

Bible Study
Proverbs



Trinity Church Adelaide

Welcome to our study of Proverbs! “The Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth comes knowledge and understanding.” (Prov 2:6) Across 6 weeks in our Sunday gatherings we will be exploring the book of Proverbs and we’ve got a series of studies that tracks closely with this to keep mulling it over together. It’s going to be a great mix of big-picture and close-focus. We’ll be grappling with what it means to live wisely and it’s going to be a fun challenge to make sense of the many simple-yet-profound sayings that will cross our path. Through it all we will be encouraged to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, ‘in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.’ (Col 2:3) And what treasure God has in store for us: ‘more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold... more precious than rubies!’ (Prov 3:14-15)

Proverbs is a gold mine of memory verses, and we’d encourage you to be deliberate in memorising any passages that really hit home for you. We’d like to suggest two passages worth making a real effort to commit to memory. These provide a foundational perspective that not only helps us make sense of Proverbs, but helps us live wisely in Christ:

*“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge,
but fools despise wisdom and instruction.” Proverbs 1:7*

*“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.” Proverbs 3:5-6*

Print these out, write them out again and again, stick them on your toilet door or bathroom mirror, make a bookmark with them, set them as your computer wallpaper... whatever you’ll find helpful to bed them deep into your memory.

And on the topic of helping us remember things, each study in this booklet concludes with an encouragement to ‘wise living’ that will be discussed in ‘wise reflection’ in the following study. This not only aids memory, but helps us thank God for the wins and take the losses to him in prayer as we spur one another on in faith, hope and love.

‘Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.’ Proverbs 27:6

Here are a few helpful tools for studying Proverbs.

The Bible Project puts together excellent videos that provide an overview of biblical books and themes.

They have two overviews of Proverbs. The first helpfully emphasises the impact of the structure of the book.

<https://bibleproject.com/all-videos/read-scripture-old-testament/>

The second provide similar insights from a slightly different angle.

<https://bibleproject.com/all-videos/wisdom-series/>

If you are looking for a high quality yet accessible commentary on Proverbs, it is hard to go past one written by Australian OT scholar Lindsay Wilson in the Tyndale Old Testament Commentary

<https://ivpbooks.com/proverbs>

If you're looking for family devotions on Proverbs, pastor and author Marty Machowski has published 'Wise Up', an excellent volume of 12 weeks of devotions.

<https://newgrowthpress.com/wise-up-10-minute-family-devotions-in-proverbs/>

As a companion to the 'Wise Up' devotions, Sovereign Grace Music published an album of songs that reflect on the wisdom of Proverbs. Check out 'Walking With The Wise' on streaming services and wherever you get your music.

<https://sovereigngracemusic.org/music/albums/walking-with-the-wise/>

On the topic of Music, the Verses Project is a great collection of art and music to aid memorisation of scripture. Search for 'Proverbs' and see what you get...

<http://theversesproject.com/search?q=proverbs>

Study 1 – The beginning of wisdom

Sunday May 17. Sermon title: Do you want to be wise? Proverbs 1:1-7

The Big Idea: The foundation of a wise life is knowing and fearing God.

Wise reflection:

We've just spent three weeks learning about the resurrection - both Jesus' and ours. What would be a wise response to the announcement that Jesus rose from the dead? What might be one foolish response to this announcement?

Wise listening:

Read Proverbs 1:1-6

From v1, who wrote Proverbs? How is he described here? What do we know about him from elsewhere in the Bible?

From v2-4, what is Proverbs for?

From v5-6, how should a wise person respond and what will be the result?

From these introductory verses, how would you sum up the nature and purpose of Proverbs?

Read Proverbs 1:7

This is the first and foundational proverb in the book of Proverbs. It has the same structure that most of the proverbs have, with two lines in parallel. Sometimes the parallel lines might complement each other and build on a similar idea, or they contrast each other as in this one. Each line helps us understand the other because of their similarities and differences and together they make their point, although sometimes the point is hard to discern!

What is the contrast made in v7 and what is the point being made?

What is there about God to be fearful of? How do the death and resurrection of Jesus help us see even more clearly that God is to be feared?

How is fearing God the opposite of despising wisdom and instruction?

Note that like most proverbs this one doesn't actually instruct us to do anything, but what is the response that it prompts in us?

We might be inclined to read this proverb with the assumption that we are wise people. From the definition of a fool given in this verse, how are we all naturally prone to foolishness? (Of the many other places in scripture you could see this coming through, you might like to read Romans 1:20-23, Romans 3:10-18 and the root cause in Genesis 3:6)

What hope does the gospel give us in light of our natural inclination to foolishness?

Wise living:

The headings of Trust, Say, Do, Pray are not intended to mean you should work through all of these points of application, but rather to help us avoid our individual hobby horses of only considering one aspect of how God calls us to respond to his word.

Trust:

Do you treat God too flippantly? How might you need to reflect on his character more respectfully this coming week?

Say:

Share with someone one way that you've experienced the impact of recognising God's holiness, justice and mercy.

Do:

Memorise Proverbs 1:7 this week.

Pray:

This proverb highlights the importance of fearing God. Think of some elements of God's character that are praiseworthy or ways his wisdom and glory have been displayed. Spend some time praising him and acknowledging who he is.

Spend time in confession of your foolishness, thanking God for the forgiveness and hope of transformation that he offers us in Christ.

Study 2 – Two ways to live.

Sunday May 24. Sermon title: Choose Wisdom not Folly, Proverbs 1:8-19, 9:1-18

The Big idea: The pursuit of wisdom is a choice and the choice is essentially to choose Jesus, the embodiment and goal of wisdom.

Wise Reflection:

How has your week been impacted by 'the fear of the Lord'? Pray together about the times that your fear of God was displaced by something else.

Wise Listening:

Read Proverbs 1:7-19

Proverbs is portrayed using the scenario of a father guiding his son, with the implication from 1:1 that the father figure is King Solomon in all his God-given wisdom (see 1 Kings 4:29-30).

While v8-9 encourages the son to listen to the wisdom of his parents, from v10-19, who should the son NOT listen to?

From what is described here, what might be appealing about listening to such people?

In a worldly sense, what might even seem 'wise' about their invitation?

How does the fear of the Lord set a foundation for thinking wisely about such invitations?

In Proverbs the 'father' repeatedly presents his 'son' with the choice between wisdom and folly. A vivid image that the father uses a number of times is the invitation of two different women whom we'll refer to as Lady Wisdom and Lady Folly. Divide your group in half to read about these two women and their invitations and then compare and contrast your observations.

One half of the group read Proverbs 7:1-27 and 9:13-18

How is Lady Folly described?

How does she make her invitation? What is so seductive about it?

What are the consequences of accepting this invitation and how do they contrast with the promises Folly makes?

The other half of the group read Prov 8:1-21 and 9:1-6

How is Lady Wisdom described?

From 8:1-4, how does she make her invitation?

How does 8:10-11 imply that it might not always be easy to choose wisdom?

How would you sum up the consequences of choosing wisdom?

Proverbs has a lot more to say about this choice between Lady Wisdom and Lady Folly. After sharing your observations of these passages, what are the main points of contrast in how they've been described here?

Of course, the portrayal of Wisdom and Folly as women doesn't mean that this is only for men or that it has nothing to help women grow in wisdom. Remember that Proverbs is set in the context of a hypothetical discussion between a father and his son. As such, the implications are just as real for those who might be seduced by Mr Folly and need to listen instead to Mr Wisdom. Either way, on the face of it pursuing folly seems quite foolish! Who in their right mind would do such a thing? And yet it can be so enticing!

Looking back at Prov 1:7, what might seem so enticing about foolishness? What might make wisdom seem less attractive?

Read Matthew 7:24-27.

How does Jesus summarise the choice between wisdom and folly?

At first glance this analogy seems crazy. Why do you think anyone would ever build their house on sand rather than the rock?

What does it mean for us to choose wisdom today?

How can we help each other make such a choice?

Wise Living:

Trust:

How can we help each other trust God when he tells us that the invitation of Folly is deceitful and disastrous?

Say:

Make a specific plan for the week ahead to write to or speak with one person to gently encourage them to persevere in wise living.

Do:

What is one area of life where you need to change your behaviour because you've been enticed by Folly? What will it look like to avoid wandering down the street that leads to the corner that leads to the door that leads to destruction?

Pray:

The Lord's prayer is part of Jesus' words that the wise person hears and puts into practice (Matt 7:24). Each day this week pray the Lord's Prayer reflecting on how each line reflects a godly fear of the Lord and asks God to help us move forward in wise living. We'll reflect together in the next study on the impact that praying this regularly has on us.

Our Father in Heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.
For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
Now and forever.
Amen.

Study 3 – Wisdom for life part 1

Sunday May 31. Sermon title: Ethics by Soundbites, Proverbs 26:1-28

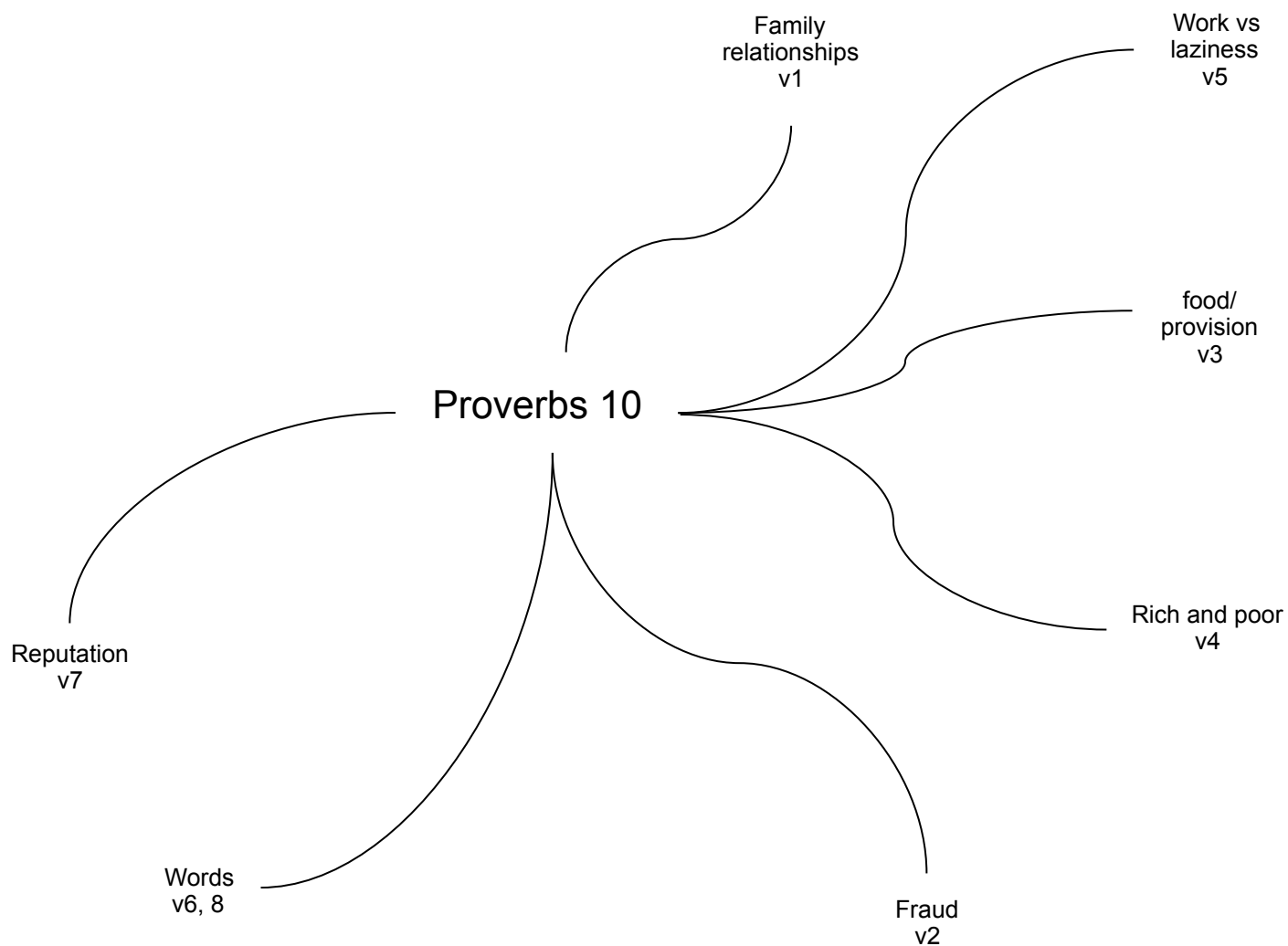
The Big Idea: "Proverbs are probabilities not promises." How to read proverbs well.

Wise Reflection

Share your experience of the impact that praying the Lord's Prayer has had on your thinking about wisdom and folly.

Wise Listening

Proverbs chapters 1-9 provide an introductory framework for reading the rest of the book as it sets out the choice between wisdom and folly. From chapter 10 on we come to the various individual proverbs and it can be hard to see how they relate to each other. We're going to get a taste for this by simply reading through chapter 10 and using the space below to draw a 'mind map' of the various parts of life that are mentioned. We've made a start with the first few verses to show what we mean. At this stage, don't try to figure out what each proverb is saying, just note the different areas of life they relate to.



What stands out to you about the various sayings in this chapter?

Proverbs can be challenging because the individual sayings aren't organised according to topic. How does this reflect life?

Skim read the chapter again – are there any sayings that are direct commands or instructions? Are there any that are specific promises? How would you describe what these sayings are?

Look closely at v27.

As an observation of life in the world, in what sense is it generally true? Why might this be so?

If this was a promise, in what sense does it often prove to be untrue? Why is this so? Reading it in light of Jesus, in what sense is it ultimately true?

This helps us see how context matters in our reading of the various sayings in Proverbs. Unlike other parts of the Bible that have a continuous story or logical argument where the context is usually defined by the verses immediately before and after, the context of the individual proverbs is provided by the overall perspective of the book and even more by the wider perspective of the Biblical worldview. As someone has summarised: 'proverbs are probabilities not promises.' The wise person makes sense of them and applies them by reading them through the lens of the rest of scripture. This means that there are three main aspects to context to take into account when reading Proverbs:

- 1 - Creation is good and ordered because it has been made by a good and orderly God.
- 2 - Creation is frustrated and disordered by sin and its consequences.
- 3 - Creation is looking forward to its future redemption in Christ. In all this, the fear of the Lord is what will enable wise reading and wise living.

Wise Living

Pray that you will trust God's wisdom for life, seek it out, and put it into practice.

Attached at the conclusion of this study booklet is another series of studies that our youth leaders have prepared for the high-school youth group, Fusion. They're great studies that trace an aspect of practical wisdom through Proverbs and they help us to do exactly what we've just prayed: to trust God's wisdom, seek it out and put it into practice. Next week we will spend our time together working through one of these themes as a group, so decide now which theme that will be. Of the remaining themes, pick another one of interest to you personally that you'll work through in your own time in the coming week. Don't be put off that these studies are written for teenagers! God's wisdom is ageless and we will all be better for spending time in his word. Praise God for our fantastic team of youth leaders who are helping Fusion youth - and all of us - learn from God's wisdom!

Study 4 – Wisdom for life part 2

Sunday June 7. Sermon title: The Ant and the Sluggard. Proverbs 6:6-11, 26:13-16

The Big Idea: Much of the wisdom of Proverbs can be considered in various 'themes' of life, and there is so much to learn that we'll just get a taste of this week.

Wise reflection

Can you recite Proverbs 1:7?

Share one thing that has stood out to you from our study of Proverbs so far and take that to God in prayer – either in thanksgiving, confession, or asking him for help.

Wise listening and living

As we anticipated last week, this week we're making use of the great thematic studies that our Fusion leaders have prepared for our church youth to work through. These additional studies can be found at the conclusion to this booklet. One of the core themes of Proverbs is to have the humility to accept wisdom and instruction, so we'd be foolish to dismiss a study written for youth simply because "we're beyond that!" Proverbs certainly doesn't hold back on this theme:

When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.

(Proverbs 11:2)

Wisdom's instruction is to fear the Lord, and humility comes before honour.

(Proverbs 15:33)

Do you see a person wise in their own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for them. (Proverbs 26:12)

So, pick a theme from the Fusion studies and delight in God's wisdom as you work through it together!

Study 5 – Gaining wisdom

Sunday June 14. Sermon title: What can we learn from worldly wisdom? Proverbs 30:1-33

The Big Idea: Special Revelation informs our understanding of General Revelation. All truth is God's truth, all wisdom is his wisdom, any wisdom in worldly wisdom is a gift from God mediated through his creation, but our only way to discern what is wisdom and what is folly is to view it all through the lens of scripture. In this we will often see that what seems foolish is wise and what seems wise is folly.

Wise reflection

The contrast between pride and humility is one of the most common themes discussed in Proverbs. How have you been challenged to be more humble through the specific topics you've considered in these recent sessions?

Wise listening

Read the following clusters of proverbs and consider the question: how do we gain wisdom?

Proverbs 6:6-8; 19:20; 22:17-21; 23:29-30; 24:32-34; 30:24-28

Proverbs 4:3-5; 6:20-23; 10:17; 12:1; 13:1;

Proverbs 1:7; 2:6-8; 9:10; 20:12; 30:2-6

So we see that much wisdom can be gained through the careful observation of the world, but this alone is not a sufficient source of wisdom. Godly wisdom pays close attention to the ways of the world with the humility to be taught and corrected by others. But even more than that, true wisdom recognises that any ability to attain wisdom is a gift from God and any true wisdom must reflect what he has made known in his word.

How do the following proverbs demonstrate that there can be such a thing as 'false wisdom.' Have you seen any examples of this in life?

Proverbs 1:10-14; 3:7; 10:16-18; 12:15; 14:12; 16:25;

With this in mind, **read 1 Corinthians 1:18-31.**

What does this teach us about true wisdom?

How does this equip us to observe and evaluate the wisdom of the world?

(If you want to explore this further, you might like to read Jeremiah 9:23-24, which Paul quotes in 1 Corinthians 1:31, and ask the same questions of this passage in Jeremiah in light of its fulfilment in Christ)

Wise Living:

At the start of this booklet we recognised Proverbs 1:7 and 3:5-6 as two good passages for memorisation. As we live in light of what we've learned from this study, let's use Proverbs 3:5-6 as a tool for wise living.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

Trust:

When do you find it hard to trust in the foolishness of the cross rather than worldly wisdom and your own perspective?

Say:

Speak this memory verse to yourself each morning this week.

Do:

Where do you need to allow God's wisdom to put you back on straight paths?

Pray:

Pray for those in leadership (in our church, in your workplace, in our world). Ask God to enable them to make wise decisions and that they would seek the ultimate wisdom found in Jesus.

Study 6 – Pursue Wisdom

Sunday June 21. Sermon title: How about you suggest one! Proverbs 31:1-31

The Big Idea: Pursue wisdom for life!

Wise reflection

Can you recite Proverbs 3:5-6? Has the exercise of memorising it led to any further reflections of its impact on life?

Wise listening

Read Proverbs 31:10-31

For various good reasons most of us will read this as wisdom for finding the ideal wife. However, while there is a lot here to guide those who are seeking a marriage partner, that's not what it is primarily about!

Read Proverbs 3:13-18 and 8:1-4, 10-11.

What similarities do you see between these passages and the description of the 'wife of noble character' in chapter 31?

With this in mind, read Proverbs 31:10-31 again, this time substituting the word 'Wisdom' in place of the word 'she'. What does this say as a summary of the book of Proverbs?

We've seen that most proverbs don't specifically give an instruction as blunt as 'do this' or 'don't do that', but they still prompt a response from us. What is the overarching response that this conclusion to Proverbs calls for?

Remember that the book of Proverbs is set in the context of a hypothetical lesson from a father to his son. Flowing out of this we've seen the persona of Lady Wisdom used to encourage this young man to choose Wisdom over Folly. This helps us see that this conclusion to Proverbs is a poetic final encouragement to pursue wisdom. Over these last five weeks, as we've moved from Proverbs through to Jesus, we've seen in various ways that Jesus is the embodiment of godly wisdom and the ultimate source of wisdom for life. So, as an encouragement to pursue wisdom, the 'wife of noble character', is really an encouragement to pursue Jesus – to really know him, his teaching and his work on our behalf. Let's see what this looked like for the Apostle Paul.

Read Philippians 3:7-14

What worth does Paul attribute to knowing Christ? How does this compare to the value of wisdom in Proverbs? (e.g. Proverbs 3:13-18 or 4:7)

Where do we see Paul's humility in not presuming to be wise in his own eyes? (e.g. Proverbs 3:7, 22:7)

How does Paul's pursuit of Christ reflect a profound 'fear of the Lord'? (see Proverbs 1:7)

How is Paul demonstrating an awareness that the promises of Wisdom are ultimately found in Christ? (see, for example, Proverbs 8:35)

Wise living

Trust

Back in study 1 we saw how Folly can be so enticing. How have you grown in trust that God's wisdom is better by far?

Say

Can you think of any opportunities for evangelistic conversation with friends or family that flow out of the wisdom of Proverbs? Pray for opportunities and boldness to make the most of this.

Do

We've really just skimmed the surface of Proverbs. Perhaps you might commit to reading through it in full, prayerfully considering how God's wisdom informs your life under Christ.

Pray

Pray through some of the prayers of the Bible that either reflect great wisdom or ask for wisdom:

The Lord's Prayer (see study 2)

Psalm 34

Psalm 73

Psalm 92

Psalm 111

Proverbs 30:7-9

Colossians 1:9-14

Ephesians 1:3-10, 15-23

Revelation 7:9-11

GET SMART



STUDIES IN PROVERBS



A long time ago, in a country far, far away...

GOD'S WORD

EPISODE XX - PROVERBS

PROVERBS is named for the fact that it collects many wise sayings - proverbs - from all around the world, but nowhere more than Israel under Solomon's kingship. Proverbs is a life hack book for the PEOPLE OF GOD. There is much for us to learn and to be encouraged by, as we are challenged that TRUE LIFE is found in living under God. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction." (Proverbs 1:7). Proverbs is written for young and old, women and men, wise and simple. Come join the good life, found in the FEAR OF THE LORD.



Gustave Doré

King Solomon in Old Age

| | |
|--|-----|
| Get Wise - looking at the pursuit of wisdom in Proverbs | p2 |
| Get Rich - looking at wealth and money in Proverbs | p5 |
| Get Talking - looking at our language and speech in Proverbs | p7 |
| Get Mates - looking at friendship according to Proverbs | p10 |
| Get Sexual - looking at sex and sexuality in Proverbs | p12 |
| Get Beer - looking at alcohol according to Proverbs | p14 |
| Get Woke - looking at laziness and work in Proverbs | p16 |

Week 1 - Get Wise

Who, or what, do you first think of when you think of wisdom?

Any thoughts / questions / etc from the talk?

Read Proverbs 3

Who is it addressed to?

How is that important / relevant to us?

As a group, make a list of the different ways in which wisdom is described.

What benefits does wisdom provide?

v5-6 reads “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.” How does this apply to us when looking at the future?

- As you plan for when COVID restrictions end?
- As you plan for formal?
- As you plan for end of year 12?

Back to the talk, where the beginning of wisdom is described as a fear of the Lord: what do you think that means?

What does a “fear” of the Lord look like in your life?

What would it look like for you to act wisely in your own life?

Pray to Close

Week 2 - Get Rich

Is money a good or a bad thing? Why?

Anything jump out at you from the talk? Anything strange or unusual?

Read the following proverbs. What do they say about money?

a) Proverbs 10:15

b) Proverbs 14:20

c) Proverbs 14:24

d) Proverbs 19:4

Read the following proverbs. What do they say about money? How do they compare with the above set of proverbs?

a) Proverbs 15:27

b) Proverbs 17:5

c) Proverbs 22:16

d) Proverbs 23:4-5

Read the following proverbs. What do they say about money? Do you think they are different, or work together, with the previous two sets of proverbs?

Why do you think this?

- a) Proverbs 3:9-10
- b) Proverbs 11:24-25
- c) Proverbs 21:17
- d) Proverbs 22:2
- e) Proverbs 22:9
- f) Proverbs 28:6
- g) Proverbs 28:27

Overall, is money a good thing or a bad thing? Has your opinion changed?

Have you thought about if/when you might start giving to church? When? Why then?

Do you think giving to church should affect your lifestyle? Why/why not?

How will you practically honour God with your money this week?

Pray to Close

Week 3 - Get Talking

What words have had the most positive impact on your life? Why do you think they are so memorable?

Anything jump out at you from the talk? Anything strange or unusual?

Read Proverbs 4:20-27

What are we to do with our words?

We are instructed to 'keep corrupt talk far from our lips'. But why? What impact can harsh words have? Read the following passages:

- a) Proverbs 15:1-4
- b) Proverbs 16:24
- c) Proverbs 17:19-20
- d) Proverbs 26:18-28

If we are to instead speak kindly and 'keep our mouths free from perversity', what is the benefit of that?

- a) Proverbs 12:15-19
- b) Proverbs 15:1-4
- c) Proverbs 16:24
- d) Proverbs 25:11-15

Read the following passages from the New Testament. What do they say about the tongue in relation to the body?

- a) James 3:1-12
- b) Luke 6:45

Think about the conversations you have had in the last week with the following people and consider what might be a tree of life or a crush to the spirit:

- a) Parents
- b) Siblings
- c) Friend at school
- d) Stranger (or someone you don't know so well, like a classmate)

How can you be deliberate with the words you use in conversations you have in this week ahead? Be specific! (Hint: think about what you did well or could do better from your conversations last week)

Pray to Close

Week 4 - Get Mates

What are 3 things about you that your friends would use to describe you?

Think about one of your friends that you spend the most time with. What are the first 3 things that stand out to you about this friend?

What do you think is the most important thing to have in common with your closest friends?

Anything jump out at you from the talk? Anything strange or unusual?

Let's find out what the bible tells us about friendship. Open your bibles to these passages in Proverbs. Read them to the group and answer the following questions.

12:26

18:1-2

22:24-25

27:5-6

13:20

18:24

25:17

27: 9-10

17:17

20:19

25: 21

27:12

What do these passages tell us about what kind of friends we should have?

What do these passages tell us about what kind of friend we should be for others?

Read John 15:9-17

Who does Jesus' say his friends are in this passage?

What has Jesus commanded his friends to do in this passage?

How can we follow the example of friendship that Jesus has set for us in our friendships?

What can you do for the friends you thought of earlier to follow Jesus' example of friendship that he has set for us?

Pray to Close

Week 6 - Get Sexual

What movies/books pop into your head when you hear “sex” or “love”? What kind of image do they portray about the topic?

In proverbs, there are different verses, sections and chapters written on sex and relationships. Why are they there and why should we read them? Read Proverbs 5:1-2 and 6:20-23 (two of the many sections).

Reflecting on the talk, what is God’s design for sex? (Hint: read Genesis 2:24)
Do you think this is good or bad? Why?

Read the following passages; what do they say is the consequence of sex outside of marriage?

- a) Proverbs 2:16-19
- b) Proverbs 5:3-14
- c) Proverbs 6:25-33
- d) Proverbs 7:24-27

As well as talking about what we shouldn't do, the bible also helps us to live our lives. Read 1 Corinthians 6:13-20. What does this have to say about how we conduct ourselves?

What does it look like to "honour God with our bodies"?

In your life, what does it look like to "flee from sexual immorality"? Some areas to think through may be porn, dating, media (movies, tv-shows etc.), video games, books, social media, self-image)

Pray to Close

Week 7 - Get Beer

What are some of the ideas about alcohol consumption that you have heard of before? (These could be legal restrictions, social and/or church perspectives, parental rules, etc.)

Read the following bible passages:

Proverbs 20:1

1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1

1 Timothy 3:1-7

Proverbs 23:19-21

John 2:1-12

Proverbs 23:29-35

What do these passages say about drinking alcohol?

What do these passages say about not drinking alcohol?

What do you think Jesus would say to you about drinking alcohol? Why do you think this way?

Read Ephesians 5:15-20. Has your idea about Jesus' view on alcohol has changed?

What do you think Jesus would say to you about drinking alcohol now that you've read this passage?

How do you feel about alcohol now that you've read these passages?

Your friend from school Marty Nee tells you about his weekend. He tells you that he went to a friend's birthday party where there were a lot of people drinking alcohol. "I didn't really want to drink anything, but I felt like people would judge me if I didn't have one drink!" How would you respond to Marty?

Pray to Close

Week 8 - Get Woke

Are you a lazy person?

Anything jump out at you from the talk? Anything strange or unusual?

Read the following proverbs:

- a) Proverbs 6:6-11
- b) Proverbs 10:4-5
- c) Proverbs 10:26
- d) Proverbs 12:24
- e) Proverbs 18:9
- f) Proverbs 19:24
- g) Proverbs 20:4
- h) Proverbs 21:25-26
- i) Proverbs 24:33-34
- j) Proverbs 28:19

What sticks out to you from these passages?

What recurring themes did you see in these proverbs?

Why do you think messages on laziness are included in the Bible?

Why do you think it is important to work hard and not be lazy?

Laziness looks different for each of us. Without comparing yourself to the energy levels of others, in what ways could you personally be less lazy?

Think about some of these situations:

- a) Homework
- b) Chores
- c) Sleeping in
- d) Bible reading and prayer
- e) Church

For the above scenarios, how would laziness effect what you (or others) get out of each activity?

How can we balance laziness and rest? Where would you draw the line of healthy rest and straight up laziness? (again, this might look different for each of us)

How can you be less lazy this coming week?

Pray to Close

Appendix - Is Proverbs scripture?

Proverbs is part of the wisdom literature in the Writings division of the Hebrew Bible. Unlike the other divisions of the Old Testament, and unlike other parts of the Writings (e.g. Psalms), Proverbs isn't primarily concerned with the broader picture of God's salvation plan for his people. Instead, it is focussed on individuals living their everyday lives with Yahweh as their God. It isn't filled with commands, but with calls to be wise. It calls us to engage with the hard questions in life.

Wisdom literature was not a uniquely Israelite property either. Many Ancient Near Eastern peoples had wisdom literature of their own, some of which is even recognised in Proverbs as wisdom for God's people too (the sayings of the wise in Proverbs 22:17ff). For example, here's some wisdom literature from approximately 2500 BC in Egypt:

If a son accepts what his father says, no project of his miscarries. He whom thou instructest as thy obedient son, who will stand well in the heart of the official, his speech is guided with respect to what has been said to him, one regarded as obedient. ... (But) the induction of him who does not hearken miscarries. The wise man rises early in the morning to establish himself, (but) the fool rises early in the morning (only) to agitate himself.¹

Given the fact that wisdom literature as a genre, and even a reasonable portion of the book of Proverbs itself, is not unique to God's revelation to Israel, there is a case to ask whether Proverbs belongs in the Bible. Is it part of God's special revelation? There is much that could be discussed on this point, but a good place for us to begin is with Proverbs 1-9. Wisdom for Israel, and for us, cannot be understood aside from the fear of Yahweh (1:7; 9:10). True wisdom comes from depending on Yahweh and being devoted to him. Given wisdom comes from Yahweh, we would expect the rest of the world to reflect that as image bearers. But it is

¹ "THE INSTRUCTION OF THE VIZIER PTAH-HOTEP," 412-414 in James Bennett Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 3rd ed. with Supplement. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 414.

only when the wisdom the world bears is brought under Yahweh's headship that it is truly wisdom, and not just a cheap imitation. So we can say that Proverbs is indeed scripture.



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