



WISE UP

Wisdom In Proverbs

WISE UP: WISDOM IN PROVERBS

Written by: Cherie Noel

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PREFACE

The primary goals of *Wise Up!* (and of all the Positive Action secondary level Bible studies) are to make the Word of God more meaningful and to have a life-changing impact on the lives of your students. As an administrator of a Christian school, I have used a variety of curriculum approaches with my students. Too often, however, I found that my students had mastered a great deal of material and factual knowledge without really having seen the truth of the Scriptures at work in their own lives.

Therefore, it has been my goal as I developed this study that students would draw knowledge, wisdom, and understanding for themselves from the Word of God. They need to learn that God's Word has something to say about guidance and direction for every area of their lives. They need to have realistic scenarios placed before them that teach them how to make choices based on God's Word. They need to discern and follow God's calling on their lives—now and in the future.

A key emphasis in this study is establishing students soundly in the Word of God so they can find answers for themselves. While it is important to begin with sound doctrine and factual knowledge of the Scriptures, students need to go beyond this and apply their knowledge. They need to be presented with the type of material that will help them comprehend, analyze, and derive personal applications in line with God's Word. *Wise Up!* has been written in such a way that it should help students form personal convictions based on their own study of God's Word.

In this study on “Wisdom in Proverbs,” students will encounter a variety of concepts that are applicable to their own lives. Each lesson will use life application sections to help students learn specific applications of Bible truths. In addition, one objective for this study is to see the Holy Spirit use it to work in the lives of the students to “conform them to the image” of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29). Genuine character development requires the Holy Spirit's involvement to grow the “fruit of the Spirit” within the life of each student. *Wise Up!* includes a variety of activities designed to help students “get” the connection between biblical wisdom and everyday life.

In order to accomplish our goals, two basic points must be emphasized. First, teachers must spend the necessary time teaching their students how to apply God's Word to their everyday lives. The teacher is an integral part of Bible class. You cannot assume that the goals are accomplished simply because students have completed a workbook assignment. God's Word is alive, and this should be evident in your dynamic teaching style and in the way you live it out yourself. Secondly, as you complete each lesson, use it as a launch pad for class discussion to make sure that the students are rightly understanding and applying biblical principles. General facts and Bible knowledge are important, but discussion and activities will help make these facts more real in the lives of your students.

Wise Up! provides adequate material and enough variety to keep Bible class both interesting and profitable. Focus on the living Word of God and pray for the privilege of seeing your students walking in its truth.

Mrs. Cherie Noel

CURRICULUM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This study recognizes the typical characteristics of the middle school student. Young teens desire to be independent and think for themselves, but they still need reliable guidance and direction. They may not realize their strong need for firm direction, but this need is profound. The middle school years are a time of questioning conventional rules and ideals. Students are trying to understand whether the customary boundaries and ways of interacting with adults still apply. They recognize that they are no longer children, but they also know that they are not yet adults. They are at a special place in their lives, and they need to be dealt with both in firmness and in love. Perhaps at no other time do they need to feel our love more than during these years when they are often unloving or less lovable themselves. Our example of firmness and strong love will continue to reinforce what they have learned about themselves in their earlier years.

Wise Up! focuses on the particular needs of a typical twelve- to fourteen-year-old student. From this study of Proverbs, your middle school students can gain great insight into the Word of God and into the worth and purpose of their own lives.

In addition to the above, this study is also distinguished by the following features:

- Students will receive strong biblical instruction in truths that particularly need to be reinforced during this period of their lives. Through these truths, your students should recognize the importance of the family and the need to acknowledge the counsel and direction of their parents. They will also recognize the value of their teachers and other authority figures in their lives and the need to respect and heed their input. They will learn about godly interpersonal relationships and how to react in a variety of inevitable life situations that they will face.
- Students will be reminded of who God is and the importance of His claim on their lives. They will learn why they were created, where they fit into the scope of what God is doing, and how they can honor Him with their lives. They will learn that God has a plan and purpose for each of them and that their schoolwork fits into that plan.
- Students will experience a strong emphasis on life application principles so that they will learn how to apply Scripture faithfully and directly to everyday reality.
- A variety of activities and ideas included in the book will enable students to use scriptural truths. Suggested activities include skits, compositions, journals, story-writing, and poetry.
- Scripture memorization selections prioritize the following elements:
 - Passages of Scripture rather than verses removed from their contexts
 - Passages that are immediately applicable to students' lives
 - Structure that encourages families to memorize passages together
 - Passages that are manageable and complementary to the students' other obligations

EFFECTIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES

Classroom Atmosphere

The “climate” of your classroom is so important! Teacher, make sure you prepare for success by establishing an atmosphere of welcome, openness, and collaboration. Discussion times will be crucial as you and your students work through the lessons this year. Your class periods should be a time when students are encouraged to get involved with candor and humility, yet with confidence that what they say will not be broadcast. As the teacher, you set the tone to help students feel free to share their opinions and questions without fear of embarrassment. Make sure your students understand that we cannot *condone* sin, but we must learn to *overcome* sin.

Encouraging Deeper Thinking

It can be tempting to present the material in Proverbs and drill the students simply for mastery of the facts. Do not take this easier route! Your students need to go beyond a superficial level of thinking. When reading a supernatural book, it is not enough to read it as though it were a dusty textbook full of superstitious axioms or pointless trivia. The material for this series should engage your students’ *hearts* as well as their minds. Are they making the necessary connections between theology and practical living? There are crucial connections between doctrine (what they believe) and experience (how they really live out what they say they believe). Make certain that your students do not latch on to head knowledge merely so they might ace the next quiz. They need to form genuine heart convictions and personal standards based on the knowledge they are gaining. Teach them the difference between knowing religious principles from Proverbs and having an actual relationship with the living God who authored Proverbs.

- Lesson questions focus on multiple, progressive levels of thinking:
 - Knowledge—learning basic facts
 - Comprehension—understanding concepts and ideas; recognizing allusions and patterns
 - Analysis—thinking through the different implications of new information
 - Discernment—perceiving truth from revealed facts and concepts
 - Evaluation—drawing conclusions; interpreting values to form personal decisions
 - Application—using information learned; applying truths to personal life
- In order that your students might learn to think on these different levels, it is important for certain attitudes to prevail in your teaching.
 - Become an integral part of your class. Use every opportunity to talk to and work with your students.
 - Even if a workbook assignment has been completed, do not assume that the lesson will certainly have been learned or that the student’s heart has been transformed.

- Recognize, especially in teaching the Bible, that factual knowledge is not equivalent to heart conviction. Students need to be guided in their thinking. Help them learn how to analyze material and reach their own conclusions.
- A Bible-based discussion should become the heart of your time with the students. Spend adequate time to help the students understand the Bible principles and that they are making life applications.
- Most students are in the habit of stopping short once they have learned the facts. If thinking beyond mere facts is not customary for them, you cannot expect them to handle your questions without some difficulty at first. You will have to serve as their guide. Lead them gradually but consistently into a habit of thinking through information on a different level.

The following suggestions may help you encourage your students toward deeper thinking:

- Complete the first question of each lesson with your students and let them complete the remaining questions on their own. This works well with charts and sequential types of exercises.
- Arrange for students to work in pairs, sharing ideas and coming to conclusions together. They can then share their answers together, which may give them more confidence.
- Guide your students step by step through a series of questions. Let them look up material in their Bibles and complete the answers. When it is necessary to analyze a concept or draw a conclusion, work on the idea together. As the semester progresses, begin to give them more material to cover without your aid. Always discuss their answers afterwards, so they will gain right insight into these concepts.
- Lead students step by step to analyze what they are learning. Do not give away answers, but do give the discussion direction. Ask a thought-provoking question to steer the conversation, or drop occasional hints if they seem to be getting off-track.
- Discuss a particularly difficult concept with your class before they see the lesson. After a thorough discussion, have them turn to the lesson and complete it themselves. Have a review discussion afterwards to insure these concepts are understood.
- Never conclude a lesson without some type of discussion or follow-up. Talking through the material will help your students learn to think more productively. They will discover aspects they had never considered previously. Otherwise, your lessons will become only an academic exercise rather than a convicting spiritual exercise.
- During discussion times, do not voice immediate or harsh criticisms in response to students' answers. Accept all reasonable answers, redirecting the emphasis if necessary. Your students should not have to feel like they must walk on eggshells to avoid quickly-formed negative judgments from you or their peers.

Note: Thinking skills are learned skills. You are teaching students how they ought to think about God and how they can learn to live for Him. It will thrill you to see your students develop into wise thinkers and to see God work in their lives.

Inner Character Development

One of the primary goals of this study is to teach your students how urgently we all need the Holy Spirit to produce “the fruit of the Spirit” within us. Because we recognize that He must work change in our students’ lives to conform them to the image of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29), this study strongly emphasizes God-enabled inner character development.

You may give the self-evaluation quizzes periodically to encourage your students to consider their own lives and to what extent God is truly working in their lives. These quizzes are not meant to measure students’ comprehension but rather to provide them opportunities to be honest with themselves before the Lord. When these self-evaluation quizzes are used, exhort the students to humble themselves before the Lord and to be willing to respond honestly as the Holy Spirit reveals their shortcomings through His Word.

After taking a self-evaluation quiz, students should thoughtfully consider how God can change them to be more like His Son. You could encourage them to pray for His help to desire that kind of genuine change and to obey with humility and enthusiasm. Like adults, your middle school students need to learn how to be a “vessel” set apart for the Holy Spirit to work in and through. One aim of activities like the self-evaluation quiz is to help the students recognize God’s claim upon every area of their lives.

Life Principles

A profitable follow-up activity each week would be to have students write out life principles based on the material that has been covered during the week. “Life principles” are basic truths applied in a practical way to our lives. Share ideas together and have the class determine a life principle for each lesson. These may be written in personal “life principle notebooks” or kept in a class notebook, for occasional reference and review throughout the year.

Life Application Sections

To further enable students to recognize God’s claim on their lives, most lessons include a “life application” section. The general design of these sections is to enable students to personalize the truths taught throughout the week. We want students to form personal convictions based on the Word of God—going from “head knowledge” to life application.

Students will therefore be expected to analyze and apply information and draw conclusions for their own lives. It is of utmost importance that an atmosphere of acceptance and openness be established. We do not want to condone sin but rather to recognize that we all have sin problems that require attention. Students need to feel free, not necessarily to admit specific sins openly in the classroom, but to discuss areas of common problems.

Your students will most probably feel somewhat inhibited at first. As you continue to guide their thinking and use discussion time to share common issues, this section should become the most engrossing activity of the week.

Teacher’s Lessons (Overhead Transparencies)

One unique feature in many Positive Action Bible studies is the “Teacher’s Lesson” designed to be taught through the use of an overhead projector. (The overhead masters for these transparencies are found with the teacher’s material for each lesson. Printed transparencies are available from Positive Action For Christ.) As the teacher discusses this material, students should complete the notes under the corresponding “Teacher’s Lesson” section in their books. This helps students to identify and analyze the ideas being presented and also helps them to keep focused on these thoughts. The Teacher’s Lesson complements the student’s lesson itself and supplements it with insights not previously covered. You will notice that, due to the nature or length of some lessons, there are no Teacher’s Lesson sections (and thus no overhead masters) for those particular lessons.

Weekly Quizzes

The weekly quizzes are intentionally short, and they tend to test the objective facts covered in each lesson. We cannot really test life application material via the short-answer quizzes, so that is not their purpose.

As the teacher, however, you should feel free to add questions relevant to any particular emphases you have made during the week. You may want to ask your students to write a few essay sentences or even a brief composition about some concept you highlighted repeatedly during the week.

If you are using the “life principle notebook” idea given above, you may want to ask your students to write the life principle from each lesson as part of the quiz. You may also want to ask them to give an example of a life principle at work—either an example from Scripture or from their own real-life experience. This would help you to evaluate how well they have grasped the principle and its implications for daily Christian living.

WEEKLY LESSON PLANS

5-Day Week

- **Day One:** Introduce new Scripture memory verses for the week and discuss key ideas. Discuss “Target Truths” for the week from the teacher’s supplement section. Have students begin working through the first sections of the student’s lesson.
- **Day Two:** Drill Scripture memory verses for the week.
Continue to work through sections of material in student’s manual. Provide discussion time to make sure that the concepts are well understood.
- **Day Three:** Drill Scripture memory verses. Drill overall passage for review. Review material from the last two days.
Finish student’s lesson, including life application section, focusing on internal conviction. Include discussion time to make sure concepts are well understood.

- **Day Four:** Drill Scripture memory verses. Review material for quiz.
Use “Additional Teaching Suggestions” from the teacher’s supplement section. Teach and discuss the teacher’s lesson.
- **Day Five:** Give the weekly quiz.
Check Scripture memory report sheets.
Discuss principles learned from the week’s material.

4-Day Week

- **Day One:** Introduce Scripture memory verses and discuss what they mean.
Discuss “Target Truths” for the week from the teacher’s supplement section and assign material from the student’s lesson.
- **Day Two:** Drill Scripture memory verses.
Continue to work through sections in the student’s manual. Provide discussion time to make sure that concepts are understood.
- **Day Three:** Drill Scripture memory verses for the week and the complete passage. Teach and discuss the teacher’s lesson.
Discuss the life application section in the student’s lesson, focusing on internal conviction. Provide overview and review for the quiz.
- **Day Four:** Give the weekly quiz.
Check Scripture memory report sheets.
Do some activities from the “Additional Teaching Suggestions” in the teacher’s supplement section.

3-Day Week

- **Day One:** Introduce Scripture memory verses and discuss them briefly.
Introduce key ideas from the “Target Truths” in the teacher’s supplement section. Introduce lesson and allow students to work on assigned material. Evaluate which material you will focus on during the week and leave the remainder for extra-credit work or for use in another subject area (English, literature, or social studies).
- **Day Two:** Drill Scripture memory verses.
Continue to work through the student’s lesson together and focus on the life application section at the end. Teach and discuss the teacher’s lesson.
- **Day Three:** Give a quiz either weekly or bimonthly.
Use “Additional Teaching Suggestions” if there is time. Discuss overall principles for the week’s lesson.
** If there is too much material for the class as a whole or for the amount of time available, simply decide what you feel is most important to cover, based on the special needs of your class.*
** Some activities may be used for an English composition or a project in another related subject if you teach the same students in other class subjects.*

SCRIPTURE MEMORY PROGRAM

Purposes

As touched upon under “Curriculum Goals and Objectives,” the Wise Up! Scripture memorization selections prioritize the following elements:

- Passages of Scripture rather than verses removed from their contexts: We want to encourage students to approach God’s Word rightly, rather than isolating and perhaps twisting verses away from their divinely appointed original context.
- Passages that are immediately applicable to students’ lives: We want the students to recognize that God does intend His Word to be relevant to them individually today.
- Structure that encourages families to memorize passages together: We want to include parents in the process and keep them an integral part of the spiritual training of their children.
- Passages that are manageable and complementary to the students’ other obligations: We want to encourage students to be attempting Scripture memory work in reasonable portions that also coincide with (rather than detract from) what they may already be learning at home or in their local churches.

How to Use the Program

- Each week in class, spend time discussing the meaning of the verses you have assigned for that week. If students are to learn these verses for life, and for real-life application, they must first know what the verses mean.
- Encourage students to recite verses to their parents at home. (Other arrangements may need to be made to accommodate some students whose parents may not wish to participate.) This accomplishes two purposes: (a) You need not spend class time listening to each student quote verses, and (b) parents can take this as a unique opportunity to involve themselves in their children’s spiritual training.
- You might copy and distribute a Scripture memorization report sheet at the beginning of a new school year. Each student could keep his sheet at home and bring it in once a week with a parent’s signature to assure you that he has successfully recited the week’s memory work. A sample report sheet form is provided on the next page.
- As you drill the verses each week, continue to drill and review verses from the passages that were learned in previous weeks. We want these verses to become a part of your students’ lives so that the principles contained in them will not be forgotten.
- Notice that review weeks (italicized) are provided during which the entire passage that has previously been learned can be thoroughly reviewed and quoted together. If your students are drilled on the verses week by week, quoting the entire passage together during this review week will be easy for most of them.
- The danger in any Scripture memory program is that the students memorize words only to meet a deadline and then move on to the next group of words. We should make sure that these Scripture verses become more than just words to our students and then do all we can to see that they understand their true meaning and make them an integral part of their everyday lives.
- Provide a systematic way of rewarding students who demonstrate that they have truly memorized all the Scripture for the year.

WISE UP! SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION REPORT SHEET

Name _____

Teacher _____ Grade _____

Week	Scripture	Due Date	Parent's Signature
1	Prov. 1:5-6		
2	Prov. 1:7-9		
3	Prov. 1:10-11		
4	Prov. 1:12-14		
5	Prov. 1:15-16		
6	<i>Prov. 1:5-16</i>		
7	1 John 2:3-4		
8	1 John 2:5-6		
9	1 John 2:7-8		
10	1 John 2:9-10		
11	1 John 2:11-12		
12	<i>1 John 2:3-12</i>		
13	Eph. 4:22-23		
14	Eph. 4:24-25		
15	Eph. 4:26-28		
16	Eph. 4:29-30		
17	Eph. 4:31-32		
18	<i>Eph. 4:22-32</i>		
19	2 Pet. 1:2-3		
20	2 Pet. 1:4-5		
21	2 Pet. 1:6-7		
22	2 Pet. 1:8-9		
23	<i>2 Pet. 1:2-9</i>		
24	Josh. 1:5-6		
25	Josh. 1:7		
26	Josh. 1:8-9		
27	<i>Josh. 1:5-9</i>		
28	James 3:3-4		
29	James 3:5-6		
30	James 3:7-8		
31	<i>James 3:3-8</i>		
32	James 3:9-10		
33	James 3:11-12		
34	James 3:13-14		
35	<i>James 3:3-14</i>		

TEACHER'S MANUAL

WHAT IS WISDOM?

TARGET TRUTHS

- Wisdom comes only from God.
- The religion of humanism is man's view of the world.
- Wisdom is a Person (Jesus Christ).
- A wise person follows the principles of the Word of God.

TEACHING STRATEGY

Man's Ways Vs. the Ways of God

As this section is read, discuss the differences between humanism (man-centered thinking) and God's ways. Write two headings on the board. As you discuss aspects of humanistic thought, invite students to explain how God's ways differ.

For example:

Humanism

1. There is no Creator.
2. Man is the center of all things.
3. There is no absolute or universal right or wrong (or, we each have the right to determine right and wrong for ourselves).

God's ways

1. God is the Creator of all things.
2. God is the center of the universe.
3. God has commandments and absolute principles by which we should live our lives.

The Future of All Humanistic Thought

With the above list of ideas on the board, have students read Proverbs 1:24-33 and discuss the future that will befall those who reject God and rely on self. Explain that the natural tendency of our sinful flesh is to accept humanistic thought, so there are some areas in our own lives that will drift toward humanism if we are not careful. It is important to realize that God's principles and commandments are there for our good—not to squelch the enjoyment of life. The truth is, only Christians can truly enjoy the benefits of

life within the framework that God designed. The humanists' way of life does not lead to happiness but eventually to dissatisfaction. A life of seeking temporary pleasures and doing only what you desire to do without considering others will only cause you to keep on wanting more and more. Because you essentially make yourself a god, you are assured of having a god who cannot meet all your needs. Soon, you will find that nothing in life satisfies. The only way anyone can be fully satisfied and content is to yield to God's way to live and His purpose for our lives. God created us to be content only when we are trusting in Him and seeking to please Him.

Thus, the first indication of wisdom is the understanding that there are two different points of view about the meaning and purpose of life: God's view and man's view. The truly wise person understands that the Creator God has made him or her for a divine purpose that will bring great satisfaction and contentment.

Wisdom Is a Person

Have students read the verses and complete the section before discussion. As the material is discussed, make the comparisons between the passages in Proverbs and John very evident. After the discussion, write the following equation on the board and discuss its truth based on the Scriptures already studied.

God = Jesus = Word of God = Wisdom

How Wisdom Acts/How the Unwise Act

Take time during these sections to share God's plan of salvation. You may wish to ask your students to write a short paper sharing their personal salvation testimonies. If you do something like this during the first couple of weeks of school, you might gain a good idea early on about which students may not yet have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Don't forget the possibility that some of your students, even the ones who seem to say the right things and who hold "a good testimony" around school, may still be outside of Christ. They may have gone through the motions of Christianity and followed all the rules. They may even sincerely believe that they have done enough externally to prove they merit salvation, yet they still might not be truly trusting and obeying Him. Therefore, you must be careful not to give them a "pat answer" about biblical salvation. Salvation is a new life oriented toward and dependent on God, not just praying a prayer and making a public profession. You need to seek wisdom from the Holy Spirit to lead you in how to approach the topic with each student individually and with your class as a whole.

ADDITIONAL TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

Commercials

If your students watch television, ask them to take notes on commercials for a few days. Ask each student to be prepared to give an example of a commercial that invites the audience to respond to its message based on foolish reasoning.

Share God's Plan of Salvation

Using the discussions as a springboard, you should be sure to share the following basic facts about the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- All of mankind is unrighteous and sinful before a holy God. We are unable to save ourselves because of our sinful condition (Rom. 3:23).
- If we die in our sins, then we have no hope of heaven. A righteous, holy God cannot allow sin in His presence. Therefore, sinners must die physically and endure an eternity of spiritual death (torment and separation from God) as well (Rom. 6:23).
- Even though God is holy, pure, and righteous, He is also loving and merciful. Jesus, the Son of God, came to earth to die for our sins. He had no sin of His own for which to die; but out of His great love for us, He came to die for ours (Rom. 5:8).
- If we believe that Jesus Christ is God and that He took our place on the cross, and if we receive Him as our Savior, our sins are forgiven. We become the sons of God and have the assurance of heaven (John 1:12).

TEACHER’S LESSON (OVERHEAD TRANSPARENCY)

Definition of Humanism

Humanism is man’s attempt to solve his problems independently of God.

Instead of using the truth of the Word of God as the basis for solving problems and understanding the world we live in, humanists try to find another way of explaining truth. For instance, to explain the origin of the universe, humanists offered the theory of evolution—the idea that everything came into existence by itself. The theory is that from insignificant life forms to the most complex of beings (mankind), everything has evolved over millions of years. Evolutionists reject the Creator God, and thus they reject true knowledge and understanding. All of life is seen from this perspective. Science, history, philosophy, sociology, and political science—every avenue of study is based on this false idea.

God talks very specifically about such people when He says that when they claimed to be wise, they became fools (Rom. 1:22). Jeremiah 8:9 says that when “wise men” reject the word of the Lord, there is really no wisdom at all in them, and they are put to shame.

Two Ways of Looking at Knowledge

Thus there are two ways of looking at the various fields of study. We can either look at all fields of study through the eyes of the Word of God, or we can look at the Word of God through the eyes of the various fields of study. These disciplines in and of themselves are not evil because they can be viewed in the light of God’s Word. But when those who study these things fail to acknowledge the absolute truth of the Bible and leave God out of their studies, they are bound to fall short in their efforts to discover and use truth.

Science that teaches evolution rather than creation must either reject the Bible or change the Bible to fit their notions.

History that records events as though mankind could control his own destiny or which fails to acknowledge God’s sovereignty and constancy over the centuries falls short of teaching the total truth.

Psychology that theorizes man's problems are merely mental or physical and able to be solved by personal resolve and various therapies (without factoring in the reality of spiritual needs and the sufficiency of the Bible) cannot truly offer lasting help to anyone.

Sociology that assumes drunkenness, aggression, homosexuality, or other sins are just diseases rather than grievances against God cannot offer any effective solutions to the social problems which pervade our culture.

Therefore, if you eliminate the Word of God, you eliminate your access to reliable truth! An education without God will not provide you with fullness of knowledge. Education apart from God is not true wisdom.

QUIZ ANSWERS

1.
 - Silver
 - Gold
 - Rubies
 - Anything else you may desire
2.
 - Man's wisdom
 - God's wisdom
3. Knowledge is the accumulation of facts and ideas. Wisdom is knowing how to apply facts and ideas so that important choices can be made rightly.
4. Jesus Christ
5.
 - Wisdom seeks salvation from hell.
 - Wisdom is obedient.
 - Wisdom wins souls.
 - Wisdom fears the Lord.
 - Wisdom is peaceable.
6. Humanism is man's attempt to solve his problems independently of God.

L E S S O N 1

WHAT IS WISDOM?

This year we are going to center our study on the key word of the book of Proverbs—“wisdom.” Your years in middle school are a very important time in your life. No longer are you a child, but neither are you an adult. You are entering a time of life when you must learn what it means to be a mature, responsible young man or woman. You will have many important choices to make, and your parents will have to trust that you can make wise choices as you journey through the next few years. In some situations, learning to be wise will mean the difference between success and failure. Learn to be wise, and you will have success.

According to Proverbs 3:13-15, what four things cannot compare to the value or importance of wisdom?

1. silver
2. gold
3. rubies
4. anything else you may desire

Many people would value these things above anything else. But why is wisdom more valuable than any of these things?

Wisdom is more important and will last longer than any material possessions.
By wisdom we understand how to obey God and receive His blessing.

WHAT WISDOM IS NOT

God’s Word is very specific about what wisdom is and what it is not. In the next few lessons we will study exactly what wisdom *is*. But first, let’s make sure we understand what it is *not*.

According to 1 Corinthians 2:4-8, there are two types of wisdom. What are the two types?

1. God's wisdom
2. Man's wisdom

How is the wisdom that comes from God described in these verses?

It was ordained by God before earth was created. It is powerful and of the Holy Spirit.

Read Proverbs 21:30. Explain in your own words exactly where wisdom *is* found and where it is *not* found.

Wisdom can be found only in the Lord. It will never be found apart from the Lord.

MAN'S WAYS VS. THE WAYS OF GOD

Anything that denies or belittles God is not wisdom. Without God, there can be no true wisdom. What does Isaiah 55:8 teach us about God's thoughts and actions?

They are different from the ways of the world.

Therefore, atheism or godlessness in any form is not wisdom. One system of thought that teaches ideas opposed to God in today's society is humanism. Humanists say:

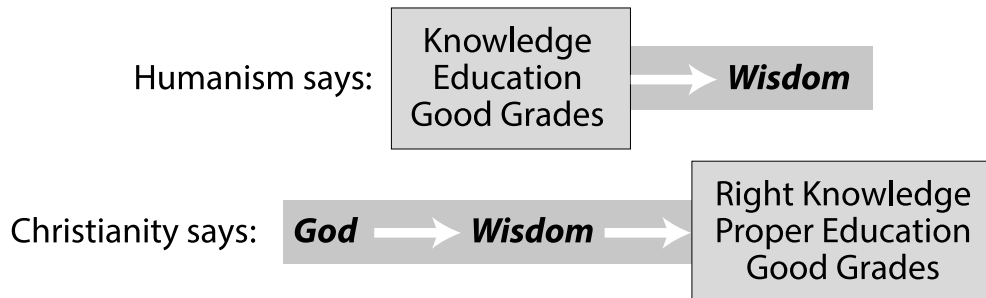
God is not the center of all things. In fact, there is no God, and there is no Creator. Instead, the world came into existence by itself. There is no God to tell us right from wrong. Man is the center of all things and in control of everything that happens. "Right" is anything that pleases man and adds to his pleasure. "Wrong" is anything that man dislikes. It is good and right for us to "do our own thing" or whatever will bring us pleasure and contentment.

Humanists say that *education* is the source of wisdom. Many people in the world have learned much of the knowledge of the world, but that does not mean they are wise.

Humanists say that good grades are the measure of wisdom. However, you may be the most intelligent person in your school and make all the honor rolls, but this does not necessarily mean that you are wise.

Make sure you understand the difference. Education and good grades do not make us wise. God alone makes us wise. A truly wise person will study hard and get the best grades possible because a wise person knows that God has given us the opportunity to understand the world He has created.

Knowledge is the accumulation of facts and ideas. Wisdom is knowing how to apply facts and ideas so that important choices can be made rightly.



Read 1 Corinthians 1:19-21 and 3:19-20 and answer the following questions.

- What will God destroy? (1:19)
the wisdom of the wise
- What is the world unable to use in order to know God? (1:21)
its own worldly wisdom
- What did it please God to use in saving those who believe? (1:21)
the foolishness of preaching
- What is the world's wisdom in God's sight? (3:19)
foolishness
- In God's sight, what are the thoughts of those who are "wise" in the worldly sense? (3:20)
vain or futile

THE FUTURE OF ALL HUMANISTIC THOUGHT

Go back to God's wisdom book, Proverbs, and see what God promises will happen to all those who do not listen to Him and follow Him. Read Proverbs 1:20-33 and describe what will happen to those who reject God and His wisdom.

God will mock them when what they fear has come upon them. Destruction and calamity will come to them. They will experience distress and anguish. God will not answer them.

WISDOM IS A PERSON

Read Proverbs 8:22-31. Compare what is said there with what is said in the New Testament in John 1:1-3, 10-12.

- Both passages are describing Whom?
Jesus (wisdom personified)
- Read Colossians 2:3. According to this verse, what is in Christ?
all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge

The Christ of Creation is the very wisdom and knowledge of God. If you know Jesus, you know God. And if you know and fear the Lord God, you will have wisdom.

HOW WISDOM ACTS

We now understand that true wisdom comes only from God and only through knowing His Son, Jesus Christ. What then does wisdom have to do with salvation?

The first step toward wisdom is trusting Christ as your Savior.

When we know Jesus Christ, we have the capability to act wisely. He can instruct us in wisdom and enable us to be wise. If you are trusting and obeying Christ as the Savior and Lord of your life, then He will change you to help you be more and more like Him (including in His wisdom) in all aspects of life! As we continue through our study of Proverbs this year, we will learn how wisdom applies to every aspect of our lives. Match the following verses to see just a few of the ways that having wisdom will affect your life:

D/A	1. Wisdom prepares for the future.	A. Prov. 22:3
G	2. Wisdom seeks salvation from hell.	B. Prov. 11:30
E	3. Wisdom is obedient.	C. James 3:17
B	4. Wisdom wins souls.	D. Prov. 30:24-26
D/A	5. Wisdom plans for the future.	E. Prov. 28:7
F	6. Wisdom fears the Lord.	F. Prov. 15:33
C	7. Wisdom is peaceable.	G. Prov. 15:24

HOW THE UNWISE ACT

Using the seven examples above that show how wisdom acts, describe how the *unwise* act. In your explanation, do not just write the exact opposite of what the verse says. Use different wording to explain your ideas. For example, for the first one, do not simply say that the unwise do not prepare for the future. Instead, you might say that the unwise are concerned only about what is happening right now. The unwise...

1. are concerned only about now (today)
2. do not worry about heaven and hell
3. are stubborn and rebellious
4. do not care about others
5. do not plan for the future
6. do not respect God
7. have problems getting along with others

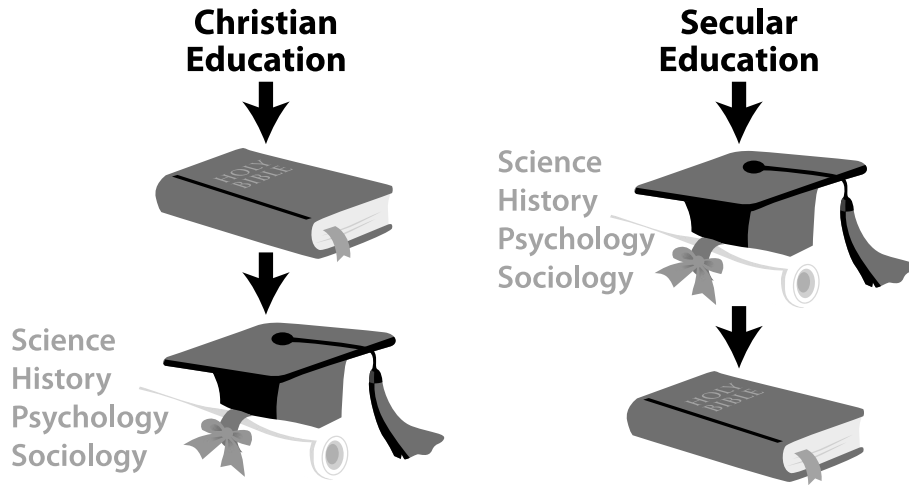
This year, as we study how wisdom works in our lives, we will be studying about our homes, our relationships with others, how we make decisions, what the future will be like, and many, many other ideas. To begin, look at the lists under “How Wisdom Acts” and “How the Unwise Act” and think through how wise you are in these seven areas. List

each idea in one of the boxes below. For example, take item #1. Do you prepare well for the future? If so, write this statement in the first row under the first column: "I prepare for the future." If this is not true of you, write this statement in the first row under the second column: "I am concerned only about now." From this, you will begin to see those areas in which you need to grow in wisdom, and you will be able to plan how to respond wisely in particular situations.

	Wise	Unwise
1.	Answers will vary.	
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		

TEACHER'S LESSON

Humanism is man's attempt to solve his problems
independently of God.



LESSON 1 QUIZ

WHAT IS WISDOM?

Name _____ Date _____ Score _____

1. According to Proverbs 3:13-15, what four things cannot compare with the value or importance of wisdom?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

2. According to 1 Corinthians 2:4-8, what are the two types of wisdom?

- _____
- _____

3. What is the difference between knowledge and wisdom?

4. According to Proverbs 8:22-31 and John 1:1-3 and 10-12, who is wisdom? _____

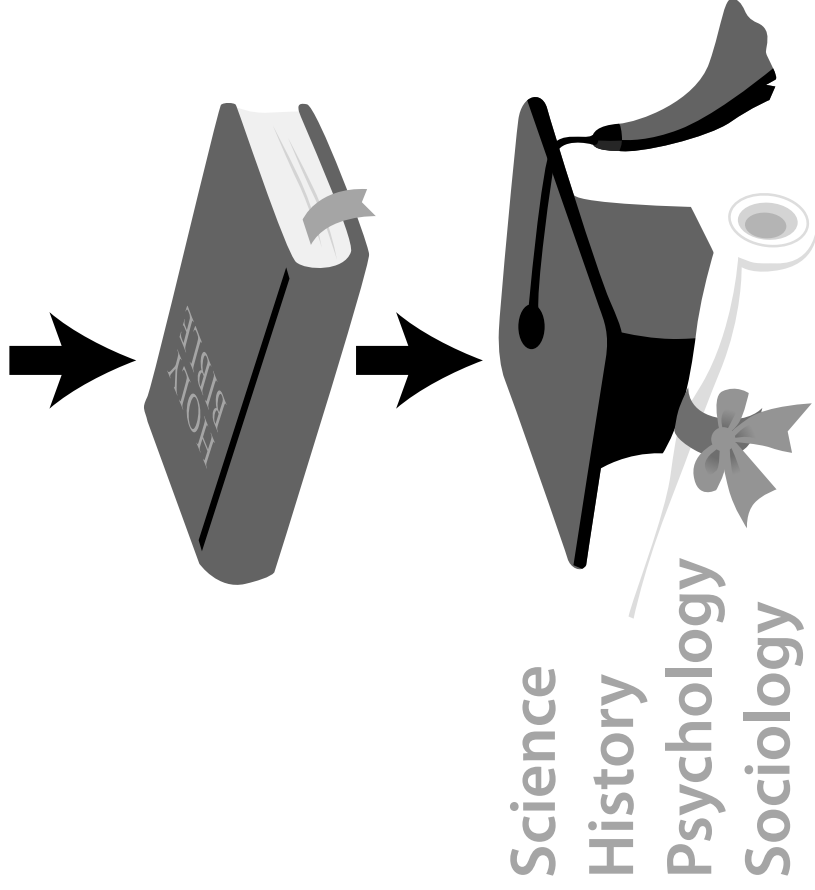
5. List four ways in which wisdom acts. (Hint: One way wisdom acts is that it prepares for the future.)

- Wisdom _____.
- Wisdom _____.
- Wisdom _____.
- Wisdom _____.

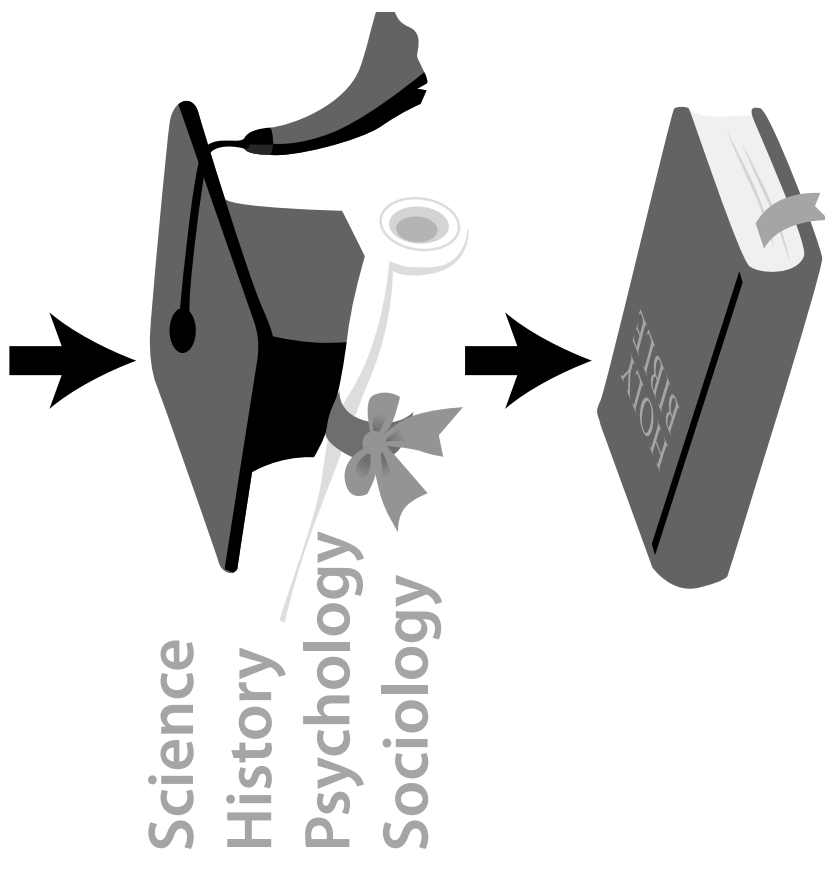
6. What is humanism? _____

Humanism is man's attempt to solve his problems independently of God

**Christian
Education**



**Secular
Education**



WISDOM AND FOOLISHNESS

TARGET TRUTHS

- The Bible makes a great distinction between the actions of a wise man and a fool.
- Whether we are wise or not is not a matter of age, but rather of knowing and fearing God.
- We need to evaluate our own lives from time to time to recognize any foolish tendencies in our lives.

TEACHING STRATEGY

As your students read the first paragraph of the lesson, emphasize that wisdom has nothing to do with age. Young people can have great wisdom if they are willing to listen to God's Word and follow it. An adult who refuses to follow God and obey Him can be very foolish, or his additional experience in life can enhance biblical wisdom that comes from obeying God.

Wise and Foolish Reactions

One of the greatest insights or keys as to whether we have wisdom or foolishness in our hearts is the way we react to such things as rules, correction, instruction, disagreements, and sin in our lives. Tell your students that as they take notes on each area, they should really consider how they react in such situations. This section can show them more than any other how wise they are. A wise person will take heed to areas that need to be corrected.

The reason for this is that a wise person is not filled with pride. Pride does not want to admit weakness. A person's pride does not want to admit it when he has done wrong. Pride does not want to be corrected or admonished in any way and does not want to accept rules for his life. A proud person is not wise.

After students have taken notes on each section, spend time reviewing and discussing the differences between a wise person and a foolish person. Explain that the word "reaction" means response. These are things we do not begin or initiate ourselves but must respond to when we are confronted by them. God is not as interested in the problems we face as in how we respond to the problems. God knows we will be faced with situations we do not enjoy, but our response in each case shows what our inner character is really like. It is our character with which God is most concerned.

The Key to Wisdom and Maturity

When a young child begins to try to walk, there is a day when he takes the first step. The first step to becoming a mature and wise person involves recognizing that we did not make ourselves. We were created by a loving and wise God to fulfill a unique and special purpose in life. To recognize that great God and the place He holds in our lives is wise indeed. Thus, the first step to wisdom and maturity is having great

respect for and trust in God. These verses say that God searches the earth for those who love Him, respect who He is, and trust Him. Unless we fear the Lord, we will live out our lives in “abominable iniquity” with no other hope.

More About the Fool and the Wise Man

Read the directions with your class and do the first section together. Your students should look up what the Bible says about the fool and write the opposite characteristic that would be a part of a wise person’s life.

Let students complete this on their own and then share ideas with the class. At the end of the section, ask students to consider what areas in their lives are foolish and wise. They should look at the first section regarding reactions as well as this last section in completing their evaluation. Consider leading in a time of prayer before they begin to think through these things. Praying before the Lord will encourage them to take self-evaluation more seriously. Do not go over these but explain that later during the year, we will return to this section to check up and see how we are growing in wisdom.

ADDITIONAL TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

The Meaning and Use of “Fear” in Scripture

Have students use a concordance to look up the word “fear” as it is used in Scripture. See if you can find different meanings that this word has in Scripture. Be prepared to discuss the different meanings with your class.

Composition

Ask the students to think of unwise actions they have observed in their own lives. The lists they made in this lesson may help them. Instruct them to write a composition on how their actions have affected others.

Making Decisions

Have students discuss some decisions they will have to make this week—in class, with friends, or at home. For each one, have students explain what would be a wise decision and a foolish decision.

Courtesy and Rudeness

Discuss the difference between the wisdom of courteous behavior and the foolishness of being rude.

The House on the Rock

Review the story of the house built on the rock and the house built on sand from Matthew 7:24-27. Give students the challenge of finding another similar analogy to emphasize wisdom and foolishness. They can write their own short parable or draw a picture of the comparison.

TEACHER'S LESSON (OVERHEAD TRANSPARENCY)

Definition of a Proverb

A proverb is a short sentence expressing in a few words a well-known truth.

The book of Proverbs is made up of 31 chapters and over 900 proverbs that were spoken, written, or collected by King Solomon, Agur, and King Lemuel. The vast majority of the proverbs were those of Solomon, who spoke 3,000 proverbs, according to 1 Kings 4:32. Many of the proverbs, as you will see, were written in the form of a comparison. In other words, a great truth was often compared to something common with which everyone could identify. Since the proverbs were written thousands of years ago, the comparison is sometimes difficult for us to understand, but the truth is everlasting from generation to generation.

The Main Purposes for Studying Proverbs

Proverbs 1:2-4 suggests five purposes or objectives for studying Proverbs.

- To know God

Proverbs 1:7 says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Therefore, one of the key purposes for any study of Proverbs is to build a closer relationship to God by learning who He is and how He thinks. When we begin to learn who God truly is, we will begin to grow in wisdom and knowledge.

- To know the Word of God

As we study the Word of God, we learn to know God, how He thinks, and how to discern His wisdom. By learning how God thinks, we will begin to understand how He acts and how He intends to work in our lives.

- To know God's principles

God's Word is filled with God's principles that show us how to live our lives successfully. As we study Proverbs, we will learn how to make right decisions in life. Our life choices will be right when they are based on truth.

- To learn how to apply God's wisdom

Everyone has "rough edges" that must be smoothed away. The rough edges God is concerned about are primarily in our character and inner attitudes. When He smooths out these ugly aspects of our lives, our lives will follow a beautiful and wonderful path and demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit.

- To give purpose to life

The Bible talks about people being tossed about with no direction, purpose, or understanding in life. God wants our lives to have direction, goals, and a purpose.

How to Understand Proverbs

- Recognize you have a need

If you think you know all you need to know for your life and that you have no more need to learn, you will not grow. Only by recognizing that we have problems and areas that we need to repent of our sin and change can we begin to grow in wisdom and knowledge.

- Hear

We must be willing to listen attentively to what we will be taught. But hearing in order to learn and grow must be done with the heart and not just the mind. If we just allow the message to affect our ears and part of our minds, we will not change. If we hear with our hearts, we will begin to see differences in our lives.

- Pray

Begin to pray and ask God to help you in two important ways. First, you need to pray that God will help you to understand the great and important truths that you will be taught. Second, you need to pray that God will help you to apply the truths you learn to your own life.

- Study

You need to apply yourself to your study of Proverbs this year. You will be looking up many verses in Proverbs and many other books to teach you great truths and principles for your life. You must be willing to apply yourself to your study, knowing that you will benefit from your study and perseverance.

QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1-5. Many answers are possible. Their answers should reflect portions of the material studied under the section “Wise and Foolish Reactions” in the student lesson.
- 6-9. Answers for these should include concepts presented in the section “More About the Fool and the Wise Man” in the student lesson.
10. the fear of the Lord (recognizing who God is and developing a great respect for and trust in Him)

L E S S O N 2

WISDOM AND FOOLISHNESS

Proverbs contains many comparisons between a wise man and a fool. Being a wise person often has nothing to do with age. Usually an older person does have knowledge and wisdom because of all the experiences of life. One basic reason we need to listen to older people is that they have already dealt with many of the same problems we are facing. But just because a person is old does not mean that he or she is truly wise because true wisdom comes only from God. Sometimes older people still act very foolishly, while young people have great wisdom because they know and follow God.

WISE AND FOOLISH REACTIONS

Read the following verses in Proverbs, and record how a wise man and a fool react to the following types of situations. Be ready to use your notes to discuss each section.

1. Reaction to Rebuke, Reproof, or Correction	
Wise Man's Reaction	Fool's Reaction
(9:8) <u>loves the one who rebukes him</u>	(9:8) <u>hates the one who reproves him</u>
(15:31) <u>lives among other wise people</u>	(13:1) <u>doesn't listen</u>
(17:10) <u>accepts it</u>	(15:12) <u>will not go to the wise for advice</u>
	(17:10) <u>doesn't accept it</u>

2. Reaction to Rules, Regulations, and Authority	
Wise Man's Reaction	Fool's Reaction
(10:8) <u>receives commandments</u> _____	(10:8) <u>falls because he doesn't listen</u> _____
	(10:23) <u>enjoy doing wickedness</u> _____
	(17:11) <u>seeks rebellion</u> _____
3. Reaction to Advice, Instruction, Teaching, and Preaching	
Wise Man's Reaction	Fool's Reaction
(12:1) <u>loves knowledge</u> _____	(1:7) <u>despises wisdom and instruction</u> _____
(12:15) <u>listens to counsel</u> _____	(1:22) <u>delights in scorning or mockery</u> _____
(15:14) <u>seeks knowledge</u> _____	(12:15) <u>believes his own way is right</u> _____
(18:15) <u>seeks and gets knowledge</u> _____	(15:5) <u>despises his father's instruction</u> _____
	(17:16) <u>has no heart for wisdom</u> _____
	(23:9) <u>despises wisdom</u> _____
4. Reaction to Arguing, Fighting, and Disagreements	
Wise Man's Reaction	Fool's Reaction
(11:12) <u>keeps quiet</u> _____	(18:6) <u>creates contention</u> _____
	(29:11) <u>says everything he thinks</u> _____

5. Reaction to Sin and Wrongdoing	
Wise Man's Reaction	Fool's Reaction
(14:16) <u>fears God and departs from evil</u>	(14:9) <u>mocks sin</u>
(22:3) <u>anticipates evil and hides from it</u>	(14:16) <u>uncontrolled and careless or reckless</u>

THE KEY TO WISDOM AND MATURITY

As you have seen from the last exercise, the major concern of the Scriptures is not whether people are rich or poor, athletic or musical, smart or slow to learn, well dressed or poorly dressed, outgoing or shy or friendly or lonely. In fact, foolish people judge others by some of these external standards, but maturity teaches us to view others as God views them. God judges us by whether we are wise or foolish. A fool rejects the one true God and does not recognize that the world was created and is held together by Him. A fool does not consider Who it is that provides everything we have. He does not even recognize Who gives him life. He is indeed a fool.

Read Psalm 14:1-3 and explain in your own words how King David described the fool.

He says there is no God. He is corrupt. He does abominable works. He does no good. He does not seek God.

According to Proverbs 15:33, what keeps a person from being a fool?

the fear of the Lord

When the Bible talks about fearing the Lord (as in Prov. 15:33), it does not mean being afraid of God in the way that we fear danger or pain. In this verse and many others, fear means to have a deep respect for God and to give Him great honor. Compare the above verses and explain what you think really is the key to growing up into maturity.

The key to wisdom and maturity is recognizing who God is and developing a deep respect for, submission to, and trust in Him.

MORE ABOUT THE FOOL AND THE WISE MAN

Each of the following areas are very important aspects of our lives. Look up each verse in Proverbs and think about what the Bible says about the fool. Then, in your own words, write the *opposite* attitude or action that a *wise* person would have or show. If there are words in the verses that you do not understand, use a dictionary to look them up.

1. Attitudes	
12:15	A wise person is willing to admit that he is not always right.
14:3	A wise person does not allow pride to control him.

2. Home Life	
10:1	A wise person encourages his mother.
15:5	A wise person listens closely to his father's instruction.
15:20	A wise person loves and honors his mother.

3. What We Say	
15:2	A wise person says the right thing at the right time.
15:7	A wise person disperses (spreads) knowledge and says wise things.
29:11	A wise person chooses his words carefully.

4. Attitude Toward Sin	
13:19	A wise person departs from his sin.
14:9	A wise person does not make light of sin.
14:16	A wise person fears the Lord and avoids sin.

5. Getting Angry	
10:19	A wise person does not say things he shouldn't.
12:16	A wise person does not let his anger get the best of him.
14:17	A wise person controls his temper.

6. Setting Goals and Completing Tasks	
10:14	A wise person will not be destroyed for failing to use his knowledge.
15:14	A wise person seeks knowledge about what he should do.
21:20	A wise person will be careful with his possessions and make wise use of what he has.

Look over the verses in Proverbs that we have studied in this lesson. List some of the characteristics (both of the foolish man and the wise man) that you see existing in your life right now. A wise person evaluates himself and knows himself. As you evaluate yourself, God can help you weed out those foolish reactions and strengthen the areas in which you are showing wisdom in your life.

Foolish Characteristics in My Life	Wise Characteristics in My Life
Answers will vary.	

TEACHER'S LESSON

Definition of a Proverb

A short _____ sentence _____ expressing in a _____ few words _____ a
 _____ well-known _____ truth

The Main Purposes for Studying Proverbs:

- To know God
- To know the Word of God
- To know _____ God's principles _____
- To learn how to apply God's wisdom
- To give purpose to life

How to Understand Proverbs:

- Recognize you have a need _____
- Hear _____
- Pray _____
- Study _____

L E S S O N 2 Q U I Z
WISDOM AND FOOLISHNESS

Name _____ Date _____ Score _____

Tell how a wise person responds or reacts to each of the following things:

1. Correction or rebuke: _____
2. Rules and authority: _____
3. Advice and instruction: _____
4. Arguing and disagreements: _____
5. Sin and wrongdoing: _____

Tell how a wise person shows his wisdom in each of the following areas.

6. His home life (relationship with his parents): _____
7. What he says: _____
8. Getting angry: _____
9. Setting goals and completing tasks: _____
10. According to Proverbs 15:33, what is the key to becoming wise and mature? _____

Definition of a Proverb

A short sentence expressing in a few words a well-known truth.

The Main Purposes for Studying Proverbs

- To know God
- To know the Word of God
- To know God's principles
- To learn how to apply God's wisdom
- To give purpose to life

How to Understand Proverbs

- Recognize you have a need
- Hear
- Pray
- Study

THE EXAMPLE OF WISE MEN

TARGET TRUTHS

- It is possible to learn wisdom by studying the examples of wise men.
- A wise person knows how to handle conflicts.
- It is important to choose priorities wisely.

TEACHING STRATEGY

King Solomon

As your students study King Solomon's values, use the following survey of Ephesians 5-6 to help them understand what priorities are and why they are important to God:

Read and explain Ephesians 5:18-6:9 and Colossians 3:14-25 to help your students understand more about priorities. Here is an outline of the Ephesians passage:

1. Ephesians 5:18-21—a right relationship with God
2. Ephesians 5:22-33—a right relationship with your spouse
3. Ephesians 6:1-4—a right relationship with your family
4. Ephesians 6:5-9—right relationships with authorities at work or school

Young people need to see that their relationship with God is to be their first priority in life (just as it should be their parents' first priority). Since your students are not married, their second priority ought to be their relationships with their parents and siblings. They need to make sure they follow through with their obligations at home. Next in the line of importance is their relationship to their authorities outside their family, particularly the leaders of their church and their teachers. These three areas must be of prime importance to them as God builds wisdom into their lives.

Ask your students to show you where activities and friends fit into the Ephesians outline of priorities. Does this mean that God is not interested in their friendships? The fact is, God is very interested in their activities and friendships, and there is nothing inherently wrong with them—just as long as they are kept in the proper perspective!

Having right priorities means that we put first things first and that we manage our lives decently and in order in accordance with God's priorities as revealed in the Bible. This is how Solomon ordered his life—at least the first part—and he became the wisest man ever known. He had such great wisdom that God used him to write a book full of wisdom.

As students complete the last part of this section, they need to do so with the above teachings in mind.

Before you leave the study of Solomon, however, explain that later in his life, Solomon strayed from the commands of God. He married heathen women and began to worship their gods. When this happened, he did not have the wisdom of God in his life like he had before. It is important for your students to realize that walking with God and learning His wisdom is a continuing need in our lives. We can never allow ourselves to assume that we can get along without God.

Daniel

This section is self-explanatory for the most part. Have your students complete the material on their own and then discuss each conflict as a class. Ask the students to read James 1:5-8 to see how we can obtain wisdom when we need it. Make sure to emphasize the following points:

1. We need to ask God for wisdom.
2. We need to ask in faith, not allowing our emotions or circumstances to toss us about with indecision.
3. We should not be double-minded. We should not want God's way *and* another way. God's will must take first priority.

My Own Conflicts

As students evaluate their own conflicts, explain that for this assignment the most important aspect is not whether or not they handled the example conflict wisely. The important thing is that they learn through this example how to seek God's wisdom faithfully in order to resolve future conflicts.

Blessings in Using the Wisdom of God

One of the greatest blessings that comes in using the wisdom of God is the confidence we have that God knows the ultimate outcome and will work things out for the best as we trust and obey Him, even if the immediate results do not seem to make sense. Not every conflict or problem will be resolved because we cannot change the hearts and lives of others. But we can have confidence that we have submitted ourselves to what God wants and that His way is best even when it is hard.

ADDITIONAL TEACHING SUGGESTION

Wise Leaders God Has Given Me

Have your students list those people in their lives whom God has used to instruct them and teach them wisdom. Next to each name they write, ask them to describe something specific that the person has taught them about living wisely.

TEACHER'S LESSON

We have just studied the life examples of men who sought the wisdom of God and allowed this wisdom to guide their lives. In Proverbs 30, God gives us four examples of wisdom in action. He uses four tiny creatures that have wisdom because of the way they were created to act and that can teach us some important principles.

The Ant: Forethought and Preparation (Prov. 30:25)

- Prepares for the future

The ant prepares for the future by gathering its food during the long summer months in preparation for the winter when he cannot get outside and search for food.

You must prepare for the future in many ways. First, you ought to prepare for your eternal future by repenting of your sins and trusting in Christ alone for salvation. Only in this way will you know that your sins are forgiven and that you can enter heaven one day. Second, you must prepare for the immediate future by getting the knowledge necessary for your life while you have the opportunity (such as during your years in school).

- Prepares to fight against temptation

We need to learn to recognize that Satan will tempt us again and again in many different ways, particularly while we are young. He does not want us to find satisfaction in trusting and obeying God. He does not want our lives to be successful tools in God's hands. We need to prepare in advance for Satan's attacks so that we will know how to combat him and gain victory over temptation. (Throughout the year, we will continue to discuss ways to prevent and avoid sin.)

The Coney (or possibly rock badger) : Security Despite Weakness (Prov. 30:26)

The coney was some sort of creature, perhaps similar to a rabbit, that lived in the rocks and caves of Palestine and Lebanon. The coney teaches us two outstanding lessons from its two major characteristics.

- Realizes its feebleness

We need likewise to recognize our sinfulness and inadequacy before God. As long as we think that we can live profitable lives without God, we will never see what wonderful things God can do with our lives (for His glory and for our good)!

- Hides in rocks for its defense

Throughout the Bible, God compares Jesus to a rock. A rock is something that is strong and sure, something that we can trust not to budge if we put our weight on it. That is what Jesus is like after we trust Him as Savior. He is our protector and our defense. This is what the coney in its wisdom also realized it needed—protection and defense from its enemies.

The Locust: Unity and Cooperation (Prov. 30:27)

The strength of the locusts is in their unity and orderliness. They are not independent of each other; rather, they depend on one another. Even without a leader, they fly in perfect ranks and formation. We can learn the need to be unified in Christ—not bickering or gossiping or being jealous and critical of one another, but relying on one another for counsel and strength.

The Lizard (or spider): Boldness (Prov. 30:28)

We do not possess enough linguistic evidence to determine with certainty whether this Hebrew word refers to a lizard or a spider. Whichever animal is in view, an outstanding characteristic of it is boldness. Though small and despised, these creatures live in the palaces of kings. This is a wonderful picture of sinful man. Though there is nothing in ourselves that merits a special status, we have the right (through Jesus) to enter daily into the very throne room of God.

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Solomon
2. an understanding heart to be able to discern between right and wrong
3. any four of the following would be acceptable:
 - without blemish or defect
 - handsome (may be translated well-favored)
 - skillful in all wisdom (intelligent)
 - possessing much knowledge
 - gifted in understanding and discernment
 - able to serve in the king's palace
 - able to learn a new language
4. He was asked to eat the king's food.
5. He proposed a testing period during which he and his friends would only have vegetables and water.
6. King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that none of his wise men could interpret. The wise men were to be killed for their inability to interpret the dream.
7. Daniel asked the king not to kill the wise men if he could interpret the dream, and God gave Daniel the correct interpretation.
8. Any five of the following would be acceptable:
 - safety and lack of fear of evil
 - long life and peace
 - happiness
 - pleasant, peaceful life
 - lack of fear; ability to sleep easily
 - protection from stumbling
 - good health
 - favor from the Lord
 - strength
 - reward
9.
 - lizard or spider
 - locust
 - ant
 - coney or rock badger

SELF-EVALUATION

Do I Use Sound Wisdom?

Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 5 for each of the following, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest level of wisdom used in each situation.

1. ____ I listen to adults' instructions willingly so I will know how to discern right from wrong and choose right.
2. ____ I ask the Lord to give me the wisdom I need for difficult situations.
3. ____ I study God's Word on my own so I will be able to judge right from wrong.
4. ____ I do not make decisions frivolously. I carefully think through what I should do.
5. ____ I do not go along with my friends' ideas without thinking through what is right and wrong.
6. ____ When my parents or a teacher must correct me, I listen closely to learn from my mistakes.
7. ____ I do not decide what I will do based on my feelings and what others are doing but rather on what the Bible teaches.
8. ____ I do not argue about obeying God's rules when they are clearly set forth in the Bible.
9. ____ When I get involved in a possible conflict, I listen carefully and think through what I will do and say.
10. ____ When I am organizing my time, I think about my priorities and what is the most important thing to do first.

- What do my answers to these questions suggest about how well I apply wisdom?

- Which areas of my life most need to grow in wisdom?

L E S S O N 3

THE EXAMPLE OF WISE MEN

We are going to spend most of this lesson seeing how two men pursued God's wisdom. God had greatly blessed both of these men, King Solomon and Daniel. They both became famous and were able to influence the lives of many people with whom they came in contact. Not only were they wise, but they also enjoyed fame, fortune, and great success during their lifetimes. Look carefully at how and why God blessed them and think about how you could glorify God if He would bless you with wisdom and help you make right choices throughout your life.

KING SOLOMON

One great reason to study the life of Solomon is that he is the primary author of our main "textbook" for this class this year—the book of Proverbs. God can use the life of this great king to teach us the difference between the wisdom of God and the perceived wisdom of the world.

King Solomon was the son of the great King David. He was fortunate to have had a father like David who loved the Lord God all the days of his life. David taught Solomon the value of trusting in God and having the wisdom of God above all else. If you read Solomon's story, you will see once again the value of having the fear of God as your first priority. Our "priorities" are what we value as important in our lives. Read part of the story of Solomon (1 Kings 3:3-15), and answer each question below:

What did Solomon learn from his father? (vss. 3 and 6)

He learned to love the LORD and walk in His commandments and to have truth, righteousness, and uprightness of heart.

How did Solomon view himself? (vss. 7 and 8)

as a servant of God—a child who did not know how to act in the midst of a great people

For what did Solomon ask? (vs. 9)

an understanding heart to be able to discern between right and wrong

For what did Solomon *not* ask? (vs. 11)

long life, riches, or vengeance on his enemies

List what God gave Solomon (in the order of their priorities). (vss. 12 and 13)

a wise and understanding heart, then riches and honor

What did God require of Solomon? (vs. 14)

Solomon had to keep God's commandments.

What reward did He promise him? (vs. 14)

God would lengthen his days.

Solomon was the king of Israel. He was rich and famous, and—humanly speaking—he had no need of anyone or anything. Yet Solomon saw the need to seek God and the wisdom of God first. What conclusion can you reach about priorities for your own life? Make a list of things that are important to you. You might include friends, school, music, sports, family, church, or anything else that is important to you.

1. Answers will vary.
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Of the things you have listed, which three do you think ought to have the highest priority in your life?

1. Answers will vary. _____

2. _____

3. _____

DANIEL

During the reign of Jehoiakim, Daniel and three of his companions were taken captive to Babylon. Their superiors recognized them to be excellent young men. Because of their special qualifications, they were selected to be trained for the king's service.

Daniel 1:4 explains specifically what the Babylonians saw in Daniel and his friends that impressed them. List these things below:

1. without blemish or defect _____

2. handsome (may be translated well-favored) _____

3. skillful in all wisdom (intelligent) _____

4. possessing much knowledge _____

5. gifted in understanding and discernment _____

6. able to serve in the king's palace _____

7. able to learn a new language _____

All of these are qualities that people might admire in you, also. Good looks and a noble heritage are nice to have, but notice the emphasis on the wisdom of these young men and on their aptitude to learn and to teach.

Daniel and his friends got their wisdom from God! Their wise responses helped them through three conflicts with the Babylonians.

Read Daniel 1:8-16. What was the first conflict?

They were asked to eat the king's food, supposedly so that they could grow stronger. But in order to eat that kind of food, they would be forced to violate God's law, and they did not want to go against God.

How did the wisdom of God help Daniel resolve the conflict?

Daniel proposed a creative alternative. He respectfully proposed a testing period during which he and his friends would eat only vegetables and water. God blessed them and caused them to prosper during this period, so much so that their authorities were amazed and gladly permitted them to continue honoring God.

Read Daniel 2 to find out about the conflict between pagan magic and the wisdom of God. What was the conflict?

King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that none of his wise men could interpret. As a result, it was decided that the wise men were to be killed for their inability to interpret the dream.

How did the wisdom of God help Daniel resolve the conflict?

Daniel asked the king not to kill the wise men if he could interpret the dream, and God gave Daniel the correct interpretation.

Read Daniel 3 to find out about the conflict between heathen idolatry and loyalty to the true God. What was the conflict?

Daniel's friends would be thrown into the fiery furnace if they did not bow down before the king's image.

How did the wisdom of God help Daniel's friends resolve the conflict?

They remained loyal to God and were thrown into the furnace, but God did not allow them to be burned.

You will learn that you will have conflicts of many kinds in your life. Friends will try to tempt you to do wrong. Situations will arise in which you will have to make important decisions for yourself. As in Daniel's situation, your parents may not be able to help you make a decision. You will be responsible to make wise choices on your own.

Share a situation in which you had a conflict to resolve. What was the conflict?

Answers will vary.

How did the wisdom of God relate to the situation?

Answers will vary.

What choice did you make in the situation? Was it a wise choice?

Answers will vary.

BLESSINGS FOR APPLYING THE WISDOM OF GOD

God blesses our lives in many different ways as we trust in His wisdom—just as Solomon and Daniel received great blessings. Read the verses from Proverbs listed on the next page and write out each blessing God promises for using the wisdom that comes from Him.

After seeing some of the rewards and results of true wisdom, it is obvious why God says that those who reject Him are truly foolish.

- 1:33 safety and lack of fear of evil

- 3:2 long life and peace

- 3:13 happiness

- 3:17 pleasant, peaceful life

- 3:24 lack of fear, ability to sleep peacefully

- 4:12 protection from stumbling

- 4:22 good health

- 8:35 favor from the Lord

- 24:5 strength

- 24:14 reward

TEACHER'S LESSON

Proverbs 30:24-28



Forethought and Preparation



Security Despite Weakness



Unity and Cooperation



Boldness

L E S S O N 3 Q U I Z
THE EXAMPLE OF WISE MEN

Name _____ Date _____ Score _____

1. Who wrote most of the book of Proverbs? _____
2. When God told this man He would grant his request, for what did he ask?

3. Daniel 1:4 mentions seven things that impressed the Babylonians about Daniel and his three friends. What were four of those things?
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
4. What conflict did Daniel face in Daniel 1? _____

5. How did the wisdom of God help Daniel resolve this conflict? _____

6. What conflict did Daniel face in Daniel 2? _____

7. How did the wisdom of God help Daniel resolve this conflict? _____

8. We noted ten blessings in Proverbs for using the wisdom of God. List five of those blessings.
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
9. Which animals are used as illustrations of these important lessons in Proverbs 30?
 - Boldness: _____
 - Unity and cooperation: _____
 - Forethought and preparation: _____
 - Security despite weakness: _____

Proverbs 30:24-28



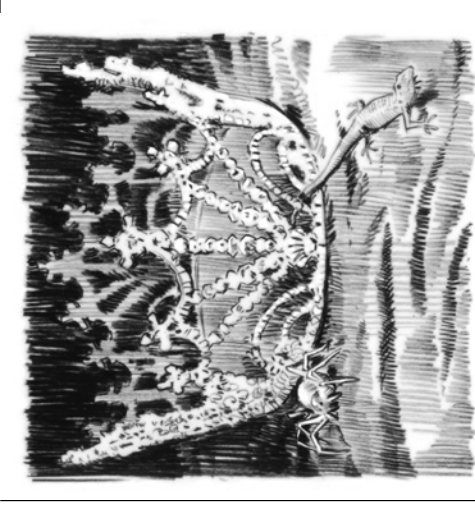
Forethought and Preparation



Security Despite Weakness



Unity and Cooperation



Boldness