



**Thesis:** God cares deeply about us living a wise life.

**Objective:** To encourage students to pursue godly wisdom.

**Scripture:** Proverbs 4:5-7 (*Supplemental Texts: Proverbs 3:5-6, Psalm 19:7-8, James 1:5, Proverbs 12:15, Proverbs 13:10*)

### **Series Introduction:**

Today we are kicking off a new series called *Wisdom: A Study in Proverbs*. The book of Proverbs is all about wisdom! It was written mostly by King Solomon, who is generally considered the wisest man to ever have lived. Solomon was King David's son, and in 1 Kings 3, we find that God gave Solomon the chance to ask for anything he wanted. Rather than asking for power or wealth or fame, Solomon asked God for wisdom—which greatly pleased God. **[Teacher's Note: You could read the story in 1 Kings 3 if you want to give some context to this introduction].**

While Solomon was not perfect (he didn't even always take his own advice!) he did record an incredible collection of wisdom in the book of Proverbs. This wisdom is timeless; it was relevant thousands of years ago and it is relevant today. The specifics may have changed, but the principles in Proverbs are still solid and sound advice for you and me! As we study Proverbs together, we are going to be challenged with timeless truths about pretty much aspect of life: friendship, money, work, sex, families, authority, speech, and temptation. It is all there!

Now, there are a few things we need to know about Proverbs that make it a little bit different than other books of the Bible that we often study.

- 1) **Proverbs contains general principles about how life should work.** The statements in Proverbs are not necessarily facts about what will happen in every situation. Instead, they contain general wisdom about how things work most of the time, or at least how things *should* work most of the time. Take Proverbs 22:6 for example:

***Proverbs 22:6 (NIV): Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.***

Proverbs tells parents that they should teach their kids how to act and they should teach their children the ways of God. If parents do this, when their kids are older, they will still make good decisions and follow God. This is great advice and is how the world *should* work. And, in a lot of cases, this is exactly how things play out. But you guys know this as students. Do you *always* do what your parents tell you to do? I mean a lot of times you probably do because you are great kids, right? But there are times when you don't follow the instructions of your parents. There are also times that, despite having great, godly parents, kids grow up and reject the things that their parents taught them.

Or let's take another example: **Proverbs 10:4 (NIV): *Lazy hands make for poverty, but diligent hands bring wealth.***

Is this generally true? Yes! Lazy people do not accumulate great wealth and people that work hard have a better chance of being wealthy. But I know people who, despite not having a great work ethic, stumble into great wealth and I also know incredibly hard-working people that are not necessarily wealthy. As a general principle, this proverb is spot on. But in both examples we've just looked at, there are always going to be exceptions.

This is important to understand when you read Proverbs. You are reading general descriptions of how life *should* work, *most of the time*. These are not guarantees by any stretch. These are not formulas that automatically ensure a certain result. **They are guiding principles that help give you the greatest chance for a healthy result.**

- 2) Another unique feature of Proverbs is that this book, while it does contain moral instructions (right vs. wrong), **Proverbs contains examples of foolish vs. wise behavior.** Unwise behaviors are not all necessarily sinful, but they often do not lead to living the life God designed. Often, even if our foolish behavior isn't a "sin," it can put us in greater *danger* to make sinful choices.

And I think this is cool because it shows that God cares about *every aspect of our lives*. After all, God created life, and He created it with a certain order and a certain desire. It makes sense that God wants His creation to get the most out of life! God cares how we use our time, how we talk to each other, how we harvest our crops, how we interact with our families, and so on. As

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