

July 26, 2020

Lesson 8

# WISDOM: THE WAY, TRUTH, AND LIFE

ADULT/YOUTH

ADULT/YOUNG ADULT TOPIC: **Finding One's Way**  
YOUTH TOPIC: **Choosing Wisdom as the Way**

CHILDREN

GENERAL LESSON TITLE: **Wise Up and Live for God**  
CHILDREN'S TOPIC: **I Choose Truth**

DEVOTIONAL READING  
Proverbs 3:13-18

ADULT/YOUTH

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: **Proverbs 3:17; 8:32-36; John 14:1-14**  
PRINT PASSAGE: **John 14:1-14**  
KEY VERSE: **John 14:6**

CHILDREN

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: **Proverbs 3:17; 8:32-36; John 14:1-14**  
PRINT PASSAGE: **John 14:1-14**  
KEY VERSE: **John 14:12**

## John 14:1-14—KJV

LET NOT your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

7 If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

## John 14:1-14—NIV

“DO NOT let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.

2 “My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?”

3 “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

4 “You know the way to the place where I am going.”

5 Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

6 Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

7 “If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

8 Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?

10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

11 Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

10 "Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.

11 "Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves.

12 "Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

13 "And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

14 "You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."

**UNIFYING LESSON PRINCIPLE:** Some people say there are many ways to salvation and that everyone attains it by following his or her own way. What are we to make of such claims? Just as Proverbs contrasted the way of wisdom with false ways, Jesus proclaimed that He is the way, the truth, and the life through whom His disciples would come to know and understand God the Father.

## LESSON OBJECTIVES

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

1. Explore the encounter between Jesus and the disciples in the upper room as Jesus told them that He was going away and that they would only later be able to join Him in a place He would prepare.
2. Appreciate the difficulty the disciples had in understanding Jesus.
3. Celebrate the promise of Jesus to prepare a place for His followers and to hear and respond to their prayers.

## AGE-LEVEL POINTS TO BE EMPHASIZED

### Teachers of ADULTS and YOUTH

—Jesus' words and proclamations in John 14:1-14 offer similarities to Wisdom's speech in Proverbs 8:1-36.

—Chapters 14–17 are known as the Farewell Discourse of Jesus. Jesus bequeaths wisdom and power to the disciples.

—John 14 shows the difficulty the disciples had in understanding Jesus. These things He spoke of were very new to them and hard to perceive.

- They asked questions to get clarity, but only later would they come to a better understanding.
- The unity of the Father and the Son (14:11) is a recurrent theme in John’s gospel.
- Jesus as truth in John 14:6 aligns with “the truth” in 1:14.
- Verse 13*: “in my name” means to ask as Jesus’ representative rather than invoking the name *Jesus* as a kind of magic spell.

### Teachers of CHILDREN

- Jesus speaks words of comfort and care to the disciples as He prepares for His death and resurrection.
- Jesus is informing the disciples that His love for them is so great that He has already prepared a

- place for them in eternity with the Father and Himself.
- The disciples did not fully understand what Jesus was saying about the way, the truth, and the life.
- Jesus rebukes Philip for his desire to see the Father, questions all of the disciples’ faith and belief in Him as truth, and expects them to focus their attention on God’s working inside Him (Jesus).
- Jesus proclaims that persons of faith will follow Him in their actions and will do things that are even greater than what He does.
- Jesus declares that anything done or asked in His name will be blessed.

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## THE CHRONOLOGICAL SETTING OF THE LESSON

Proverbs 3:17 and Proverbs 8:32-36 (Background Scripture) teach about the righteous way. Solomon is credited as the author, and he composed these sayings to offer instruction, wisdom, and understanding during his reign in the tenth century from 970 to 930 BC. In general, the book of Proverbs is a compilation of Israelite wisdom, and it provides insight on how to live a life that is pleasing to God. Proverbs 3 serves to persuade believers to be holy and provides them with the necessary direction in this regard. The seventeenth verse shows the importance of gaining wisdom. Similarly, Proverbs 8:32-36 emphasizes the benefits of being righteous and able to correctly discern the ways of the Lord. These passages are compiled around the central contrasting themes of wisdom and folly.

Authorship of the book of John is credited to the beloved disciple of Jesus named John, the brother of James and the son of Zebedee; he was a part of the inner circle companions of Jesus. A close study of the gospel of John gives some clue as to the identity of the “beloved disciple.” This disciple

must be a Jew, a native of Palestine, an apostle, and an eyewitness of the account being written. All these criteria are satisfied by John. The gospel of John obviously was written after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and further evidence suggests it was written in a relatively short time. It is dated around 90–100 CE. This book of the Bible was written to the church, and it focuses on the divinity of Jesus Christ, signs and miracles, and how these connect with faith.

## THE GEOGRAPHICAL AND CULTURAL SETTING OF THE LESSON

The cultural setting for the book of Proverbs goes as far back as the time prior to the Babylonian exile, providing details about the lives lived by the children of God during this time. The wealth of masculine language in this book is indicative of the vastly different cultural spheres that existed among men and women in this age and the attendant varying child-rearing practices that were used in training boys and girls. The style of the Proverbs found

in this book is also similar to what is to be expected in Near East communities and civilizations.

The gospel of John has a different setting from the Synoptic Gospels. This book of the Bible was written in a different context and time—around the end of the first century—when the church was confronting a new challenge. False teachers had arisen in the church, and some people were beginning to question and challenge the deity of Christ. Others were questioning His humanity. John wrote to lay to rest these issues, and in the opening lines of this book he confirms the deity and humanity of Jesus by stating, “The Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). Later, he continues, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (John 1:14a, NIV). The geographical setting of John’s gospel has always been disputed. However, the two possible locations where this gospel could have been written are Syria and Ephesus. Syria is a possibility because of the connection of the gospel with the Odes of Solomon and Ignatius of Antioch. However, according to early church tradition, it is suggested that John composed his gospel in Ephesus.

## PROMINENT CHARACTER(S) IN THE LESSON

**Solomon:** credited as the author of most of the Proverbs. He composed these sayings to offer instruction, wisdom, and understanding during his reign in the tenth century from 970 to 930 BC.

## KEY TERMS IN THE LESSON

**Believe (verse 1)**—Greek: *pisteuó* (pist-yoo’-o): to have faith in; to trust, entrust.

**Heart(s) (verse 1)**—Greek: *kardia* (kar-dee’-ah): the heart; inner life (lives); intention.

**Know (verse 5)**—Greek: *eidó* (i’-do): to know of anything; remember; be aware of; behold.

**Place (verse 3)**—Greek: *topos* (top’-os): a place, region, seat; an opportunity.

**Prepare (verse 2)**—Greek: *hetoimazó* (het-oy-mad’-zo): to prepare, make ready.

**Way (verse 4)**—Greek: *hodos* (hod-os’): a way, road, journey; path.

## TOPICAL OUTLINE OF THE LESSON

### I. Introduction

- A. God’s Wisdom Provides the Way, Truth, and Life
- B. Biblical Background

### II. Exposition and Application of the Scripture

- A. Don’t Worry  
(John 14:1-5)
- B. Don’t Wonder  
(John 14:6-9)
- C. Don’t Waver  
(John 14:10-14)

### III. Concluding Reflection

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. God's Wisdom Provides the Way, Truth, and Life

Even though the Proverbs passage is in the background Scripture, it provides an important context for today's lesson. The overall General Lesson title is "Wisdom: The Way, Truth, and Life." The book of Proverbs has historically been considered an anthology of wise sayings. When it is connected with the book of John, which presents Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life, we can see the unique connection. The book of Proverbs teaches about divine wisdom. Chapters 3 and 8 of Proverbs reveal that real peace comes from an understanding and knowledge of the way of God, and it advises that living true to this path would bring benefits to the believer.

John 14 shows Jesus in conversation with His disciples, telling them to cast aside their worries and trust in Him completely. In this text, Jesus establishes that He is the way, the truth, and the life, and that He is the only channel through which God the Father can be accessed. Jesus goes further to tell His disciples about the Advocate that would be with them when He returns to His Father in heaven.

### B. Biblical Background

The book of Proverbs has its background in the cultural Jewish belief system. Proverbs 3:17 and 8:32-36 introduce the concept of the way of the righteous and the merits of living by the code and precepts outlined in the Bible. It was and is designed to school young men in particular and young people in general on how to live right through the application of wise thoughts. Wisdom in Proverbs is based upon having a deep reverence for God and a willingness to be obedient to His laws. Proverbs tells us that the "fear of" or reverence for God is the beginning of wisdom.

John 14:1-14 is deeply rooted in faith and its numerous workings, and how Jesus has paid the price and gone to prepare a place for those that truly believe. In this passage, Jesus reassured His disciples that His death has a divine purpose and He sought to help them understand why it was necessary that He die. His reassurance is embedded in His statement that He is "the way, and the truth, and the life."

## II. EXPOSITION AND APPLICATION OF THE SCRIPTURE

### A. Don't Worry

(John 14:1-5)

**LET NOT your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place**

**for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?**

As the disciples convened in the Upper

Room, they struggled to grasp the concept of Jesus' imminent departure, and undoubtedly a somber sense of dread must have pervaded the atmosphere. The tone set by Jesus suggests that one has a choice as to whether he or she will "allow" his or her heart to be troubled (verse 1). Some people labor under the false assumption that worry and dread are inevitable terrorists that mercilessly attack us at will and there is nothing that can be done about it. However, Jesus informs us that we can actually choose healing over heartache, peace over panic, and calm over chaos. Jesus Himself demonstrated this capacity as He encountered the dread of death (see John 12:27; 13:21).

Belief in God and belief in Jesus were given as powerful ways and reasons that we can refuse to flinch in the face of fear. Problems of the present pale in comparison to a sure and unwavering confidence in God. The Jews of the time accepted the reality of God just as they relied on breathing every day. Jesus, however, desired for them to extend the trust they had in God and to apply it to Him as well. This was a difficult exercise to accomplish because some of the Jews did not accept Jesus as the Messiah. But Jesus was present with God in the beginning (see John 1:1), and at the appropriate time the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory (see John 1:14). First Peter 2:8 (NIV) refers to Jesus as "a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for. In this verse, Jesus is saying to the listeners then as He is still saying to us now that if we truly understood the kind of peace that He

offered, we would gladly embrace it and our unnecessary worries and burdens would be lifted.

The Greek word for "house" (verse 2) is the same one used metaphorically in 2 Corinthians 5:1. These are the only two places where this word is used in the New Testament. Perhaps Jesus was attempting to allay their fears regarding His departure by reminding them that His leaving would not be a permanent condition. Like a father who is about to leave on a long trip, Jesus promised that He and His disciples would eventually be reunited with the Father in a place that had plenty of space with no possibility of overcrowding for those who qualified.

In verse 3, Jesus simply yet profoundly provides a guarantee of making good on His promise to the disciples. A common practice for a band of travellers in that day was to send a few representatives ahead of the group to make adequate preparation for the arrival of the rest of the group. Jesus adapts this practice and applies it to Himself as the one who is going ahead to prepare a place for future fellowship to occur. The three parts, then, of this promise is the leaving, the return, and the forever fellowship.

In verse 4, Jesus wisely answers the disciples' question before they ask it. He is continuing to provide a sense of assurance that the three years they have invested with Him has not been in vain. His departure is part of His purpose which cannot be fulfilled without His exit. When Jesus tells His disciples that they know where He is going it serves as a bridge of hope and assurance that they have what it takes to continue the ministry and to fulfill the vision that was cast by the Master.

It should be no surprise that it is Thomas who interjects a line of questioning and doubt into the assurances being given by

Jesus (verse 5). Thomas has walked with Jesus and lived with Jesus and watched Jesus operate up-close and personal for the past three years and after never seeing Him falter or fail or speak one mistruth, he still consistently demonstrates his innate tendency toward doubt. By his statement, Thomas essentially discloses that despite all the time that he has spent with Jesus, he still never learned the lesson Jesus repeatedly taught about the necessity of Jesus' return to the Father. Thomas seemed to be a bit of a spiritually slow learner, and the same can be said for many of us who are given the same lesson multiple times, yet we continue to fail the tests.

## B. Don't Wonder

(John 14:6-9)

**Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?**

This classic statement by Jesus in verse 6 is a staple in many Vacation Bible Schools and is a great verse to use when introducing someone to Christ. Jesus uses the personal pronoun "I" in order to distinguish Himself from all other possible imitators (see John 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:5). Jesus offers a remedy to Thomas's nagging doubt regarding the ability of Jesus. Jesus serves as the bridge between the holy divinity of the Father and the sinful state of the people. Jesus Christ is God's solution to the problem of human imperfection and evil. Because of Jesus' death on the cross, we do not have to be

separated from God any longer. Jesus paid the price for our sin, and in so doing He bridged the gap between God and us.

Rather than making efforts to reach God on our own terms, all we have to do is accept the sacrifice that has already been provided. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die like everyone else, will live again. They are given eternal life for believing in me and will never perish" (see John 11:25-26).

Perhaps Jesus was saying to His understudy disciples in verse 7, "If you had really known Me as you should have known Me, you would also know My Father God as well because we are as one." The way to receive that revelation is through the power of the Holy Spirit who gives us wisdom, insight, and spiritual revelation (see Ephesians 1:17). This statement accentuates the reality that truly knowing Jesus is not about public fast facts or even about visual observation and proximity. Truly knowing Jesus comes from the development of a growing, obedient, and intimate relationship with the risen Savior with evidence through bearing the fruit of the Spirit.

After Jesus has responded to the question asked by Thomas, He is then accosted with another dubious statement, this time by Philip (verse 8). Philip's request concerns Jesus' giving still more proof of His divinity and proof of His connection to Father God. It must have been frustrating, if not sad, for Jesus to have poured so much of Himself and His teachings into the lives of the disciples only to have Philip miserably fail the test at the moment of the "final exam." Surely then, as well as now, Jesus willingly and compassionately performs miracles in order for the people to take Him at

His word. He wanted them to stand on the fact that “man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

Jesus had opened blinded eyes, healed the lame, fed multitudes, and even raised the dead. Despite all this miraculous and incontrovertible evidence of His divinity, many still did not believe (verse 9). This is proof that the central factor at stake is not the need for Jesus to prove Himself but the need for people to believe. Jesus had already done His due diligence by performing excellent teachings, mighty miracles, and demonstration of character. Belief was the problem. One of the most difficult hurdles for the people then and now was/is the ability to believe that a man could also actually be God (see Matthew 11:27; Luke 10:22; John 1:18).

### C. Don't Waver

(John 14:10-14)

**Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.**

First of all, Jesus wants to make sure it is understood that nothing He does and says comes from a place of self-centered ego tripping (verse 10). Everything He does undergirds the central purpose of glorifying God the Father. He takes the disciples back to the spiritual classroom and teaches a refresher course on Basic Discipleship 101. He had taught this many times before, and it starts with Jesus' being in

God and God's being in Jesus (see John 8:28, 38). If this basic premise is not accepted, then it will always be difficult to significantly build beyond that.

Through His profound understanding of the human condition and its limitations, Jesus wanted to make sure that the listeners had the best possible chance of receiving and believing the truth of the Gospel. To that end, He gave them a choice in verse 11: either believe Him because of their personal experience with Him, or believe Him because they saw His works with their own eyes. His works must have been quite profound for Him to use them as evidence of His divinity. Some people only need a one-time experience with Jesus to believe. Others require a lifetime of proof, and even then the most extraordinary miracles may still be suspect.

Verse 12 has been a source of speculation among the theological community due to Jesus' own comparison of His works and the works of those who would come after Him. The primary focus is upon the word *greater*. What does this word mean in this context, and how could any human's effort or works possibly be greater than the works of Jesus?

There are at least two kinds of “greater” that could be considered here. One type of “greater” is greater in number, quantity, or occurrence. Another type of “greater” is greater in terms of quality. It would be very difficult even to come close to superseding the quality of Jesus' miracles. Who else can compare, even though the disciples still accomplished miracles, serving as vessels for physical healings? According to Acts 5:15 (NIV), “people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by.” Beyond that in terms



of greater works, Jesus' ability to make an impact was limited to a small radius. Since that time, the Gospel has been spread over the entire world, and evangelists such as Billy Graham have personally preached to millions more than Jesus did in His time on earth. The introduction of television and the Internet even further increases the gap between how many people are reached by Jesus personally and how many are reached by His contemporary disciples.

What does it mean to ask for something in Jesus' name (verse 13)? Is this phrase composed of the right magic words that will be sure to activate special powers needed to grant my request? Does God even hear prayers that do not end with the phrase "in Jesus' name"? First of all, to do anything in Jesus' name would be doing that thing not only in the name of Jesus, but also in the will of God. It is wanting what God wants and doing what God would do. Praying and saying "in Jesus' name" is not a guarantee of successful endeavors or answered prayers. Proof that God does answer prayers without the prayer ending "in Jesus' name" is seen in the fact that many of the prayers included in the Bible do not include the phrase in question. Even the prayer that Jesus taught to His own disciples when they asked Him to

teach them to pray ends in, "For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever." What God desires is a heart that is flexible enough to be molded and shaped into the divine will of almighty God so that God's glory may be seen and His kingdom may come on earth as it is in heaven.

### III. CONCLUDING REFLECTION

It is natural to have questions when it comes to trusting God, understanding God, and developing our walk of faith. God is not afraid of our questions as we navigate life decisions and search for deeper meaning in life. However, there should come a point in the life of the believer when God has already shown so much power and capability that we should have no doubt about whether or not God can and will make a way. Even beyond believing God for the things that God has already done, there is also the need to learn how to walk by faith and not by sight. The mature Christian is the one who has no need to be constantly reassured that God is good and able.

### PRAYER

*Dear Lord, teach us to remember what You have taught us, and help us to walk by faith and not by sight. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

## HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

*(July 20-26, 2020)*

### Wisdom: The Way, Truth, and Life

**MONDAY, July 20:** "Wisdom—the Source of Abundant Life" (Proverbs 3:13-18)

**TUESDAY, July 21:** "Jesus Does What the Father Does" (John 5:19-24)

**WEDNESDAY, July 22:** "Love as I Loved You" (John 13:31-35)

**THURSDAY, July 23:** "The Spirit of Truth Dwells in You" (John 14:15-17)

**FRIDAY, July 24:** "Love Binds Believers to God" (John 14:18-24)

**SATURDAY, July 25:** "The Spirit of Wisdom Is Promised to All" (John 14:25-31)

**SUNDAY, July 26:** "Jesus, the Way to the Father" (John 14:1-14)