loving disposition, seriousness of purpose, and love for the Lord and others.

He could not do enough for the Lord and for people. He was continually trying to win every Yale student to Christ. He established three different prayer bands, played on the football and baseball teams, was an outstanding wrestler, and rowed on the Yale crew.

As if that were not enough, he noticed that no one was working with the down-and-outers in the town (New Haven, Connecticut), so he started the Yale Hope Mission. Many nights, Bill spent his time working with drunken men, feeding them, cleaning them, giving them fresh clothes, and finding sleeping accommodations for them. He used his own money extensively this way.

As busy as he was, he still found time to study diligently and to keep a constant relationship with the Lord. He was up at 4:00 a.m., reading the Word, praying, and meditating, never wasting a moment. With clear-eyed determination and well-defined goals, Bill was the marvel of the students, faculty, and Christian leaders of the day. By his senior year, he was president of Phi Beta Kappa, and he was elected to the Board of Trustees of Moody Bible Institute!

By then, Christian leaders throughout America were aware of this young man. They marveled at his wisdom, single-mindedness, and boundless energy for the Lord. At the age of twenty-two, he entered Princeton Seminary and again established an outstanding record. Bill was involved in sports, his studies, witnessing, running the Yale Hope Mission, attending to the business of Moody Bible Institute, and other duties. That same year, he became a delegate to the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of the China Inland Mission, a director of the National Bible Institute, and a member of the Board of the China Inland Mission—all without dropping any of his other duties. Yet, he was never in a hurry. He always had time for everyone, and he lived as a humble servant to his friends.

One of the striking things about Bill Borden was his kindness to others. He never owned a car because he wanted to give his money to help the cause of missions! His family owned a beautiful yacht, and whenever
he took a day or two off, he invited his friends to go sailing, but he did all the work. He sailed the boat and prepared the meals for his friends. Work was his delight; serving others was his trademark.

Upon graduation from Yale, he was asked to write the Statement of Faith for both Moody Bible Institute and the China Inland Mission. During this time, he also felt God definitely leading him to the mission field. (He had recognized this call for a long time, but he announced it publicly only upon graduation.) He gave his entire fortune of more than a million dollars to Christian organizations and left himself nothing but the Lord. He then announced his intention to go to a group of Muslims in the remote regions of China (near Tibet and Mongolia). The Christian world was shocked, and Chicago newspapers published the story on their front pages.

Before Bill left America, he spoke to students in more than thirty colleges, always challenging them with this question: “Are you drifting, or are you steering?” Scores of youths were touched, and many of them were saved after hearing this young man’s message and seeing his total dedication.

Bill sailed for Egypt first because he had determined to learn the Arabic language and the religion of the Muslims before going to China. After only a few weeks in Egypt, he had a deep burden for the 800,000 souls of Cairo and soon organized a group of men to help him evangelize the entire city.

Bill was deep in his work of winning the Muslims to the Lord when, on March 21, 1913, he developed a headache. The next afternoon it was worse, and the doctors diagnosed it as cerebral meningitis. Within two weeks Bill Borden was dead.

His mother and sister arrived four hours after he died and, upon entering the room, were startled to see his face. His body had gone through much suffering in his last two weeks, and his face showed the strain. His beard had grown, and his hair was disheveled. Mrs. Borden later reported that it was eerie to look at her son, for he looked exactly like the artist’s conception of Christ. She said it almost gave her a holy feeling. Yet, she knew it was Bill. He was so devoted to his Lord that he had truly picked up some of the very attitudes and characteristics of the Lord, if not His earthly appearance.

Without fanfare, Bill was laid to rest in a simple wooden box—just the way he would have had it. Although his kindness and love were stilled and his roaring laughter and playful ways were over, the world would not soon forget this young man of singular mind and purpose.

His many friends and those whom he had led to Christ sent messages from all over the world. From those letters we learn three great things about Bill Borden.

1. He was a young man of much prayer and meditation.

   Bill himself said, “Next to salvation this [devotions] is most important.”

2. He had a close relationship with the Lord.

   One of his fellow students wrote, “The secret of William Borden’s life, as it seems to me, was his belief in the sufficiency and abiding presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. This was more than a belief; with him it was an experiential reality.”

3. He was single-minded in purpose and dedication.

   Another of his friends wrote, “This single-mindedness of his spiritual life was the secret of that fixity of purpose which took him straight along wherever he had set out. What Bill started, he would finish.”
Bill Borden was a helmsman!
Challenge the students to become helmsmen, to steer their lives aright with purpose rather than drifting aimlessly through life.

APPLICATION ACTIVITIES

At the end of each student lesson is an optional list of extra projects and assignments. Use as many as time permits, or you can create your own projects tailored to your students’ needs. Refer to the section of the student textbook titled “Developing the Ideas” for the list of possible activities.

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. To know God
2. To know the Word of God
3. To know God’s principles
4. To smooth the rough edges of life
5. To give purpose to life
6. Personal growth
7. Helmsmanship
8. Recognize your need
9. Hear (pay attention)
10. Pray
11. Dig
12. Gather
13. See Christ
14. Comparison
15. A short sentence expressing in a few words a well-known truth
16. C
17. E
18. B
19. D
20. A
21. D
Essay (See Teacher’s Lesson)
“An apple a day keeps the doctor away.”
“Early to bed, early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.”

These and other sayings are called proverbs. They are short, pithy, easy-to-remember statements of common truths. A proverb is a short sentence expressing a well-known truth.

Our Bible devotes one entire book to some of the most powerful proverbs ever known to man. The 31 chapters in the book of Proverbs contain a collection of more than 900 proverbs written by three men: King Solomon, who wrote most of them (Prov. 1:1 and 1 Kings 4:32); Agur (Prov. 30:1); and King Lemuel (Prov. 31:1). Most of these proverbs are simply short, unrelated sentences, but some of them develop a more detailed theme in the form of short paragraphs.

The book of Proverbs is especially instructive and beneficial for young people because it gives them principles for dealing with issues in many practical areas of their lives, including the following:

- Their home
- How to choose friends
- How to handle money wisely
- Character development,
- How to use their tongues wisely
- Their associates
- Dating
- How to treat others properly
- Their thought lives
- The folly of vices and sin

Many areas of our lives are regulated by rules. But rules that are not based on principles are like leaves without trees. A leaf finds its origin in a tree and proves its usefulness when it is attached to a tree. When it is separated from the tree, however, the leaf loses its life, flies aimlessly about, and soon decays, becoming a nuisance to those who must rake their yards. So it is with rules.

Unfortunately, many Christians have been passing on their rules to each succeeding generation without passing along the principles on which the rules were originally based. The result is
that the young people of the new generation conform outwardly to the rules, but they have no firm conviction for obeying them. This, in turn, leads to inconsistency and randomness in making and enforcing rules. This inconsistency leads to either rebellion or a reexamination and revision of the rules, whereby the rules are perverted, annulled, or simply not enforced.

The book of Proverbs is primarily a book of principles. It provides the foundation upon which the rules of life are formulated.

The main purpose of a proverb is to teach. Proverbs 1:2-4 gives five general principles for the book of Proverbs. (Read that passage and see if you can list the five objectives. Your teacher will explain each of them in more detail during the class lesson and discussion.)

As beneficial as proverbs can be, however, one must recognize his or her need of instruction before their full benefit can be realized. When you read or hear a proverb, you must listen attentively to it and think carefully and prayerfully about how it applies to you to gain its full benefit. Doing so will lead to personal growth and “helmsmanship.” Rather than being adrift without a rudder, one who heeds and applies the proverbs will steer his life aright and with a God-honoring purpose.

TEACHER’S LESSON

Overview of Proverbs

- Content of the Book
  - 31 chapters
  - More than 900 Proverbs
  - Three authors:
    - King Solomon (1:1)
    - Agur (30:1)
    - King Lemuel (31:1)

- Definition of a Proverb
  - A short sentence expressing in a few words a well-known truth
Summary Outline

- Chapters 1-9: The _____definition_____ of wisdom
- Chapters 10-31: The _____practice_____ of wisdom

Main Objectives of Proverbs

- To Know  ____God______________________________
- To Know  ____the Word of God_____________________
- To Know  ____God’s Principles_____________________
- To  ____Smooth the Rough Edges of Life____________
- To Give  ____Purpose to Life_______________________

Keys to Understanding Proverbs

- Recognize Your  ____Need_____  
- Hear—  ____Pay Attention______________
-  ____Pray______________
-  ____Dig______________
-  ____Gather______________
-  ____See Christ__________

Benefits of Studying Proverbs

-  ____Personal Growth______________
-  ____Helmsmanship______________
DEVELOPING THE IDEAS

1. What is a proverb? Give some examples of commonly known sayings or proverbs and explain the rules that come from them.

2. Why was the use of proverbs more important in early history than it is today? Do our modern, high-tech means of communication make the proverbs in the Bible obsolete or of less importance in our lives than they once were?

3. How can a study of Proverbs help you understand the rest of the Word of God?

4. How can we learn from the four “teachers” in Proverbs: wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity?

5. What is helmsmanship?

6. Explain how Bill Borden’s life (described by your teacher) exhibited a definite, God-focused purpose.

7. Begin your indexing of Proverbs. (See instructions under “How to Index Proverbs.”)

ASSIGNMENTS

During your study of Proverbs this year, you will have various assignments to help you better understand the truths you are learning. Some of these assignments will be short-term assignments specific to each chapter in your textbook. A few of the assignments will be long-term projects.

One such long-term assignment will be memorizing assigned Scripture verses. (Your teacher will explain this assignment more fully.) Another long-term assignment is that of indexing proverbs, organizing the contents of the book into broad subject areas. During each week of the year, you will categorize, or index, one chapter of Proverbs. Your teacher will set periodic dates for this project to be turned in for evaluation. Try to do your indexing faithfully so you don’t get behind. Reminders will be given in some “Developing the Ideas” sections along the way.

HOW TO INDEX PROVERBS

In a word processing program, type out the list of categories included below placing a page break between each. Be sure to keep multiple copies of the project in case you have computer
troubles. If you choose to do the project by hand, copy each of the following categories at the tops of separate sheets of paper. Place these sheets into a loose-leaf notebook or binder.

Then, beginning with Proverbs 1, index one chapter per week by writing out each verse and its reference under the appropriate heading. (For example, you might write out Proverbs 25:14 on the page you’ve labeled “Humility” because that verse deals with someone who boasts about having a false gift.)

Some of the verses might fit in more than one category, so you should include such verses in every appropriate category. Also, as you progress with your indexing project, you may find that you must add new categories to your list. If you are doing the project by hand, you will need to add a new page for each category you include. You will find that some categories require more pages than others.

YOUR INDEX CATEGORIES AND SUBCATEGORIES

I. WISDOM (This will be a title page for Section 1, which includes much of Prov. 1–9.)
   A. What is Wisdom?
   B. Importance and Blessing of Wisdom
   C. Types of Wisdom (30:24–28, 31)
   D. Examples of Wisdom (31:10–16, 25–30)
   E. Personification of Wisdom (8:22–31)
   F. How to Obtain Wisdom
   G. Characteristics of a Fool
   H. Characteristics of a Wise Man

II. THE GOD OF WISDOM (This will be a title page for Section 2, which will draw material from the whole book of Proverbs.)
   A. The Attributes of God (title page)
      1. God Is Wise
      2. God Is Loving
      3. God Is Holy
      4. God Is Just and True
      5. God Is Omniscient (All-Knowing)
      6. God Is Omnipotent (All-Powerful)
      7. God Is Sovereign (Rules All Things)

13
B. The Works of God (*title page*)
   1. God Creates
   2. God Judges
   3. God Defends and Saves
   4. God Guides
   5. God Provides
   6. God Hears Prayer

III. WISDOM IN DAILY LIVING (This will be a *title page* for Section 3, which includes much of Prov. 10-31.)
   A. The Family (*title page*)
      1. Parent-Teen Relationship
      2. Husband-Wife Relationship
   B. Companions (*title page*)
      1. Friends
      2. Dating
   C. Treatment of Others (*title page*)
      1. Kindness
      2. Thoughtfulness
      3. Arguing
      4. Understanding
      5. Respecting Others
      6. Other
   D. Finances (*title page*)
      1. Borrowing
      2. Thrift
      3. Debts
      4. Loaning
      5. Seeking Wealth
      6. Dishonest Wealth
      7. Tithing
   E. Thought Life
   F. Taking Vows, Making Agreements
G. Labor vs. Laziness

H. Inner Qualities (title page)
   1. Love
   2. Honesty
   3. Humility
   4. Gladness and Joy
   5. Patience
   6. Persistence

I. Vices (title page)
   1. Drinking
   2. Adultery
   3. Gluttonous Eating
   4. Greed
   5. Scoffing
   6. Murder and Hurt
   7. Punishment for Evil

J. Speech (title page)
   1. Talking Too Much or Too Hastily
   2. The Speech of the Righteous
   3. The Righteous Know What to Say
   4. Destructive Speech
   5. Lying
   6. Gossip

K. Making Decisions, Seeking Advice
LESSON 1 QUIZ
WISDOM DEFINED AND CATEGORIZED

List the five main objectives of the book of Proverbs.
1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________________________
5. ____________________________________________________________

Name the two major benefits of studying the book of Proverbs.
6. ____________________________________________________________
7. ____________________________________________________________

List the six keys to understanding Proverbs.
8. ____________________________________________________________
9. ____________________________________________________________
10. ____________________________________________________________
11. ____________________________________________________________
12. ____________________________________________________________
13. ____________________________________________________________

14. What did the original Hebrew word for proverb mean?

15. Define the word proverb.

Match each item in the first column with the best answer in the second column. You will use some of the choices more than once.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>16. Proverbs 1-9</th>
<th>A. Practice of wisdom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17. Number of chapters</td>
<td>B. Nine hundred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Number of proverbs</td>
<td>C. What wisdom is (definition)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. King Lemuel</td>
<td>D. Author of proverbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Proverbs 10-31</td>
<td>E. Thirty-one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Agur</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Complete the following essay. (Use a separate sheet of paper or the back of this quiz.)

22. Identify Bill Borden and explain how his life was characterized by helmsmanship.
LESSON OBJECTIVES

- To establish the definition of wisdom as the fear of the Lord
- To establish in the students’ minds how one develops the fear of the Lord
- To help the students recognize whether they fear the Lord or not
- To lead the students to conclude that fearing the Lord results in God’s blessings

TEACHER’S LESSON

In Lesson 1, we studied the five principle objectives of the book of Proverbs: (1) to know God, (2) to know the Word, (3) to know God’s principles, (4) to smooth out the rough edges of our lives, and (5) to give purpose to our lives.

All of these objectives can be summarized by one word: wisdom (Prov. 1:2). But what is wisdom? This is the question you’ll try to answer in this lesson. In 1 Corinthians 2:4-8, the Bible tells about two kinds of wisdom: divine and human. In this study we are concerned with divine wisdom.

Familiarize yourself with the introductory reading in the student textbook before proceeding with the rest of this lesson. Discuss the contrasting summary views of humanism and Christianity using the visuals if available. Review with the students what wisdom is NOT. (Refer to the student textbook for this material.) Then move the students into the main lesson, a discussion of what true wisdom IS.

THE SOURCE OF WISDOM

**Ask:** Where does wisdom come from? Discuss. Make the students give specific answers. True, wisdom comes from God, but how does it come from God, and what about God teaches us wisdom?

The Fear of the Lord (Job 28:28; Prov. 1:7)

Job asked the same question about wisdom. Read Job 28:12-27. He declares that man cannot find wisdom in this world. It is not in the deep places of the earth or in the sea (v. 14); it is not in the air (v. 21); even if you looked among the dead you couldn’t find wisdom (v. 22). Only God knows the place to find wisdom (v. 23), and He tells men where to find it. Read Job 28:28. “The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom!”

Proverbs 1:7 states the same truth. The starting place for all knowledge and wisdom is the fear of the Lord. But what is the fear of the Lord? We will answer this question in the next section, but first we need to look at a second source of wisdom.
The Knowledge of God (Prov. 9:10)

Proverbs 9:10 links the fear of the Lord to knowledge of God. We find continually as we study God’s Word that knowledge of God is at the very root or foundation of every area of the Christian life. In fact, it is the very heart and soul of Christianity.

A proper knowledge of God is the key to dedication, devotion, and delight in the Lord. Here we see it is the foundation for fearing God and, thus, the foundation of true wisdom. But what knowledge of God produces the fear of the Lord? Do certain attributes or characteristics of God more readily produce a fear of the Lord than others?

Ask: Which attributes of God would produce a true fear of the Lord? Discuss the various student responses; then lead into a discussion of each of the following attributes.

Knowledge of God’s Power (Ps. 33:8)

As one sees the power of God at work, he is filled with the fear of the Lord. An illustration of this fact is in Jonah 1:11-16. When the men aboard the ship with Jonah saw God calm the storm as soon as they threw Jonah overboard, they feared Him and worshipped Him. Any exhibition of God’s power produces a deep conviction of sin and a fear of the Lord in saints and sinners alike.

There is really only one reason for living—to do His will in His power. If the power of God is not upon our lives, there is no reason for living. Challenge the students to live in such a way that their lives exhibit this power so clearly that those who know them will be brought under conviction and fear God!

Knowledge of God’s Holiness (Rev. 15:4)

Read Revelation 15:4. God’s holiness also produces a worshipful fear of the Lord. Isaiah is a perfect example of this principle. Read Isaiah 6. When he saw the majestic holiness of the Lord, he fell on his face in worship, confessed his uncleanness, and presented himself to God’s service. The man who has been gripped with the holiness of God will be properly motivated to purity and service.

Ask: Do you serve Him? If so, why do you serve Him? Is it out of habit? Is it because others do it? Is it because it’s fun? Or is it because you have seen your God in His holiness and have fallen in submission and worship before Him?

Knowledge of God’s Love (1 Sam. 12:22-24; Ps. 34)

In 1 Samuel, the children of Israel asked, against God’s will, for an earthly king to reign over them. God gave them their wish but warned them that this was the first step in turning from the Lord. They were to have the Lord God alone rule over them. However, in verse 22 He shows them His great love for them. God had chosen Israel for His people. He still loved them and would care for them even though they desired an earthly king over them. Then Samuel reminded them of their one obligation: To fear the Lord and serve Him with all their heart (v. 24).

Note that their fear of the Lord was based on His goodness to them. True fear of the Lord is more than being afraid of God. It is more than a reverence or standing in awe of God. True fear includes a rich love for the Lord because of His goodness to us.
This truth also appears in Psalm 34. Read the psalm making the following comments.

- vv. 1-3: David is praising and blessing the Lord. Why?
- v. 4: Because the Lord had heard his prayer and had delivered him from the bondage of fear. In Hebrew, this word *fears* means to creep along hesitatingly, much like a man crawling on a frozen lake on all fours, scared that the ice might cave in with him.
- vv. 5-6: God had given David victory, which made his friends radiant with joy.
- v. 7: The Lord had promised David that the angels were surrounding him, so he had absolutely nothing to fear.
- v. 8: David invites others to enjoy this same goodness and blessing of the Lord.
- v. 9: David mentions the fear of the Lord and says that those who fear Him will never suffer need. What a wonderful promise!
- v. 11: David offers to teach his children the fear of the Lord. What, then, does he teach them? He teaches them the goodness and love of God for His people.
- vv. 12-14: God will give long life and goodness to those who fear Him.
- v. 15: God continually watches over the righteous and answers their prayers.
- vv. 16-17: Whereas God punishes the wicked, He protects the righteous.
- vv. 18-22: He is near us, He delivers us, He protects us, He redeems us, and He will never allow us to be desolate.

Thus, we see that the heart of David’s teaching on the fear of the Lord has to do with God’s goodness and love to us. Acts of obedience out of a sincere love for God are as much a part of fearing the Lord as obedience to avoid punishment.

**THE FEAR OF THE LORD**

Now we return to the question we asked earlier, “What is the fear of the Lord?”

**What the Fear of the Lord Is**

As we seek to define the fear of the Lord, we must look at three elements included in the definition.

*It Includes Love*

Recognizing the power, holiness, and love of God and meditating on these great attributes (in the Word and providences) will give you a deep, abiding love for the Lord and, thus, a desire to please Him. Do you love God?

*It Includes Reverence*

Reverence is awe and worship. It is a healthful, affectionate respect for God. Those who know Him as He really is are continually marveling at His greatness. Do you reverence God?

*It Includes Submission*

Because of the saint’s love and reverence for the Lord, he will bow in surrender to His every wish. Are you submitted to God?
Summary:

The fear of the Lord is an affectionate reverence for God by which the child of God bends himself humbly and carefully to his Father’s will.

The Attitude of Fearing God

As a believer grows in his Christian walk, God becomes an ever-increasing focus of all that he does. The fear of God becomes a way of thinking and a way of living. Someone has said that the child of God has only one dread—to offend the Lord. As he sees God’s holiness and power, the believer realizes the foolishness of offending Him. And the child of God has only one desire—to please the Lord. The love of God and His majesty motivate us to do always those things that please Him.

The Importance of the Fear of the Lord

Ask: Why is the fear of the Lord important? Discuss various student responses; then ask the students to look up and read the following verses. Discuss what each verse teaches about the importance of fearing God.

Isaiah 11:2–3 Christ feared the Lord!

This prophecy about Christ tells us that He knew the fear of the Lord. If He had a fear of the Lord, surely it should be present in our lives.

Jeremiah 2:19 It is a sin not to fear the Lord.

God warns that a lack of the fear of the Lord leads to a life that is “evil and bitter.” The word evil means broken, or to break in pieces. Hence, something evil is worthless or destroyed. Bitter means poisonous or distasteful. Failure to fear the Lord renders a person’s life broken, worthless, and distasteful.

Ecclesiastes 12:13 Fearing God is the whole duty of man.

That is, it is the sum total of what Christianity is all about! When one has the fear of the Lord, he automatically lives a separated Christian life, grows in his knowledge of the Lord, faithfully obeys God’s commandments, and fervently witnesses. Fearing God is not optional; it is at the very heart of Christianity.

2 Samuel 23:3–4 The fear of God is essential for true Christian leadership.

No man is qualified to preach, teach, serve as a missionary, or exercise any authority in spiritual things who does not fear the Lord. A godly leader must recognize his dependence upon the Lord for the grace needed for ministry. A leader who does fear the Lord is like life-giving sun and rain to those who follow him (v. 4).

Psalm 147:11 The fear of God is the distinguishing mark of those who please Him.

God is pleased with service done from a heart of affectionate reverence. He is not impressed by a person’s skills or abilities. Instead, He reserves His mercy and loving kindness for those who confidently trust in Him.
HOW WE LEARN THE FEAR OF THE LORD

All saints must desire diligently to cultivate the fear of the Lord.

Studying God’s Word (Prov. 2:1–5)

Read Proverbs 2:1–5. As you search God’s Word you will begin to understand the fear of the Lord. Why is that? It is because you will begin to see the majesty of God as He reveals Himself in the Bible.

Beholding God’s Majesty (Ps. 96:1–9)

Read Psalm 96:1–9. The majesty of God has overwhelmed the author of this psalm. As in Isaiah 6, a true look at God’s majesty deeply impacts the heart of this man. He calls out in these verses to all those who know God to proclaim His majesty to the whole world. Seeing God’s majesty brings forth many emotions and actions.

**Ask:** What are some of the emotions and actions that come from beholding God’s majesty according to this psalm? Discuss. Allow the students to give several answers. Point out that one of the results is that God is feared above all idols (v. 4) even to the point of trembling with fear before Him (v. 9).

Seeing God’s Works

Closely connected with God’s majesty are the mighty works that He performs.

**Ask:** Where are some places you would look if you wanted to see evidences of God’s mighty works? Discuss. There are many areas, but we are going to look at three of the most obvious.

*In Creation (Ps. 33:6–9)*

Look at all of creation around you and think for a minute about how little power you really possess. Can you make the trees grow faster? Could you change the course of a river? Could you make a single new star begin to shine? Of course not! You couldn't do any of these things.

Now read Psalm 33:6-9. God created all the stars of heaven with a word! Verse 7 says that God gathers all the waters of the world and places them in His storehouse. (The Hebrew word is sometimes used to mean a cellar.) No wonder the psalmist tells us to fear Him!

*In History (Josh. 4:20–24)*

Joshua and the children of Israel had just crossed into Canaan to begin the conquest. The crossing had been spectacular as God parted the flooded Jordan to allow His chosen people to pass through on dry ground. Joshua wanted the generations that followed to know God’s great work accomplished that day so he ordered a monument to be built. Read Joshua 4:20–24.

**Ask:** What are some ways that you can see God’s works in history? Discuss.
In Our Lives (1 Sam. 12:24)

I Samuel 12:24 challenges us to consider all the great things that God does in each of our lives. Do you ever take time just to think about all the blessings you enjoy because of God’s eternal goodness?

By fastening our minds upon His great Person and His great deeds, we come to fear the Lord and gain victory over sin in our lives. Oh, that our minds would be so full of Him that the world itself would be tasteless to us!

CONCLUSION

A fierce battle is being waged today for the minds of men, especially young people. Satan knows that if he can get your mind off the Lord, he has gained the victory. Remember: it’s not so much that we think about the wrong things; it is that we do not think about the right things!

Anything that occupies our time and minds so that we are not taken up with Him is sin! Cars, sports, recreation, dating, and other innocent things can so preoccupy us that they prevent us from meditating on Him and rob us of the only thing worthwhile—His power and blessing on our lives.

Challenge the students to consider Him, to let Him be their preoccupation and meditation all the day. This is true wisdom.

APPLICATION ACTIVITITES

Refer to the section of the student textbook titled “Developing the Ideas” for a list of possible application activities. Use as many or as few of these as time allows.

You may wish to go over the answers to activities one and two with the class.

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. False
2. False
3. True
4. False
5. False
6-10. Any five of the following: preservation; keeping (guarding; watching over) you; promotion (exaltation); honor; an ornament (or garland) of grace; a crown of glory (or beauty); long life; steps that are straight (unhindered); keeping you from stumbling.
11. B
12. A
13. A
14. B
15. A
Essay (See Teacher’s Lesson)
Lesson Two

Wisdom: The Fear of the Lord

Most people today don’t fear God. In fact, they are fighting against Him! And opposition to God is not just by individuals; people are organized in their opposition to God.

The anti-God movement known as humanism had its origins in ancient Greece, Rome, and China. Today, it is an organized religious movement that threatens to overthrow all that is Christian and, in the United States, all that is American.

Humanism stems from a statement by Protagoras, a Greek philosopher of the fifth century before Christ. He said, “Man is the measure of all things.” In other words, man is his own god. “Right” is anything that pleases man and adds to his pleasure; “wrong” is anything that man dislikes. There is no heaven, no hell, and no God. Man’s ultimate goal is to “do his own thing.” The following summaries show some contrasts between humanism and Christianity.

**ACCORDING TO HUMANISM…**

- Man is the measure of all things, at the center of everything, and solves his own problems.
- The solution to all of man’s problems is education. Man needs no god to help him; he is his own god.
- The key to successful living is getting more so you can “do your own thing.” One can measure success by outward, material things.

**ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE…**

- God is the proper central focus of all aspects of life. Life can have no real meaning apart from Him (Col. 1:16-18).
- The solutions to all of man’s problems are found somewhere between Genesis 1:1 and Revelation 22:21 (Psa. 19:7-11).
- The key to successful living is focusing upon God in every area of life and submitting to His Word (Josh. 1:8).

Amazingly, our own U. S. Supreme Court has labeled humanistic philosophy a bona fide religion! Our public schools and state colleges teach humanism as fact, and some of the most powerful figures in American politics are admitted humanists. (One can often identify such people's humanist views by the legislation they promote in government or the causes they espouse in their communities.)

Many leading political and social organizations are humanistic, and their sole purpose is to belittle God and to replace Christianity with their godless religion of humanism. The following organizations are only a few prominent examples of such promoters of the humanist philosophy.

American Ethical Union (AEU). Founded in 1880, the work of this federation of more than thirty ethical societies has resulted in the establishment of several other influential organizations, including the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the Sex Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS), and the National Organization of Women (NOW).

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). This group has been perhaps the most effective humanist tool for destroying the laws, morals, and rights of Americans. You are perhaps most familiar with it because it is frequently in the news. It is infamous for its attempts to remove all godly influences (e.g., prayer and Bible reading) from public schools, to restrict the displaying of manger scenes and the singing of Christmas carols on public property, to prohibit the posting of the Ten Commandments in schools and courtrooms, and to promote pornography under the guise of freedom of speech.

Among its founders were William Z. Foster, the former head of the Communist Party, USA; Dr. John C. Bennett, a president of the liberal Union Theological Seminary; John Dewey, a humanist educator and trainer of teachers; Clarence Darrow, the lawyer for the defense of evolution in the famous Scopes (“Monkey”) Trial; and Corliss Lamont, a leading spokesman for humanism.

American Humanist Association (AHA). According to Chambers, the AHA was established in Illinois for “educational and religious purposes.” In 1973, the AHA updated its “bible,” known as The Humanist Manifesto (1933), producing Humanist Manifesto II. This “bible” criticizes true Bible believers and denies the existence of a creator. It asserts, “No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.”
Think of it. These are the organizations and the people who control the news media, the entertainment industry, most government organizations, and our public school system! This is one reason why Proverbs is such an important study for your generation.

Remember, *true wisdom is never against the Lord*. Regardless of how official and religious today's humanists sound, and regardless of how well-educated (in their own false doctrines) they seem to be, God calls them *fools!*

### STUDENT LESSON

So far in your study of Proverbs, you have learned that the book has five main objectives.

- To know God
- To know the Word of God
- To know God's principles
- To smooth the rough edges of life
- To give purpose to life

All of these objectives can be summarized by one word: *wisdom* (Prov. 1:2). But what is wisdom? The word in Hebrew is *hokma* and occurs some 150 times in the Bible, more than half of them in Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. The Bible also tells us about two kinds of wisdom: divine and human. (Read 1 Cor. 2:4-8.) We are concerned in this study with divine wisdom, but to better understand true wisdom we must first understand its importance and know what it is *not.*

### WISDOM’S IMPORTANCE

Read the following verses about the importance of wisdom. Then answer the questions beside each reference.

- **Proverbs 4:7**—What does this verse say about the importance of wisdom?  
  
  "*Wisdom is the most important thing; therefore, we should seek to gain wisdom.*"

- **Proverbs 1:2**—Why did Solomon write Proverbs?  
  "*He wrote it to give others wisdom and instruction (or discipline).*"

- **Proverbs 4:5–13**—What does Solomon tell us to get?  
  "*wisdom and understanding*"
According to Solomon’s list in Proverbs 4:5-13, what nine benefits does becoming a wise person offer?

- preservation, guarding, keeping
- keeping (guarding, watching over) you
- promotion, exaltation
- honor
- an ornament (or garland) of grace
- a crown of glory (or beauty)
- long life
- steps that are straight (unhindered)
- keeping you from stumbling

Clearly, Solomon wants us to be wise because such wisdom is important. But what is wisdom? We have to know what it is if we are to know whether or not we have it. Let’s define wisdom by first looking at what it is NOT.

**WHAT WISDOM IS NOT**

Refer to the verses in parentheses after each of the following points to find biblical evidence that true wisdom is NOT man’s wisdom.

1. Wisdom is NOT ______ against God ______ (Prov. 21:30).

   What does this mean?  True wisdom is founded in God; therefore, it will not deny God.

   List the examples of unwise things that are mentioned in the following verses:
   - Psa. 14:1 ______ denying there is a God
   - Prov. 12:15 ______ going our own way without counsel
   - Prov. 14:9 ______ mocking at sin
   - Prov. 19:3 ______ blaming God for failures
Atheism or godlessness in any form is not wisdom but foolishness. This fact could apply to secular science and history books in that their authors might deny that God is the Creator or that He is in control of history and current events. In either case, they deny God's sovereignty over man and nature.

2. Wisdom is NOT ______________________ (Prov. 23:4).

Education is not wisdom. Someone once said, “You cannot put a man in the penitentiary for forgery until you first teach him to write. You can't put a man in jail for fraud until you first teach him to figure.”

- Read 1 Corinthians 1:19-27. How do the educated and wise men of this earth compare with God?  Their wisdom is nothing in God’s sight. His foolishness is wiser than man’s greatest wisdom.  

- Good grades are not wisdom. Read 1 Corinthians 3:19-20. You may be the most intelligent person in your school and make every honor roll, but what does God say about your wisdom and intelligent thoughts?  God considers this world’s wisdom to be foolishness.

3. Wisdom is NOT always ______________________ (Job 32:9).

Being a top athlete, public official, famous preacher, or educator does not mean that person has divine wisdom. Just because someone has lived a long time doesn't mean he has learned biblical wisdom.

WHAT WISDOM IS

- The definition of true wisdom is found in Proverbs 1:7 and Job 28:12, 20, 28. Read these verses and finish this statement: “True wisdom is the ___fear___ of the ___Lord___.”

The fear of God is based on the knowledge of God. Certain attributes of God (characteristics that make Him who He is) will produce a true fear of the Lord. The Teacher's Lesson will continue the study of what wisdom is.
The Source of Wisdom

- The Fear of the Lord (Job 28:28; Prov. 1:7)
- The Knowledge of God (Prov. 9:10)
  - Knowledge of God's power (Psa. 33:8)
  - Knowledge of God's holiness (Rev. 15:4)
  - Knowledge of God's love (I Sam. 12:22-24; Ps. 34)

The Fear of the Lord

- What the Fear of the Lord Is
  - It includes love
  - It includes reverence
  - It includes submission
  - Summary: The fear of the Lord is an affectionate reverence for God by which the child of God bends himself humbly and carefully to his Father's will.

- The Attitude of Fearing God
  - The child of God has only one dread—to offend the Lord
  - The child of God has only one desire—to please the Lord

- The Importance of Fearing God
  - Isaiah 11:23 Christ feared the Lord.
  - Jeremiah 2:19 It is a sin not to fear the Lord.
  - Ecclesiastes 12:13 Fearing God is the whole duty of man.
  - 2 Samuel 23:3–4 The fear of God is essential to true Christian leadership.
  - Psalm 147:11 The fear of God is a distinguishing mark of those who please Him.

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• How We Learn the Fear of the Lord
  • Studying God's ____ Word ____ (Prov. 2:1–5)
  • Beholding God's ___ majesty ____ (Ps. 96:1–9)
  • Seeing God's ____ works ____
    • In ___ creation ______ (Ps. 33:6–9)
    • In ___ history ______ (Josh. 4:20–24)
    • In ___ our lives ________ (1 Sam. 12:24)

**DEVELOPING THE IDEAS**

1. Those who fear the Lord exhibit certain characteristics. Read the following verses and write down the characteristics of a proper fear of the Lord.
   a. Proverbs 8:13  **hating evil, pride, arrogance, the evil way, and the perverse mouth**
   b. Proverbs 16:6  **depart from evil**
   c. Psalm 19:9  **clean, enduring**
   d. 2 Corinthians 7:1  **perfecting holiness**

2. What are the benefits and blessings that come to those who fear God?
   a. Psalm 34:9  **They don't want or lack.**
   b. Proverbs 15:33  **They are instructed in wisdom.**
   c. Psalm 111:10  **They are wise.**
   d. Psalm 25:14  **They learn the secret of the Lord and His covenant.**

3. Write a short essay explaining why humanist reasoning appeals to so many people and why it never really delivers its promises. Support your points with appropriate Scripture passages.

4. Discuss the following questions as a class or in small groups.
   a. What is the difference between love, reverence, and submission? How are they interrelated to one's fear of God?
b. What are some of the outward signs that one
   1. loves God?
   2. reverences God?
   3. submits to God?

c. What practical examples can you give of people showing a disregard for God and wisdom?

d. What practical steps can you as a believer take to help other people desire true wisdom?
Tell whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. The child of God has only one desire—to please himself.  □ True  □ False

2. The purpose of a humanist organization is to help people become more human by developing a proper fear of God.  □ True  □ False

3. The child of God has only one dread—of offending God.  □ True  □ False

4. The American Civil Liberties Union is fighting to protect our God-given freedoms of religious expression.  □ True  □ False

5. The fear of the Lord is based on an understanding of the human condition.  □ True  □ False

List five of the nine benefits of wisdom as listed in Proverbs 4:5-13 (one benefit per line).

6. ______________________________________________________

7. ______________________________________________________

8. ______________________________________________________

9. ______________________________________________________

10. _____________________________________________________

Indicate whether each of the following statements reflects either (A) biblical wisdom or (B) secular humanism. Put the letter of your answer in the blank provided beside each statement.

11. _____ Man is the measure.

12. _____ Outward material wealth is not a sign of true success in life.

13. _____ The solutions to life’s problems are found in the Bible.

14. _____ Education will solve man’s problems.

15. _____ Focusing on God and submitting to His Word lead to success.

Complete the following essay. (Use a separate sheet of paper or the back of this quiz.)

16. Explain how humanist organizations are attempting to belittle God and replace Christianity with the religion of humanism.