

SEVEN YEAR WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year III

First Quarter

Lessons 1-13

Psalms 103 - Proverbs 24

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FOREWORD

Two little girls were discussing their families. "Why does your grandmother read the Bible so much?" asked one.

"I think," replied the other little girl, "that she is CRAMMING FOR THE FINALS."

Mrs. Pearl Karrick, 79, mother of Mrs. William (Mary) Martin one of our faithful members, has read during the first 343 days of 1961 the Old Testament ONCE and the New Testament 16 times! She will probably read the New Testament again before the New Year comes. "I just love to read God's Word," explains Mrs. Karrick, "and I have lots of time to meditate through His Word"!

W. W. wrote Billy Graham a question in the Cincinnati Enquirer December 7, 1961: "Why do ministers always urge us to spend MORE TIME ON THE SCRIPTURES? The basics of the Gospel are simple, and I see no point in going over and over the fundamentals. Is there some magic in Scripture reading?"

Billy says in My Answer: J. Edgar Hoover recently said: "Note the Communists' emphasis on keeping to the ORIGINAL SOURCE OF THEIR BELIEFS. The faithful Communist reads Marx and Lenin constantly on a daily or weekly schedule." And you ask about the "Greatest Book in the World," "why must we keep going over and over the fundamentals?" The ignorance of the average professing Christian of Bible teaching is astounding. We know more about Maverick than we do about the Master; and we know more about Paladin than Paul. Mr. Hoover said that "a demand for the very best from the individual," is the Communists' goal, and then added: "If the Communists can create such response on the basis of cold, cynical materialism. Just think of the accomplishments which can be wrought by Christians with the Power of the Holy Spirit."

Yes, there is a 'MAGIC' IN GOING OVER AND OVER THE SCRIPTURES. They become FOOD FOR THE SOUL. Job said, "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12). If you were constantly reading and obeying the Scriptures you would not have even asked your question, concluded Billy.

Read It through This Year!

Read three (3) chapters in the Old Testament and One (1) chapter in the New Testament each day in 1962. You will be blessed greatly as you "search the scriptures daily" (Acts 17:11) like the Bereans under the ministry of the Apostle Paul.

YEAR 3 - LESSON 1 - PAGE 1
WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year III

First Quarter

Lesson 1
Psalm 103

Page 1
Memory Verse: Psalm 103:1

Memory Verse:

"Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me; bless his holy name" (Psalm 103:1).

Public Reading: Psalm 103:1-5.

THE PSALM OF THANKSGIVING

Psalm 103 is one of joyous praise. It is perhaps the perfect song of pure praise in the Bible.

An examination of the twenty-two verses reveals that the Psalm is addressed to the Lord; that David not only invited his own soul but the soul of every individual, including the hosts of heaven, to join with Him in blessing the Lord. Not one single petition is found in the Psalm.

This Psalm is a perfect expression of worship. Many look upon prayer solely as an avenue to ask God for blessings. This is one phase of prayer (Matthew 7:7, 8), but not the main phase of it. Prayer offers a greater opportunity to pour out our heart's affection upon the Lord, and to "worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

W. B. Riley calls the Psalm "My Favorite Chapter." Certain scriptures are dear to us. We learn to lean upon them. What encouragement to pray when we read (John 14:13-15, 21, 23-24). What inspiration to teach and teach the word when we study Isaiah 55:10-11; Matt. 25:35; Heb. 4:12. When we sin, what a blessing, as in repentance, to die to the practice of sin and know that "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). This chapter is glorious in days of health. It is one's support -- one's life buoy in the days of serious illness. Dr. Riley affirms: "This is the chapter that tided me through these dark days near death (a serious illness of nine months' duration) and the far more difficult ones of convalescence. It is a chapter that I shall be compelled to recommend hereafter to people whose nerves have collapsed and whose spirits are in the consequent despair."

If Psalm 103 gave light, and life, and hope to this man of God, it will do the same for you and me. It is as fresh and full of beauty as ever!

I. The Ground of Thanksgiving (Psalm 103:1-5)

1. The burst of praise (Psalm 103:1).

"Bless the Lord, O my soul" (Psa. 103:1): The Psalmist speaks first of what God has personally done for him. God is the object of David's praise. He wanted his entire being to "bless his holy name." What an occupation! Some people reserve worship for Sunday only, and an hour's pained participation at that. When we know and love the Lord Jesus Christ, our every moment is His. We are ready "without ceasing" (I Thess. 5:17) to pray, to praise, to serve Him. Oh to be occupied more with the Lord. So many are occupied with doing something, and with working for the Lord that they lose sight of the fact that the chief concern of a redeemed soul is the contemplation, adoration and praise of God. See Psalm 92:1; 69:1; 100:1, 2; 101:1. How infinite is the variety of expression that voices thanksgiving and praise.

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2. The memory of benefits (Psalm 103:2)

"My soul . . . forget not all his benefits" (Psa. 103:2): God is the Royal Benefactor. It is so easy to forget. We forget names, faces, duties, and vows. We even forget the God of all blessing! Let us not change this verse to read: "Praise the Lord, O my soul, but don't forget His failures, and don't be unmindful of His judgments." Do not dote upon your miseries. Let us delight in His mercies.

Some folk are like the Iowa farmer whose corn crop was a bumper. A friend congratulated him, saying: "It has been a great year for you."

"Yes, in some ways," the farmer opined, "but an awfully hot one."

"But hot weather makes good corn."

"Yes, if you get enough rain!" persisted the farmer.

"Well, haven't you had enough rain this season?" asked the friend.

"Yes, we can't complain of lack of rain," admitted the farmer.

"Isn't this the greatest crop you have ever had?"

"Yes, I think it is, but you know a crop like this is awfully hard on the soil."

"Oh, they grumble on Monday . . . grumble the whole week through." Nothing is ever entirely right for some godless grouches. God doesn't commend and never uses them; they won't allow Him to. Be in your place with a song of joyful praise! "Bless the Lord, O my soul!"

3. The budget of mercies (Psalm 103:3-5).

"Who forgiveth all thine iniquities . . ." (Psa. 103:3): Above all the benefits God gives to man stands His sin-pardoning mercy. God has taken care of the sin question through the blood of Jesus Christ His Son (John 1:7; Heb. 9:22). "We are buried with Him by baptism into death" (Rom. 6:4); we "PUT ON CHRIST" (Gal. 3:27) or "clothe yourselves with Christ" in baptism. There is NO OTHER WAY (Mark 16:16; John 14:6). When we sin as Christians, we confess our sins repent or die to its practice, and are cleansed through Christ (I John 1:7-10).

"Who healeth all thy diseases" (Psa. 103:3b): Saint and sinner alike suffer. Disease and death respect no one. God may allow us to be tested, as was Job (1:11,22; 2:6, 9, 10; 42:12). God did not remove the thorn without or with natural means for Paul (II Cor. 12:7-11; see also II Chron. 21:19; Isa. 38:1-8).

God can, and does, heal bodily diseases. However, David may refer to diseases of the soul and heart. They are more alarming than bodily ills; NO EARTHLY DOCTOR can heal them. Only the Lord can do so.

"Who redeemeth thy life from destruction . . ." (Psa. 103:4a): At great cost, Christ has saved us from the pit of destruction. Here used as a synonym for Sheol (Psa. 16:9-11). He is our Righteous Redeemer.

"Satisfieth . . . youth is renewed like the eagle's" (Psa. 103:5): God satisfies the soul of man with good. The size, strength, and longevity of the eagle explain the simile. Probably there is a reference to the bird's annual molting; some detect an allusion to the phoenix legend (See Job 29:18; 33:25; Isa. 40:31; Psa. 92:14). This shows the perennial youthfulness of the soul. He is a Renewing Satisfier.

II. The Grace of God (Psalm 103:6-13)

1. It is exercised for all the oppressed (Psalm 103:6,7).

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"The Lord executeth righteousness . . ." (Psa. 103:6): This denotes the various acts of God's government as He dealt with Israel. How gracious and fatherly He was towards sinful and perishing man. See Psa. 148:14. He is a Reigning Judge.

"He made known His ways . . . Moses . . . Israel" (Psa. 103:7): God has progressively revealed His will, as to Moses (read Exodus 33:1ff; John 14:1-6; Heb. 1:1-4; John 5:39-46).

2. Grace shows God's essential nature (Psa. 103:8-11).

"The Lord is merciful." (Psa. 103:8): Verses 8-10 show God's goodness. See Exodus 34:6. "Grace is unmerited favor" (Rom. 5:6-11). Grace is something we don't deserve but greatly need!

3. Grounds of our confidence (Psalm 103:12-18).

"East . . . west . . . removed our transgressions" (Psa. 103:12): Sin is forgiven, or sent away (see Lev. 16:21,22 and no longer separates us from God. It is utterly impossible to calculate the distance between east and west, for we have nowhere from which to begin. "East is east and west is west and never the twain shall meet." THEREFORE, when God removes my sin from me, I'll never meet it again.

"Our frame... we are dust" (Psa. 103:14): A reference to Gen. 2:7. God made us. See also Psa. 94:9. Our Lord was "the Word that became flesh" (John 1:1-3,14). In the midst of man's frailty, we have a Remembering Discerner, God's eternal mercy and power (verse 13, 15-18). There is "a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will" (Shakespeare, HAMLET, Acts V, scene 2).

III. A Great Oratorio (Psalm 103:19-22)

1. He is the one worthy of all praise (Psa. 103:19; John 3:16; 4:24; 10:30; Rev.15:3-4). He is a Recognized Ruler.

2. All creatures should join in praise (Psa. 103:20,21; 95:6; 138:4, 5; 148:2; 150:2-6). Here Is a Rejoicing Choir.

3. All creation to sound God's praises (Psa. 103:22).

"Bless the Lord, all his work" (Psa. 103:22a): God loosed the tongue of a dumb brute to rebuke his disobedient servant (Num. 22:28-31). Rocks will "cry out" God's praise if we hold our peace (Luke 19:40; Psa. 98:4,7,8).

"Bless the Lord, O my soul" (Psa. 103:22b): All ends with the personal word. The perfect music of the psalm is revealed in the fact that it opens and closes on the same note.

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QUESTIONS

1. How many petitions are found in Psalm 103?
2. Of what is the psalm a perfect expression?
3. Is there a place in prayer for petition and asking for God's blessings (Matt. 7:7, 8)?
4. What does Dr. W. B. Riley call Psalm 103?
5. How does the psalm begin and end (Psalm 103:1, 22b)?
6. How many "benefits" does David list as being from God (Psalm 103:2-5)?
7. To whom has God made known His ways (Psalm 103:7; John 5:39-46; Heb. 1:1-4)?
8. What characteristics of God's essential nature are shown in Psalm 103:8-11?
9. Has God dealt with us according to our sins (Psalm 103:10, 11; Rom. 5:6-11)?
10. How far has God removed our transgressions from us (Psalm 103:12)?
11. To whom is God likened in Psalm 103:13?
12. Toward whom does the Lord show pity or compassion (Psalm 103:13b)?
13. What does Psalm 103:14 mean to you (See Gen. 2:7)?
14. To what is man likened in Psalm 103:15, 16?
15. How long is God's mercy extended to them "that fear him" (Psalm 103:17)?
16. What is the attitude of those that "fear" God toward "His covenant, and His commandments" (Psalm 103:18)?
17. Where has God prepared His throne, and over whom does He rule (Psalm 103:19)?
18. Who is called to praise God in verses 20,21?
19. Who is to sound God's Praise in verse 22a?
20. Will YOU bless the Lord with your entire being, now and always (Matt. 22:37, 38)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year III

First Quarter

Lesson 2
Psalm 119

Page 1
Memory Verse: Psalm 119:130

Memory Verse:

"The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple (Psalm 119:130).

Public Reading: Psalm 119:1-11.

THE WORD OF GOD

The 'glories of God's Word' is the theme of Psalm 119. It has 176 verses, thus making it the longest chapter in the Bible.

I believe David wrote the Psalm. However, I have no idea under what circumstances he composed it; or whether he followed the idea of a diary, which he began in his youth and continued, to his old age. "A young man" in verses 9, 99, 100, 141, and "an old man" in verses 84-87 may indicate that this is David's SPIRITUAL DIARY. If so, it is worthy of imitating. God keeps a diary even if we don't (see Malachi 3:16-18; Rom. 14:12).

An Acrostic Psalm

It is an acrostic, or alphabetic Psalm, having 22 stanzas. The Hebrew alphabet has 22 letters. Each stanza has 8 lines, each of the 8 lines beginning with the same letter. 22x8 equal 176 verses. This was John Ruskin's favorite Psalm that he had committed to memory.

Psalm 119 has been called the Psalm of the Law. "The Law" should be understood in its widest significance, no fewer than ten Hebrew words being used in referring to the greater matter celebrated. These are translated "law," "word," "saying," or "sayings," "commandments," "statutes," "ordinances " precepts," "testimony," "way " "path." ONE underlying conception of all these words is that GOD'S WILL HAS BEEN MADE KNOWN TO MAN! Each word reveals some aspect of God's will in itself, of the method of its revelation, and its value to human life.

The Psalm in Hebrew

The following is a poor attempt to give the English reader a notion of the construction of the Psalm in the Hebrew:

Aleph

Are not the Blessed undefiled in the way, walking in the Law of Jehovah? (1)

Always they keep His Testimonies, and seek Him with their whole heart (2).

Also they do no iniquity, walking in His ways (3).

All thy Precepts Thou hast commanded us to keep diligently (4).

Ah! that my ways were directed to keep Thy Statutes (5).

Ashamed should I never be, when I have respect to Thy commandments (6).

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Again will I praise Thee with upright heart, when I shall have learned Thy righteous judgments (7).
And I will keep Thy Statutes; forsake me not utterly (8).

A Study of Six Stanzas

Any dealing with this psalm must necessarily be general, and not particular. Therefore, we shall study six of the twenty-two stanzas in our lesson today.

I. A Centered Heart: Aleph (Psalm 119:1-8)

"Blessed are the undefiled in the way . . ." (Psa. 119:1): This wonderful Psalm opens with the same thought as the first Psalm (1:1). The happiness of the godly is a familiar theme of the psalmists (1:1; 2:12; 34:8) and of other Old Testament writers (Deut. 28:1-14; Prov. 8:32, 34). The "undefiled" in the way are the "blameless."

Aleph expresses the OBJECT for which the Psalmist yearns: THE PERFECT, MATURE, KEEPING OF GOD'S LAW.

"Law of the Lord" (Psa. 119:1b): Eight names for God's Word are used in this Psalm. "The Word" occurs 42 times, and is taken to mean all the Scripture then known. "The Law," 25 times, is a general name for the Laws of God, which include the following five words: "Thy Commandments," used 22 times, meaning the Ten Commandments of Mt. Sinai; "Thy Statutes," 22 times, and means special ordinances (in Leviticus 6 times of the sacrificial observances); "Precepts," 21 times, and means orders for the day; "Judgments," 20 times, and means judicial deliverances in special cases; "Testimonies," 23 times, being testimonies about God Himself. 175 times God's Word is spoken of in 176 verses!

In 5 verses only of this Psalm (verses 84, 90, 121, 130) is there no special mention of one of the above names. In 5 verses (verses 16, 43, 160, 168) more names than one is given. An attempt is made to give every one of the 8 names in the 8 verses of every stanza in the Psalm.

Note in Aleph: "The Law," verse 1; "His Testimonies," verse 2; "His ways;" verse 3; "Thy Precepts," verse 4; "Thy Statutes," verse 5; "Thy Commandments," verse 6; "Thy Judgments," verse 7; "Thy Statutes," verse 8.

"God ... hath ... spoken" (Heb.1:1-3) in His works, creation; in His Son; and through His written Word, the Bible. The Psalmist had His heart centered in God's Word, because "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven" (verse 89).

Two men shared the same room in a hotel in Boscobel, Wisconsin. That meeting resulted in the giving away of no less than 1,500,000 Bibles. John H. Nicholson, a shoe salesman, was one who kept God's "precepts (verse 4) diligently. He turned to his new roommate, a paint salesman by the name of Samuel Eugene Hill, and said: "My custom is to read a portion of God's Word every night and to give thanks for God's care over me during the day."

"I, too, am a Christian," replied Mr. Hill. "Let us have our devotions together."

This was the beginning of the Gideons, which grew out of the study of the Word of God!

"O that my ways were directed . . ." (Psa. 119:5): A prayer for constant and steadfast loyalty to the divine requirements.

Aleph summarized: 1. Walking in the Law of the Lord (verse 1). 2. Seeking the Light of the Lord (verse 2). 3. Keeping in the Love of the Lord (verse 4).

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II. A Cleansed Walk: Beth (Psalm 119:9-16)

"Wherewithal . . . young man cleanse his way?" (Psa. 119:9): When young people study God's Word their hearts, minds and bodies will be KEPT PURE. This is a CERTAIN CLEANSING! Note that verse 9b is the answer to the question of verse 9a.

"O let me not wander . . ." (Psa. 119:10): A Soul Seeking. The royal method of the heart that wholly seeks God is to refuse to wander from the living and liberating Word of God.

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart . . ." (Psa. 119:11): This is argument enough for the daily study of His Word. Store your mind and heart with it. A sentence here will lodge, a verse there, to comfort, guide, and enrich you. A father's advice to his son who was going away to college, written on the flyleaf of his Bible, is forever true: "This Book will KEEP YOU FROM SIN, or SIN WILL KEEP YOU FROM THIS BOOK!"

"I will delight myself in thy statutes . . ." (Psa. 119:16): The Right Rejoicing is here seen in the Psalmist (cf. also verse 14).

III. A Clear Understanding: Mem (Psalm 119:97-104)

"O how I love thy law!" (Psa. 119:97): To know the Word of God in the love of it, is the surest method of attaining true wisdom. More unity characterizes this strophe than most of the others. Its main theme is the superior wisdom that comes from the study of God's law.

"Thou hast made me wiser than mine enemies . . ." (Psa. 119:98): How thankful the writer is for what he has been taught in the Word of God (read also verses 99, 100). Note his AMAZING PERCEPTION BY THE WORD (verse 99).

"How sweet are thy words . . ." (Psa. 119:103): This is the AGREEABLE PROVISION IN THE WORD. The power of the Word to inspire right living which grows sweeter day by day GROWS OUT OF RIGHT THINKING and ACTING (Prov. 23:7; Phil. 4:8 9). This is one of the GREATEST PROOFS OF THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE.

IV. A Conflicting Opposition: Nun (Psalm 119:105-112)

"Thy word is a lamp . . . light" (Psa. 119:105): Spurgeon writes: "The Word of God is a lamp By night, a light by day, and delight at all times." However, dark the way, God's Word is the light to show us the way. However painful or humiliating the afflictions that come, there is comfort in the thought that our tribulations are but for a moment and work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory (II Cor. 4:17, 18).

"I am afflicted . . ." (Psa. 119:107): The Stricken Soul is made alive through the power of the Word of God, who revives him and keeps him alive (verse 25). His enemies cannot overcome him because "yet do I not forget thy law" (verses 108-110).

"Thy testimonies have I taken . . . forever" (Psa. 119:111): The Psalmist is a SAVED SOUL. He rejoices in the divine testimonies "for ever."

"I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes always . . ." (Psa. 119:112): The Psalmist is THE STEADFAST SOUL! He finds the Word of God sufficient always, and in all ways "even unto the end."

YEAR 3 - LESSON 2 - PAGE 4

V. A Compassing Deliverer: Koph (Psalm 119:145-152)

"I cried with my whole heart . . ." (Psa. 119:145): He is a MAN OF PRAYER. Real prayer is essentially of the heart. The lips may move in prayer, but the heart must move and move mightily, or we shall never know the depth of the river of God that is full of water. See II Thess. 5:17; Luke 6:12. Earnest cries for God's help avail much.

"I cried . . . SAVE ME" (Psa. 119:146): The Basic Need of Men is expressed in II Peter 3:9 and Romans 3:23.

"Mine eyes prevent the night watches . . ." (Psa. 119:148): His eyes anticipated the night watches. "Prevent" is to "go before" or precede. They did not allow themselves to be caught sleeping in The NIGHT OF FEAR.

"Thou ART NEAR, O Lord" (Psa. 119:151): The NEARNESS OF GOD to all His trusting children keeps us in "perfect peace" (Isaiah 26:3).

VI. A Considering Love: Resh (Psalm 119:153-160)

"Consider mine affliction, and deliver me . . ." (Psa. 119:153): The nearness of God leads to such intimacy that the Psalmist is continually pouring out his heart before the Lord. He pleads with God for deliverance, and three times prays that he may be quickened, or given life.

"Plead my cause, and deliver me" (Psa. 119:154): Not His PLAINTIVE CRY.

"Great are . . . mercies" (Psa. 119:156): A PRECIOUS CONSOLATION.

"How I love thy precepts..." (Psa. 119:159): A PERSONAL CONSIDERATION. Twenty (20) verses tell of his great love for God's Word.

The great artist Wenkleman sent one of his students to the Apollo Belvedere to study that wonderful specimen of art. The student returned shortly, saying: "I see no beauty in that."

Wenkleman replied: "Go again, and if need be, again and again. The beauty is there. If you study long enough you will both feel and see it."

The same is true of Psalm 119 (II Tim. 2:15).

YEAR 3 - LESSON 2 - PAGE 5

QUESTIONS

1. What is the theme of Psalm 119?
2. How many verses are in the Psalm, and in how many does David affirm his love for God's Word (Psa. 119:14, 16, 20, 35, 47, 48, 54, 70, 72, 77, 92, 97, 103, 105, 111, 113, 127, 128, 129, 130, 138, 140, 147, 159, 160, 161, 167, 172)?
3. Who do you think wrote Psalm 19 and why? How only may we understand the Word (Psa. 119:18; I Cor. 2:14; I John 2:29)?
4. How many stanzas make up this acrostic or alphabetic Psalm?
5. Can you list ten words used in this Psalm justify its being called "The Psalm of the Law"?
6. What English essayist, critic, and reformer who lived from 1819-1900 called this his favorite Psalm?
7. What are those of a "centered heart" called in Psalm 119:1? Why?
8. How many times is the expression "The Law" used in this Psalm (Psa. 119:1)?
9. Of the eight names for God's Word used in this Psalm, how many times is God's Word referred to in the 176 verses of this Psalm?
10. In which verses of this Psalm is no special mention made of the eight names'?
11. In which verses of Psalm 119 is listed more than one of the eight names, and what attempt is made in every one of the 22 stanzas of the Psalm?
12. Under what circumstances were two men instrumental in creation of the Gideons, and who were they?
13. What three things summarize the Aleph section of Psalm 119 (verses 1,2,4)?
14. How shall a young man keep his mind, heart and body clean (Psa. 119:9)?
15. What is the meaning of "Thy word have I hid in mine heart" (Psa. 119:11)?
16. What assurance is given in this Psalm that God will NOT CHANGE His Word (Psa. 119:89,152,160)?
17. Have you found God's Word sweet unto your taste (Psa. 119:103)?
18. What is the meaning "Thy word is a lamp into my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psa. 119:105)?
19. Was David a man of persistent prayer (Psa. 119:145-148), and what great fact about God kept David in "perfect peace" (Psa. 119:151; Isa. 26:3)?
20. In pleading the love of God and of his need for deliverance, how many times did David pray "Quicken me according to thy word" (Psa. 119:154,156,159)?

YEAR 3 - LESSON 3 - PAGE 1
WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year III

First Quarter

Lesson 3
Psalm 144

Page 1
Memory Verse: Psalm 144:1,2

Memory Verse:

"Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight: My goodness, and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer; my shield, and he in whom I trust; who subdueth my people under me" (Psalm 144:1, 2).

THE LORD: OUR HELP AND HOPE

The Lord is the center of power for the individual and the nation as shown by Psalm 144:1, 15. This is a song of triumphant assurance.

David speaks of God as "my strength . . . goodness . . . fortress, high tower . . . deliverer . . . shield" (Psa. 114:1, 2). The soul who trusts in God is invincible. In times of great danger God had shielded David from those who sought his life (I Samuel 18:8-11; 19:9, 10; 23:14, 26-38). God was David's HELP AND HOPE when Saul sought to kill him repeatedly. God is OUR HELP AND HOPE, too (Rom. 8:31; Heb. 13:5; I Pet. 3:12).

Psalms 120-134 are called "The Songs of Ascents," or "Degrees." Perhaps they were chanted by the people as they went up to Jerusalem, as, for example, see Psalm 122:1, 2.

To understand fully Psalm 144, Psalms 135-143 must be kept in mind. Psalms 135-139 celebrate the SUFFICIENCY OF GOD. Psalms 140-43 DECLARE THE UTTER HELPLESSNESS OF MAN.

Psalm 144 then follows, and in it the two facts are present, but the DIVINE SUFFICIENCY IS SEEN ENCOMPASSING MAN'S HELPLESSNESS!

"O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home!" (Isaac Watts)

Strength: The Center of Power (Psalm 144:1)

"Blessed be the Lord my strength . . ." (Psa. 144:1): David praises God as his all-sufficient help. Psalm 18:1, 2 has a striking series of parallel epithets by which God is described of which Psalm 144:1 seems to be an echo.

Here is PRAISE and PROVIDENCE. Have you noted the great variety of mood and subject matter in the book of Psalms? There are songs of gratitude, cries of penitence, laments from exiles (as in Psalm 137:1-4) and prisoners, praise from pilgrims (Psalms 120-134), liturgies for priests and people in the temple. In one Psalm, we study a young man rejoicing in his strength and full of the joy of living. In another, we find a poor man wrestling with the soil, a shepherd watching his sheep, or a prince bearing the burdens of state. "The Lord . . . teacheth my hands to war" (Psa. 144:1b): David praised God because He taught him to fight and conquer. God blessed him with physical prowess as a warrior, and guided him wisely in his campaigns.

A

YEAR 3 - LESSON 3 - PAGE 2

review of I and II Samuel and the parallel passages in I Chronicles will show how God blessed and preserved David daily. God is THE REFUGE FOR RULERS, or those who would lead people aright in any age or country. Let us remember "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities . . . powers . . . the rulers of the darkness of this world . . . spiritual wickedness in high places (Eph. 6:12).

Professor Lewis of Drew Theological Seminary in "A CHRISTIAN'S MANIFESTO" declares: "An urgent need of the modern world is to get some iron into its thinking about God. In our churches especially people have been encouraged to suppose that Divine Fatherhood means Divine Paternalism, with the result that God has been talked about as though He were much the same kind of an individual as President Bill of the local Rotary Club. LIFE IS NOT A PLAYGROUND --IT IS A BATTLEFIELD."

Victor Hugo asks the question: "WHO conquered Napoleon at Waterloo? Did Wellington? No. Did Bluecher? No. Then who conquered Napoleon at Waterloo? The ANSWER IS GOD. He overcame Satan (Matt. 4:4,7,10,11; James 4:7)! He is all the soul in conflict needs.

II. Shield: The Overshadowing Presence (Psalm 144:2)

"My goodness . . . in whom I trust" (Psa. 144:2): David was not ashamed, before or after he became the king of Israel, to confess his complete dependence upon God.

Gladstone said he knew sixty (60) of the greatest minds of his country, and that fifty-four (54) of them -- scientists, statesmen etc. -- were friends of Jesus, believers in God. The list included Agassiz, Copernicus, Kepler, Newton, and George Washington. Gladstone lived from 1809-1898, and served as Prime Minister of Britain from 1868-1874; 1884-1885; 1886; 1892-1894.

"The Lord . . . subdueth my people under me" (Psa. 144:2): David ruled as the agent of God (See Rom. 13:1-7). The difference between David and our modern dictators or rulers is the difference between a godly, praying ruler, and a godless, brutal egoist who thrives on the fanfare of class hatred and denunciation.

III. Shadow: Man's Life (Psalm 144:3-8)

"Lord, what is man . . ." (Psa. 144:3): This is a variation of Psalm 8:5. David exclaims in surprise that the Lord so high should take any account of man, who by comparison is vanity.

"Man is like to vanity . . . as a shadow" (Psa. 144:4): In Psalm 8:3-8 the Psalmist is overawed by the resplendent heavens and cried out: "What is man, that thou are mindful of him and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" In this Psalm David asks much the same question, but he had in mind not the matchless grace of God that makes His mind to be full of man, BUT GOD'S INEXHAUSTIBLE PATIENCE IN WITHHOLDING JUDGMENT FROM THE MAN WHOSE MOUTH SPEAKS VANITY, whose right hand is one of falsehood. How soon we lose our patience and desire quick judgment (Luke 9:51-56), but God can afford to wait His time, know well that man's day is but a shadow (Psa. 90:1-4` 9, 10)

"God does not pay off every Saturday night, but he pays off." (Gal. 6:7-3) !

It pays to serve Jesus, it pays every day, it pays every step of the way whether "the days of our years are seventy" or eighty, or more or less! God will come and give victory to us over "strange children" (Psa. 144:7) and those who "speak vanity . . . falsehood" (verse 8).

IV. Song: A New Song (Psalm 144:9)

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"I will sing a new song . . ." (Psa. 144:9): God had delivered his people from "strange people" (verse 7), a reference to captivity. The instrument of which David speaks was one used in worship of God in Jerusalem. Music, vocal or instrumental, ought to be the expression of the worshipful heart in its devotion to the Lord. David's "new song" was sung and played unto God. The Lord alone who giveth "songs in the night" (Job 35:10; Acts 16:25) can so adjust our lives that they will ring with melody unto the Lord-anytime, anywhere! This thought has caused some to liken the instrument of TEN STRINGS to this body of ours, with its TEN FINGERS. See "The TEN STRINGS," by Herbert Lockyer, Locksley Press Publisher.

V. Salvation: A Precious Gift (Psalm 144:10-12)

"It is he that giveth salvation . . ." (Psa. 144:10): God could and did deliver David from his enemies (Psa. 18:50). God helped David escape the "hurtful sword" of Goliath (I Samuel 17:37-51). God gave him sons and daughters (verse 12), bright and beautiful. Happy father of children was he!

For us today "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23b). David met God's conditions of pardon in his day. All who NOW COME TO the Saviour to obtain pardon (salvation from sin) are required to believe on Him. All who know the truth can do this. "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6; Rom. 10:17). We must repent, or perish (Luke 13:3; II Peter 3:9). Faith in Jesus Christ must be confessed with the lips (Matt. 10:32, 33; Rom. 10:9, 10). "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (pardoned) affirmed the risen Saviour (Mark 16:15, 16; Gal. 3:27). One who thus receives God's GIFT OF SALVATION through Christ has the "BLESSED ASSURANCE" within (II Tim. 1:12; Rom. 8:1, 2)? Do you have this salvation? If not, why not receive and OBEY Jesus as your Saviour right now (Heb. 3:15)?

VI. Supply: An Abundant Ingathering (Psalm 144:13, 14)

"Our garners may be full" (Psa. 144:13): God had given full granaries and fields covered with flocks that "bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets," or more correctly "fields." Rags and hunger are banished. During and before David's time, the godly Jew was rewarded with temporal blessings. Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, and David were rich. Prosperity was the promise of God -- earthly blessings were assured to His earthly people.

Under the Gospel of Grace the Christian is not promise temporal prosperity, although careful and diligent Christians are often blessed materially. "My God," says Paul in Phil. 4:19, "shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." See also Matt. 6:19-21, 25-34; 7:7-11.

"Who does God's work, will get God's pay, However long may seem the day,
However weary be the way; Though powers and princes thunder, 'Nay,'
Who does God's work will get God's pay.

"He does not pay as others pay, In gold, or land, or raiment gay;
In goods that vanish and decay; But God in wisdom knows a way
And that IS SURE, let come what may,
Who does God's work will get God's pay."

VII. Satisfaction: A Joyful Experience (Psalm 144:15)

"Happy is that people . . ." (Psa. 144:15): Of all the elements of happiness, this was the CROWN and the SECRET, that the Lord was their God, and that they were the people of His pasture and the flock of His care. Happy the family whose Father is God! "To be allowed to call the God from whom every blessing comes his God, is still infinitely more than the richest abundance of material blessing. The pinnacle of Israel's good fortune consists in being, by the election of grace, the people of the Lord (Gen. 12:1-3).

Material prosperity is not the guarantee of happiness. Millionaires like Ivar Krueger, the Swedish match king; Eastman, of Kodak fame; Lowenstein, the financier, who dropped to death from an airplane while crossing the English Channel -- these and many others who have committed suicide because of unhappiness prove anew that "HAPPY IS THAT PEOPLE, WHOSE GOD IS THE LORD." The REAL BASIS for abiding happiness spring from a knowledge of and obedience to God and our Lord Jesus Christ!

QUESTIONS

1. Who is the center of power for the individual and the nation as shown in Psalm 144:1, 15?
2. How does David speak of God in Psalm 144:1, 2?
3. Can you recall some times of danger during which God had shielded David from those who sought his life (I Samuel 18:8-11; 19:9, 10; 23:14, 26-38)?
4. Who is the Christian's hope and help (Rom. 8:31; Heb. 13:5; I Peter 3:12)?
5. What are Psalms 120-134 called?
6. How did the people of God perhaps use such Psalms?
7. What do Psalms 135-139 celebrate; what do Psalms 140-143 declare?
8. What two facts are present in Psalm 144?
9. Can you show how Psalms 146-150 are the adoration Psalms because of the opening and closing great call to praise, for example (Psa. 146:1,10b)?
10. For what does David "bless" the Lord in Psalm 144:1?
11. Against whom does the Christian fight daily (Eph. 6:12ff), and how important is it that he be fully clothed with God's armor?
12. Who did Victor Hugo think conquered Napoleon at Waterloo, and why?
13. Was David ashamed to confess his complete dependence upon God (Psa. 144:2)? Are you?
14. To what is man likened in Psalm 144:4, and why does David marvel (Psa. 144:3; Luke 9:51-56; Psa. 90:1-4,9,10)?
15. Why did David desire to sing a "new song" unto God (Psa. 144:9, 7), and with what instrument did he propose to praise Him?
16. Who gives the believer "songs in the night" (Job 35:10; Acts 16:25)?
17. Who alone "giveth salvation" (Psa. 144:10) and delivers "his servant from the hurtful sword" (Psa. 144:11) in David's day (I Sam. 17:37-51), and in ours (Rom. 6:23b; Heb. 11:6; Rom. 10:17; Luke 13:3; II Pet. 3:9; Matt. 10:32,33; Rom. 10:9,10; Mark 16:15,16; Gal. 3:27; II Tim. 12:16; Rom. 8:1,2)? When should the believer obey the gospel and receive salvation (Heb. 3:15; II Cor. 6:2)?
18. In what material ways had God blessed David (Psa. 144:12,13,14)?
19. What may be said of "that people... whose God is the Lord" Psa. 144:15)?
20. If Utopia is not made by man, on what basis does society rest (Psa. 144:15)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year III

First Quarter

Lesson 4
Proverbs 1,2

Page 1
Memory Verse: Proverbs 1:7

Memory Verse:

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Proverbs 1:7).

Public Reading: Proverbs 1:1-9.

INSTRUCTION AND EXHORTATIONS

A proverb is a short, pithy, axiomatic saying. It teaches by contrast, or comparison. The Hebrews call this portion of their Scriptures "Mashalim" or "Comparisons," for example, "Is Saul also among the prophets" (I Sam 10:12), and "As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him" (Prov. 10:26).

The Oriental method of teaching was constant repetition of wise or practical thoughts, in a form that would stick in the mind. PROVERBS is "a collection of maxims, woven into a didactic poem around the general topic of WISDOM, the eternal companion and delight of God, and making a popular system of ethics. They are wholly unconnected. They are designed primarily for the young, but the wisdom will make youth and age acceptable to God and pleasing to man.

Author of Proverbs

The book claims to be from Solomon's pen (Prov. 1:1; 24:23, 24; 10:1; 25:1; Eccl. 12:9, 10). Most of the Proverbs are ascribed to Solomon who bears the same relation to Proverbs that David does to the Psalms. Each was the principal writer. Psalms is a book of devotion. Proverbs is a book of practical ethics, teaching about the practical affairs of life, with special emphasis on righteousness and the fear of God.

Arrangement of Proverbs

Like Psalms and the Pentateuch, Proverbs is divided according to its titles into five parts:

Book I: Advice to Sons (Proverbs 1-7).

Book II: The Voice of Wisdom (Proverbs 8, 9).

Book III: The Folly of sin (Proverbs 10-19).

Book IV: Warnings and Instructions (Proverbs 20-29).

Book V: The Words of Agur, and Lemuel (Proverbs 30-31).

Proverbs is a very readable book. Some one has called it "The best guide to success that a young man can follow."

I. Introduction, Instruction, and Exhortations (Proverbs 1:1-33)

1. Title (Prov. 1:1).

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"The proverbs of Solomon . . ." (Prov. 1:1): David's son Solomon is definitely stated to be the principal author of Proverbs. King Solomon has achieved the distinction of being remembered as a person who was the source of many wise sayings. Jesus referred to him (Matt. 6:28-29).

2. Purpose of the book (Prov. 1:2-6).

"To know wisdom and instruction . . ." (Prov. 1:2): The aim of the proverbs here is to make men know wisdom, and when that is accomplished, it is hoped that men will do right. Wisdom is the skillfulness or ability to use knowledge aright. It is used thirty-seven (37) times in this book. "Instruction" occurs twenty-six (26) times, and means to teach by discipline, or chastisement. "Understanding" comes from "bin," meaning "to separate," "to divide," and comes to mean "to distinguish between what is right and wrong" (for example, I Kings 3:9). "Words of insight" would be a more accurate translation.

"To receive the instruction of wisdom . . ." (Prov. 1:3): "To receive" is a term used to describe the process of acquiring knowledge. "Wisdom" is the "horse sense" or "good sense" as applied to the everyday practical affairs of life. "Justice," or righteousness, means the standard norm of conduct that exists among individuals, or "right conduct."

"Judgment" is the right relationship between people; "custom," "manner," and then "way of life."

"Equity" is "smooth" or "straight" and is used of the path of the righteous as smooth or level (Isa. 26:7). "On the level," a popular idiom expresses the idea exactly.

"To give subtlety to the simple . . ." (Prov. 1:4): This wisdom will help the young and immature to be prudent, or shrewd, and "wise as serpents" (Matt. 10:16). "Discretion" will come to the young if he feeds on the Word of God. The ten words of these verses well describe the well rounded character which the study and practice of God's truth alone can produce.

"A wise man will hear . . ." (Prov. 1:5): The truly wise are ever ready to learn that which is worthy. Only a fool thinks himself above instruction (II Tim. 2:15). The scholarly aim of the book is shown in verse 6.

3. Motto of Proverbs (Prov. 1:7).

"The fear of the Lord . . ." (Prov. 1:7): This is the principle of true piety and knowledge (Prov. 2:5-14:26, 27; Acts 9:31). There never has been and never will be a conflict between the Bible and Science. BEGIN WITH GOD. Only foolish men rule God out of the picture (Gen. 1:1). Those who despise divine wisdom are "dull" and become morally corrupt.

4. Exhortation to listen to instruction (Prov. 1:8, 9).

"My son, hear the instruction' (Prov. 1:8): "My son" is a common form of address. Life begins at home. According to this book, wisdom also begins at home. This tender entreaty for a child to learn wisdom that will be as an "ornament of grace unto thy head" bears witness to the fact that the home must assume the chief place of character formation (Deut. 6:6-7; Ex. 12:26ff). The father's instruction is important. The mother is a source of wisdom (verse 8b). Proverbs has more to say about respect and love for mother than any other book in the Bible (see Prov. 31:10-31).

5. Evil enticers to be rejected (Prov. 1:10-19).

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"My son, if sinners entice thee" (Prov. 1:10): The son is warned against associating with robbers and murderers in this section. Crime does not pay-then, or now. Lawless elements will seek to "open the way" for the young to become criminals. Reject such persons. It is no sin to be tempted. Sin is in yielding to temptation. Luther said: "One cannot keep the birds from flying over his head; he can keep them from building a nest in his hair." My son, don't let temptation build a nest in YOUR HEART! II Cor. 6:14-18 is the only safe course for believers!

"Cast in thy lot among us . ." (Prov. 1:14): Murder and robbery for easy gain are condemned (verses 1-14). Crime doesn't pay in money, or in peace of mind! There is no "perfect crime" (verses 12, 13). Shun such enticers (verses 15, 16; 4:14) as instinctively as birds avoid spread nets which are baited (verses 17, 18). It is wise always "To shun evil companions." They will corrupt you if you don't (I Cor. 15:33).

"The ways . . . greedy of gain" (Prov. 1:19): Honest toil will be rewarded. Selfish sinners who use every ruse to get gain (Psa. 9:16; I Tim. 6:10) are grabbing for sorrow and destruction.

6. Wisdom pleads that she be heard and heeded (Prov. 1:20-23).

"Wisdom crieth . ." (Prov. 1:20): Wisdom is personified. She is ever seeking to turn the steps of the young man from the door of folly and ignorance to the temple of knowledge and blessing. She cries "in the chief place of the concourse" (verse 21), at the head of the noisy streets, and "in the opening of the gates."

"How long . . . will ye love simplicity?" Prov. 1:22): How long will you love ignorance? Three types of fools are mentioned here: The inexperienced simpleton, the scoffer or scorner; the contemptuous or arrogant one who turns his back on the good; and the thick, dull type who is insensible or even averse to moral truth. It is hard to do anything with an ignorant person who does not want to learn, or to "Turn" at wisdom's reproof (verse 23).

7. Calamity follows the rejection of wisdom (Prov. 1:24-33).

"I have called . . . ye refused" (Prov. 1:24): Wisdom holds in derision those who do not heed her call. Wisdom uses every device to awaken people, and to turn them to her ways. How like the pleading of wisdom is to the gospel call. If either are despised, judgment will surely come (Gal. 6:7, 8; Prov. 29:1). Those who "obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . shall be punished" (II Thess. 1:8-10). We can reject wisdom and the gospel, thus despising our day of grace!

"Call . . . I will not answer" (Prov. 1:28): God's "Spirit shall not always STRIVE WITH MAN" (Gen. 6:3). The fools of verse 22 are indifferent to wisdom's beck and call. If we sin away opportunities, they will someday mock us. What can be worse for a lost soul than to have to remember in the abyss of woe the gospel messages he once spurned or listened to with indifference. He will cry in despair: "Jesus died, yet I am in hell! He gave Himself for sinners, provided a way for me, but fool that I was, I spurned His grace until it was withdrawn and the door was closed and I am on the wrong side of that door forever!" You must "eat of the fruit" of your "own way" (verse 31) and the "prosperity of fools shall destroy" (verse 32) you. Harken unto wisdom; obey God today (verse 33; Psa. 32:10; Eph. 5:15, 17; II Pet. 3:9; I Pet. 4:17,18; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 8:1).

"O, sir, to willful men
The injuries that they themselves procure
Must be their schoolmasters"
(Gloucester in Shakespeare's KING LEAR, Act. II, Scene 4).

II. Invitation to Seek Wisdom (Proverbs 2:1-22)

1. God's guidance is open to all (Prov. 2:1-9).

"My son, if thou wilt ... " (Prov. 2:1): One does not have to be scholarly and have a Ph. D. degree to understand the Scriptures.

There are some publishing house writers who like to make you feel that way, but I know it is not so; and you know it is not so, too! WITH THE AID OF THE HOLY SPIRIT learn to "search the scriptures" and be a workman "approved unto God" (II Tim. 2:15). Wisdom, to be had, must be sought with the whole heart. "Incline thine heart unto wisdom... cry after knowledge" (verses 2, 3).

"Seekest her as silver ..." (Prov.2:4): Hunt the truth of the Word of God like that old man in Florida is hunting \$4,000,000 of pirate gold. This will result in "finding the knowledge of God" (verse 5).

"For the Lord giveth wisdom" (Prov. 2:6): The Lord is the source of wisdom. This wisdom is communicated through the medium of His word (Job 22:22; Psa. 19:7-11). One's search for wisdom cannot be fruitless, since God has hidden it will also reveal it (verse 7). The Lord "keepeth the paths of" those who do justly and will guard them (verse 8).

2. Wisdom delivers one from evil men (Prov. 2:10-15).

"Wisdom... deliver thee" (Prov. 2:10,11): To walk in the way of wisdom is to escape false ways (12-15) and "evil men."

3. Wisdom delivers one from evil women (Prov. 2:16-19).

"Deliver thee from the strange woman..." (Prov. 2:16): "Strange" woman is a term often used for harlot, or a loose, immoral woman (Judges 11:1,2). Sex sins are still rampant in America – perhaps more than ever before. The problem of vice was, and is, very grave (Prov. 5:1-23; 6:20-35; 7:1-27; 9:13-18). Such harlots lure men to destruction with smooth words, or flattery (see Prov. 7:13-21).

"Her paths... unto the dead" (Prov. 2:18): To be impure is to invite mental, spiritual and physical death (I Cor 6:18-20,9, 10). "Go unto her" (verse 19) is a sexual expression to indicate that illicit intercourse is the one-way road to destruction and death.

4. Wisdom alone keeps us on the right path (Prov. 2:20-22).

"Walk in the way of good men..." (Prov. 2:20): The blessing of those who follow wisdom will be to possess the land, whereas the wicked will be "cut off" (verse 22). God kept Joseph pure (Gen. 29:7-9). He can keep you and me pure, too (I Cor. 10:13).

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QUESTIONS

1. What is a proverb? How does it teach?
2. Who wrote this book (Prov. 1:1; 25:1; I Kings 4:32)?
3. Does this collection of proverbs contain only the original sayings of Solomon (Eccl. 12:9; Prov. 1:6; 22:17; 30:1; 31:1)?
4. How was Solomon divinely equipped for this work (I Kings 3:5-12, 28)?
5. Is the material found in the book of Proverbs related primarily to creed or to conduct?
6. Into how many parts is the book of Proverbs divided?
7. What has someone called Proverbs relative to a "young man"?
8. Did Jesus ever refer to Solomon (Matt. 5:28-29)?
9. What is the purpose of the book of Proverbs as set forth in the introduction (Prov. 1:1-7)?
10. What is the prerequisite for receiving wisdom (Prov. 1:7)?
11. Can you show from a comparison of Prov. 1:8, 9 with Ex. 1:8, 9 with Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20 and II Tim. 3:2 that life and wisdom begin at home?
12. To whom are the first seven chapters addressed (Prov. 1:8; 2:1; 3:1; 4:1; 5:1; 6:1; 7:1)?
13. Against what kind of companions is the young man warned in Proverbs 1:10-19 (II Cor. 6:14-18)?
14. Where and to whom does wisdom cry (Prov. 1:20-23), and what is the result of turning at her reproof (verse 23)?
15. What is the result of the rejection of wisdom (Prov. 1:24-33; Gal. 6:7, 8; Prov. 29:1; Gen. 6:3)?
16. How may Prov. 1:20-33 be applied to the unsaved and the gospel call which is hated and rejected (verse 28, 30-32); Eph. 5:15-17; I Pet. 4:17, 18; II Pet. 3:9; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 8:1)?
17. To whom is God's wisdom and guidance open (Prov. 2:1-9)?
18. From whom does wisdom deliver (Prov. 2:10-15) the wise young man?
19. Will wisdom save young men from the "strange woman" or harlot (Prov. 2:16-19)?
20. What alone can keep us on the right path (Prov. 2:20-22)?

YEAR 3 - LESSON 5 - PAGE 1
WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year III

First Quarter

Lesson 5
Proverbs 3,4

Page 1
Memory Verse: Proverbs 3:6

Memory Verse:

"In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:6).

Public Reading: Proverbs 3:1-8.

HONEST DEBTS

The search for wisdom was dealt with in our first study in Proverbs. Today in view of the value of wisdom, we see an appeal to cultivate wisdom. The appeal consists of a DECLARATION of its essence (Prov. 3:1-10), a DESCRIPTION of its excellence (verses 11-20), and a DECLARATION of the safety which it brings (verses 21-35).

A debt is "That which is due from one person to another; a thing owed; obligation."

All of us are in debt. Of course, this does not mean that all of us are in debt, as far as owing bills, to this or that company is concerned. "A man who owes a little can clear it off in a little time; if he is prudent, he will," said Lord Chesterfield.

"I am debtor" (Rom. 1:14) to God, my parents, my country, this church and its members, and especially to those who have not the Gospel. "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (I Cor. 4:7) and "if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"

Let us apply this principle to the sound advice, beautiful language and wisdom, "the principal thing" (Prov. 4:7), of the third and fourth chapter of Proverbs.

I. "Acknowledge Him" In All Thy Ways (Proverbs 3:1-35)

1. He gives long life (Prov. 3:1-8).

"Forget not my law . . . for length of days" (Prov. 3:1, 2): "Remember" is a golden word of our religion. Apart from the great spiritual heritage of the past, there can be no spiritual life or growth. The past must teach us in the present (Ex. 12:26, 27; Deut. 6:4-9, 20-25). Long life is an evidence of the special blessing of the Lord (Psa. 21:4; 91:16). Those who keep "my commandments" (verse 1; Psa. 119:11; Ezra 7:10; John 14:15, 23) exhibit loving devotion to God. This tends to lengthen days. The essence of wisdom consists in a determined devotion to the things of wisdom. Right living does give right rewards -- here and hereafter! Normally all good things follow right living. However, "man's inhumanity to man" (Robert Burns, "Man Was Made to Mourn) may defeat God's purpose in one's life.

"Mercy and truth . . . bind . . . write . . . heart" (Prov. 3:3): Let mercy and truth outwardly adorn and inwardly govern one's motives (John 1:17; Jer. 31:33; Eph. 4:15). Wisdom will give God first place as life is lived in relation to God (Matt. 6:33).

"Favor... God and man" (Prov. 3:4): God and good men will approve the life of wisdom lived in relation to God: perfect trust in Him, personal dependence on Him, and worshipful devotion expressed in actual giving! This is the essence of wisdom. Jesus exemplified it (Luke 2:52).

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"Trust in the Lord . . ." (Prov. 3:5): This is the center and marrow of true wisdom (Prov. 22:19; 28:25). "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool" (Prov. 28:26). Confidence in self is like leaning on a broken cane (I Cor. 10:12)-one is sure to fall! From God alone comes true prosperity, true help.

"In all thy ways acknowledge him . . ." (Prov. 3:6): The emphasis is upon "All." God demands absolute surrender and obedience in every realm of life before he can DIRECT OUR PATHS. Seek God's wise aid (Psa. 1:1; 37:5; Jer. 9:23, 24; Prov. 16:3). Then God will "direct" or make plain the path of duty (Heb. 12:13; Matt. 6:22). No wealth is equal to such wisdom, and the very chastenings of God help in gaining it. Do your best, rest your case in the hands of the eternal God in whom "we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28). To trust in God promotes bodily health (verse 8); life committed In faith to God acts as "a tonic to our nerves."

2. "Honor the Lord with substance" (Prov. 3:9, 10).

"Honour . . . with thy substance" (Prov. 3:9): Substance is not ours in the sense that we are the owners. God is Creator and Owner of all (Gen. 1:1; Psa. 24:1; I Cor. 10:26). We are stewards or managers for God of that which He has entrusted to us (I Cor. 4:2; Prov. 11:24-26). The Israelite brought the first fruits of everything in worship to recognize God's ownership (Ex. 23:19). So we recognize God as the owner and honor Him by bringing a TENTH of what he entrusts to us into His storehouse and by using the NINE-TENTHS in ways that honor God the Owner! Many a saint goes on in comparative poverty because he will not "PROVE GOD" (Malachi 3:8-10) and be blessed in every good thing (verse 10). You and I cannot OUTGIVE GOD (Phil. 4:19).

3. Hearken to His chastening and wisdom (Prov. 3:11-24).

"My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord" (Prov. 3:11): God often has to discipline, or child-train, his saints (Heb. 12:5-13; Job 5:17; 2:12, 7-10). Trial and sufferings must not be looked upon as something strange to the Christian (I Pet. 4:12-17). God -- as do all real parents at times -- corrects and chastens us for our own good. The highest wisdom God can give is a spirit of trust and devotion that when sorrows and disappointments of life come they may be accepted from God's hand.

"For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth . . ." (Prov. 3:12). These two verses are quoted in Heb. 12:5, 6, as the New Testament has no better solution than this for the problem of suffering.

"Wisdom . . . better . . . gold" (Prov. 3:13, 14): He who seeks and gets (draws out, as metals by digging) wisdom has that which is better than gold and more precious than rubies. The best blessings result from finding wisdom (Matt. 6:33; I Tim. 4:8), and they may include length of days, riches and honor, pleasantness, and peace faith God, self and neighbor (verses 15-17).

"She is a tree of life . . ." (Prov. 3:18): Wisdom is allegorized as a "tree of life" (see Gen. 2:9; 3:22; Rev. 2:7) whose fruit preserves life, and gives all that makes living a blessing. This is the "secret" of being happy (verse 13)!

"The Lord by wisdom . . ." (Prov. 3:19, 20): The Lord by wisdom "founded the earth" and "established the heavens." This same wisdom God offers to us to be our guide on our pilgrim pathway on earth. The excellence of wisdom is proven by the pleasantness and peace it will bring to man.

"Keep sound wisdom . . ." (Prov. 3:21): "It is not enough that one hold the truth, if the truth hold not him." We must not let wisdom escape or depart from us. Wisdom is the source of life as well as graciousness. It is the way to walk securely (verses 22, 23) and it enables us to lie down in sweet slumber (verse 24).

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4. Heaven's help makes us hopeful and helpful (Prov. 3:25-35).

"Be not afraid . . . the Lord . . . thy confidence" (Prov. 3:25, 26): Wisdom is able to cope with the daily emergencies of life. The ruin of the wicked causes no fear to those who walk by wisdom. Only the soul who obediently acknowledges God as Sovereign can lay hold of the precious promises of Scripture. The willful, lawless ones have "NO HOPE" and are "WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD" (Eph. 2:12). God is our Refuge; He will keep us (Psa. 46:1-3; 91:12; I Pet. 3:14, 15). God is the Source of our strength (Phil. 4:13; Psa. 144:1, 2).

"Withhold not good . . ." (Prov. 3:27): "Hold back no benefit from those entitled to it." Owe no man anything but to love and honor him (Rom. 13:8). The wise man will give promptly, whether wages or help to the needy. "He who gives quickly gives twice" (James 2:16; Prov. 3:28). Money that is owed to another is not mine. To misuse it for my own purposes is dishonesty. Let us pay our honest debts.

"Devise not evil . . ." (Prov. 3:29): Misplaced confidence has ruined many. Avoid malicious conduct (verse 30) and litigation (Rom. 12:18).

"Envy thou not the oppressor . . ." (Prov. 3:31): Asaph was envious at the foolish when he saw the "prosperity of the wicked" (Psa. 73:3). When God showed him "their end" (Psa. 73:17) then he was grieved and owned his folly (Psa. 73:21ff). God's "secret is with the righteous" (verse 32); He "gives grace unto the lowly" (verse 34). "The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools" (verse 35). "Shame" is the opposite of honor, and it "shall be the promotion" or "disgrace" of "fools"! Why envy such an end?

II. "Attend to My Words": Wisdom Commended to Scholars (Proverbs 4:1-27)

1. Wisdom preserves one from folly (Prov. 4:1-9).

"Hear, ye children . . ." (Prov. 4:1): The best school is the home. The child learns by word and example the right way. Early impressions will mold his character and remain with him throughout life. To heed a wise father's advice gives understanding and insight to the child. David did not discipline Adonijah (I Kings 1:5, 6). That son brought shame to his father. Both David and Bathsheba, however, disciplined Solomon. The value of parental discipline cannot be over-estimated. A beautiful picture of a godly Jewish family is seen in verses 2-5.

"Love her... shall keep thee" (Prov. 4:6): Man is to love wisdom. As a man seeks a wife, so man is to obtain wisdom.

"Wisdom... principal thing" (Prov. 4:7): The soul needs knowledge and the wisdom and intelligence to use it aright. This is the principal thing that is impressed on the young. It is to preserve us from folly. This verse adorns the facade of the University of Cincinnati McMicken Building.

"Exalt her... promote thee" (Prov. 4:8): Wisdom when highly esteemed raises one to honor. "Embrace her" with fond affection. She will be to you as a chaplet or wreath of conquerors (verse 9).

2. Wisdom keeps us from evil men and ways (Prov. 4:10-17).

"Enter not... path of the wicked" (Prov. 4:14): The paths of wisdom are straight and lead to the abundant life (verses 10-13). Wisdom warns one against association with wicked men. We are called to holy living; avoid the path of evil men. Stay away from them! Here's an example. One Saturday night in Cincinnati a taxi driver, James C. Case, 31, was shot in the back of the head. His cab had plunged into a

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twelve-foot gully. Within forty-eight hours after the crime was committed, three young men confessed to the crime. A young man, 19, was the ringleader. Two others, 22 and 15, were partners in the crime. They got \$6.00 from the dead man; \$2.00 each for murdering the father of three children. The three youths planned the crime while they SAT DRINKING BEER in the Golden Dawn Cafe (!) Was their way wise? Does such a course lead to long life (verse 10). RUN AWAY from evil companions, young people (I Cor.15:33; Prov.4:16,17).

3. The wonderful end of the just (Prov. 4:18-27).

"Path of the just... shining light" (Prov. 4:18): What a contrast to the end of the path of the wicked. The path of the righteous leads to God. The END OF THE WICKED is banishment from God and an eternity in hell (Matt. 25:41, 46; Prov. 4:19).

"Keep thy heart with all diligence . . ." (Prov. 4:23): The heart is essential to physical well being. A healthy heart means a healthy body; while a diseased heart will bring death to the body. The SPIRITUAL HEART must be jealously guarded that only good will issue from it (Matt. 15:17-20). We must WATCH what we THINK (Phil. 4:8, 9) to STAY SAVED. If the INNER LIFE is right, the OUTWARD LIFE will conform to that which pleases God. Fidelity to wisdom demands complete devotion, wisdom in the heart, persistent looking straight-ahead and unceasing caution (verses 24-27).

QUESTIONS

1. What appeal is made in Proverbs 3:1?
2. Into how many sections may Proverbs 3 be divided?
3. To whom are we all in debt (Rom. 1:14; I Cor. 4:7)?
4. What special blessing is promised to the one who lives wisely (Prov. 3:2; Ex .12:26, 27; Deut. 6:4-9, 20-25)?
5. What should we write "upon the table of thine heart" (Prov. 3:3)?
6. Will such inner and outer graces please God and man (Prov. 3:4; Jer. 31:33; Eph. 4:14; Luke 2:52)?
7. What does God demand before He will "direct thy paths" (Prov. 3:5, 6)?
8. Does trust in God promote bodily health (Prov. 3:8)?
9. Why should we "Honour the Lord with thy substance" (Prov. 3:9; Psa. 24:1; I Cor. 4:2; Prov. 11:24-26; Mal. 3:8-10)?
10. How are we to react to the "chastening of the Lord" (Prov. 3:11, 12; Heb. 12:5-13)?
11. To what is wisdom likened (Prov. 3:18) and name some blessings from finding and following wisdom (Prov. 3:13-24).
12. Who is our "confidence" as we daily face life, and what does he do to our feet (Prov. 3:26)?
13. Why should we pay our honest debts-to God, to Christ and His Church, our family, and society (Prov. 3:27-28; Rom. 13:8)?
14. Do you ever envy the wicked who seem to prosper (Prov. 3:31; Psa. 73:3, 21)?
15. Who had disciplined Solomon, and what did he think of such parental guidance (Prov. 4:2-4)?
16. How is one to seek wisdom and what is the result of such seeking (Prov. 4:5-6, 8)?
17. What is wisdom called in Prov. 4:7, and where are these words chiseled at the University of Cincinnati?
18. What horrible end awaits the wicked as shown in (Prov. 4:14-17,19)?
19. To what is the path of the just compared in Prov. 4:18?
20. Why is the heart so important, and how is it to be kept (Prov. 4:20-27)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year III

First Quarter

Lesson 6
Proverbs 5

Page 1
Memory Verse: Proverbs 5:21

Memory Verse:

"For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings"
(Proverbs 5:21).

Public Reading: Proverbs 5:1-14.

GOD'S ALL-SEEING EYE

"He (God) has smiled on our undertaking" is a motto on the reverse of the great seal of the United States. The "ALL-SEEING EYE" has above it the Latin words: "Annuit Coeptis," the meaning of which is given above.

Our study today points out that "God's All-Seeing Eye" smiles on us when in wisdom we do that which is right sexually (Prov. 5:21; I Pet. 3:12). God's eyes are on all our ways. Nothing escapes God's eye. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13).

"Thou God seest me" (Gen. 16:13) sobered Hagar. It ought to be a great incentive to us to follow the way of the wisdom of God.

Teachers and preachers should declare "unto you ALL THE COUNSEL OF GOD" (Acts 20:27). No portion of God's Word should be shunned. This is a portion of God's Word "given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of Gad may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:16, 17).

Proverbs 5, 6, 7 warn the young man against the wrong use of sex. The loose, immoral woman is pictured as the seducer. Men are tempted by a prostitute, or by an adulteress. More often, it is a married woman who is using her wiles to beguile another married man. The seclusion and social convention of that day protected the woman who wanted to be pure and live a chaste life. Today we parents warn our boys AND GIRLS of the dangers and death that the wrong use of sex surely brings.

I. Warning against Unchaste Love (Proverbs 5:1-14)

"My son, attend unto my wisdom . . . regard discretion" (Prov. 5:1, 2): When God joins "my" to wisdom and understanding, it is the duty and privilege of all to obey.

If any man, or woman, insists on going in the way of wickedness, it is not for lack of warning, but for willful neglect of God's Word. God will punish disobedience (Luke 12:47, 48; James 4:17). It is right to do right -- always!

"The lips of a strange woman . . ." (Prov. 5:3): This is a term for a harlot, an immoral woman (Prov. 2:16-19). This is the second of five warnings against immoral women in the first section of Proverbs (chapters 1-9). A sample of her enticing words is found in Proverbs 1:13-21. Judging from the space Solomon devotes to such women, there must have been a good many such women then (Eccl. 7:28). This woman is the wife of another, and does not belong to him to whom she gives herself or who goes after her (Prov. 2:16). She appears here as the betrayer of youth.

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"Her end is bitter . . ." (Prov. 5:4): Note the contrast between verses 3 and 4. "Honey" (verse 3) and "wormwood" (verse 4). Wormwood is a plant in the Old Testament used as a symbol of suffering. "Smoother" (verse 3) and "sharp" (verse 4). "End": The word involves the idea of final judgment or punishment (also verse 11).

"Her feet go down to death . . ." (Prov. 5:5): See Prov. 2:18. "Death," rather "hell," or better "Sheol," the place of departed spirits. The wicked woman's way of life is fatal to her, and to those who consort with her. To live such a life is to SHORTEN LIFE on earth.

"Remove thy way far from her . . ." (Prov. 5:8): Run from evil. "Flee fornication" (I Cor. 6:18) is Paul's command to Christians. Solomon warns us (verse 7) against wicked women, those who prefer to live by their shame. Such women could not practice their immorality without wicked men. God's Word knows no DOUBLE STANDARD -- one for man and one for woman. BOTH are to be PURE (I Pet. 1:15-16).

Some years ago a young man from a prominent family in Cincinnati went to a house of shame and asked the madam for the prettiest girl in the house. When the young woman came into the room, the man turned to see who his companion for the night of sin would be. Instantly he grabbed a pistol from the table and shot the girl twice. She fell to the floor and died. With ghastly face, he said to those who rushed to the room, "THAT YOUNG WOMAN IS MY SISTER and I will kill her before she can come to such a place as this again!"

Before God, that young woman had as much "right" to be there as that young man had!

Young men must be as pure as they want their sisters and mothers and the wife of the future to be Pure. Husbands must be pure, as they desire their wives to be pure.

"Come not nigh . . . LEST" (Prov. 5:8b, 9): The immoral woman's abode is to be shunned for many reasons. The terrible consequences of sin are pictured. "Honor": All that has gone into the life of a man to make his position honorable among men is thrown away in illicit sex. "Cruel": The pitiless ones who get possession of the victim's money (verse 10). Through debauchery the foolish man loses his wealth, and is unable to buy even the necessities of life for himself and his family (Prov. 6:31).

"And thou mourn at the last . . ." (Prov. 5:11): Literally, roar in pain; groan. Immoral sexual living takes its toll in disease. Ask your doctor. He knows! Moreover, some of you may too, by bitter experience! How many blind children I have seen in Kentucky-made blind by the sin of parents, or a sinful parent.

"I hated instruction . . . not obeyed" (Prov. 5:12, 13): The pang of remorse for the one who has hated instruction is by far the worst result of sin. At the close of a short life of sin, all the warning voices of parents, teachers, and friends crowd the memory but it is TOO LATE. The sinner goes to the inevitable doom he has chosen for himself!

"I was almost in all evil . . . congregation" (Prov. 5:14): The adulterer had just missed suffering dire punishment at the hands of -- and in the presence of -- the congregation, and assembly -- his people. Shun the evil woman if you value your honor, health, wealth, and peace of mind!

II. The Joy and Loyalty of Married Love (Proverbs 5:15-23)

"Cistern . . . well . . . fountain" (Prov. 5:15, 16): This is an exhortation to married fidelity and the blessings thereof. A happy and honorable marriage relationship is the true safeguard against the temptations described in Prov. 5:1-4. A wife is described in Oriental imagery in terms of a fountain, and sexual enjoyment in terms of the drinking of water. One may seek and truly find satisfaction in the married relationship only. This is the right use of sex.

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"Rivers of waters . . ." (Prov. 5:16): "Purity of married life will diffuse itself abroad like streams from a fountain, in a numerous family, and in wholesome influences."

"Let them be only thine own . . ." (Prov. 5:17): The pleasures of sexual enjoyment must be experienced with one's wife alone. One man and one woman in the wedded relationship is God's ideal. Moreover, it is ideal for man and woman, too!

"Rejoice with the wife of thy youth" (Prov. 5:18): "Fountain" means wife (verses 15-17). Sanctified wedded love remains true to the wife of one's youth. For us Christians, marriage represents the mystical union between Christ and the Church (Eph. 5:23-33). How holy is that earthly association which speaks of such exalted heavenly things! "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4). "Ye husbands, dwell with them (your wives) according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered" (I Pet. 3:7).

"Be thou ravished . . . her love" (Prov. 5:20): Be fully satisfied. When both husband and wife are true to the relationship of marriage, no triangle will mar their marriage (verse 20).

"Eyes of the Lord . . ." (Prov. 5:21): Wisdom recognizes that human life is under the OBSERVATION, and within the GOVERNMENT of God. God SEES US. That knowledge kept Joseph pure when Potiphar's wife would seduce him (Gen. 39:7-10)! This is sufficient motivation to keep us pure in mind and body. God sees you and me. He weighs and ponders every thought, word, and action. See II Cor. 5:9, 10.

"Cords of his sins" (Prov. 5:22): The wicked weave the cords out of their own sins. Habit has the sinner bound. You can easily snap a string that is bound once around your hands. Bind the cord a few times around the wrist and it is impossible to break free. Impurity of conduct may seem to be of silken texture in its enticement; it becomes a cable to bind the life in slavery. A young man who had turned from lust to Christ said: "But for the help of an all-merciful and powerful God, I should have returned to my lust and lost my soul." Jesus saves! He makes us "MORE THAN CONQUERORS" (Rom. 8:37; I John 1: 7).

III. Warnings to Be Heeded (Proverbs 6:1-7:27)

1. Warning against guaranteeing others' loans (Prov. 6:1-5).
2. Warning against indolence (Prov. 6:6-11).
3. Warnings against perversity (Prov. 6:12-15).
4. Warnings against seven sins (Prov. 6:16-19).
5. Warnings against the adulteress (Prov. 6:20-7:27).

"Lust not after her beauty . . ." (Prov. 6:25): Parental exhortation warns the youth against the first movement toward sin -- DESIRE. Kill the lust in its beginning.

"Keep my commandments . . ." (Prov. 7:2): The strange woman Solomon talks about is still in our cities, and the youth void of understanding. He passes to the slaughter like an ox (verse 22), or as a bird hasting to a snare (verse 23). In the hour of sin's glamour, it is good to look to the end which is Sheol and the chambers of death (verses 25-27).

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QUESTIONS

1. What is the motto on the reverse of the great seal of the United States?
2. What sobering fact does our text today make plain. (Prov. 5:21; Heb. 4:13; Gen. 16:13)?
3. Against what sin does wisdom warn the young man in Proverbs 5-7?
4. Do you believe that plainly we ought to warn youth, young men and young women, of the wrong use of sex? If so, why? If not, why not?
5. What is "my son" urged to do in Prov. 5:1, 2?
6. What is the meaning of "strange woman" (Prov. 5:3), and how many warnings against the immoral woman occur in Prov. 1-9?
7. Do we have a sample of enticing words of the immoral woman (Prov. 7:13-21)?
8. Can you state the contrasts in verses 3 and 4? Moreover, what is the "end" of such a woman verse 5?
9. What warning is given in Prov. 5:8 (see I Cor. 6:18), and is there a "double standard" for man and woman in the Bible (I Pet. 1:15, 16)?
10. How many reasons can you find in Prov. 5:9-14 for shunning the evil woman?
11. What Oriental imagery describes a wife in Prov. 5:15, 16?
12. With whom alone is the sexual relationship right before God (Prov. 5:18)?
13. Marriage, to the Apostle Paul, represents what relationship (Eph. 5:23-33)?
14. Since marriage is honorable before God, how should the husband dwell with his wife (Heb. 13:4; I Pet. 3:7; Prov. 5:20)?
15. Do you know that God SEES YOU in all your relationships of life (Prov. 5:21) and that you must give an account of your deeds to God (II Cor. 5:9, 10)?
16. What fact kept Joseph pure when an evil woman would seduce him (Gen.39:7-10)?
17. Did Solomon heed the warnings recorded in Prov. 6:23-27(I Kings 11:1-3)?
18. How did Solomon suffer for his sin (I Kings 11:4-11)?
19. Is there any escape from physical death through believing in Christ (Rom. 5:12-14; Heb. 9:27; I Cor.15: 51,52; I Thess. 4:15-17)?
20. Will you be determined more than ever to keep your body pure, or die in the attempt?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year III

First Quarter

Lesson 7

Page 1

Proverbs 10

Memory Verse: Proverbs 10:7

Memory Verse:

"The Memory of the just be blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot" (Proverbs 10:7).

Public Reading: Proverbs 10:1-7.

THE FOLLY OF WICKEDNESS

Here begin the proverbs proper. This is the strictly proverbial portion of the book.

"The Folly of Sin" includes Proverbs chapters 10-19. They present a SHARP CONTRAST between Wisdom and Folly in the outworking of such in practical life.

Today we consider Proverbs 10 which contains proverbs about many things, contrasting the righteous and the wicked, both as to this world and the world to come. No exposition is possible save to take each proverb and consider it in its separate value.

As Scripture itself abounds with illustrations of almost every proverb before us, a reference will generally be given to some person or circumstance manifesting the truth of the saying in question. You may know or have read of persons and events that illustrate the truth of the rich practical teaching of this chapter.

Note that each verse is a parallelism, mostly antithetical. That is, the second part of the verse has a thought THAT IS THE OPPOSITE OF THE FIRST PORTION OF THE VERSE. For example, "The memory of the just is blessed: BUT THE NAME OF THE WICKED SHALL ROT" (Prov. 10:7).

I. The Fool, or Foolish Man (Proverbs 10:1b, 86, 106, 14, 18b, 21b, 23a)

"Foolish son . . . heaviness of his mother" (Prov. 10:1b): A "fool" in the Scripture is never a mentally deficient person, but rather one who is proud and self-sufficient; one who orders his life as though there was NO GOD (Psa. 14:1). The rich farmer of Luke 12:16-20 was certainly NOT MENTALITY DEFICIENT, but God called him a "FOOL" because he supposed that "his soul could live on the things of the barn, giving no thought to his eternal well being" (Schofield).

The "wise" versus the "foolish" son is the keynote of this chapter. The mother is the one who feels most keenly the folly of her child. See Esau in Gen. 26:34, 35; 27:46. In Proverbs, consideration for parents is regarded as both a mark of wise living and a proper motive for right living. The Jews made much of FAMILY LOYALTY. Honoring FATHER and MOTHER was HIGH ON THE JEWISH LIST OF VALUES. Such loyalty is a mark of WISDOM. The son who fails to honor his mother and father is a "fool," who brings "heaviness" or "sorrow" to both. Read and heed, young people, Proverbs 20:20; 30:17.

Consideration for parents is a good motive for RIGHT LIVING. Some feel that parents' business is to bring happiness to their children. Proverbs sets forth that children should BRING HAPPINESS TO THEIR PARENTS. Read and heed, young people, Proverbs 27:11; 23:24; 17:25.

The parent-child relationship is a two-way traffic. Let both strive to be wise in example and in the right choices. Then a David's lament will not be often heard (II Sam. 18:33), "The king. . . wept. . . O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom: would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my, my son."

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"A prating fool shall fall" (Prov. 10:8b): A prating fool is "foolish of lips; one who talks foolishly. Such a one will come to certain ruin. Verse 10b shows that blunt and unwise speech causes only the fall of him who uses it.

One day the French infidel, Voltaire, said, to a friend: "It took twelve ignorant fishermen to establish Christianity. I will show the world how one Frenchman can destroy it."

One day Sir Isaac Newton made a prophecy based on Dan. 12:4 and Nahum 8:4 when he said that man will some day be able to travel at the tremendous speed of forty miles an hour. Voltaire openly ridiculed Newton, "See what a fool Christianity makes of an otherwise brilliant man such as Sir Isaac Newton. Doesn't he know that if man traveled forty miles an hour, he would suffocate and his heart would stop?"

To top the irony of Voltaire's futile efforts, twenty-five years after he died, his home was purchased by the Geneva Bible Society and became a Bible storage building while Voltaire's printing press was used to print an entire edition of the Bible!

"A prating fool shall fall!" The prating fool, too wise in his own conceit to receive instruction, must learn by coming to grief (Daniel 5:18-21). The advances of modern transportation make Voltaire's ridicule of Sir Isaac Newton foolish talking in the extreme!

"The mouth of the foolish is near destruction" (Prov. 10:14b): Fools by reckless speech bring on calamities. The magician Elymas is a New Testament example (Acts 13:6-11).

"He that uttereth a slander is a fool" (Prov. 10:18b): One who openly slanders another is a fool. "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people" (Lev. 19:16). The tales might be true; that could not excuse the bearer (Lev. 19:17).

"Some people go through life like a bullet. They nick one, wound another, break the bones of a third" (Henry Ward Beecher). The "fool does all this, and more, with a lying, slanderous tongue.

The accusers of Jeremiah illustrate the type of fool condemned here (Jer. 37:11-15).

"Fools die for want of wisdom" (Prov. 10:21b): The fool's speech is worthless. He lacks the heart to learn from those who would instruct him. Saul, despising Samuel's instruction, literally died (I Sam. 15:3, 20-23; 31:3-5). It was an untimely death.

"It is as sport to a fool to do mischief . . ." (Prov. 10:23a): Such a one has a positive fiendish delight in doing evil. Such a man was Balaam (Num. 31:16; Rev. 2:14; James 4:4). Such a fool finds satisfaction in wickedness. Those foolish individuals who twist radio antennas from cars while the owner is at worship in church are "fools" in this sense.

II. The Wise and Righteous Man

(Proverbs 10:1a, 2b, 3a, 5a, 8a, 11, 14a, 16, 19b, 21a, 23b, 24b, 28a, 30a, 32a)

"A wise son . . . glad father" (Prov. 10:1a): Happy is the son, and his father and mother, who refuses to follow the siren voice of folly (read I Chron. 22:12; II Chron. 1:7-12). It is significant that the opening proverb of this section deals with the home --the first place where wisdom is imparted. The wise son possesses practical knowledge; he "behaves well," or has "horse sense" with "table manners" as we say.

"Righteousness delivereth from death" (Prov. 10:2b): Righteousness probably here means "almsgiving" as that was the highest expression of the good life (Prov. 1:3). One who is righteous may be called upon to suffer, but God will deliver him in the end (Esther 7:10 vs. Esther 3:2, 13; 6:10, 11; 12:2, 3).

"The Lord will not suffer . . . righteous to famish" (Prov. 10:3a): God will supply the temporal wants and needs of the righteous in every age and place (Psa. 37:25; Phil. 4:19). The soul of the righteous is lifted above all circumstances and rejoices in the midst of tribulation (Acts 16:23-26; Phil. 4:1-13; Heb. 3:17-19).

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"He that gathereth in summer . . . wise son" (Prov. 10:5a): Summer and harvest are interchangeable. The wise son will gather in summer or the harvest time. This principle abides in time, or eternity. ONE SHOULD CAPITALIZE ON THE OPPORTUNITY. Set a proper value on the God-given present, redeeming the time for the days are evil" (Eph. 5:16). Young people, use your summer of opportunity to get the best education you can secure. It is "HIGH TIME to awake out of sleep" (Rom. 13:11), friend, and TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SUMMER OF OPPORTUNITY TO KNOW THE WORD OF GOD MORE ACCURATELY (Acts 18:26).

"The wise . . . receive commandments" (Prov. 10:8a): A wise son will follow the wise teaching of the wise men (Prov. 2:1). Wise people bow to the Word of God (Prov. 9:10; John 14:15).

"Mouth of a righteous man . . . well of life" (Prov. 10:11a): The one who lives by the rules of wisdom is a source of blessing to his fellow men, like a well of precious water to a weary traveler. What he says STRENGTHENS AND REFRESHES the soul. He is like an oasis in a barren land.

"Wise men lay up knowledge . . ." (Prov. 10:14a): The truly wise know their limitations. They seek to learn always (II Tim. 3:14, 15).

In summary see that the labor of the wise "tendeth to life" (verse 16). "He that refraineth his lips is wise" (verse 19b; James 3; Eccl. 5:1-7). "A man of understanding hath wisdom" (verse 23b). "The desire of the righteous will be granted" (verse 24b). "The righteous is an everlasting foundation" (verse 25b; Matt. 7:24-29). "The hope of the righteous shall be gladness" (verse 28a). "The righteous shall never be moved" (verse 30a). "The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable" (verse 32a).

III. The Woeful End of the Wicked Man (Proverbs 10:2a, 3b, 6b, 7b, 11 b, 24a, 27b, 28b, 30b, 32b)

"Treasures of wickedness profit nothing . . ." (Prov. 10:2a): "He that getteth riches and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days and at his end shall be a fool" (Jer. 17:11). Treasures laid up in heaven are secure (Matt. 6:19-21). God will "cast away the substance of the wicked." Note the fate of the rich fool (Luke 12:16-21). Smith Reynolds was rich, but "violence covered" his mouth. He died in disgrace and very young (verses 6, 11).

"The name of the wicked shall rot" (Prov. 10:7b): Verse 6 describes the earthly life of the righteous and the wicked; this verse characterizes their lot after death. Paul stands before a Nero, called "the lion" (II Tim. 4:17). Who stands acquitted before the bar of justice now, Paul or Nero? Nero's name is literally "worm-eaten, useless and disgusting." The name of the godless becomes decayed and rotten like his bones. Think of a Stalin's body being moved from a prominent place of honor by his successor Kruschchev!

"Fear of the wicked . . . come upon him" (Prov. 10:24a): However bold the lawless one may appear. He has ever a gnawing fear at his heart of impending calamity. He dreads the future. He fears sickness, bankruptcy, the loss of reputation, and the destiny of the godless (Heb. 10:26-30). He shall pass away as quickly as the whirlwind comes and goes (Prov. 10:25a). He shall soon be gone from earth into a dark and grief-filled eternity (Rev. 21:8).

"Years of the wicked . . . shortened" (Prov. 10:27b): The wicked will be cut off early in life. The Cincinnati Times-Star carried a front-page story of Melvin Gerard, 24, who was found dead on the bedroom floor at the home of Miss Irene Shaw, 21, Monday at 4:25 a. m. when police entered the apartment. "I didn't mean to do it," the young woman told the police. A drinking party ended with a young, foolish and wicked man stabbed to death! The wicked shall not "inhabit the earth" (Prov. 10:30b), nor shall he enter heaven (Rev. 21:8; I Cor. 6:9, 10).

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QUESTIONS

1. How many chapters does "The Folly of Sin" or wickedness include?
2. In this strictly proverbial section of Proverbs what is seen in sharp contrast in most of the verses?
3. How many different forms of the words "righteousness" and "wicked" are found in this chapter?
4. How many things are said of the "righteous" in this chapter?
5. Is the word "fool" in the Scripture a mentally deficient person (Prov. 10:1b; Psa. 14:1; Luke 12:16-20)?
6. Does Prov. 10:1b seem to indicate that the mother is the one who feels most keenly the folly of her child (Gen. 26:34, 34; 27:46; Prov. 20:20; 30:17)?
7. Is it the main business of parents to bring happiness to their children, or as Proverbs sets forth that CHILDREN SHOULD BRING HAPPINESS TO THEIR PARENTS (Prov. 27:11; 23:24; 17:25)? Or is the parent-child relationship a two-way traffic (II Sam. 18:33)?
8. What shall happen to "a prating fool" (Prov. 10:8b), and what Frenchman illustrates this proverb so well?
9. If "fools die for want of wisdom," can you give an illustration of such from the Bible (I Sam. 15:3, 20-23; 31:3-5)?
10. What Old Testament king and writer illustrates that "A wise son maketh a glad father" (Prov. 10:1a; I Chron. 22:12; II Chron. 1:8-12)?
11. What famous Jew shows that "righteousness delivereth from death" (Prov. 10:2b; Esther 7:10; 3:2, 13; 6:10, 11; 12:2, 3)?
12. Why should we be convinced that "The Lord will not suffer . . . the righteous to famish" (Prov. 10:3a; Psa. 37:25; Phil. 4:19)? Why should we worry, then, about our "daily bread" (Matt. 6:11)?
13. Is it wise to take advantage today of our God-given opportunities (Prov. 10:5a; Eph. 5:16; Rom. 13:11; Acts 18:26)?
14. Do wise men obey the commandments of God (Prov. 10:8a; 2:1; 9:10; John 14:15; I John 2:17)?
15. What results attend the wise man (Prov. 10:11a, 14a, 16, 23b, 24b, 25b, 28a, 30a, 32a)?
16. When treasures are laid up by wicked men in wicked ways what is the inevitable result (Prov. 10:2a; Jer. 17:11; Luke 12:16-21; Prov. 10:6, 11)?
17. Is there any place where treasures may be laid up securely (Matt. 6:19-21)?
18. What woeful end of the wicked is portrayed in Prov. 10:24a, 25a (cf. Heb. 10:26-30; Rev. 21:8)?
19. Does wickedness have a tendency to shorten life (Prov. 20:27b, 30b)?
20. Will the willfully wicked enter heaven, and name some who aren't going there (Rev. 21:8; I Cor. 6:9, 10)?

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Year III

First Quarter

Lesson 8

Page 1

Proverbs 15

Memory Verse: Proverbs 15:9

Memory Verse:

"The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness" (Proverbs 15:9).

Public Reading: Proverbs 15:1-6.

THE RIGHTEOUS MAN

"The righteous Man" is a decided contrast to our lesson last Lord's Day on "The Folly of Wickedness."

The real measure of a man is ---

Not: "How did he die?"

But: "How did he live?"

Not: "What did he gain?"

But: "What did he give?"

Born, lived, and died are three words that echo and re-echo in Genesis 5 of all who lived from Adam to Lamech, Noah's father. "Born, lived, died" tells the story of every person who has lived from Adam until now with just three exceptions. Adam was not born; God made him from the dust of the earth (Gen. 2:7). Enoch and Elijah did not die; they were translated without tasting death (Gen. 5:22-24; II Kings 2:11). One's birthplace is not of vital importance; our Saviour was born in a stable (Luke 2:7). Little stress is placed on a man's death in the Bible. Christ our sinless Lord died on the cross between two thieves (Luke 23:33). The Bible stresses from beginning to end the importance of being right with God, of right living here on earth.

Right speaking is a vital aspect of right living. The most familiar of the many sayings about speech in Proverbs occur in Prov. 15:23; 24:26; 25:15. The main directions in the treatment of this subject are:

1. Kindliness of speech,
2. Courtesy in reply,
3. The wisdom of silence, and
4. Caution in speaking.

Characteristics of "The Righteous Man"

I. The Righteous Man Has a Trained Tongue (Proverbs 15:1, 4a, 7a, 23, 26b, 28a)

"A soft answer . . ." (Prov. 15:1): Tender or gentle answer. What power for good or evil lies in the tongue. A kindly gracious word will often disarm the most ill tempered. A sharp cutting remark has separated friends of many years' standing. It takes more character to meet an insult without angry reply, to remain calm when the other fellow is wrathful, than it does to give malice for malice. A gentle word turns away the heat of anger. "The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright" (Prov. 15:2a).

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"Grievous words stir up anger" (Prov. 15:1b): Harsh words; literally, "word of pain." This denotes anger in the highest degree. Such words add fuel to the flame of anger. In Gideon's answer to the men of Ephraim we see a "soft" answer that turns wrath away (Judges 8:1-3). In Jephthah's reply to the same people we see the terrible end of "grievous words" (Judges 12:1-6). 42,000 men died because of them!

"A wholesome tongue . . ." (Prov. 15:4a): Gentle, or soothing tongue. Such a tongue binds up, gives cheer, and makes peace. Abraham had such a tongue (Gen. 13:8). Sheba's hasty tongue brought division and judgment (II Sam. 20:1ff).

"Lips of the wise disperse knowledge . . ." (Prov. 15:7a): Wise lips spread knowledge. "The tongue of the just is as choice silver . . . feed many" (Prov. 10:20, 21).

"A word spoken in due season, how good it is!" (Prov. 15:23b): Timely words bless the giver and the receiver. Such words leave no regrets. The idle words of Job's friends were out of season. There is genuine satisfaction in being able to say the right thing at the right time.

"The words of the pure . . . pleasant" (Prov. 15:26b): The conversation of the pure is pleasant in His sight, as being the outflow of a heart exercised unto godliness. The very thoughts of the evildoer are an abomination to God (Hab. 1:13). Both classes are seen in John 6:68-71.

"The heart of the righteous studieth to answer . . ." (Prov. 15:28a): The man who walks in the fear of God will weigh his words, lest by a hasty utterance he dishonor his Lord and hinder where he desires to help. Contrast Elisha with the sins of the prophets at Jericho II Kings 2:15-18).

II. God's Approving Eye Is Upon the Righteous Man (Proverbs 15:3)

"The eyes of the Lord are in every place . . ." (Prov. 15:3): How comforting this is to the weary heart, who like Hagar in the desert can say: "Thou, God, seest me" (Gen. 16:13; see also Psa. 66:7; Prov. 5:21; Heb. 4:13; I Pet. 3:12). The wicked know that those all-seeing eyes of God are upon him. He can't escape them. Sin not repented of makes it dreadful to think of coming before God. Repent; come to Him now for mercy (II Pct. 3:9; Psa. 139; Jno. 3:16-21).

II. A Righteous Man Does Not Despise Correction (Proverbs 15:5, 10-12, 22, 31-33)

"He that regardeth reproof is prudent" (Prov. 15:5b): To regard reproof and thankfully accept correction is an evidence of true wisdom. Contrast Manasseh with his father Hezekiah (II Kings 18-21). Unlike the fool who resents reproof, the righteous man acts discreetly because of it. The young man who considers his knowledge superior to his father's forgets that one cannot leap over many years' experience. It is folly not to profit by the experience of one's friend, especially one's father.

In the "LIFE AND EXPERIENCES OF T. Q. MARTIN," pages 11 and 12, is the story of a "young fool." Mr. Smith was the first husband of Brother Martin's mother. He was a saddle maker by trade. His little saddle shop joined his home in the village of Clintonville, Kentucky. Mr. Smith had a son, Solomon, by his first wife. Solomon often had "stiff arguments" with his father because "he wanted to use the new saddles from the shop instead of the one his father had made especially for him and given to him."

One afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Smith were sitting on the little back porch, when they saw Sol coming into the front door of the shop with his old saddle on his shoulder. "Now Sol wants to take out a new saddle, and he shall not do it," said Mr. Smith. "Just as soon as the sweat pads are soiled the saddle becomes a second-hand one and Sol has as good a saddle as any young man in the neighborhood." As his father entered

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the shop, Sol had hung up his old saddle and was taking down a new one. His father gently took the stirrup of the new saddle out of Sol's hand and suddenly Sol drew a pistol from his pocket and shot his father! Mr. Smith fell into his the arms of his wife, who sat and held her dead husband and the infant child of theirs until help came from those who lived nearby. Solomon was tried, condemned, and publicly hanged! Yes, "A fool despiseth his father's instructions" (Prov. 15:5a). "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right" (Eph. 6:1).

"Correction is grievous . . ." (Prov. 15:10): Severe discipline or reproof is grievous "unto him that forsaketh" the God-pleasing right way (Prov. 2:13). An early or violent death is the result of the undisciplined life (verse 10b). "Hell" or better "Sheol," the dismal place of departed spirits where there is no fellowship with God. "Destruction" or "Abaddon" is a synonym of Sheol. In Rev. 9:11, it is the name of the angel of the abyss. The unseen world, which to man is dark and hidden, is open before him. The Lord alone searches the hearts of men, and tries the reins. When men refuse correction His eye is observing their perversity, and He will see that they are judged according to their works (verse 11). The scorner is one who resents correction and reproof, and hence avoids the wise, lest his evil ways be called in question. Nevertheless, he cannot avoid the results of his choices. He is a foolish builder who builds on the sands (Matt. 7:24-27).

"Without counsel . . . multitude of counselors" (Prov. 15:22): To depend entirely upon one's own judgment is folly. Even the wisest and best make mistakes. To weigh a matter in the presence of God; to invite the counsel of those whose experience fit them to "prove all things" (I Thess. 5:21) is a mark of wisdom. Rehoboam lost the major part of his kingdom because he refused to listen to wise counselors (I Kings 12:5, 5, 10-15). "For lack of advice plans go wrong, but with many counselors they are accomplished."

"The ear that heareth the reproof . . . wise" (Prov. 15:31): He who is humble enough to be thankful for correction when going astray God calls a wise man. "Before honor is humility" (verse 33) as Joseph's remarkable story shows us (Gen. 37-50).

IV. The Righteous Man Has Much Treasure (Proverbs 15:6a, 16, 17, 27)

"In the house of the righteous is much treasure" (Prov. 15:6a): The true riches are found in the house of the righteous. They have treasures that shall never pass away. This is true whether he has much or little of this world's goods. The fool, whatever his possessions, is filled with folly (II Sam. 13:13; I Sam. 25:25). See Daniel 12:3.

"Better is a little . . ." (Prov. 15:16): Spiritual wealth is superior to material wealth. A dear old saint spread on his table a bit of bread, an onion, a glass of water, then joyfully thanked God for "ALL THIS AND JESUS." It is better to have little with Jesus than to have great treasures with great trouble and hatred.

John Wood was a man who disappeared in those greedy days of the gold rush. He wrote this in a diary included in "Folklore of Highland County" (Ohio): "What a blessing in the world, if mankind only knew their wants, and seek for contentment in honest and moderate gain, for true and lasting happiness can come from no other source"! See I Tim. 6:6-12; Matt. 6:19-24.

V. God Hears the Righteous Man's Prayers (Proverbs 15:8b, 29)

"The prayer of the upright is His delight" (Prov. 15:8b): Only those who bow in submission before God can please God. Ponder over Psalm 66:18. God hears the prayer of the righteous.

VI. The Righteous Man Has a Merry Heart (Proverbs 15:13, 15)

"A merry heart . . . cheerful countenance" (Prov. 15:13): A glad heart and a cheerful countenance belong to the man who commits his all into God's hands. He can rejoice at all times for he has cast all his care upon God (I Pet. 5:7). This benefits the digestion, and makes friends, too, with its happy-looking appearance.

"A merry heart hath a continual feast" (Prov. 15:15b): The glad-hearted man has that holy joy which results from tracing everything that comes upon him back to God. One who sees "black" all the time dishonors God (John 16:33). This is not a frivolous joy, but a holy joy (Phil. 4:4, 7, 11-13).

VII. The Righteous Man Is Slow to Anger (Proverbs 15:18)

"He that is slow to anger . . . (Prov. 15:18b): A lowly man will be slow to anger, for he has learned not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think. A wrathful man is a proud man – a "hothead." Contrast the spirit displayed by Saul and David (I Sam. 20:30-34; 24:8-22). See James 1:19; Eph. 4:31, 32.

QUESTIONS

1. What kind of man does God love according to our memory verse (Prov. 15:9b)?
2. What is the real measure of a man?
3. What three words describe every person who has lived from Adam until now with but three exceptions (Gen. 5; 2:7; 5:22-24; II Kings 2:11)?
4. Can you cite the most familiar sayings about speech in Proverbs 15:23; 24:26; 25:15)?
5. What kind of answer turns away wrath (Prov. 15:1)?
6. Can you give an example of a "soft" answer and "grievous" words in the Old Testament and the effect of both (Judges 8:1-3; Judges 12:1-6)?
7. Who had "a wholesome tongue" (Prov. 15:4a; Gen. 13:8), and to what is it likened?
8. What may be said of a "word spoken in due season" (Prov. 15:23b)?
9. What solemn thing is said about the eyes of the Lord (Prov. 15:3; Gen. 16:13; Psa. 66:7; Prov. 5:21; Heb. 4:13; I Pet. 3:12)?
10. Does a righteous man despise correction, and can you give an example (Prov. 15:5) of one who despised his father's correction at Clintonville, Kentucky?
11. Is it wise to counsel with those of experience, and what king lost the major part of his kingdom because he refused to listen to wise counselors (Prov. 15:22; I Kings 12:4, 5, 10-15)?
12. What does God call a man who is humble enough to be thankful for correction when he is going astray (Prov. 15:31)?
13. In what way does the story of Joseph (Gen. 37-50) show us that "before honor is humility" (Prov. 15:33b)?
14. What is the meaning of "In the house of the righteous is much treasure" (Prov. 15:6a)?
15. Whose prayer does the Lord hear with delight (Prov. 15:8, 29; Rev. 5:8; 8:3)?
16. Why can one with a merry heart be of a cheerful countenance (Prov. 15:14; I Pet. 5:7)?
17. What is the meaning of "A merry heart hath a continual feast" (Prov. 15:15; John 16:33; Phil. 4:4,7-13)?
18. Do you think it would be better to have a vegetable dinner with love, than a juicy steak where hatred prevailed in the hearts of those around the table (Prov. 15:17)?
19. What is true of him "that is slow to anger" (Prov. 15:18; James 1:19; Eph. 4:31,32)?
20. Can you contrast the spirit displayed by Saul and David (I Samuel 20:30-34; 24:8-22)?

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Year III

First Quarter

Lesson 9

Page 1

Proverbs 18

Memory Verse: Proverbs 26:20

Memory Verse:

"Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth" (Proverbs 26:20).

Public Reading: Proverbs 18:6-21.

THE GOSSIPER

Carlyle said the Anglo-Saxon race talked too much. Evidence inclines me to think he was right. The influence of speech is tremendous. Bryan's speech made him a candidate for the presidency. Wendell Phillips' voice rang out against slavery and men were inspired to act against that evil practice. When Patrick Henry stood on the floor of the Virginia Legislature he cried: "I know not what course others may take but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!" The assembly thrilled to action, as one man cried: "To arms! To arms!"

All reforms -- all revolutions, political, social, and religious -- have been born and carried to success by the burning speech of some champion of the truth.

Think of the tongue as it offers consolation, sympathy, and cheer! Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the Bones" (Prov. 1.6:24). "The tongue of the just is as choice silver" (Prov. 10:20).

An Evil Tongue

A gossip is "An idle tattler; a "newslinger"; one who spreads groundless rumor." Of course, this is the wrong use of the tongue. Let us consider today a number of passages from the book that deals with the wrong use of the tongue.

I. The Gossiper Causes Strife (Proverbs 18:6, 7; 26:20, 21)

"A fool's lips enter into contention . . ." (Prov. 18:6): The fool is ever ready for strife, and his mouth utters hasty and bitter words on the slightest pretext. His contentious lips call for severe rebuke, and shall be his destruction, if he were not brought to repentance. He delights in slander and scandal. He gives ear to the whisperer. Of this sort were Korah, Dathan and Abiram (Numbers 16:1-3, 12-17, 30-34). The quarrelsome gossip brings trouble to others and to himself (Prov. 6:2). "A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his mouth calleth for strokes" (Prov. 18:7).

"Where there is no talebearer . . ." (Prov. 26:20): As fire goes out for want of fuel, when there is no wood to add to it, so strife dies a natural death when there is no gossip or whisperer to spread lies. Tale bearing is evil. "It is an honor for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling" (Prov. 20:3). "Hatred stirreth up strife: but love covereth all sins" (Prov. 10:12).

II. The Gossiper Revealeth Secrets (Proverbs 11:13; 20:19)

"A talebearer revealeth secrets... " (Prov. 11:13): Tale bearing, even the tales be true, is devilish. If there be a fault in a person, admonish him in love and conceal the matter (Gal. 6:1; Matt. 18:15ff). There is ONE SURE WAY TO KEEP A SECRET: TELL IT TO NO ONE! The one who praises his listener while he backbites another, deserves to be treated in the spirit that David showed toward the Amalekite who brought him news of Saul's death (II Sam. 1:1-16). "He that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter" (Prov. 11:13b).

III. The Gossiper Separates Friends (Proverbs 16:28; 17:9)

"A whisperer separateth chief friends" (Prov. 16:28): It is an ungodly man who digs up evil, whose lips seem to be set on fire of hell (verse 27; James 3:6). Such a one goes about scattering the seeds of strife as one might sow thistledown, or other noxious seeds, to result in a harvest of grief and anguish to many a soul.

The Dirty Dozen

"I heard," "They say," "Everybody says," "Have you Heard," "Did you hear," "Isn't it just awful?" "People say," "Did you ever?" "Somebody said," "Would you think?" "Don't say I told you," "Oh, I think it's perfectly terrible." Christians will never repeat this dirty dozen daily! This vice alienates dearest friends, creates misunderstanding, defiles all who listen to the recital of tales (Prov.17:9).

"Boys flying kites haul in their white-winged birds;
But you can't do that when you are flying words.
Thoughts unexpressed fall back dead,
But God Himself can't kill them when they're said."

See what mischief was brought about by the tale bearing of Doeg the Edomite; do not follow in the steps of so unsavory a wretch (I Sam. 22:9-19).

IV. The Gossiper Peddles Falsehoods (Proverbs 17:4; 18:8)

"False lips... a naughty tongue" (Prov.17:4): When the heart hides iniquity, the ear readily gives heed to lying lips and an evil tongue. The upright in heart learn to know the voice of the deceiver, and to refuse his words; the unjust and false soul readily falls in with those who are like himself (Jer. 5:30, 31). He would always rather spread a lie than the truth. He never discovers the good traits of his victim to talk about. Like the buzzard, he seeks the rotten upon which to feed. Talebearing reveals one's true nature!

"Words are as wounds . . ." (Prov. 18:8): Such words are "sweet morsels;" they are greedily picked up by the hearers. They go into the mind or heart. Do you have a gossiping ear-one eager to hear discord and the faults of others? One is as evil as the other.

V. The Gossiper Is a Fool (Proverbs 10:18; 18:13)

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"He that uttereth a slander, is a fool" (Prov.10:18): To spread evil stories is reprehensible. God condemns it (Lev. 19:16, 17). God calls such a one a fool; one who orders his life as if there were no God. The word "Devil" in the original means "Slanderer." Hypocrisy and tale-bearing alike are detestable. Diogenes when asked what beast had the most dangerous bite, replied: "Of tame beasts, the bite of the flatterer; of wild beasts, that of the slanderer." Such a one deliberately chooses to spread evil instead of good. He (or she) never works in the open; he is too cowardly to work in the open.

"Answereth . . . before he heareth" (Prov. 18:13): Rash judgment based on the one-sided evidence. Investigate before you speak, or shame is sure to come upon you. NEVER BELIEVE EVIL OF ANY PERSON UNTIL YOU HEAR HIS SIDE OF THE STORY. You'd want it that way if YOU WERE THE VICTIM. (Matt. 7:12).

I've heard of a preacher who had on his desk a special notebook labeled: "Complaints of members against other members." When one called to tell him the faults of another, he would say: "Well here's my complaint book. I'll write down what you say, and YOU SIGN IT. Then when I have to take the matter up officially, I shall know what I may expect you to TESTIFY TO. The sight of the open book and the pen had its effect. "Oh, no; I could not sign anything like that!" NO ENTRY WAS MADE. The preacher says he kept the book for forty years, opened it a thousand times, and NEVER WROTE A SINGLE LINE IN IT!

VI. The Power of the Tongue (Proverbs 18:19.21)

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue . . ." (Prov. 18:21): He who sows with his lips shall reap an abundant harvest, of good or evil, depending on what he has sown. A chance word dropped to a stranger has been the means of untold blessing or its opposite if it was an evil word. The false teachers of II Peter 2:1-8 and the ambassadors of Christ in II Cor. 5:20, 21 will be rewarded according to their sowing. How much better to use the tongue aright and save offense (Prov. 18:19), to invite men to Christ (John 1:41, 42) rather than show them the way of death (Matt. 7:24-27; Prov. 12:26, 28; 14:12).

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QUESTIONS

1. What did Carlyle say of the Anglo-Saxon race? Was he right?
2. Do you recall what the power of speech did in the life of William J. Bryan, Wendell Phillips, and Patrick Henry?
3. In the right use of the tongue, to what is it likened (Prov. 16:24; 10:20)?
4. What is a gossip?
5. Is the gossip ever ready for strife (Prov. 18:6,7), and can you name three contentious men who stirred up strife (Numbers 16:1-3; 12-17,30-34)?
6. To whom does the gossip bring trouble (Prov. 6:2)?
7. Will you remember that one who carries a TALE TO YOU will also carry a TALE ABOUT YOU (Prov. 26:20)?
8. What does God think of the gossip (Prov. 6:16-19; 10:31b; 12:19b, 22; Psa. 101:5)?
9. Do you think Paul's advice is good (I Thess. 4:11)? Why?
10. Do the words of our Lord in Matthew 12:36-37 make you afraid of being a gossip?
11. Would the words you have spoken today justify or condemn you (Matt. 12:37)?
12. Can you give the meaning of Prov. 26:20-21?
13. What sure way is there to keep a secret (Prov. 11:13; 20:19)?
14. If there is a genuine fault in another, what procedure should be followed to correct the fault (Gal. 6:1; Matt. 18:15ff; Prov. 11:13b)?
15. What does the gossip sometimes do to "chief friends" (Prov. 16:28), and who set his tongue on fire (James 3:6)?
16. Does the gossip specialize in telling the truth (Prov. 17:4; 18:8; Jer. 5:30, 31)?
17. Does God condemn the spread of evil stories (Prov. 10:18; Lev. 19:16, 17)?
18. Should you ever believe a slanderer (Prov. 18:13), and what rule should we strive to follow daily (Matt. 7:12)?
19. What two things are in the power of the tongue (Prov. 18:21)? Show that false teachers (II Pet. 2:1-8) and the ambassadors for Christ (II Cor. 5:20, 21) will reap life or death according as they have sown evil or good.
20. Will you daily invite men to Christ and life, rather than gossip them into hell (Prov. 18:19; John 1:41, 42; Matt. 7:24-27; Prov. 12:26, 28; 14:12)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year III

First Quarter

Lesson 10
Proverbs 21

Page 1
Memory Verse: Proverbs 21:13

Memory Verse:

"Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard" (Proverbs 21:13).

THE GENEROUS MAN

Generous comes from the Latin, 'generosus,' of noble birth, magnanimous; from genus birth, race. It means liberal; openhanded; characterized by munificence; abundant; ample.

The book of Proverbs has some rich teachings on "The Generous Man." While chapter 21 will serve as the basic chapter, we shall examine also several passages in other chapters that deal with our subject.

When we think of a generous man we think usually of one who is liberal with his money. This is too narrow a view.

"Make Me a Lavish Spender"

The following prayer shows many ways in which we can cultivate the art of generosity: "Lord, make me a lavish spender! Grant that I may become reckless in dispensing good will. May I never stop to reckon things up in giving away smiles and cheerful greetings and all evidences of a merry and courageous heart. Grant that I am recklessly generous in the times I place my hand on a brother's shoulder as a symbol of encouragement and faith. Make me a prodigal indeed, when it comes to scattering broadcast my appreciation. Save me from hoarding my enthusiasms. Enable me to spend lavishly of my time for another's need and of my hope for his despair. Make me a miser only in hoarding my griefs, in holding fast to my disappointments, in keeping for myself alone my own doubts. Grant unto me such faith in life, such love of people, and such certainty of Thyself that I will freely spend all that I am upon the world about me. In the name of him who shed abroad freely the light of his "inner self" for all of us! Amen."

I. "The Generous Man" is Diligent in His Work (Proverbs 21:5-7)

"Thoughts of the diligent tend . . . plenteousness" (Prov. 21:5): The contrast is between steady industry and rashness. Riches gotten by means of honest toil give pleasure and a measure of satisfaction to their possessor. Hasty gatherings of wealth by lying, deceit, downright (if legal) robbery will bring sorrow and shame. One may possess much gold and silver and be as needy as the Arab lost in the desert who, when almost dead for want of food, found a package on one of his camels. With trembling hands, he opened it, hoping it might be dates. "IT'S ONLY PEARLS," he groaned in dire disappointment. Pearls worth thousands of dollars could not FEED A STARVING MAN! Therefore, wealth illegally gotten cannot satisfy. Rich men, bereft of God and honesty, carry on a weary round of vexation and disappointment and groan at the end of life, "All is vanity and pursuit of the wind." Study prayerfully Eccl. 5:10-17.

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"Every one that is hasty . . . want" (Prov. 21:5b): The slothful, rash, unthinking man shall come to want. So shall the one who tries to get rich quick by dishonest means (Prov. 28:20). "The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing" (Prov. 13:4a). A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again" (Prov. 19:24). "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing" (Prov. 20:4). The diligent, wise man has much treasure laid up, but "a foolish man spendeth it up" (Prov. 21:20).

"Slothful . . . coveteth greedily" (Prov. 21:25, 26): Like a drone the slothful man covets the fruits of labor but **DETESTS THE WORK THAT PRODUCES THEM**. He is occupied with himself, full of desire, but **OPPOSED TO EFFORT**. His strongest characteristic is selfishness. The righteous man is a producer. He loves to acquire, but only in order that ye may "provide things honest in the sight of all men" (Rom. 12:17), properly meet the need of those dependent upon him, and have plenty to give to any who are in genuine need (Eph. 4:28).

Contrast the spirit of Achan (Joshua 7:21) and the Macedonian Christians (II Cor. 8:2). See also Prov. 12:27.

II. "The Generous Man" Delights to Give to the Poor (Proverbs 21:13)

"Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor . . . (Prov. 21:13): He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord and that which he hath given will he pay him again" (Prov. 19:17). God is the patron of the poor. Did God leave such in the world to test the hearts of those who are better provided for? Money and goods bestowed with loving pity on those in distress are not gone forever. God's Word says such shall be repaid. Genuine philanthropy is the result of true love to God. The law of retribution works -- for good or evil. As we sow, we reap (Gal. 6:7). If we refuse to help the poor, the day will come when we will need help and cry for it but "The Generous Man. "shall not be heard. Our Lord accents **WHAT IS DONE FOR THEM AS SO MUCH DONE FOR HIMSELF** (Matt. 25:40, 45).

"He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he" (Prov. 14:21b): "He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse" (Prov. 28:27). "He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor" (Prov. 22:9).

Whose example will you follow? The rich young ruler (Luke 18:18-30)? Or will you choose the widow of Zarephath? She was none the poorer for ministering to Elijah, but found for herself an unending cruse of oil and an unending supply of meal (I Kings 17:10-16)! **GOD DOES PROVIDE IN ALL WAYS -- ALWAYS** (Phil. 4:19).

"Scattereth . . . increaseth" (Prov. 11:24): This is God's divine plan for increase. Bunyan's quaint rhyme, propounded as a riddle by Old Honest and explained by Gaius, is suitable commentary for this verse:

"A man there was, though some did count him mad,
The more he gave away, the more he had.
He that bestows his goods upon the poor,
Shall have as much again, and **TEN TIMES MORE.**"

YEAR 3 - LESSON 10 - PAGE 3

Like the Egyptian farmer who scatters his seed upon the retreating waters of the Nile to reap a rich harvest "after many days " SO ONE WHO GIVES AS GOD DIRECTS WILL FIND TRUE INCREASE LATER BY SCATTERING NOW? The one who greedily keeps all to himself will surely come to ruin. In II Cor. 9:6-10 Paul uses this as a grand principle and applies it to benevolence. The Philippian Christians knew the joy of thus sharing (Phil. 4:10-19). In Nabal we learn the folly of greed and self-occupation (I Sam. 25:10, 11, 36-38).

"Withholdeth corn . . . people shall curse him" (Prov. 11:26): A stingy, selfish man will let people starve to force prices up. Contrast this with Joseph who by wise planning was able to save a famine-ridden world (Gen. 41:39-44; 45:7). If this is true of those who withhold the corn which makes bread to save bodies, HOW MUCH IS IT TRUE IF WE WITHHOLD THE BREAD OF LIFE FROM DYING PEOPLE (John 6:35, 41, 48)? We MUST DO MORE AND MORE TO SPREAD THE KNOWLEDGE OF AND OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD through our Whole Bible Study Course! PRAY, GIVE sacrificially, and WORK to HONOR THE WORD OF GOD. The God of the Word will honor us if we do!

III. "The Generous Man" Despises Shallow Pleasures (Proverbs 21:17)

"He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man . . ." (Prov. 21:17): The spendthrift and the self-indulgent will come to misery and want. "He that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich." The frugal, self-denial will have enough for themselves and plenty to share with others. Note Psalm 37:25 and Luke 15:14-17. The prodigal son who does to the dogs will end up feeding the hogs! "There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up" (Prov. 21:20). He or "She that liveth in pleasures dead while she (he) liveth" (I Tim. 5:6). Those who set the Lord always before them (Acts 1:18) only enjoy that which is really life. He, who pampers his appetite in youth with costly dainties, is likely in old age to be brought to coarse fare.

A friend told me how he used to drink and gamble away many hundreds of dollars. What an awful thing to have such a memory as this. Will anything less than the same abandon in giving to the Lord's work be acceptable before God? "Flee the pleasure that bites tomorrow. " Follow after those things of God (I Tim. 6:11) with openhanded liberality.

Tyron Edwards said: "Sinful and forbidden pleasures are like poisoned bread; they may satisfy for the moment but there is death in them at the end." Moses knew this (Heb. 11:25). Do you?

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QUESTIONS

1. What is the meaning of generous? What error are we likely to fall into when we think of "The Generous Man?"
2. Will you pray "Make Me a Lavish Spender" and make it your daily resolution?
3. To what do the thoughts of the diligent tend (Prov. 21:5a)?
4. Can you think of an example where riches acquired by lying deceit, or 'legal' robbery brought joy and satisfaction to the possessor (Prov. 21:6; Eccl. 5:10-17)?
5. Name at least five things that are more desirable than riches? (Jer. 9:23, 24; Prov. 22:1; Mark 8:36; I Tim. 6:17; Heb. 11:26)
6. Does God put His stamp of approval on the slothful man? Prov. 21:25, 26; 12:27; 19:24; 20:4)
7. Do you think Proverbs 28:19, 20 accurately describe the diligent wise man, or the man, who by rash, get-rich-quick illegal means "maketh haste to be rich?"
8. What is the highest motive for acquiring money (Eph. 4:28; Rom. 12:17)?
9. Contrast the spirit of Achan (Joshua 7:21) with that of the Macedonian Christians (II Cor. 8:1-5).
10. When was the last time you gave as much for the support of your orphans' home as you spend on a trip to a ball game? Be Honest!
11. What will happen to the man who "stops his ears at the cry of the poor" (Prov. 21:13)?
12. If you have pity on the poor, to whom do you "lend" (Prov. 19:17), and what has God promised to do to such a man?
13. What did Jesus mean by "INASMUCH" in Matt. 25:40, 45?
14. What characterizes the man who has "mercy on the poor" (Prov. 14:21; 28:27; 22:9)?
15. Are you following the example of the rich young ruler (Luke 18:18-30), or that of the Widow of Zarephath (I Kings 17:10-16)?
16. What is God's divine plan for increase-in sowing grain, or in generosity in giving (Prov. 11:24, 25)?
17. What application does the Apostle Paul make of this principle (II Cor. 9:6-10)?
18. If we see the result of greed in Nabal (I Sam. 25:10, 11, 36-38), will you imitate the joyous giving of the Philippian Christians (Phil. 4:10-19)?
19. If men curse those who refuse to share this world's goods with the starving (Prov. 11:26), what about those who refuse to share the BREAD OF LIFE with the unsaved in this community (John 6:35, 41, 48; Matt. 28:18-20)? When did you last try to lead someone to become a Christian (Acts 8:4)?
20. What is the result of loving sinful pleasures (Prov. 21:17; 21:20; Luke 15:14-17; I Tim. 5:6)?

YEAR 3 - LESSON 11 - PAGE 1
WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year III

First Quarter

Lesson 11
Proverbs 22

Page 1
Memory Verse: Proverbs 22:1

Memory Verse:

"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold" (Proverbs 22:1)

Public Reading: Proverbs 22:1-6.

A GOOD NAME

A NAME is "The title by which any person or thing is known or designated." In ancient times, each person was called by but one name. Thus we find such names as Adam, meaning "formed of red earth"; Abigail, meaning "her father's joy"; Andrew, "manly"; Joseph, "He who shall increase."

The growing use of certain names made it necessary to devise further means of individual identification to distinguish one James from another James, one Mary from another Mary. Therefore, people began adding surnames or family names to their given names. Family names were usually derived from local surroundings, trades, or ancestral homes. Thus John, the son of John, became John Johnson. John who hailed from Scotland was called John Scott.

Today we consider the study of "A Good Name" which is of untold importance to each of us. "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches..." is restated by Shakespeare: "He that filches from me my good name robs me of that which not enriches him. And makes me poor indeed."

I. A Good Name Is Desirable (Proverbs 22:11)

"A good name . . ." (Prov. 22:1): The adjective "good" is not in the original text. Nevertheless, "a name" is used in the sense of character, or renown. To make oneself a name is equivalent to building a monument in honour of oneself. "Let us make us a name" (Gen. 11:4). God will make His people "HIGH ABOVE ALL NATIONS . . . IN NAME" (Deut. 26:19). See II Sam. 7:9, 23; 8:1.3. In this sense, a "name" is far preferable to vast wealth; to be highly esteemed is better than immense wealth and a "bad" name. A Godly man usually will have a good name, and all the gold he needs, too.

"The invisible thing called a GOOD NAME is made up of the breadth of numbers that speaks well of you," said Lord Halifax.

It is a great mistake for young people to think that such an honored name is easiest found on the battlefield, in the halls of government, in the ranks of great writers, or in the business world. No name is MORE LASTING THAN THAT WON BY HIM WHO LIVES FOR GOD.

Devotion to David caused Abishai and Benaiah to win immortal names (II Sam. 23:18, 22). Devotion to Jesus Christ has caused many to be remembered forever who otherwise would have long since fallen into oblivion. When Jesus was anointed by Mary of Bethany (Mark 14:3-9), our Lord said: "Verily I say unto you, Wherever this gospel shall be preached throughout the world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial to her."

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The twelve apostles followed Jesus, and are known wherever the Bible is read (Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:1.2-16).

What would have been the glory of the name of Saul, the rabbi of Tarsus, compared with that of Paul the missionary of the cross?

The New Testament Stress on a Name

"What's in a name anyway?" you ask. Would you just as soon be called a "liar" as a man of "truth"?

Our risen Lord commanded that "repentance and remission of sins should be PREACHED IN HIS NAME AMONG ALL NATIONS, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47).

We are to "Baptize them (those who taught the way of the gospel of Christ) in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38).

Paul and Barnabas "hazarded their lives for the NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST" (Acts 15:26). We must "confess" his name (Phil. 2:9-11; Matt. 10:32, 33). "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12) than through Jesus Christ!

The "Worthy" name by which ye are called" (James 2:7) is worth more than "great riches." Let us wear only the God-breathed name of Christian (Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Pet. 4:16). Let it be known that you are NOT THE ONLY CHRISTIAN, but that YOU ARE A CHRISTIAN ONLY!

"At the name of Jesus bowing,
Falling prostrate at His feet,
King of Kings in heav'n we'll crown Him,
When our journey is complete." --Baxter

II. Christian Nurture Is Vital If Children Are To Choose "A Good Name" (Proverbs 22:6)

"Train up a child . . ." (Prov. 22:6): To start the child right is of vital importance. We cannot too early instruct or initiate our children in the right things of life. The saying of the Jesuit, "Give me your child until he is twelve, and I care not who has charge of him afterwards," has passed into a proverb. If taught to love the world, its fashions, and its follies in childhood, they are almost certain to live for the world, the flesh, and the devil. If properly instructed as to the vanities of this evil age, they will not likely change their judgments, as they grow older. Parents must not only teach their children about Jesus, they must live the gospel they teach daily (II Tim. 1:5; Eph. 6:1-4).

"The rod of correction . . ." (Prov. 22:15): To leave a child to itself is to insure its ruin, for folly is bound up in its heart. Discipline, properly administered, will correct the natural tendency for it to go astray. The road of corporal punishment is not always required; it might at times be very unwise. Family discipline should be patterned after the divine discipline of Hebrews 12. It is not love, but the lack of it, which leaves a child to develop tendencies that, if unchecked, will bring certain sorrow and sin. Contrast Eli (I Sam. 3:13, 14) with Abraham (Gen. 18:19).

The lack of parental restraint was responsible in large measure for the evil ways of both Absalom and Adonijah (II Sam. 14; I Kings 1:6).

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A study of Proverbs 10:13; 13:24; 19:18; 23:13; 26:3; 29:15, 17 will show us that "The iron hand in the velvet glove" has long been the symbol of strict discipline administered in grace. The rod, throughout Scripture, speaks of authority and power.

III. He Who Chooses a Good Name

1. Prepares for the future (Prov. 22:3).

"A prudent man foreseeth the evil . . ." (Prov. 22:3): These solemn words are repeated in Prov. 27:12. To refuse God's love and repent and turn from evil surely brings punishment. The wise man sees the evil and hides himself in the refuge God has provided (Isa. 32:2; Psa. 32:7). Contrast the Philippian jailer with the Roman magistrates (Acts 16:25-40). Be prepared for the present and the future -- now (II Tim. 1:12; Heb. 3:13-19).

2. Fears the Lord (Prov. 22:4, 5, 12).

"By humility and the fear of the Lord . . ." (Prov. 22:4): How different are the paths and the ultimate rewards of the godly man, and the evil man. A meek and contrite spirit and the fear of the Lord mark the former. The ungodly is stubborn and self-willed. God rewards the one with every good thing. The Lord "overthroweth the words of the transgressor" (Prov. 22:12, 5).

3. Shuns debt (Prov. 22:7).

"The borrower is servant . . ." (Prov. 22:7): "Owe no man anything, but to love one another" (Rom.13:8) is a good rule for the Christian. Carelessness in this regard brings woe and distress to loved ones (II Kings 4:1). It is not a sin to go in debt -- if you can pay the bills. There is certain bondage in being in debt. The interest rate is high! Those who think nothing of running bills and borrowing with no thought of payment are dishonest; such action will bring certain grief and dishonor on the cause of Christ. If we go in debt, let us be sure that we repay with interest that which we borrow.

4. Sows good (Prov. 22:8,9,10).

"He that soweth iniquity . . ." (Prov. 22:8): The harvest is sure to be like the seed sown (Gal. 6:7). He who sows vanity will reap a dreadful crop of vanity. The kindly soul who plants the seed of thoughtfulness for others will reap a bountiful harvest of blessing (Jer. 38:7-12; 39:16-18). If we choose the good name, we will "cast out the scorner" (Prov. 22:10). Such a man (or woman) can work much evil and hinder God's work. Put them away (I Cor. 5:1-13) from among yourselves.

5. Abhors the immoral woman (Prov. 22:14).

"The mouth of a strange woman..." (Prov. 22:14): With flattering words the "strange woman," the immoral woman allures him who stops to listen to destruction. She will take none who walk with God. One who chooses sin will stumble with her as a blind man into a "deep pit." Read again Prov.2:16-19; G:23-35; 7:4-27.

6. Heeds the voice of wisdom (Prov. 22:17-21).

"Hear the words of the wise . . ." (Prov. 22:17): We have here a challenge reminding us of that seven times repeated in Rev. 2 and 3. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." God has marked out the way. Let

YEAR 3 - LESSON 11 - PAGE 4

us walk therein. Paul quotes from this book of wisdom (Heb. 12:5, 6; Rom. 12:19, 29). So does James in his epistle (4:6) and Peter (I Pet. 4:8, 17, 18; II Pet. 2:22), and Luke (Luke 14:11). God has linked this plain, practical portion -- these "words of truth" (Prov. 22:21) -- inseparably with all the rest of His holy book.

7. Removes not the ancient landmark (Prov. 22:28).

"Remove not the ancient landmark . ." (Prov. 22:28): This is almost a repetition of what God spoke through Moses (Deut. 19:14). Each Israelite received his portion from the Lord; clearly indicated landmarks marked out its bounds. All were commanded to respect the landmark. He who removed the landmark, usually a mound of stones as our guide pointed out to us near Hebron, was defying God. Our heavenly portion today has some doctrinal landmarks. To remove the landmarks of doctrine in God's Word is to incur the anger of God (Heb. 1:1-3; Gal. 1:6-9; I Pet. 1:18-25; Mark 1G:15; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3-11; I Cor. 11:23ff; Acts 20:7).

QUESTIONS

1. What is a good definition of a "Name"?
2. In ancient times, how many names did a person have? Illustrate.
3. What made is necessary to have a given name and a surname?
4. What did Shakespeare think of a "good name"?
5. Is the adjective "good" in the original text of Proverbs 22:6?
6. In what sense is "a name" used, and is it valuable (Prov. 22:6)?
7. Does God put emphasis on "a good name" (Gen. 11:4; Deut. 26:19; II Sam. 7:9; 21; 8:13)?
8. What enabled Abishai and Benaiah to win immortal names (II Sam. 23:18, 22)?
9. What mistaken conception of winning a name do we have, and how does Mary's quiet act of love prove it (Mark 14:3-9)?
10. What is the real value in a name, as seen in Luke 24:47; Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38; Acts 15:26; Phil. 2:9-11; Matt. 10:32, 33; Acts 4:12; Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Pet. 4:16?
11. What is essential if children are to choose "a good name" (Prov. 22:6; I Tim. 1:5; Eph. 6:1-4)?
12. Is it wise to use the rod in the discipline of a child (Prov. 22:15; 10:13; 13:24; 19:18; 23:13; 26:3; 29:15,17).
13. What did God think of Eli's not "restraining" his vile sons (I Sam. 3:13), and that Abraham would "command his children" (Gen. 18:19)?
14. What characterizes a "prudent man" (Prov. 22:3; Isa. 32:2; Psa. 32:7; I Tim. 1:12; Heb. 3:13-19)?
15. Is it wrong for a Christian to go in debt (Prov. 22:7; Rom. 13:8; II Kings 4:1)?
16. Does the law of the harvest apply to good as well as to bad seed (Prov. 22:8-10)?
17. To what is the mouth of an immoral woman likened, and who is certain to fall therein (Prov. 22:14)?
18. What three-fold command is given in Proverbs 22:17 and how has God cause "the words of the wise... the words of truth" (Prov. 22:17, 21) to be emphasized in the New Testament (for example, Heb. 12:5,6; Rom. 12:19,20; James 4:6; I Pet. 4:8, 17,18; II Pet. 2:22; Luke 14:11)?
19. Is respect for the property and rights of others commanded in Proverbs 22:28 (see also Deut. 19:24)? Is it important that we respect the doctrinal landmarks of God's word?
20. Do your words, your example and your influence INCREASE THE GOOD NAME OF YOUR FAMILY (or are you a disgrace to the good name of your parents and this church? Be honest in your answer. Why not start today and choose "A GOOD NAME" above all other considerations?

YEAR 3 - LESSON 12 - PAGE 1
WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year III

First Quarter

Lesson 12
Proverbs 23

Page 1
Memory Verse: Proverbs 23:31,32

Memory Verse:

"Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it proveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder"
(Proverbs 23:31, 32).

THE DRUNKARD AND THE IMPURE

Like begets like.

A mother went to the back door and called to her children, "I want you children to stop that quarreling and scrapping."

"We're not quarreling," one replied, "we're playing mom and pop."

Parents who drink intoxicating beverages and lead immoral lives before their children are surely teaching their children to become drunkards and prostitutes. Adult delinquency paves the way for juvenile delinquency. Children will "play mom and pop" for GOOD OR EVIL, in the future.

Terms Defined

A drunkard is "A toper; sot; intoxicated with or as with strong drink." Impure: "Not pure; unchaste; lewd; obscene."

Drunkenness has always been associated with the shameless uncovering of a person's body (Gen. 9:21-23). "Wine, women, and song" -- the unholy trio. They are devastating to morals, and death to the body and soul (Rom. 6:23; Gal. 6:7, 8).

Anything that concerns His creatures is big enough for God to take note of. See that ...

I. Right Thinking Produces Right Action (Proverbs 23:1-18)

1. Right behavior when dining with a ruler (Prov. 23:1-3).

"When thou sittest to eat with a ruler . . ." (Prov. 23:1): Self-restraint at the table of one in power who has invited one to a feast is here advised. A blase manner soon excites disgust; such action would draw down indignation and ill-will of the one higher than himself.

"Put a knife to thy throat . . ." (Prov. 23:2): This is an Eastern figure for putting definite restraint on the appetite. Avoid the dangers of gluttony. Daniel and the Hebrew children show a right spirit regarding dainties of the ruler (Dan. 1:5-20).

2. Labor not to be rich (Prov. 23:4-5).

"Labor not to be rich . . ." (Prov. 23:4): The Scriptures warn often against making money the god of one's life. Men strain every nerve and exhaust every means to get money they will never enjoy. The covetous spirit is like a spreading cancer to the soul (I Tim. 6: 6-10, 17, 18; Luke 12:13-15). "Miser" and "misery" are from the same root word. Jay Gould, the American millionaire, had plenty of money.

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When dying, he said: "I suppose I am the most miserable man on earth." The advice of Jesus is still good (Matt. 6:19-21). Riches have wings, like eagles, and they fly away, leaving him whose mind was set upon them, disappointed and heart-sick (verse 5).

3. Insincere hospitality to be refused (Prov. 23:6-8).

"Eat thou not the bread of him . . . evil eye" (Prov. 23:6): Deceitful men who feast you for an evil purpose are to be rejected. To accept such hospitality will ensnare you. "Evil eye": is evil purpose.

"For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7): A famous and oft-quoted text. The insincere host thinks evil in his heart. He tries to cover up his insincerity by putting on a feast for you. Do not be deceived. Because the host thinks evil, he is evil --in spite of "his dainty meats" (verse 6b). He would put those who accept his pretended kindness under obligation to him. Covetousness and self-seeking are there; his ways are shaped accordingly. See the old prophet of Bethel (I Kings 13:1ff, 11-32).

4. Advantage not to be taken of the fatherless (Prov. 23:10-11).

"Remove not . . . enter not" (Prov. 23:10): God is the Avenger of the poor, the oppressed widow and orphan. See Prov. 22:22, 23. To befriend such is a mark of genuine religion (James 1:27). To take advantage of the helpless invites the wrath of God (verse 11).

5. Children are to be corrected (Prov. 23:12-18).

"Apply thine heart in instruction . . ." (Prov. 23:12): A series of precepts to remind the young to right hearing and right action. Careless learning by rote will never profit one. Occupy the whole being with truth and wisdom will dwell in your heart. An aged Christian "meditated the Bible through three times" a vastly different thing from merely reading words (See Jer. 15:16; II Tim. 2:15).

"Withhold not correction from the child . ." (Prov. 23:13): Discipline is to be administered wisely, it is for the profit of the child (Eph. 6:1-4; Heb. 12:5-13; Prov. 23:14).

"There is an end . . ." (Prov. 23:18): The righteous may suffer now, but as Newberry suggests "Verily there is a hereafter." Right shall triumph (Matt. 5:10-12), for there is "an afterwards"; "there is a future!"

II. Refuse Drunkenness, Gluttony, and Immorality (Proverbs 23:19-35)

1. Wisdom will guide us aright (Prov. 23:19-25).

"Hear thou, my son, be wise" (Prov. 23:19): We may hear in the words of a father addressed to his son, the desire of our Father, God, that we His children walk wisely "in the way."

"Be not among the winebibbers . . ." (Prov. 23:20): Intemperance in eating and drinking is a heart not controlled by wisdom. The Christian is to be temperate in all good things. The Christian will abstain from evil things. The body is to be kept in subjection (I Cor. 9:27).

"Drunkard . . . glutton . . . come to poverty" (Prov. 23:21): Do you recall an illustration of this truth? A wealthy dentist in Kentucky came to poverty through drink and gluttony. Drowsiness comes from eating and over-drinking (verse 21b).

"Hearken unto thy father . . ." (Prov. 23:22, 24, 25): Esther's obedience to her foster father Mordecai is a lovely sample of what is here inculcated (Esther 2:20). One who would not wisely rule his appetites was the sin of the stubborn and rebellious son of Deut. 21:20.

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"Buy the truth . . ." (Prov. 23:23): Get the truth --that which is opposed to errors of all kinds. See I Thess. 5:21.

2. Solemn warning against impurity (Prov. 23:26-28).

"My Son, let thine eyes observe my ways" (Prov. 23:26): "Give me thy heart, says the Master above." A greater than Solomon is here speaking. Be occupied with Him, as Mary was who sat at His feet to "hear his word" (Luke 10:39, 42). One who is occupied with Christ will never fall into mental or physical impurity (Rom. 12:1, 2; I Cor. 13:5).

"Take my poor heart, and let it be
Forever CLOSED TO ALL BUT THEE.
Take my love, my Lord; I pour
At Thy feet its treasure-store."

"A strange woman . . ." (Prov. 23:27): An immoral, impure woman. Give God your heart in complete surrender. Fix your affections and mind on Christ to escape her. "Flee fornication" (I Cor. 6:18). We still need to warn the innocent of the unholy woman who like a deep ditch, hidden until one has stumbled into it, "lieth in wait" to destroy the pure. Check the following passages about her (Prov. 2:16-19; 6:23-35; 7:4-27; 22:14).

The United States Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say on their web site: "Each year, approximately three million cases of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) occur among teenagers and approximately one million teenagers become pregnant. In 1997, 48% of high school students had ever had sexual intercourse. Also, 16% of high school students had had four or more sex partners during their lifetime." (<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/sexualbehaviors.htm> – July 2002) Pregnancies out of wedlock abound. It is documented that there are between 1.3 and 1.5 million abortions (BABIES KILLED BEFORE BIRTH) in this country each year!

Many are falling into the "deep ditch" of impurity. Only through Christ can you remain pure (Matt. 5:8; Titus 1:15; Phil. 4:13). How terribly Samson suffered because of an evil woman (Judges 16:1-31).

3. The woes of drunkenness (Prov. 23:29-35).

"Who hath woe?" (Prov. 23:29): Drunkenness is condemned. The wise men of Israel, and in our day, were keenly aware of the dangers that lurk in strong drink. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Prov. 20:1). If wine has a medicinal purpose, be sure a Paul and a competent medic prescribes its use (I Tim. 5:23)! SIX QUESTIONS are now answered in the following verses.

WHAT are the characteristics of those who "tarry long at the wine" (verse 30)? Woe, sorrow, contentions, anxiety (or perhaps, mutterings), needless wounds, and inflamed eyes! Focus the mind upon the terrible description of the drunkard.

"Look not thou upon the wine when it is red ..." (Prov.23:31): "When it gives its life in the cup." The color denotes greater strength (Gen. 49:11; Deut 32:14). "Red" or "white" wine or any alcoholic drink that "giveth his color in the cup," sparkles, is condemned. Alcoholic beverage may "go down smoothly" but it certainly will "rough things up" and quickly, too! Winston Churchill says he once said to Bernard Shaw, "Do you really never drink wine at all?" Shaw replied: "I am hard enough to keep in order as it is."

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"At the last it biteth like a serpent ..." (Prov.23:32): What seems so delightful and innocent became in the end (at the last) like a poisonous serpent in the bosom. Drunkenness and immorality are linked, as cause and effect. The Cincinnati Times-Star for March 16, page 1, tells the story of a young woman, 22, who was bruised, burned and slashed by a man, 32. She shared a room with him for two weeks. He was "just pranking around" when he scratched his and her initials on her upper left arm with a penknife. He "didn't remember" burning the young woman's feet and other parts of her body with lighted cigarettes! He added: "We were pretty drunk all the time." Patrolmen found the young woman "virtually nude." Her sister said: "Barbara's big trouble is too much drinking."

All self-respect goes when the deadly poison controls the brain. Lust and license possess the being (verse 33). The drunken man is like one who tries to sleep upon the top of the mast of a ship (verse 34).

"I will seek it yet again..." (Prov. 23:35): Alcohol is a habit-forming, narcotic poison. It leads to destruction (I Sam. 25:36-38). Drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God (I Cor. 6:10). By sobriety set an example to others (Rom. 14:21,22; 15:1). Dare to be a Daniel! Do not defile your body with evil drink or forbidden diet!

QUESTIONS

1. Can you define a drunkard?
2. Who is an impure person?
3. With what has drunkenness always been associated (Gen. 9:21-23; Rom. 6:23; Gal. 6:7, 8), and what is the end thereof?
4. What is the meaning of "Put a knife to thy throat" (Prov. 23:2)? Does this verse advise suicide?
5. Who showed the right attitude toward the food and drink of a ruler (Dan. 1:5-20)?
6. Can you understand that "miser" and "misery" result when Prov. 23:4 is not obeyed (I Tim. 6:6-10, 17, 18; Luke 12:13-15; Prov. 23:5; Matt. 6:19-21)?
7. What is the meaning of "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7)?
8. Is the old prophet of Bethel an example of insincere hospitality which should have been refused (Prov. 23:6, 8; I Kings 13:1ff, 11-32)?
9. Will a right thinking person take advantage of the fatherless, or disrespect the property rights of others (Prov. 23:10, 11)? Why (James 1:27)?
10. What should not be withheld from the child (Prov. 23:13, 14; Eph. 6:1-4; Heb. 12:5-13)?
11. Who and what alone can keep the young from gluttony, drunkenness and immorality (Prov. 23:12, 15-17, 19, 22-26)?
12. Against what is youth cautioned in Proverbs 23:20?
13. What is the inevitable end of gluttony and drink (Prov. 23:21)? Can you give an example of this?
14. To what is the immoral woman likened (Prov. 23:27)?
15. Are many people falling into the "ditch" of STDs, abortion, and illicit sexual sins in America? In your community?
16. What are the six "woes" or results of strong drink (Prov. 23:29, 30)?
17. Against what is youth warned in Prov. 23:31?
18. When does strong drink deal out its cruel wages (Prov. 23:31, 32)?
19. After the drunkard's immoral indulgence, what is the decision of the impaired will (Prov. 23:33-35)?
20. To what did alcohol bring Nabal, and can drunkards inherit the kingdom of God (I Sam. 25:36-38; I Cor. 6:10; Rom. 14:21, 22; 15:1)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year III

First Quarter

Lesson 13
Proverbs 24

Page 1
Memory Verse: Proverbs 24:11, 12

Memory Verse:

"If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? And shall not he render to every man according to his works?" (Proverbs 24:11, 12).

Public Reading: Proverbs 24

THE END OF EVIL MEN

To envy those who seem to prosper in wickedness is not wise, for their day of retribution is coming -surely. However, the righteous may suffer in the present age, it will be proven at last that they had the better part who daily lived in the fear of the Lord (Prov. 23:17, 18).

The doctrine of future retribution is more than hinted at. Newberry suggests, "Verily there is a hereafter" as an adequate rendering of Prov. 23:18. There is a time coming when present conditions shall be reversed, and righteousness shall triumph. See Matthew 5:10-12.

The wise son who has wisdom to "guide his heart in the way" (Prov. 23:19) is given the following instructions.

I. Envy Not Evil Men (Proverbs 24:1, 2)

"Be not thou envious . . ." (Prov. 24:1): When Asaph saw the end of wicked men, "How are they brought into desolation . . . they are utterly consumed with terrors" (Psalm 73:17-19 21), he felt every envious yearning vanish from his bosom. "Verily there is a hereafter (Prov. 23:18, Newberry). The wicked who seem to prosper in everything shall "soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb" (Psa. 37:2). "Envyings" (Gal. 5:21; Jas. 4:5, 6) **MUST NOT MARK THE BELIEVER IN GOD**, whether it be toward the prosperous wicked or the **SUPERIOR TALENTS** of another saint of God (Rom. 12:10b).

1. Desire not the company of evil men (Prov. 24:1b).

"Neither desire to be with them" (Prov. 24:1b): "The companion of fools shall be destroyed" (Prov. 13:20). Lot got in bad when he chose evil company (Gen. 13:10-13). "Be not deceived: evil companions corrupt good manners" (I Cor. 15:33). A rotten apple will spoil the whole barrel!

2. The evil occupation of such men (Prov. 24:2).

"Their heart studieth destruction . . ." (Prov. 24:2): The hearts of wicked men devote their lips and hearts alike to destruction and mischief. See Psa. 140:1, 2). "David knew that Saul secretly practiced mischief against him . . ." (I Sam. 23:9). Such are "inventors of evil things" (Rom. 1:30). He is a "mischievous person" (Prov. 24:8) whom the Lord abominates (Prov. 6:16-19), and whom all decent, Godly people shun (Rom.

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2:18). Disappointment and grief will be the portion of those who hope through iniquity to find happiness. See II Chron. 21 and the wretched life of Jehoram, king of Judah.

"Lips talk of mischief" (Prov. 24:2b): Evil thoughts come from the heart and show a polluted being (Matt. 15:18-20). Christ shall judge thoughts as well as deeds (Matt. 12:36; II Cor. 5:10). The saint has plenty of good things to think and talk about (Phil. 4:8,9).

3. The plots of evil men shall fail (Prov. 24:15, 16).

"Righteous man falleth . . . riseth" (Prov. 24:16): The wicked rejoice in evil and are glad at the calamities of the righteous. Though the just man stumble, he shall be LIFTED UP AGAIN even "SEVEN TIMES," for we "are more than conquerors through him that loveth us" (Rom. 8:27). "God is able to make us stand." The sevenfold fall may refer to what are commonly called misfortunes or to moral lapses brought on by lack of vigilance. WATCH and DO NOT BECOME CARELESS (Matt. 26:40,41) as did the disciples when Christ needed them most (Matt. 26:33-35).

"Wicked shall fall into mischief" (Prov. 24:16b): God is still able and does "turn the counsel" of evil men "INTO FOOLISHNESS" (II Sam. 15:31). Contrast Peter with Judas (Matt. 26:75; 27:3-5). Compare Psalm 34:18-22.

II. Emulate the Way of the Wise Man (Proverbs 24:3-6,7,10,17,18,23)

1. He builds wisely (Prov. 24:3,4).

"Through wisdom is a house builded ... " (Prov. 24:3): Storing the mind with wisdom, knowledge and understanding is like building a mansion on a ROCK FOUNDATION and beautifying it with every costly treasure (Matt. 7:24-27). He can never be poor who has the wisdom that cometh down from above (James 3:17, 18).

2. He is strong (Prov. 24:5,6,10).

"A wise man is strong . . . " (Prov. 24:5): Wisdom makes one strong, regardless of how inferior he may be in other respects to his adversaries.

"Make thy war... " (Prov. 24:6): "Make successful warfare" or war to thine advantage." Read I Tim. 6:11,12; II Tim. 4:7.

"If thou faint..." (Prov. 24:10): The hour of trial shows one's strength, or weakness. The time of opposition will find the saint of God "encouraging himself in the Lord." Contrast Elijah when threatened by Jezebel, with David when the people spoke of stoning him in a time of adversity (I Kings 19:2-4; I Sam. 30:6). Read also I Pet. 4:12-16; Luke 18:1; Heb. 2:10). The hour of trial finds the trusting soul more confident still he KNOWS WHERE THE SOURCE OF ALL POWER IS TO BE FOUND.

3. He is not rash (Prov. 24:7):

"Wisdom is too high for a fool . . . " (Prov. 24:7): The wise man is not rash. As he goes out to meet the enemy, he avails himself of the counsel and wisdom of others. He counts the cost (Luke 14:28-32). See the poor wise man of Eccl. 9:14-16. The fool will be speechless "in the gate," the hour of judgment (Matt. 22:11-13).

4. He rejoices not when an enemy fails (Prov. 24:17, 18).

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"Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth . . ." (Prov. 24:17): Love does not gloat over the sorrows of others, even though that sorrow be richly deserved, and although the one who is suffering has been a bitter foe. The wise soul has tears, not sneers, for the afflictions of his enemies. "He that is glad at calamities shall not be held innocent" (Prov. 17:5b). See Obadiah 12-16. Marvel at the restraint of the New Testament writers when referring to Judas (Matt. 26:25; 27:3; John 18:2, 5; Acts 1:25). Love "rejoiceth not in iniquity" (I Cor. 13:6; Rom. 12:15) or in the fall of one paying the price of his evil!

"But for the grace of God, there go I," said a preacher as a drunk staggered by. Our Lord wept over the city which rejected him, knowing the bitter end of that rejection (Matt. 23:37, 38; Prov. 24:18).

5. He is no respecter of persons (Prov. 24:23-26, 28, 29).

"Not good to have respect of persons . . ." (Prov. 24:23): The wise man will have no partiality to rich or poor in judgment. The merits of the case will decide the verdict (Prov. 18:5; 28:21; Lev. 19:15; Deut. 1:17; 16:19). He who condemns the guilty will earn the esteem of the people. All will "kiss his lips" (verse 26) who gives a right sentence. The kiss, among eastern nations, was a symbolical act that denotes affection and esteem.

"Deceive not with thy lips" (Prov. 24:28b): To appear as a witness against one's neighbor with the deceitful purpose of bringing about his ruin (to get revenge) is opposed to the holiness that becomes the saint of God (Eph. 4:25, 30-32; Rev. 22:15). Leave the revenge to God (Prov. 24:29; Rom. 12:19; Col. 3:25 II Sam. 16:5-12; 19:16-23).

6. He is not slothful (Prov. 24:30-34).

"I went by the field of the slothful . . ." (Prov. 24:30): Poverty and sloth go together. Read Prov. 6:9-11; 20:4. Thorns and thistles flourish in his vineyard (Prov. 24:31), but NOT FRUIT. The wall is broken down. Everything speaks of lack of care. Young people, WASTE YOUR OPPORTUNITIES OF EDUCATION AND YOU'LL FIND MIDDLE AGE UPON YOU WITHOUT OPPORTUNITY TO SECURE COLLEGE TRAINING!

A tenderhearted woman set a well-filled plate before a man, saying: "There now! I should think a great, big, strong fellow like you would be ashamed to beg."

"I am so ashamed," admitted the over-grown sloth, "but what am I to do. I MUST BEG OR WORK." Pray and ponder over John 4:34; 5:17; 17:4; Eph. 2:20; II Thess. 3:10. Do you know of one lazy man God ever used or honored? God wants men like Henry Martyn who say: "Let ME BURN OUT FOR GOD." He did at thirty-one!

"Yet a little sleep . . . poverty come" (Prov. 24:33, 34): The musings of the heart of the sluggard meditate upon the unhappy scene. He was sleeping when he should have been laboring. The sluggard will awake too late to realize that his wasted opportunities have gone beyond recall!

III. The Wise Won is called to Higher Priorities.

1. Deliver the innocent drawn to death (Prov. 24:11, 12).

"If thou forbear to deliver ... " (Prov. 24:11). Muenscher says, "In ancient times, when a criminal was led to execution (in Syria and Palestine), a crier went before who proclaimed the crime of which the prisoner had been convicted, and called upon ANY WHO COULD SAY ANYTHING IN BEHALF OF THE

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CONDEMNED CULPRIT TO COME FORWARD; in which case, he WAS LED BACK TO THE TRIBUNAL AND THE CAUSE WAS REHEARD." To have the information which IF GIVEN WOULD HAVE SAVED THE CONDEMNED, but to selfishly withhold it and allow him to be slain, would be to take the mean ground on which Cain walked, and ask: "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen. 4:9).

To have the gospel and give it to others that they may believe and obey it and be saved (Acts 16:31-34; 2:36-41; 22:16; John 6:37b) and NOT DELIVER IT is to bring blood of the lost upon our head (Ezek. 33:1-12). To neglect our duty is to sin (James 4:17). What will you or I say to God for failing to "GO YE ... preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15,16)? Neglect will doom us (Heb.2:3; Prov. 24:12).

2. Delight is wisdom (Prov. 24:13,14).

"My son, eat thou honey... So shall knowledge be" (Prov. 24:13, 14): As honey is delightful to the taste, so shall wisdom be to the soul of her devotee. The earnest seeker after godly understanding; shall never be put to shame. See Cornelius (Acts 10:1ff).

IV. End of Evil Men (Proverbs 24:19,20)

"Fret not thyself because of evil men ..." (Prov. 24:19): God's hard-pressed saints are not to envy the wicked rich man (Psa.37:1 38; 18:28; Prov.29:1). NO REWARD AWAITS them for all their toil on earth when they stand before God in eternity (verse 20). God whose judgment they have despised and whose grace they have refused will judge them (Acts 12:20-23; 17:30,31).

"Until this moment I thought there was neither a God nor a hell. Now I KNOW and FEEL that there are both and I AM DOOMED TO PERDITION by the JUST JUDGMENT OF THE ALMIGHTY:" Sir Thomas Scott. If you refuse Jesus Christ as Saviour now you shall face Him as Judge who can then give you only justice -- HELL. (John 3:16-21; Matt. 25:40,41,45,46).

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QUESTIONS

1. Is it wise to envy the wicked who seem to prosper (Prov. 24:1; 23:17, 18)?
2. Does a Christian allow a spirit of envy to possess him toward either the prosperous wicked or the saint who has superior talents or blessings (Gal. 5:21; Psa. 73:17-19, 21; Rom. 12:10b)? Christian, did you make some catty remark when one sang more beautifully than you sing, or a disparaging remark when some Christian brother or sister by virtue of hard work, or good fortune, was rewarded with a higher position or some honor? What is the Christian attitude in such a situation?
3. Should a Christian desire to be in the company with evil men (Prov. 24:1b; 13:20; Gen. 13:10-13; I Cor. 15:33)?
4. To what do evil men devote their heart and lips (Prov. 24:2; Psa. 140:1, 2; I Sam. 23:9; Rom. 1:30; II Chron. 21)? What is the source of such thoughts (Matt. 15:18-20), and who will judge them (Matt. 12:36; II Cor. 5:10)? About what should the Christian think (Phil. 4:8, 9)?
5. What should be the attitude of the Christian toward such men (Rom. 12:18), and what does God think of such a one (Prov. 6:16-19)?
6. What great promise is made to the wise believer in Prov. 24:16 (Rom 8:27), and should we watch and pray "without ceasing" (Matt. 26:40, 41, 33-35)?
7. What is the inevitable end for the willfully wicked man or woman (Prov. 24:16b; II Sam. 15:31; Matt. 26:75; 27:3-5)?
8. Through what is a "house builded . . . established" (Prov. 24:3 4), and with what is it being continually adorned (Matt. 7:24-27; James 3:17, 18)?
9. What marks a wise man, and is he able to "make successful warfare" (Prov. 24:6), and why (I Tim. 6:11, 12; II Tim. 4:7; Phil. 4:11, 13, 19)?
10. Is the wise man promised that he shall not have adversity (Prov. 24:10), and what is his source of power (I Kings 19:2-4; I Sam. 30; 6; I Pet. 4:12-16; Luke 18:1ff; Heb. 2:10)?
11. What is too high for the fool (Prov. 24:7) and what marks the wise man (Luke 14:28-32; Eccl. 9:14-16; Matt. 22:11-13)?
12. Does the Christian rejoice "when thine enemy falleth" (Prov. 24:17)? Why not (Prov. 17:5b; Obadiah 12-16)? What restraint characterized the apostles who wrote of Judas (Matt. 26:25; 27:3; John 18:2, 4; Acts 1:25; I Cor. 13:6; Rom. 12:15)?
13. Does God approve of "respect of persons" (Prov. 24:24; 18:5; 28:21; Lev. 19:15; Deut. 1:17; 16:19)?
14. Is it right to deceive with one's tongue to get revenge, or, for the purpose of hurting someone, just because you are in a position to do so (Prov. 24:28b; Eph. 4:25, 30-32; Rev. 15)?
15. What two things usually go together (Prov. 24:30-34; 6:9-11; 20:4)?
16. Do we have a record of God ever using a lazy, slothful man (John 4:34; 5:17; 17:4; Eph. 2:20)?
17. What did the inspired Apostle Paul say concerning the man who would not (but could) work (II Thess. 3:10)?
18. If we forbear to deliver the Gospel to all whom we can reach, will God hold us responsible for our omission (Prov. 24:11; Ezek. 3 3:1-12; James 4:17; Mark 16:15, 16; Prov. 24:12)? If we are not interested in the other fellow, whose mark does it place on us (Gen. 4:9)?
19. What is the end of evil men (Prov. 24:19, 20; Psa. 37:1, 38; 18:28; Prov. 29:1; Acts 20:20-23; 17:31- 32)?
20. Do you believe there is a literal hell into which the wicked are finally cast forever (John 3:16-21; Matt. 25:40, 41, 45, 46; Rev. 20:10-15)?

I DO BELIEVE THE BIBLE

I do believe the Bible; the blessed Word of God,
And close unto its promises I cleave;
It points me to the pathway the saints and martyrs trod,
My Father is its author; And I believe.

It was my parents' counsel; to them its truths were grand,
And memory oft a picture sweet doth weave
Of that "old-fashioned Bible that lay upon the stand,"
In life, in death, it cheered them --And I believe.

I once was lost, and dying in darkness and despair,
And o'er my lost condition long I grieved,
Until I searched the Bible and learned of Jesus there,
Who sweetly blest and saved me; When I believed and obeyed!

Bold infidels may cavil, and scorn the blessed Book,
And with their groundless doctrines may deceive;
Still all the while the Bible brings peace to those who look
With faith upon its pages --And I believe!

CHORUS:

Yes, I believe the blessed Word of God,
It marks the path His people all have trod;
The story, from creation, all through to "Revelation,"
Bears proof of INSPIRATION ---AND I BELIEVE.

F. A. Blackmer