

June 7, 2020

Lesson 1

# THE CALL OF WISDOM

ADULT/YOUTH

ADULT/YOUNG ADULT TOPIC: Listen Up!  
YOUTH TOPIC: Learning about Wisdom

CHILDREN

GENERAL LESSON TITLE: Listen to God's  
Wisdom  
CHILDREN'S TOPIC: Wise Up!

DEVOTIONAL READING  
Psalm 34:11-18

ADULT/YOUTH

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 1  
PRINT PASSAGE: Proverbs 1:1-4, 7-8, 10-11,  
20-22, 32-33  
KEY VERSE: Proverbs 1:7

CHILDREN

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 1  
PRINT PASSAGE: Proverbs 1:1-4, 7-8, 10-11,  
20-22, 32-33  
KEY VERSE: Proverbs 1:33

## Proverbs 1:1-4, 7-8, 10-11, 20-22, 32-33 —KJV

THE PROVERBS of Solomon the son of David,  
king of Israel;

- 2 To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;
- 3 To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;
- 4 To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.

.....

7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

8 My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother.

.....

- 10 My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.
- 11 If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for

## Proverbs 1:1-4, 7-8, 10-11, 20-22, 32-33 —NIV

THE PROVERBS of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:

- 2 for gaining wisdom and instruction; for understanding words of insight;
- 3 for receiving instruction in prudent behavior, doing what is right and just and fair;
- 4 for giving prudence to those who are simple, knowledge and discretion to the young.

.....

7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

8 Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching.

.....

- 10 My son, if sinful men entice you, do not give in to them.
- 11 If they say, "Come along with us; let's lie in

blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause.

.....

20 Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets:

21 She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying,

22 How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?

.....

32 For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.

33 But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.

wait for innocent blood, let's ambush some harmless soul."

.....

20 Out in the open wisdom calls aloud, she raises her voice in the public square;

21 on top of the wall she cries out, at the city gate she makes her speech:

22 "How long will you who are simple love your simple ways? How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge?"

.....

32 "For the waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them;

33 "but whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm."

**UNIFYING LESSON PRINCIPLE:** People feel compelled by something greater than themselves to act wisely when confronting feelings of inadequacy to complete a task. How can they overcome these feelings of inadequacy and move forward? The wisdom of God instructs us to discern the direction in which we should go and gives us the insight we need to understand life.

## LESSON OBJECTIVES

*Upon the completion of this lesson, the students will be able to do the following:*

1. Recognize the value of godly wisdom for discerning the direction in which one should go.
2. Value godly wisdom in the choices they make.
3. Make a conscious effort to apply the standards of wisdom to a specific choice that needs to be made.

## AGE-LEVEL POINTS TO BE EMPHASIZED

### Teachers of ADULTS and YOUTH

—The prologue to the book of Proverbs clearly indicates the collection's intended audience: inexperienced young men about to enter adulthood.

—Proverbs 1:7 is considered the motto for the entire collection and firmly connects human wisdom and knowledge to service of God. (See also 8:13; 9:10; 14:27; 15:33; 19:23.)

—Though Wisdom is personified as a woman in Proverbs (see 1:20-33; 8:1-36; 9:1-6), women are noticeably absent from it, appearing primarily in relation to the young men the book addresses.

—Proverbs admonishes us to know or acknowledge the sound instructions of the Word of God.

—Proverbs tells us that there will be corrective measures taken for not obeying instructions.

—It is not enough to simply know right from wrong; it is essential to understand and adhere to instructions.

- Proverbs seeks to provide the naïve with knowledge and insights to lead them to wisdom.
- Proverbs establishes that reverent fear of God is foundational to knowing wisdom.
- Wisdom is a gift from God.

### Teachers of CHILDREN

- Solomon, who was King David’s son and the third king of Israel, is the author of the book of Proverbs.
- Solomon directs his words of guidance and encouragement to young people.

- There is an emphasis placed on the simple ones, the fools, and those who prefer to turn away from wisdom.
- Wisdom is portrayed as a powerful and transforming characteristic of God.
- Wisdom is needed to address the problems of life and the foolish choices that people make.
- Wisdom is a wonderful asset to have and is received with respect and honor by those who want her to lead and nurture their knowledge.

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## THE CHRONOLOGICAL SETTING OF THE LESSON

It is generally accepted that King Solomon wrote the book of Proverbs. King Solomon was a wise king who was known to have more than three thousand proverbs and sayings (see 1 Kings 4:32). However, not all of the proverbs in the book of Proverbs were written by King Solomon as the book itself lets us know. There were others who contributed to the infinite wisdom in the book. Agur, son of Jakeh, contributed (see Proverbs 30:1-33). King Lemuel also wrote a part of it. It is speculated that he may have been a non-Israelite who lived in a place called Uz, where people still believed in Yahweh (see Proverbs 31).

Some parts from Proverbs 22–24 are believed to have been written by a group of people referred to as “wise men,” who are believed to have been attached to King Solomon (1 Kings 4:31; 12:6). The passages in Proverbs 25:1 through Proverbs 29:27 are believed to be the work of a committee appointed under King Hezekiah (726–698 BC).

No one is certain about the date of the writing, but it is widely believed that the book of Proverbs was written and compiled sometime between the tenth and sixth century BC.

## THE GEOGRAPHICAL AND CULTURAL SETTING OF THE LESSON

The cultural setting of the book of Proverbs is a very rich one. Some of the proverbs in the book are thought to emanate from ancient Egyptian wisdom. These proverbs or instructions emanated from wise men of Egypt. There have been arguments that these were probably copied and attributed to King Solomon. Some were said to have been copied from Greek and Persian periods during the post-exilic era. This may be true as it is often the trend that people sometimes attribute more to great men than they actually achieved. However, this does not take anything away from the fact that King Solomon was the wisest man alive.

Since Solomon is said to have spoken those three thousand proverbs, some of which are recorded in the book of Proverbs, it is not strange that people would accord anything “wise” to him. Also, all wisdom comes from God almighty whether it be revealed to children of God, or to those who are yet to come to the light. God is all-wise and so, there is no humanly emanated wisdom that compares to His own.

The book of Proverbs has God at its center, telling people to live their lives in a way as not to offend God and not to offend other people. It advises people to trust in God and to live their lives in a way that pleases God. It speaks against idolatry and gratification of the flesh which may hinder one from being right with God. It is not just a book that teaches morals; it is a book that hinges life and living on God, guiding people on how to live smartly and safely without offending God or the king. It has a focus on Israel before Christ, teaching people to follow the law, and to make sure that even though they may not break the law, they do not err against God in their hearts.

## PROMINENT CHARACTER(S) IN THE LESSON

**Israel:** This refers to the people who inhabited the location that was known as Israel. They were descendants of Abraham, and they were God’s chosen people. The book of Proverbs was for them, to guide them in living right.

**King David:** the father of King Solomon who is, perhaps, the most famous king who ruled Israel. Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, came as a descendant of King David’s.

**King Solomon:** the generally accepted author of the book of Proverbs, and Proverbs 1 is attributed to him. He was king in Israel and he is said to be the richest and wisest king ever.

**The LORD:** The term *LORD* in the Bible is used to refer to Yahweh. The book of Proverbs teaches and guides people to live right according to Yahweh.

## KEY TERMS IN THE LESSON

**Come (verse 11)**—Hebrew: *halak* (haw-lak’): to go, come, walk.

**Delight (verse 22)**—Hebrew: *chamad* (khaw-mad’): to desire, take pleasure in; covet.

**Fear (verse 7)**—Hebrew: *yirah* (yir-aw’): a fear; reverence.

**Instruction (verse 2)**—Hebrew: *musar* (moo-sawr’): discipline; chastening; correction.

**Prudence (verse 4)**—Hebrew: *ormah* (or-maw’): craftiness; cautiousness; “subtily” (KJV).

**Sinful Men (verse 10)**—Hebrew: *chatta* (khat-taw’): sinful; “sinners” (KJV); those who have “missed the mark.”

**Wisdom (verse 2)**—Hebrew: *chakam* (khaw-kawm’): to be wise.

## TOPICAL OUTLINE OF THE LESSON

### I. Introduction

- A. The Way Knowledge Begins
- B. Biblical Background

### II. Exposition and Application of the Scripture

- A. The Purpose of Wisdom (Proverbs 1:1-4)
- B. The Foundation of Wisdom (Proverbs 1:7-8)
- C. The Situations for Wisdom (Proverbs 1:10-11, 20-22)
- D. The Result of Wisdom (Proverbs 1:32-33)

### III. Concluding Reflection

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. The Way Knowledge Begins

A *proverb* is a short, pithy sentence in the form of a similitude or comparison. The book of Proverbs was written for attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight; for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; for giving prudence to the simple, and knowledge and discretion to the young (Proverbs 1:2-4). This Scripture clearly shows the theme and purpose of the book of Proverbs. Although it was written for guidance, it should not be confused with being concerned with morals alone. The author clearly states that it is important, even crucial, to have the fear of God. He contends that fools do not fear God, thus operating in rebellion and displeasing Him on purpose. Proverbs enables men, and especially young men, to obtain wisdom and to get understanding.

Proverbs 1:7 reads, “the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.” This is another way to articulate and to remember that we should not give in to sinners when they try to take our hearts and eyes from God. This outlines the focus on God, which the book of Proverbs discusses and admonishes. Proverbs encourages us to highly value wisdom and understanding.

### B. Biblical Background

Proverbs 1:7 hammers on the fact that the fear of God is the beginning of knowledge. One cannot gain knowledge of spiritual things if he or she does not believe in God in the first place. One must honor God by following God’s commandments. True knowledge is fearing God.

Proverbs 1:7 is repeated in Proverbs 9:10, near the end of the first section. It can also be found in Job 28:28 and Psalm 111:10. This all shows that the foundation of these proverbs and admonitions are all rooted in the fear of God. It is largely about God and not about morals. There is an emphasis on knowledge in Proverbs along with commentary on happenings within the general human society. Proverbs also focuses on the Jewish culture and laws about being right with God. However, the primary focus is the knowledge of God. The book of Proverbs outlines the many benefits that can be obtained from following God’s laws, including the benefits of knowledge and understanding.

## II. EXPOSITION AND APPLICATION OF THE SCRIPTURE

### A. The Purpose of Wisdom (Proverbs 1:1-4)

**THE PROVERBS of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel; to know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; to receive the instruction**

**of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; to give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.**

In many ways, the book of Proverbs can be used as a practical tutorial for men. In many

ways, the life of Solomon represented the apex of what many common men view as living the life: Solomon had great wisdom, he had great wealth, he had great respect through his position/power, and he had great resources for sex through his 700 wives and 300 concubines. Since Solomon had achieved the apex of what some men seek after, he was in a credible and unique position to dispense sound advice. Solomon had been there, done that, and survived to tell the story.

The proverbs of Solomon impart wise and helpful instruction to those who are open and willing to receive it. The wisdom of these writings offers prudent and practical guidance about how to act and react in a variety of different life situations. Life poses such a wide variety of options that it is sometimes difficult to know the difference between what is right and what is wrong. In such situations, we need a reliable tutor and a trustworthy standard upon which to stand. The reliable tutor that has been provided for us is the Holy Spirit and the trustworthy standard is the written Word of God.

Those who are deemed “simple” are those who are unwise and who lack good common sense. The biblical perspective of prudence is the ability to govern and discipline oneself by the use of reason. It involves shrewdness in the management of one’s affairs and good judgment in the use of resources. Some younger people who have not experienced a great deal of life have a tendency to approach life in a naïve fashion. These are the ones who could greatly profit from a more mature perspective and from a mentor who could help one to avoid being deceived, hoodwinked, and bamboozled by false advisers. Everybody needs somebody to help them be better in some way.

## **B. The Foundation of Wisdom (Proverbs 1:7-8)**

**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction. My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother.**

This Scripture presents a picture of the finite creation in the presence of the infinite Creator. To fear the Lord is not to be literally afraid of God in the sense of dread and fright, but it is more of a sense of reverence, respect, awe, and honor. This attitude enables us to better fulfill our obedience to God. Without this foundation of reverent respect for God, all other human knowledge is rendered of little significance in the broad scheme of things. When we focus on the little picture, we get little results. But when we focus on the big picture, we are able to get big results and to build our hope on things eternal. One way to evaluate the significance of a particular so-called wise perspective is to place it within the context of life-defining parameters such as sickness and impending death. If it doesn’t matter at the cemetery, it probably doesn’t really matter that much.

Fools are people who lack wisdom and demonstrate as much by their words and actions. Foolish people can be detected by their rejection of godly principles which are replaced by their own weak ideas and designs. This willful rejection of God’s holy ways eventually leads to their downfall and destruction.

When we speak, we can only say that which we already know. But when we listen, we have the opportunity of learning something new. On a human level, good listening helps with developing fresh insights and ideas that fuel success. But on a spiritual level, good listening leads to eternal life. The speaker in this passage



addresses the listeners with paternal authority yet with affectionate relationship.

### C. The Situations for Wisdom (Proverbs 1:10-11, 20-22)

**My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause. . . . Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: she crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?**

This is a warning against a common practice at the time known as Brigandage, which is the life and practice of highway robbery and plunder. Although it may seem like an easy way to acquire money and things, it is the pathway toward destruction and that lifestyle will eventually come back to bite the participant. Easy money may come quick, but it usually leaves fast. Easy money comes in many forms other than that which is illegal. The lure of easy money also comes in the forms of playing the lottery, high-interest loan shops, and pyramid schemes. The Bible has much to say about the management of money and one source of financial advice is found in Ecclesiastes 7:12 (NRSV)—“For the protection of wisdom is like the protection of money, and the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom gives life to the one who possesses it.”

The literary device of personification is utilized to emphasize the passionate voice of wisdom who desires to impart life-saving instructions to those who will take the time to listen. Wisdom is personified as an elegant woman who stands in the public square as a town crier with worthwhile advice to share. This wise woman called Wisdom will not break

into anyone’s house and force that person to follow the truth. But much like in Revelation 3:20, Wisdom stands at the door to figuratively knock and hope that someone hears her voice and invites her in.

In order for the foolish to begin the process of deliverance and transformation, they must first admit the error of their ways and their need for help and change. When this state of humility and brokenness occurs, the Spirit of God is then able to impart correction and wisdom in order for growth and maturity to begin. Sometimes this process can be painful, but it is necessary pain and a pain that heals rather than a pain that kills.

Wisdom makes no attempts at being coy, shy, or reserved when it comes to widely delivering her crucially important message. Instead, she aggressively climbs on top of the city wall to warn and compel those who are headed to a certain destruction. Accepting or rejecting her message could mean the difference between life and death. Reading this passage should be convicting and motivating for us.

Three categories of people are addressed in this verse: the simple, the scorers, and the fools. The simple are the naive ones who are spiritually immature and unguarded in their minds. Thus, they are easily influenced and led astray by those who do not have their best interest at heart. The mockers or scorers reject and despise what is holy; and, in their pride and arrogance, they deem themselves above spiritual critique and wise advice. Finally, there are the fools who hate knowledge because both true knowledge and godly wisdom expose corruption. Fools devalue wisdom because it is antithetical to the ways of the flesh.

## D. The Result of Wisdom

(Proverbs 1:32-33)

**For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.**

Those who are simple turn away from obedience to God or from the call of wisdom; this action results in death and destruction (see Jeremiah 2:19). Turning away from God is the opposite of listening to God and submitting to God. This is the original sin committed in the Garden of Eden when humanity presumed to know more and be wiser than the Creator. *Complacency* is defined as a feeling of contentment, self-satisfaction, quiet pleasure, and security often combined with a lack of awareness of pending trouble, controversy, or potential danger. Those who are foolish or who act foolishly make themselves into sitting ducks for destruction.

Whoever heeds the instructions of wisdom will be rewarded with the gift of safety and peace of mind. There is no amount of money that can purchase peace of mind, and that is one of the reasons why peace is so valuable. Some of the alternatives to peace and faith include fear and worry. We are called to walk

by faith (see 2 Corinthians 5:7), and whatever is not of faith is sin (see Romans 14:23). Living free from fear and worry is a tremendously underrated bonus of walking by faith.

## III. CONCLUDING REFLECTION

Life is full of daily decisions and choices that have the capacity to shape our destiny. If we are to live lives of power and confidence, we would do well to heed the instructions of wisdom found in the book of Proverbs. Although it was written so many years ago, it still has relevant advice that can be practically applied in contemporary settings. Knowledge can be obtained through reading books and taking classes. But wisdom comes from heeding the will of God as personified by Lady Wisdom. Wisdom is a gift of God that can be of supreme value if we acknowledge God in all our ways (see Proverbs 3:5-6). There is no true profit in gaining the whole world if in the process we lose our souls (see Mark 8:36).

## PRAYER

*Lord, please give us the grace to seek first Your kingdom and Your righteousness, knowing that all the other things that we need will eventually be added. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

## HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

(June 1-7, 2020)

### The Call of Wisdom

**MONDAY, June 1:** “Faith Community Discerns Path of Wisdom” (Acts 6:1-7)

**TUESDAY, June 2:** “Parents Joyfully Pass On the Faith” (2 Timothy 1:3-9a)

**WEDNESDAY, June 3:** “Learning the Fear of the Lord” (Psalm 34:11-18)

**THURSDAY, June 4:** “Violence Is Not a Wise Choice” (Matthew 26:47-52)

**FRIDAY, June 5:** “The Vast Scope of Solomon’s Wisdom” (1 Kings 4:29-34)

**SATURDAY, June 6:** “Prize Wisdom and Insight” (Proverbs 4:1-9)

**SUNDAY, June 7:** “Godly Wisdom for Life’s Decisions” (Proverbs 1:1-4, 7-8, 10-11, 20-22, 32-33)