

Wisdom for Life

The Book of Proverbs

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Wisdom for Life: The Book of Proverbs was created for and taught to a High School Bible class at the Karns Church of Christ. The material has been edited and uploaded here for you to use, free of charge, to help meet the needs of your ministry.

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Wise Words from a Destructive Life

The Book of Proverbs

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Wise Words From A Destructive Life

Week 1: Stop and Listen! Dealing with Correction

Introduction:

- A. Perhaps one of the hardest things to do is to stop and listen when someone is trying to correct you or your behavior.
- B. ILLS: When I was somewhere around 13-14 years old, I can remember my dad being upset with me because of the way I had spoken to my mother. After he laid in to me pretty sternly, my dad grounded me for a lengthy period of time. I can remember thinking how unfair that was. I didn't deserve that, right? But my dad was trying to discipline me and correct a behavior before it became a pattern in my life. I didn't like it, but he had to do it.

Why Must We Be Corrected?

- A. Have you ever wondered why we have to be corrected at all? Why we can't live however we want? **Question:** What would be the problem with man living however he wanted?
- B. Fools think their own way is right (Prov. 12:15). The older I get the more I realize my way is not always right, even though I use to think it was.
- C. If someone does not care enough about me to correct me, I'm going to continue living the way I think is right and that can be a slippery slope...especially when my way is not how God wants me to live. God EXPECTS us to CORRECT (Gal. 6:1; 2 Thess. 3:14-15).

Correction Is For Our Own Good

- A. It keeps us from *MISTAKES*.
 - 1. **Question:** How many times have you made a mistake and wished someone would have said something to you before you made the mistake? Anyone willing to share a time?
 - 2. By listening to correction we become wise and make better decisions (Prov. 19:20).

3. Safety is found in seeking counsel and direction from others (Prov. 11:14).
 4. Rehoboam acted foolishly by not listening to the counsel of his advisers (I Kgs. 12:1-16).
- B. It keeps us from *SHAME*.
1. Sometimes our mistakes are so BIG and public they bring about shame and disgrace.
 2. EX: Tiger Woods and Alex Rodriguez have both made mistakes that brought them a great deal of shame.
 3. Poverty and shame come to him who neglects discipline (Prov. 13:18).
- C. It keeps us from *REGRET*.
1. It is stupid to hate correction (Prov. 12:1). **Question:** Why do you think this is?
 2. If we neglect listening to correction, we will look back on our lives with some regrets (Prov. 5:11-13).

How Should We Respond To Being Corrected?

- A. LISTEN (Jam. 1:19) – some of us have a bad habit of not listening to the correction given us
1. **Question:** How many times have you failed to listen to your parents when they were trying to correct you? Why did you fail to listen to what they were saying?
 2. There have been times were I failed to listen to someone who was trying to correct me while I was doing something wrong (EX: putting something together without directions while the other person was reading the directions).
 3. Let's hear people out when they are speaking of something we might need to correct in our lives.
- B. ACCEPT (Prov. 15:5)
1. After listening to someone offer correction, if they are right, accept it.
 2. We hate to be wrong...but I'd rather be wrong and it pointed out now than to be wrong and pay the price for it later.
 3. Accepting correction is not a sign of weakness, but rather it's a sign of strength. Only strong people can handle being corrected; the weak at heart cannot.

- C. ACT (Jam. 2:14-17) – although this verse is in reference to faith, the idea is the same. If we accept/believe something but fail to act on it, what we accept/believe is worthless.
1. EX: Let's say I had \$20 and pledged to give it to the first person who came up and asked me for it. Now, you heard me make this claim and you believe me when I say I will give the money away. Is your ability to listen to me make such a claim and accept it enough for you to receive the money? Of course not...you have to act by coming up and asking me for the money.
 2. The same can be said of correction. It's not enough for you to just listen to someone try to correct you and say, "Yep, I agree." You have to then act on the correction.
 3. **Question:** Why is it some people fail to act after they have accepted something they need to correct?

Conclusion:

- A. "Mistakes are inevitable, what separates a person from others is the improvement made after a mistake is realized." (Author Unknown)
- B. Next time someone tries to correct you, how will you respond?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why do we have such a hard time dealing with correction?
2. Can a person's ability to handle correction tell you anything about them? If so, what?
3. What is something someone tried to correct you for that you really did not want to hear?
4. Can you think of any more reasons why correction is for our own good?
5. What is one thing this lesson on correction has caused you to think about or see differently?

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Week 2: Get a Hold of Yourself! Dealing with Anger

Introduction:

- A. When was the last time you got really angry about something? What were you angry about? How did you respond during your moment of anger? Was your response something you are proud of or ashamed of?
- B. Most people have had plenty of moments where they lost control of their anger and embarrassed themselves. I have even heard of some parents losing control of their anger during their children's recreational league basketball games.
- C. James said we are to be slow to anger (Jam. 1:19-20). What does he mean by slow? Why should we be slow to anger?

Ephesians 4:26-27 – *“Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil.”*

- A. What does that phrase about the devil and opportunity mean? How does our anger give the devil an opportunity?
- B. **QUESTION:** What are some of the bad things that can happen when we are angry?
- C. “Speak when you are angry and you will make the best speech you will ever regret.” (Ambrose Bierce).

Proverbs 16:32 - We accomplish more than a mighty warrior when we are slow to anger.

The Dangers of Anger – what happens when we fail to learn how to control our anger?

- A. We act on a situation too quickly making ourselves look foolish (Prov. 14:17, 29).
- B. We cause trouble for ourselves and others (Prov. 29:22; 15:1).

C. If we don't suffer the consequences for losing our anger, we will do it again (Prov. 19:19).

Proverbs 29:11 – “A fool always loses his temper, but a wise man holds it back.”

Ways to Control Our Anger – “When anger arises, think of the consequences.” (Confucius)

- A. Stop and pray.
- B. Realize what you are angry over probably isn't that important in the long run.
- C. Understand other people are watching you.
- D. Ask yourself, “How would God feel about me being angry about this?”

Conclusion: “Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else; you are the one who gets burned.” (Buddha)

Discussion Questions:

- A. Why is anger such a hard emotion for us to control?
- B. Have you ever been so angry you said or did something you later regretted? Did you go back and apologize to whoever you lost your anger in front of? How did that make you feel?
- C. What are some more dangers that can occur because of one's anger?
- D. If a friend came to you about his or her anger issues, how would you counsel them?
- E. What is something you can do this week to help you in your battle with controlling your anger?

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Week 3: Choose Your Friends Carefully! Dealing with Friendships

Introduction:

- A. What type of characteristics do you value in a friend? (EX: trust, honesty, kindness, loyalty, availability, Christian, generosity, popularity).
- B. Why do you value such traits as these?
- C. It has been said, "A true friend is one who never gets tired of listening to your pointless drama over and over again." This kind of sums up some of our friendships, doesn't it?
- D. Really though...What's makes someone a true friend? Let's see what the Book of Proverbs has to say.

Attributes of a True Friends

- A. True Friends Listen and Give Good Counsel (Prov. 11:14; 15:22).
 - 1. When we have people we can turn to and seek advice from, we prosper and make wise choices.
 - 2. Remember, friends can listen and give bad advice too (I Kgs. 12:1-19).
- B. True Friends Lift Us Up (Prov. 27:17).
 - 1. Friends lift us when we fall down and need a helping hand (Ecc. 4:9-10).
 - 2. Friends lift us up when we are discouraged and need encouragement (I Thess. 5:11).
- C. True Friends Love Us at All Times (Prov. 17:17).
 - 1. "A friend is one who knows you and loves you just the same." (Elbert Hubbard)

2. Even though we may mess up big time and bring about trouble for ourselves and others, true friends continue to love us and overlook our faults.

Transition: Having true friends is a wonderful blessing, but we must carefully choose who we allow to be our closest friends.

Choosing Our Friends Carefully

A. Friends Rub Off on Us (Prov. 22:24-25).

1. Bad company corrupts good morals (I Cor. 15:33).
2. Just as our friends rub off on us, we should rub off godly characteristics on them (Heb. 10:24-25).

B. Friends Ruin Us on Occasions (Prov. 18:24).

1. If we have too many ungodly and non-Christ-like friends, they will ruin our good morals.
2. Hang around wicked people and you will be led away from God (Prov. 12:26).

Guardrails for our Friendships

- A. Don't hang around friends who don't live according to God's standards. Break away from them (2 Cor. 6:14).
- B. Build strong relationships with people in your youth group who will hold you accountable.
- C. Be a leader and not a follower!

Discussion Questions:

1. What's the ONE trait you value most about your best friend? Why?
2. Give an example of a time when one of your friends either listened, lifted or loved you when you were going through a rough time?
3. Why is it hard for us to break away from friends who we know are not the best people to be hanging out with?
4. Can you think of any more guardrails we should include when it comes to our friendships?
5. What is one thing you will take away from this lesson when it comes dealing with your friends?

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Week 4: Oh, Be Careful Little Mouth What You Say! Dealing with Our Words

Introduction:

- A. There are a lot of things in life that can bring about death in destruction. Name a few.
- B. Whether you realize it or not, we ALL possess something in our lives that can bring about great destruction.
- C. Our words can bring either life or death, depending on how we use it (Prov. 18:21). Let's consider a few of the good and bad ways we can use our tongues.

Our Words Used for Good

- A. When we give wise and helpful advice (Prov. 10:31-32; Prov. 16:24).
- B. When we offer healing (Prov. 12:18).
- C. When we speak timely words (Prov. 15:23).
- D. When we speak few words (Prov. 10:19; Prov. 18:6-7).

Our Words Used for Evil

- A. When we speak perverse words (Prov. 10:32).
 - 1. Any time we speak bad of someone else, we are speaking perverse words.
 - 2. Any time we use our words to be mean, we are speaking perverse words.
- B. When we use our words to gossip.
 - 1. A gossip separates close friends (Prov. 16:28). Why does gossip separate close friends?
 - 2. Perhaps it's because you break a confidence...telling secrets (Prov. 11:13). Avoid anyone who talks too much (Prov. 20:19).
 - 3. Those who gossip are under God's wrath (Rom. 1:29-32).
- C. When we use our words to tear others down (Prov. 27:17).

D. When we use our words to lie or be deceitful – white lies and small omissions are still lies.

1. Lying lips are an abomination (elsewhere expressed abhorrence of pagan practices) to the Lord (Prov. 12:22).

2. A righteous person hates lying (Prov. 13:5).

E. When we use our words to blow up and spout off (Prov. 17:27-28).

F. When we use our words to speak too quickly (Prov. 18:13; Prov. 29:20).

Conclusion: Those who guard their mouths preserve their lives, but those who speak rashly (open wide his lips) will come to ruin (Prov. 13:3).

Discussion Questions:

A. Have you ever used your words in a way that could have brought about destruction?

Why do we do this when we know how destructive our words can be?

B. How can being a person of few words be a good thing?

C. Have you ever had a friend use their words for evil when speaking to or of you? In what way did they use their words for evil?

D. What would you say is the best way one can use their words?

E. What do you think is the worst way a person can use their words?

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Week 5: Protect Yourself! Dealing with Our Reputation

Introduction:

- A. What kind of reputation do you have among your friends? What about among your teachers? Church friends? Parents?
- B. Is your reputation the same with all these different groups? Why or why not?
- C. Are you proud of the reputation you have among others?

Proverbs 22:1 – *“A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold.”*

- A. How is a good reputation more valuable than riches?
- B. Is it important for a Christian to have a good reputation? Why or why not?

Building Our Reputation

- A. Good reputations are built over time; they are shaped by both the big and small things we do each day. Some may be significant while others are insignificant, but they all contribute to our overall reputation among others.
- B. Consider a few of the things we can do to build up a good reputation among others.
 - 1. Stay away from people who make a point to do evil (Prov. 1:10-15).
 - 2. Work hard at everything you do (Prov. 10:4-5).
 - 3. Listen to what others have to say (Prov. 11:14; Prov. 22:17).
 - 4. Trust in the Lord (Prov. 3:5-6; Prov. 18:10).
 - 5. Love at all times (Prov. 17:17).

Conclusion:

- A. I've often heard it said, "It takes a lifetime to build a reputation but only a moment to destroy it." Why do you think this is?
- B. We are always working to build our reputation but one mistake and it's always remembered by others.
- C. People tend to remember the bad moments in our lives more than the good.

Discussion Questions:

- A. Why is having a good reputation of great value in our lives? Why is having a bad reputation so harmful in our lives?
- B. Should our reputation be the same or different, depending on who we are around?
- C. What part of your reputation are you most proud to have?
- D. What part of your reputation are you least proud to have?
- E. What can we do to build up our reputation? What can we do to protect our reputation?

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Week 6: Avoid the Trap! Dealing with Sexual Temptation

Introduction:

- A. One of the biggest pitfalls of our society has to do with sexual temptation. It's all around. It's a trap that many teens and adults fall into.
- B. The sad reality is that for the majority of the population, there is nothing wrong with sex or sexual behavior outside of the marriage relationship.
- C. God speaks out against sexual immorality on many occasions (I Thess. 4:1-8; I Cor. 6:9-11; Eph. 5:3). Since God is against sexual behavior outside of marriage, what can we do to avoid it?

Notice the Mistakes this Young Man Makes (Prov. 7:5-13).

- A. He went down near her house (v. 8). There are certain places that should be off limits (ex: anywhere that can lead us to trouble should be off limits).
- B. He went at night (v. 9). He didn't want anyone to know (he was alone which always creates a problem).
- C. He does not run away. He stays in the presence of a half dressed woman who was looking for a good time (vs. 10-13). This is the opposite of what Joseph did when he was tempted (Gen. 39:11-12).

Notice the Lures of this Woman (Prov. 7:13-21).

- A. She kissed him (v. 13). There are two things girls need to know about guys: 1) They're visual, 2) They're physical. You can turn a guy on by what you wear and how you touch him.
- B. She offered him somewhat of a feast (v. 14). She was giving him something in hopes of getting something in return. I'll give you this, if you give me that.

- C. She tells him he's the one she's been looking for (v. 15). She is using the power of words to seduce this young man. How many times has someone of the opposite sex tried to entice people by using words?
- D. She tells him what she wants and that her bed is ready (vs. 16-18). She's trying to convince the young man that they have the perfect opportunity and place to enjoy one another's company.
- E. She tells him her husband is away (vs. 19-20). She even promises no one will find out; it would be their little secret.
- F. She lured him with her persuasive and smooth talk (v. 21). He just couldn't resist her smooth and convincing talk.

The Consequences of Sexual Sins - He followed her to his destruction (vs. 22-27).

- A. You can never get back what you lost.
- B. You will someday have to tell your spouse about your past.
- C. You will never be able to clear the thoughts from your head.
- D. You will make comparisons even after you are married to a certain extent.
- E. You will carry around regret and disappointment for the rest of your life.

Avoiding the Trap of Sexual Temptation

- A. Prov. 5:7-8 - Keep yourself far from a path that will lead to sexual sins (Prov. 1:17).
- B. Prov. 6:20-24 - Remember what you have been taught.
- C. Prov. 7:24-27 - Think about the consequences that will come from such actions.

Conclusion: If we want an eternal home in heaven, we must learn how to avoid the trap of sexual temptation.

Discussion Questions:

- A. On a scale of 1-10, how high would you rate sexual temptation in the lives of teens?
Why would you rate it so high?
- B. What mistakes do you see or hear your peers make in the struggle against sexual temptation?
- C. How can you help a friend who is struggling with sexual temptation?
- D. What is one of the biggest lures teens use to get others to give in to sexual temptation?
- E. What would you consider to be one of the hardest consequences involved in sexual sins?

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Week 7: Get a Move on It! Dealing with Laziness

Introduction:

- A. How would you define the word lazy? What makes a person lazy? Do you know people who are lazy?
- B. What would be considered the opposite of being lazy? Do you know who are like this? Why would you consider these people to not be lazy?
- C. Do you think laziness is something our society struggles with? Why or why not?
- D. The Bible has a lot to say about a person working hard and not being lazy. Read 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 and 1 Timothy 5:8. Let's consider why the Bible speaks out against a person being lazy.

Consequences of Laziness

- A. Laziness leads to Negligence (Prov. 6:6-9).
 - 1. If a person is lazy they are not going to be doing the things they should be doing. Unlike the ant, who although it does not have a commander or ruler, it stores and gathers food in preparation for what is to come. The ant does not neglect doing what needs to be done.
 - 2. Any person who is lazy and careless will find themselves in poverty (Prov. 10:4). The lazy person will neglect even the important things of life like working and providing for their family.
 - 3. We must guard against being so carefree that we become lazy in certain areas of our lives.
 - 4. **Question:** What areas of your life is it easy to become lazy and neglect?
- B. Laziness leads to Annoyance (Prov. 10:26).
 - 1. A lazy person annoys the one who has given him a task to do.
 - 2. ILLS: Teachers get annoyed at students who continually neglect doing their

homework. Coaches get annoyed at players who continually fail to put forth a good effort in practice.

3. **Questions:** Has there ever been a time in your life where someone else's laziness has caused you to be annoyed? What did they do or not do that caused you to be annoyed?

C. Laziness leads to Difficulty (Prov. 15:19).

1. It's difficult to walk through thorns and bushes when you are hiking or walking through the woods. Sometimes it's even painful, isn't it? Have you ever been stuck by a thorn? Ouch.
2. **Question:** How can laziness lead to difficulties in life? What are some of the difficulties laziness might produce? What can be done to overcome those difficulties?

D. Laziness leads to Nothing (Prov. 13:4; Prov. 20:4).

1. People who are lazy never accomplish much of anything in the long run. The people who accomplish great things are the people who are willing to get busy and work hard.
2. Do you think Noah was lazy when it came to building the ark? Of course not! Because of his hard work and obedience to God, he and his family were spared. What would have happened had Noah been too lazy to do what God had told him to do?
3. **Question:** In what area of your life have you seen this idea of laziness producing nothing played out?

Conclusion:

- A. Whether we want to admit it or not, laziness is something most of us struggle with in certain areas of our lives.
- B. Just like all other sins we struggle with, we must guard our hearts and lives against the sin of laziness.

- C. What areas of your life cause laziness to rear its ugly head? Make a point to do something about it.
- D. This week to do the very things you most often neglect doing due to being lazy.

Discussion Questions:

- A. How prominent do you think laziness is in the life of teenagers? What can be done so laziness is less of a factor in one's life?
- B. Think of the laziest person you know (**DON'T call them out by name**). What makes this person so lazy in your eyes?
- C. What area of your life do you most need to work on when it comes to being lazy?
- D. What can you do this week to help in your battle against being lazy in this area of your life?
- E. How can laziness play a role in the life of a Christian?

Wise Words From A Destructive Life

Week 8: Treat them Right! Dealing with our Enemies

Introduction:

- A. Relationships are great but they are not always easy! In fact, relationships of every kind are difficult and lots of hard work. However, the most difficult relationships are most often the relationships we have with those who we consider to be our enemies.
- B. Do you have people in your life you would consider to be your enemies? What makes these individuals enemies?
- C. Consider this...If we want to be pleasing to the Lord, we must seek to make peace with our enemies (Prov. 16:7).

Who Are Our Enemies? (Luke 6:27-29)

- A. Those who hate us (v. 27). This would include those who are hostile toward us, even opposing us.
- B. Those who curse us (v. 27). This would include those who wish or speak evil of us; to slander or put down.
- C. Those who mistreat us (v. 28). This would include those who insult us, treat us abusively, etc.
- D. Those who hit or cause us bodily harm (v. 29). Those who want to inflict harm on us.
- E. Those who take things from us (v. 29). This would include those who steal from us or tear us down to the point it ruins us and our reputation.

Our Relationship with our Enemies...

A. Love Them (Lk. 6:27)

1. This teaching was and still is foreign on so many levels. We want to do the opposite of love. We want to hate them and wish evil upon them, don't we?
2. When bad things happen to our enemies it's easy for us to want to rejoice, isn't it? However, we are told not to rejoice when our enemies stumble and fall (Prov. 24:17-18). Those who mock at calamity and disaster will not go unpunished (Prov. 17:5).
3. The Greek word for love here is "agapao" (agape). This is the word that is used to most often describe the love of God. This kind of love is an unconditional and voluntary kind of love. Quite frankly...IT'S A CHOICE WE MAKE!!!
4. What credit is there if you love those who love you (Lk. 6:32)? That doesn't take much sacrifice and effort, does it?

B. Do Good to Them (Lk. 6:27)

1. Not holding a grudge or seeking revenge is not enough. We must actively seek to do good to those who hate us and cause us harm without expecting anything in return (Lk. 6:35).
2. Be kind to your enemy (Prov. 25:21-22). A trapped Aramean army (who was an enemy of Israel) was given a great feast and then sent home at the request of Elisha (2 Kings 6:21-23).
3. We should treat our enemies the same way we want them to treat us (Lk. 6:31).

C. Bless Them (Lk. 6:27)

1. The word bless means we are to speak well of those who curse and hate us. That's not easy to do. The easy thing for us to do is use our words to bring harm upon them.
2. "Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing" (Prov. 12:18).

D. Pray for Them (Lk. 6:27)

1. Jesus was a great example of this (Lk. 23:34).

2. The word pray is a present active imperative. This means it is to be continuously fulfilled in our lives.

Conclusion:

- A. Why does Jesus command something from us that goes against our human nature?
- B. Because our actions toward our enemies demonstrates our likeness to God (Lk. 6:35).
- C. Loving those unlovable individuals is a distinctive mark of a Christian (Jn. 13:35).

Discussion Questions:

- A. How can we show our enemies love? Remember, love is not something you say, it's something you do.
- B. Why is being kind to our enemies such a struggle? How can we correct this in our own lives?
- C. How can we use our words to bless our enemies?
- D. When praying for our enemies, what should we pray about?
- E. Of all the things mentioned above about our relationships with our enemies, which is the hardest for you to do?

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Week 9: Show Some Respect! Dealing with Parents

Introduction:

- A. Being a parent is the hardest and most stressful job on the planet, but it's also one of the greatest and most rewarding jobs any person could ever have. The good far outweighs the bad when it comes to parenting.
- B. Psalm 127:3-5 teaches us that children are a heritage from the Lord. Children are a unique blessing.
- C. With this great responsibility in mind, let's consider what God expects, both from parents and their children.

Parent's God-Given Responsibilities

- A. Teach and Impress the Commandments of God on their Children's Hearts (Deut. 6:4-9).
 - 1. Parents must train, dedicate and instruct their children in how they should live (Prov. 22:6).
 - 2. This is a constant battle because the world is teaching them all the things that go against the commandments of God.
- B. Discipline their Children out of Love (Prov. 13:24; 23:13-14).
 - 1. Children often times act foolish and need to be disciplined in order to remove the foolishness from their lives (Prov. 22:15).
 - 2. Parents are to discipline their children while there is hope (Prov. 19:18). If a parent fails to discipline their children while they are young, they will pay the price when the child grows up.
 - 3. If parents discipline their children, the children will bring peace and rest (Prov. 29:17).
- C. Look out for the Best Interest of their Children (Eph. 6:4). A parent's job is to HELP, not HINDER!

Children's God-Given Responsibilities

- A. Listen to Your Father and Mother's Teaching and Instruction (Prov. 1:8-9).
 - 1. Our parents have a lot more wisdom than we give them credit for (Prov. 5:1).
 - 2. Our parents have experienced the things we are experiencing at one point or another.
- B. Keep and Obey Your Father's Commands (Prov. 6:20).
 - 1. We are to obey our parents in the Lord because it is right (Eph. 6:1-3).
 - 2. We are to obey our parents in everything that is not sinful (Col. 3:20; Acts 5:29).
- C. Honor and Care for Them when and if that Day Comes (I Tim. 5:3-4).

Conclusion:

- A. Just as God has expectations of parents, He has expectations of children as well.
- B. We need to be mindful of how God expects us to deal with our parents, even we don't always agree and see eye to eye.
- C. Someday many of you may be parents, and you will come to realize that you're parents were a lot smarter and wiser than you and you'll wish you had treated them differently.

Discussion Questions:

- A. What is the most difficult thing for you when it comes to your relationship with your parents/guardians?
- B. Of the things mentioned, what do you consider to be the hardest God-given responsibility for parents?
- C. Of the things mentioned, what do you consider to be the hardest God-given responsibility for children?
- D. What can you do differently that might help the relationship you have with your parents/guardians?
- E. What can your parents do differently that might help the relationship they have with you?

Wise Words From A Destructive Life

Week 10: Riches Don't Last Forever! Dealing with Money and Wealth

Introduction:

- A. What do you want to accomplish over the course of your life? For most people the answer can probably be summed up in three words: health, happiness and prosperity.
- B. The idea of prospering and being successful is very appealing to most people. Sadly though, many times we forget the dangers and problems that can come from prospering financially.
- C. Financial prosperity (money and wealth) has both benefits and problems. Unfortunately, for many people, money because become a god in their lives.

No One Can Serve Two Masters...

Jesus said, "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money." (Matt. 6:24).

The Benefits of Money and Wealth

- A. It can Lead to Providing for Our Families.
 - 1. Having a job and making money is not necessarily a bad thing. It enables us to provide for and take care of our families.
 - 2. Those who do not provide for their families are considered worse than unbelievers (I Tim. 5:8). As a husband and father, I have a great responsibility to take care of my wife and son.
- B. It can Lead to Good Works and Sharing.
 - 1. We are commanded to be generous and ready to share with others (I Tim. 6:17-19).

2. When we share and do good with our financial blessing, we honor the Lord (Prov. 14:31).
3. "The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor" (Prov. 22:9).

The Problems with Money and Wealth

A. Money and Wealth can Lead to Greed and Covetousness

1. The problem with money is there is never enough. It does not matter if we have a little or a lot, it is never enough. We always want more (Eccl. 5:10).
2. Prov. 15:27 - "The greedy bring ruin to their households...how is this? Because the greedier one is, the more they are willing to do to get what they want."

B. Money and Wealth can Lead to Dishonesty

1. Because of greed and covetousness, we are driven to look for an easy and quick way to get more.
2. Some people are so caught up in greed and having more, they are willing to do anything to get what they want. The problem is many times what they do is dishonest (Prov. 28:6).

C. Money and Wealth are Temporary, not Eternal

1. Just like life, money does not last forever (Prov. 23:4-5; Prov. 27:24).
2. Solomon, who spent a great amount of time amassing great wealth, went on to talk about how useless money is toward the end of his life (Ecc. 5:15-16).

D. Money and Wealth can Lead Away from a Relationship with the Lord

1. Once a person is hung up on money and wealth, their hearts can be turned away from God (I Tim. 6:9-10).
2. Some people take time away from the Lord and doing His work just so they can make more money and have all the things they desire. This is not done out of need, but out of want.

A Prayer for our Finances...

Our prayer should be that of Agur when he said, "Two things I ask of you, Lord; do not refuse me before I die: Keep falsehood and lies far from me; *give me neither poverty nor riches*, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the Lord?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God." (Prov. 30:7-9).

Conclusion:

- A. Let's not get so caught up in making our lives about achieving financial prosperity. There is a lot more to life than just money.
- B. We must remember to always be on guard against the possible problems that can come from money and wealth throughout the entirety of our lives.
- C. In the end, money and financial wealth are completely worthless (Prov. 11:4).

Discussion Questions:

- A. If you had an unlimited supply of money, what would you do with it? Why?
- B. Is having money in and of itself wrong? Why or why not?
- C. What do you consider to be one of the biggest problems that come from having lots of money?
- D. Why do you think our culture has allowed money to become a modern day god?
- E. What can be done to prepare young people to properly deal with money and wealth?

Wise Words From A Destructive Life

Week 11: Think It Through! Dealing with Decision Making

Introduction:

- A. Decisions, decisions, decisions...sometimes they are easy and sometimes they are difficult. Sometimes they are really important and sometimes they are not that important at all.
- B. Sometimes our decisions are as small as what to eat or wear. Other times they are as big as where to go to college or who should I marry?
- C. Small decisions are not that important, but the big decisions can be life changing. That is why it is important for us to always make wise decisions. But how do we go about doing that, especially when decisions are hard?

Making Decisions Wisely

- A. Look to Others for Counsel and Guidance.
 - 1. It was never God's intent for man to go through life alone. From the beginning God wanted man to have a helper (Gen. 2:18). Would a helper be important in the decision making process?
 - 2. Where there is no guidance people fall (Prov. 11:14). We need an abundance of counselors to help keep us safe.
 - 3. Why is there safety in an abundance of counselors? The way of a fool is right in his own eyes (Prov. 12:15).
 - 4. Be on guard though...not everyone is qualified to help you make certain decisions (I Kgs. 12:1-20).
- B. Trust in the Lord to Direct Your Path (Prov. 3:5-6).
 - 1. One of the hardest parts of making a decision is trusting God to help lead us.
 - 2. Do you think Abram trusted God when he was called to leave everything he knew and

go to an unknown place (Gen. 12)? Of course, but I'm sure it was not easy.

C. Remember What You Have Been Taught (Prov. 1:8; 6:20).

1. Our parents have spent a lot of time helping prepare us to make important decisions.
2. The things my parents taught me about right and wrong helped prepare me for making the important decision of who my friends should be, who I should date, where I should go to school, who I should marry, etc.

D. Learn from the Mistakes of Others. The whole book of Proverbs is about wisdom/becoming wise.

1. When I have witnessed certain decisions being detrimental to other people I know, it helped me to not make the same decisions. (Ex: watching how drugs and alcohol affected my friends).
2. ILLS: If you watched one of your friends get drunk and make a fool of them self in front of the entire school, would you repeat that same behavior? No, because you witnessed firsthand how damaging the affects were.

Conclusion:

- A. There will always be decisions to make in life, both big and small. What's important is for us to remember how wise it is to seek counsel before making those big and important decisions.
- B. Friends and family are a blessing and big advantage when it comes to the important decisions of life. They can help us think through and about the decision in ways we never would have on our own.
- C. The next time an important decision comes your way, how will you handle it?

Discussion Questions:

- A. What has been the biggest decision you have ever had to make at this point in your life? Did you seek counsel from a friend or family member? Why or why not?
- B. What do you consider to be important when it comes to making wise decisions?
- C. Why do you think it is people today often times make big decisions by themselves instead of seeking counsel?
- D. Who is the person in your life you feel as though you can go to for counsel when it comes to making big decisions? Why do you feel this is the best person for you to turn to?
- E. What is the best piece of counsel you have ever received when it came to making an important decision?

Wise Words From A Destructive Life

Week 12: The Heart of the Matter! Dealing with our Hearts

Introduction:

- A. Man's greatest spiritual battle wages deep within himself, in the very depths of his own heart. You see, our hearts are a battlefield we must constantly protect.
- B. Notice what Solomon said about the heart... "Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life." (Proverbs 4:23). What does "Springs of life" mean? (Guard your hearts for it affects everything you do - NLT).
- C. We must guard our hearts because what is stored up in our hearts will eventually be played out in our lives through what we say and do.

The Heart of Man

- A. The way we talk is affected by what we have allowed into our hearts. Jesus said, "For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart" (Matt. 12:34).
- B. The way we act is affected by what we have allowed into our hearts. Jesus went on to say, "But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slander" (Matt. 15:18-20a).
- C. Our hearts have everything to do with who we are. As the heart goes, so goes the man.

Protecting our Hearts

- A. Guard against what you watch.
 - 1. I'm not going to tell you what to watch, but watch as one who will give account for what he or she watches.

2. Job made a covenant with his eyes (Job 31:1).
 3. Paul told the church at Corinth that those who practice certain sins would not inherit the kingdom of God (I Cor. 6:9-11). Are we not commending the shows we watch?
 4. Jesus taught that our eyes can cause us to sin and be condemned to hell (Matt. 5:28-29).
- B. Guard against what you listen to.
1. Music today talks about sex, drugs, alcohol, homosexuality, murder, material things, etc.
 2. "But test everything; hold fast to what is good. Abstain from every form of evil." (I Thess. 5:21-22)
- C. Guard against what you think about.
1. We are to think and dwell on honorable and godly things (Phil. 4:8).
 2. We can't guard against what we think when we fail to guard against what we watch and listen to.
 3. God destroyed the world by flooding during the days of Noah because every intention and thought of man's heart was evil continually (Gen. 6:5).
 4. "God will judge the secrets of men" (Rom. 2:16).
- D. Guard against who you spend time with.
1. Bad company corrupts good morals (I Cor. 15:33).
 2. Friends can be a lot like spoiled food, you don't realize it's bad until it's too late.

Conclusion:

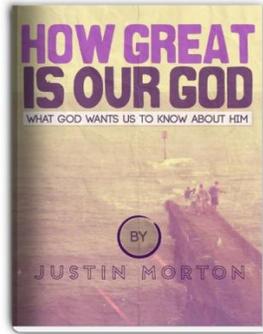
- A. We must come to understand that our hearts reflect who we really are.
- B. "As in water face reflects face, so the heart of man reflects the man." (Proverbs 27:19).
- C. If you are in need of a new or clean heart, cry out to God (Psa. 51:10).

D. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God (Matt. 5:8).

Discussion Questions:

- A. What are some of the hardest struggles teens face when it comes to guarding their hearts?
- B. Of the ways mentioned to protect one's heart, which one is the easiest? Which one is the hardest?
- C. When you fail to guard your heart, where do you see the most evidence? In your words or in your actions?
- D. What can we do to help ourselves better guard our hearts?
- E. Is it possible to watch and listen to things that are good for our hearts? If so, what are some of the good things we can watch and listen to?

Other Works Available By Justin Morton



7 Week Teaching Series - Packed with illustrations, discussion questions, and a weekly faith building experience.

In this seven week teaching series, your students will grapple with the greatness of God. Most “churched” students come to worship on a weekly basis. They attend youth group, youth rallies and retreats. They sit through countless Bible classes and sermons. By all appearances, they may even seem to have it all together. Sadly though, many students don’t really know who God is, or the excellency of what Christ has done. This series is designed to help students gain a better understanding of the God they worship. This series examines six different promises of God, and what He wants His people to know about Him.

Lesson 1 - I Can Handle Your Doubts

Lesson 2 - I Have Big Plans for You

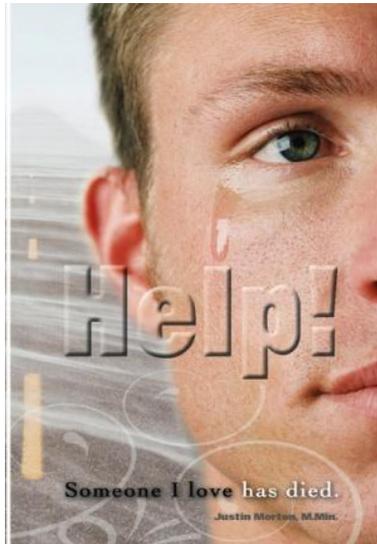
Lesson 3 - I Won’t Ever Abandon You

Lesson 4 - I Will Forgive You

Lesson 5 - I Don’t Send People To Hell

Lesson 6 - I Want You!

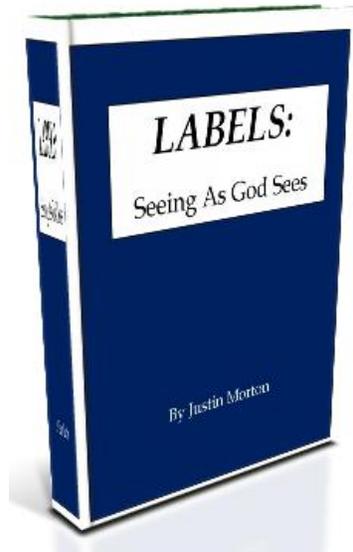
Lesson 7 - Telling Others of God’s Greatness



* **Teen Booklet*** Great for a Bible class setting. Includes teacher outlines!

Death's dark shadow has fallen across every doorstep. Whether it is the loss of a parent, grandparent, friend or church member, the resulting sense of despair has made its way into the lives of all people, including teens. Death causes us to feel hurt, angry, betrayed, lonely and afraid. The problem is that many people do not know how to deal with death or how to help a friend who has been touched by a loss.

In *Help! Someone I Love Has Died!* you will experience Scripture in a way that helps you learn how to better deal with the pain of losing someone you love, and also how to help others who have experienced a loss by following the most compassionate example ever: Jesus.

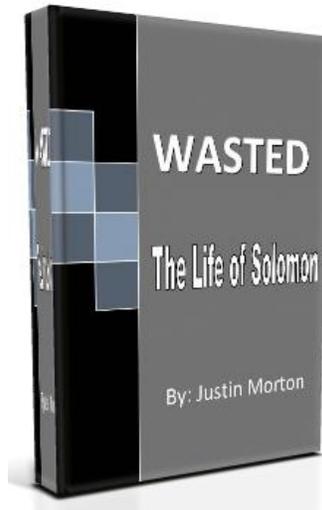


We live in an age where people label everyone they know. Some people wear the label: funny, smart, popular, honor student, kind, cool and athletic. Others wear labels like: uncool, dorky, outcast, loser, reject, worthless and stupid. This three part series is a study devoted to helping us learn to see ourselves and others the way God sees us.

Lesson 1 - Wait! Seeing Past the Label

Lesson 2 - God's Masterpiece

Lesson 3 - What Label Defines You?



What if God told you to ask anything you wished, what would you wish for? What if you were blessed by God with an amazing amount of potential to change the world, would you use that potential for good? Solomon was one of the few people who was uniquely offered anything he wished from the hand of God. What at first looked to be the potential for an amazing life of influence, turned out to be a life wasted. This six part series is a study devoted to the life of Solomon.

Lesson 1 - Solomon's Great Beginning

Lesson 2 - Solomon Stopped Growing

Lesson 3- Solomon Failed to Guard His Life

Lesson 4 - Solomon's Strength Became His Weakness

Lesson 5 - Solomon's Possessions Possessed Him

Lesson 6 - Solomon's Regretful Life

Visit Something-To-Think-About.com for more information about each of these resources.