

# Proverbs

The Fountain of Life

# Proverbs: The Fountain of Life

Written by: Frank Hamrick with C.J. Harris

Copyright © 1999, 2009, 2016 by Positive Action For Christ, Inc., P.O. Box 700, Whitakers, NC 27891-0700.

All rights reserved. No part may be reproduced in any manner without permission in writing from the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America

Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the King James Version.

2016 Printing

ISBN 978-1-59557-101-4

Edited by C.J. Harris and Kristi Houser

Design by Shannon Brown

Published by

 **PositiveAction**  
BIBLE CURRICULUM

# Contents

	Preface	5
<b>Lesson 1</b>	Wisdom Defined and Categorized	14
<b>Lesson 2</b>	Wisdom: The Fear of the Lord	29
<b>Lesson 3</b>	The Wisdom of God vs. the Wisdom of Man	43
<b>Lesson 4</b>	Wisdom: A Person	56
<b>Lesson 5</b>	Wisdom: How It Acts	68
<b>Lesson 6</b>	Wisdom: The Foolish Man	82
<b>Lesson 7</b>	Wisdom: The Wise Man vs. the Foolish Man	92
<b>Lesson 8</b>	Wisdom: How It Is Obtained	104
<b>Lesson 9</b>	Wisdom: In the Home: The Importance of the Home	114
<b>Lesson 10</b>	Wisdom: In the Home: Your Place in the Home	125
<b>Lesson 11</b>	Wisdom: In the Home: Understanding Your Parents	138
<b>Lesson 12</b>	Wisdom: In the Home: Duties of the Parents	151
<b>Lesson 13</b>	Wisdom: In Companions	165
<b>Lesson 14</b>	Wisdom: In Companions: Companions to Avoid	176
<b>Lesson 15</b>	Wisdom: In Companions: Characteristics of Wrong Companions	192
<b>Lesson 16</b>	Wisdom: In Companions: Wrong Attitudes and Wrong Actions	204
<b>Lesson 17</b>	Wisdom: In Companions: Why We Lose Friendships	217
<b>Lesson 18</b>	Wisdom: In Companions: How to Gain Friends	228
<b>Lesson 19</b>	Wisdom: In Character: What is Character?	240
<b>Lesson 20</b>	Wisdom: In Character: The Works of the Flesh	251
<b>Lesson 21</b>	Wisdom: In Character: Love	264
<b>Lesson 22</b>	Wisdom: In Character: Joy	277
<b>Lesson 23</b>	Wisdom: In Character: Peace	289
<b>Lesson 24</b>	Wisdom: In Character: Longsuffering (Patience)	300
<b>Lesson 25</b>	Wisdom: In Character: Gentleness (Kindness)	314
<b>Lesson 26</b>	Wisdom: In Character: Goodness	324
<b>Lesson 27</b>	Wisdom: In Character: Faithfulness	336
<b>Lesson 28</b>	Wisdom: In Character: Meekness (Gentleness)	348
<b>Lesson 29</b>	Wisdom: In Character: Self-Control (Temperance)	361
<b>Lesson 30</b>	Wisdom: Dealing with the Flesh	375
<b>Lesson 31</b>	Wisdom: In Thought Life	389
<b>Lesson 32</b>	Wisdom: In Speech (Part 1)	398
<b>Lesson 33</b>	Wisdom: In Speech (Part 2)	411
<b>Lesson 34</b>	Wisdom: In Acknowledging God	426
<b>Lesson 35</b>	Wisdom: The Fountain of Life	440
	Recommended Reading List	448
	Quizzes & Tests	451
	Answer Keys	507



# Preface

The fear of the Lord, Solomon wrote in Proverbs 14, is a fountain of life. As we stand in awe of God, rooted in His Word, His truth will infuse our lives. We should never remove ourselves from His wisdom, because every leaf, flower, and fruit grows only by His grace.

We can find other springs of wisdom—other bits of advice, other rules—but these help us only so far as they flow from the Source of all truth, God Himself. A rule may establish order or protect us from danger, but following it does not guarantee us a relationship with God. More important than any act is the motivation and spirit from which it flows.

We can be thankful, therefore, that the Book of Proverbs is a set of principles built around a relationship with God. We do not read these passages as a list of rules. Rather, we can trace each bit of wisdom back to its roots in God's own character. The proverbs catch our attention because they are simple and practical, but they also help us understand the God who gave them to us.

This study includes two major sections: wisdom defined and wisdom applied. In the first eight lessons, the material addresses wisdom in general terms, while the rest of the lessons cover a wide variety of practical topics. By the end of this study, students should have an introductory understanding of the book's overall themes and its granular wisdom. Students should also be challenged to abide in God's wisdom, walk with Him, and live out His love toward other people.

# Features of This Study

## TEACHER'S LECTURES

The lesson content in the Teacher's Manual can help you prepare and present the truths of this study to your students.

### Lesson Objectives

These serve as target truths for each lesson.

### Teacher's Lesson

The lecture material is presented verbatim—though formatted with headings and bullets in case you prefer to teach from limited notes.

### Notes from the Teacher's Lesson

Each lesson in the Student Manual contains a fill-in-the-blank outline of the corresponding teacher's lesson. Students can use this outline as a foundation for their lecture notes, which will help them study for tests and quizzes.

You can find digital presentations with these outlines on the *Proverbs* product page at [positiveaction.org](http://positiveaction.org).

We encourage teachers to approach lessons not so much as a fact-finding process, but as a way to strengthen the students' relationship with God. Perfect truth includes love, and perfect love includes truth, so please take care to present this material in a way that both encourages and challenges your students. Make time for discussion, and encourage your students to share their questions with the class.

## STUDENT EXERCISES

Almost every lesson in the Student Manual includes exercises that students should complete outside of class. These exercises encourage students to seek God's truth and love on their own, while also reviewing some of the content from the teacher's lesson.

Early in this course, you may wish to complete some of these exercises with your students, especially if the students are not familiar with looking up and summarizing Scripture on their own.

### Introductory Reading

Each lesson in the Student Manual begins with a brief essay. You may wish to ask your students to read this before you begin a lesson. Several teacher's lectures reference the introductory reading, so your group may benefit from students being ready to discuss the topic.

## Developing the Ideas

Each lesson in the Student Manual features additional projects and activities that you can review and assign at your discretion. Some projects—like the “Producing Fruit” forms in Lessons 21–29—require much more research and reflection than the others. Many of these are more appropriate for higher grade levels.

## TESTING AND EVALUATION

For classes that require a score or grade, the Teacher’s Manual includes lesson quizzes and unit tests. These cover material from the teacher’s lectures and the student reading. Question types include matching, short answer, multiple choice, true-false, and short essays.

Quizzes, tests, and answer keys are at the back of this Teacher’s Manual. You can find editable versions of the testing material on the *Proverbs* product page at [positiveaction.org](http://positiveaction.org).

Some teachers also grade weekly Scripture memorization, as well as the completion of student exercises and extra activities.

Note that these materials can help you evaluate students’ mastery of factual content—not, of course, their spiritual growth.

## COMPLETED PAGES FROM THE STUDENT MANUAL

This Teacher’s Manual contains a complete copy of the Student Manual. In each lesson, you can find facsimiles of the Student Manual pages with suggested answers filled in.

A digital version of these facsimiles is available on the *Proverbs* product page at [positiveaction.org](http://positiveaction.org). If presented via projector or screen, these pages can help you review exercises with your students.

## SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION

At the end of this introduction, you’ll find a Scripture memory program with an assignment for each lesson. In the past, teachers have used this optional component in the following ways:

1. Assign verses to be recited or written in a graded quiz, whether weekly, monthly, or once a semester.
2. Assign verses to be written on the back of regular lesson quizzes, perhaps as extra credit.
3. Evaluate the students’ understanding of the verses by offering a fill-in-the-blank verse test, or one that requires students to match the text of each passage with its reference.

You can find printable verse cards on the *Proverbs* product page at [positiveaction.org](http://positiveaction.org).

# FORMAT AND GRADE LEVEL

Though teachers have successfully adapted and taught this study in grades seven through twelve, we recommend this content for the eleventh and twelfth grade.

As with any other Bible study, your students' background, Scriptural literacy, and reading level will greatly impact their ability to approach this material. Some students may require additional teacher or parent involvement to understand and complete the exercises in the Student Manual.

## SUGGESTED WEEKLY SCHEDULE

This study includes 35 lessons—one for each week in an average academic year. In general, teachers should first present the lecture in each lesson, after which students can complete the exercises in the Student Manual. At the end of the week, students can take the appropriate lesson quiz or unit test. Any optional activities or Scripture memory can expand the students' individual or group study.

Note that this study likely contains more content than you could cover in depth, especially in a three- or four-day-a-week class. Depending on the needs of your students—and depending on the time you spend in discussion or review—you may need to cover some minor points quickly or not at all.

### Five-Day Option

Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four	Day Five
Introduce lesson objectives. Begin the teacher's lesson. Introduce the Scripture memory verses. Assign the student exercises and any additional activities.	Continue the teacher's lesson. Review Scripture memory.	Finish the teacher's lesson.	Review the student exercises, as well as lesson content relevant to the quiz or test. Review Scripture memory.	Administer the quiz or test. Check or quiz Scripture memory. Discuss any student questions and additional activities.

## Four-Day Option

Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four
<p>Introduce lesson objectives.</p> <p>Begin the teacher's lesson.</p> <p>Introduce the Scripture memory verses.</p> <p>Assign the student exercises and any additional activities.</p>	<p>Finish the teacher's lesson.</p> <p>Review Scripture memory.</p>	<p>Review the student exercises, as well as lesson content relevant to the quiz or test.</p> <p>Review Scripture memory.</p>	<p>Administer the quiz or test.</p> <p>Check or quiz Scripture memory.</p> <p>Discuss any student questions and additional activities.</p>

## Three-Day Option

Day One	Day Two	Day Three
<p>Introduce lesson objectives.</p> <p>Begin the teacher's lesson.</p> <p>Introduce the Scripture memory verses.</p> <p>Assign the student exercises and any additional activities.</p>	<p>Finish the teacher's lesson.</p> <p>Review the student exercises, as well as lesson content relevant to the quiz or test.</p> <p>Review Scripture memory.</p>	<p>Administer the quiz or test.</p> <p>Check or quiz Scripture memory.</p> <p>Discuss any student questions and additional activities.</p>

## NOTES

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---

# OPTIONAL PROJECT: INDEXING PROVERBS

Included in this study is an optional long-term project that challenges students to organize the entire Book of Proverbs into subject categories. You can find the instructions for this project on page 12 of the Student Manual.

Some students may need help with this project, especially when they encounter proverbs that are vague or unclear. Depending on your students' grade level, you may wish to explain some difficult proverbs in class—or make available a good commentary or similar reference work.

In the past, teachers have graded this project with the following methods:

1. Grade each chapter in Proverbs (or group of chapters) by the number of verses indexed by the student. For example, Proverbs 10 includes 32 verses. You might offer a scale like the following:

<b>Verses Indexed</b>	<b>Grade</b>
20	100
19	95
18	90
17	85
16	80
15	75

2. Assign each chapter a completion grade, with the entire project due by the end of the year. State the minimum required verses per chapter.
3. Offer extra credit for all or part of the project.

## FEEDBACK

As a non-profit publishing ministry, we consider teachers our co-laborers in the faith. Each of our curricula remains a work in progress, and the people who teach these studies have a great impact on the scope and format of each new edition. If you have any comments, questions, or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us—we'd love to hear from you.

[info@positiveaction.org](mailto:info@positiveaction.org)

Positive Action for Christ

P.O. Box 700

Whitakers, NC 27891-0700

800-688-3008

[www.positiveaction.org](http://www.positiveaction.org)

# A FINAL WORD

It's our prayer that this study helps you and your students know God's glory, grow in that knowledge, and share it with others. To see the most from this study, we'd encourage you to do the following:

- Spend time each day in the Word. Use the material in this study to guide your devotional reading so that you can present God's truth and love from the heart. Spend time also marking and adjusting the lecture content to suit your students' needs.
- Pray for your students, and ask God to grow you, as well.
- Be vulnerable to your students, expressing questions and confidence in equal measure. Encourage them to explore Scripture with you.
- Be the love and truth you want to see from your students.
- Depend on God's strength and grace, even in your weakness.

## SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION PROGRAM

Lesson	Passages	
<b>1</b>	1:7	1:8-9
<b>2</b>	1:10	2:6
<b>3</b>	2:22	3:5-6
<b>4</b>	3:11-12	4:7
<b>5</b>	4:19	4:23
<b>6</b>	5:21	6:20-21
<b>7</b>	9:8	10:7
<b>8</b>	10:12	11:14
<b>9</b>	11:22	11:25
<b>10</b>	11:30	12:22
<b>11</b>	13:10	13:15
<b>12</b>	13:20	13:24
<b>13</b>	14:12	14:15
<b>14</b>	14:34	15:1
<b>15</b>	15:3	16:1
<b>16</b>	16:7	16:32
<b>17</b>	16:33	17:17
<b>18</b>	17:22	18:10

Lesson	Passages	
<b>19</b>	18:21	19:5
<b>20</b>	20:1	20:11
<b>21</b>	21:1	21:31
<b>22</b>	22:1	22:6
<b>23</b>	22:24-25	22:28
<b>24</b>	23:31-32	24:6
<b>25</b>	25:11	25:18
<b>26</b>	25:21-22	25:28
<b>27</b>	26:4	26:11
<b>28</b>	26:20	27:1
<b>29</b>	27:2	27:6
<b>30</b>	27:17	27:19
<b>31</b>	27:20	28:1
<b>32</b>	28:9	28:13
<b>33</b>	29:1	29:11
<b>34</b>	29:25	30:5-6
<b>35</b>	31:10	31:30



# Teacher's Manual

# Wisdom Defined and Categorized

## 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<sup>3/4</sup>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.

## Lesson One

# Wisdom Defined and Categorized

“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)

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

# Wisdom: The Fear of the Lord

## 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).

*Psalms 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.

## 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 man's wisdom (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 found in old or great men (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.

## TEACHER'S LESSON

### *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.

- 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?

# The Wisdom of God vs. the Wisdom of Man

## LESSON OBJECTIVES

- To contrast God’s wisdom and man’s wisdom
- To establish in the students’ minds the foundation and 5 key teachings of Christianity
- To establish in the students’ minds the foundation and 5 key teachings of humanism
- To lead the students to conclude that Christianity and humanism cannot coexist

## TEACHER’S LESSON

I Corinthians 2:1-8 contrasts two kinds of wisdom: man’s wisdom and God’s wisdom. Paul declares that the world’s wisdom will come to nothing (v. 6). Yet God’s wisdom is powerful (v. 5) and can come only from Him (v. 7). Therefore, God’s wisdom stands in direct opposition to man’s wisdom. Because of this, the unsaved “elite” of the world cannot understand the wisdom of God (v. 8).

A religion today is seeking to control the world. Many of the “elite” of the world have embraced that religion. People who are trying to expand the religion promote it as the view of all “educated,” “wise,” and “intelligent” people. Yet, this religion admits no God. In fact, its major premise is that man does not need a god other than himself.

What is the name of this apparently very successful religion? It is secular humanism. This belief system establishes man as the sole authority of human reason and self-actualization while rejecting the divine or supernatural. This lesson contrasts two opposing religions or pathways to wisdom: secular humanism and Christianity.

## CHRISTIANITY: THE WISDOM OF GOD

**Ask:** What is the basis for Christianity? Discuss. The basis for Christianity is the collection of sixty-six books we call the Bible, the Word of God.

### The Foundation of Christianity—The Word of God

The Bible contains the wisdom of God that He has chosen to reveal to men. Of course, no number of volumes could contain all of the wisdom of God. In fact, John 21:25 says that the world isn’t big enough to hold all the books it would take to record all that Jesus said and did.

And that deals with only the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ! What more could be written of the Father, the Holy Spirit, the angelic beings, etc.? Not only that but 1 Corinthians 1:25 also says that God's foolishness (if it were possible for Him to be foolish) is still far wiser than man at his wisest moment!

Yet, God has chosen to reveal certain facets of His wisdom for us to learn, and He recorded that information in the sixty-six books of the Bible. In that storehouse of wisdom we find the answers to all of the major questions of life.

Throughout human history, philosophers have been asking the same basic questions:

- Who am I?
- Where did I come from?
- Why am I here?
- Where am I going?
- How can I get there?

Apart from God, none of the philosophers down through history has been able to give even one satisfactory answer to any of these questions. In the Bible, however, we find them all conveniently and completely answered.

Everything a Christian believes is based on the foundation of this source of Divine wisdom—God's Word. If any knowledge or viewpoint contradicts or violates this Book, the Christian must reject it as false. If it is in agreement with the Book, however, the Christian may embrace that knowledge or that view as Truth.

## Five Key Teachings of Christianity

The Christian worldview is based on five basic beliefs or teachings.

### *God*

The Bible begins with the assumption of the existence of God, "In the beginning God" (Gen. 1:1). The Bible presents without question the fact that there is a God and that He created all things by His infinite wisdom and power. This God is holy, omnipotent, loving, omniscient, and gracious in all His dealings. This great God has revealed Himself to man, and it is our privilege to get to know Him.

### *Creation*

The first two chapters of the first book of the Bible state clearly that the formation of our physical universe was not the result of a lengthy evolutionary process but was an instantaneous act of creation by God.

**Ask:** Why do you believe in creation? What if scientists discovered something that "proved" beyond a doubt that the world evolved? Would you be scared? Would it make you wonder? Do you *really* believe the Bible, or do you simply accept it because so far no one has been able to disprove it? Discuss.

Accepting the fact of creation has always been a matter of faith based on the existence of God and the acceptance of God's Word. Each of these basic facts builds on previous facts. If one disbelieves the Bible as the Word of God, he will naturally fail to believe that there is a God of creation. Creation, however, has much more evidence than what is found in God's Word. All of the scientific findings of man, while they do not prove creation, favor creation rather than evolution.

Even scientists who deny the truthfulness of God's Word and the existence of God admit that there is not a shred of scientific evidence in favor of evolution. Dr. Henry Morris, a noted creation scientist and a Christian, said, "There is no evidence that vertically upward evolution is possible, that it ever occurs in the present or that it ever occurred in the past. If one believes in evolution, he must do so by faith, not by observation."

The Christian places his faith in the word of the God of the Bible; the humanist places his faith in man and the supposed evolutionary process.

### *Moral Ethics*

The third foundation stone of God's wisdom is the Judeo-Christian ethic, certain basic standards of morality that God has given in His Word and by which He expects man to live. These rules are *moral absolutes*. They cannot be changed, annulled, or adjusted by man without the destruction of society.

This moral code is based on the Ten Commandments, the first four of which deal with man's relationship to God and the last six of which deal with man's relationship to his fellowman. Those six commandments deal with the following:

- Stealing
- Bearing false witness
- Committing murder
- Committing adultery
- Coveting someone else's possessions
- Honoring one's parents

History shows that nations that adhered to this moral code rose to greatness and maintained that greatness as long as they followed these rules. Whenever a nation or people strayed from this code, however, they soon lost their power, wealth, and influence. Some of those nations disappeared entirely. History also shows that God never judged a nation simply because it had an "incorrect" political or economic system, but God *always* judges nations that refuse to be bound by His moral code.

**Ask:** What are some examples of the fall of nations in this way? Discuss.

However, the moral condition of a nation is but a symptom of a deeper problem. Moral decay is but the fruit of a deeper problem—sin. No mere outward "cleanup" of our moral condition will be lasting; only when men's hearts are changed will the changes be permanent.

### *Servants of God*

If one accepts the first three doctrines of Christianity—God, creation, and moral absolutes—the next doctrine is easy to understand. Read Proverbs 16:4. This verse tells us that God has created everything to serve the purpose He intends. He even has an intended purpose for the wicked!

**Ask:** Why is man here? Discuss.

As the old Westminster divines worded it, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." We glorify God by serving *Him* and doing what He commands. Nowhere in the Bible do we find instructions to "do our own thing."

Many young people and even adults talk about “identity crises” and “self-esteem problems.” They are bewildered and preoccupied with finding out “who they are” and “why they are here.” No Christian, however, should have that problem. God has made the answer plain, and if you have accepted Christ as your Savior, you are a child of God here on earth with a purpose that is clear—to serve God and man.

### *A Compassionate Worldview*

Matthew 28:19-20 challenges Christians to go forth and make disciples from among all nations. Based on the foundational truth that we are His servants, serving for His glory, the ultimate goal of every Christian is to spread God’s wisdom, glory, and grace to every nation. Men are lost and headed for hell. Without faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross, they will suffer for eternity. Thus, Christians have a heart filled with compassion and concern for the world.

## HUMANISM: THE WISDOM OF MAN

Humanism has five key teachings, just as Christianity does. They are quite different, however, from those of Christianity<sup>3/4</sup> as you can well imagine by this point in our study!

The “family tree” of humanism is traceable all the way back to the Garden of Eden. Satan’s first assault in the war against man’s soul was to tempt Adam and Eve with the lie that if they ate of the forbidden fruit they could “be as gods, knowing good and evil.” Man interpreted this as, “I can be my own god! I can decide for myself what is right and wrong. I don’t need God!” From this root, humanism grew throughout history.

### The Foundation of Humanism—Man’s Reasoning Powers

From this root grew various philosophies and traditions that find their common ground in humanistic thinking, which, simply stated, is man’s attempt to solve his problems independently of God. Humanism as a religion did not fully develop until the twentieth century, but the ideas appear throughout history.

In the fifth century before Christ, the Greek philosopher Protagoras began to develop Satan’s original root into a philosophical system of thought. He rephrased Satan’s lie a bit, saying, “Man is the measure of all things.” By the time of Christianity, this humanistic idea held sway in much of the world, but the ministry of Christ and the early church ran directly contrary to this way of thinking.

In the Dark Ages, however, Satan took advantage of the fact that much of Christianity had fallen into apostasy and sparked a renewed interest in philosophy and human tradition by men such as Thomas Aquinas, an apologist for the Roman Catholic Church. The established Church of those centuries began to treat these human traditions as equally authoritative with Scripture.

During the Renaissance, or “reawakening,” there was a renewal of science and the human arts. While some of the men of this era allowed God and His Word to guide their study, many began to turn away from religion. *World Book Encyclopedia* says of this period, “They made man, rather than God, their center of interest.”

The next stage in Western history was the Enlightenment, which emphasized human reason (rather than revelation) as the primary source of knowledge and authority. During this period, French philosophers

Rousseau and Voltaire became the “high priests” of the secular arm of humanism. Their philosophical views spread to America where they were championed by John Dewey. He was an atheist and a board member of the American Humanist Association, which drafted the *Humanist Manifesto* in 1933. With the publishing of the *Humanist Manifesto*, secular humanism became a fully established religion. Dewey stated, “There is no God, and there is no soul.” He proceeded to infect the American educational system, especially the teachers’ colleges, with humanism. Today, most humanists view the teachings of Christianity as their greatest enemy.

## The Five Key Teachings of Humanism

### *Atheism*

The first and central doctrine of humanism is the belief that there is no God. The humanist “bible” states, “We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of the supernatural; it is either meaningless or irrelevant. As non-theists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity. No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.” This is but a reflection of Satan’s words in Eden promising that Adam and Eve could be like gods.

### *Evolution*

Having rejected God, humanists must somehow explain the origin and existence of the universe. Their solution is to revive the theory of evolution, which can be traced to Babylon two thousand years before the birth of Christ! The greatest boost to this ancient view came from Charles Darwin when he published *The Origin of Species* in 1859. Today this view is so widely accepted as fact that almost every field of study—from chemistry, biology, and astronomy to psychology, political science, and history—is based firmly on it.

Evolution is the foundation of all secular education. If it were suddenly removed from the schools, secular education would crumble. The humanists know that very well; therefore, they will fight tooth and nail to prevent the teaching of Creationism in the schools and to retain evolution as the only permissible view.

Note: You might want to take some time to discuss the fact that evolutionists have not one shred of evidence to support their theory, yet they will dogmatically and fanatically fight to preserve their unproven and unscientific theory. Several books on the Recommended Reading List will prove helpful in this regard. Another excellent source of information on evolution is the Institute of Creation Research, P.O. Box 2667, El Cajon, CA 92021. Their web site is <http://www.icr.org>. They offer a free monthly newsletter that includes many useful articles.

The entire humanist philosophy rises or falls on this one doctrine of evolution. If evolution is wrong, if the Creator indeed exists, then man is dependent on that Creator and is accountable to Him for his actions, choices, and conduct. Evolution is so closely tied to humanism that Sir Julian Huxley, a founder of the American Humanist Association, defined humanism in terms of evolution:

“I use the word ‘humanist’ to mean someone who believes that man is just as much a natural phenomenon as an animal or plant; that his body, mind, and soul were not supernaturally created but are products of evolution, and that he is not under the control or guidance of any supernatural being or beings, but has

to rely on himself and his own powers” (quoted in Henry M. Morris, *Education for the Real World*, San Diego: Creation Life Publishers, 1977, p. 82).

### *Amorality*

According to *The Humanist* magazine, “Darwin’s discovery of the principle of evolution sounded the death knell of religious and moral values. It removed the ground from under the feet of traditional religion.”

If one believes that man is an animal, he will soon believe he is to live like one. If there is no God, there is no rule or law other than the rule of doing whatever you like. As one leading “sexologist” said, pointing upward, “There is no one up there telling you what is right and wrong.” In other words, there is not right and wrong, no good and evil. Man is his own judge of what is acceptable, just as Satan promised Adam and Eve.

### *Autonomous Man*

If man is merely an animal, and if there are no absolutes of right and wrong, man is free to live for himself. Humanism promotes almost fanatically uninhibited self-expression in thought, word, and deed. Rousseau taught that man was basically good and would remain so “as long as nothing foreign to him corrupts him.” By this he means that man, left to himself, remains good. It is only by external factors such as religion that he is corrupted.

### *Socialistic, One-World Order*

A publicly stated goal of humanism is to supersede national boundaries by building a world organization that will have sovereignty over every nation of the world. The United Nations is a favorite tool of the humanists as they vie for control of the world. The various UN organizations actively promote the humanist worldview in the areas of science (UNESCO), relief (UNICEF), agriculture, and political affairs.

## CONCLUSION

Humanism and Christianity are 180° opposed and cannot coexist. Tim LaHaye has stated, “Knowledgeable humanists look upon the church and its doctrinal absolutes as the greatest enemy of mankind” (*The Battle for the Mind*. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1980, p. 78). They are stepping up their attacks on the church and anyone else who tries to maintain a moral standard. Notice the growing number of laws that are being passed that make it more difficult for the church to operate or for parents to rear their children according to God’s Word. Increasingly more laws and court decisions are making it easier for man to “do his own thing” without moral restraint. This is no mere happenstance or accident; it’s all according to Satan’s plan.

Christianity is God’s revelation of Himself as the only source of truth and salvation. Humanism, on the other hand, is man’s attempt to solve his problems independently of God. Christianity cannot coexist with such an avowed enemy without compromising its historic position. If it ever compromised, it would no longer be Christianity, and humanism would have won. The battle lines are drawn. There is no neutral ground. Everyone must choose his side. Where do you stand?

Sometimes the situation may look bleak for Christianity. But God has already pronounced the doom of the humanists. Read Proverbs 1:24-32, Psalm 2, and Jeremiah 8:9. He has already won the victory; we just haven't seen the final chapter yet!

Until we reach that point, our task is clear. We must learn what God's Word says, be willing to obey it, and stand firmly for the Truth. We have the greatest arsenal at our disposal—God's Word. An important weapon in that arsenal is the Book of Proverbs. Challenge the students to study it diligently, memorize it faithfully, and apply its principles regularly to their daily lives.

## Lesson Three

# The Wisdom of God vs. the Wisdom of Man

Throughout the history of mankind, men have been asking the same serious questions.

- Who am I?
- Where did I come from?
- Why am I here?
- Where am I going?
- How can I get there?

Perhaps you have at times asked yourself the same questions. Apart from God, however, philosophers have never been able to arrive at a satisfactory answer to even one of these questions. Yet, the answers to all of these important questions are found in God's Word, the Bible.

As you studied in the previous lesson, there are basically two worldviews: God's way, called biblical Christianity, and man's way, known as humanism. In this lesson, which is possibly the most important lesson of the year, we take a closer look at these two philosophies. They are locked in mortal combat. They are mutually exclusive; they can in no way peacefully coexist. There is no middle ground between them; every person must choose one side or the other (Josh. 24:15).

With this battle waxing hotter every day, a new generation of Christian young people must be built up. First, they must be introduced to the glorious God of the universe that they might know Him and love Him. Then they must be grounded in the faith and equipped to wage war—defending that faith, restraining the assaults of the enemy, and advancing the gospel of Christ throughout the world.

You are an important part of that generation. To be a good and victorious soldier in this spiritual war (Eph. 6:12), you must know the strategy, weaponry, strengths, and weaknesses of

both yourself and the enemy (2 Cor. 2:11). You must learn to detect the tricks of the most subtle and dangerous religion in the world today—humanism.

You have one of the most powerful arsenals at your disposal—“the whole armor of God.” This armor includes “the sword of the Spirit,” the Word of God (Eph. 6:10-18). The book of Proverbs is one of the most powerful weapons in that arsenal. Just as a soldier becomes intimately acquainted with his rifle by studying it, cleaning it, and practicing with it daily, so you must become intimately familiar with your weapon, your spiritual sword. Study Proverbs diligently (Acts 17:11), memorize it faithfully (Ps. 119:11), and apply its truths regularly to your daily life (John 13:17).

## STUDENT LESSON

### WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT HUMANISM

Read Proverbs 1:24-31. This passage deals with the deadly religion of humanism. As you read, answer the following questions.

#### The Sins (Characteristics) of Humanism

- How does the fool respond to wisdom’s call (vv. 24-25)? He refuses to listen and ignores wise counsel.
- Read verses 29–30 again. What are some ways that people your age do the things listed in these verses? Answers will vary. The answers should include the idea that the people described in these verses choose to ignore the Bible and godly advice.

#### The Future of Humanism

The word translated calamity or disaster in verse 26 comes from the Hebrew term meaning “a heavy crushing.” It implies that the trouble resulting from rejecting wisdom will be terrible.

- What four words are used in verse 27 to describe their troubles?
  - Answers will vary based on translation.
  - \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- What picture does the verse use to show how quickly and violently their troubles will come? a rushing storm or whirlwind overwhelming them  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Read verses 26-28. What does God say He will do when the people who reject wisdom call on Him for help?
  - v. 26 He will laugh when their trouble comes upon them.  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - v. 28 He will not answer their calls for help.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Explain (in your own words) their future as described in verse 31. They will  
reap what they have sown.

## WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT CHRISTIANITY

Read Proverbs 2:1-5. This passage deals with the Christian who truly wants to glorify God with his or her life. In your own words, list the characteristics from those verses that identify such a person and the blessings that he or she derives from living such a life.

### The Characteristics of a Christian

- v. 1 (two answers) He receives the words of wisdom.  
He memorizes God's commandments hiding them in his heart like a treasure.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- v. 2 He listens to wisdom and applies his heart to understanding.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- v. 3 He cries out for discernment and understanding.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- v. 5 He understands the fear of the Lord and finds the knowledge of God.  
\_\_\_\_\_

## The Blessings of a Christian

- According to Proverbs 1:33, what is the blessing that comes from listening to wisdom?  
safety and quietness from fear of evil  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Do you exhibit the characteristics of a Christian listed in Proverbs 2:1-5? Do you have a deep desire to know God intimately? The verses you've just read show you how to have all possible blessings of the Christian life.

## CONCLUSION

Humanism and Christianity are 180° opposed and cannot coexist. Someone once said, "Humanists look upon the church and its doctrinal absolutes as the greatest enemy of mankind." As we have seen, God has declared the doom of our humanist enemies. From these two choices, everyone must choose a side: Man or God? There is no neutral ground. And the Christian knows which side is going to win the day when the dust of battle settles.

- Jeremiah 8:9 gives the final verdict. Summarize the verse in your own words on the lines below. Answers will vary.  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## TEACHER'S LESSON

### *Christianity: The Wisdom of God*

- The Foundation—                      The Word of God
- Five Key Teachings
  - God
  - Creation
  - Moral Ethics
  - Servants                      of God
  - A      Compassionate                      Worldview

### ***Humanism: The Wisdom of Man***

- The Foundation— \_\_\_\_\_ Man's Reasoning Powers \_\_\_\_\_
- Five Key Teachings
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Atheism \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Evolution \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Amoralism \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Autonomous \_\_\_\_\_ Man
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Socialistic \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ One-World \_\_\_\_\_ Order

### ***Conclusion***

- Christianity is God's revelation of \_\_\_\_\_ Himself \_\_\_\_\_ as the only source of \_\_\_\_\_ truth \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ salvation \_\_\_\_\_.
- Humanism is man's attempt to \_\_\_\_\_ solve \_\_\_\_\_ his \_\_\_\_\_ problems \_\_\_\_\_ independently of \_\_\_\_\_ God \_\_\_\_\_.

## **DEVELOPING THE IDEAS**

1. Read 2 Peter 3:5-7 and explain how that passage relates to evolutionists and humanists.
2. Explain how one can say that the roots of the "family tree" of humanism can be traced all the way back to the Garden of Eden.
3. How has the widespread acceptance of the humanist philosophy affected the way our national educational system functions? Why is evolution a cornerstone of the educational system? What are the inevitable results of following such views?
4. Why can one say, "The first stone of all humanistic thought is atheism?"
5. Why do humanists insist that there can be no moral absolutes?
6. What are the political ramifications of a world system that is based on humanism?
7. Read and report on one of the books dealing with humanism and/or evolution from the Recommended Reading List.

8. Read about the lives of some of the humanists mentioned in this chapter, noting how they arrived at their erroneous views and their animosity toward God, His Word, and His people.
9. Conduct a study of civilizations that were destroyed (or lost their wealth, power, and influence) because of their departure from God's moral absolutes. List the characteristics that signaled that fall. Note any similarities with our own national situation.
10. Debate the following proposition: "Resolved: that humanism and biblical Christianity cannot peacefully coexist."