

Study Guide

Job • Proverbs • Ecclesiastes • Song of Solomon



The Ruins of the Library of Celsus in Ancient Ephesus

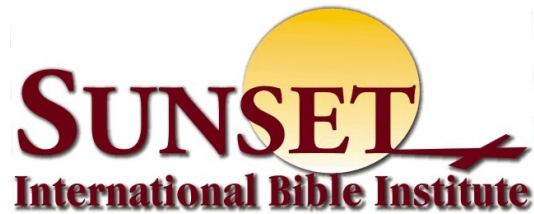
Wisdom Literature

by Charles Speer

SUNSET
International Bible Institute



A STUDY OF WISDOM LITERATURE



INTRODUCTORY
OLD TESTAMENT
STUDIES

Arranged for study by
Charles Speer
&
Virgil Yocham

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3710 34th Street
Lubbock, Texas 79410
(806) 788-3280/1 or (800) 687-2121

Wisdom Literature

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quotations within critical articles and reviews, including translation.

DISCLAIMER

The textbook used in this course was selected because we consider it to be the best commentary on the book available written by a conservative author. *The Wisdom Literature & Psalms*, written by James E Smith (The College Press NIV Commentary series), we believe, is an excellent commentary. This book will re-enforce the teaching you will receive from viewing the video/audio lessons by Charles Speer. As with all books written by men, there may be some things with which you and I would not agree. The principle, “use what is good and discard what is not good” applies to all textbooks used with our courses. Please be wise enough to discard any and all teaching that is not biblical.

Instructions and Requirements for Level II Students (Certificate of Basic Biblical Study)

Each lesson is built around the instruction on either the DVDs or the CDs. Listen to or view the lecture as you follow along in the course Study Guide.

Reading: It is recommended that you read a good commentary on these four books.

Tests: There is a **Self Exam** at the end of each lesson. Preview each lesson by reading these questions first. There will be only two tests to complete this course. The mid-term test will cover the first seven (7) lessons on **Job**, a final test will be given covering the books of **Ecclesiastes** and **Proverbs**. There will not be a test on the book, "**Song of Solomon**." **You must receive a grade of 70% or above to successfully pass this course. (The two major tests will be worth 80% of your final grade)**

Memory Work: Memory verses are to be done as you go through the study. You are asked to either write your verses in the presence of the administrator, correct them with a different colored pen and turn them in with the mid-term or final test or quote them to the administrator during the course of study. He will keep track of the verses completed and report them to us. Please be diligent in doing your memory work. All memory work must be completed to pass this course. There are 15 memory verses for this course. **(Memory verses will be 10% of your final grade)**

Due with mid-term test: (7 verses)

Job 1:21; 5:7; 7:6,17; 13:15; 14:1,14.

Due with final test: (8 verses)

Romans 15:4; Proverbs 3:5-6; Ecclesiastes 12:1, 7, 13-14.

- All the Self Exams in the Study Guide are to be completed and inspected by the Administrator. **(10% of your final grade)**
- All the memory verses assigned must be completed and either written or quoted before the mid-term, (lessons 1–7), and final test, (lessons 8–21), are taken.
- All assignments, must be completed to pass the course.

Grade: Your total grade average for the course must equal 70% or above..

Memory verses	10%
Self exams	10%
Mid-term and final exams	<u>80%</u>
	100%

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for any purpose.**

Instructions and Requirements for Level III Students

(Bachelor Degree and Certificate of Biblical Studies)

Each lesson is built around the instruction on either the DVDs or the CDs. Listen to or view the lecture as you follow along in the course Study Guide.

Reading: The sections on Job, Ecclesiastes, Proverbs and Song of Solomon in the book entitled, *The Wisdom Literature & Psalms* by James E. Smith must be read as you progress through the course. **A two page evaluation of the sections read must be written and sent in with your final test.** Discuss its value to you, its clarity of teaching and any teaching that was particularly meaningful to you. **(This reading and paper will be worth 15% of your grade).** See the Bibliography for other worthwhile reading material.

Memory Verses: You are required to memorize thirty-nine (39) verses. These are to be done as you go through the study and the appropriate passages done at the appropriate time. The first 14 verses must be completed by the end of the study on Job. The last 25 verses must be completed by the end of the study on Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. Either quote these to your Test Administrator or write them out and have someone correct them with a different colored ink. If you write them out turn them in with your exam papers. **(Worth 10% of your total grade)** Please indicate which Bible version you are using.

Due with the mid-term test: (14 verses)

Job 1:21; 5:7; 7:6,17; 13:15; 14:1,14; 19:25; 23:10,12; 26:7; 28:28; 42:5,6

Due with the final test: (25 verses)

Romans 15:4; Proverbs 3:5-6; 1:7, 10; 3:5-6, 9-10; 4:7, 13, 23; 9:17-18; 10:4; Ecclesiastes 5:1, 2, 15; 7:1, 20, 29; 12:1, 7, 13-14.

Notebook: You may want to begin and complete a notebook consisting of material gained in this study. This is not a requirement but will be profitable for your future study and teaching.

Exams: There will be only two tests to complete this course. The mid-term test will cover the first seven (7) lessons on **Job**, a final test will be given covering the books of **Ecclesiastes** and **Proverbs**. There will not be a test on the book, **“Song of Solomon.”** You must receive a grade of 70% or above to successfully pass this course. These two tests will be 75% of your total grade. Complete all “Self Exam” questions in your Course Guide and show them to your Administrator. **(5% of your grade).** A grade of at least 70% is required on the Mid-term and Final exams to pass this course.

Grade: Your total grade average for the course must equal 70% or above..

Readings and evaluation paper	15%
Memory verses	10%
Self exams	5%
Mid-term and final exams	<u>70%</u>
	100%

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LESSON ONE

INTRODUCTION TO OLD TESTAMENT WISDOM LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION:

This is a course in Wisdom Literature from the Old Testament. This is what I call the music and poetry appreciation course in the bible. I grew up in a family of scientists and logical thinkers. My dad was a bio-chemist. My mother's college major was biology. She and my dad would sit at the kitchen table during dinner and discuss my father's work in the scientific world. My brother's PhD is in Physics. He has worked in the electronics industry for many years. My university degree is in Electrical Engineering before I turned to preaching and teaching the Bible. We were and are a family of critical thinkers and problem-solvers.

My mother and father, especially my dad, loved classical music. Perhaps he knew that both sides of the brain needed to be engaged and stimulated. While he read scientific journals and plotted the next day's research on blood coagulation or platinum compounds of chemotherapy treatment of tumors, he listened to Bach, Chopin, Mozart, Strauss, Brahms, and of course Beethoven. It was an interesting combination, Amadeus and Science! I didn't know exactly how that worked. My dad was also incorporating in me the importance of the artistic side, not just the scientific and logical side.

God does the same thing in scripture. Some scripture is very logical and reasoning in its approach. Paul was a very logical thinker in his approach to writing. God does a very good job in presenting his message in a very logical and reasoning way. However God also does a very good job in mixing his messages of truth in different packages. The Lord did not package all truth in scripture in the same wrapping. God packages different kinds of truth in different packages. Some appeals more to the right brain and some to the left brain. This is what God has done with wisdom literature. God has presented wisdom literature in a different way that we need to gain an appreciation for. This portion has often been neglected, and we need to get back to this important part of scripture. There is plenty of logic and reason in scripture for the left-brain, but there is also a need and an appeal to the artsy side of the right-brain.

LESSON TEXT: Those listed in the Study Guide.

LESSON AIM: To introduce the student to the study of the wisdom literature books of the Bible

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Become acquainted with the books of the Old Testament identified as Wisdom Literature and where they fit in the Bible.
 2. Learn the scope, themes, and background of the books identified as Wisdom Literature in the Old Testament.
-

THE SCOPE OF THE COURSE

A. Purposes of the Course

1. To become acquainted with the books of wisdom literature – 243 chapters of Scripture that deserves our attention.
 - a. They are almost two and half times the size of Isaiah
 - b. They contain more Messianic references than almost every other part of the Old Testament. Psalms is the most quoted Old Testament book in the New Testament.
2. To obtain a more complete picture of God!
3. To come to appreciate another kind of literature. This goes back to what we said earlier about how God packages truth in different packages.
4. To wrestle with some of the major questions of life.
 - a. **Who is God and what is He like?**
 - 1) All scripture reveals something about God, so this is nothing unique here.
 - 2) Each kind of scripture might reveal something unique about God.
 - b. **What is true wisdom?** A lot of emphasis on wisdom in the Wisdom Literature, especially in Proverbs.
 - c. **What is an answer to suffering?** Job addresses this important question.
 - d. **What is my purpose and why?** These are introspective books. They make me look at myself, as to who I am and why I'm here and how I should proceed in life.
 - e. **How can I communicate with God?** How do I worship? This is Psalms. It calls for worship.
 - f. **Why serve God?** What is the bottom line as to why I serve God?
 - g. **What to teach our children?** Proverbs is a course in youth instruction.
5. To bolster our personal, devotional life and meditational activity. This is reflective material, for our inner man.

B. Why it is called “Wisdom Literature”

1. Because it contains so much depth of wisdom about life, death, the past, the present, self, relationship to God, and others.
2. It provides insight – the way to think.
3. It provides a pragmatic way to live or behave.
4. Other parts of the Old Testament and some extra-biblical literature are considered to be in this category.
 - a. Ecclesiasticus (180 B.C.)
 - b. Wisdom of Solomon (50 B.C.)
 - c. Poem of Baruch (100 B.C.)

C. The Wise People of the Ancient World. It would seem that kings especially were given to surrounding themselves with wise men and women.

1. Isaiah 29:14 – Wise men of Judah.
2. Proverbs 22:17; 24:24 – “These are the sayings of the wise.”
3. II Samuel 14:1-24 – Wise women of Tekoa (Edom)
4. Obadiah 8 – Wise men of Edom.
5. II Samuel 20:14-16 – The Wise Woman of Abel of Beth-maacah.

6. Judges 5:29 – Wise women who attended Jabin’s wife
7. Esther 1:13 – Wise men of Babylon
8. Daniel 1:2 – Wise men in Babylon

D. The World’s Wisdom Literature. Some of the world’s wisdom literature has been unearthed by the archeological spade.

1. Men grapple with the same problems or questions of life.
2. Old Testament writers sometimes corresponded to or with near Eastern literature. However, Old Testament writers did not borrow from them, they were inspired of God.
3. Israelite literature and wisdom is superior.

E. Proverbs 11:14; 15:2; 24:6 – Many advisors

1. In many advisors come wisdom.
2. There is wisdom in surrounding ourselves with, not only scripture, but also with wise people who have been trained and have gone to the depths of scripture.

WISDOM THEME

A. Wisdom Seemed to Be a Highly Favored and Sought after Virtue in Solomon’s Day

We need to explore some of the uses of the word wisdom in Old Testament literature as a general rule.

B. Dr. John Willis from ACU in his “Introduction to Wisdom Literature” notes different connotations and uses of the term wisdom in the Old Testament.

1. Used in the sense of being skilled in a particular art or craft.
2. Used in the sense of discretion or good judgment in running the affairs of state.
3. Used in the sense of being shrewd, crafty, or cunning.
4. Used in knowing how to behave and conduct oneself in certain situations.
5. Used in the sense of being sharp, smart, intelligent.
6. Used of magicians, sorcerers, and enchanters.
7. Used in the sense of understanding or discernment.

C. Closely Connected with Wisdom Is “the Fear of the Lord”

(Found connected in at least two books – Ecclesiastes and Proverbs)

1. Proverb 1:7; 9:10 – “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”
2. Psalm 111:10 – “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”
3. “**Beginning**” may mean the kernel, the core, the heart; as well as an initial step in the flight of stairs of wisdom.
4. Fear of God has the idea of:
 - a. Respect for God (Psalm 103:13).
 - b. Awe of God.
 - c. Reverence for God (Psalm 22:23).
 - d. Fear of God (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

D. The Wisdom Literature books:

1. **Job** – Fear of God’s awesome and powerful nature. The difference between humanity and deity.

2. **Psalms** – Reverence for the great One who is worthy of worship.
3. **Proverbs** – Respect for His grand wisdom about life.
4. **Ecclesiastes** – Fear of the God of judgment.
5. **Song of Songs** – Awe at the mysteries of our relationship with a mate and with God.

LITERARY BACKGROUND

A. Characteristics of Wisdom Literature

1. Mostly artistic and poetic.
2. Alliteration – The occurrence of two or more words having the same sound.
2. Acrostic – A poem or series of lines in which certain letters, usually the first in each line, form a name or message.
3. Word plays/puns – since written in Hebrew often missed in the English.
4. Parallelism – A certain literary technique.
5. Not rhyme or rhythm like we are used to.
6. Terse sayings – Sayings that get to the point.
7. Imagery, figurative and artistic language.

B. These Books Are Not History Books in Their Purpose

1. It's a little difficult to know the settings of these books, or even parts of them.
2. There is an occasional reference to history.
3. Some references in the Psalms speak of incidents in the life of David, particularly as he fled from Saul.
4. They do fit into the lives of the authors some place or other.
5. When Ecclesiastes would have taken place in the life of Solomon.
6. When Job lived, probably during the patriarchs.
7. Which part of Solomon's life Song of Songs is about.

C. These Books Deal with Major Philosophical Questions of Life and Godly Wisdom

1. As we apply them to the situations to our lives James Smith, in his introduction to Wisdom Literature, labels them this way.
 - a. There is philosophical wisdom – Job and Ecclesiastes.
 - b. There is practical wisdom – Proverbs.
 - c. There is praise wisdom – Psalms.
 - d. There is passion wisdom – Song of Songs.

D. Not a Lot of the Words of the Lord Heard Here

1. This is not a prophetic kind of literature.
2. It is philosophical, inspired talk from different people and writers.
3. We get to hear what they are saying to God.
4. It's inspired and it is in the cannon.
5. It gives us a wise approach to life from these inspired men.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON ONE:

1. What are the four purposes for studying Wisdom Literature?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

2. According to Dr. John Willis what are some of the different connotations and uses of the term wisdom in the Old Testament?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____
 - 7) _____

3. Explain briefly why fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom?

4. What five books from the Old Testament are considered Wisdom Literature?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____

5. What are some of the characteristics of Wisdom Literature you discovered from the lesson?

LESSON TWO

THE CHALLENGE OF JOB (1)

INTRODUCTION:

There was a man in the old times who was blessed with a fine family, healthy children, abundance of wealth, and possessions. He was also a deeply religious man, much more than most of his day. There was no flaw in this man. Even God said of him, “See there is no one like him!” God even liked to show him off before His angels and the Devil. He was proud of him.

That is not the end of this story. This is the story of Job, the man God used to show Satan the faithfulness of His servants. The boom is lowered on this “sheltered, pampered” man. He loses it all, every bit of it. He loses his health, wealth, posterity, possessions, reputation, and even the respect of his wife (Job 19:17).

Several questions arise in this book. “Why do the righteous suffer? Why is evil not punished in this life? What kind of God rules this world? (That’s the ultimate question). Because these are troubling questions to all people of every generation, the book of Job is relevant today. It is the best known of Bible books outside Christian circles. It is the story that is perhaps known around the world. Yet, it is not just a story. There are important themes for us to gather out of this great book relevant for us today.

There is quite a bit that can be read and said about the background of this book. For the purposes of our study we will be spending most of our time in the text itself, trying to understand what God is saying to us through this book. What is Job wrestling with? What are his friends saying? Those are the questions we want to talk about.

LESSON TEXT: Job 1:1-22

LESSON AIM: To introduce the student to the book of Job and begin looking at the start of the warfare we see in the first chapter between God, Satan and man.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Become acquainted with some background material about the book of Job.
 2. Learn the five great questions and five solutions to the problem of suffering.
 3. Look briefly at the layout and purpose of the book of Job.
 4. Begin the study of the warfare we find in Job chapter 1.
-

BACKGROUND OF THE BOOK OF JOB

A. Criticism – An Appraisal of the Book Itself

1. The Inspiration of Job – We accept it as such.
 - a. The book is quoted in the New Testament.
 - 1) In 1 Corinthians 3:19 Paul quotes from Job 5:13.
 - 2) In James 5:11 James speaks of the “Steadfastness” of Job.
 - b. Everything said in Job is not all true. Not everything Job or Job’s friends say is true. But God inspires the writing of what is said.
 - c. It is inspired and is accurately recorded and reported.
2. It is a story of integrity – a real story.
 - a. It is not a romantic legend.
3. It was written at an ancient date.
 - a. Probably written around the time of Abraham.
 - b. Perhaps written around 2000 B.C.
 - c. Some copies of the Hebrew Bible put it after Psalms or Proverbs, indicating a belief that maybe Solomon wrote it.

B. The Problems Discussed in the Book

1. The book of Job raises five great questions.
 - a. Is there any goodness done that is not rewarded?
 - b. Why do the righteous suffer and why does sin go unpunished?
 - c. Does God really care for and protect His people who fear Him?
 - d. Are adversity and affliction signs that the sufferer is wicked?
 - e. Is God a god of pity and mercy?
2. Job presents five possible solutions to the problem of suffering.
 - a. Suffering is a test of character that is rewarded in the end (chapters 1,2,38-42).
 - b. Suffering is always a punishment for sin (argued by all 3 friends).
 - c. Suffering is closely connected with sin, sent as a voice from God to call us back to Him (Elihu – Chapter 33). Might be referred to as “discipline.”
 - d. Job’s solution: Does not really know. An arbitrary allowance of God – Unjust.
 - e. God’s solution: There is a mystery in both good and evil, and man should submit because of faith in God to know what is best.

C. The Layout of the Book – the Outline

The argument proceeds as follows:

1. There is a conference (warfare) between God and Satan and the consequent afflictions of Job (Chs. 1-2).
2. The first cycle of discussions.
 - a. With Job’s three friends in which they charge Job with sin and he denies the charge.
3. The second cycle of discussions.
 - a. In this discussion Job’s friends argue that his claim of innocence is further evidence of his guilt and impending danger.
4. The third cycle of discussions.

- a. Here the friends argue that his afflictions are just the kind that would come to one who yielded to temptations such as those to which he is subject.
5. Elihu shows how Job accuses God wrongly while vindicating himself.
 - a. He asserts that suffering instructs us in righteousness and prevents us from sinning.
6. God intervenes and in two addresses instructs Job.
 - a. In the first address, Job is shown the creative power of the Almighty and his own folly in answering God whom animals by instinct fear.
 - b. In the second address, Job is shown that one should know how to rule the world and correct its evils before one complains or accuses God as to the way He rules it.
7. Job repents, prays and is restored.

(Outline from Richard Rogers, Furnace of Affliction)

D. The Purposes of the Book

1. Job was written to justify God in matters of Human suffering.
2. God can trust man to serve Him even when there is no hope of reward.
 - a. We have the hope of glory (1 Corinthians 15).
 - b. Those who have no hope of reward would be pitiable.
 - c. Job was pitiable, but he served God anyway.
3. Although we cannot understand God's dealing with human suffering, we can trust Him.
 - a. Many of us must understand something or we do not accept it as truth. That is foolish.
4. The value of honest doubt.
 - a. Don't discourage doubt; solve it.
 - b. Job doubted the integrity and righteousness of God.
 - c. Then he learned in his affliction that God is righteous and merciful.
5. The disciplinary value of suffering. (Consider James 1:3-4).
6. When man really sees God, he repents.
 - a. If we show men God, they will repent.
 - b. It is the nature of God that causes men to repent.
 - c. When Job saw that God is more powerful and more terrible than he imagined, he repented in sackcloth and ashes.
7. The restricted power of Satan.
 - a. He does not do anything that God does not commission him to do.
 - b. He has never done anything against what God willed or permitted.
 - c. We are permitted to exercise choice – A robot cannot.
 - d. Satan is limited in power (1 Corinthians 10:13 – He is allowed to tempt us).
 - e. Temptation is part of God's permissive will. Satan is a lion – on a chain (1 Peter 5:8).
8. The implication that righteous man must suffer.
 - a. Otherwise men will be righteous just to escape suffering.
 - b. If doing good was insurance against disease, people would be good, but it would be doing good for less than "high" reasons.

9. We learn what a man can stand even though he can lose a great deal:
 - a. Prosperity – all his possessions, and they were great!
 - b. Children – He loved them so much he even made sacrifices for them.
 - c. Health – all of it (leprosy, fever, chills, eyes with scabs).
 - d. Reputation – from most trusted counselor to the dung heap.
 - e. Wife’s confidence – as long as the wife is there, it is all right.
 - f. Friends’ confidence – all friends condemn him.
 - g. Love of life – “I wish to die.”

NOTE: He can lose all of those in a month or two and still stand! And he does not even know – have to know about Calvary or heaven! Man is indeed a noble being!

10. We learn what a man cannot lose – and what Job holds on to.
 - a. Integrity – or he will fall – If you ever lose your sense of self-righteousness by faith, you will fall.
 - b. Belief in the reality of God – “My witness is on high. As soon as He learns the facts, He will vindicate me!” Job did not realize in his affliction of God’s omniscience. He knew it by intellect.

THE WARFARE – JOB 1:1-22

A. Description of Job (1:1-5)

“In a story of epic proportions, heaven looks down on a struggle for a human soul in whom God himself had a stake.” (Stephen Hooks, pg. 55, College Press)

1. Uz is probably the early name of Edom (Lamentations 4:21).
2. He is the “greatest” (v. 3), meaning “richest” – in wealth and reputation.
3. He was morally correct, materially prosperous, domestically happy (seven sons and three daughters), religiously right, and meticulous (he suffered and offered sacrifices in case there is sin).
4. God is very proud of his children.

B. Satan In Heaven (1:6-12)

1. “Sons of God” are either angels or glorified men.
 - a. In Genesis 6 they are men – Angels don’t marry.
 - b. In this context it seems to say they are angels.
2. Satan must come to give an account to God.
 - a. God asks him about what he has been doing to get a conversation started (Proverbs 15:3).
 - b. Satan says he has been looking over his territory as god of this world.
3. God presents his servant Job – “Have you considered my servant Job?”
 - a. Satan says Job is a hireling.
 - b. He claims Job serves only because he has rewards.
 - c. Satan says if he can touch Job, he will not stand faithful to God.
 - d. He says that God has built a protective hedge around Job preventing Satan from touching him.
4. Satan challenges God, and God allows him to touch all the things around Job.

- a. But he couldn't strike Job.

C. Satan Touches Job (1:13-19)

1. Possessions taken away.
 - a. He lost his flock and his herds.
 - b. He lost his servants.
 - c. He lost his children.
 - d. All of his wealth was taken away – That's one thing.
2. Sons and daughters taken away – That's another thing.
 - a. It all came tumbling down in a very short time.
3. The fire of God fell from the sky (v. 16).
 - a. The messenger interpreted all that happened as God's responsibility.
 - b. How would Job respond to all of this?

D. Job Mourns and Then Worships (1:20-22)

1. One of the most remarkable passages in scripture (v. 21).
 - a. *"Naked I came . . . naked I shall return."*
 - b. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away.
 - c. Link this with his response to his wife in 2:10 – *"Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?"*
2. Job's first response to what he believes has all come from God.
 - a. Praise the Name of God anyway.
 - b. Job's "programed-in" response – He didn't have to sit down and think this out.
 - c. Long before this took place Job knew that trials and tribulations would come.
 - d. No matter what happens he knew that God brings all things.
 - e. He worshiped God – *"May the name of the LORD be praised"* (v. 21).
3. If man can turn to nothing else he can turn to God.
 - a. His first statement is one of resignation to God's will. What faith!
 - b. A second response in 2:9-10 implies inner doubt.
 - c. Later, he wished he had never been born (Ch. 3).
 - d. This is not fatalism, but faith? – It is confessional.
 - e. The blessing of God is not prerequisite for one's devotion to God.
 - f. He doesn't curse God – He worships God.

CONCLUSION – What have we programmed into our hearts?

1. What should be our initial response when trials and tribulations come?
2. What have you prepared as your first response?
3. What have you programed in spiritually to your heart and mind to say and believe and act upon when trials and tribulations come your way?
4. God is still worthy of worship anyway.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWO:

1. What are five questions raised in the book of Job?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____

2. What are five possible solutions suggested to the problem of suffering?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____

3. From what you learned in this lesson briefly explain in your own words the purpose of the book of Job.

4. List the five things about the restricted power of Satan.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____

5. What are two things man cannot lose without falling (Things Job held on to)
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____

6. Discuss briefly Job's initial response when everything was taken from him.

LESSON THREE

JOB'S FRIENDS SPEAK (2)

INTRODUCTION:

In our last lesson we talked about Job's warfare. Satan had attacked him and attacked his children. He had attacked Job himself. In chapter two Satan came before God a second time, and once again we see God is proud of His servant Job. Job still maintained his integrity despite what had been done to him. In this lesson we will see Job stricken again by Satan and Job's reaction to this. We will see Job question God, wondering why he had ever been born, and why this had happened to him. We will call Chapter three "The Why Chapter. We will also see the appearance of Job's three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. We will study their reaction to what had happened to Job, and their advice as to why this happened to him and what Job should do about it.

LESSON TEXT: Job chapters 2-5, 8, 11, 15, 22, 25, 27:12ff

LESSON AIM: To consider Job's reaction to the situation he found himself in after Satan had afflicted him, and see the reaction and advice of Job's three friends.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn the reaction of Job when he is afflicted the second time by Satan.
 2. Study the Language of Agony we will see in Job chapter three.
 3. Learn and consider the conflict between Job and his friends.
-

JOB IS STRICKEN BY SATAN A SECOND TIME – Job 2:1-13

A. Satan in Heaven a Second Time (2:1-6)

1. God is responsible for Job's affliction (3b).
 - a. So when Job accuses God for his affliction, he is righteous.
 - b. God is not always fair according to human standards!
2. Satan does not give up.
 - a. We must remember he will never quit.
 - b. He claims that Job's health is too much to let him have.
 - c. Repetition in prose equals Hebrew parallelism in poetry.

B. Job Stricken a Second Time (2:7-10)

1. Job stricken from the top of his head to the tip of his toes.
 - a. Job scraped himself with a piece of pottery.
 - b. He takes his place among the ashes.
2. Job must have seen his wife coming
 - a. He may have said, "Oh, it will be all right now. We will talk of past days before I die."

- b. But his wife did not come for that purpose.
- c. She was concerned about her husband. She does not like to see him suffering.
- d. She is offering him suicide – “*Curse God and die.*”
- e. She would be a “mercy-killer” today.
- 3. Job did not sin with his lips (v. 10).
 - a. Shall we accept only good from God, and not adversity?
 - b. His heart is beginning to harbor civil war though.

C. Job’s Three Friends Come (2:11-13)

- 1. These three friends love him.
 - a. They come to comfort him – they come many miles to see him.
 - b. They are great men of God. They have ruled their cities well.
- 2. They did, however, hold to the wrong theory.
 - a. They came and saw a man in ashes.
 - b. They are silent for seven days, in respect.
 - c. Sometimes the best comforters are those who are silent.
- 3. Characterization of three friends.
 - a. Eliphaz – the exegete, or the prophet.
 - 1) He has the answer to any question.
 - 2) He has a proof-text for every answer too.
 - 3) Quoting a passage is not necessarily sufficient – It must be applied.
 - 4) Eliphaz is not consistent in using Scripture.
 - b. Bildad – the historian, the sage.
 - 1) He goes back to the fathers to get answers.
 - 2) He thought all wisdom is in the past.
 - c. Zophar – the dogmatic rationalist.
 - 1) The Intellectual, egg-head, young know it all.
 - 2) He relied on common sense and reason.
 - 3) The problem with common sense is that it is not always common.
 - 4) We ought to call it horse-sense; that is stable thinking.

THE LANGUAGE OF AGONY – JOB 3 – (THE WHY CHAPTER)

A. I Wish I Had Never Been Born (vs. 1-15)

- 1. Death is preferable to life if it’s going to hurt this bad (vs. 12-13).
- 2. Death is at least peaceful (v. 13).
- 3. Death puts me with the great ones of the past (vs. 14-15).

B. The “Why” Stage – “Why Me?” – Questions We May All Ask at Some Time

- 1. Why did I have to be born? (v. 11).
- 2. Why did my parents bring me into the world?
 - a. Why did I have to be born into this circumstance? (v. 12).
- 4. Why did I have to be the one to suffer this? (v. 13).
- 5. Why could I not have been stillborn? (v. 16).
 - a. Wouldn’t have had to face life’s trials .
 - b. I just want out of the pain – A better choice by far.
 - c. There’s equality after death – peace for all.

6. Why does a man have to live in pain, not of his own choosing, but allowed by God? (v. 23).
 - a. “And whom God has hedged in” (Very ironic in view of 1:10).
 - b. Consider the two views of being hedged in here.
7. Why all this pain? Can’t I just die and escape it? (vs. 24-26).
 - a. Can’t eat (v. 24).
 - b. Cry all the time (v. 24).
 - c. Worst nightmares (v. 25).
 - d. Can’t get away from it (v. 26).

C. Kinds of Pain

1. Emotional (v. 20):
 - a. Why is light given to him who suffers?
 - b. Why is life given to the bitter of soul?
2. Spiritual (v. 23).
 - a. Why is light given to man whose way is hidden?
3. Physical (vs. 24-26).
 - a. My groaning comes in the sight of my food.
 - b. No peace, no quiet, no rest, only turmoil.

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN JOB AND HIS “FRIENDS”

A. A Dialogue Between Job and His Three Friends

1. At first they come to give him comfort.
 - a. Just by sitting with him.
2. Then they have an extended dialogue with him.
 - a. The middle part of this book.
 - b. A dialogue that is quite repetitious .
3. These friends will say the same thing over and over again.
 - a. Each time Job will respond to them.
 - b. This will go on for three rounds.
 - c. Each friend will say something and Job will respond.
 - 1) Like a three round prize fight.
 - 2) The language will be flowery, ornate and straight forward.
 - d. Three parts to what each man says to Job.
 - 1) They will talk to him personally – perhaps chide him.
 - 2) They will present their theology.
 - 3) They will present their authority sources.

B. Eliphaz (Chapters 4-5, 15, 22) – The Exegete

1. Share at his despair (4:1-11).
 - a. You’ve helped others, now let others help you (4:1-6).
 - b. Theology: (4:7-11).
 - 1) Innocent people don’t perish – if you are righteous bad things don’t happen to you.
 - 2) Wicked people do perish – They reap evil. If you are evil bad things do happen to you.
 - 3) This is a common theology we will see throughout. Since bad things have happened to Job, he must be a great sinner.
2. Warning against Job’s murmuring: (4:12 – 5:1).

- a. Authority Source: He claimed to have seen a vision (4:12-19).
 - 1) Authority message (v. 17) – Can mankind be just before God?
- b. No one, not even angels, will come to your defense (4:18 – 5:1) .
- 3. Application to Job’s situation (5:2-16).
 - a. Your resentment and bitterness over this seemingly unfair hand dealt does you no good . . . (5:2-3).
 - 1) God will reward the penitent (a hint to Job) (5:17-27).
 - b. Restatement of Law of Retribution (5:4-16).
- 4. Conclusion: The spirit of Eliphaz.
 - a. That’s it, I’ve said it, It’s all been said, all you can do is accept it, There’s no more discussion.
 - b. This is truth! Believe it! (5:27).
- 5. Rebuke – (Job 15).
 - a. Rebukes Job because he rejects their composite “wisdom.” (15:1-16).
 - 1) He seems presumptuous to Eliphaz, even over heaven, not just the friends.
 - b. Authority Source: Sages of the ages (15:7,12, 17-18).
- 6. Defense of Traditional Theology:
 - a. Eliphaz’s message, which is by experience, and agrees with the wisdom of the ages: The wicked suffer and pay in this life (15:17-32).
 - b. “It will be paid in full before his time” (RSV) – in this life (v. 32).
- 7. Chapter 22 is possibly answering 21:24-26).
 - a. God is far above man. What would man gain by being good?! (22:1-3).
 - b. But you, Job, were evil. You didn’t help with your money and you did not use your opportunities (22:4-9).
 - c. God knows all about this (22:10-18).
 - 1) He sees your evil.
 - 2) You can’t escape or tell him to leave you alone.
 - d. Repent, submit, and God will reward you (22:19-30).

C. Bildad (Chapters 8, 18, 25) – The Historian, Sage

- 1. Just discrimination: (Job 8).
 - a. He is offended by Job’s strong comments and rebuff in Chapter 6-7 (8:1-2).
 - 1) He apparently takes it personally.
 - 2) He calls Job’s speech “a blustering wind.”
 - 3) To Bildad, Job is a lot of hot air or violent and vain.
 - b. Surely God is not at fault in this (8:3-4).
 - 1) He never twists justice.
 - 2) It must be your children who have sinned, since they died.
 - 3) They must pay the penalty for their sin.
 - 4) Job sinned too, but not as bad as the children.
 - c. The way back is repentance (8:5-7).
 - 1) Such a course will begin humbly but go well.
 - d. Authority Source: Ask the former Generation (8:8-10).
 - 1) See what their fathers learned.
 - e. Theme verse: (8:11-12).
 - 1) Cause and effect (For every effect there must be an equal and adequate cause.
 - 2) This is true in nature:

- a) Papyrus without water wilts.
 - b) Leaning on a spider's web will cause one to fall.
 - c) Godless people don't last, no substance to them.
- f. It's true for the one who forgets God (8:13-19).
- g. Contrast of what God blesses or curses (8:20-22).
- 2. Indignation: "When will you end these speeches?" (Job 18)
 - a. He claims Job is crazy and out of control.
 - 1) You make out like you're right and all else is wrong!
 - 2) Should all nature change to suit you?!
 - 3) Offended by treatment of friends and God.
 - b. Law of Retribution (18:5-21).
 - 1) You reap what you sow.
 - 2) Bildad affirms there is a law of retribution (vs. 5-11).
 - 2) There will be an end of the wicked (vs. 12-21).
 - 3) He tries scare tactics – Declares calamity for all men.
 - 4) This is the one who knows not God (v. 21).
- 3. Compares God's greatness and righteousness to man's (Job 25).
 - a. Man is presumptuous to proclaim his innocence when viewing God.
 - b. He may be exhausted or exasperated by Job's arguments, but he must respond to the spirit of his adversary.

C. Zophar (Chapters 11, 20, 27:12ff) – The Dogmatist, Intellectual

Not going to find a lot of compassion here.

- 1. Someone must answer for God (Job 11).
 - a. Are all these words to go unanswered?
 - a. He considers Job's words insolent and arrogant (v. 4).
 - b. He thinks Job is getting off easy (v. 6).
 - c. God's wisdom is far above man's (11:6-12).
 - 1) Man cannot fathom it.
 - d. If you will repent, then you will be okay again (11:13-20).
 - 1) You may then forget about your troubles.
 - 2) But if not, then you will fail and there will be no escape.
- 2. The authority of this is from old (Job 20).
 - a. Considers this from the establishment of man on earth (v. 4).
 - b. An accusation that Job is prideful and tries to hide it (vs. 6,12).
 - c. Such is the fate of the wicked! (vs. 7-29).
 - d. Trying to use scare tactics to get Job to repent.

CONCLUSION

When we come back next lesson, we need to remember what these men have said to Job. We'll move the Theology and authority sources aside for just a minute, and ask the question, did Job's friends really react to Job well? Could they have appreciated him to some regard? Could they have reacted to him in a more merciful way? We'll talk a little bit about bedside manner. What would have really helped in this certain case?

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON THREE:

1. Describe Job's reaction after he was stricken the second time, his wife's reaction, and Job's reaction to his wife?
 - 1) Job's reaction to being stricken the second time: _____
 - 2) His wife's reaction: _____
 - 3) Job's reaction to his wife: _____

2. In Chapter 3 of Job, what are seven "Why" questions we see being asked that we may sometimes ask ourselves today?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____
 - 7) _____

3. What are three kinds of pain that is being described in Job in Chapter 3?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

4. During the dialogue between Job and his three friends there emerges a three part pattern to what each man says to Job. What are these three parts?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

5. What is the general Characterization used to describe Job's three friends?
 - 1) Eliphaz: _____
 - 2) Bildad: _____
 - 3) Zophar: _____

6. Describe briefly the general theology of Job's three friends.

7. Describe briefly the general authority source of Job's three friends. _____

LESSON FOUR

JOB'S RESPONSE TO HIS FRIENDS (3)

INTRODUCTION:

So far in our previous two lessons, we've seen how God allowed the devil to afflict Job in various ways, to take away from him a lot of the essence of who he was. But he couldn't take away his character. Then we saw his friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, come to him and at first seem to be very good comforters. They sat with him for several days. But then they began to attack and criticize him. He came back at them and they didn't like his retorts. Then they tried to prove their theology, which was: "Wicked people suffer and righteous people don't suffer. Since you have suffered, that means you have sinned. If you would just repent and change, then all of the things God has taken away from you would be restored to you. And your fellowship and everything else would be restored too." Their theology was, "The Law of Retribution."

They had their authority sources. One claimed to have a vision or dream. All three of them talked about the days of the past, sages of the past and people from the past who supposedly are the wise men of the day. Job just needs to confess to what he's done, so he can be restored.

In this lesson, we get a chance to hear what Job has to say to them. We're going to talk about some of his initial responses to their criticism. We will also take a look at his integrity. Initially, in each of Job's speeches, there will be a small piece of the text in which he will criticize his friends, and then shift his attention to God and begin to talk directly to Him.

LESSON TEXT: Job chapters 6, 9, 10, 12, 13, 16, 19, 23, 26, 27, 31

LESSON AIM: To look closely at Job's reaction to what his three friends tell him and his responses to their criticisms.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn of Job's criticism of the message his friends bring him.
2. Be amazed at Job's integrity throughout his dialogue with friends and God.
2. Listen as Job pours out his heart to God during this time of struggle.

JOB'S CRITICISM OF HIS FRIENDS

A. Criticism of Their Conceit and Lack of Consideration (12:1-3)

1. A lot of sarcasm to start with (vs. 1-3).
 - a. He's not a dummy.
 - b. Just because they outnumber him, he won't be intimidated.

2. They are on the outside looking in (vs. 4-6).
 - a. He's on the inside looking out and knows better himself than anyone.
 - b. He will retain his claim to innocence.
 - c. He does not appreciate how they are treating him.

B. Does Not Need Speeches, Needs Concern and Comfort (16:1-5)

1. No comfort in what they say to him or about him.
2. They aren't real friends at all.
3. Real friends would have "brood time" with him.
4. All they want to do is philosophize and play the spiritual physician.
5. Not good words, such as, "I'm sorry you're hurting, Job."
6. They just heap goals on his head, like one would put on an enemy.
7. Job needs "comfort" and "solace" – not just words.

C. No Room for Arrogance (19:1-6)

1. "Get off my back," Job retorts again.
 - a. Give me some room, let me breath.
 - b. Let me have my time to talk with God.
2. "Even if I have sinned, it's my concern alone.
(I don't think he's admitting anything, just hypothesizing)

D. Very Sarcastic – A Real Help You Are (26:1-4)

1. As if Job is powerless, weak and without wisdom.
 - a. As if he doesn't have any substance about him.
 - b. They don't really respect Job and it shows in their speeches.
2. They have treated him in a condescending denigrating way – not appreciated.
3. They don't really respect who Job is and what he is all about.

BEDSIDE MANNER

A. How Should We, as People of God, React When Someone Experiences Trials and Tribulation?

1. People bring trials upon themselves.
 - a. They make mistakes, sin, make poor decisions.
 - b. Unfortunately, they reap the consequences of that (happens all the time).
 - c. How do we treat such a one in the depth of such pain?
2. Trials and tribulations come because we live on a cursed earth.
3. Other people make decisions that have a negative effect on us.
4. All kinds of things come our way that are hurtful and difficult.
5. We must consider our bedside manner in such situations.

B. Bedside Manner: Some Dos and Don'ts

Seven things we should practice as people of God to those who are hurting

1. **Be there:**
 - a. Job's friends started out this way – often we start out great by just being there.
 - b. The presence of the right people at the right time is so crucial.
 - c. Often don't have to say much at all.

- c. Just be there with presence, touch, closeness, arm around the shoulder or hug.
 - 2. **Avoid “preaching:”**
 - a. Sermons, sharing biblical truths is appropriate at a latter stage.
 - b. Emotion is too strong to be instructed at the early stages of shock and grief.
 - c. When we feel compelled to say something, it’s normally because we are uncomfortable ourselves.
 - 3. **Be willing to be uncomfortable:**
 - a. Often there are things said or done in the extreme emotion that are hard to hear or see.
 - b. We need to be willing to feel uncomfortable and deal with it.
 - c. Don’t do or say things to ease your own uneasiness at the expense of the afflicted one.
 - d. We need to remember we are the servant, not the served.
 - 4. **Avoid cliches, pat answers, easy solutions:**
 - a. Sometimes it is that “little biblical statement.”
 - b. It may be a true statement, but not helpful at that particular point in time.
 - c. Avoid pulling out those pat and easy answers that don’t really help.
 - 5. **Don’t short-circuit the grief process:**
 - a. Don’t tell them to “Get over it” or “just accept it.”
 - b. Grief comes in a lot of forms for any number of losses.
 - ▶ There is grief over lost we must all go through.
 - c. We often want people to get over it and get back on their way.
 - ▶ Most often because it makes us uncomfortable.
 - d. We must allow people to go through their own grief process.
 - ▶ Allowing them to move on in their own way.
 - 6. **No need to respond or correct angry outbursts:**
 - a. People at times like this are hurting very deeply.
 - b. At times like this people say all kinds of things out of their emotions.
 - c. People often say things in times of extreme emotions that they would never say in another context.
 - ▶ The example of a woman in the extreme transition of childbirth.
 - d. If God can handle us in times such as these, we must be able to handle it too
 - 7. **Read, seminars, on grief process:**
 - a. Find out ways to minister better to hurting people in need.
 - b. Allow yourself to be put in the position to minister closely in such times.
- Note:** We need to strive to do a better job of ministering than Job’s friends did.

JOB’S BLAMELESSNESS AND INTEGRITY

A. Job Did Not Deny the Word of the Holy One (6:10, 29)

- 1. Job does not want to come off his convictions and beliefs because of the pain.
 - a. Sometimes the pain is so great it would be easy to give in.
 - b. Sometimes we may become desperate to do anything to ease the pain.

2. Job's integrity is at stake (v. 29).
 - a. He feels his integrity is being pushed to the limits.
 - b. He doesn't want to give in.
 - c. Even if it mean he disagrees with God.

B. Job Recognizes That He Is Not Sinless, but Insists He Is Blameless (10:4-7)

1. He recognizes that he is not sinless.
 - a. He feels he is not guilty of anything he is covering up.
 - b. He feels he is being pressed on by God.
2. This feeling of being pressed on takes away his sense of integrity.
 - a. This doesn't take away the difficulties of dealing with his friends.
 - b. He requests that respect be given for his integrity.

C. Job Makes a Statement of Godly Commitment (23:10-12)

1. Job likens himself to precious gold tested and purified.
 - a. He is going to come out looking like gold on the other side of this.
2. He has treasured God's Will, Ways and Words more than food.
 - b. That is the integrity Job is speaking about here.
 - c. He has held on to his integrity as long as he has lived.
 - d. If he holds on until the end he will be like tested gold.

D. Job Is Willing to Go to His Death Holding on to His Convictions (27:2-6)

1. Job believes he is righteous, right and mistreated by God.
2. He will maintain his integrity even if it costs him his life.

E. Job Make a Case for His Innocence (31:5ff)

1. He is innocent in regard to:
 - a. Immorality (vs. 1-12).
 - b. Lying, Deceit (v. 5).
 - c. Dealings with servants with integrity (vs. 13,15).
 - d. Helping the needy (vs. 16-23).
 - e. Covetousness (vs. 23-25).
 - f. Idolatry (vs. 26-28).
 - g. Rejoicing in another's downfall (vs. 29-31).
 - h. Hospitality (v. 32).
 - i. Peer pressure (vs. 33-34).
 - j. Even how he treated the land (vs. 38-40).
2. He is innocent and holding on to his beliefs.

BEING TRUE TO SELF-INTEGRITY

A. You Need to Be Found Blameless

1. Job is saying there is not some big thing you can get a handle on.
 - a. Nothing that shows a real flaw in one's character.
 - b. Nothing that shows a big hole in one's life.
 - c. Nothing that shows a real problem with some sin.
 - d. A sinner, but not a presumptuous sinner.
 - e. Not someone who hides his sin.

B. You Need to Be True to Knowing Who You Are

1. Holding on to your convictions.
2. Holding on to the truth of God's word.
3. Holding on no matter what troubles or trials are going on.
4. Holding on no matter what the past or future looks like.
5. Holding on with no ulterior motive.
6. Holding on with no naivety.
7. Holding on to the practices that come out of knowing God's word.

CONCLUSION

Job had a lot to say about what our convictions are. What are your convictions? How strong do you believe them? Are you willing to hold on to those convictions because you believe that what God says is true?

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FOUR:

1. What are some of the things Job criticizes his friends for in their words of wisdom spoken to him?

2. What are seven dos and don'ts we should practice as people of God to those who are hurting?

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

6)

7)

3. In what five ways did Job display his blamelessness and integrity?

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

4. In making a case for his innocence what did Job say he was innocent in regard to?

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

6)

7)

8)

9)

10)

5. In what seven ways are we to be true to knowing who we are?

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

6)

7)

LESSON FIVE

JOB'S ARGUMENT WITH GOD (4)

INTRODUCTION:

Revue: We've seen the challenges Job has gone through of all the trials that came his way. We've seen his friends come to him to comfort and encourage him to confess his sin and thus receive forgiveness. We've seen and listened as Job responded to them in a sarcastic way in denying that there was any hidden sin in his life, insisting that his life was one of integrity and that they were poor comforters.

Preview: Job will repudiate his friend's theology of the Law of Retribution – that is, that the wicked always suffer and the righteous never suffer. He will also present his argument to God that he is unjustly being punished, challenging God to come down and allow him to present his case before him.

Job still feels that God's rule is arbitrary and not in accord with justice (12:7-25). Job regards his friends as ill-advised counselors. He desires to speak with God and to plead with him. This seems to be the first step in advance (13:13). Hitherto, Job has accepted the pagan philosophy of his friends, namely that in this life the good are rewarded and the evil punished. His own terrible sufferings, however, have caused him to doubt the validity of the principle. Hence he turns on God in bitter complaint.

Now, however, he wants to discuss the matter with God which shows both that he begins to recognize in reality that God is greater than he and also that there is justice in God, for he expects God to listen to him. More and more he begins to realize that God is essentially just (13:10-11). Job will prove his ways to God, even before His face. God will slay him, he fears, but he is prepared for that. He will await what God will do, and resigns himself to it, even though it be death.

LESSON TEXT: Various texts in the book of Job.

LESSON AIM: To investigate, define the law of retribution and determine the truth or falseness of that philosophy.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn the definition of "The Law of Retribution" and the refutation of that philosophy.
 2. Investigate the modern day application of "The Law of Retribution" and discover the falseness of that concept.
 3. Learn of Job's view of the afterlife.
-

REPUDIATION OF THE LAW OF RETRIBUTION

A. First: God Allows the Wicked to Flourish and the Innocent to Hurt (9:22-24)

1. God seems to strike the righteous and the wicked with scourge (v. 22) and doesn't seem to care (v. 23).
 - a. Since God controls all He's responsible (12:5f).
 - b. And because they are on the outside looking in and he's on the inside looking out and knows himself better than anyone, he will retain his claim to innocence (12:4-6).
 - c. Job reasons that both the righteous and the unrighteous suffer the same things, and thus their theology is wrong
2. Even the animals are smarter and better witnesses to the truth of things than these friends (12:7-9)!
3. That truth is that:
 - a. The Lord did this.
 - b. He is all powerful.
 - c. He seems arbitrary in the use of this power in hurting the righteous and the wicked. This is the part that troubles Job the most (12:16-25).

B. Second: The Apparent Affluence and Welfare of the Wicked (21:7-19)

1. The evidence of experience says that there are many wicked people who flourish throughout their lives. They don't get punished in this life (vs. 7-18).
2. It is said that God punishes the children instead (v. 19), but that doesn't make sense to Job. Why should the children reap the consequences and not the father ?! (vs. 20-21).
 - a. The wicked seem to prosper in this world – this goes against the Law of Retribution.
 - b. The righteous are not always blessed and difficult things happen to them – this contradicts the Law of Retribution.

C. Third: The Innocent Suffer at the Hands of the Wicked and God Seems to Do Nothing (24:1-12)

1. Things are all wrong and unfair!
 - a. The righteous suffer at the hands of the wicked.
 - b. God does not give the righteous due justice.
2. Job wishes there were regular “court days” with God (24:1).
3. He's miffed at the apparent unequal treatment of people while they are on the earth.
 - a. He's already claimed his own innocence and yet he suffers. That's one side.
 - b. But in this chapter he presents the fact of the prospering wicked man. No, he doesn't hurt the needy, but he's seen wicked men do it, and get away with it (24:2-16)! Where's the justice in this inequality of treatment?!

NOTE: God will not be badgered or manipulated into doing something opposed to His will or nature. We cannot, and should not force Him to abandon His purposes. We just need to patiently wait on Him.

MODERN DAY APPLICATIONS

A. Our Lingering Belief in the Law of Retribution

1. We still wonder what we've done wrong when things are bad for us.
2. We might even wonder about others.
3. The religious doctrine of Jesus coming to deliver us from all sickness and disease.

B. Correct Approach When Trials Come

1. Ask self if God is disciplining (Hebrews 12:5-11; 1 Peter 4:12).
2. Ask what God would like to do to me, to make of me through the sufferings (Romans 5:3-5; 1 Peter 1:3ff; James 1:2-4).
3. Romans 28:30: God works all things, even bad things, for the good of those He loves.

C. Demands and Wishes of God (7:11-21)

1. Give me an answer that explains all this (vs. 11-21).
 - a. Job will not be silent. He accuses God of bringing unbearable and unexplained suffering on him.
 - b. Life of a human being seems too important for God to press him down so much. The dread of life is too painful for him (vs. 12-19).
 - c. You, God, cause me great pain, yet I'm not aware of great sin. If I've sinned, why do you not pardon it? Let me die if this is the way it's to be; but if I die, you'll not have me to delight in anymore (vs. 20-21).

D. How Can Anyone Get a Fair Trial Before God? (9:2-35)

Job's view of God. He is powerful. He is wrathful (v. 19)

1. Two things prevent anyone getting fair treatment:
 - a. The power of God (vs. 3-19). Job puts this in the context of God using His power arbitrarily, not really being merciful to the righteous.
 - b. No intercessor or mediator (vs. 32-33).
God is too powerful to go face to face with man.
2. God seems to strike the righteous and the wicked with scourge (v. 22) and doesn't seem to care (v. 23).
3. If he were to drop his complaint as Bildad suggests, it wouldn't diminish the sufferings of his friends' wounds. Job believes they are wrong and won't give in on it (vs. 27-31).

E. Job Requests Two Things of God (13:20-28)

1. Removal of the suffering (13:21). *"Withdraw your hand far from me, and stop frightening me with your terrors."*
2. Face to face encounter to talk this over (13:22). *"Then summon me and I will answer, or let me speak, and you reply."*
"Be fair, O God; give me a chance. Don't hide behind your power and glory. Let me ask you 'Why?!'"

F. Job Gets Personal with His Complaint to God (16:6-22)

1. Job again turns to God to argue his case. He cannot be silent (v. 6).
2. Job is convinced that God is the source of his tribulations.
 - a. Job doesn't understand yet the plan of God in all this, the place of

- Satan in the pain. He just feels pain and neglect.
- b. He feels the victim of God's winsome character. He definitely blames, charges God with the responsibility.
- c. Even though he is a righteous man (v. 17), God is making him suffer (vs. 6-16).
- 3. Job maintains his innocence (v. 17) and begs earth (v. 18) to become his witness, advocate, and intercessor to God (vs. 19-21) He sees two gods in a sense (16:18-21): the God who is good and just (he previously thought so) and the God who is arbitrarily cruel (he feels now).

G. Job Recounts His Losses (19:6ff)

- 1. Friends are deserting him while God pursues him, without just cause (vs. 6-7).
 - a. Even though Job wrongly accuses God, they wrongly accuse Job.
 - b. He tries to get them to focus for a minute on what God has done or "wronged me" (vs. 6-7) and won't answer to Job for His actions (v. 7).
- 2. What God has taken away:
 - a. Progress, movement (v. 8).
 - b. Honor (v. 9) – reputation.
 - c. Hope (v. 10).
 - d. Fellowship (v. 11) – friendship with God.
 - e. Peace (v. 12).
 - f. Friends (vs. 9,13).
 - g. Family (vs. 14,17) – wife included.
 - h. Respect (vs. 15,16) – guests and servants and children.
 - i. Health (v. 20).
- 3. He admits to having a bitter complaint, and he wants to verbalize it to God face to face so that an answer can be given.
- 4. He is upright, and he believes an upright man could argue his case before God and survive. God would not do him in.
- 5.. The problem is that at this point. God is unwilling to be involved in that dialogue. Job knows the benefits of trial to his own life (23:10), at least intellectually so (sounds like us), but the pain causes him to seek the Lord for a better and fuller answer, but God cannot be found unless he wants to be found.

THOUGHTS ABOUT AFTERLIFE

A. The Plight of All Men, Including Job: Troubles (7:1-10)

- 1. His pain is severe.
- 2. Life is quick and it ends in death, at which time no one remembers you. "*As a cloud vanishes and is gone, so he who goes down to the grave does not return.*"
- 3. Job does not have the knowledge later revealed by Jesus and the New Testament writers like Paul.

B. Job's View That Death Brings an End to Man (14:7-14)

"But man dies and is laid low; he breathes his last and is no more."

- 1. Death at the end (14:11-12). Not much beyond.
- 2. It seems to Job that if man is indeed God's beloved creation (cf. 10:811),

it seems like He would back off from this role of persecutor and make man's life joyful, so that He could enjoy His friend, man. Because when man dies, God will miss perhaps that kind of joyful walk with man on the earth. If Job is your friend, God, please back off and let us enjoy our fellowship. It's not good having pain from a friend all the time, and that's how Job feels.

3. *"If a man dies, will he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait for my renewal to come."*
4. A last flash of hope and confidence that he'll be vindicated, and that these friends will be recompensed by God for their sin (19:23-29).
 - a. He will have his day in court some day. It will probably be after his death when his defender, the God in whom he believes, will appear and with the testimony of Job chiseled in stone, that defender will vindicate Job. That will happen when God finally does appear on the earth.
 - b. He may be thinking of his "kinsman" redeemer who will vindicate his good name and integrity.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FIVE:

1. Explain the theory of The Law of Retribution and the refutation of it.
The Law explained: _____

2. Give three statements listed by the teacher that seems to refute this theory.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
3. Give two (2) good questions to ask when trials come.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
4. Concerning a correct approach when trials come, what are two good questions to ask about the trials?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
5. What two request does Job make of God concerning his suffering.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
6. List nine things God has taken away from Job.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____
 - 7) _____
 - 8) _____
 - 9) _____

LESSON SIX

ELIHU'S ASSESSMENT OF JOB (5)

INTRODUCTION:

The introduction of Elihu in prose (32:2-5) indicates that a new element is being introduced. He is given a brief genealogy, something that is lacking in the case of Job and his friends, as Job and his friends are introduced. Irrespective of whether they were of good family or not, as representatives of the Wise, their position in society rested on their own merits, not on those of their fathers. Elihu, however, is introduced as a young man and his father and family line is mentioned.

The Wise were not godless men; their goal was their understanding the divine rule of the world, that they might direct their own and their pupils' footsteps accordingly. But they believed God had given them the proper start—for Eliphaz it was **religious experience**; for Bildad the **voice of tradition**; for Zophar **sound common sense**. Their own reason was ample, they thought, and would bring them to their goal. Elihu challenges this with the **claim of inspiration** (32:8). Without a doubt Elihu stands on firmer ground than the three friends. With one burning phrase he laid bare the inner weakness of those who have spoken before him. Human reason cannot grasp the depths of God's work in heaven and on earth (cf. 28:20-28), but the sequel is to show that Elihu's claim to inspiration is as shallow as the three friends' claim to divine wisdom.

Elihu presents a phenomenon we constantly meet in life. The self-satisfaction of an older generation finally drives young men to revolt. In practice they seldom say much that is new and seldom say it well, but they are almost invariably glimpses of valuable truth which the older generation had missed, to its loss.

LESSON TEXT: Job chapters thirty-two through thirty-six.

LESSON AIM: To see the solution to Job's dilemma as presented by his friend, Elihu and the fallacies of his reasoning.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will. . .

1. Learn Elihu's claim to have the right to speak to Job concerning his condition.
 2. Understand that all that Elihu puts forward is merely a restatement of the Law of Retribution that the others had already presented to Job.
 3. Listen to Elihu's claim that no one can know God – but then claim to know God and know His desire.
-

ELIHU'S ANGRY SPEECH

A. Why, I Can Speak and I Should, Job! (Ch. 32)

1. Job quieted the three friends by his persistent claim to innocence. Meanwhile the younger man, Elihu, listened and waited his turn. He became very angry because:
 - a. Job justified himself rather than God. (32:2)
 - b. The three friends did not successfully answer him (v. 3).
2. He explains his reasons for speaking.
 - a. He waited his turn. He waited patiently while the three older men failed in their attempt. He respected age's prerogative. (vs. 32-34)
 - b. However, youth can possess wisdom too (v. 9). Actually, he claims an inner inspiration from God (vs. 8, 18).
 - c. Job's need to be set straight.
 - d. He won't use their arguments (v. 14)
3. He claims he'll show no partiality and won't use flattery (v. 19). Elihu claims to have the right to speak.

B. God Speaks to Men in Various Ways (Ch. 33)

1. He begins diplomatically, yet firmly, to get Job's attention and respect and his response.
2. After summarizing Job's arguments (fairly accurately, I think, vs. 8-11), Elihu proceeds to tell Job that God speaks to us in different ways:
 - a. Dreams, visions. (vs. 15-18). See further Hebrews 1:1 – "*In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways,*"
 - b. Through affliction. (vs. 19-22). The Lord may speak to man through trial and affliction.
 - c. Angels. (v. 23). "*Yet if there is an angel on his side as a mediator...*" Man just needs to respond in penitence so that he won't get the hell he deserves (vs. 24-30).
3. So, Job, follow suit. Listen to the punishment of the Lord, repent, and be spared what you deserve. (vs. 31-33).

C. Same Song, Fourth Verse (Ch. 34)

1. Elihu's message is the same old thing – Law of Retribution.
2. He begins and ends by accusing Job rather strongly of adding scorn and rebellion to his sin that brought this on in the first place (vs. 1-7, 32-39).
3. In the middle is this rather long discourse of the Law (vs. 8-31).
 - a. He mixes part truth with error – that's false religion at its best.
 - b. He leaves out the part that Job has repeatedly reiterated – the wicked don't always get punished in this life.
4. Job, you are accusing God of being unjust and this is wrong! God is the Judge and always does what is right and just.
5. Job, not only are you a great sinner, you are also rebellious.
 - a. You have become insolent.
 - b. You have become scornful and rebellious and you have no right to do that.

D. The Arrogance and Distortion of Elihu's Speech (Ch. 35)

1. Elihu has totally distorted Job's remarks and arguments. (It reminds me of someone in the pew who doesn't like your preaching anyway, and when they hear you struggle with things that touch the "untouchables" of their creed – not their faith – they make you say what you didn't and plaster you all over as a false teacher!)
2. Note the following distortions:
 - a. "What do I gain by not sinning?" (v. 3) as if to say that Job in 9:27-31 is intimating that he might as well give himself over to sin.
 - b. Job with claiming not to see God (v. 14) and therefore He's not around or involved (vs. 4-14).
3. Elihu's reasoning is that God doesn't answer the arrogant (v. 12). He won't grace that kind of request. His reasoning is that since God has not answered, Job must be arrogant.
4. That God never punishes evil (v. 15). Job didn't claim "never," He did not say that there are wicked people who get away with sin their whole lives without punishment.

NOBODY KNOWS GOD, ...BUT I KNOW HIM! (Ch. 36)

A. Elihu Claims to Be an Accurate Spokesman for God

He grows bolder and more arrogant, claiming "the perfect one is with you" (vs. 1-4).

B. Elihu's Claims to Have an Accurate Concept of God

1. **First:** God exalts the righteous (vs. 6-7).
 - a. Elihu adds a new thought that the "three" did not.
 - b. Having mostly dealt with the other side of that, Elihu only shortly mentions it, and even then it's not a hard and fast rule.
2. **Second:** God keeps man hurting to get him to repent.
 - a. He proceeds to tell Job how God acts in trials. He's "wooing you," Job (v. 16).
 - b. So don't give up the hurt for evil (v. 18).
 - c. Just repent of your arrogance (v. 10) and resentment (v. 13) and He'll restore you.
3. **Third:** God is immutable – No one can figure God out (vs. 26-33). (What about him!?)
His power in creation and nature should teach us that. (If he's going to apply that to Job, why doesn't he take his own advice?!)

C. Elihu's Evaluation of the Greatness of God Illustrated in Creation (Ch. 37)

1. Elihu gets goose bumps thinking about God's power in creation and nature.
 - a. He has complete control (vs. 1-12).
 - b. He uses it to send messages of love and punishment of men (v. 13).
2. He challenges Job to be more humble before the Omnipotent Almighty.
Two reasons:
 - a. Because of our ignorance about how God deals with creation (vs. 14-24).
 - b. If we can't even look into the sun, only His creation, then how should any man expect to be able to gain an audience with the God of splendor (vs. 21-23).

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SIX:

1. What was the four (4) sources of wisdom claimed by these four men?
Eliphaz: _____
Bildad: _____
Zophar: _____
Elihu: _____
2. In Elihu's judgment, by what three (3) ways or means did God reveal His will to man?
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
3. Of what two (2) added sins does Elihu accuse Job?
1) _____
2) _____
4. What two claims does Elihu make concerning his knowledge of God?
1) _____
2) _____
5. What are the three attributes of God presented by Elihu?
1) _____
2) _____
2) _____

LESSON SEVEN

GOD'S FINAL WORD FOR JOB (6)

INTRODUCTION:

The Voice comes out of the whirlwind – “Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge?” Job is examined by Jehovah. Job had desired to take his case before God, 13:15, 18, 22, 24; 23:3-7; 31:35. His friends had thought, “If only God were here, He would side with us and show Job up as a hypocrite and a scoundrel.”

Both sides have cried, “If only God were here, He would settle the argument and answer the basic question, ‘Why?’” The argument has been completed. All that human wisdom can say on the subject has been expressed. Now comes the whirlwind out of which God speaks.

As we read these chapters we see something quite unexpected. God says none of the things we expect of Him. There is not one word spoken directly about the problem which has been under consideration for the last 36 chapters.

1. He does not mention the meaning of suffering.
2. He does not refer to what took place between Himself and Satan in the heavenly courts.
3. He does not refer to Job's dream of life after death or to his vision of a redeemer.
4. He reveals no deep secret which will unravel the mystery of God's way with His world.

The Lord does not touch upon His control of the moral world, the real cause of Job's problem. He does not say one word about the problem of suffering, or retribution, of chastisement. He does not speak of suffering for righteousness sake.

LESSON TEXT: Job chapters 38 through 42

LESSON AIM: To see and understand God's response to Job's complaints and questions.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will. . .

1. Listen as God questions Job concerning the inanimate creation and who can control it.
 2. Learn that God, not man, controls the animal creation as God lists the different animals and asks Job unanswerable questions.
 3. Find out how the story ends as Job responds to God and how God responds to Job by rewarding him for his righteousness.
-

THE LORD FINALLY SPEAKS (CHS. 38-42)

A. God's Glory Seen in the Inanimate Creation (Ch. 38)

1. God answers Job out of the storm. (Perhaps lightning and thunder!)
 - a. The storm is a judgment or power position for God – a graphic illustration!
 - b. He is presenting to and reminding Job of His power (v. 1).
2. God chides of Job for being presumptuous and ignorant.
 - a. He asks Job where he (Job) was when all of creation was made (v. 4).
 - b. God is all-powerful, all wise, and takes care of His creation.
 - c. Job should know better than to challenge Him.
3. There is beautiful poetry and figures of speech in this chapter. God is the Master of language.
 - a. Rain's father and mother (vs. 28-29). – *"Has the rain a father?"*
 - b. Lightning bolts like arrows (v. 35). – *"Can you send out lightnings..."*
 - c. Sea behind doors, damned up (v. 8). – *"Or who shut in the sea with doors..."*

Supplementary Notes – The Questionnaire¹

1. What about the inanimate world. Job?
 - a. What holds up the world?
 - b. Who decided how big the world would be?
 - c. Who determined where the sea shall stop and the land begin?
 - d. Can you make morning come when you are ready?
 - e. Do you cause the day to end and the night to draw near?
 - f. Can you make thunder or lightning, or cause the wind to blow in any direction you desire?
 - g. Can you bring dew to the earth or frost?
 - h. Can you change the stars in the sky or re-arrange the constellations?
 - i. Do you know where the snow is kept (or how much it is worth)?
2. Well then, what about the animal world, Job?
 - a. Do you understand how the animals of the wilderness regulate their lives?
 - b. Can you feed the lion and the raven?
 - c. Do you know how the mountain goats breed?
 - d. Can you point out the dwelling place of the wild ass?
 - e. Did you adorn the peacock with his fine feathers?
 - f. Do you regulate the life of the ostrich and the stork?
 - g. Do you give the war horse his great strength?
 - h. Do the hawk and the eagle fly at your command?

B. God's Glory Seen in the Animate World (Ch. 39)

1. He questions Job about what he knows about animal life – and reminds him he doesn't know anything.
 - a. The animate world is a mystery to man, but not to God.

¹ Rogers, Richard, "In the Furnace of Affliction", Sunset Institute Press.

- b. God controls and cares for all of them, and man is not able.
- 2. God's point driven home by examples:
 - a. The Mountain goat – the way of their young (vs. 1-4).
 - b. The Wild donkey – his wasteland home (vs. 5-8).
 - c. The Wild ox – undomesticated (vs. 9-12). Untamable by man.
 - d. The Ostrich – no wisdom (vs. 13-18).
 - e. The Horse – strong and brave in battle (vs. 19-25).
 - f. The Hawk and eagle – resting in the heights (vs. 26-30).
 - g. The lion – his prowess as a hunter (vs. 39-40).

C. God's Glory Seen in the Leviathan (Chs. 40-41)

- 1. Again, as in chapter 38, he challenges Job to speak in response (v. 1).
Job can only say he has been hasty and will be quiet from now on.
- 2. Out of the storm again Jehovah claims to be just in all His dealings (v. 8).
 - a. He does indeed crush the wicked – but in His own time (vs. 11-13).
 - b. He doesn't explain the "when" or "how" though – That's for later in the Bible.
- 3. The rest of chapter 40 and all of chapter 41 present the "leviathan" in all his splendor. God says he ranks first in strength among all the creatures (v. 19). His characteristics are given (hippopotamus or elephant or crocodile):
 - a. He eats grass (v. 15).
 - b. He has strong tail and legs (vs. 16-17).
 - c. He hides in lotus plants and fears not the floods.
 - d. No one can capture him (40:24-41:11).
 - e. He is strong of body all over (41:12-44).
- 4. King over all (41:39; cf. 40:19).

CONCLUSION – HAPPILY EVER AFTER (Ch. 42)

As God is exalted far above the powers of nature in His might and wisdom, so He is also exalted above the moral world which He controls and rules. The Creator and Provider is also the Redeemer. He does not have to give an account to any of His creatures.

A. Job Humbly Acknowledges His Presumption and Anger and Sin

- 1. He repents (vs. 1-6). One who quarrels with the Almighty must also answer His questions!
 - a. Job has a new estimate of God.
 - b. Job confesses his own folly.
 - c. He humbles himself in dust and ashes.
 - d. He is ready to be restored.
- 2. He is glad to be answered though.

B. God Tells the Three Friends (Elihu Mentioned) to Repent Too Because Their Answers Were Not Right

- 1. Job's were (vs. 7-8), but he just didn't respect God enough.
- 2. Since Job is more righteous than they, he should offer sacrifice and prayer of repentance for them too. He does (vs. 7-12).

C. The Lord Restored All of What Job Had Lost and Then Some

CONCLUSION:

Job is now ready to live, not by his own integrity and righteousness, but by faith in the eternal purposes of God. Job has found what he really needs—not an answer to his question—but trust in God. The basic purpose of the book is to call on all men to accept by faith the purpose of God. The appearance of men to counsel Job led to controversy, disillusionment and despair; the appearance of God led to submission, faith and courage. The word of man was unable to penetrate the darkness of Job's mind; the word of God brought abiding fruit. Jehovah did not answer any of the burning questions that are debated in the book; but he answered the need of Job's heart. He did not explain each phase of the battle; but He made Job "more than conqueror" in it. The book takes its place in the testimony of the ages that there is a blank in the human heart that Jesus alone can fill.

Herein lies the solution of the problem of suffering. It is not that the Lord answers every question, or that He tells us the "Why?" of our suffering. This is often a matter of pride. But the humbled soul is ready to say, I do not know why. I cannot trace His hand, but I do know my God, and I know that He will make it all turn out for the good. This is the consistent answer of the entire Bible. The fact is established that the innocent do suffer, but this is due not to God's carelessness or to His evil purpose. It is a manifestation of His wisdom and power.²

² Rogers, Richard, "In the Furnace of Affliction", Sunset Institute Press.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SEVEN

1. What is illustrated by God answering Job out of the storm?

2. For what two things is God chiding Job in chapter 38?

1) _____

2) _____

3. What four (4) things are involve in Job's repentance?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

4. In what two areas of creation does God question Job.

1) _____

2) _____

5. How does Job respond to God's revelation and how does God respond to Job's repentance?

LESSON EIGHT

INTRODUCTION TO ECCLESIASTES

INTRODUCTION:

This is a continuation of the study of wisdom literature, those books that are in the middle of the Old Testament, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon. In this particular course we've excluded Psalms because that's a different course, but we're zeroing in on those other books called wisdom literature.

In some ways I really wish that the Old Testament had arranged these books differently. Ecclesiastes in many ways, philosophically and perhaps prophetically, should come before Proverbs. It has something to say that really precedes what Proverbs has to say. In other words at the end of the book of Ecclesiastes the writer, which is Solomon, will say the whole duty of man is to fear God and keep his commandments. That's at the end of the book. It's as if the writer has gone through a number of different things in his thinking and practice in the book of Ecclesiastes. He's gotten to the end and he said I've concluded after wandering through the maze of life that the real thing about man is to fear God and keep his commandments. It's like that's a conclusion to this book.

When you read Proverbs you find out in chapter 1 verse seven that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. So Ecclesiastes has gotten to a point at the end of the book that Proverbs starts with. That's the reason I think perhaps Ecclesiastes would be well to be studied before Proverbs, because in essence Solomon will say in this book, the things that I am going to share with you in this book these aren't wise. And he gets to the end and he says fearing God is the starting place. In Proverbs says fearing God that's the starting place; now let's talk about the rest of wisdom. This book is approached differently by different commentaries and commentators. I've approached it a certain way and will study it from that particular approach.

LESSON TEXT: Ecclesiastes One

LESSON AIM: To become acquainted with the book and examine some of the philosophies Solomon presents in the book.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. Learn of some false philosophies of life that invade our thinking and our lives.
 2. Be able to define and describe the term "Philosophy."
 3. Learn who possibly wrote the book and some key thoughts and concepts presented by the author.
-

FALSE PHILOSOPHIES AND HOW THEY AFFECT ONE'S LIFE

A. Commercials Promote False Philosophies of Life

1. Their favorites and why. What do they say about a philosophy of life?
2. Commercials, etc.
 - a. Grotons fish – buy their products and we will donate to saving the oceans.
 - b. Fleishman's margarine – people saying, "I'm three!" or "I'm one!" though old. Life began when diet and controlled lifestyle starts.
 - c. Solorflex – with greater physical condition, being in good shape comes: self-esteem, more confidence, new power to control your situation, meet challenges head on and come out on top, looking good/feeling good is from being in good shape.
 - d. Humor in commercials – life is a laugh. Comedy on TV.
 - e. Schlitz – "You only go around once in life. Get all the gusto you can get."
 - f. Power Stick Deodorant – power and control in your deodorant is representative of a life that's powerful and in control.
 - g. Royal Caribbean Cruises – life is enduring work to earn enough to sail the Caribbean for a week.
 - h. Schwarzkopf – "I'd like to work with young people. Education. I believe that education is the answer to so many problems in our society."
 - g. "Folks, it just doesn't get any better than this," an auto dealer says. It indicates that life is a nice car.

B. Everybody Has a Philosophy of Life. They may not be able to verbalize it, but their attitudes and actions reflect a certain philosophy of life, or maybe a mixture of philosophies.

1. The music you listen to reflects your philosophy.
2. Clothes you wear – or won't wear.
3. Attitude toward school work.
4. Attitude toward authorities.
5. Recreational favorites.
6. Television shows, movies you watch and like.

DEFINITION, DESCRIPTION AND NATURE OF PHILOSOPHIES

A. A Philosophy of Life Is the Rule or Set of Principles or Rules by Which One Lives

1. It's a description of what a person thinks makes his life valuable or worth living.
2. It's the approach he takes to life, defining for him his purpose and values in life.

NOTE: As you meditate on the kind of people you know at work, your family, and school—describe succinctly several fairly common philosophies in our country. Use one or two sentences for each one.

B. Determine What Is Your Philosophy of Life

1. The nature of one's mind apart from God – messed up, faulty thinking.
 - a. Romans 1:21 – *“For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their **thinking** became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.”*
 - b. Romans 1:25 – *“They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.”*
 - Price tags don't always express the true value of things.
 - c. Ephesians 4:17-19 – *“They are darkened in their understanding...”*
2. The nature of one's mind in fellowship with God. When we become Christians, we are saved from sin, but also we begin the transformation into Christ-likeness in thought as well as action.
 - a. Romans 8:29 – *“...to be conformed to the likeness of his Son,...”*
 - b. Philippians 2:5 – *“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus...”*
 - c. 2 Corinthians 3:18 – *“...being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory ...”*
3. Unfortunately we do not always make the desired changes. We don't grow out of faulty ways of thinking and ungodly ways of acting.

cf. Colossian letter, esp. ch. 2.

C. In Ecclesiastes, Solomon Tries to Present a Number of Philosophies of Life
He tries most of them himself and most of them were wrong.**D. “Key” Concepts in Ecclesiastes**

1. Key verses are 1:2-3.
2. Key thought – life apart from God is completely void of meaning and purpose, and full of disappointment.
3. Key word is “vanity” which is used 37 times and means futility, uselessness, nothingness.
 - a. Ecclesiastes is an inspired book but not everything in it is true.
 - b. Some of the thoughts are partially true, and some are false.
4. Key person is Solomon, king of Israel.

E. About the Author and Title of the Book

1. In the Hebrew Bible, the book is called *Koheleth*, which means “the words of the preachers.”
2. The translators of the Septuagint rendered this *ekklesiastes*, from which we derive our English title.
3. The Hebrew term suggests one who speaks to an assembly.

F. Solomon “Lived” as Much as Anyone Ever Has

1. Solomon experienced a great deal in life. He saw a lot; He had a lot; he tried a lot.
2. Because of that background, he serves as a test-case about life.
3. Having approached life from about every angle, Solomon shows and tells us many truths about our existence on this earth.

NOTE: Men today are attempting the same approaches that Solomon found to be fallacious. The book of Ecclesiastes is Solomon's progression in approaches and thought. Let us survey the book from this standpoint, the philosophies of life tried by Solomon.

Note also as you study the book the development of his concept of and attitude toward God.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON EIGHT

1. What is one of the things that is most influential in shaping our philosophy of life?

2. List six things that may reflect our philosophy of life.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____
3. Give the definition, description and nature of PHILOSOPHIES.


4. What is the "key" thought in the book of Ecclesiastes?

5. True or false: The book of Ecclesiastes is an inspired book and everything in it is true.
6. In the Hebrew Bible, the book is called *Koheleth* which means _____
_____.

LESSON NINE

FALSE PHILOSOPHIES OF LIFE (1)

INTRODUCTION:

cclesiastes written by Solomon – to whom we don't really know but it's about false philosophies of life. In the book of Ecclesiastes you get meaningless, chasing-after-wind philosophies of life. We're going to look at this book in segments. We're going to look at pieces of the text and read those texts and others that are discussed. You will discover what false philosophy of life Solomon is really talking about here, what's the teacher trying to say?

LESSON TEXT: Ecclesiastes 1:1 – 2:11.

LESSON AIM: To examine two philosophies presented by the author and the merits or lack of merits of each one.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. Examine Solomon's first philosophy and determine if his conclusions are true or false.
 2. Look at the philosophy of intellectualism and discover its merits or lack thereof.
 3. Investigate the philosophy of hedonism and its dark road of hopelessness.
-

THE VANITY OF AN UNYIELDED LIFE TO GOD

A. The Proof – The First One (1: 3-11)

1. Key phrase – “under the sun.”
 - a. Means in the closed system of the world that I (Solomon) know, empirically perceived through my senses.
 - b. This means it is a system that excludes God, e.g. Deism, Theism. This is an “Atheistic” philosophy.
2. Life is boring, discouraging, frustrating – and therefore meaningless – because nothing can be changed.
 - a. All has been set in motion, and there can be no interruption and intervention or introduction of something new and different.
 - b. No matter what you do, you cannot really alter the way it is. It's a sense of fatalism in the universe.
3. Examples from life in that world from the text.
 - a. People come and go, but the world remains the same (v. 4).
 - b. Sun continues to rise and set (v. 5).
 - c. Wind blows here and there (v. 6).

- d. Streams flow into the sea, yet it doesn't fill up (v. 7).
- 4. Result – nothing really gained by man's existence (vs. 3,11).
 - a. He has no control; he has no effect; and he really gets nothing out of it.
 - b. The system always wins and man is a victim of it.

B. The Question: Is He Right?

PHILOSOPHY #1 – YOU CAN'T BEAT THE SYSTEM

- A. Certainly life is pretty much as it's always been, but there is no place in Christian theology for such pessimistic fatalism.
 - 1. How do you feel? How should you feel? cf. Romans 1:16-17; being made into Christ's likeness, preaching the gospel to the whole world.
 - 2. God's philosophy would be: "You can make a difference in your life and in the world with the gospel and my power!"

B. No Real Answer or Approach or Alternative

Christians do not believe this philosophy but know that God can change all things for those who come to Him.

PHILOSOPHY #2 – THE VANITY OF INTELLECTUALISM (1:12-18)

A. Other titles:

- 1. "Education, Education, Education; That is the panacea of society!" – Key Verses (13,16-18).
- 2. The concept – if I just get enough education and experience, I'll succeed and be happy in life! Expressions of this:
 - a. Enough education gets you a good job, money, status, prestige, wife...success!
 - b. Schwarzkopf – education is the answer to our society's problems – the problem of AIDS, poverty, teen pregnancy, etc.
 - c. Safe Sex will take care of the teen sex problem and the AIDS problem.

B. Examples of Noted People of Our Society Who Believe this

- 1. The sea explorer Jacques Cousteau.
- 2. Professional students.
- 3. College professors.
- 4. The one who knows so much – even Bible! We in the church have fallen for this philosophy too.
 - a. We have believed that if we just put enough Bible knowledge in this mind, it will act right!
 - b. Edna Hayes used to say to me, "Charles, they know better (implying that they should therefore do better)".

B. What Do You like to Know About? Why? Is there an innate curiosity in man? Is there worth in these pursuits? Is there a balance to be had?

- 1. Solomon concluded it was "chasing after wind," e.g. catching wind. Why?

- a. No lasting satisfaction.
- b. No real purpose or eternal end in view. “Sorrow” and “grief” – no answers.
- c. Its inability to correct nature’s mistakes (v. 15).

C. Note His Attitude Towards God (v. 13)! It’s almost God’s fault! He sets the curiosity in man and then makes it a dead end!

PHILOSOPHY #3 – THE VANITY OF HEDONISM (2:1-11)

A. A Philosophy about Pleasure

"Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good." But that also proved to be meaningless.

- 1. “Life in the fast lane” – meaningless.
- 2. NEB – *“Come, I will plunge into pleasures and enjoy myself.”*

B. The Word “Pleasure” Describes a Hedonistic Approach

Whatever the desires of my flesh want, I try to get it – “devoted to pleasure.”

- 1. Forty-five times he uses the pronouns “I, me, mine, etc.”
- 2. Hedonism is described or expressed in a number of ways.
- 3. Laughter (v. 2) – whatever makes me laugh, keep happy, jokes (TV emphasis).
- 4. Alcohol (v. 3) – modest, controlled approach. Commercials portray this and try to make it seem like the successful, the beautiful, the young, the smart drink.

C. He’s Searching for What’s Worthwhile to Do

- 1. Materialism (vs. 4-8). *“I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards.”*
- 2. Accomplishment (vs. 4-6) – challenge of a project and the thrill of finishing.
- 3. Control over people (v. 7) – *“I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves”* – power, e.g. politics.
- 4. Amusement (v. 8) – singers (v. 9).
- 5. Illicit sex (v. 8c) – harem, the delight of men.
- 6. Reputation, fame, status (vs. 8, 9). *“I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me.”* – Legendary.

D. His Conclusion

- 1. Meaningless.
- 2. Chasing after wind (vs. 1,11).
- 3. Nothing gained (vs. 1,11).
- 4. Foolish (v. 2).
- 5. Only reward was the delight of having accomplished something (v. 10).

Conclusion

We have to view things as God views them. All these things in our world are made by God and he has given us a biblical perspective of these things but before we go

looking at the biblical perspective in this book we're looking at Solomon saying don't go down this path don't head toward this direction because these things are all false. They don't give meaning to life – they are meaningless.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON NINE

1. List the three false philosophies of life examined by Solomon in this lesson.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

2. What is meant by “a closed system?”

3. What is God's philosophy when talking about a “closed system?”

4. What is involved in the concept of intellectualism?


_____. Is there some good in this?

5. What is “hedonism” and what dangers does this philosophy hold?

LESSON TEN

FALSE PHILOSOPHIES OF LIFE (2)

INTRODUCTION:

cclesiastes is a book that talks about a lot of meaningless things, a lot of chasing after wind, a lot of vanity. The writer will use that statement or that word or that phrase a number of times in this book. He'll describe the philosophy of life that he has tried or that he has seen others try and he says this is meaningless, don't go down this road. Perhaps he's talking to young people perhaps he's talking to his children perhaps he's just talking to a general audience. But whatever the case he seems to be working down this group of philosophies of life that are really ungodly, they're not right, they're not according to God's word and somewhere in those philosophies he will say, this is meaningless.

This is very instructive for us today because these philosophies of life are very up-to-date. Lots of people today are trying these philosophies of life and, of course, they come to the same conclusion, at least God does, that they don't work. I think most people while they're going down these roads eventually find out this is not where I want to go. This really doesn't gain anything; this is not what I'm searching for, really. Perhaps that talks about the insight that God puts in every man to say there is a searching and a seeking after me and when you find me that's when you find complete satisfaction and joy and relationship.

LESSON TEXT: Ecclesiastes 2:12 – 3:22

LESSON AIM: To bring to the student's attention more philosophies which the Arthur considers and discards.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. Consider the mind-set of the writer as he contemplates more philosophies that doesn't seem to work for his peace of mind.
 2. Discover the writer's concept of God and how He works in this life.
-

PHILOSOPHY #4: THE DIGNIFIED APPROACH TO DOING EVIL (2:12-16)

A. Description from the Text

1. He pauses for a minute to make a general statement about how each of these philosophies could be carried out:
 - a. With wisdom, or
 - b. With madness and folly (cf. 2:3).
2. Wisdom is skill and keeping your head about things, dignified, upright – according to society's standards.

3. “Madness” is foolishness and boasting and “folly” is thickheadedness.
 - a. Don’t be and act a complete idiot in these approaches. Be a sensible, dignified, not self-deprecating sinner.
 - b. Even society sees the foolish sinner as evil and stupid, even though his practice may be the same as the dignified indulgent.

B. Sounds Good but Nothing to Be Gained by this Approach

1. An all-wise king stated it, and none after him will know any more (v. 12).
2. Death is the great equalizer.
 - a. It renders wise and fool alike as forgotten people after they die.
 - b. Nothing really gained by that approach (v. 15).

NOTE: The similarity of the folly approach with the wisdom approach:

1. The same things the fool faces the wise faces also (v. 15; cf. 9:11) Unless wisdom sees further than this, it is truly of no lasting value.
2. Seeking to gain a remembrance among men as a goal is vain if one builds only for this (v. 16).
3. The wise (skillful) man and the fool (self-confident) may die the same way – each wrapped up in self and this present existence (v. 16b).
4. The wise (skillful) man hates life when it dawns on him that all his labor “under the sun” (not the Son – cf. 1 Corinthians 15:58) is vanity (like a vapor)– and he can’t take it with him. (v. 17; 1 Timothy 6:7)¹

THE POSITIVES AND NEGATIVES OF WORKING HARD (2:17-26)

A. Work to Get Ahead (vs. 17-21). Note the Words:

1. Work – “...*the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me...I must leave them to the one who comes after me.*” (v. 17).
2. Toil – (vs. 18, 19).
3. Effort.
4. Skill.
5. Toilsome labor.
6. Anxious striving.
He’s a workaholic, to get ahead. “Son, the only way to get ahead is to work harder than anyone else. If you just work hard enough, anything is within your grasp.”

B. It Is Meaningless – it Has No Lasting Value – Thus labor is not worth the effort.

1. You don’t really get anywhere or gain anything (v. 22).
“*For what hath a man of all his labor, and of the striving of his heart, wherein he laboreth under the sun?*”
2. When you die, a fool may inherit or take what was yours (v. 18). What a waste!

¹ Keesee, Dayton, Ecclesiastes Outline, published by Sunset Institute Press.

C. Solution – Don’t Make Work an End Within Itself

1. Don’t bring the job home with you. Don’t get ulcers over business worries. Do your best and be content with that.
2. Find satisfaction in doing a good job and seeing something accomplished; but when you come home, “Eat, drink, and be merry.”

D. Interesting view of God introduced (vs. 24-26)

1. God is very fatalistic and deterministic. “*A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too, I see, is from the hand of God.*”
2. God is the source of all these things.
3. God assigns to the sinner a very hard road.
“*To the man who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God.*” (v. 26 NKJ)
4. He acknowledges God’s control, but doesn’t seem submissive to it.

E. Work Ethic Is Definitely Biblical

(Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13). What is the biblical work ethic?

1. Work for God – evangelism (Ephesians).
2. Work to take care of family (1 Timothy 5).
3. Work to prevent being a burden to others (1 Corinthians 9; 1 Thessalonians 5).
4. To follow the example of Jesus (John 9:3-4 – “...while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.”
So what’s Solomon’s basic problem in his approach to work?

FATALISM IN ITS VARIOUS FORMS (Chapters 3 – 6)**A. That’s the Way Life Is (3:1-15)**

1. Famous opening poem (1-8) about the harsh realities of life.
2. In presenting this theme, the writer gives contrasts. For each positive, there seems to be a negative and vice-versa. It all cancels each other out! His conclusion: What’s the use?!

B. There Is No Gain in Life for Man (v. 9)

“*What does the worker gain from his toil?*”

1. God has predetermined time and life (vs. 10-11, 19).
2. Man thinks of eternity but isn’t really allowed satisfaction by God (v. 11).
3. Can’t change or add to anything (v. 15) – repeat of chapter one. (“*Man’s fate is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both...*”)

C. Solution (v. 13) – Same as 2:17ff: – “eat, drink, be happy, do good” (an addition, not so selfish now).**D. His View of God at this Point.**

1. God is Sovereign (v. 14).

2. God is Judge (vs. 15,17).
3. Arbitrary (vs. 10-12, 16), Heavy on man (vs. 10, 14).

GOD IS ARBITRARY AND UNFAIR (3:16-22)

A. He Seems to Expand on vs. 10,14

It has to do with the seeming arbitrariness of the Sovereign Lord.

B. His Example Is That There Is Evil in the World (v. 16)

"I thought in my heart, "God will bring to judgment both the righteous and the wicked, for there will be a time for every activity, a time for every deed."

1. God will judge the wicked one in time (Law of Retribution), not in eternity.
2. This interpretation based on his apparent lack of belief in afterlife.
3. He doesn't see a consistency in God's actions (or lack of them) in this area.

C. He Believes God Tests Men Arbitrarily (v. 18)

1. Because He enjoys seeing man squirm!
2. He sees God as being Sadistic! Capricious!

D. This Leads Solomon to Conclude That Man Is No Better than the Animals

1. Surely God totally controls the existence of animals.
2. It looks like He does the same to us – just as He does the animals.
3. Because of his lack of knowledge of afterlife, he concludes that life on earth is all there is.
 - a. That life is so closely controlled by God you can't fight it.
 - b. We're no better in God's sight than the animals (vs. 19-20).
"Man's fate is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both: As one dies, so dies the other. All have the same breath; man has no advantage over the animal. Everything is meaningless. All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return."

E. The Solution Is the Same – Enjoy Yourself

1. Get a little pleasure out of life and work, because there's not much you can do to direct your own destiny, so don't get intense about trying to.
2. Roll with the punches life hits you with (v. 22).
3. Very fatalistic, and he doesn't seem to like it, or the God who made it that way.
 - a. Rejoice in one's own good work in the present (vs. 22a, 12f). Be yourself; Be busy; Be happy.
 - b. Realize God holds the future and respect His unfolding of things. Is not this the same great lesson of Matthew 6:33f, which most of us yet need to learn? "His portion" proves God is the giver (v.13).

NOTE: The evolutionist views us as animals, and would conclude with the same conclusion (no afterlife) and their solution – (enjoy life), though not necessarily believing in fatalism.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TEN:

1. Concerning the dignified approach to doing evil, what are two ways a man may approach doing each of these false philosophies?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____

2. Define the two terms just mentioned.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____

3. What is the writer's view of God presented in 2:24-36?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

4. Concerning the value of work, the teacher gives four (4) biblical reasons that work is to be done. What are these three reasons?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

5. What ultimate solution does the writer arrive at after considering his understanding of the various philosophies in this lesson?

LESSON ELEVEN

FALSE PHILOSOPHIES OF LIFE (3)

INTRODUCTION:



solomon, the writer of Ecclesiastes is talking about philosophies of life. Unfortunately for Solomon they are all wrong. He's been going down these different paths to try to find out what is life. Perhaps that question resonates in the heart of most of us, to find out what is life. Jesus addressed this question in the New Testament giving a number of different answers in relation to a number of different topics. Solomon would've been wise to have had that kind of insight, but he had a lot of worldly wisdom and he approaches life with that worldly wisdom in a number of different ways that are incorrect.

We come to chapter four in our study and were going to see some different philosophies that he points out. In all of them he will say this is meaningless this is vanity. He will go down this path in chapter four, the first six verses. I call this dog eat dog survival of the fittest. There's going to be a lot said about oppression and power, one person over another. Listen to the first six verses as Solomon talks about the dog eat dog philosophy of life again.

LESSON TEXT: Ecclesiastes 4:1-16 – 5:1-7.

LESSON AIM: To be warned concerning false assumptions concerning life and one's relationship toward man and God.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will. . .

1. Examine three more philosophies considered by Solomon and come to a conclusion about the validity of each.
 2. Consider the conclusion reached by Solomon and determine the validity of that conclusion.
-

THE OPPRESSION AND POWER PHILOSOPHY (4:1-6)

God is not mentioned in this chapter. Here is man's miserable moments among men. "I returned and considered" shows that Solomon is reevaluating to find the failure he has vexingly experienced.

A. The Nature of this Philosophy

1. There is oppression, there is power.
2. It looks like one person is over another. One person wants to dominate the other person.
3. "Winning Is Everything."
4. He saw, but didn't ascribe to or participate in this philosophy.

B. We Can Phrase it Several Ways

1. Dog-eat-dog.
2. Survival of the fittest, meanest, toughest.
3. Iron Rule – might makes right.
4. Force, coercion is the only way to get the job done.
5. Challenge of competition (v. 4).
 - a. It's a philosophy of power and pressure and position that gets you what you want and need; and so whatever it takes to get there, do it!
 - b. The man even enjoys it, seen in the statement “folds his hands” (v. 5a).

C. Solomon's Evaluation of this Philosophy

1. It is meaningless (v. 4).
2. It is chasing after wind (v. 4).
3. It is better to have died and not feel the pain any longer (v. 2).
4. It is better never to have been born (v. 3).
That kind of existence is not worth living and enduring. The only alternative to enjoyment of life as a gift from God's hand is the gloomy despair caused, in part at least, by reflection on unchecked oppression.

D. Areas of Life Where We See this Philosophy Prevalent

1. Business – organizations and bosses doing anything to get ahead.
2. Oppressive governments – heavy taxation and penalties.
3. Husbands and wives – abusive behavior in the relationship.
4. Parents and children – heavy handed in their relationships.
5. Elders and congregations – arbitrary decisions without considering the desires of the congregation.

NOTE: This is not a good philosophy at all. It is very hurtful. It can intimidate, it inhibits people from proceeding in the way that they want to with their lives, or in the way they need to with their lives, to take care of their families. Why would Solomon deplore such an approach to one's problems?

E. Reasons this Approach Is to Be Rejected

Consider what the problems are in this philosophy.

1. It hurts people – “tears,” “no comforter.”
2. It fosters conditions that are toilsome, troublesome, produces turmoil (v. 4).
3. It breeds envy (v. 4).
4. Selfish – deceived by covetous desires (both hands full).
5. Materialistic.

F. Jesus on “Power”

1. Matthew 20:28; Mark 10; Luke 22:24-27.
2. John 13:1ff; Philippians 2:5-8.

SURROUND YOURSELF WITH PEOPLE PHILOSOPHY(4:7-12)**A. Another Problem for the Aggressive, Workaholic, Step-on-everyone Approach**

1. It leaves one friendless – without companionship.
2. No contentment or enjoyment in life (v. 8).
3. Loneliness – because he used everybody to get where he is.

B. Solomon Concludes That Price Is Too High

People, friends, loving family are the essence of life. Examples of advantage of having people in one's life:

1. More accomplished (v. 9).
2. Helper / helpers (v. 10).
3. Warmth and encouragement by associates (v. 11).
4. Strength to defend (v. 12).

C. Places People in the World Today are Trying this Philosophy

1. Pubs, bars.
2. Living together.
3. Clubs – Lion's club, etc.
4. Attending church services might be for the purpose of having friends.
5. Cults.
6. Love song.

D. The Biblical Context in Which Human Relationships Are Meaningful and Satisfy Their God-intended Purpose

1. Church (Ephesians 2:19-22).
2. Marriage (Ephesians 5:22-33).
3. Children (Ephesians 6:1-4).
4. Business (Ephesians 6:5-9).

PERPETUATE YOUR YOUTH PHILOSOPHY (4:13-16)

A. The Respect Given to the Young

1. He is afraid that in his old age no one will listen to him or follow him, even though he's a king.
2. He is panicking over lost influence.

B. He Depicts Perhaps an Historical Event

1. An old, proud king was foolish in not listening to advice.
2. A young wise man came along and stole the hearts of the people, e.g. Rehoboam (not old though) and Jeroboam.

C. Some Might Try to Stay Young, Believing That's Where the Action is

1. Our society caters to youth and youthfulness.
2. Advertizing emphasizes the attractiveness of youth.
3. Cosmetics – designed to make one look younger.
4. Bad attitudes toward the usefulness of aged people and their experience.
5. Preachers hired who are young – churches want young preachers with several years of experience.

D. Even Solomon Sees the Fallacy of this Philosophy

1. The fickle people eventually turn away from following the youth or later people will be looking for another “golden boy”.
2. Always looking for a new movie star.
3. New, bright, strong, young athlete. Fame in youth is short-lived.
4. New preacher.
5. Youth rally speakers.

SOLOMON’S CONCLUSION – TREAD LIGHTLY WITH GOD (5:1-7)

A. Be Cautious in Your Relationship with God

1. Since God is awesome and He will repay evil, a person should tread lightly and uprightly with Him to avoid punishment.
2. In other words, fear God because He’ll zap you.
3. It is utilitarian in attitude, totally pragmatic, and not based on a close relationship with God.
4. He’s just talking about avoiding getting clobbered – like the child who does right only because he wants to avoid punishment, not because he loves the parent.

B. The Attitude of Modern Man

I don’t know that too many people have this attitude toward God today, but they might. One might think that he should appear to be devout, believing that this will keep God off his back (Amos 5:21-24 – 6:4-6).

Conclusion:

1. Listen to God.
 2. Worship well.
 3. Watch your speech.
 4. Keep your vows.
- Good moral upstanding citizen!

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON ELEVEN:

1. In 4:1-6 Solomon presents another philosophy, what is this philosophy and what does Solomon conclude?

1) _____

2) _____

2. The second philosophy presented in this lesson is found in 4:7-12, what is this philosophy?

3. What philosophy does Solomon consider in 4:13-16 and what is his conclusion concerning it?

1) _____

2) _____

4. What is Solomon's final conclusion in 5:1-7?

LESSON TWELVE

FALSE & TRUE PHILOSOPHIES OF LIFE

INTRODUCTION:

If riches are meaningless, and that's true as far as Solomon is concerned. It is a good thing that man be allowed to enjoy himself. He says a couple times in that text that this is man's lot. That's the fatalism, the determinism, that's the control that God has over life, but that it is a gift from God that he be allowed to enjoy his life. That kind of statement leads into chapter six. This is a little contradictory to what he just said in the last part of chapter 5.

"I have seen another evil under the sun, and it weighs heavily on men: God gives a man wealth, possessions and honor, so that he lacks nothing his heart desires, but God does not enable him to enjoy them, and a stranger enjoys them instead. This is meaningless, a grievous evil." (6:1-2)

LESSON TEXT: Ecclesiastes 6:1 – 8:2

LESSON AIM: To acquaint the student with even more of Solomon's approaches to life.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will. . .

1. Learn four more philosophical approaches on how to live life.
-

GOD DENIES ENJOYMENT OF PROSPERITY (Ch. 6).

A. A Combination of Thoughts Already Presented in Chapters 1 and 5

B. This Philosophy Says We Should Enjoy Our Prosperity, Yet God Doesn't Really Seem to Allow Such

1. Man struggles and struggles just to satisfy his appetites (v. 7).
2. But when he does, it isn't lasting. He has to do it all again, like cleaning house.
3. No gain to it all. No impression on society.
4. The roving appetite gets man in trouble (v. 9).
5. An invader takes it (v. 2).

C. Interesting Notes:

1. Repeat of stillborn better than the living (vs. 3-6, of Job 3:16).

2. “Proper burial” (v. 3) – a must in that day and time to retain respect of person, dignity.

D. God Is to Blame!

He challenges God’s fairness. He gives but then doesn’t allow enjoyment!

LIVE WISELY AND PRAGMATICALLY – THE MORALIST (7:1-14).

A. An Attitude of Cynicism or Giving up Seems to Set in at this Juncture

B. A Group of Loosely Related Statements of Wisdom

1. Each one is a reflection of a general philosophy that is, “Live wisely and pragmatically.”
2. Each of the situations is an example or a part of that lifestyle.

C. Examples of Attitudes or Approaches to Some Aspects of Life Fitting this Philosophy

1. Build a good reputation.
2. The end is better than the beginning or during the process. Of course the ultimate end is death, so it is the best (vs. 1,8).
3. Stay sober, even sorrowful; because after a high, you’ll only ‘come down’ emotionally to sorrow and be very hurt and disappointed (vs. 2-4).
4. Stay around wise people and listen to their advice (v. 5).
Fools only lead you to nothing good (v. 6).
5. Be honest and fair with people (v. 7).
6. Avoid pride and arrogance (v. 8).
7. Avoid anger, because it only renders you a fool (v. 9).
8. Don’t live in memories of the past (v. 10). It is a fruitless comparison to make with today’s world.

D. The Wisdom of Living the “Good Life”

1. Summing this up, he urges one to live a “good moral life.”
2. Because it’s what will avoid the most trouble and prevent the most unhappiness (v. 12).

E. His Attitude Towards God (vs. 13-14)

1. God is responsible for the crooked world (v. 13). He is Sovereign. Solomon still seems to hold the determination theory.
2. Solution – roll with the punches (v. 14a).
3. Why – because man cannot know the future. Even if he could, he couldn’t do much about it!

TAKE THE MIDDLE ROAD – AVOID EXTREMES (7:15-22)

A. Closely Related to the First Part of this Chapter and its Pragmatism

However, we have here another expression of that philosophy. It’s a behavior or approach that reflects a Pragmatic Philosophy.

B. It Is Wise to Avoid Extremes

1. Solomon's conclusion is to avoid being fanatical, avoid being extreme, even in reference to holiness or wickedness (vs. 16-17).
2. Proverbs on not having too much or too little money. Therefore, too, don't let anyone influence you to the point of extremism (vs. 21-22).

C. The Relation Between Wickedness and Righteousness

Observation tells us that wickedness and righteousness exist, and there is a continual "holy war" between them. There is a great chasm between and neither can cross over.

D. The Inequality of Life (v. 15)

If you try to do it right, you don't really gain anything, so hold onto all aspects of life.

E. Reacting to Fanatics

1. The fanatically righteous.
2. The wickedness of the wicked.

F. A Description of the "Middle of the Road" Approach Today

1. Goes to church services but isn't committed.
2. Believes in anti-nuclear world, but wouldn't be vocal or protest in marches about it.
3. Does his work, but isn't consumed with it.
4. Gives the face of religion for social reasons, but denies its claims on his life.
5. cf. 9:7-10.

G. Would You Consider Christianity Fanatical (Or Intense) in its Approach?

1. Fanatical statements made Jesus.
 - a. Matthew 6:24 – *"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."*
 - b. Luke 6:46 – *"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"*
 - c. Luke 9:57-62 – *"As they were walking..."*
 - d. Matthew 10:32-39 – *"...whosoever shall confess..."*
2. We constantly struggle with how to be true to those descriptions of the Christian, and our solution is usually more "middle of the road" than fanatical.
3. Note the tension of fanaticism and becoming all things to people or identity for the sake of evangelism.

LIVE A GOOD MORAL LIFE BECAUSE IT PLEASES GOD (7:23-8:1)**A. A Glimmer of Hope**

For a brief moment in his "practically atheistic" philosophies, he gives us a glimmer of hope about letting God truly have a part in his life.

1. There is no “meaningless” statement in these verses.
2. He still doesn’t comprehend life and its inequalities, and therefore probably still holds God accountable.
3. He is still very pragmatic.
4. But..., but he says, “*The man who pleases God...*” (v. 26).
5. And, he blames a lot of man’s problems on man (v. 29). For the first time we see him admitting that man is sinful and responsible (v. 28).

B. A Turning Point in the Book

1. He introduced God into his approach back in 2:24-26.
2. His understanding of man and God is progressing.

SUMMARY

When we come back for our next lesson on Ecclesiastes we’re going to get closer and closer to the right philosophy that Solomon is going to end with in this book. We will survey a few more false philosophies and then we’ll get right to the heart of the matter at the end of the book to see where Solomon really ends up in regard to the right philosophy of life. **(CHAPTERS 8-10 WILL NOT BE STUDIED INDIVIDUALLY IN THIS COURSE)**

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWELVE

1. What are the four false philosophies studied in this lesson?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

2. Of what does Solomon accuse God concerning the prosperity of a man?

3. According to Solomon, who is responsible for the crooked world?

LESSON THIRTEEN

TRUE PHILOSOPHIES OF LIFE

INTRODUCTION:

In previous lessons we been reading about false philosophies presented by Solomon for his hearers to make them realize that you don't want to go down those paths. They are paths of self-indulgence, self-satisfaction not really thinking about God, but really thinking only about self. In previous lessons you've seen a good flavor of the false philosophies, but now having said all of those negative things all those wrong things, Solomon is now going to at least make some progress out of the pit of those false philosophies of life into a more acceptable philosophy of life. I don't think by the end of the book that he's gotten there because you see even in the last two chapters, 11 and 12 he's going to have three statements that we've seen before in other parts of the book.

He brings together a final philosophy that he's going to accept and live with. To him, it's the only reasonable, plausible, least painful one. I don't think he's reached a totally mature solution and conclusion because there are still statements of resistance to God and life (11:8,10; 12:8). However, it's a start!

There are three parts to his concluding philosophy.

1. Do for others (11:1-6).
2. Start serving God from youth (11:7-12:8).
3. Fear God and keep His commandments (12:9-14).

It's still a bit of a pragmatic approach. Still not totally submissive to God.

LESSON TEXT: Ecclesiastes 11 – 12.

LESSON AIM: To discover the conclusion of Solomon that the whole duty of man is to fear God and be obedient to Him.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will. . .

Learn that Solomon's final decision is to do for others, serve God when you are young, and to fear God and keep his commandments.

DO FOR OTHERS BECAUSE IT WILL REAP BENEFITS (11:1-6)

A. Trust God to Supply

1. "Cast your bread..." (v. 1). cf. Isaiah 28:28; 30:33 – "bread" is representative of seed.
2. The meaning seems to be, "Give to people; help them; and trust God to return to you." It's a somewhat unselfish approach, which is quite different from what we've been hearing from Solomon in previous sections of the book.

3. So don't be idle – Looking up at the clouds does no good (vs. 3-4).

B. “Keep Trying; Keep Searching; Keep Growing”

1. You will receive a return some day. – From commerce or business to be aggressive and venturesome.
2. Spread investments out (v. 2).
3. Disasters unforeseen will come (v. 3), so number two is important.
4. You can't control or manipulate the forces of nature controlled by God (vs. 4-5).
5. So, sow and wait and accept the inevitable results.
6. Life is to be enjoyed, so enjoy it!

NOTE: So as he finishes this section the emphasis is prepare for the future so that you will be taken care of. Don't get all upset about what you can't control and while you're bringing in that crop and while things are preparing for your security in the future, share with some other people too because they are probably in need as well.

BEGIN SERVING GOD AT A YOUNG AGE (11:7 – 12:8)

A. Be Happy in Your Youth

Don't spend it in planning any of the fruitless endeavors Solomon has described previously. It's all a waste of time, effort, and life (11:7-9a).

1. Remember, however, that you will face God in judgment (11:9c), so make sure that your enjoyment is according to His will. (Note again that we're not sure how much Solomon knew about afterlife and judgment therein. He may well have been talking about judgments of God in this life.)
2. Not only should a youth keep in mind the judgment, but he should build a close relationship with God, in his youth (12:1). Honor Him, obey Him, love Him.
 - a. Could Solomon have been reflecting on his own life here, regretting the wasted time and the consequential difficulties it has brought? There's no doubt that a rebellious youth leaves many scars and develops habits and thought patterns that are difficult to break.
 - b. In verses 2-7 we have a description of the “evil” that will come in later years. Perhaps he means more “pain and affliction and trial” than an increase of sin itself. The pains of old age are a real burden if one has wasted his youth in frivolous pursuits.

B. Specific Conditions of Later Years (Old Age) Described

1. 2a – loss of one's mental and ruling faculties.
2. 2b – affliction follows affliction. Usually relief follows a rainstorm, but in old age another one follows close upon it.
3. 3 – looking out window probably implies dim eyesight. Weakness of body, even palsied condition of old age.
4. 4a – “doors to street closed” – seclusion of old age – maybe loss of hearing.
5. 4b – “the grinders” – not teeth lost – can't hear what's going on in the street.

6. 4c – startled by little sounds, even that of a bird, but really they have hardness of hearing. Trouble sleeping.
7. 4c – “songs grow faint” could be the inability to participate in song and dance.
8. 5a – older folks tend to lose sense of balance and sense of security. A fall shatters their fragile bones. Because of the dangers, they withdraw from public life.
9. 5b – “the almond tree” – white hair.
10. 5c – “grasshopper” – the old person can’t even carry a grasshopper! Too heavy! His strength is gone.
11. 5d – “desire is no longer stirred” – “desire” is “caperberry” in LXX, an aphrodisiac or sexual stimulant. The idea is that even with a stimulant sexual desire is non-existent.

C. Then – Death! And Professional Mourners (5e)

1. So, vs. 6-7 – re-emphasizes verse 1. Two illustrations to show how sudden life ends.
 - a. Golden bowl attached to a silver cord that breaks. The bowl smashes on the floor in ruins.
 - b. Pitcher on a windlass is broken at the bottom of the well when the cord snaps.
2. The spirit returning to God reflects a change in Solomon (cf. 3:21). He seems now to be placing his trust in God. cf. Hebrews 12:9 – “...the Father of spirits,” Zechariah 12:1 – “...formeth the spirit of man within him,” Numbers 16:22 – “...God of the spirits of all flesh,” Genesis 2:7; James 2:26.

D. So, the Human Approach Is Indeed Complete Vanity (v. 8). Only the spiritual, godly approach is meaningful.

FEAR GOD AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS (12:9-14)

A. His Credentials as a Teacher (v. 9a)

B. His Method of Research and Instruction (v. 9b)

C. The Usefulness and Authority of His Instruction (vs. 10-11). *“The words of the wise are like goads, their collected sayings like firmly embedded nails--given by one Shepherd.”*

D. Issues a Warning Against Extended Use of Valueless Material (v. 12)

E. His Final Words (vs. 13-14)

1. His conclusion – he has looked at everything under the sun and come back to looking at it with God in mind.
2. Fear God and keep his commandments.
 - a. Fear – reverence as worthy of worship. Revere respect, honor, hold in awe (Proverbs 1:7; 19:23; 10:23; 22:4).

- b. Keep (heed) his commandments (James 1:19-25; 2:14-26).
- 3. Reason – “For this is the whole (duty) of man.”
“Duty” although in the text, is probably the best inclusion because of the following verse.
- 4. Reason – God will judge us. So live with a sense, an awareness of the Judgment to come.

CONCLUSION

So there you have it, Solomon’s search for happiness and meaning in life. He finally got to the beginning point: “Fear God” – but not before having to go through a multitude of fallacious approaches to life. I’m sure he had many scars. And I’m sure he would not urge anyone to take that indirect path. Many never get to the end!

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON THIRTEEN

1. What are the three (3) divisions of this lesson?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

2. What was Solomon’s conclusion as to the correct philosophy of life?

LESSON FOURTEEN

INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS

INTRODUCTION:



solomon wrote Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. We studied Ecclesiastes first because it ends with that statement, “*Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole (duty) of man*” (12:13). He had wandered through the maze of false philosophies of life and come to that conclusion, which is really the beginning of a wise life. Although Proverbs in the text precedes Ecclesiastes, in our study, Proverbs comes after Ecclesiastes and there’s a reason for that. We studied Ecclesiastes we listened to Solomon talk about all the different false philosophies and the different approaches to life that he took. He had gone down a path that he would tell us is not the way to go because it just ends in a meaningless life and all kinds of consequences that are not very good . He ends the book by coming to the conclusion that the whole of man, the whole duty of man one translation says, is to fear God and to keep his commandments.

Proverbs is about godly wisdom. It springs out of the fear of the Lord. Solomon opens the book with a purpose and theme statement (1:1-7). In introducing Proverbs an examination of both the threads in Proverbs – wisdom and fear will be profitable.

LESSON TEXT: Proverbs Chapters 1–9 and other related scriptures.

LESSON AIM: To introduce the student to the overall content and aim of Proverbs.

LESSON OBJECTIVES; You will. . .

1. Discover who wrote the book and some of its literary features – its contents and style of writing.
 2. Learn several characteristics of wisdom along with its value and demands.
-

GENERAL INFORMATION CONCERNING THE BOOK

A. Authors of the Book

1. Solomon wrote chapters one through twenty-nine.
2. Agur, son of Jabek wrote chapter thirty.
3. King Lemuel, taught by his mother in chapter thirty-one.
Primarily written by Solomon.

B. Literary Features – Content and Style

1. It is poetry, in couplet form, – two lines that form one thought. They are

- pithy, short sayings of truth.
2. These proverbs often must be viewed as general rules.
 - a. Generally speaking, they are true, but there may be exceptions, e.g. Proverbs 22:6: “*Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.*”
 - b. Just because there are exceptions, however, should not cause us to dismiss the validity and strength and importance of the general rules.
 3. Psalms and Proverbs are dominated by a literary device called “parallelism.” This nomenclature and description was developed by an Englishman, Robert Lowth in the 1700s. He was a bishop in the Church of England and a professor of poetry at Oxford. Normally in Proverbs the poetry takes on one of three forms of parallelism.
 - a. Synonymous – the first line says one thing the second line repeats the thought of the first line in different words (Examples, 11:25; 22:1).
 - b. Antithetic (many in chapter 12) – the first line of the proverb will say something and then the second line is introduced with the word but as if to say this is so but this is so .
 - c. Synthetic (3:9-10) – the first line statement would be made and then it would be developed in the subsequent line or lines.
 4. Normally a proverb in one verse stands alone, but occasionally an essay of sorts emerges from a collection of proverbs on a particular subject (ch. 31; 1:20-33). Even chapters one through nine could be considered a unit.
 5. Using that outline:
 - a. Chapters 1-9 is a presentation of the theme and setting.
 - b. Chapters 10-31 presents other truths in various forms.
 6. Didactic in content, not descriptive or narrative in style.
 - a. Moralistic and hortatory.
 - b. Sometimes in a gentle, pleading sort of way, as a father would plead with his son.
 - c. Sometimes rather sharp and direct (cf. 21:9).
 7. It is an extremely practical book, covering many subjects. It is almost like reading a dictionary or encyclopedia (more a dictionary because the proverbs are in gem form, not explained or applied)

THE ANALOGY (Proverbs 1-9)

A. Setting the Stage

1. Illustration: Carnival midway, where people in the booths are vying for your attention as you walk along, “Come in here....”
2. A young man is walking down the road of life, being wooed by two different women, Folly and Wisdom. To whom will he listen?

B. Readings (three different people reading the following texts)

1. Introduction to Wisdom (Narrator): Proverbs 8:1-3
2. Introduction to Folly (Narrator): 9:13-15
3. Folly: 7:14-15
4. Introduction to Wisdom (Narrator): 1:20-21
5. Wisdom: 8:4-12

6. Introduction to Folly (Narrator): 7:6-10
7. Folly: 7:16-17
8. Wisdom: 8:31–9:1
9. Folly: 7:18
10. Wisdom: 4:4-8
11. Folly: 7:19-20
12. Wisdom: 9:4-12
13. Folly: 9:16-17
14. Conclusion (Narrator): 1:1-7

NOTE: This book is Solomon's attempt to prevent young people, perhaps his children, or anyone for that matter from going down wrong paths, e.g. trying all the false paths of Ecclesiastes. Will he listen?! Proverbs is a good book to study with children, to alert them to all the things and people that can destroy their lives.

STUDY OF WISDOM IN PROVERBS

A. Wisdom Is a Personification – 1:20-33

- She calls to the simple one, the naïve one, capable of wisdom or folly.
 - She aggressively exhorts him to heed her rebuke and warning.
 - If, however, he decides to be foolish, she will give him over to it and not hear his cries for help when he finds himself in the pit of folly.
1. Its source is the words of his parents (vs. 8-9).
 2. Don't be seduced by the foolish, because their end is destruction (vs. 10-18).
 3. Wisdom is personified as a woman in the streets, in contrast to the Seductive evil woman of Proverbs 5-7.
 - a. She can rebuke, so the wise one receives rebuke well (v. 23).
 - b. Grasp wisdom while you can, for if you don't, when you fall and call out for her, she'll be unavailable (v. 28ff).
 - c. The key, "Whoever listens to me will live in safety...without fear of harm" (v. 33).
 4. It is a life and death choice he is going to make. Often times youth is like the motorcycle rider streaking down the highway, passing cars in too little space, cutting in and out of traffic, maybe even going down the line between lanes and between cars, almost daring something bad to happen. It usually does!

B. The Lord, Our Protector – 2:1-15

1. Must desire wisdom strongly, e.g. like mining for silver (v. 4).
2. Search for wisdom diligently, it will lead you to the Lord. You will come to fear Him, and then He can teach you the true wisdom (cf. James 3:13-18). He is the Teacher!
3. His wisdom, if ingested, will protect you from unholy companions, e.g. peers who are foolish. You will be able to say no to all their enticements.

C. Definition of and Benefits of Wisdom – 3:1-18

1. Characteristics of the wise person. (vs. 1-11)
 - a. He doesn't forget his father's teachings (v. 1).
 - b. He keeps love and faithfulness in his heart (v. 3).
 - c. He trusts in the Lord (vs. 5-7).
 - d. He shuns evil (v. 7).
 - e. He honors the Lord with his wealth (v. 9).
 - f. He accepts the Lord's discipline (v. 11).
2. Blessings of these aspects of wisdom.
 - a. Prolongs life (v. 2).
 - b. Prosperity (v. 2).
 - c. Favor and a good name with God and man (v. 4).
 - d. Straight paths (v. 6).
 - e. Health (v. 8).
 - f. Barns are full (v. 10).
 - g. Loved by God (v. 12).
 - h. Valuable (vs. 14-15).
 - i. Long life (v. 16).
 - j. Pleasant ways, peace (v. 17).
 - k. Tree of life (v. 18).

D. The Value of Wisdom – 4:1-9

1. Get wisdom at all costs – it is worth any price.
2. It will pay off in the long run – its value is in the fruit it produces.

E. Wisdom Rules the World – 8:1-36

1. Wisdom personified as calling in the streets for followers. She is trying to sell herself and her benefits.
2. Wisdom rules the world.
3. Wisdom is from eternity (vs. 23-31).
4. Finding wisdom brings life (vs. 32-36).

F. Wisdom Is a House Builder – 9:1-18

1. Wisdom is a house-builder, and is inviting the people on the street to come in.
2. On the other hand, the woman called "Folly" is hiring the simpletons in too (vs. 13-18).

G. The Fellowship of Wisdom – 13:20

Be a companion of wise people. You become like your companions.

H. The Unwise Man – 14:15-16

1. Gullible, believes anything, no discernment, impulsive.
2. Hot-headed.
3. Reckless.

I. Wisdom More Valuable than Money – 16:16

J. A Wise Man Has Hope – 24:13-14

Because he won't make mistakes, there's hope for him to live on.

K. Wisdom in Planning – 30:24-28

Wise animals, e.g. ants – industry, panning ahead; coneys – strong but stealthy; locusts – work together; lizard – makes friends with kings.

CONCLUSION

Wisdom is the opposite of folly. Folly gets you in trouble – with God, others, and self. No good comes out of it. On the other hand, wisdom offers life itself. Because of that, it is to be sought after with all one's might. Doesn't come easily or cheaply but it is worth every effort. Wisdom begins by trusting in God and fearing Him. That leads to listening to one's parents and other people of wisdom.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FOURTEEN

1. What three men wrote the book of Proverbs and what sections are attributed to each?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

2. What kind of poetry is found in Proverbs?

3. Are these proverbs hard and fast rules or are they general rules?

4. Psalms and Proverbs are dominated by a literary device called "parallelism." List three kinds of parallelism found in Proverbs and describe each one.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

5. Give the two divisions of the book with a description of the content of each division.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____

LESSON FIFTEEN

SOLOMON ON RICHES

INTRODUCTION:

It is said that one out of every three or five verses in the New Testament are attributed to Jesus himself talking about something in relation to money. So Jesus thought it was that important and maybe that much of a threat to our salvation to talk about it the way he did, over and over in his teachings and in his example. Solomon was one who had a lot to say about riches. He is qualified because he was blessed with a lot of riches.

With Solomon's great riches he built the temple in seven years and his palace in 13 years. They were both elaborate and ornate. His daily provisions were substantial (1 Kings 4:22-28) and his wealth was immense (1 Kings 10:14-29). It appears that the combination of wealth, power, and foreign women led to his downfall. But he did have a lot of wisdom about wealth to share with his children in Proverbs.

There are four important points made about riches in the book of Proverbs.

1. The deceitfulness of riches.
2. The relation of riches and wisdom – the unwise man loses his wealth.
2. Sharing of riches with the poor.
3. God is the source of wealth.

Remember, proverbs are short, pithy statements that need further explanation and application. That will be our approach, to read the text, sometimes in more than one translation then give a basic explanation to it and apply it in some ways.

LESSON TEXT: The various texts referenced in the study outline.

LESSON AIM: To familiarize the student with the relation wealth and riches has with one's life and destiny and the danger of hoarding wealth. To acquaint us with the value of sharing with those who are needy and less fortunate.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will. . .

1. Learn that Solomon's evaluation of riches is that they are deceitful and not to be trusted and relied upon.
 2. Consider that the lover of pleasure and riches lacks wisdom and understanding.
 3. See the relationship between wealth and generosity.
 4. Know that whether a person has wealth or not God is the provider of all.
-

WEALTH / RICHES ARE DECEITFUL

A. A Contrast Between What Will Last and What Will Wither

Proverbs 11:28 – “*Whoever trusts in his riches will fall (wither), but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf.*”

1. The rich think their money will keep them on top of life.
 - a. Their riches may cause them to be hard and high and rough in talk to others (cf. 18:23).
 - b. They may use their wealth to control people and can treat them any way they please.
2. Notice the antithetic parallelism, indicating the second phrase is the opposite or antithesis of the first phrase.
 - a. The righteous person is contrasted with the one who trusts in riches.
 - b. Faith is the essence of what deems us righteous (cf. 3:5-7).
 - c. Faith or trust in anything else nullifies faith in God and thus jeopardizes one’s righteousness. That’s why the love of money is such a danger.
3. The emphasis in this verse is what lasts. Wither/fall (NIV) versus flourish (cf. Psalm 1:3-4 – “*He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.*”)

B. Safety Perceived to Be in Riches

Proverbs 18:11 – “*The wealth of the rich is their fortified city; they imagine it an unscalable wall.*” 28:11 – “*A rich man may be wise in his own eyes, but a poor man who has discernment sees through him.*”

1. Pride gets to the rich man. He hides behind his riches and thinks they will be an impenetrable wall and fortress against all invasions.
2. He thinks he is invincible. No one can bring him down.

C. Wealth and Riches Attract Friends

Proverbs 14:20 – “*The poor are shunned even by their neighbors, but the rich have many friends.*” 19:4 – “*Wealth brings many friends, but a poor man’s friend deserts him.*”

1. Think of the entourage around famous people with money!
2. 19:4-6 speaks of false friendships, so this is one of them.
3. In contrast to the rich, the poor are shunned by people, e.g. prodigal son in the pig pen had no friends! (Luke 15:13-15)
4. As long as you are prosperous, you will have so-called friends. They are pseudo-friends though, because when the money runs out, they do too.

D. The Truth about Wealth and Riches

1. Jesus says that riches are deceitful (Mark 4:19 – “*...but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things ...*”). They fly away (Proverbs 23:5).
2. You cannot take them with you, nor will they buy you eternal life (Luke 16:19-31).

WEALTH / RICHES ARE FLEETING – ESPECIALLY TO THE UNWISE

A. The Fleeting Nature of Wealth and Riches

Proverbs 21:17 – *“He who loves pleasure will become poor; whoever loves wine and oil will never be rich.”*

1. Principles of laziness here. Laziness gains a man only poverty. The word “poor” means destitute, in need. Used in Proverbs more than in any other book in the Old Testament.
2. The man who loves pleasure will suffer strife and want. Frivolous, wasteful again reminds us of the prodigal son in Luke 15.
3. Proverbs 21:20 – *“In the house of the wise are stores of choice food and oil, but a foolish man devours all he has.”* Fastidious, frugal and resourceful!

B. Riches / Wealth Does Not Protect Against Wrath

Proverbs 11:4 – *“Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.”*

1. Judgement cannot be bought off! Cf. Isaiah 10:3; Zephaniah 1:18.
2. Will money buy off the invader in the day of God’s wrath?! No! Can’t you hear the rich man saying, “Stop, I’ll give you all my wealth!” The conqueror ignores him, because he knows he will get it all anyway!
3. How is it that righteousness delivers from death?
 - a. Nationally – Righteousness exalts a nation (Proverbs 14:34).
 - b. Eternally – Death has no lasting effect on righteous people, even if they get killed. They are just transferred to the home base!
 - c. Physically – Sometimes righteousness gives physical deliverance, e.g. destruction of Jerusalem, when the saints were warned to get out of the city (Luke 21:21).

C. A Good Name / Reputation to Be Desired

Proverbs 22:1 – *“A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.”*

1. A good name and character and reputation will sustain you where riches will not.
2. Consider Job’s name and story.

D. The Relationship Between Giving and Receiving

Proverbs 11:24-26 – *“One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed. People curse the man who hoards grain, but blessing crowns him who is willing to sell.”*

1. A liberal man will be enriched, by God and even and his fellow man.
2. A covetous man will be cursed by his fellow-man and God.

E. The Temporal Nature of Wealth Attained Dishonestly

Proverbs 13:11 – *“Dishonest money (wealth hastily gotten) dwindles away, but he who gathers money little by little makes it grow.”* What a paradox! The one who gives is made fat. His soul is made fat (cf. 13:4; 28:25).

F. The Fruit of the Covetous Character

Proverbs 28:22 – “*A stingy man is eager to get rich and is unaware that poverty awaits him.*” The ASV reads, “*He that hath an evil eye hasteth after riches...*”
 I Timothy 6:9 – “*People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap, and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.*”

G. The Importance of Being Diligent and Alert

Proverbs 6:10-11 – “*A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest—and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man.*” (cf. 24:33-34).

H. The Fruit of Hard Work and Planning

Proverbs 14:23 – “*All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.*”

1. Hard work = profit; talk only = poverty. Cf. 21:5 – “*The plans of the diligent lead to profit, as surely as haste leads to poverty.*”
2. Plans = profit; haste = poverty.

WEALTH / RICHES ARE TO BE SHARED WITH THE POOR**A. The Ultimate End of Those Who Hoard Wealth**

Proverbs 11:26 – “*People curse the man who hoards grain, but blessing crowns him who is willing to sell.*” Cf. Amos 8:4-6 – They hoped the religious days would pass, so they could return to their evil, corrupt practices. They shortchanged the people so badly that the people could only buy the refuse of the wheat.

B. The Sinfulness of Exploiting the Poor and Helpless

Proverbs 22:16, 22-23 – “*He who oppresses the poor to increase his wealth and he who gives gifts to the rich—both come to poverty. ... Do not exploit the poor because they are poor and do not crush the needy in court, for the Lord will take up their case and will plunder those who plunder them.*” God is the champion of the poor and oppressed (1 Samuel 24:12; Psalms 12:5; Jeremiah 51:36; Proverbs 14:31).

C. Blessings Received by the Generous Man

Proverbs 22:9 – “*A generous man (the bountiful eye) will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor.*” The bountiful eye versus the evil eye (28:22). The bountiful eye has a bountiful heart behind it.

D. New Testament Scriptures

1. I John 3:17 – “*...how does God’s love abide in the one who shuts up his goods from his brother?*”
2. I Timothy 6:17-19 – “*...be willing to communicate.*”
3. II Corinthians 8:1-5 – Consider the spirit of the Macedonian Christians.

WEALTH / RICHES ARE PROVIDED BY GOD

A. Realize that God Is the Provider of All

Proverbs 22:2 – “*Rich and poor have this in common: The Lord is the Maker of them all.*”

1. God made the rich and the poor. He did that because some perhaps could not bear the temptation of riches (James 5:1-5).
2. The rich need the poor, and the poor need the rich.

B. The Importance of Relying on God

Proverbs 23:4 – “*Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint.*”

1. Stop letting the world convince you to use your wisdom to gain wealth only.
2. Let God do the giving and taking; you just work honestly. God is in control (Matthew 6:19-21).

C. The Pride of Pretending to Be Wealthy

Proverbs 13:7 – “*One man pretends to be rich, yet has nothing; another pretends to be poor, yet has great wealth.*” Great wealth is not necessarily in the abundance of things that a man has (Luke 12:15).

1. One is so covetous that he does not enjoy life. He is indeed poor in the eyes of God.
2. There is one that makes himself poor—sacrificial life—that loves God and life. He did not say the one who is poor and feigneth wealth will be happy.

D. The Desire to Know and Realize What Is Real

Proverbs 30:7-9 – “*Two things I ask of you, O Lord, do not refuse me before I die. Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise I may have too much and disown you and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’*”

1. He doesn’t want to be setting his mind on money whether rich or poor.
2. The rich feel satisfied (1 Timothy 6:9-10); the poor feel shunted and become covetous.
3. He asks God to feed him so that his dependence is on Him. Give him only that which is needful, lest an extreme tempt him to sin (cf. 1 Timothy 6:6-8).

CONCLUSION

From one who had lots of wealth to those of us who have some, let us heed his warnings. He echoes the New Testament warnings. He knows the extra temptations riches bring.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FIFTEEN

1. What is Solomon's evaluation of wealth in the following things?

- 1) What is lasting and not lasting? _____

- 2) Providing safety? _____
- 3) Attracting friends? _____

2. What two things did Jesus say about riches?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

3. What are the four profound truths concerning wealth / riches?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

LESSON SIXTEEN

SOLOMON ON THE TONGUE

INTRODUCTION:



roverbs has a great deal to say about the tongue or the right kind of speech. And so does James in the New Testament. *“Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.”* (James 1:5-6)

In a commentary on James one writer entitles his comments on this chapter of James, “Caution, Tongues Working.” When the tongue starts to move about and starts saying things, there’s always the temptation that there will be mistakes made, and things said that are not right. Even James starts his text by saying, *“Not many of you should presume to be teachers my brothers because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.”* James agrees with the writer of Proverbs that it is difficult to control the tongue.

LESSON TEXT: All the scriptures referred to in the study notes.

LESSON AIM: To acquaint the student with the positive and negative uses of the tongue in speech.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will. . .

1. Examine three areas in which the tongue can be used to advantage and disadvantage.
 2. Learn seven ways someone might answer in a good way.
-

A. General Scriptures from Proverbs

1. Proverbs 4:23-27 – *“Keep your heart with all vigilance; for from it flows the springs of life. Put away from you crooked speech, and put devious talk far from you. Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you. Take heed to the path of your feet, then all your ways will be sure. Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil.”*

Everything is involved: the heart, the eyes, the feet, and the tongue,

2. Proverbs 10:20-21 – *“The tongue of the righteous is choice silver; the mind of the wicked is of little worth. The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of sense.”*

The silver is the pure and precious metal. It has a sense of nobility and majesty about it too.

3. Proverbs 19:1 – *“Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity than a man who is perverse in speech, and is a fool.”*
4. Proverbs 21:6 – *“A fortune made by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor and a deadly snare.”*
A lying tongue that obtains riches is dangerous.

B. Three Areas of Concern in the Use of the Tongue:

1. Listening – no use. ...when the tongue is idle and the ears active
2. Lying – misuse. ...when the tongue is actively producing evil.
3. Answering – proper use. ...when the tongue is speaking with wisdom.

LISTENING – LEAVING THE TONGUE IDLE

A. Keeps One out of Trouble

1. Proverbs 10:19 – *“When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is prudent.”* (Check the Living Bible.)
2. Proverbs 21:23 – *“He who keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble.”* Why is this so?
 - a. People get tired of others talking – pride.
 - b. Often the talk is about themselves.
 - c. Other?
3. Proverbs 17:27-28 – *“A man of knowledge uses words with restraint, and a man of understanding is even-tempered. Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue.”*
 - a. Anger often seems to come with a lot of words.
 - b. A person’s character is judged by the way he speaks.

B. Pride in Talking

1. Proverbs 18:2 – *“A fool finds no pleasure in understanding but delights in airing his own opinions.”*
2. Proverbs 20:9 – *“Who can say, ‘I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin’?”*
Don’t proclaim your own forgiveness. Perhaps we need to watch what we say about how bad we have been in the past, and how God has made us clean again.
3. Proverbs 20:22 – *“Do not say, ‘I’ll pay you back for this wrong!’ Wait for the LORD, and he will deliver you.”*
 - a. Don’t proclaim vengeance. That is God’s job (Romans 12:19-21).
 - b. On the contrary, Proverbs 25:21-22.
4. Proverbs 20:25 – *“It is a trap for a man to dedicate something rashly and only later to consider his vows.”*
 - a. Don’t make hasty vows, and not do them: “I’ll do it!” but doesn’t.
 - b. Peter vowing to defend Jesus to the death.
5. Proverbs 27:2 – *“Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips.”* Don’t blow your own horn too much, e.g. taking the chief seats at the feasts.

C. Wisdom Gained in Listening – Especially While Young.

1. Proverbs 12:15 – *“The way of the fool seems right to him but a wise man listens to advice.”*
The fool thinks he knows it all. It is difficult to listen to advice, especially when you are proud; but if we can really do this and if we are really interested in life, you will do and reap the benefits. The fool doesn’t know enough to know he’s wrong.
2. Proverbs 19:20 – *“Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise.”*
“Wisdom for the future.” So many pitfalls could be avoided if we would but listen to our elders, e.g. Solomon, elderly women (Titus 2:3-4).
3. Proverbs 20:5 – *“The purpose in a man’s mind is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.”*
 - a. Use questions in listening. Learn from people! There is a gold mine in other people if we will draw it out.
 - b. The people with the advice you want are probably not going to offer it unless asked.

D. Wisdom Applied

1. Proverbs 22:17-18 – *“Pay attention and listen to the sayings of the wise; apply your heart to what I teach, for it is pleasing when you keep them in your heart and have all of them ready on your lips.”*
 - a. If you store it up now, it will be in your heart and on your lips for future use.
 - b. Provide a pleasant way to live..
2. Proverbs 21:28 – *“A false witness will perish, and whoever listens to him will be destroyed forever.”* (cf. 19:5,9)
 - a. An honest witness is safe. Telling the truth is safe. What a paradox!
 - b. The word of the listening man is that which endures.

LYING – THE WRONG USE OF THE TONGUE**A. The Prevalence of Lying**

I still have difficulty visualizing the devastation caused by lying and deception, e.g. Japanese people wanting to fight to the death even after Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

B. The Contrast Between Lying and Speaking Truthfully

1. Proverbs 10:11,18 – *“The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked. ... He who conceals his hatred has lying lips, and whoever spreads slander is a fool.”*
Slandering another’s reputation is murder, Jesus says (Matthew 5:21-26).
2. Proverbs 11:13 – *“A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret.”*
3. Proverbs 16:27-30 – *“A scoundrel plots evil, and his speech is like a scorching fire. A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends. A violent man entices his neighbor and leads him down a path*

that is not good. He who winks with his eye is plotting perversity; he who purses his lips is bent on evil."

C. The Effect of the Lying Tongue

1. Proverbs 18:8 – *"The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts."*
2. Proverbs 26:2 – *"Like a sparrow in its flitting, like a swallow in its flying, a curse that is causeless does not alight."*
A false word about someone rarely stops.
3. Proverbs 12:17-19 – *"A truthful witness gives honest testimony, but a false witness tells lies. Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment."*
4. Proverbs 16:13 – *"Righteous lips are the delight of a king; and he loves him who speaks what is right."*

ANSWERING – THE PROPER USE OF THE TONGUE

Often our retorts to other people's statements get us in trouble. How we answer is so important.

A. How to Wisely Answer Someone

1. Softly – Proverbs 15:1 – *"A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."*
2. Not slashingly – Proverbs 12:18 – *"There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing."*
3. Not quickly – Proverbs 18:13,17 – *"If one gives answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame. He who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him"*.
Don't answer too quickly, negatively or positively.
4. Rebuke when necessary – Proverbs 24:24-26 – *"He who says to the wicked, 'You are innocent,' will be cursed by peoples, abhorred by nations; but those who rebuke the wicked will have delight, and a good blessing will be upon them. He who gives a right answer kisses the lips"*.
5. No flattery – Proverbs 28:23 – *"He who rebukes a man will afterward find more favor than he who flatters with his tongue."* A general rule.
6. Not according to a fool's way – Proverbs 26:4-5 – *"Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes."*
NEB. Use judgement about how the answer will affect you and him.
7. Avoid quarrels – Proverbs 17:14 – *"The beginning of strife is like letting out water; so quit before the quarrel breaks out."*
Proverbs 20:3 – *"It is an honor for a man to keep aloof from strife, but every fool will be quarreling."* Proverbs 26:21 – *"As charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife."*

B. Result of Speaking Wisely – Persuasion (Proverbs 16:21,23) –*"The wise in heart are called discerning, and pleasant words promote instruction. Understanding is a fountain of life to those who have it, but folly brings*

punishment to fools. A wise man's heart guides his mouth, and his lips promote instruction." cf. Matthew 12:34 – out of the mouth come the things of the heart.

C. The Contrast Between Speaking Wisely and Foolishly

(Proverbs 15:23,28) – *"To make an apt answer is a joy to a man; and a word in season, how good it is! The mind of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things"*

CONCLUSION

1. Proverbs 16:24 – *"Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body."*
2. Proverbs 18:21 – *"Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits."*
3. Proverbs 25:11-12 – *"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver. Like a gold ring or an ornament of gold is a wise reprovewer to a listening ear."*
4. Proverbs 29:18 – *"Where there is no prophecy the people cast off restraint, but blessed is he who keeps the law."*

Use your tongue most of all for prophecy, the speaking of God's law.

The good tongue is a blessing, but the tongue can be a fire, but its flames issue from the heart. If we can bring every thought under control in the heart (2 Corinthians 10:5), then we can also bring every word under control too.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SIXTEEN

1. According to your teacher what are three areas of concern in the use of the tongue?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

2. List seven ways one might properly answer someone according to Solomon.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____
 - 7) _____

LESSON SEVENTEEN

SOLOMON ON SEX

INTRODUCTION:



Our opening lesson about the two women—Wisdom and Folly—presented the scenario which a young man faces. Folly is the loose seductress woman in the analogy. She represents the seduction of any and all kinds of foolishness, e.g. lure of riches, malicious speech, evil companions, use of time. On a literal level of understanding, however, we see in her all of the dangers and consequences of fornication.

That's a word not often used in our modern society. Our culture accepts, and even encourages and glorifies illicit sex in the movies, TV, and in real life. Solomon takes a different view; and as one who had hundreds of wives and concubines, he understands the pitfalls of illicit passion fulfilled. Once again, he appears to be warning his children against falling prey to the deadly trap of fornication.

As we look at parts of chapters 2, 5, 6, 7, and 9, I'll be straightforward and sensitive at the same time in relation to this important but sensitive topic. We will work our way through these chapters, looking at the nature of the seduction itself and the damaging results of participating in fornication.

LESSON TEXT: All the scripture referenced in the study notes.

LESSON AIM: To allow the student to become familiar with Solomon's teaching on sex.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will. . .

1. Examine the characteristics, tricks and lure of the adulterous woman / man.
 2. Be able to recognize the extreme danger and the destructive consequences of illicit sex.
 3. See that the safe-guard against succumbing to temptation is being prepared ahead of time.
-

THE WISDOM OF GOD PROTECTS FROM THE SEDUCTIVE WOMAN

The wisdom of God laid up in the heart ahead of time.

A. The Lure of the Adulteress (2:16-19)

1. Key to faithfulness: Wisdom will protect one from the adulteress.
2. Objects of unfaithfulness: Two kinds of women (obviously it could apply to men as well).

- a. Foreigners – maybe cult prostitutes, the street women.
- b. Wayward wife or strange woman, i.e. another man's wife who is not committed to her marriage.
So the temptation may not always come from the obvious source. One may think, "There could be no involvement with another person's mate, especially a friend's wife," but it can and does happen. Notice her attitudes.
- 3. Attitudes or situations involved in unfaithfulness.
 - a. No commitment to permanency to her mate.
 - 1) Left or forsakes the partner of her youth (cf. Malachi 2:11 ff).
 - 2) She has forgotten the vows she made to her husband.
 - b. Covenant is violated. Ignored the covenant she made before God or the covenant of her God.
 - 1) It could refer to the marriage vows with God as a witness or the covenant with God to remain true to Him and obey His laws, one of which is "Thou shalt not commit adultery."
 - 2) The lack of commitment to a biblical standard of marriage (v. 17).
- 4. Consequences of unfaithfulness: Her house sinks or inclines into death (cf. 5:5; 7:27; 9:18).
 - a. It is as if when you get in her house, death opens its jaws and swallows up anyone caught in there (v. 18).
 - b. There really are very few adulterers who repent and come back to the Lord or their mates. There has been too much damage done to the trust between mates.
 - c. The sexual union is intended by God to be just that, uniting. Once this union is experienced with someone else, a bond is formed.
- 5. The guardians of faithfulness: We need to know our own vulnerabilities in regard to the opposite sex.
 - a. Notice how often her flattering words, seductive speech is mentioned in this context.
 - b. The wisdom of God laid up in one's heart ahead of time will save a person from this death trap?

B. The Extreme Danger of Illicit Sex (5:3-23)

- 1. The danger of flattery: Mentions her persuasive and deceptive speech again (v. 3). She knows how to flirt. Do you know when someone is flirting with you? Are you oblivious?
- 2. The danger of a seared conscience: She has little thought for morals or where infidelity takes you, to death (v. 6). She is ignorant of her ways. She has no conscience about her sin. Few are claiming any more that adultery is destructive, sinful, and damning. Our society is drowning in its own promiscuity and does not even know it, e.g. Whatever Became of Sin? (Karl Menninger).
- 3. The danger of deceptive temptation: Adultery is very deceptive. It looks like fun, but it is as bitter as gall in the end.
- 4. The danger of flirting with adultery: Don't put yourself in a precarious situation (vs. 7-8).

- a. Don't even come close to the place or the situation where she could lure you into committing adultery. Young people and dating habits and behaviors must be considered.
 - b. Don't put yourself in a situation that makes you "Sexually nervous."
- 5. The results / consequences of illicit sexual activity (vs. 9-11).
 - a. Loss of position, honor, and strength (v. 9).
 - b. Slavery to another (v. 9).
 - c. Disappointment – physically and mentally (v. 11). Loss of ministry.
 - d. A life of regret and remorse.
- 6. Because he hated self-control (vs. 12-13). Gives himself over to being controlled (cf. I Thessalonians 4:3-4).
- 7. Find sexual satisfaction in your own marriage (vs. 15-19).
 - a. He encourages the man to work on his sexual relationship with his mate.
 - 1) It doesn't simply happen normally; it demands attention. (v. 15 – *"Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well."* ...cistern, that's the wife metaphorically. v. 16 – children from street connections.)
 - 2) We have been led to believe that sex is automatically and spontaneously exhilarating and satisfying.
 - 3) Most happily married couples find that true sexual satisfaction takes time, tenderness, effort, conversation, consultation or advice at times, and putting away of selfishness.
 - 4) The sexual relationship should grow with the rest of the relationship.
 - b. We are commanded to be captivated ("ravished, intoxicated" – v. 20) by our partner's body and looks. That is partly an effort of the will.
 - 1) While I am making a covenant with my eyes NOT to look upon the beauty and sexuality of another, I am covenanting with my eyes to find satisfaction in my mate's beauty and sexuality.
 - 2) Hebrews 13:4 – let the marriage bed be undefiled with thoughts of another person in our love-making . If the mind is left free to be captivated and inflamed by any and all, we are in trouble.
 - 3) There must be a dedication to finding satisfaction in one's own mate. That calls for protection against the temptations to fantasize about others.
 - 4) God intended for all of our sexual messages and input to come from one person, our biblical mate.
- 8. More consequences of fornication (vs. 21-23).
 - a. The Lord sees it (Proverbs 15:3 – *"The eyes of the Lord are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good"*).
 - b. Brings self-destruction and slavery with it. Sex is intended by God to be habit-forming, in a marriage only.
 - 1) Because it is by nature habit-forming, the habit must be started and sustained only with one's mate.
 - 2) Those who wander into fornication believe they can give it up anytime; but, if it's habit-forming and forms a bond between two people, it's more difficult to give up.
 - c. Loses self-discipline and self-control (v. 23).

PROPER PREPARATION – THE KEY TO NOT BEING OVERCOME BY TEMPTATION

A. Preventing Adultery by Being Prepared (6:20-35)

1. A prepared heart – The key to avoiding the immoral woman is preparation.
 - a. It is important for parents to give good instruction spiritually and morally speaking. And for the child to accept it (vs. 20-23).
 - b. Keep these instructions close to you, because when temptation comes, you will be ready. This should be part of the parental “birds and bees” curriculum!
2. Deaf ears – Mentions her smooth talk again (v. 24). We are susceptible to that, men and women.
3. Shielded eyes – Don’t let her beauty or her eyes cause you to lust (v. 25).
 - a. She uses her beauty, her eyes, and her speech as tools of seduction.
 - b. Don’t be looking where you shouldn’t be looking, deep into the eyes of a beautiful woman. Make that covenant with your eyes (Job 31:1).
 - c. Be careful of the tight clothing and the amount of skin showing.

NOTE: Men and women need to work together on the clothing thing. It’s a big problem in our society. Protect one another. Protect each other from others. Protect yourself from others. If you, woman or man, are wearing and looking like you do to entice others to look at your sexual features, you are not doing the right thing.

4. A true sense of value – She does not care for you as a person (v. 26). You are an object. You are a loaf of bread. You will be reduced to poverty because you fall to her seduction and lose everything of value.
5. Awareness of consequences – Adultery is bound to have far-reaching bad results (vs. 27-35). There are consequences (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:18).
 - a. Self-destruction, emotional and moral.
 - b. Breaks up another family. Adultery is not easily forgiven, because it is such an intimate contact. Passion clouds good judgment.

B. The Sly and Seductive Way of the Harlot (7:5-27)

1. Same introduction as chapter 6, paying attention to the father and mother (vs. 1-4).
2. The demise of a young man (vs. 5-9). The young man is especially susceptible and should be taught and warned.
 - a. We need to give our children both the positive and the negative side of the sexual relationship.
 - b. They need to get their information from us who are spiritual, not from the gutter of humanity. Not from the schools (who give out the mechanics) or the street (perverted view) or even only from the church.
 - c. They need to be introduced to things as they grow up. It must be more natural to talk about it than in the past.
3. More of her ways (vs. 10-21).
 - a. Dress (v. 10).
 - b. Loud party (v. 11).

- c. Available (v. 12).
- d. Touch (v. 13).
- e. Kiss (v. 13).
- f. No guilt (v. 14).
- g. Appeal to pride (v. 15).
- h. Romantic (vs. 16-17).
- i. Sex = love (v. 18).
- j. Secretive and no risk (vs. 19-20).
- k. Words of seduction (v. 21).
- 4. Destruction results (vs. 22-26).
- 5. It has claimed many victims (v. 26). We must take it seriously. It is a serious threat to our salvation and our children's salvation.

C. The Deception of Stolen Love (9:13-18)

- 1. She is proud and loud. No shame. Calling evil good (v. 13).
- 2. She's on the prowl (vs. 14-16). She's looking for victims. We are susceptible to their lures.
- 3. She lures with forbidden fruit (v. 17). Our ego and pride can get in the way.
- 4. The result is death (v. 18).


SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SEVENTEEN

- 1. In Proverbs 5:3-23 what are four extreme dangers involved in illicit sex as given in your Study Guide?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
- 2. In 5:9-11 your teacher gives four (4) results / consequences of falling into illicit sex. List these below.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
- 3. Three more consequences of fornication seen in (vs. 21-23) are:
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
- 4. Preventing adultery by being prepared involves what five things?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____

LESSON EIGHTEEN

SOLOMON ON PURPOSEFUL PARENTING

INTRODUCTION:

e live in an age plagued by a philosophy which urged restraint upon discipline of children. Our children are supposed to be allowed to be creative, full of self-expression. Discipline supposedly squashes their real inner self. That philosophy has failed miserably in our society. We are paying a high price for that approach to child rearing. This becomes significant when we attempt to determine as parents how children are to respond to Christian parental discipline while surrounded in the world by another kind of philosophy.

How many social ills can be traced back to poor parenting or absentee parenting? How many people in our prisons did not benefit from good parenting? The influence of a good, natural mother and father in the home cannot be underestimated. How many of our young people in the church leave the Lord primarily because they didn't have devoted parents who knew how to parent or they neglected to do what they knew to do?

Proverbs will give us some general rules to parent by. The book and these texts on parenting are not a complete, fleshed-out instruction manual, but they are a good beginning point. The principles that reference surfaces are trans-cultural and withstand time.

LESSON TEXT: All the scripture referenced in the study notes.

LESSON AIM: To investigate and learn God's view of the relationship between parents and children and see their respective duties in the relationship.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will. . .

1. Learn the general rules for parenting given in the book of Proverbs.
 2. Discover specific ways that parents discipline their children.
 3. Look at several scriptures in Proverbs that reveal the child's response to their parents.
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PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITY TO CHILDREN

A. General Rules for Parenting in Proverbs

1. Instruction, 22:6 – *“Train up (show) a child in the way he should go, and*

when (ASV– even) *he is old, he will not depart from it.*”

- a. Give to the child instruction “conformably to his way” (One translation from the Hebrew).
 - 1) May refer to God’s way.
 - 2) Probably, more likely, it refers to the age and stage of development, the maturity of the child.
 - 3) Adjust your approach to the kind of child you have and where they are in life and where they need to go, according to God’s wisdom.
 - b. The training should become ingrained, second nature to the child.
 - c. “Even” in the ASV indicates he won’t depart when young either, not just in old age.
 - d. Yeakley – “in his own way” A warning, not a comforting promise.
 - e. “Train” in the Hebrew signifies “dedicate” or “consecrate” as well as “discipline” and “initiate.”
2. Discipline (training), 29:17 – “*Discipline your son, and he will give you peace; he will bring delight to your soul.*” If you don’t, they will weary and worry you till your death. You will live with a lot of guilt and regret.

B. Specific Ways to Discipline – (more than just correct wrongs, but rather the whole package that yields a disciplined lifestyle).

1. **WITH WORDS:** (cf. whole book of Proverbs).
 - a. Proverbs 29:15 – “*The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother.*” NASV–“the rod and reproof” indicating the use of words.
 - 1) Refers to discipline with words also, not just the rod.
 - 2) “Left to himself” or “undisciplined” as one translation has it, is used in reference to animals let out to go anywhere and do anything, unattended. NEB – “allowed to run wild.”
 - 3) Mothers sometimes become too indulgent with their sons, fondling their little darlings, to the point of letting them get away with foolishness.
 - 4) It takes a lot of talking to kids, all along the pathway of life. It takes a lot of encouraging, exhorting, and instructing to accomplish this task. But we are trying to lay up in their hearts the principles of wisdom to save them in the day of temptation, e.g. Jesus and the temptations (Matthew 4; Luke 4).
 - b. Proverbs 29:19 – “*A servant cannot be corrected by mere words; though he understands, he will not respond.*” Words, yet, in regard to a servant or a child, but that’s not all it takes.
2. **BY EXAMPLE:**
 - a. Proverbs 20:7 – “*The righteous man leads a blameless life; blessed are his children after him.*” A child takes so much from our example. We all know this.
 - b. We can’t use words that don’t accord with a lifestyle.
3. **DISCIPLINE WITH A ROD:**
 - a. Proverbs 13:24 – “*He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him early.*” “Diligent” (NASV for “careful”).

- 1) Start it early in life. Discipline the son in the early morning of life. This gives him timely chastisement. Sets the stage for a disciplined lifestyle.
- 2) We dare not exalt/praise a child during the foolish and adventuresome or immature lifestyle and stunts.
- b. Proverbs 10:13 – *“Wisdom is found on the lips of the discerning, but a rod is for the back of him who lacks judgment.”*
- c. Proverbs 22:15 – *“Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him.”* “Folly is bound up (NAS), “deep-rooted” (NEB).
 - 1) “Folly” is that pleasure in childish tricks and mischievous undertakings. Oh, boys will be boys, we say. Not so, the Lord says! Don’t glorify that foolishness or let children get away with it because we think it’s cute. It’s not cute in adulthood.
 - 2) The heart must make room to harbor and take in wisdom and intelligence. Thus, folly must be removed. We do have those tendencies as a child, so they must be removed (cf. Psalm 51:5; 58:3).
- d. Proverbs 19:18 – *“Discipline your son, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to his death.”*
 - 1) Do not be a willing party to his death. By being passive, you sentence him to death.
 - 2) Lack of discipline doesn’t unlock his creativity; it unleashes his worldliness that will lead to his demise!
 - 3) I think it follows the first part of the verse and refers to the parent causing spiritual death of the child if he does not discipline him.
- e. Proverbs 23:13-14 – *“Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die. Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death.”*
 - 1) “Beat” – (ASV) – (“punish” – NIV).
 - 2) “Take the stick to him” (NEB).
 - 3) If you beat (a sound whipping) him, he will not die. Don’t be afraid to apply the rod. It won’t damage his spirit.
 - 4) The point/reason of discipline is the soul’s salvation. (Hebrews 12:5-6)

C. The Model Way to Help Children Is to Do it like the Father Does

1. *“My son, do not despise the Lord’s discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the Lord reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights.”* (3:11-12).
2. Ephesians 6:4 – Don’t provoke, exasperate, and break the spirit of a child. Nurture through discipline. Admonish with words as well.

D. Dobson on “When to Spank”

1. If they are in danger of getting hurt.
2. If it’s the only way to get their attention and call their mind to it.
3. If they are rebelling against authority.

CHILDREN'S RESPONSE TO PARENTS

A. General Scriptures

1. Proverbs 13:1 – “A wise son heeds his father’s instruction, but a mocker does not listen to rebuke.”
2. Proverbs 15:5 – “A fool spurns his father’s discipline, but whoever heeds correction shows prudence.”

B. Attitude Toward Parents

1. Proverbs 15:20 – “A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish man despises his mother.” The respect continues into adulthood.
2. Proverbs 28:24 – “He who robs his father or mother and says, ‘It’s not wrong’—he is partner to him who destroys.”
 - a. Such a flippant attitude toward the parent’s possession is destructive.
 - b. Keil says, “Is the companion of the destroyer” or Satan!
 - c. How could you rob father or mother? Take advantage of them in any number of ways, e.g. Mark 7:9-13.

C. Reward to Parents

1. Proverbs 10:1 – “A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son grief to his mother.” Cf. 15:20; 17:21, 25.
Ever seen parents whose child despises them? Parents agonize over children more than anything else, it seems.
2. Proverbs 19:13a – “A foolish son is his father’s ruin....”
3. Proverbs 23:15-16 – “My son, if your heart is wise, then my heart will be glad; my inmost being will rejoice when your lips speak what is right.” A son’s fruit is especially meaningful to parents. Proud parents look for something to boast about in their children.
4. Proverbs 28:7 – “He who keeps the law is a discerning son, but a companion of gluttons disgraces his father.”
 - a. “The law” could be God’s law. Spiritual growth makes a father glad as well as keeping the laws of the dad.
 - b. A father hates to see a son with evil companions.
 - c. We have a responsibility to protect our father’s name and reputation.
5. Proverbs 23:22-24 – “Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old. Buy the truth and do not sell it; get wisdom, discipline and understanding. The father of the righteous man has great joy; he who has a wise son delights in him.” A parent is always glad when the son seeks truth and wisdom.
6. Proverbs 22:6 – “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.”

D. Rewards to Sons

1. Proverbs 1:8-9 – The teachings of your parents ought to be a son’s glory and crown and joy. If they are, he will be rewarded with glory himself.
2. Proverbs 3:1-12 – keep his commands and you will live long. Some of those are:
 - a. Be loyal and faithful in dealings with men (vs. 3-4).

- b. Look to God for wisdom (vs. 5-8).
- c. Honor the Lord with monies first (vs. 9-10).
- d. Receive the Lord's reproof (vs. 11-12).
- 3. Proverbs 4:1-5, 20-22.
 - a. Heed the father's words especially.
 - b. They are life to the son.
 - c. Real life is found in obedience.
- 4. Proverbs 6:20-24 – obedience will preserve you from evil.
- 5. Proverbs 17:2 – *“A wise servant will rule over a disgraceful son, and will share the inheritance as one of the brothers.”*
- 6. Proverbs 20:20 – *“If a man curses his father or mother, his lamp will be snuffed out in pitch darkness.”*
- 7. Proverbs 30:17 – *“The eye that mocks a father, that scorns obedience to a mother, will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley, will be eaten by the vultures.”*

CONCLUSION

The emphasis is on the father's role and the child's response to him. He is the teacher and discipliner, primarily. There is an emphasis on heeding parents' words. If we follow that advice, discipline becomes unnecessary, but we are often foolish and must receive reproof or correction. This helps us understand Ephesians 6:1-4 a lot better.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON EIGHTEEN

1. Charles gives three specific ways to discipline a child. List these below.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
2. What is the possible consequence for the child if no discipline is applied?

3. What is the model way of applying discipline to the child?

4. What is Dobson's wisdom on when to spank?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

LESSON NINETEEN

INTRODUCTION TO THE SONG OF SOLOMON

INTRODUCTION:

This book, the Song of Solomon, might be regarded as perhaps the least read and studied and the most diversely interpreted book in the whole biblical canon, certainly in the Old Testament. It, along with books like Zachariah and Revelation are seen as the most difficult books, and maybe the least understood, because of their figurative language. Perhaps this book is least understood because it has a lot of poetic language in it. And when you think about poetic language, usually all poetic language, in the day that it's written, is tied to that day – to the culture of that day. It's tied to the idioms of that day, tied to the understanding and the connotation of words and figures of the day. If you have literal language in a past document that becomes a little easier to interpret. But when you have poetic language that's connected to so much of the culture and language and the connotation of the day in which it was written it becomes more difficult to interpret.

This was actually quite a popular book among Christian writers and preachers in the first part of the Christian age. For instance an ancient writer, Origen, in 185 A.D. wrote 10 volumes on the song of Solomon. The book consists of only eight chapters and we might find astounding that somebody would write that much material on this particular book. By A.D. 1200 there had been 100 commentaries written on this particular book. Bernard of Clairvaux who lived about 1090 A.D. wrote 86 sermons on the first two chapters. That's probably due to the interpretive approach he took to the book. The hermeneutical approach he took to the book would not be one that I'm going to take.

But if it was an analogy and if it was an allegory perhaps and foreshadowing the coming of Jesus and the building of the church then you can see perhaps how he might find a lot of symbolism to talk about in 86 sermons.

LESSON TEXT: None.

LESSON AIM: To grasp an overall view of the book.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will. . .

1. Learn the character and make-up of the book called "Song of Solomon."
 2. Learn four major approaches in interpreting the book.
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THE CHARACTER AND MAKE-UP OF THE BOOK

A. Place in the Canon

1. In Kethubim or writings of Old Testament.
2. Read at Passover Feast, perhaps contrasting the love in Songs to the death plague in Egypt.
3. Wisdom Literature deals with major questions in life: Origin, Future, Life, etc.

B. Dating Song of Solomon

1. Difficult to date, to say the least.
2. Solomon is the probable writer (3:9). There are enough literary clues to sustain this date (971-931 B.C).

C. The Arthur – Solomon

1. Many wives.
2. Some think the woman lover is Pharaoh's daughter. Pharaoh's chariot is referred to (1:9), and that is the reason.

D. Interpretative Approaches

Four Major approaches

1. **Allegory:** The man is God – the woman is Israel and that is also parallel to Christ and the church in the New Testament in the scheme of things. Normally places are fabulous in an allegory, and that is not true in this book. Some who hold this view are against the Bible talking of sexuality.
2. **Typology:** most used approach. It does speak of the sexual relationship of the king to his wife, but that is typical of Christ and the church.
 - a. It is sometimes related to Psalm 45, which is a psalm of a king relating to his wedding song.
 - b. It is quoted in the N.T. and is Christological in nature.
 - c. With the similarity in language between the Song and Psalm 45, some have concluded that they are related.
3. **Dramatic:**
4. **Natural:** Our approach.
 - a. Israelite emphasis on children, thus the beauty of marriage and the sexual relationship between husband and wife.
 - b. Dignity and purity of human love.

E. Language of the Book

1. Lot of unusual words in comparison to the rest of the Old Testament. 117 verses, 470 Hebrew words, 47 HAPAXs (the only time used in the O.T.).
2. Omission of all major religious words, such as Yahweh, Adonai, LORD, El, Elohim, ark, righteousness, glory, evil, etc.

F. Sections of the Book

1. Anticipation (1:2 – 2:7).
2. Found and Lost – and Found (2:8 – 3:5).
3. Consummation (3:6 – 5:1).

4. Lost – And Found (5:2 – 8:4).

5. Affirmation (8:5-14).

The clause, “Do not awaken...” (2:7; 3:5; 8:4) is a refrain and section of the book somewhat. Other two parts end with a common theme of consummation (5:1b; 8:14). Each begins with idea of arousal or arrival.

Two views:

1. Description of wooing – problems and reconciliation in marriage.
2. Stages of lovers’ relationship.

G. Purpose of the Book

1. Didactic – a somewhat of a topological relationship between God and his people.
2. Celebratory of love – this is what the intimate sexual relationship between a husband-wife really ought to be .
3. To glorify the very intimate relationship between husband and wife

H. Garden Motif

1. Production.
2. Eden.
3. Royal Retreat.
4. Erotic symbol – cultic use some contend.

I. Title – Song of Songs

1. Hebrew idiom meaning “of all the songs, this is the song.” The best or most beautiful. Parallel to Holy of holies language.
2. The word for “song” is a general word for any happy song. SİR is the word. Used in celebrations most frequently.

Conclusion: Many evangelical scholars interpret the Song of Songs as a lyric poem which has both unity and logical progression. The major sections of the Song deal with courtship (1:2-3:5), a wedding (3:6-5:1), and maturation in marriage (5:2-8:4). The Song concludes with a climactic statement about the nature of love (8:5-7) and an epilogue explaining how the love of the couple in the Song began (8:8-14).

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWENTY

1. Give the date and author of the Song of Solomon.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
2. What are the four (4) approaches to understanding the book?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

LESSON TWENTY

SOLOMON ON MARITAL SEX (1)

INTRODUCTION:

The “Song of Solomon” is the last book in the wisdom literature of the Old Testament. It has a unique theme in comparison to the others. It really focuses in on the relationship between husband and wife not just their relationship in general but into the intimacy of their relationship. This book is God inspired and must be treated with the respect we would afford to any other book of the Old Testament. It needs to be treated with the respect and the sensitivity that God expects. God put this in the canon and so obviously he wanted the Israelites to understand this very special relationship.

This book is probably not been covered in our church curriculums. Where do we put it? Where should we put it? How should we talk about this very sensitive subject. Certainly it is a part of the Israelite way of looking at husband-wife relationship. Why not Christian relationships? Perhaps neglecting this book is part of the reason why some of our relationships in the Christian community have come apart – because we haven’t been attentive to this, as well as other kinds or parts of relationships. When you look at the reasons why people go through divorces, the top two reasons are money management and the sexual relationship. If we give some attention to those two things, we will be doing ourselves a favor in regard to our marital relationships. Let’s see what this book has to say in regard to this very special part of the husband-wife relationship.

LESSON TEXT: Chapter 1:1 – 3:5.

LESSON AIM: To become acquainted with the style and poetry of the book as it expresses the love relationship between two lovers.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will. . .
Listen as Charles reads and expresses his thoughts concerning what transpires between two people finding each other.

MUTUAL LOVE OF SOLOMON AND THE SHULAMITE

The Woman’s Chamber

A. The Beloved’s First Request

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—for your love is more delightful than wine. Pleasing is the fragrance of your perfumes; your name is like perfume poured out. No wonder the maidens love you! Take me away with you—let us hurry! Let the king bring me into his chambers. We rejoice and

delight in you; we will praise your love more than wine. How right they are to adore you!

1. The woman is the first speaker. *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth* – This is speaking about intimacy.
2. Speaking of the husband-wife relationship.
3. “Love” in Hebrew would be DDM, same consonants as “breasts.” LXX–the “Septuagint” and Vulgate rendered it such. It is erotic in connotation. Different from “love” in vs. 4,7.
4. Name (v. 3) – God says sex is for two people who know each other very much and they love each other – the whole person.
5. Connection between wine and sex is well attested to in the literature of the time. (v. 2).
6. Some see v. 4 as a plea for the lover to come and save her from the king.
7. Her lover is the king. She yearns for his romantic advances to take her away, to be exclusively his, though his admirers are many.
8. She sounds like an in-love young lady, fantasizing about her boyfriend whose kiss she can taste and whose romantic approach is anticipated.
9. Possibly friends (1:4b) – They sing a chorus of “Amen’s” to her description of him. These may be the other women who adore him (cf. 4c).

B. The Girl’s Shy Uncertainty (1:5-7)

1. “Dark” black (cf. 5:11), due to sun tan (v. 6). *“Dark am I, yet lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, dark like the tents of Kedar, like the tent curtains of Solomon.”*
2. She is lovely.
3. Daughters – chorus.
 - a. King’s harem.
 - b. Wedding attendants.
4. Tents of Kedar made from goats’ hair.
5. She seems to feel a little alone, different, and maybe a little jealous or concerned about her standing with her lover. (They appear to have been together before.)
 - a. She may be a commoner, in contrast to these court maidens.
 - b. Her brothers made her work the vineyards, and that is how she acquired her darkened skin.
 - c. In spite of her background, she feels she should be equal to or better than the ladies in waiting because of her standing with him.
 - d. She looks for him, where he grazes his flocks. She wants to be unveiled before them.

ROYAL BANQUET ROOM (1:8 – 2:7)

A. The Lover’s Gentle Encouragement (1:8-11)

1. Friends – the friends urge her to follow the tracks of the sheep in order to find him.
2. Verses 8,11 disagreed upon by scholars as to whether they are the Lovers or Friends.
3. Verse 9 has led some to think this is Pharaoh’s daughter.

4. (Lover, vs. 9-11) – He sees her! (I suppose she has found him.) She is like a precious mare that pulls the king's chariot. He promises to adorn her with many precious jewels.
5. "Harnessed" (v. 9) – among the stallions. More like her beauty than her strength.

B. The Beloved's Soliloquy (1:12-14)

1. Royal banquet scene.
2. Verse 14 – he too is the best of the best.
3. It appears the two are embracing in love-making. She thinks of him as a packet of perfume between her breasts. She wears him like a perfumed necklace.

C. The Lover's Banter (1:15 – 2:2)

1. Lover (v. 15) – He speaks of her beauty, especially her eyes. (Supposedly he looks into her eyes and communicates his love for her beauty while they make love.) Remember the eyes' part in sexual attraction in Proverbs. Eyes as doves – perhaps the deep color.
2. Beloved (v. 16) – She responds with words of admiration for his handsome physique. Together they have made the marriage bed like a place of lush, green, growing vegetation; perhaps like a garden (later references in the book). The garden is a sexual message. "Verdant" – green – probably of leaf, as alive. NEB – "shaded with branches" as a canopy of their love-bed.
3. Lover (v. 17) – He speaks of the sturdiness of their home, perhaps alluding to the surety of their love and relationship. It will stand firm and endure, he affirms. He reassures her of his dedication and how he feels about their relationship.
4. Beloved (2:1) – She is a beautiful flower of Palestine, like a rose of Sharon or a lily of the valley. These are well known beautiful flowers of the land that are symbols of beauty. Sharon is the place of wild flowers. The lily is probably a water-lily.
5. Lover (2:2) – He affirms her beauty and secures her in his thinking. In comparison to all others, she is a flower among thorns! She surpasses all others.

D. The Beloved's Second Request (2:3-7)

1. The "banner" picture may convey more "possession" than a protective flag or rallying point.
2. She pictures him, in keeping with his comparison of her to others, as an apple tree among forest trees.
 - a. He is the fruit tree, the one that gives her food to eat. It sustains her. There may be specific, explicit sexual connotations here, as she describes tasting his fruit.
 - b. Or, she may be referring to her delight to be in his presence and partaking of his protection and possession.
 - c. The scene does seem to be the sexual embrace, and she is experiencing pleasure (v. 6).

3. Don't interrupt the dream. Or Don't start the process of loving exchange until the opportunity and appropriate occasion is present (v. 7).

MUTUAL SEEKING AND FINDING OF TWO LOVES (2:8 – 3:5)

Bride's Private Chamber (2:8-17)

A. The Lover's Arrival (2:8-9)

1. Beloved – She draws the picture of her lover coming quickly to take her away, whisk her away.
 - a. The winter is past; the spring has sprung. It's time for love! This is the romantic picture and scene with which the book began, her looking for him to come get her.
 - b. Has the intervening scene been a flashback of a previous encounter, or was the other just looking forward to this time?

B. His First Request (2:10-13)

1. Dove – migrating kind, not like the previous one. Verse 14 – dove permanent kind.

C. The Lover's Intercession (2:14-15)

1. Like doves in rocks, she stays in the refuge of the house.
2. Verse 15 – very uncertain in Hebrew.
3. They seem to be playing a little game of chase or hide-and-seek in the vineyard. He pictures their love as in bloom, and he yearns to see her beautiful face. Is she hiding from him?

D. The Beloved's Response (vs. 16-17)

“Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.” Jabbok River Gorge probably.

A BAD DREAM (3:1-5)

A. The Beloved's Search (3:1-5)

They are together in love all night. Then she bids him go as he came – a deer running swiftly through the hills (vs. 16-17). She waits for him to come, but he doesn't. So, she goes and searches Jerusalem for him, finally finding him (vs. 1-4). It's a dream probably. Then that refrain.

B. A Successful Search

She sees him (King Solomon) returning from battle or some other official venture. She describes the royal coach, the honor guard, and the crown. The crown was a wedding present from his mother.


1. This is a wedding song for Solomon (3:6-11; cf. Ps. 45).
2. She calls on the “daughters of Jerusalem” (all the maidens who would wish to be Solomon's wife) to see him as her husband. She's proud of him. She's showing him off, and in so doing, asserting that he is her husband.

There are no self exam questions on this lesson

LESSON TWENTY-ONE

SOLOMON ON MARITAL SEX (2)

INTRODUCTION:

 e continue our study of the Song of Solomon. We're in the middle of this book and in sort of a review, let's think for just a minute about where we come from. This is a book about the intimate relationship between a husband and wife. We've already seen in this book of their love for each other, not just their love of the sexual relationship, but their love about everything about each other. They are indeed in love with the whole person. As we ended chapter 3 we saw Solomon in all his glory coming to get her at the beginning of their relationship. They wed and now they're together. Let's pick it up in chapter 4.

How beautiful you are, my darling! Oh, how beautiful! Your eyes behind your veil are doves. Your hair is like a flock of goats descending from Mount Gilead. Your teeth are like a flock of sheep just shorn, coming up from the washing. Each has its twin; not one of them is alone. Your lips are like a scarlet ribbon; your mouth is lovely. Your temples behind your veil are like the halves of a pomegranate. Your neck is like the tower of David, built with elegance; on it hang a thousand shields, all of them shields of warriors. Your two breasts are like two fawns, like twin fawns of a gazelle that browse among the lilies. Until the day breaks and the shadows flee, I will go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of incense. All beautiful you are, my darling; there is no flaw in you.

Song of Solomon 4:1-7

In this description you may laugh just a little bit because some of the descriptions are not descriptions that we would use to describe our lovely mate, but they are figures of speech that they would of used that would've been very, very personal and very, very beautiful in their culture. The relationship between the King and the Shulamite is expressed in beautiful figurative language.

LESSON TEXT: Chapters 4 through 8.

LESSON AIM: To become aware of the beautiful relationship that exists between a husband and wife.

LESSON OBJECTIVE: You will. . .

Listen as Charles reads the last four chapters of the Song of Solomon and learn of the sensitive nature of the relationship between lovers.

WEDDING AND NUPTIAL CELEBRATION (3:6 – 5:11)

(Or CONSUMMATION)

A. Solomon Comes to Her (3:6-11)

1. She sees him (King Solomon) returning from battle or some other official venture. She describes the royal coach, the honor guard, and the crown. The crown was a wedding present from his mother.
2. This is a wedding song for Solomon (3:6-11; cf. Ps. 45).
3. She calls on the “daughters of Jerusalem” (all the maidens who would wish to be Solomon’s wife) to see him as her husband. She’s proud of him. She’s showing him off, and in so doing, asserting that he is her husband.

B. In the Bridal Chamber (4:1-15)

1. Lover (4:1-15) – He praises her physical beauty by describing her features. Each one is like the loveliest and best scene Palestine has to offer. Her beauty calls him to her.
2. Teeth are often associated with beauty.
3. He entices her to come down from mountains, out of the lions’ den to be with him.
 - a. He speaks, beauty, charm, and fragrance have stolen his heart. She is like a garden, full of fruit and good fragrant trees.
 - b. She is locked up (perhaps picturing the virginity till the wedding day), but he wishes to enter. (There is such beauty in the mystery between a man and a woman in love!)
4. Beloved (4:16) – she is willing to receive her lover. She invites him into her garden. Consummation
5. Lover (5: 1) – He has come to his garden and is enjoying the fruit and fragrance.
6. Friends (5:1 c) – they encourage the lovers to drink deeply of each other’s love.

LOVE SEPARATED AND RECONCILED (5:2-6:9)

(Or LOST – AND FOUND, 5:2 – 8:4) 80 of the remaining 111 lines are by her She is the aggressor

A. Another Dream – The Shulamite’s Troubled Evening (5:2 – 6:3)

1. Beloved (5:2-8) – She may be sleeping and dreaming, or it may be a real experience for her. The “robe” of verse 3 is a garment worn close the skin. In other words, she is naked. He comes to her room in the night and wants to be with her. She gets up to receive him, wanting him so much; but when she does, he is gone. She searches Jerusalem for him, but the watchmen find her and beat her instead.
2. She closes by entreating the daughters of Jerusalem to find her lover and tell him to come to her, for she desires him. “If you find him, will you tell him that I am faint with love-making?! How foolish!”
3. Friends (5:9) – They sing a chorus verse that asks why she charges them so earnestly to find him. Why is he so special?

4. Beloved (5:10-16) – She describes his magnificent appearance. She uses numerous metaphors of precious stones and items of strength and grandeur to describe him. He is her lover and friend, and she is totally enamored with him.
5. Friends (6:1) – “Where has he gone?” they ask.
6. Beloved (6:2-3) – She says he is presently browsing in his garden, which seems to be her beautiful body. He is back with her now! She must be thrilled.

B. Praises Her Beauty with Poetic Effusion (6:4-9)

1. Lover (6:4-9) – He again is taken with her beauty and character. He describes her physical beauty the same way as he had once before (cf. 4:1-3).
2. Then he says she is the best of all women, which even they recognize and bless.

THE BEAUTY OF THE SHULAMITE PRAISED (6:10 – 8:4)

A. Maidens Praise Her Loveliness

1. Friends (6:10) – They ask the Lover who this extraordinary person is, who is compared to the beauties of the heavenly scenes.
2. Lover (6:11-12) – He went to inspect the nut trees and inflamed his desire. Bride responds – pondering why she, a Shulamite maiden, has been chosen by Solomon as a bride (cf. 5:11-12).
3. Friends (6:13) – They desire to look upon the Shulamite who apparently has departed.
4. Lover (6:13b – 7:9a) – Once again he describes her beauty as he prepares to make love to her. She is compared to all the best beauties of Palestine again (cf. 4:1-5; 6:4-7). Once his eyes have feasted on her beauty, he embraces her beautiful body in love-making. One commentator claims that it is the maidens who praise her beauty as she dances for them (7:1-5). They praise her beautiful body as she dances.
5. Beloved (7:9b – 8:4) – She receives his advance with delight. She picks up on the figure of wine in her mouth and wants to transfer the taste to him. She fantasizes about getting away on a little renewed honeymoon. They can roam the countryside and drink deeply of love.
The jealousy and spite of others she feels somewhat, because she wants to take him away from all that to her mother’s house.

THEIR VISIT TO THE SHULAMITE’S COUNTRY HOME (8:5-14) (Or AFFIRMATION)

- A. Friends (8:5) – who is this with you, lover/beloved?
- B. Beloved (8:5b-7) – our love is so strong... it rages and flames and nothing can quench it or come between us.
- C. Friends or her brothers (8:8-9) – we have a young maiden sister not yet fully developed.
What should we do with her?

- D. Beloved (8:10-12) – I was like that and yet Solomon chose me! (Thus, this young maiden still has hope of finding a fine husband). He treats me and my family with respect and favor.
- E. Lover (8:8-13) – he wants to know where she is, with the friends? He wants her.
- F. Beloved (8:14) – She accepts his advance and invites him to again go away with her to the mountains of love.

There are no self exam questions on this lesson.

Study Guide



Charles Speer

Charles Speer received a Bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering from Southern Methodist University in 1970. From there he went directly to Sunset School of Preaching in Lubbock, Texas. After graduation in 1972, Charles went to work with the Northside congregation in Dallas for five years. In 1977 Charles and Cara were married and moved to Weatherford, Oklahoma, where he preached for eight years. Their two children, Bryn and Jamin, were born in Weatherford. In 1985 the Speer family attended six months of mission training at Sunset School of Preaching before leaving for New Zealand where they worked for three and a half years training preachers for New Zealand, New Guinea, and other points in the South Pacific at South Pacific Bible College.

Since 1989, Charles has been working full time with Sunset International Bible Institute while also serving on the ministry staff of the Sunset Church of Christ. Charles has a passion for the word of God and believes deeply that we need to have more respect and love for God's revelation. In *Wisdom Literature* he helps Bible students grasp the unique nature, value and place of the songs of poetry portions of the Old Testament.

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