

**Title: *Proverbs***

**ADULT SABBATH SCHOOL BIBLE STUDY GUIDE**

**TEACHERS EDITION**

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***Proverbs***

**by: Jacques Doukhan**

**January, February, March**

**2015**

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## Words of the Wise

While many books of the Bible are filled with deep spiritual and theological truths, the book of Proverbs is filled with practical and down-to-earth advice for daily living.

Brief, well-balanced, poetic, salty, and often humorous, the proverbs are universal, are easy to memorize, and make their points well, sometimes even more efficiently than do eloquent speeches and rigorous argumentation.

For instance: "Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise" (*Prov. 6:6, NKJV*). Or: "It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman" (*Prov. 21:19*). Or: "If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the LORD will reward you" (*Prov. 25:21, 22, NIV*). Who is going to forget images like that?

The book of Proverbs is a witness to the wisdom that had been accumulated over generations. Its human authors are referred to as King Solomon (*Prov. 1:1-9:18, 10:1-22:16, Proverbs 25-29*); as nonidentified "wise men" from the ancient Near Eastern world (*Prov. 22:17-24:22, 24:23-34*);



Introduction: *Proverbs*

1 and as the non-Israelite Agur (*Prov. 30:1-33*). The book even  
2 acknowledges King Hezekiah's editorial contributions (*Prov.*  
3 *25:1*). In some cases, too, the book reflects other ancient  
4 Near Eastern texts, especially those from ancient Egypt.

5        Yet, the book of Proverbs *is* the Word of God, because  
6 it was under divine inspiration that the authors pulled  
7 their materials together. Although God is rarely explicitly  
8 mentioned in the texts, He is always present: wherever we  
9 are in the marketplace, or as we speak, eat, drink, work,  
10 buy, sell, socialize, and love, the Lord is there. The God  
11 of Proverbs is not just the God of a religious person,  
12 whether a priest or a worshiper in the pew. Godliness is  
13 here put into working clothes.

14        The book of Proverbs also teaches about what it means  
15 *to fear God* (*Prov. 1:7, 31:30*), not just in church but as we  
16 go about our daily lives, because the way we live speaks  
17 louder than the way we preach, pray, or even sacrifice  
18 (*Prov. 28:9, 15:8*).

19        In Proverbs "wisdom" is revealed when you acknowledge  
20 the Lord "in all your ways" (*Prov. 3:6, NKJV*); that is,  
21 wisdom is living in faith and in obedience; it's about what  
22 it means to be human before the God of Creation.

23        From the book of Proverbs we will learn how to be wise,  
24 but concretely, in practical ways. The book answers such

Introduction: *Proverbs*

1 questions as *What and how should I teach my children? How*  
2 *can I be happy and successful? Why do I have money problems?*  
3 *How can I get a promotion in my job? How can I resist sexual*  
4 *temptations? How should I cope with my anger or my tongue?*

5       Finally, wisdom isn't necessarily intellectual might.  
6 On the contrary, the one who is sure of his or her  
7 brainpower is in the most danger of playing the fool,  
8 because even the smartest person knows so little. One may  
9 think of oneself as already wise and therefore as having no  
10 need to seek more knowledge. The prerequisite for wisdom is,  
11 instead, to be humble, to feel our need, and then to ask for  
12 wisdom.

13       Proverbs is deep and rich, and it deals with many  
14 topics. Because of the limitations of space, we've had to  
15 pick and choose which material we could cover. We can't  
16 cover it all, but all that we have is, indeed, worthy of our  
17 prayerful study.

18  
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Introduction: *Proverbs*

1 *University.*

2

1 **TE-1Q-2015-01-The Lesson in Brief**

2

3 **Key Texts:** *Proverbs 1:7 and 3:5-9*

4

5 **The Student Will:**

6 **Know:** Explore the meaning and relevancy of wisdom  
7 and the fear of the Lord as the basis of biblical  
8 spirituality.

9 **Feel:** Foster the presence of God in everyday life.

10 **Do:** Implement the fear of the Lord as a  
11 fundamental part of his or her lifestyle.

12 Cultivate the sense of God's closeness and  
13 practice discipline in order to experience and  
14 nurture a balanced, productive, and happy life.

15

16 **Learning Outline:**

17 **I. Know: Wisdom and the Fear of God**

18 A. How does fearing God open the way for gaining  
19 true knowledge and wisdom?

20 B. What definitions can you provide to explain  
21 what it means to fear God?

22 C. Why is discipline so important in relation to  
23 wisdom and fearing the Lord?

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## **II. Feel: Wisdom and Our Motivations**

- A. How can fear and love be combined?
- B. How can you emotionally support the decisions of others to honor God and live according to His revealed will? How can doing so nurture and sustain your own commitments to serve Him and live in His presence?
- C. What type of motivations for respecting God may help you to live a harmonious life?

## **III. Do: Wisdom and Discipline**

- A. How can you cultivate the awareness of God's presence?
- B. How can the implementation of clear boundaries in life be done without moralizing or falling into the danger of legalism?
- C. In what ways can you build a disciplined and meaningful relationship with your God?

**Summary:** The call of wisdom to live in God's presence enables people to discern between good and evil and do what is right.

1 **TE-1Q-2015-01-Learning Cycle**

2

3 **STEP 1–Motivate**

4

5 **Spotlight on Scripture:** *Proverbs 1:7 and 3:5–9*

6

7 **Key Concept for Spiritual Growth:** The book of Proverbs  
8 begins with an introduction emphasizing the importance  
9 of true wisdom. Wisdom is a tree of life (3:18; see  
10 also 11:30, 13:12, 15:4), creative power (3:19, 20),  
11 and more precious than gold or rubies (3:14, 15).  
12 Without this capacity to discern between good and evil,  
13 one cannot live a meaningful life (2:11–16; 3:2, 4, 13,  
14 16, 17). Wisdom not only is the ability to distinguish  
15 between good and evil but also involves following what  
16 is right (3:5–9), thus acknowledging and honoring God  
17 in our daily lives.

18

19 **Just for Teachers:** This week's lesson should help us to  
20 understand better the meaning of the "fear of God."

21

22 **Proverbs presents a sharp contrast between two**  
23 **allegorical women: Wisdom and Folly. The book begins**  
**positively by stressing Wisdom as the motivation for**

1 following a prudent path to a fulfilling life. This  
2 wisdom comes from above and is rooted in the fear of  
3 the Lord.

4  
5 **Opening Discussion:**

6 1. What is the difference between fear as anxiety and  
7 terror and fear as respect and worship?

8 2. Of all the biblical books, Proverbs is the most  
9 tightly connected with the lifestyle characterized by  
10 "the fear of the Lord." Why is the concept of the fear  
11 of God so dominant in Proverbs and closely related to  
12 wisdom and discipline?

13 3. How can you train your children to fear the Lord?  
14 Consider the following: "Parents are to look upon their  
15 children as entrusted to them of God to be educated for  
16 the family above. Train them in the fear and love of  
17 God; for 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of  
18 wisdom.'"—Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, p. 23.

19  
20 **STEP 2—Explore**

21  
22 **Just for Teachers:** You can appreciate and perceive the  
23 relevancy and urgency of God's call to fear Him when

1       you understand the meaning of His command to "fear the  
2       LORD."

## 4       **Bible Commentary**

6       The principal theme in wisdom literature is to fear the  
7       Lord. You cannot be wise without it. "The fear of the  
8       Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (*Prov. 1:7, see*  
9       *also Prov. 9:10, Job 28:28, and Ps. 111:10*).

### 11       **I. The Fear of God as the Key for Gaining Wisdom**

12       (*Review Deuteronomy 31:12, 13 and Proverbs 3:7 with the*  
13       *class.*)

15       We do not naturally know how to fear God, and as a  
16       result we have lost sight of its relevancy.

17       Consequently, we need to learn how to experience it  
18       afresh (*Deut. 31:12, 13*). The fear of the Lord does not  
19       mean to be scared but to tremble in awe before His  
20       holiness. He is the God of love, the Other One, the God  
21       of truth and justice. Thus, we admire, follow, and  
22       worship Him, for no one is like Him (*Exod. 34:6-8, Isa.*  
23       *40:25-29, 44:6-8*).



1

2

**Consider This:**

3

1. Study with your class the meaning of the first

4

occurrence of the expression "fear of God" in the

5

Bible. Note the words of Abraham to Abimelech when he

6

laments that "surely the fear of God" was not in Egypt

7

(*Gen. 20:11*). Was Abraham fearing God in this

8

situation, or was he more afraid of the king? Explain

9

your answer.

10

2. At Mount Sinai, God spoke, and the people were

11

afraid. What is the meaning of Moses' statement: " 'Do

12

not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the

13

fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning'

14

" (*Exod. 20:20, NIV*)?

15

3. There is the saying, "He who kneels before God can

16

stand before anyone." What does this mean, and how true

17

is it?

18

19

**II. Definitions of Fearing God**

20

(Review Deuteronomy 10:12, 13 and Proverbs 8:13 with

21

the class.)

22

23

Fearing God results in accepting and responding to

24

God's grace. But what does it mean to put that fear

1 into practice?

2 1. To fear God means to fear to grieve Him.

3 When they were small, a man's children would ask:

4 "Daddy, whom should we marry?" His simple answer:

5 "Marry someone who fears to grieve God! Why? Because  
6 only if that person fears to make God sad will they  
7 fear to make you sad! But if they do not care about or  
8 have respect for God, they will have no respect or care  
9 for you!"

10 Our relationship with God is the most important  
11 relationship in life; all other relationships spring  
12 from it. "To fear the LORD is to hate evil" (*Prov.*  
13 *8:13, NIV*). Fearing God means to make Him happy, like a  
14 child, out of love, seeking to make a parent happy. Too  
15 simple? Listen to the words of Jesus: " 'Truly I tell  
16 you, unless you change and become like little children,  
17 you will never enter the kingdom of heaven' " (*Matt.*  
18 *18:3, NIV*).

19 2. To fear God means to respect Him and His will,  
20 making all our decisions in regard to Him.

21 As we are unable to always think about our parent,  
22 spouse, or child, likewise we are unable at all times  
23 to think about God. However, a faithful child, parent,  
24 or spouse will always make his or her decisions in

1 regard and respect to loved ones. Similarly, we ought  
2 to make all our decisions in regard to God, His Word,  
3 His law, and His will.

4 Biblically, to fear means to revere and worship  
5 God. "Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the  
6 people of the world revere him" (*Ps. 33:8, NIV; see*  
7 *also Eccles. 8:12, 13; Jer. 10:6, 7*).

8 3. To fear God means to love and obey Him. The  
9 concept of love in the notion of fear is not present in  
10 our modern languages. This dimension is lost and is  
11 preserved only in the biblical Hebrew: "And now,  
12 Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to  
13 fear the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, to  
14 love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your  
15 heart and with all your soul, and to observe the LORD'S  
16 commands and decrees that I am giving you today for  
17 your own good?" (*Deut. 10:12, 13, NIV; see also Ps.*  
18 *103:17*). To fear God means to be in love with Him, in  
19 total submission and admirable obedience.

20 4. To fear God means to cultivate the awareness  
21 that He is present. He always sees us, we cannot flee  
22 from His presence, and His eye is constantly on us.  
23 This does not mean that He is a heavenly controller but  
24 instead, He is a loving, caring parent. "The eyes of

1 the LORD are on those who fear him" (*Ps. 33:18, NIV*).  
2 The fear of God is an acute consciousness of God's eye  
3 upon us and having the full assurance that we are  
4 living in His presence.

5 In order to cultivate a sense of awe before God,  
6 we need to enjoy His presence, sense His holiness, and  
7 maintain a correct trembling before His grace and love.

8 " 'Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD Almighty!' " (*Isa.*  
9 *6:3, NIV; see also Ps. 2:11, 12; Phil. 2:12, 13*).

10 Superior to His creation in every way, God is not our  
11 equal partner or a sentimental God but a consuming fire  
12 and the God of faithful love.

13

14 **Discussion Questions:**

15 How did David experience the fear of the Lord? Reflect  
16 on his experience: "I [David] have set the LORD always  
17 before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not  
18 be moved" (*Ps. 16:8*). How did he overcome fears,  
19 according to Psalm 56:3, 4? Contrast it with Psalms  
20 36:1 and 86:14.

21 Moses did not fear Pharaoh's anger but the living  
22 God, and "he persevered because he saw him who is  
23 invisible" (*Heb. 11:27, NIV*). What role does faith play  
24 in seeing the invisible God?

1

2 **STEP 3—Apply**

3

4 **Just for Teachers:** The book of Proverbs states that we  
5 should “fear the LORD and shun evil” (3:7, NIV).

6 **Explain to your class how regular prayer, daily Bible**  
7 **study, and witnessing about God’s goodness will enhance**  
8 **awareness of God’s presence in life.**

9

10 **Thought Question:**

11 What are practical ways for saying No to evil and  
12 avoiding evil behavior? What is the opposite of running  
13 away from evil? Discuss what that means.

14

15 **Application Questions:**

16 1. How can one emphasize loving God and obeying Him  
17 out of gratitude for what He did and is doing in our  
18 lives?

19 2. Why is discipline so crucial in gaining wisdom?

20

21 **STEP 4—Create**

22

23 **Just for Teachers:** Study with your class the meaning of

1       the term *wisdom*. What are similar terms that express  
2       the same idea? What are the characteristics of wisdom  
3       in the Bible? Study especially Proverbs 2, 3 from this  
4       perspective.

5  
6       **Activity:**

7       1. Suggest that, for one week, class members imagine  
8       God's presence by doing one of the following: (1) put  
9       another plate on the table to remind them that Jesus is  
10      eating with them; (2) while reading, watching TV, or  
11      working on their computers, place a chair for Jesus  
12      beside them to represent His participation in these  
13      activities.

14     2. It is not difficult to find references about the  
15     "fear of the Lord" in Proverbs, because it is a  
16     dominant theme. In the New International Version, "fear  
17     the LORD" is used six times (1:29, 3:7, 8:13, 14:16,  
18     15:33, 24:21); the phrase "the fear of the LORD" occurs  
19     10 times (1:7, 2:5, 9:10, 10:27, 14:27, 15:16, 16:6,  
20     19:23, 22:4, 23:17, NIV); the book commends everyone  
21     who "fears the LORD" (14:2, 26, NIV); and culminates  
22     with the praise of the woman who "fears the LORD"  
23     (31:30, NIV). By design, this notion often occurs in  
24     biblical wisdom literature (Job, Psalms, Ecclesiastes),

1        thus underlining that we can be wise only if we  
2        cultivate a personal relationship with God. By using a  
3        concordance or Bible software, discover where and how  
4        often this theme appears in the rest of the Bible.

1 **TE-1Q-2015-02-The Lesson in Brief**

2

3 **Key Text:** *Proverbs 5:11-13*

4

5 **The Student Will:**

6 **Know:** Understand that the wisdom described in  
7 Proverbs points to Christ, "the wisdom of God" (1  
8 *Cor. 1:24*).

9 **Feel:** Sense the pain of ignoring the wise  
10 instructions of God and the hurt that foolish  
11 actions bring him or her and loved ones.

12 **Do:** Seek Christ as the only solution to his or her  
13 foolish heart.

14

15 **Learning Outline:**

16 **I. Know: Christ Is "the Wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:24).**

17 A. Why are there similarities between the wisdom  
18 of Israel and the wisdom of the ancient world?

19 B. Why did Israel fail repeatedly even though they  
20 had superior wisdom from God?

21 C. Why do people know what is right yet often fail  
22 to do it?



1 D. In the 2,000 years of its history, why did the  
2 Christian church choose the path of “destruction  
3 and misery” so often, even though it knew Christ’s  
4 teachings, as outlined in the New Testament (*Rom.*  
5 *3:16*)?  
6

## 7 **II. Feel: The Pain of the Human Bent Toward Folly**

8 A. Can you think of a Bible personality who knew  
9 the wise thing to do yet chose the path of folly  
10 instead? How did it turn out for him or her?

11 B. Have you ever known that something was wrong  
12 and done it anyway? How did God work with you to  
13 restore you back to the path of wisdom?  
14

## 15 **III. Do: Seek Christ**

16 A. Why is there such colossal moral failure all  
17 over the world when people are receiving higher  
18 education in greater numbers than ever?

19 B. How has Christ made a difference in your life?  
20

21 **Summary:** We can live wisely if Christ lives in us and  
22 gives us a new set of desires. For, left to our  
23 own, we are invariably drawn to folly.

1 **TE-1Q-2015-02-Learning Cycle**

2

3 **STEP 1—Motivate**

4

5 **Spotlight on Scripture:** *Proverbs 5:11-13*

6

7 **Key Concept for Spiritual Growth:** The lament in  
8 Proverbs 5:11-13 is a warning to everyone who is on the  
9 path of folly. Found at the heart of Proverbs 4-6, this  
10 text calls upon the reader to heed the call of  
11 conscience before it is too late. Many nations besides  
12 Israel had sages, and many of the proverbs in these  
13 chapters are, in fact, found in the ancient world:  
14 remember the teachings of your parents and elders; do  
15 not obey your lower passions; do not lend money to  
16 friends; work hard and do not be lazy. The unusual  
17 nature of Proverbs 5:11-13 is that it reveals the  
18 reason nations and individuals have fallen in spite of  
19 having great wisdom. They fell because they developed a  
20 proud ear that would not hear rebuke. The point of  
21 Proverbs 5:11-13 is that the sooner you confess, "Oh,  
22 how I hated instruction," thereby acknowledging your  
23 shortcoming in this area, the sooner you can become

1 wise and avoid the disaster waiting for you.

2

3 **Just for Teachers:** It is important to read Proverbs in

4 light of Christ as the Wisdom of God made flesh.

5 Otherwise, the counsels in Proverbs will be mere advice

6 or maxims. Christ is the only person in history who was

7 always able to choose the way of wisdom. The Cross is a

8 good example of His amazing wisdom. He chose to go to

9 the cross when, to others, it appeared to be a foolish

10 path of misery and destruction. In stark contrast, many

11 falter, because, in their eyes, the path of folly looks

12 wiser. It is important to remember that Jesus was a

13 living Example of the way that the wisdom of Proverbs

14 was meant to be lived out.

15

16 **Opening Discussion:** Why did Jesus insist on going to

17 the cross (*see Mark 8:31-34*)? How was it wise? How much

18 money could Jesus have made if He had charged for His

19 healing? What would happen to the world if there were a

20 lot of people living like Jesus: doing good without

21 charging a fee, obeying the will of God even when it is

22 disadvantageous to oneself, speaking the truth

23 regardless of the consequence to oneself?

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**Questions for Discussion:**

- ① Why do people sometimes cosign loans for their friends or lend money to them?
- ② Why do many people fail to work like ants if they are not supervised?

**STEP 2—Explore**

**Just for Teachers:** It is important to be honest and transparent when teaching this week’s lesson. It is easy to underestimate how difficult it is to live by the wisdom taught in Proverbs. David, who taught the wisdom recorded in Proverbs to Solomon, as well as Solomon himself, who wrote it down for posterity, could not, in the end, live by the wisdom they taught. They could not teach their feet to walk the straight path. Imagine how much more difficult it is for us ordinary people to live by the wisdom of the Bible. The reason David and Solomon are considered wise is that they had humble and willing ears to hear the rebuke and repent when shown their guilt. Specifically, David had the

1 wisdom to confess his sin when he was told "Thou art  
2 the man" (2 Sam 12:7). On what occasion has God spoken  
3 to you lately the words, "Thou art the [man or woman]"?  
4

## 5 Bible Commentary

### 7 I. The Wisdom of Parents

8 (Review Proverbs 4 with the class.)  
9

10 This chapter begins with the scene of a father teaching  
11 the law of God (*vs.* 2), the Torah, to his children. The  
12 law (*Deut.* 6:7-9) actually requires such parental  
13 instruction. The word *Torah* originally means  
14 "instruction." But because *Torah* is often translated  
15 with the word *law*, one sometimes gets the impression  
16 that the law of Moses is simply a set of rules. This is  
17 not true. In Proverbs 4, the father passes on the Torah  
18 to his son in the form of instruction, as though it  
19 were a precious gift (*vs.* 2). He teaches it in the form  
20 of secrets of happiness and success. He divides his  
21 instruction into three parts: (1) an appeal to walk in  
22 his way, which is the law of God (*vss.* 5-13); (2) an  
23 appeal not to enter into the path of those who do not

1 respect God (*vss. 14-17*); (3) a promise of life to  
2 those who live in integrity and a promise of death to  
3 those whose actions and lips speak lies (*vss. 18-27*).  
4 At this point, it would be good to recall the warning  
5 of David, the father, in Proverbs 4 that no one  
6 actually chooses the way of wisdom: "Every one of them  
7 is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; *there*  
8 *is* none that doeth good, no, not one" (*Ps. 53:3*;  
9 *compare with Rom. 3:12*).

10  
11 **Consider This:** How can one give instructions to one's  
12 children so that they can see that they are receiving  
13 something precious? When was the last time you felt  
14 someone had given you valuable advice?

## 15 16 **II. The Loose Woman**

17 (*Review Proverbs 5 with the class.*)

18  
19 The loose woman described in chapter 5 symbolizes  
20 folly. There is no question that the father earnestly  
21 desires his son to avoid wasting his resources on  
22 prostitutes. But his concern is broader than just  
23 abstaining from visiting prostitutes or loose women.

1 Prostitutes appear frequently in the Bible as a symbol  
2 of spiritual apostasy or a general state of immorality  
3 (*Isa. 57:3; Jer. 3:2-9; 13:27; Ezekiel 16; 23; 43:7-9;*  
4 *Hos. 1-4; 5:3; 6:10; Nah. 3:4; Rev. 17:1, 15, 16;*  
5 *19:2*). Similarly, the prostitute in Proverb 5  
6 symbolizes apostasy.

7 The word *wisdom*, on the other hand, appears at the  
8 beginning of the chapter (*vs. 1*), and the word *folly*  
9 appears at the end of the chapter (*vs. 23*) to show a  
10 clear contrast between wisdom and folly. The loose  
11 woman in chapter 5 personifies folly. The point is that  
12 folly, regardless of its manifestation, wears a  
13 tempting face and promises pleasure. The central  
14 message of the chapter appears in the middle of the  
15 chapter (*vss. 11-13*), with a warning of what you will  
16 say in the end if you go down the path of folly: "How  
17 have I hated instruction, and my heart despised  
18 reproof" (*5:12*). Which will you choose? Folly beckons  
19 you with lying words of flattery, and wisdom calls you  
20 with true instruction and reproof.

21  
22 **Discussion Question:** Why does truth often offend? Why  
23 are we sometimes afraid to learn about our medical

1 conditions from our doctors even though they are not  
2 trying to hurt us? Think of something or someone that  
3 you were attached to that was hurting you and your  
4 family. How did it feel to have it taken away from you?  
5

6

### III. The Long and the Short View of Things

7

*(Review Proverbs 6:1-19 with the class.)*

8

9 Proverbs 6:1-19 consists of four sections. The first  
10 section (*vs. 1-3*) warns us not to guarantee our  
11 friends' loans. This warning applies to any act of  
12 trying to do things for "friends" out of fear that one  
13 might lose their friendship. But in the long run, you  
14 will surely be ruined if you keep doing things for him  
15 or her out of pressure.

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In the second section of the chapter (*vss. 6-11*),  
there appears a parable of the sluggard. The story of  
the ants is placed in the parable (*vss. 6-8*) to provide  
a contrast. The point of the story is perseverance. The  
ants persevere because they have a long-range view of  
things and prepare for the wintertime. The sluggard, on  
the other hand, has a short-term view of things and  
tries to avoid any inconvenience that might hinder his



1 enjoyment of life now. The third section (vss. 12-15)  
2 sums up the foolish person as "wicked" (vs. 12). The  
3 wicked spends his or her life devising "mischief" and  
4 sowing "discord" among friends (vs. 14). The problem is  
5 that they fail to have the long-range view of things  
6 and to see that their ruin will come upon them  
7 "suddenly" (vs. 15) and that there will be no one to  
8 help. In the fourth section (vss. 16-19), there appears  
9 a list of seven things that the Lord hates. What this  
10 list implies is that the fool loves the things that God  
11 hates and finds pleasure and happiness in doing them.  
12 Why else, Proverbs asks, would he or she do them  
13 "continually" (vs. 14)?

14

15 **Consider This:** Why do many enjoy watching movies and TV  
16 shows that show the behaviors described in the list of  
17 seven things that God hates?

18

### 19 **STEP 3—Apply**

20

21 **Just for Teachers:** The list of seven things that the  
22 Lord hates in Proverbs 6:16-19 describes the way of  
23 life in big cities, especially in job situations that

1 encourage competition. The seven things are what people  
2 do to get ahead in life. But the Lord hates these  
3 things, especially the sowing of "discord among  
4 brethren" (*vs. 19*).

5

6 **Application Questions:**

- 7 ❶ How can the church always be a community that does  
8 what the Lord loves, a place of humility and harmony?  
9 ❷ What causes a hesitation to do the will of God?

10

11 **STEP 4—Create**

12

13 **Just for Teachers:** Proverbs 4–6 point to our desperate  
14 need for Christ, the wisdom of God. Jesus says to the  
15 church, "Without me ye can do nothing" (*John 15:5*).

16

17 **Activities:**

- 18 1. Ask your class to write down the names of those who  
19 have offended them. Ask them to write down what it  
20 would take to become friends with them again.  
21 2. Discuss with the class the past experience of your  
22 congregation—peace and harmony or discord and

- 1 indifference. Ask them to explain the reasons for the
- 2 situation in light of today's lesson.

1 **TE-1Q-2015-03-The Lesson in Brief**

2

3 **Key Text:** *Proverbs 6:23*

4

5 **The Student Will:**

6 **Know:** Understand that following guidance from  
7 God's law is essential for our ultimate survival.

8 **Feel:** Cherish the warmth and security of God's  
9 parental love as He teaches what is best for him  
10 or her.

11 **Do:** Accept God's instruction and seek to learn  
12 more of His will, as recorded in writings that He  
13 has inspired.

14

15 **Learning Outline:**

16 **I. Know: Following God's Law Is a Matter of Life and**  
17 **Death.**

18 A. What is God's law?

19 B. How do God's instructions shed light on the  
20 safe way of life?

21 C. How is God's law based on cause and effect?

1 D. How does God's law reveal dangers of departing  
2 from God's principles?  
3

4 **II. Feel: God's Love Is Expressed Through His Law.**

5 A. What does God's law have to do with His  
6 character of love and care for us?

7 B. If we feel God's mercy and grace, why do we  
8 need His law?

9 C. In what way do we feel God's love when He  
10 disciplines us for departing from His  
11 instructions?  
12

13 **III. Do: Accepting and Learning God's Instructions**  
14 **Affects Your Life.**

15 A. What instructions from God that you understand  
16 up to this point have you accepted and followed?  
17 What difference has this commitment made in your  
18 life?

19 B. Why should you want to learn more of God's  
20 instructions?

21 C. What are specific ways in which you actually  
22 (not theoretically) may go about learning more of  
23 God's will for your life?

1

2 **Summary:** God lovingly teaches us His principles of living

3 for our own good.

4

1 **TE-1Q-2015-03-Learning Cycle**

2

3 **STEP 1—Motivate**

4

5 **Spotlight on Scripture:** *Proverbs 7:1-4*

6

7 **Key Concept for Spiritual Growth:** God teaches His  
8 instructions to us as a loving parent teaches a child.  
9 His purpose is not to burden us but to help us make  
10 wise choices. If we cherish His guidance as a precious  
11 gift and allow it to shape our inner attitudes, we will  
12 enjoy life rather than falling into temptations that  
13 deceive those who lack understanding.

14

15 **Just for Teachers:** *Proverbs 7* presents divine teaching  
16 through King Solomon as words of wisdom addressed to  
17 his son (*vs. 1; compare 1:1*). Verses 1-4 of chapter 7  
18 reiterate 6:20-23, and both of these passages introduce  
19 warnings against falling into temptation to commit  
20 adultery (*6:24-35, 7:5-27*).

21 **The Ten Commandments** prohibit adultery (*Exod.*

22 *20:14*). Related laws condemn to death, under the

1        **Israelite judicial system, those who commit this crime**  
2        *(Lev. 20:10, Deut. 22:22)*. **Proverbs deals with the same**  
3        **sin and its deadly consequences but approaches it from**  
4        **a different angle by appealing to the listeners' desire**  
5        **for their own well-being and by describing the kind of**  
6        **attractive temptation that could lead to adultery.**

7  
8        **Opening Discussion:** God is our perfect manufacturer,  
9        and He provides us with the Bible as the Manufacturer's  
10       Manual. When you buy a car and the manufacturer's  
11       manual says to put motor oil in its engine, you follow  
12       the instructions without complaining, because you know  
13       that the one who made the vehicle knows best. So, why  
14       would anyone even think of disregarding God's  
15       instructions?

16  
17        **Questions for Discussion:**

18        ❶ How many principles of the Ten Commandments can you  
19        find in Proverbs 6, 7?

20        ❷ Why does God teach the principles, illustrated in  
21        the Ten Commandments, from different angles in various  
22        parts of the Bible? Can we learn anything from this  
23        method regarding how we can pass His instructions on to



1 others, including our children?

2

3 **STEP 2—Explore**

4

5 **Just for Teachers:** Three of the most important words  
6 for law and related concepts appear together in  
7 Proverbs 6:23: "For the commandment [*mitzvah*] is a  
8 lamp, and the law [*torah*] a light; reproofs of  
9 instruction [*musar*] are the way of life" (*NKJV*).

10 A *mitzvah* is a "command" or "commandment." *Torah*  
11 is "direction," "instruction," or "teaching" from  
12 someone who is wise (*13:14*), such as a mother (*1:8*) or  
13 father (*4:2*). The word *torah* is apparently derived from  
14 the same Hebrew root as the verb *yrh*, which means  
15 "teach" (*4:4, 11*) or "point" (*6:13*). *Musar* is  
16 "discipline" or "training" (*3:11*) or "warning" or  
17 "instruction" (*1:8*).

18 By using several terms with related but distinct  
19 meanings, the biblical text expands understanding of a  
20 concept. Law is commanded by a superior person, such as  
21 a parent or God (*mitzvah*), but it is not arbitrary; it  
22 is instruction that points out a wise course of action

1 (torah) and trains a person through warning and  
2 discipline (*musar*). Through parallel expressions,  
3 Proverbs 6:23 characterizes law as "a lamp," "a light,"  
4 and "the way of life." A "lamp" provides "light," so  
5 these words are closely related and show that law  
6 functions to dispel darkness so that one can see what  
7 is going on. By adding that law is "the way of life,"  
8 Proverbs indicates that the light of the law  
9 illuminates the safe course of life that results in  
10 living rather than dying.

11

## 12 Bible Commentary

13

14 Proverbs 7:1-3 urges the hearer to internalize wise  
15 commands "within you," using the metaphor of writing  
16 them "on the tablet of your heart" (*NKJV*). True and  
17 unflinching obedience flows from inner attitudes shaped  
18 by the commands; it is not something artificially  
19 imposed from the outside. Our sinful will and lack of  
20 understanding prevent us from internalizing God's law  
21 by ourselves. But God promises to put His law in our  
22 minds and write it on our hearts (*Jer. 31:33; compare*

1        *Ezek. 36:26*).

2                Putting a clean heart within us is a miracle of  
3        God's creative power (*Ps. 51:10*). To receive it, we  
4        must acknowledge our weakness and accept the  
5        forgiveness and moral cleansing that God offers through  
6        Jesus Christ (*Psalm 51, Jer. 31:34, 1 John 1:7-9*). God  
7        transforms us, making us new people through His Holy  
8        Spirit (*John 3:3-8, Titus 3:4-7*).

9  
10        **I. Wise Words Give Light for Life**

11        (*Review Proverbs 4, 6:20-23 with the class.*)

12  
13        Proverbs 4 presents instruction from a wise father, who  
14        says: "Keep my commands, and live" (*vs. 4, NKJV*). Then  
15        he likens the path of righteous people to light (*vs.*  
16        *18*), by contrast with the dark way of the wicked, who  
17        "do not know what makes them stumble" (*vs. 19, NKJV*).  
18        The righteous allow their lives to be illuminated by  
19        wisdom so that they do not fall into danger through  
20        ignorance. Therefore, words of wisdom "are life to  
21        those who find them, and health to all their flesh"  
22        (*vs. 22, NKJV*). Proverbs 6:20-23 pulls together the  
23        concepts of wise commands, light, and life more

1 tightly. Here a parent's commands will lead and keep  
 2 you (*vs. 22*), "For the commandment is a lamp, and the  
 3 law a light; reproofs of instruction are the way of  
 4 life" (*vs. 23, NKJV*).

5 In Psalm 119:105, God's Word "is a lamp to my feet  
 6 and a light to my path" (*NKJV*). In John 1:1-5, 14,  
 7 Christ, the divine Creator, has come to earth as the  
 8 ultimate Word (Communication) from God. "In Him was  
 9 life, and the life was the light of men" (*vs. 4, NKJV*).  
 10 By internalizing His words (*compare John 6:53-58, 63*),  
 11 we gain ultimate wisdom that prepares us for eternal  
 12 life with Him.

13  
 14 **Consider This:** How does beholding Christ's life change  
 15 us (*compare 2 Cor. 3:18*)? In what way does this effect  
 16 go beyond the influence that any other hero has on  
 17 someone who admires him or her? What difference does  
 18 whom we admire make?

## 20 **II. Wise Instructions Warn Against Temptation**

21 (*Review Proverbs 6:23-25, 7:1-21 with the class.*)

22  
 23 In Proverbs 6 and 7, seduction by a woman (*compare by a*

1        *man in Exod. 22:16*) illustrates how temptation works.  
2        It can be desirable to the ears and mind (*Prov. 6:24,*  
3        *7:21*), to the eyes (*6:25*), to one's appetite for food  
4        (*7:14*, here sacrificial meat eaten at home by the  
5        offerer; *compare Lev. 7:16*), to fulfill a desire for  
6        companionship (*Prov. 7:15*), to satisfy a yearning for  
7        touch (*7:16*), and can appeal to one's sense of smell  
8        (*7:17*) and sexual appetite (*7:18*). Of themselves, these  
9        are good desires that God has given. But temptation is  
10       effective, because it presents attractive ways to  
11       fulfill them in ways that violate boundaries that God  
12       has established for our protection (*James 1:14, 15;*  
13       *compare Gen. 3:6; 1 John 2:16*). By appealing to several  
14       desires and offering assurance that there is no danger  
15       (*vss. 19, 20; compare food and sex in Num. 25:1, 2;*  
16       *Rev. 2:14*), Proverbs 7 illustrates how strong  
17       temptation can be.

18

19        **Discussion Question:** What kinds of temptations appeal  
20        to us? Why are they attractive? Why are they dangerous?

21

### 22        **III. Yielding to Temptation is Costly**

23        (*Review Proverbs 6:26-35, 7:22-27 with the class.*)

1

2

Rather than appealing to the moral rightness of resisting temptation because one is accountable to God (*compare Gen. 39:9–Joseph*), Proverbs emphasizes earthly cause and effect in the present life. Consequences of sin are inescapable (6:27–29) and deadly (6:32–35, 7:22–27). The cost of its temporary pleasure is too high; it is not worth it.

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A TV comedian got lots of laughs by exclaiming, “The Devil made me do it!” But this is just an excuse. The Devil can’t *force* you do anything, because “God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (1 Cor. 10:13, NKJV). Sin is a choice that we don’t have to make, because God gives us the opportunity to resist, and He is able to keep us from falling (*Jude 24*).

**Consider This:** If you really believe that God, your Creator and Savior, is able to keep you from falling into temptation, then how do your choices show this belief? In what ways could relying wholly on God help

1           you to be more successful?

2

3   **STEP 3—Apply**

4

5           **Just for Teachers:** Many people are discouraged and see  
6           no hope for overcoming their weaknesses. Help your  
7           class to understand the power, through prayer, of  
8           taking struggles to Christ. He understands and provides  
9           access to the mighty power of God, who promises to help  
10          in every time of need (*Heb. 4:14-16*).

11

12   **Application Questions:**

13          ❶ What practical things can we do to reduce  
14          temptations and make ourselves less vulnerable?

15          ❷ How can we help others who are discouraged,  
16          frustrated, and suffering because of their failures?

17

18   **STEP 4—Create**

19

20          **Just for Teachers:** Proverbs 6 and 7 presents negative  
21          examples as warnings. Help your class to see the  
22          positive message behind these warnings.

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**Activities:**

1. List specific ways in which you can get acquainted with the people of your neighborhood, have opportunities to learn their needs, and share with them God's offer of a better life by following His wisdom.
2. Set up a network in your group so that any time one of you is struggling with temptation or discouragement, that person can call on the others for prayer support.



1 **TE-1Q-2015-04-The Lesson in Brief**

2

3 **Key Text:** *Proverbs 8:22-31*

4

5 **The Student Will:**

6 **Know:** Grasp the reality of Christ in Proverbs 8 as  
7 Divine Wisdom, Co-creator with the Father, and  
8 pre-Fall Mediator.

9 **Feel:** Appreciate the warmth, intimacy, joy, and  
10 condescension of the Godhead in Their work of  
11 Creation.

12 **Do:** Accept the biblical picture of the pre-  
13 incarnate Christ as Co-Creator with the Father and  
14 as Pre-Fall Mediator, and internalize this  
15 demonstration of the character of God.

16

17 **Learning Outline:**

18 **I. Know: The Reality of the pre-incarnate Christ in**  
19 **Proverbs 8**

20 Proverbs 8 affirms that Jesus is the Divine  
21 Wisdom, Co-Creator with the Father, and Mediator  
22 between an infinite God and finite creatures.

1           Where else in Scripture is Christ's pre-Fall  
2           mediation implied (*see John 1:1-3*)? Why was such  
3           "mediation" necessary even before sin?  
4

## 5           **II. Feel: The pre-Incarnate Christ as mediator**

6           Proverbs 8 describes Christ coming down at the  
7           time of Creation to identify with His creatures  
8           (*vss. 30, 31*). How does this demonstrate the  
9           "Immanuel" ("God with us") principle from the very  
10          beginning? In what ways does this portrait of  
11          Christ impact your feelings about the amazing  
12          character of the Godhead?  
13

## 14          **III. Do: Divine Wisdom and God's Character**

15          Proverbs 8 depicts the vibrant and even playful  
16          joy and fellowship among the members of the  
17          Godhead at Creation. Imagine the Father and Son  
18          joyously, even playfully, interacting during  
19          Creation Week. How does this picture transform  
20          your view of God's character?  
21

22          **Summary:** Proverbs 8 reveals a loving Godhead in intimate  
23          and joyous fellowship at Creation and Christ, the

1            Divine Wisdom, condescending to mediate (build a  
2            bridge) between the infinite Godhead and finite  
3            creatures.

1 **TE-1Q-2015-04-Learning Cycle**

2

3 **STEP 1-Motivate**

4

5 **Spotlight on Scripture:** Proverbs 8:22-31

6

7 **Key Concept for Spiritual Growth:** Wisdom, in Proverbs  
8 8, goes beyond mere poetic personification and actually  
9 refers to a divine Being—the pre-incarnate Christ, who  
10 was Co-Creator with the Father and served as Mediator  
11 between the infinite Godhead and finite creatures even  
12 before sin.

13

14 **Just for Teachers:** In the early centuries of Christian  
15 history, Proverbs 8:22-31 was one of the most popular  
16 Old Testament passages utilized by the Church Fathers  
17 as referring to Christ, and this interpretation  
18 prevailed throughout the Christian era until modern  
19 times. Although many scholars since the nineteenth  
20 century have seen in Proverbs 8 only a poetic  
21 personification of wisdom, there is strong biblical  
22 evidence for affirming that this passage speaks

1 directly of the pre-incarnate Son of God. This  
2 interpretation has profound significance for  
3 understanding the relationships among the members of  
4 the Godhead and for seeing the amazing character of the  
5 Creator in coming down to be close to His creatures in  
6 creation.

7  
8 **Opening Activity:** Ask your class to stretch their minds  
9 by trying to imagine the prevailing mood of the Father  
10 and Son in their work of creating the universe and in  
11 particular this world and its inhabitants. Was it  
12 somber, or joyous--perhaps even playful? What kind of  
13 special role did the pre-incarnate Christ take on in  
14 this creation?

15  
16 **Consider This:** According to John 1:1-3, Christ in the  
17 beginning was called "The Word." A "word" goes between  
18 one's mouth and another's ear so that communication can  
19 take place. This week we will discover that from the  
20 beginning of Creation, the Son of God was such a Word--  
21 mediating or facilitating communication between the  
22 Godhead and created beings.

23

**1 STEP 2-Explore**

2

3 **Just for Teachers:** Throughout Proverbs 1-7 wisdom is  
4 merely personified, but in Proverbs 8, the language  
5 shifts to describe Wisdom in a way that could only  
6 apply to the Second Person of the Godhead, the pre-  
7 incarnate Christ. (See Richard M. Davidson, "Proverbs 8  
8 and the Place of Christ in the Trinity," *Journal of the*  
9 *Adventist Theological Society* 17, no. 1 [Spring 2006]:  
10 33-54, available at [www.atsjats.org](http://www.atsjats.org).)

11

**12 Bible Commentary**

13

**14 I. Jesus as Divine Wisdom**

15 (*Review Proverbs 8:12-21, 32-36 with the class.*)

16

17 The references to wisdom in Proverbs 8 denote the  
18 Second Member of the Godhead at the time of Creation.  
19 This is clear, first, because Wisdom is described with  
20 the very prerogatives that are elsewhere in Scripture  
21 reserved for Yahweh alone: (1) Giver of life and death  
22 (*vss. 35, 36; compare with 14:27*); (2) Source of

1 legitimate government (*vss. 15, 16; compare, e.g., Num.*  
 2 *11:16, 17*); (3) the One who is to be sought after,  
 3 found, and called (*vs. 17; compare Deut. 4:29*); (4) the  
 4 One who loves and is to be loved (*vs. 17; compare,*  
 5 *e.g., Neh. 13:26*); (5) the Giver of wealth (*vss. 18-21;*  
 6 *compare 1 Chron. 29:12*); and (6) Source of divine  
 7 revelation (*vss. 6-10, 19, 32, 34; compare 29:18; 30:3-*  
 8 *5*).

9           In Proverbs 8:12, the expression often translated  
 10 "I, wisdom . . ." is better translated as "I am  
 11 Wisdom," in precise grammatical parallel with the  
 12 common rhetorical form of divine self-reference  
 13 regularly reserved elsewhere in Scripture for God: "I  
 14 am Yahweh your God" (*see, e.g., Ezek. 12:25, 35:12,*  
 15 *Zech. 10:6, Mal. 3:6*). Wisdom in Proverbs 8 thus speaks  
 16 and acts as a distinct, self-aware divine Being (the  
 17 pre-incarnate Son of God). This usage of an attribute  
 18 (wisdom) to refer to a distinct divine Person is  
 19 technically known as "hypostasis."

20           Ellen G. White clearly understood the Wisdom of  
 21 Proverbs 8 as referring to the pre-incarnate Son of  
 22 God. See especially *Signs of the Times*, August 29,  
 23 1900: "Through Solomon Christ declared . . . [Prov.

1 8:22-30 quoted]. In speaking of His preexistence,  
2 Christ carries the mind back through dateless ages. He  
3 assures us that there never was a time when He was not  
4 in close fellowship with the eternal God.”

5  
6 **Consider this:** How does understanding Christ as “Divine  
7 Wisdom” broaden your perspective of God’s character and  
8 work?

9  
10 **II. The Divine Wisdom (Jesus) as Co-Creator with the**  
11 **Father**

12 *(Review Proverbs 8:22-31 and Colossians 1:15, 16 with*  
13 *the class.)*

14  
15 The Hebrew word *’amon* in Proverbs 8:30, is best  
16 translated as “Master-craftsman,” thus providing  
17 further evidence that the divine Wisdom is Christ, Co-  
18 creator with the Father. Wisdom’s building of a house  
19 with seven pillars (*Prov. 9:1*) is probably an allusion  
20 to the seven days of Creation week and possibly the  
21 Temple as well.

22 Proverbs 30:4 reinforces this interpretation,  
23 alluding to this Co-creator with Yahweh as “God’s Son.”



1 That Proverbs 8:22-31 refers specifically to the pre-  
2 incarnate Son of God, the Creator, is further supported  
3 by the allusions to Proverbs 8 in the New Testament and  
4 the application of these allusions to Christ in His  
5 work of Creation (*see especially John 1:1-3; 1 Cor.*  
6 *1:24, 30; Col. 1:15, 16; Heb. 1:1-4*).

7  
8 **Consider this:** According to Genesis 1:2, the Holy  
9 Spirit was also involved in Creation. How do you  
10 imagine the three Persons of the Godhead carrying out  
11 their "co-creative" operations during their work of  
12 Creation? How does this picture enhance our concept of  
13 the Godhead as essentially relational (an intimate  
14 fellowship of divine Beings) from eternity?

15  
16 **III. Wisdom (Jesus) as Mediator between God and His**  
17 **Creatures**

18 (*Review Proverbs 8:22-25, 30, 31 with the class.*)

19  
20 Proverbs 8:22-25 uses the language of birth with  
21 reference to Wisdom ("brought forth/born"), but this  
22 does not indicate that Christ was literally born and  
23 does not imply that there was a time before which

1 Christ did not exist. Rather, allusions to birth, when  
2 coupled with the Hebrew word for "installed" (*nasak*  
3 *III, vs. 23*), are technical Old Testament language for  
4 installation of a person into a new office. Note the  
5 precise parallel in Psalm 2:6, 7, where the Messianic  
6 king is clearly not literally born, but rather  
7 installed into a royal office, using language of birth  
8 combined with the Hebrew word meaning "installed"  
9 (*nasak III*). Psalm 2 points *forward* to the time when  
10 Christ would be installed as king after His  
11 incarnation, while Proverbs 8 points *backward* to the  
12 pre-incarnate Christ's installation into a new office  
13 at the beginning of Creation (*vss. 22, 23*).

14 What office? Proverbs 8:30, 31 indicates that this  
15 new office of Christ was that of a mediator, not in the  
16 sense of an intercessor for sin, but in the sense of a  
17 communication link between Creator and creation. Wisdom  
18 is at one and the same time "rejoicing always before  
19 Him [Yahweh]" and also "rejoicing in His [Yahweh's]  
20 inhabited world." Thus Wisdom takes the role of  
21 mediator (in the sense of "go-between") between God and  
22 created beings, facilitating communication between the  
23 infinite God and finite creatures.

1

2

**Consider This:** What is the difference between Christ's mediatorial work for sinners after the Fall and His office as Mediator between Infinity and finitude from the beginning of Creation?

6

### 7 **STEP 3-Apply**

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**Just for Teachers:** In the "counsel of peace" (*Zech. 6:13*) among the co-equal members of the Godhead before creation of the universe, it appears that the Person we call the Father represents the transcendent majesty and glory of the Trinity, while the one we call the Son would "empty" himself, coming close to His inhabited universe, mediating between infinity and finitude, thus demonstrating from the dawn of Creation the "Immanuel" principle, God with us!

**Thought Questions:** What evidence from the Old Testament hints at the possibility that Christ took the form (not the nature) of an angel to interface with His creation? (See the passages depicting the divine "Angel [or Messenger] of the Lord": *Gen. 16:13; 18, 19; 22:24;*

1       48:16; *Exod. 23:20, 21; 32, 33; and Judg. 13:3, 13, 17,*  
2       *18, 22, etc.*).

3               How does Christ's stooping to be close to His  
4       creatures, even before sin, reveal that God is not  
5       aloof, distant, cold, and forbidding, but rather  
6       intimate, personal, warm, and affirming?

7

8       **Application Questions:** How does understanding the  
9       "Immanuel principle" regarding the work of the Son in  
10      Creation affect your personal relationship with God and  
11      perhaps alter your perspective on the nature and  
12      character of God?

13              Why was it important to the Godhead for one of  
14      their members (Jesus) to be a mediator (go-between),  
15      bridging the gulf between an infinite God and finite  
16      creatures?

17              What, if anything, would have changed had They  
18      decided that the One we call the Father should have  
19      become the Mediator between infinity and finitude?

20      Discuss.

21

22      **STEP 4-Create**

23

1       **Just for Teachers:** The Hebrew word for "rejoice" in  
2       Proverbs 8:30, 31 literally means "laugh, sport, play."  
3       This passage seems to picture the Father and Son  
4       joyously laughing, sporting, even playing, during  
5       Creation. Does this indicate that God can identify with  
6       us even in our play and sport?

7  
8       **Activity:** Think about and share with the class possible  
9       times during the Creation week when the Father, Son,  
10      and Holy Spirit might have playfully laughed as they  
11      created unique animals and plants. (the long-necked  
12      giraffe, the striped zebra, the kangaroo, etc.) Then  
13      share how you imagine God enjoying fellowshiping with  
14      us in our innocent play as well in as our work and  
15      worship.

1 **TE-1Q-2015-05-The Lesson in Brief**

2

3 **Key Text:** *Proverbs 10:6*

4

5 **The Student Will:**

6 **Know:** Understand the contrast between good results  
7 of good choices and bad results of bad choices.

8 **Feel:** Trust in God's wisdom and desire for our  
9 well-being.

10 **Do:** Be aware of the causes of positive and  
11 negative effects in our lives and commit to making  
12 better choices.

13

14 **Learning Outline:**15 **I. Know: Our Choices Make a Difference.**

16 A. What kinds of choices do we have in life?

17 B. How and why do our choices cause positive or  
18 negative effects to ourselves and to others?

19 C. How do our inner attitudes affect our choices?

20 D. How does God guide and encourage us to make  
21 good choices?

22

**II. Feel: God Is Wise and Desires Our Well-Being.**

A. Why do we sometimes put our own judgment above God's rather than trusting that He knows what is best for us?

B. Why might we regard God's instructions as arbitrary and irrelevant to our well-being, as opposed to believing that He wants the best for us?

C. How do our feelings about God come across to others?

**III. Do: Be More Aware and Make Better Choices**

A. Which aspects of your life that are under your control could be better?

B. What efforts are you willing to put forth in order to understand what is going on and to make changes?

C. What will you do if changing is difficult?

**Summary:** God explains principles of cause and effect at work in our lives so that we can know how to make choices that benefit us and others.

1 **TE-1Q-2015-05-Learning Cycle**

2

3 **STEP 1—Motivate**

4

5 **Spotlight on Scripture:** *Proverbs 10:1-7*

6

7 **Key Concept for Spiritual Growth:** God created humans  
8 with free choice so that we can love Him and one  
9 another. Without free choice there can be no love. But  
10 if we are free to choose God and His love, we are also  
11 free to reject Him and choose selfishness instead.

12 Rather than forcing us to choose Him, in which case  
13 there would be no real choice or opportunity for love,  
14 God clearly sets out the alternatives and their  
15 consequences before us so that we can make informed  
16 choices rather than being deceived through ignorance.

17

18 **Just for Teachers:** The proverbs of Solomon in chapter  
19 10 of the book of Proverbs are mainly constructed as  
20 contrasting parallels. The two halves of each proverb  
21 are connected by a common element but separated by  
22 factors that are opposite. Thus, the two parts of verse



1 are linked by the topic of a son's effect on his  
2 parents. Whether a parent is happy or experiences grief  
3 depends on whether the son is wise or foolish. By  
4 analyzing relationships between the two parts of these  
5 proverbs, we can find concepts that we might otherwise  
6 miss.

7 For example, 10:6 reads: "Blessings are on the  
8 head of the righteous, but violence covers the mouth of  
9 the wicked" (NKJV). The unifying element is the effect  
10 of one's character on part of the person's body. The  
11 idea of violence covering the mouth can be taken in two  
12 ways. First, the mouth could be a source of violence  
13 (*compare vs. 11*), so that the guilt of violence would  
14 cover it (*compare Mal. 2:16*). Second, a wicked person  
15 could suffer violence in such a way that he could not  
16 even cry for help (*compare Esther 7:8-10*). By combining  
17 the two ideas, the reader gains the meaning that  
18 setting evil in motion with one's mouth comes back to  
19 affect the mouth. Not only does the punishment fit the  
20 crime; it results from the crime.

21  
22 **Opening Discussion:** The fact that Proverbs presents so

1 many choices shows the importance of our power of  
2 choice. God gave Adam and Eve a perfect world, but He  
3 also gave them the freedom to choose something else  
4 through eating the fruit of the "tree of the knowledge  
5 of good and evil" (*Gen. 2:17*). They did not need it;  
6 nor was it good for them, but they could have it if  
7 they wanted. By choosing that one tree, they were  
8 imprisoned by its world of moral weakness, sorrow,  
9 suffering, and death (*Genesis 3*). Now their choices,  
10 and those of all their descendants, would be difficult  
11 and complicated.

12

### 13 **Questions for Discussion:**

- 14 ❶ How do sin and its results complicate our choices?  
15 ❷ How does the book of Proverbs show the complexities  
16 of life and how to safely navigate through them?

17

### 18 **STEP 2—Explore**

19

20 **Just for Teachers:** Proverbs emphasizes that our Creator  
21 gives us great freedom of choice, but He has also set  
22 up causes and effects that make things work in our  
23 world according to our nature. So violating the

1 relational boundaries that God has made for our good  
2 (*see also Deut. 10:13*) is an invitation to disaster as  
3 a matter of cause and effect, not because God inflicts  
4 arbitrary punishment. Every sane person wants to  
5 achieve a sense of well-being, happiness, and success  
6 in life; so, Proverbs motivates by appealing to "common  
7 sense."

## 9 Bible Commentary

10  
11 Proverbs teaches about values and their results. Those  
12 who are loving and humble often receive the benefits of  
13 these virtues in their lives. Even if they suffer in  
14 the present age, Jesus is coming to reward them in the  
15 age to come (*Rev. 22:12*).

16 In Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28-30, God  
17 promised to lavish blessings on those who would  
18 faithfully follow Him and receive the benefits of  
19 living according to the principles of cause and effect  
20 that He has set up. By blessing them, He can attract  
21 others to follow Him too (*Deut. 4:6*).

### 23 I. Love Covers All Sins

1       *(Review Proverbs 10 with the class.)*

2

3       Proverbs 10:12 observes: "Hatred stirs up strife, but  
4       love covers all sins" (*NKJV*). Here covering sins is  
5       good because it results from love, which is the  
6       opposite of hatred. However, 28:13 says: "He who covers  
7       his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and  
8       forsakes them will have mercy" (*NKJV*).

9             Covering sins as a cover-up is not good. Here, a  
10       person covers up his or her own sins, but, in 10:12,  
11       our love for others will cover their sins against us.  
12       The Hebrew noun for "sin" here is a strong one, which  
13       is often translated "transgression" elsewhere in the  
14       Bible. It carries the idea of "rebellion" (compare the  
15       related verb "rebel" in 2 Kings 1:1). Thus, Proverbs  
16       10:12 is powerful: if you have love that is willing to  
17       overlook and forgive the kinds of offenses against you  
18       that break relationships, you will enjoy peace rather  
19       than strife. We can forgive others as God forgives us,  
20       because we love them as God and His Son love us (*John*  
21       *3:16*).

22

23       **Consider This:** Can you think of times in your life that

1 love has preserved and healed your relationships? Can  
2 you see how love for oneself and others (*compare Lev.*  
3 *19:18*) underlies specific illustrations in Proverbs?  
4

## 5 **II. Wisdom in Humility**

6 (*Review Proverbs 11-12 with the class.*)  
7

8 Proverbs 11:2 says: "When pride comes, then comes  
9 shame; but with the humble is wisdom" (*NKJV*). The  
10 wisdom of humility and the foolishness of pride is a  
11 prominent theme in the book of Proverbs (for example,  
12 see 16:18). Proud, arrogant people do not listen to  
13 others because they are sure that they are right.

14 Proverbs 12:15 calls such a person a "fool."

15 Humility is a basic requirement for wisdom because  
16 a humble person respects the source of wisdom and  
17 therefore is teachable. Above all, a humble person  
18 respects the divine Source of all wisdom. This is why  
19 "the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom"  
20 (*Prov. 9:10, NKJV*). Pride is sin because it rebels  
21 against God and His goodness (*Prov. 8:13; Isa. 14:13,*  
22 *14*), but God promises to dwell with humble people and  
23 revive them (*Isa. 57:15*). The basis of this revival is

1 the sacrifice of Christ, who humbled Himself and  
2 therefore is exalted (*Phil. 2:5-10*). His acceptance of  
3 humility looks like foolishness to the world, but it is  
4 the greatest demonstration of divine wisdom (*1 Cor.*  
5 *1:18-25*).

6  
7 **Discussion Question:** How did humility or pride affect  
8 specific people in Bible stories? How have you seen the  
9 different effects of humility and pride in your life?

### 10 11 **III. Reward of the Righteous**

12 (*Review Proverbs 13 with the class.*)

13  
14 Proverbs 13:21 lays out two alternatives: "Evil pursues  
15 sinners, but to the righteous, good shall be repaid"  
16 (*NKJV*). Here, evil is a dynamic, active force that  
17 hunts down those who violate God's law of love, but the  
18 righteous will surely enjoy the results of their  
19 choices.

20 In Psalm 23:6, goodness is also an active force:  
21 "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days  
22 of my life" (*NKJV*). The Hebrew verb translated "follow"  
23 means "pursue." It is the same word that appears in

1 Proverbs 13:21. So, those who pursue good are pursued  
2 by it! They don't need to worry about the reward they  
3 will receive; it will surely come (*Matt. 6:33*). This  
4 dynamic explains Proverbs 13:7: "There is one who makes  
5 himself rich, yet has nothing; and one who makes  
6 himself poor, yet has great riches" (*NKJV*). A person  
7 who seeks first to be rich in this life ends up with  
8 nothing, but one who gives all to serve others, as  
9 Jesus did, will have an eternal reward.

10  
11 **Consider This:** Where do you find the idea of rewards  
12 for the righteous elsewhere in the Bible? What  
13 particular kinds of rewards do you want in this life  
14 and the life to come? How does the way you live reflect  
15 the kinds of rewards you want?

16  
17 **STEP 3—Apply**

18  
19 **Just for Teachers:** Love, humility, and deferring the  
20 enjoyment of rewards until the next life are not  
21 natural for fallen human beings. Help your class to  
22 grasp the big picture of long-range cause and effect so  
23 that they are motivated to live by faith in God's

1        **promises and instructions and not just by what they see**  
2        **around them.**

3

4        **Application Questions:**

5        ❶ In what ways are we loving and humble people? How do  
6        these basic qualities affect those around us and our  
7        witness for Christ?

8        ❷ How can we apply Romans 5:5 and Philipppians 2:1-11  
9        in our lives to become more loving and humble?

10

11       **STEP 4—Create**

12

13        **Just for Teachers: This study of Proverbs 10-13 has**  
14        **identified major opportunities for personal growth and**  
15        **effectiveness in sharing God’s goodness. Emphasize to**  
16        **your class the practical results of humbly receiving**  
17        **and passing on His love and blessings.**

18

19        **Activities:**

20        1. List specific ways in which your church group can be  
21        a more powerful witness for Christ by humbly serving  
22        others through love.



1           2. Conduct a survey in your community to find ways in  
2           which your church can help meet its needs. What do the  
3           results of the survey reveal about how your church can  
4           best serve? Commit to putting one of the suggestions on  
5           the survey into action.

1 **TE-1Q-2015-06-The Lesson in Brief**

2

3 **Key Text:** *Proverbs 14:12*

4

5 **The Student Will:**

6 **Know:** Understand that humans, with their limited  
7 perspective, need God's wisdom to avoid being  
8 deceived.

9 **Feel:** Distrust his or her own wisdom but feel  
10 security in God's wisdom.

11 **Do:** Seek to learn from, and live in, the light of  
12 God's large and accurate perspective.

13

14 **Learning Outline:**

15 **I. Know: We Need God's Wisdom to Avoid Being**  
16 **Deceived.**

17 A. How much accurate information do you know,  
18 compared to how much God knows?

19 B. How much experience do you have, compared with  
20 God's experience?

21 C. Why are human beings so easily deceived?

1 D. How and why does God share His perspective with  
2 us?

3

4 **II. Feel: We Can Trust God's Wisdom, but Not Our Own.**

5 A. How does a lack of understanding make you feel?

6 B. What is the danger of feeling overconfident?

7 C. How does your access to a source of absolute  
8 and dependable truth (the Bible) make you feel?

9 D. Why do many people ignore or resent the Bible?

10

11 **III. Do: Learn From and Live by God's Perspective.**

12 A. How does the way that you live show how much  
13 you value God's perspective?

14 B. Have you ever been deceived by yourself or by  
15 others? What have you learned from the results in  
16 your life when you took God's perspective, not  
17 just your own, into account?

18 C. What are some specific, practical ways in which  
19 you can incorporate more of God's perspective into  
20 your life?

21

22 **Summary:** The all-knowing God shares His big and accurate  
23 perspective to safely guide us through life.

1 **TE-1Q-2015-06-Learning Cycle**

2

3 **STEP 1—Motivate**

4

5 **Spotlight on Scripture:** *Proverbs 14*

6

7 **Key Concept for Spiritual Growth:** Things are not always  
8 what they seem to be. Many people want the effects of  
9 success and happiness without understanding their true  
10 nature or causes. They are deceived by believing that  
11 they are wise enough to devise their own strategies for  
12 arriving at what they think is good. Unaided human  
13 wisdom would be inadequate in a perfect world, but it  
14 is disastrous in a fallen world, where our warped  
15 perspectives make us vulnerable to being deceived by  
16 ourselves, other people, and crafty supernatural  
17 beings. We can be safe to enjoy true success and  
18 happiness only by relying on God's wisdom, including  
19 His definition of success and happiness and His  
20 instructions regarding how to gain them.

21

22 **Just for Teachers:** *Proverbs 14:12* pictures a person  
23 **contemplating a road that looks good because it is**

1 straight. However, it ends up with several ways to die.  
2 Outward appearance is not a safe guide. Jesus advised  
3 us to choose a difficult and unpopular path to life  
4 rather than an attractive and popular highway to  
5 destruction (*Matt. 7:13, 14*).

6 The "way" in which one "walks" can represent that  
7 person's course of action (*1 Kings 2:4*). If people  
8 simply do what is right in their own eyes (*Judg. 17:6,*  
9 *21:25*), without a divine guide or a "map" from God,  
10 they will not see dangers lurking down the "road,"  
11 because they lack sufficient perspective and experience  
12 (see the book of Judges). Being sincere and meaning  
13 well is not enough to protect them from disaster.

14  
15 **Opening Discussion:** In Proverbs 14:1, wise women build  
16 their houses (*compare 31:10-31*), but folly  
17 (personified) tears down her house with her own hands.  
18 Do unwise people want to destroy what belongs to them,  
19 or can this be a consequence of their carelessness  
20 (*compare 14:16*), even if they think they are doing what  
21 is right? One kind of carelessness is simply to believe  
22 whatever one hears (*vs. 15*), because human sources of  
23 knowledge are unreliable. So, we need to carefully

1 check out what people tell us, including what we hear  
2 through television and the Internet.

3

4 **Questions for Discussion:**

5 ❶ Can you think of illustrations in the Bible and in  
6 your life of the principles expressed by Proverbs 14:1  
7 and 12? What is the relationship between the ideas in  
8 these verses?

9 ❷ How can you enjoy trusting relationships with people  
10 without being gullible? What examples of how to  
11 maintain this balance did Jesus give us?

12

13 **STEP 2—Explore**

14

15 **Just for Teachers:** Proverbs teaches us how to prevent  
16 problems by making wise choices. These choices are  
17 informed by accurate identification of the factors  
18 involved in a situation that could lead to one kind of  
19 consequence or another. Think before you act rather  
20 than blindly rushing ahead on the basis of however you  
21 feel at the time.

22

There were many other wisdom writings in the

1 ancient Near East, including the proverbs of other  
2 religions and cultures, but the biblical book of  
3 Proverbs adds a crucial Holy Spirit-inspired dimension:  
4 the only way to enjoy long-term well-being and  
5 happiness is to put God first in your life (*Prov. 1:7,*  
6 *Matt. 6:33*). Moses clearly set the choice of life and  
7 good versus death and evil before his people (*Deut.*  
8 *30:15, 16*). Furthermore, following God is not legalism,  
9 which misuses law for purposes for which it is not  
10 intended, such as to buy salvation from sins already  
11 committed or to dominate other people.

### 13 Bible Commentary

14  
15 Proverbs 14 uses examples to profile some major  
16 differences between wisdom and foolishness in terms of  
17 attitudes, making decisions, behavior (including  
18 treatment of others), and speech. These differences  
19 depend on whether a person is narrowly focused on  
20 personal short-range interests or takes into account  
21 the big, long-range picture revealed by God. God sees  
22 everything, whether it is good or evil (*15:3*); so, His

1 guidance is reliable, and He can hold everyone  
2 accountable for what they do. Although humans make  
3 plans, their outcome depends on Him (16:9).

4

#### 5 **I. Wisdom Takes the Big Picture Into Account**

6 *(Review Proverbs 14 with the class.)*

7

8 Being narrow-minded, shortsighted, selfish, and  
9 disrespectful toward God doesn't pay. Such people tear  
10 down their houses (*Prov. 14:1; compare vs. 11*), are  
11 punished for what they say (*vs. 3*), seek wisdom in vain  
12 (*vs. 6*), are deceived regarding which way to go (*vs. 8;*  
13 *compare vs. 15*), are consumed with envy (*vs. 30*), and  
14 are banished (*vs. 32*). By contrast, the same verses say  
15 that those who are broad-minded look ahead and are  
16 unselfish because they are loyal to God, build their  
17 houses, are preserved for what they say, easily gain  
18 knowledge, understand which way to go, and are  
19 emotionally healthy.

20 Lest anyone fails to comprehend that the big  
21 picture is what counts, in verse 4 the author brings  
22 this principle down to a mundane level: one could  
23 prefer to have no oxen to care for, but with oxen



1 (equivalent to a tractor) for plowing, a farmer can  
2 grow a lot more.

3  
4 **Consider This:** How do the examples of Caleb and Joshua  
5 in Numbers 13:25-14:38 and Elisha in 2 Kings 6:11-23  
6 illustrate the value of seeing the big picture? What  
7 can we learn from them as we seek to enter the ultimate  
8 Promised Land (*Heb. 11:16*) while under attack by evil  
9 supernatural forces (*Eph. 6:12*)?  
10

## 11 **II. God Sees Everything**

12 (*Review Proverbs 15 with the class.*)  
13

14 Proverbs 15:3 observes, "The eyes of the LORD are in  
15 every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good"  
16 (*NKJV*). Therefore, God is able to help His loyal people  
17 (*2 Chron. 16:9*). The psalmist realized that God knew  
18 everything about him, even before he was born (*Psalms*  
19 *139*). Rather than resenting such omniscience as an  
20 invasion of privacy, he was grateful and opened his  
21 heart with a prayer (*vss. 23, 24*).

22 Nobody can fool God. He knows when those who offer  
23 prayer or worship are sincere or hypocritical (*Prov.*

1       15:8; compare Isa. 1:11-17). He even knows our thoughts  
2       (Prov. 15:26). So, rather than avoiding God when we sin  
3       (Gen. 3:7, 8), we would be better off to confess what  
4       He already knows and receive forgiveness (Ps. 32:1-5).

5  
6       **Discussion Question:** How does understanding that God  
7       knows everything affect your approach to life? Can you  
8       trust people who don't think they are accountable to  
9       God? Why, or why not?

### 11       **III. Humans Plan, but God Directs**

12       *(Review Proverbs 16 with the class.)*

13  
14       Proverbs 16:9 affirms: "The mind of man plans his way,  
15       but the LORD directs his steps" (NASB; see also 19:21).  
16       Having planned wisely in consultation with others  
17       (15:22; 21:5), we should realize that humans do not  
18       understand or control everything that can affect what  
19       will actually happen, even in our age of science and  
20       technology.

21       God gives humans free choice, which is why He needs  
22       to instruct, warn, and appeal through the Bible and  
23       through His Holy Spirit (John 16:7-10). God also

1 influences people through factors in their environment  
2 that He controls. For example, although Joseph's  
3 brothers tried to get rid of him (*Genesis 37*), God set  
4 up factors, including a famine, that empowered Joseph  
5 to save his family (*Gen. 39-47*). He assured his  
6 brothers: "you meant evil against me; but God meant it  
7 for good" (*Gen. 50:20, NKJV; compare Rom. 8:28*).

8  
9 **Consider This:** The biblical stories of Daniel and  
10 Esther show how God works effectively behind the scenes  
11 to accomplish His goals and save His people, in spite  
12 of powerful and determined opposition. How do these  
13 stories affect you?

14  
15 **STEP 3—Apply**

16  
17 **Just for Teachers:** Help your class members to place  
18 their confidence in God, who knows everything about  
19 them (*Matt. 10:29-31*) and directs their steps in right  
20 paths (*Ps. 23:3*). Even if they go through difficulty,  
21 He is with them and leads them to a banquet on the  
22 other side (*vss. 4, 5; Rev. 19:9*).

23

1     **Application Questions:**

2           ❶ How has God led you in ways that turned out better  
3           than your plans? How does this affect your ability to  
4           trust Him in the present and future?

5           ❷ In what ways have you found that even bad things  
6           that happen to you “work together for good” by helping  
7           you trust God more and by making you live in hope for a  
8           better world?

9

10    **STEP 4—Create**

11

12           **Just for Teachers:** Proverbs 14–16 show how we need to  
13           rely on God’s wisdom to help us choose the way to gain  
14           what is best for us. Help your class members to see how  
15           they can apply this principle when they meet various  
16           situations in their lives.

17

18           **Activities:**

19           1. Ask class members to share personal stories of God’s  
20           providence in their lives and discuss what these  
21           stories mean to them.

- 1           2. Have your class members make a list of practical  
2           items of advice, sharing what they have learned about  
3           the "big picture," such as managing time to open up  
4           space in their lives for daily Bible study and prayer,  
5           nurturing relationships, resolving conflicts, getting  
6           out of debt, and so on.
- 7           3. Post this list in the church newsletter or on the  
8           church Web site.
- 9           4. Having studied Proverbs 14-16, write your own modern  
10          proverbs that capture some of the same principles.
- 11
- 12

1 **TE-1Q-2015-07-The Lesson in Brief**

2

3 **Key Text:** *Proverbs 19:3*

4

5 **The Student Will:**

6 **Know:** Identify words that create contention.

7 **Feel:** Appreciate family and friends as wealth.

8 **Do:** Overhaul his or her life in order to bring it  
9 in line with the wisdom of Proverbs 17-19.

10

11 **Learning Outline:**

12 **I. Know: Identify Words That Create Contention.**

13 A. Why do people fight over money? What do they  
14 say to one another when they fight?

15 B. Why do families sometimes fight when they are  
16 on a vacation together?

17 C. Why are words so important in building a  
18 relationship?

19

20 **II. Feel: Appreciate Family and Friends as Wealth.**

1 A. Why do people, at the end of their lives, say  
2 that they wish they had spent more time with  
3 family?

4 B. What are some things worse than poverty?

5 C. Why do the relationships of many rich and famous  
6 people end in divorce?

7

8 **III. Do: Live by the Wisdom of Proverbs 17-19.**

9 A. Why do we often end up saying things that we  
10 know we should not say?

11 B. How do the words of Jesus line up with the  
12 recommendations in these chapters?

13 C. Why do we think that telling the truth will  
14 create more contention and not less?

15

16 **Summary:** Human relationships are built on words. We  
17 constantly speak words to one another to indicate  
18 the nature of our relationships. The angry words  
19 of contention and lies indicate a broken  
20 relationship. The gracious words of truth and  
21 encouragement indicate a growing relationship.

22

1 **TE-1Q-2015-LC-07-Learning Cycle**

2

3 **STEP 1—Motivate**

4

5 **Spotlight on Scripture:** *Proverbs 19:3*

6

7 **Key Concept for Spiritual Growth:** Proverbs 19:3 tells  
8 us that ruined relationships are often of one's own  
9 doing. They are created by contentious and false words,  
10 spoken in haste. But often, rather than reforming our  
11 behavior, we blame God for our troubles. This week's  
12 lesson asks you to think again. More often than not,  
13 the cause of one's trouble is the preoccupation with  
14 money and self. Identify the words escaping from your  
15 lips that may be at the root of your unhappiness, and  
16 make decisive changes to your behavior.

17

18 **Just for Teachers:** No changes can take place in one's  
19 life until one takes responsibility for one's own  
20 actions. We often injure ourselves by our words because  
21 we underestimate their power, whether for good or evil.  
22 You become a liar if you lie or a bully if you speak  
23 threatening words; and no one wants to have a liar or a



1        **bully around them.**

2

3        **Opening Discussion:** What kinds of voices and words do  
4        you use when you speak to different people? Do you  
5        speak differently when you talk to your family as  
6        opposed to when you speak to your boss or your  
7        subordinates? Practice saying a phrase such as "Please  
8        bring me water," using these different voices and  
9        tones, and explain to the class what they mean.

10

11       **Questions for Discussion:**

12       ❶ Why do many cultures have polite and familiar forms  
13       of address? To whom are we closer, and why: those with  
14       whom we use polite expressions or those with whom we  
15       use familiar expressions?

16       ❷ What words and expressions offend us most? What  
17       words and expressions calm us most?

18

19       **STEP 2—Explore**

20

21       **Just for Teachers: Uncontrolled greed and self-**  
22       **absorption lie at the heart of all controversies. It is**  
23       **not wrong to want to protect your hard-earned wealth.**

1 But Proverbs asks us to consider whether or not we are  
2 about to lose valuable relationships over that wealth.  
3 One often sees that powerful people speak down to their  
4 subordinates. How do you speak to your children and  
5 spouses? Roughly or kindly? How do you expect them to  
6 speak to you? Power games are the fastest way to  
7 destroy relationships. Do we not resent those we are  
8 forced to speak up to, especially if we think they do  
9 not deserve our respect? Proverbs calls upon us to  
10 speak kindly and truthfully to everyone.

11

## 12 Bible Commentary

13

### 14 I. Good and Evil Words

15 *(Review Proverbs 17 with the class.)*

16

17 The proverbs in this chapter, with the exception of the  
18 last verse (*vs. 28*), come in couplets composed of two  
19 verses. In each of the couplets, the first verse  
20 mirrors the thoughts contained in the second verse.  
21 Verses 1 and 2 of chapter 17, for example, follow this  
22 structure. The thought of a servant inheriting the  
23 wealth of a household, in verse 2, mirrors the thought

1 of an unhappy and discordant household, in verse 1. The  
2 point is that a stranger, like a lawyer, will end up  
3 with much of the wealth if brothers in a rich family  
4 keep fighting over the inheritance.

5 Chapter 17 can be divided into three sections: (1)  
6 good words that build relationships (*vss. 1-10*); (2)  
7 evil words that destroy relationships (*vss. 11-22*); and  
8 (3) the cause of evil words (*vss. 23-28*). In the first  
9 section, good words are described as: words of truth  
10 made pure by life's trials (*vss. 3, 4*); excellent  
11 speech, which is a gift (*vss. 7, 8*); and reproofs that  
12 go down to the heart (*vss. 9, 10*). The family that  
13 speaks good words will live in harmony for generations  
14 (*vss. 5, 6*).

15 In the second section (*vss. 11-22*), evil words are  
16 described as: contentious words (*vss. 11, 12*), false  
17 judgments (*vss. 13-16*), and words coming from a cold  
18 and arrogant heart (*vss. 19, 20*). These evil words can  
19 divide a household and bring sorrow to one's own heart  
20 (*vss. 21, 22*). Yet, in hard times, there is no friend  
21 like a good brother or a sister (*vss. 17, 18*).

22 The third section (*vss. 23-28*) reveals that the  
23 cause of evil words is often a dispute over money and

1 large gifts (*vss. 23, 24*). Love of money perverts  
2 justice and brings sorrow to one's own loved ones (*vss.*  
3 *25, 26*). And where there is contention over money,  
4 silence makes even fools appear wise (*vs. 28*).

5  
6 **Consider This:** Jesus lived His whole life without a  
7 place to lay His head (*Matt. 8:20*). In fact, He left  
8 behind only a pair of thongs (footwear), a cloak, and a  
9 tunic when He died. Of course, not every homeless  
10 person is like Jesus, but in this competitive world,  
11 people often have to choose between their need to get  
12 ahead in life and friendship. Jesus always chose  
13 friendship. Which do you choose, and why?

## 14 15 **II. The Mind-set of a Loser**

16 (*Review Proverbs 18 with the class.*)

17  
18 The proverbs in this chapter are arranged in couplets  
19 and triplets (three-verse units). In a triplet, the  
20 middle verse is the most important. At the heart of the  
21 chapter, there is a triplet (*vss. 10-12*), whose middle  
22 verse (*vs. 11*) reveals the selfish mind-set that  
23 produces contention and greed. A person of this mind-

1 set believes that a "rich man's wealth is his strong  
2 city" (NKJV). The two outer verses (vss. 10, 12)  
3 dismiss this baseless theory by asserting that God is  
4 "a strong tower." The first nine verses of the chapter  
5 describe the life of the rich fool. Their lives are  
6 isolated ("separated," vs. 1) unintellectual (vs. 2),  
7 and unproductive (vs. 9). When they run out of money,  
8 people will treat them with "contempt" and "reproach"  
9 (vs. 3). The fool's arrogant words (vss. 5-8) stand in  
10 stark contrast to the life-giving words of the wise  
11 (vs. 4).

12 The latter half of the chapter (vss. 13-23)  
13 reveals the secrets of finding true wealth. Success  
14 comes from two sources: the ability to "sustain" people  
15 in their "infirmity" and expert knowledge and  
16 understanding in things (vss. 13-15). Unlike these,  
17 bribery and flattery have no staying power because the  
18 winds of power change directions by chance (vss. 16-  
19 18). Verses 19-24 return to the opening theme of  
20 "isolation." A good brother or a sister (vs. 19), a  
21 good wife (vs. 22), and a good friend (vs. 24) are  
22 precious gifts from God—they are worth gold. But  
23 believing themselves to be powerful (vs. 23), rich

1 fools speak "roughly" to those who love them, driving  
2 them away.

3

4 **Discussion Question:** Why do we not like people who  
5 flaunt their wealth and power? Why do people who do not  
6 like them still want to be like them? What is it about  
7 money and wealth that can wield so much power of over  
8 us?

9

### 10 **III. Defining Wisdom**

11 *(Review Proverbs 19 with the class.)*

12

13 Proverbs 19 seeks to define wisdom by contrasting the  
14 behaviors of the wise with those of the fool. The  
15 purpose is to encourage the reader to seek wisdom and  
16 avoid folly. Some of the high points are as follows:  
17 lying is, like luxury (*vss. 9, 10*), something that is  
18 not necessary. Lying is as unsightly as the luxury in  
19 the house of the fool. A patient and well-tempered  
20 person has the glory of a king who bestows favor (*vss.*  
21 *11, 12*). Anger is a show of power because people  
22 generally explode at those who have a lower status than  
23 theirs. Compassion brings one close to the heart of God

1 (vss. 17, 18). So, be firm but show compassion when  
2 disciplining a child. You cannot listen when you are  
3 angry (vss. 19, 20), because listening takes humility.  
4 The most excellent thoughts a person can think are  
5 thoughts of compassion and understanding for the  
6 feelings of the poor and downtrodden (vss. 21, 22). The  
7 opposite of "the fear of the LORD" is slothfulness  
8 (vss. 23, 24). For the person who fears the Lord will  
9 not "abide satisfied" in one place but promptly move  
10 forward to do the Lord's bidding (vss. 23, 24).

11  
12 **Consider This:** How does Proverbs 19 define wisdom? In  
13 what ways does the chapter contrast wisdom with folly?  
14 What should we avoid? What kind of behaviors does  
15 Proverbs 19 encourage us to embrace?

16  
17  
18 **STEP 3—Apply**

19  
20 **Just for Teachers:** Some things do not change. We still  
21 see the foolish behavior described in Proverbs 17-19  
22 around us every day. As in the days of Solomon, people  
23 want wealth because they think it will give them

1 status, security, and power. Yet, wealth has failed to  
2 deliver on these promises. These ideas live on, as  
3 those who have wealth put on a show of power with their  
4 nice clothes, big homes, and luxury cars. But the Bible  
5 tells us that those who display wealth and speak  
6 "roughly" to people actually live isolated lives, spent  
7 in idleness and strife. It is the wealth of wisdom and  
8 understanding that enriches our thoughts, builds our  
9 homes, and imparts happiness. Money certainly has its  
10 role in life, and we do wrong to say that it is not  
11 important. The danger comes from placing so much  
12 emphasis on it that we make it into a god, and by thus  
13 doing place ourselves on very dangerous spiritual  
14 ground. After all, what good is it to be very rich, to  
15 have all the world offers, but lose your soul as a  
16 result?

17  
18 **Application Questions:**

19 ❶ How can you have the good things of life and still  
20 speak as a wise person speaks?



1        ② Have you ever seen a person become a beggar because  
2        he or she followed the commandments of God? Why, or why  
3        not?  
4

5        **STEP 4—Create**

6

7        **Just for Teachers: Were you ever surprised by a good**  
8        **outcome when you courageously lived honestly, according**  
9        **to the wisdom of God? Please share with the class.**

10

11        **Activities:**

12        1. Describe Bible personalities who risked all by  
13        living according to the wisdom of God. What were the  
14        outcomes of their decisions to risk all for God?

15        2. Discuss how the church can become a community of  
16        wise people whose lives stand in sharp contrast to the  
17        follies described in Proverbs 17-19.

1 **TE-1Q-2015-08-The Lesson in Brief**

2

3 **Key Text:** *Proverbs 20:28*

4

5 **The Student Will:**

6 **Know:** Understand the cause-and-effect relationship  
7 between mercy and judgment.

8 **Feel:** Appreciate the intangible rewards of wisdom  
9 more than the tangible rewards of earthly riches.

10 **Do:** Choose good judgment over the immediate  
11 gratification and quick fixes that vices offer.

12

13 **Learning Outline:**

14 **I. Know: The Cause-and-Effect Relationship Between**  
15 **Mercy and Judgment**

16 A. How can mercy and truth preserve a king? How  
17 are they more effective than an army or wealth?

18 B. Why is good judgment essential for a king  
19 (*compare 22:2, 8, 26*)?

20 C. Explain why communities that are merciful and  
21 true are more likely to safeguard qualities such

1 as patience, transparency, and firmness than  
2 communities that are cruel and dishonest?

3  
4 **II. Feel: The Superiority of the Intangible Rewards of**  
5 **Wisdom**

6 A. Why should schools place more emphasis on mercy  
7 and judgment in their curriculums, and what would  
8 be the benefits of doing so?

9 B. What are the rewards of keeping the Sabbath?

10 Are they mostly tangible or intangible? Explain.

11 Why did you find them attractive?

12 C. Why does the Bible often describe God in terms  
13 of invisible attributes, such as righteousness,  
14 holiness, and compassion?

15  
16 **III. Do: Avoid Vices**

17 A. What happens to the family of a parent who is  
18 contentious, arrogant, and coldhearted?

19 B. Name some leaders or individuals in history who  
20 are known for their vices. Explain why they made  
21 such poor choices in life and made other people's  
22 lives so miserable in the process.

23

1 **Summary:** Mercy and truth may not bring you money or  
2 status, but they will help you make the best  
3 choices in life and give you power to create  
4 communities that flourish and grow.

1 **TE-1Q-2015-08-Learning Cycle**

2

3 **STEP 1—Motivate**

4

5 **Spotlight on Scripture:** *Proverbs 20:28*

6

7 **Key Concept for Spiritual Growth:** Good judgment is  
8 everything in life. In some situations, it can mean  
9 life or death. Companies lose millions of dollars;  
10 homes break up; accidents happen at sea, in the sky,  
11 and on the roads, resulting in terrible losses of life—  
12 all because someone made an error in judgment. Proverbs  
13 warns us that you cannot have success in any line of  
14 work without good judgment. Thus we must seek to avoid  
15 all things that becloud judgment.

16

17 **Just for Teachers:** It takes a human being to make a  
18 judgment. Animals possess judgment, but their capacity  
19 for judgment is extremely limited compared to ours. For  
20 example, as far as we know, they make no ethical  
21 judgments regarding what is good, true, and just.

22 **Computers cannot make judgments beyond what they have**

1        **been programmed to do. It takes a human being to make**  
2        **the final judgment. Proverbs tells us that what defines**  
3        **us as human is compassion. Indeed, even animals seem**  
4        **human when they show compassion. Therefore, mercy helps**  
5        **us make superior judgments because it makes us more**  
6        **human.**

7  
8        **Opening Discussion:** Explain why some cars or homes sell  
9        for much more money than others. Why do people pay top  
10       dollar for them? What do they see in them? Explain  
11       what words such as excellence, safety, reliability, and  
12       high quality mean to you. Why do people allow these  
13       invisible ideals to guide their expensive purchases?

14  
15       **Questions for Discussion:**

16       ❶ Name objects that are safe and reliable. Why do they  
17       make you feel safe and secure? How was Jesus able to  
18       provide safety and reliability to His disciples without  
19       actually providing those things as objects?

20       ❷ Paul and Silas, who were beaten, hungry, and  
21       fettered, sang praises to God in a dark and damp prison  
22       (*Acts 16:19-25*). While they may have owned next to  
23       nothing in the way of worldly goods, what did they

1           have?

2

3   **STEP 2—Explore**

4

5           **Just for Teachers:** To achieve happiness in life, we  
6           must achieve balance between the spiritual and the  
7           physical or material. From Solomon's time to our own,  
8           there has been a terrible imbalance in society in favor  
9           of the material; namely, what money can buy. Proverbs  
10          calls us back to the beauty and incomparable worth of  
11          spiritual riches.

12

13   **Bible Commentary**

14

15          **Just for Teachers:** The proverbs in chapters 20–22 may  
16          appear to repeat some of the same proverbs from the  
17          previous chapters without much organization. When we  
18          read these chapters, it is important to keep two things  
19          in mind. First, the first line of each chapter (and  
20          often the first few words) announces the topic of the  
21          chapter. This may not apply to all the chapters in  
22          Proverbs, but it certainly applies to chapters 20 and

1        21.

2                Second, many of the terms used in these chapters,  
3        such as "name" or "silver and gold," are metonyms. The  
4        term *metonym* means that the author has substituted a  
5        word or a phrase for another word or phrase. For  
6        example, "name" is a metonym for reputation and "silver  
7        and gold" for earthly riches. In other words, Proverbs  
8        is written like a riddle or a crossword puzzle. In the  
9        commentary below, metonyms have been suggested for the  
10       words or phrases contained within the proverbs in these  
11       chapters. It would be a good idea to take your class  
12       through some of the proverbs to see if you can figure  
13       out their metonyms on your own.

14  
15        **I. Sound Judgment**

16        (*Review Proverbs 20 with the class.*)

17  
18        The topic of Proverbs 20 is sound judgment. Verse 1  
19        mentions "wine" because it is an agent that beclouds  
20        judgment. The beating in verse 30, of course, has the  
21        opposite effect on a person. It wakes you up and makes  
22        you think straight. Beating in Proverbs is a metaphor  
23        for discipline and should not be taken literally.



1           The chapter also mentions “king” four times (*vss.*  
2           2, 8, 26, 28) to reinforce the importance of judgment.  
3           Imagine what would happen to a country, Solomon asks,  
4           if a king lacked judgment. The most important mark of  
5           sound judgment is decisiveness, the quality of knowing  
6           when to start (*vss.* 4, 15), when to stop (*vs.* 3), and  
7           when to say No (*vs.* 16). Sound judgment is also marked  
8           by discernment, the ability to recognize good counsel  
9           (*vs.* 18), and to exercise good common sense (*vs.* 19).  
10          To have such qualities, one must be merciful (*vss.* 20,  
11          21, 28, 29) and humble, always aware of one’s own  
12          shortcomings (*vs.* 9; *cf.* *vs.* 5) and of God’s watchful  
13          eyes that search our motives and innermost thoughts  
14          (*vss.* 5, 12, 24, 27). The life of those with judgment  
15          will be marked by transparency (*vss.* 7, 10, 14, 23),  
16          patience (*vss.* 17, 22), and firmness (*vs.* 25) in all  
17          things.

18  
19          **Consider This:** We live in an age of confusing options,  
20          with so many new ideas, opportunities, and  
21          technological and medical innovations that the Bible  
22          does not directly address though it does give us  
23          crucial principles. Therefore we might look for people

1       who can help us make the right choices. What qualities  
2       do you look for in people whose judgment you trust?

3

## 4       **II. Habits That Destroy Judgment**

5       *(Review Proverbs 21 with the class.)*

6

7       Proverbs 21 continues the topic of judgment from the  
8       previous chapter. This is clear from the mention of  
9       “king” and the formula “the Lord pondereth the hearts,”  
10      in verses 1, 2. Furthermore, the word *judgment* appears  
11      in verses 3, 7, and 15.

12             But this chapter differs from chapter 20 in its  
13      emphasis. Its focus is on what beclouds judgment.

14      Proverbs 21 is a list of intellectual and emotional  
15      habits that, when indulged, cripple one’s judgment. The  
16      list is rather long, but the underlying principle is  
17      clear. You lose judgment when you indulge in vices. The  
18      people who love vices are proud (*vss. 4, 24*), hasty  
19      (*vs. 5*), dishonest (*vss. 6, 7, 28*), crooked (*vs. 8*),  
20      contentious (*vss. 9, 19*), desirous of evil (*vs. 10*),  
21      scornful (*vs. 11*), wicked (*vss. 15, 18, 27*), without  
22      compassion (*vs. 13*), corrupt (*vs. 14*), distracted (*vs.*  
23      *16*), given to pleasure (*vs. 17*), wasteful (*vs. 20*),

1 overconfident (*vs.* 22), loquacious (*vs.* 23), lazy (*vs.*  
 2 25), stingy and greedy (*vs.* 26), hypocritical (*vs.* 27),  
 3 coldhearted (*vs.* 29), and against God (*vss.* 30, 31).

4 The underlying principle is that you cannot have  
 5 good judgment if you enjoy vices. This is why a leader  
 6 must be a person of character who has a compassionate  
 7 heart (*vs.* 21). The problem, of course, is that humans  
 8 have a natural bent toward vices.

9  
 10 **Discussion Question:** Why do vices hold such attraction  
 11 for people? Why do vices flourish in large cities? How  
 12 can we find time on Sabbath to show compassion to those  
 13 who need help, both inside and outside the church?

### 14 **III. The Reward of Wisdom**

15 (*Review Proverbs 22 with the class.*)

16  
 17  
 18 The opening line of Proverbs 22—"A good name is rather  
 19 to be chosen than great riches" (*vs.* 1)—announces the  
 20 chapter's topic: the reward of wisdom. To our modern  
 21 minds, a good name and great riches are often  
 22 synonymous.

23 Not so for Proverbs. The reward that wisdom

1 promises is, like a good name, intangible, because  
2 those who pursue tangible rewards, such as money, often  
3 become corrupt in the end. The reward of wisdom is  
4 significant and multifaceted. For example, wisdom helps  
5 you to recognize danger and avoid it (vs. 3), to be  
6 humble (vs. 5), to know how to educate a child (vs. 6),  
7 to be generous (vs. 9), to have a pure heart and to  
8 know how and when to speak (vs. 11), and to enjoy God's  
9 protection (vs. 12).

10 In stark contrast, folly brings only sorrow in its  
11 tow. By pursuing earthly riches, many find their lives  
12 filled with emptiness (vs. 8), contention (vs. 10),  
13 laziness (vs. 13), and lust (vs. 14), and discover that  
14 they have become oppressors (vss. 16, 22, 23). Solomon  
15 calls upon the reader to become wise by listening (vss.  
16 17, 18), trusting God (vs. 19), seeking knowledge and  
17 truth (vss. 20, 21), and working hard (vs. 29). They  
18 are to avoid becoming like those who, as a result of  
19 hating wisdom, seek out the company of rich and  
20 powerful friends who have no judgment (vss. 22-28).

21  
22 **Consider This:** Why do so many rich and famous people  
23 show little interest in God? Why did God endow humans

1 with minds that have greater intellectual and spiritual  
2 capabilities than any other animals?

3

#### 4 **STEP 3—Apply**

5

6 **Just for Teachers:** In our materialistic and  
7 narcissistic world, it is easy to envy and emulate  
8 people who have money and power. Help your class to  
9 appreciate the surpassing worth of spiritual riches,  
10 such as good judgment and mercy.

11

#### 12 **Application Questions:**

13 ❶ How can we make sure that wisdom and judgment are a  
14 priority in our lives?

15 ❷ Read Philippians 3:4-11. Why did Paul find it  
16 impossible to hold on to social status and to Christ at  
17 the same time?

18

#### 19 **STEP 4—Create**

20

21 **Just for Teachers:** Help your class see how accurately  
22 Proverbs 20-22 describes our situation today. Explain

1        **how these chapters offer secrets on how to escape from**  
2        **the pressures of pursuing earthly riches and success**  
3        **and to find peace and quiet in Christ, the wisdom of**  
4        **God (1 Cor. 1:24).**

5  
6        **Activities:**

7        1. Ask your class to list the priorities that are  
8        important to them right now. Ask them to explain what  
9        values they have used to devise the list.

10       2. Read the chapter "The Reward of Service" in  
11       *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 305-312, and  
12       discuss how Ellen G. White's concept of spiritual  
13       reward compares with the concept of reward found in  
14       Proverb 22.

1 **TE-1Q-2015-09-The Lesson in Brief**

2

3 **Key Text:** *Proverbs 24:12*

4

5 **The Student Will:**6 **Know:** Understand that God sees his or her

7 innermost thoughts and hidden deeds.

8 **Feel:** Foster appreciation for God's discipline,

9 even when it is strict.

10 **Do:** Choose to live honestly, as though his or her

11 thoughts and deeds are heard and seen by all.

12

13 **Learning Outline:**14 **I. Know: God Sees Our Hidden Thoughts and Deeds**

15 A. Why does God watch us always?

16 B. How does our awareness of God's watching eye

17 help us in terms of accountability and

18 transparency? How does such awareness help us

19 spiritually?

20 C. Why is it easy to forget that Christ is the

21 Judge of the world, as well as its Savior?

22

1       **II. Feel: God's Strict Discipline**

2           A. Why does truth sometimes feel restrictive and  
3           harsh?

4           B. Why do people often lie by saying, "I didn't  
5           know" or "I can't remember"?

6           C. Why do Christians sometimes experience burnout?  
7

8       **III. Do: Speak the Truth Always**

9           A. Why do some governments often rely on covert  
10          operations and even tell outright lies?

11          B. How can there be security if one always tells  
12          the truth?

13          C. Why are governments that use lies as their  
14          modus operandi more unstable than those that speak  
15          the truth?

16          D. What is the difference between telling the  
17          truth and unnecessarily disclosing or volunteering  
18          information?  
19

20       **Summary:** Truth is the surest and the simplest way to live  
21          one's life. God recognizes and blesses those who  
22          live truthfully. Lies always lose.  
23



1 **TE-1Q-2015-09-Learning Cycle**

2

3 **STEP 1—Motivate**

4

5 **Spotlight on Scripture:** *Proverbs 24:12*

6

7 **Key Concept for Spiritual Growth:** Truth is about God:  
8 who He is, what He expects from us, and why He cares  
9 about how we treat others. He expects us to live in a  
10 way that is consistent with what we know about Him. It  
11 is easy to think that because salvation is by grace, we  
12 are free to behave or think as we wish. This is an  
13 error. Our actions must be consistent with the truth  
14 that we believe.

15

16 **Just for Teachers:** This week's lesson stresses the  
17 importance of truth. Truth is not simply intellectual.  
18 It is about coming to know God as He is. He loves those  
19 who practice compassion and justice and hates the  
20 actions of those who trump compassion and justice with  
21 money and power. To receive compassion from God, we  
22 must show compassion. If we want justice, we must deal

1        **justly with others.**

2

3        **Opening Discussion:** Even the bravest of generals shakes  
4        in fear when his or her lies are discovered. Even the  
5        most corrupt and oppressive regimes try to put on a  
6        face of truth. What makes truth so powerful?

7

8        **Questions for Discussion:**

9        ❶ Secrecy is essential for security. What is the  
10       difference between secrecy and lies? What would happen  
11       if all our private activities and conversations became  
12       known to all?

13       ❷ Truth sometimes hurts. How can we tell the truth  
14       without hurting people? Why is it easier to lie about  
15       feelings than about facts?

16

17       **STEP 2—Explore**

18

19       **Just for Teachers: Truth is the reason for the**  
20       **existence of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We**  
21       **believe that truth exists and that it is found in Jesus**  
22       **and that Jesus has given us a special message for our**  
23       **time. We call this “present truth.” What is “present**

1 truth"? What does that mean? How do we understand that  
2 concept?

3

#### 4 Bible Commentary

5

6 Proverbs 22:17-29 concludes the preceding discussion  
7 about judgment (*Prov. 20-22:16*) and, at the same time,  
8 introduces the present discussion about truth (*Proverbs*  
9 *23 and 24*). Proverbs 23 calls upon the reader to be  
10 truthful even when it is difficult to do so. Truth may  
11 cost you your job or even your life, but it is still  
12 the best and only safe course in life. Proverbs 24  
13 points out that everyone knows in the depths of their  
14 heart whether or not they have acted according to their  
15 conscience.

16

#### 17 I. The Truth About God

18 (*Review Proverbs 22:17-29 with the class.*)

19

20 This week's lesson begins with the closing verses of  
21 chapter 22 (*vss. 17-29*). We saw last week that chapter  
22 is about the reward of wisdom. This week's focus is  
23 on truth.

1           What is truth? Truth is first and foremost about  
2           God, that He exists and that He is the Defender of the  
3           poor and oppressed. Proverbs warns: "Rob not the poor,  
4           . . . for the LORD will plead their cause" (*vss. 22,*  
5           *23*).

6           The second truth is that those who practice vices  
7           will end up in ruin. Solomon sums up vices through two  
8           images: "an angry man" (*vs. 24*) and a man who removes  
9           "the ancient landmark (*vs. 28*). Both of these images  
10          depict the heartlessness and arrogance of those who  
11          perpetrate vices (*compare with 23:10*). They may appear  
12          to flourish for a time, but they will suddenly come to  
13          ruin.

14          The third truth is that hard work and perseverance  
15          will be rewarded. Proverbs promises: "he shall stand  
16          before kings" (*22:29*). Seen against this backdrop, the  
17          truth described in Proverbs 22:17-29 bears a close  
18          resemblance to the fourth commandment (*Exod. 20:8-11*).  
19          The Sabbath commandment demands that we (1) remember  
20          God, who created the world (*vss. 8, 11*), (2) show  
21          compassion (*vs. 10*), and (3) work hard (*vs. 9*). "Do all  
22          thy work," the commandment says (*vs. 9*). Truth in the  
23          Bible is ethical, it never changes, and it is about

1 God.

2

3 **Consider This:** What are the three ways in which

4 Proverbs defines truth?

5

## 6 **II. The Truth About Envy and Pleasure**

7 *(Review Proverbs 23 with the class.)*

8

9 Envy is like standing in a long line at a theme park  
10 waiting for a very short and disappointing ride. Like a  
11 long line, envy makes us believe that there is  
12 something good waiting for us at the end of the line.  
13 And envy makes us look upon those “already on the  
14 rides” with longing eyes.

15 Without envy, this world would be only half as  
16 fun. Sometime Christians, unfortunately, envy the world  
17 for two reasons: the pleasures of the world appear  
18 relaxing and fun, and the will of God appears strict  
19 and disciplinary. The “pleasures” of this world come  
20 with food served on silver platters in a mansion (*vss.*  
21 *1-8*), with immorality (*vss. 27, 28*), and with wine  
22 (*vss. 29-35*). But the wisdom of God comes with a knife  
23 for your throat (*vs. 2*), a rod on your back (*vs. 14*),

1 and reins for your lips (*vs. 16*). For it is painful to  
2 subject our selfish and wandering hearts to the  
3 discipline of God.

4 However, the rewards of wisdom are weighty and  
5 eternal. So, do not grow weary of God's strict  
6 discipline, envying the people of the world. Comparing  
7 the fretting of our hearts to a spoiled child, Solomon  
8 says, you "will not die" (*vs. 13, NKJV*). The people of  
9 this world wait in a long line with eager expectation  
10 and envy, but the weary wait will bring them nothing  
11 but contention and disappointment.

12  
13 **Consider This:** Why did Christ tell those who wanted to  
14 follow Him to enter the narrow way and to take up the  
15 cross (*Matt. 7:14, Mark 8:34*)?

### 17 **III. Be Honest; You Know the Truth**

18 (*Review Proverbs 24 with the class.*)

19  
20 Proverbs 24:1 opens with a warning not to envy those  
21 who build their empires by means of vices. The chapter  
22 opens with a contrast between lies and truth and how  
23 they affect our lives (*vss. 2-10*). Lies ruin your

1 reputation and weaken you because you become "an  
2 abomination" to all when your lies are discovered (*vs.*  
3 *9*). In addition, "in the day of adversity," falling  
4 into an emotional sinkhole, you will find no strength  
5 to stand (*vs. 10*).

6 Truth, by contrast, has the opposite effects. It  
7 builds us up with spiritual riches (*vss. 3, 4*). Unlike  
8 lies, truth will help us increase and feel strong and  
9 safe (*vss. 5, 6, 16*). We will be in a fortified city  
10 with walls that are "too high" for our foes (*vs. 7*).  
11 Truth just has more staying power than lies, because  
12 what is true is also real.

13 Verses 11-29 offer further warnings about lying.  
14 Even if someone's lies are never discovered, they know  
15 and God knows when they have told a lie. Solomon offers  
16 three case studies of such lying: (a) one who sees  
17 someone in trouble and does not help, and then later  
18 says, "we did not know" (*vs. 12, NKJV*); (b) one who  
19 sees one's opponent in trouble, and becomes happy, but  
20 pretends not to notice it (*vs. 17*); (c) one who gives  
21 preferential treatment to someone because he or she is  
22 rich and powerful (*vss. 23-25*).

23 In all of these cases, the person telling the lie

1 knows that he or she has done something evil. Why else  
2 would he or she try to hide it? "In the day when God  
3 will judge the secrets" (*Rom. 2:16, NKJV*), He will  
4 repay each of us according to our works, whether good  
5 or evil.

6  
7 **Consider This:** Chapter 24 ends with a parable about a  
8 slothful person (*vss. 30-34*) and concludes the  
9 discussion on truth. How does this story apply to the  
10 concept of discipline and truth found in Proverbs 23  
11 and 24?

12  
13 **STEP 3—Apply**

14  
15 **Just for Teachers:** The truth is about God, that He sees  
16 in secret and that He is a just and compassionate God.  
17 It also means that we do not treat anyone with  
18 disrespect just because he or she is poor and without  
19 status. Explain to the class that truth is something  
20 beautiful, like mercy and righteousness. It is menacing  
21 only to those who have lied.

22  
23 **Application Questions:**



1       ❶ If someone who is socially insignificant asks to see  
2       you, and you reply "I am busy right now," what  
3       consequences does this lie have on you?

4       ❷ What happened to Christianity when it gave  
5       preferential treatment to its wealthy members and  
6       powerful dignitaries (such as the Emperor Constantine)?

7

#### 8       **STEP 4—Create**

9

10       **Just for Teachers: It requires discipline and courage**  
11       **to be truthful, especially when dealing with powerful**  
12       **individuals whose decisions could have negative**  
13       **consequences on us. We fear to offend them. Proverbs**  
14       **tells us that God hates this kind of behavior,**  
15       **especially if we turn around and treat weaker people**  
16       **with disrespect and neglect.**

17

#### 18       **Activities:**

19       1. Ask your class to make a covenant with God in which  
20       everything they say and do will be true. This does not  
21       mean that they will divulge confidences, volunteer  
22       information unnecessarily, or disclose what they know

1 without just cause, but rather that whatever they say  
2 will be true.

3 2. Ask your class to show respect and VIP treatment to  
4 members in their community and in their families who  
5 they feel are weaker than themselves and to report  
6 their experiences back to the class.

1 **TE-1Q-2015-10-The Lesson in Brief**

2

3 **Key Texts:** *Proverbs 25:2, 3; 26:11-16; 27:5, 6*

4

5 **The Student Will:**

6 **Know:** Review some of the complex problems of  
7 sinful human life and how divine wisdom is needed  
8 to help deal with them.

9 **Feel:** Rejoice in the blessing of God's  
10 understanding and the help available in His Word  
11 for dealing with life as it really is.

12 **Do:** Choose to gratefully accept God's Word as the  
13 source of wisdom for dealing with moral issues and  
14 decisions constantly faced.

15

16 **Learning Outline:**17 **I. Know: We Are Not in Heaven Yet**

18 A. Life is confusing. People can't always be  
19 trusted, and much suffering is unexplainable.

20 How can we sort out troubling situations and deal  
21 with them successfully?

1 B. Proverbs 25 and 26 provide insight into common  
2 predicaments, giving practical wisdom. In what  
3 ways is the counsel in Proverbs very contemporary?  
4

5 **II. Feel: A New Hunger to Live by God's Word**

6 A. If God's Word can be trusted, how should its  
7 principles be applied?

8 B. If God seems distant during difficult times,  
9 how can we find Him?  
10

11 **III. Do: Recalling God's Blessings in Difficult Times**

12 A. How can one confidently face the future amid  
13 life's confusion?

14 B. Recall past experiences in which God has  
15 blessed and/or helped resolve confusing  
16 experiences. Talk to others who have found God's  
17 help, and learn from their struggles. In what ways  
18 can their experiences fill you with hope and  
19 courage?

20 C. Why is it hard to sing praises to God when you  
21 are discouraged?  
22

1 **Summary:** If one is discouraged and/or dealing with  
2 unresolved problems, what is the best thing to do?  
3 Studying the practical counsel in Proverbs 25 and  
4 26 and learning from testimonies of others who  
5 have worked through painful experiences can help  
6 provide wisdom in day-to-day life. Above all, seek  
7 the promised blessing from the "God of all  
8 comfort" (2 Cor. 1:3).

1 **TE-1Q-2015-10-Learning Cycle**

2

3 **STEP 1-Motivate**

4

5 **Spotlight on Scripture:** *Proverbs 25:2, 3; 26:11, 12*

6

7 **Key Concept for Spiritual Growth:** The book of Proverbs  
8 describes different kinds of characters, including  
9 fools, lazy people, and friends (good and bad),  
10 reminding us that character qualities are more than  
11 skin deep and affect more than the person who has them.

12

13 **Just for Teachers:** This week's lesson reminds us that  
14 the outward appearance of a person does not always  
15 match the inner reality. Inwardly, a person can be  
16 deceptive and foolish, for example. Awareness of this  
17 discrepancy can teach each of us to strive for a life  
18 in which the outward appearance matches the inner  
19 nature, reflecting God's consistently truthful and  
20 loving character.

21

1       **Opening Activity:** Ask class members to recall a time in  
2       which a friend was painfully honest and how that  
3       affected them. Also, ask them to think of a time when  
4       they had to be honest with a friend and how difficult  
5       that was to do. Jesus, though loving to everyone, was  
6       honest with people, and His honesty was sometimes  
7       received negatively.

8  
9       **Consider This:** Though a prisoner of war and (most  
10      likely) a teenager, Daniel bravely spoke honestly to  
11      his Babylonian captors regarding his diet: "But Daniel  
12      purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself  
13      with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the  
14      wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the  
15      chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself"  
16      (*Dan. 1:8, NKJV*). God blessed Daniel's decision: "Now  
17      God had brought Daniel into the favor and goodwill of  
18      the chief of the eunuchs" (*1:9, NKJV*). This text can  
19      encourage us as we make moral choices. In Scripture,  
20      who are some of the characters that, in the midst of  
21      suffering, brought honor to God?

## 23   **STEP 2—Explore**

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**Just for Teachers:** The book of Proverbs can be seen as an “ethical textbook” written by the “wisest man” who ever lived. Ultimately, moral situations that humans face do not vary over the centuries, making the counsel in Proverbs still very contemporary.

## **Bible Commentary**

### **I. Behind the Mask**

*(Review Proverbs 25:1-3 with the class.)*

God Himself detests dishonesty of any kind: “These six things the LORD hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him: a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren” (*Prov. 6:16-19, NKJV*). Notice that lying is mentioned two times in this short list! Perhaps God’s loathing of lying stems, in part, from that first lie in Eden, a lie that maligned His character—a lie that is at the



1 heart of the longstanding great controversy between  
2 Christ and Satan.

3  
4 **Consider This:** What lessons can we learn from Daniel in  
5 being gracious as we choose to follow the ways of God?  
6 In the book of Proverbs we are counseled to be wary of  
7 "fools." How can a person be sensitive to discern  
8 character but still be accepting of all people?

9

## 10 **II. "The Mystery of God"**

11 *(Review Proverbs 25:2 with the class.)*

12

13 God's understanding is beyond ours, and He is beyond  
14 our understanding. However, His incomprehensibility  
15 doesn't excuse us from learning all we can about Him.  
16 Indeed, His Written Word tells us He wants us to know  
17 Him. Though He cannot explain everything fully to us  
18 presently (just as any parent cannot to his or her  
19 small children), He promises that someday we will see  
20 Him face to face and that He will help us understand  
21 many things in this life (including suffering) that are  
22 presently unexplainable.

23 "O the mystery of godliness—God manifest in the

1 flesh! This mystery increases as we try to comprehend  
2 it. It is incomprehensible, and yet human beings will  
3 allow worldly, earthly things to intercept the faint  
4 view it is possible for mortals to have of Jesus and  
5 His matchless love. . . . How can we be enthusiastic  
6 over earthly, common things and not be stirred with  
7 this picture—the cross of Calvary, the love that is  
8 revealed in the death of God’s dear Son . . . ?

9 “I shall, if saved in the kingdom of God, be  
10 constantly discerning new depths in the plan of  
11 salvation. All the redeemed saints will see and  
12 appreciate as never before the love of the Father and  
13 the Son, and songs of praise will burst forth from  
14 immortal tongues. He loved us, He gave His life for us.  
15 With glorified bodies, with enlarged capacities, with  
16 hearts made pure, with lips undefiled, we shall sing  
17 the riches of redeeming love.”—Ellen G. White,  
18 *Maranatha*, p. 318.

19  
20 **Consider This:** How does studying the life of Christ and  
21 His great sacrifice enlarge your perspective of God’s  
22 character? How does such study motivate your moral life  
23 and enable patience and faith in the face of troubling

1 situations?

2

### 3 **III. The Fool as Wise**

4 (*Review Proverbs 26:11-16 with the class.*)

5

6 We must never forget our human limitations. There is a  
7 gulf between human perception and divine reality. The  
8 ancient Greeks thought this unbridgeable gulf was  
9 caused by spirit and matter. Biblical writers teach us  
10 that the gulf between human and divine is caused by  
11 sin. We are very prone to error in our thinking,  
12 needing the true knowledge that comes from God and His  
13 Word.

14

15 **Consider This:** What might be some of the reasons the  
16 modern mind is resistant to the wisdom found in  
17 Scripture? Solomon, the wisest man, seems to have  
18 pondered this conundrum as he wrote the book of  
19 Ecclesiastes. He honestly admits that life is difficult  
20 to understand, but that the only hope is to fear and  
21 obey God (*Eccles. 12:13, 14*).

22

### 23 **IV. Friend as Enemy Versus Enemy as Friend**

1       *(Review Proverbs 27:5, 6, 17-23 with the class.)*

2

3       Being truthful is sometimes hard, whether with parent

4       and child, spouses, friends, or business associates.

5       Therefore, we are pointedly instructed: "My son, do not

6       despise the chastening of the LORD, nor detest His

7       correction; for whom the LORD loves He corrects, just

8       as a father the son in whom he delights" (*Prov. 3:11,*

9       *12, NKJV*).

10             This scripture offers guidance when seeking to

11            administer discipline and correction. If it is

12            necessary to speak a painful sentiment, it should be

13            done tenderly (with the aim to help): "Faithful are

14            the wounds of a friend"—in contrast to deceitful

15            insincerity (which hides true feelings): "But the

16            kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (*27:6, NKJV*). Also:

17            "Blows that hurt cleanse away evil, as do stripes the

18            inner depths of the heart" (*20:30, NKJV*).

19

20       **Consider This:** What lessons can be learned from the

21       struggles, victories, and friendships of our spiritual

22       forebears in both the Old and New Testaments (for

1 example, Ruth and Naomi, Hannah and Elkanah, David and  
2 Jonathan, Paul and Barnabas, et cetera)?

3

#### 4 **STEP 3—Apply**

5

6 **Just for Teachers:** Sometimes because of suffering,  
7 either our own or of those we love—or because of unjust  
8 treatment—it is often hard to believe that God is with  
9 us. What are some things a person can do to be  
10 reaffirmed in his or her faith during difficult times?  
11 What can a person do to encourage someone who is  
12 discouraged and losing his or her faith in God?

13

14 **Thought Questions:** Though called by Christ to love our  
15 enemies and do good to those that hate us, this does  
16 not mean allowing ourselves to be duped by a fool. How  
17 can we be wary of phony friendships and still be  
18 accepting of all people?

19 Christ wanted to be close to those whom He made in  
20 God's image, even before sin, and then sought for them  
21 after they sinned, revealing His loving nature.

22 "Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your

1       cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden  
2       Him; you cannot weary Him. He who numbers the hairs of  
3       your head is not indifferent to the wants of His  
4       children. 'The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender  
5       mercy.' James 5:11. His heart of love is touched by our  
6       sorrows and even by our utterances of them. Take to Him  
7       everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too  
8       great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules  
9       over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in  
10      any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to  
11      notice. There is no chapter in our experience too dark  
12      for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult  
13      for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of  
14      His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer,  
15      no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our  
16      heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no  
17      immediate interest. 'He healeth the broken in heart,  
18      and bindeth up their wounds.' Psalm 147:3. The  
19      relations between God and each soul are as distinct and  
20      full as though there were not another soul upon the  
21      earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom  
22      He gave His beloved Son."—Ellen G. White, *Steps to*  
23      *Christ*, p. 100.

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**Application Questions:** Does having Jesus as a friend inspire the kind of friend you are and the friendships you have? How have your friendships helped you to understand the love of God?

**STEP 4—Create**

**Just for Teachers:** Have the class discuss the ways in which God has personally blessed specific incidents in their lives and, as a result, helped them to become more sensitive to other people and their problems.

**Activity:** Discuss spiritual, political, and personal situations currently needing resolution and how the example of Jesus can help us know how to do this. Review how God has opened your eyes to the blessings hidden (at first) in difficult, even painful, experiences.

1 **TE-1Q-2015-11-The Lesson in Brief**

2

3 **Key Text:** *Proverbs 28:4, 5, 7-9; 29:13*

4

5 **The Student Will:**

6 **Know:** Recognize the value of the practical counsel  
7 of Proverbs, which is grounded in the fear of the  
8 Lord.

9 **Feel:** Appreciate the value of God's practical  
10 counsel, recognizing its fundamental orientation  
11 and worth, and the blessing of obedience.

12 **Do:** Be motivated to walk in the divine precepts,  
13 praising God for His love in providing such clear  
14 counsel for living in a sinful world.

15

16 **Learning Outline:**

17 **I. Know: The Exceptional Quality of God's**

18 **Commandments and Laws**

19 A. Why do some Christians think of divine laws as  
20 restrictive to freedom?



1 B. Why is it hard to think of God's laws as a  
2 blessing? How can we retool our thinking to see  
3 them as the blessings they truly are?  
4

5 **II. Feel: Recognizing Modern Culture's Error in**  
6 **Seeking to Bypass God's Laws**

7 A. How can the Decalogue be shared so that it is  
8 treasured and honored?

9 B. Some Christian traditions believe the law was  
10 done away with at the cross. What is the best way  
11 to counteract this misunderstanding?  
12

13 **III. Do: Having a New Motivation to Joyfully Live by**  
14 **God's Instruction**

15 A. "Do not withhold Your tender mercies from me, O  
16 LORD; let Your lovingkindness and Your truth  
17 continually preserve me" (*Ps. 40:11, NKJV*).

18 B. How can I acquire the attitude of the psalmist,  
19 who understood that God's mercies and His truth  
20 are not contradictory?

21 C. Where can I find the courage and stamina to  
22 hang on to my faith when everything in life seems  
23 to be against me?

1

2 **Summary:** God's laws and wisdom are linked together in the

3 book of Proverbs as the guide for life. The

4 highest wisdom, in the quest for discernment,

5 comes by submitting to God's will.

1 **TE-1Q-2015-11-Learning Cycle**

2

3 **STEP 1-Motivate**

4

5 **Spotlight on Scripture:** *Proverbs 28:4, 5*

6

7 **Key Concept for Spiritual Growth:** Much modern thinking  
8 suggests that being a "realist" means advancing  
9 ("progressing") beyond the ancient outdated constraints  
10 of the Word of God. King Solomon would disagree. He  
11 insists that the only real progress a person can make  
12 in life is by accepting the counsel of Scripture and,  
13 with God's help, living by it.

14

15 **Just for Teachers:** The book of Proverbs is a book of  
16 instruction about critical issues in daily life,  
17 couched in the fundamental premise that the fear of the  
18 Lord is the highest wisdom—that the quest for  
19 discernment begins by submitting to God. For anyone  
20 bored with religion and theology, this book gives a  
21 detailed dose of real life.

22

1       **Opening Activity:** Discuss why God's Word is needed for  
2       wisdom when there are so many self-help books  
3       available.

4  
5       **Consider This:** God's Word is the source code of health  
6       and happiness, the template on which life is  
7       constructed for the creatures made in His image. Thus,  
8       life operates best in harmony with it. Review the  
9       number of verses in Proverbs that enshrine health  
10      principles.

## 12   **STEP 2—Explore**

14      **Just for Teachers: Study Proverbs 28:4, 5, 7-9; 29:13.**

### 16   **Bible Commentary**

#### 18   **I. Importance of the Divine Law**

19      *(Review Proverbs 28:4 with the class.)*

21      Against modern sentiments, which claim and offer wisdom  
22      independently of God, the book of Proverbs regularly

1       decries limitations of human knowledge, even warning  
2       against trusting one's own wisdom. Instead, it insists  
3       on the human need for divine revelation.

4               "The hard facts of life, which knock some of the  
5       nonsense out of us, are *God's* facts and His appointed  
6       school of character; they are not alternatives to His  
7       grace, but means of it; for everything *is* of grace,  
8       from the power to know to the power to obey. 'The  
9       hearing ear and the seeing eye, the Lord has made them  
10      both' (20:12). . .

11              " All go to God's school, . . . for the knowledge  
12      which He aims to instil is the knowledge of Himself;  
13      and this, too, is the ultimate prize. In submission to  
14      His authority and majesty (that is, in the fear of the  
15      Lord) we alone start and continue our education; and by  
16      the diligent search for wisdom 'as for hid treasures'  
17      we shall find our prize in a growing intimacy with the  
18      same Lord. . . . For the goal is: 'Then shalt thou  
19      understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge  
20      of God' (2:5)."—Derek Kidner, *The Proverbs: An*  
21      *Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, Ill.:  
22      InterVarsity Press, 1964), p. 35.

23

1       **Consider This:** How can God's law teach us that God is  
2       love? Why does the law more often seem like a  
3       "straitjacket"? Perhaps, if we would memorize the  
4       entire Decalogue, including God's first words ("I am  
5       the LORD Your God, who brought you out of the land of  
6       Egypt, out of the house of bondage" [*Exod. 20:2, NKJV*],  
7       we would be reminded that salvation comes before the  
8       law! We don't keep the law to be saved! God gave the  
9       Decalogue to people He had already redeemed from  
10      slavery.

11             God's speaking the law from Mount Sinai Himself  
12      should enlarge our understanding of His concern for our  
13      well-being. Moses suggests this: "the LORD commanded us  
14      to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our  
15      God, *for our good always, that He might preserve us*  
16      *alive, as it is this day*" (*Deut. 6:24, NKJV; emphasis*  
17      *supplied*). No wonder the psalmist sang: "Oh, how I love  
18      Your law! It is my meditation all the day" (*Ps. 119:97,*  
19      *NKJV*).

20

## 21      **II. Seeking the Lord**

22             (*Review Proverbs 2:1-9 with the class.*)

23

1 Those who spurn or reject God's Law will lose  
2 companionship with Him. For us created in His image,  
3 the law is a valuable guide for a relationship with Him  
4 and for maintaining healthy, happy families and  
5 friendships, because it provides far-reaching  
6 principles of right and wrong. There is no validation  
7 of human wisdom in Proverbs. There is no allowance for  
8 doubting divine absolutes. God knows absolutely because  
9 His knowledge is comprehensive.

10 Human knowledge is enriched by meditating on  
11 divine matters. God has made Himself known in His Word  
12 and through Jesus Christ. Bible writers regularly  
13 praise the perfection and reliability of God's  
14 revelation:

- 15 • **David:** "The words of the LORD are pure words, like  
16 silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven  
17 times. You shall keep them, O LORD, You shall  
18 preserve them from this generation forever" (*Ps.*  
19 *12:6, 7, NKJV*). "The law of the LORD is perfect,  
20 converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is  
21 sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the  
22 LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment  
23 of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes" (*Ps.*

1           19:7, 8, NKJV).

2           • **Moses:** " 'For this commandment which I command you  
3           today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far  
4           off. . . . But the word is very near you, in your  
5           mouth and in your heart, that you may do it. See, I  
6           have set before you today life and good, death and  
7           evil, in that I command you today to love the LORD  
8           your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His  
9           commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that  
10          you may live and multiply' " (*Deut. 30:11, 14-16,*  
11          *NKJV*).

12          • **Jesus:** " 'He who has My commandments and keeps them,  
13          it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be  
14          loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest  
15          Myself to him' " (*John 14:21, NKJV*). " 'Sanctify  
16          them by Your truth. Your word is truth' " (*John*  
17          *17:17, NKJV*).

18  
19          **Consider This:** If a person does not accept the  
20          knowledge of God, what other sources of knowledge are  
21          there? The alternative is being dependent on depraved,  
22          finite human understanding. According to Proverbs, the  
23          starting point of real wisdom is God's revelation: "For



1 with You is the foundation of life; in Your light we  
2 see light" (*Ps. 36:9, NKJV*); "the fear of the LORD is  
3 the beginning of knowledge" (*Prov. 1:7*); "Do not be  
4 wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from  
5 evil. It will be health to your flesh, and strength to  
6 your bones" (*Prov. 3:7, NKJV*); "the fear of man brings  
7 a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe"  
8 (*Prov. 29:2, NKJV*).

### 10 **III. Loving the Truth**

11 (*Review Proverbs 14:34 and Proverbs 1:2-5 with the*  
12 *class.*)

13  
14 The book of Proverbs applies divine counsel in  
15 different situations, ultimately a book of true  
16 education. Human knowledge or culture is not exalted,  
17 for true wisdom comes from God. If He is obeyed and  
18 honored, families, business, and governments will do  
19 well: "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a  
20 reproach to any people" (*Prov. 14:34, NKJV*).

21 The book of Proverbs gives practical instruction  
22 on how to best live a disciplined and prudent life in  
23 this confused world. Many, however, jeer at the

1 possibility of absolute truth. Solomon, the wisest man,  
2 recognized this: "To know wisdom and instruction, to  
3 perceive the words of understanding, to receive the  
4 instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity;  
5 to give prudence to the simple, . . . a wise man will  
6 hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding  
7 will attain wise counsel" (*Prov. 1:2-5, NKJV*). And  
8 submission to the Lord is the starting point: "The fear  
9 of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools  
10 despise wisdom and instruction" (*vs. 7, NKJV*).

11

12 **Consider This:** Just like the book of Proverbs, the book  
13 of Deuteronomy gives a great deal of practical guidance  
14 along with its invitation to love and fear God. What  
15 does that teach us about the true Author of the Bible?

16

### 17 **STEP 3—Apply**

18

19 **Just for Teachers:** In secular societies today, lack of  
20 **faithfulness to God causes huge problems. Moreover,**  
21 **gloating over disobedience and violence is everywhere.**  
22 **Discuss why this is happening. Is there anything a**

1           person, and a Sabbath School class, can do to  
2           counteract these prevalent trends?

3

4           **Thought Questions:**

5           ❶ How can our devotion to God and His Word counteract  
6           such strong negative trends in society?

7           ❷ How does the modern media subtly glorify  
8           questionable lifestyles?

9           ❸ Why do we need to be reminded that how family  
10          members are treated is the true mark of the genuine  
11          believer?

12

13          **STEP 4—Create**

14

15          **Just for Teachers:** Remind class members that to pray in  
16          the name of Jesus is something more than a mere mention  
17          of that name at the beginning and the ending of a  
18          prayer. It is to pray in the mind and spirit of Jesus,  
19          while we believe His promises, rely upon His grace, and  
20          work His works.

21

22          **Activity:** What is the real reason Jesus hasn't returned

1 yet? It is often said that it is because the gospel  
2 hasn't been preached around the world yet. Ellen White  
3 gives a different perspective: "If we would humble  
4 ourselves before God, and be kind and courteous and  
5 tenderhearted and pitiful, there would be one hundred  
6 conversions to the truth where now there is only one.  
7 But, though professing to be converted, we carry around  
8 with us a bundle of self that we regard as altogether  
9 too precious to be given up. It is our privilege to lay  
10 this burden at the feet of Christ and in its place take  
11 the character and similitude of Christ. The Saviour is  
12 waiting for us to do this. . . .

13 " 'Learn of Me,' Christ says, 'and ye shall find  
14 rest unto your souls.' Matthew 11:29. Why do we not  
15 learn of the Saviour every day? Why do we not live in  
16 constant communion with Him, so that in our connection  
17 with one another we can speak and act kindly and  
18 courteously? Why do we not honor the Lord by  
19 manifesting tenderness and love for one another? If we  
20 speak and act in harmony with the principles of heaven,  
21 unbelievers will be drawn to Christ by their  
22 association with us."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol.  
23 9, pp. 189, 190.

1           Think of practical ways you can model the kindness  
2           and courtesy of Christ more fully in your daily  
3           interactions with others.

1 **TE-1Q-2015-12-The Lesson in Brief**

2

3 **Key Text:** *Proverbs 30*

4

5 **The Student Will:**

6 **Know:** Learn to treasure highly the divine source  
7 of wisdom found in the Creator Himself—and to  
8 appreciate that this comprehensive divine wisdom  
9 provides valuable instruction for success in the  
10 present life.

11 **Feel:** Desire to study the ways of God in nature  
12 and to find His blessing there and feel motivated  
13 to apply God's practical counsel for successful  
14 daily living.

15 **Do:** Pray for the wisdom and power of God to live  
16 within the blueprint of His Word, proving "what is  
17 that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of  
18 God" (*Rom. 12:2*), rather than conforming to  
19 secular culture's assumptions.

20

21 **Learning Outline:**

1           **I. Know: The Valuable Resource to be Found in God's**  
2           **Created World**

3           A. How can the study of nature teach us about the  
4           character of the Creator?

5           B. With sin having distorted much of the  
6           "goodness" of the original creation, how can we  
7           rightly interpret what we now see there?

8  
9           **II. Feel: The Importance of Interpreting Nature**  
10          **Through Scripture**

11          A. Though Solomon and Agur (penmen of much of the  
12          book of Proverbs) also lived in a sinful world,  
13          how were they able to still believe in the  
14          goodness of the Creator and not be deterred by the  
15          corruption in the world?

16          B. How does the pervasive theory of evolution  
17          devalue animals and nature?

18  
19          **III. Do: Communing With Nature's Creator: A blessing of**  
20          **the Sabbath**

21          A. How can the Sabbath help us to learn about the  
22          "goodness" of Creation?

1           B. How can the belief in the literal Creation of  
2           this world (*Genesis 1, 2*) guard against false  
3           interpretations of our origins?  
4  
5

6   **Summary:** Proverbs 30 presents a way of life grounded in the  
7           Creator's blueprint, including the resultant  
8           blessings, reminding us that fellowship with the  
9           Creator is the best life, even before heaven.  
10



1 **TE-1Q-2015-12-Learning Cycle**

2

3 **STEP 1-Motivate**

4

5 **Spotlight on Scripture:** *Proverbs 31:1-6*

6

7 **Key Concept for Spiritual Growth:** We can trust fully in  
8 the reliability and truthfulness of God's revealed  
9 Word.

10

11 **Just for Teachers:** Proverbs 30 instructs that moral  
12 ambiguity and relativism ultimately do not work. The  
13 boundaries of right and wrong, good and evil, true and  
14 false cannot be erased no matter how determinedly  
15 postmodern society tries. Tolerance of evil and moral  
16 indifference are neither virtues nor adequate  
17 responses, according to the book of Proverbs.

18

19 **Opening Activity:** Have your class consider how many  
20 serious problems of modern society can be linked to the  
21 disregard of God's precepts. What difference would it  
22 make in society if all spouses were faithful to each

1 other and there was no adultery? What difference would  
2 it make if there were no thieves, if everyone was  
3 always honest at home and work?  
4

5 **Consider This:** The book of Proverbs does not simply  
6 attach the knowledge of God to other secular systems of  
7 wisdom. On the contrary, the precepts of God dominate  
8 biblical wisdom, the true source of wisdom and  
9 understanding and the standard by which everything else  
10 is judged. Moreover, a personal relationship with God  
11 is the remedy for human ignorance. Why is it so hard  
12 for the human heart and mind to admit ignorance?  
13

#### 14 **STEP 2—Explore**

15  
16 **Just for Teachers:** Chapter 30 opens with Agur's  
17 confessing that on his own he cannot find wisdom (vss.  
18 2, 3); then, with rhetorical questions, it instructs  
19 that God alone possesses wisdom (vs. 4) and that He  
20 willingly shares it through His Word (vs. 5). Finally,  
21 Proverbs warns that God's Word is not to be tampered  
22 with: "Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you, and

1       you be found a liar" (*vs. 6, NKJV*), a sentiment given  
2       by other biblical writers (Moses and John).

## 4       **Bible Commentary**

### 6       **I. Knowledge of God**

7       *(Review Proverbs 30:3-6 with the class.)*

8  
9       The biblical teaching of a literal Creation grounds the  
10      wisdom literature. God Himself, in His longest speech  
11      in the Bible (to Job, in Job 38-41), joyfully refers to  
12      creating this world.

13           Believing the biblical description of Creation,  
14      upheld all through Scripture, informs and broadens  
15      human perspectives of God's character and work. "The  
16      Bible does not say God *is* forgiveness, even though he  
17      is forgiving; or that God *is* knowledge, even though he  
18      is all-knowing; or that God *is* power, even though he is  
19      all-powerful. All other attributes are, like facets on  
20      a diamond, radiant windows into the heart of God."—

21      Timothy R. Jennings, M.D., *The God-shaped Brain: How*  
22      *Changing Your View of God Transforms Your Life* (Downers

1 Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2013) p. 22.

2 According to Agur and all Bible writers, true  
3 knowledge comes from joyful submission to the Maker of  
4 heaven and earth, because He is worthy. Human ignorance  
5 of God and His creative power leads to opposing Him, as  
6 Solomon notes: " 'Truly, this only I have found: that  
7 God made man upright, but they have sought out many  
8 schemes' " (*Eccles. 7:29, NKJV*). Because of human sin,  
9 Creation only partially reveals the divine order  
10 anymore. Moreover, human understanding has become  
11 degraded because of sin and thus is not sufficient to  
12 fully understand all of reality.

13  
14 **Consider This:** What human presumptions undergird much  
15 of the false thinking about God's character and work?  
16 What does the Bible say is the prerequisite condition  
17 or attitude for receiving true knowledge?

## 19 **II. The Arrogant**

20 (*Review Proverbs 30:10-31 with the class.*)

21  
22 Proverbs 30:10-31 lists behaviors that pervert the  
23 social order. Even worse, such behavior resists divine

1 perspectives (speaking of human assumptions, not mental  
2 abilities). There is less and less reverence for God's  
3 truth. The book of Proverbs describes this as  
4 preferring to live with illusions, adopting sinful  
5 perspectives as the moral standard—reminding us that  
6 the problems of society result not from mental  
7 deficiency but from spiritual pride.

8 In Proverbs, people who do this are dubbed  
9 "simple" or "fools" and are described as gullible,  
10 irresponsible, empty-headed, inexperienced, drifting  
11 into temptation, and as not accepting discipline,  
12 rebuke, or correction.

13  
14 **Consider This:** The first principle of wisdom in  
15 Proverbs is the fear of the Lord. This is not just one  
16 aspect of learning but the place from which the search  
17 for wisdom must begin. Such a decision will determine  
18 any growth in wisdom, including the moral dimension.  
19 All biblical writers work with this same assumption.  
20 How can a person be certain that this first principle  
21 is true? Given the nature of the first principle, what,  
22 then, is the first step a person needs to take in  
23 searching for wisdom?

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23

### III. Lessons From Nature

*(Review Proverbs 30:18, 19, 24-31 with the class.)*

According to Proverbs, one of the best ways to learn about God and His ways is through the created world that He made. Though many people think about animals only in terms of how they taste, this week's lesson, along with many other verses in Proverbs, instructs us that animals can be our teachers: "Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise" (*Prov. 6:6, NKJV*) followed with a description of their diligence).

So much is being learned now about the wonders of all life, including the intelligence of animals. For example, if anyone wonders why God "commanded the ravens" to feed Elijah (*1 Kings 17:4*), the book *Crows: Wise Guys of the Avian World*, by Candace Savage (Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada: Greystone Books, 2005), is illuminating. Reconnection with the lives of animals could be valuable in softening our hearts, for animals have feelings and affection, which Ellen White noted: "The intelligence displayed by many dumb animals approaches so closely to human intelligence that it is

1 a mystery. The animals see and hear and love and fear  
2 and suffer. They use their organs far more faithfully  
3 than many human beings use theirs. They manifest  
4 sympathy and tenderness toward their companions in  
5 suffering. Many animals show an affection for those who  
6 have charge of them, far superior to the affection  
7 shown by some of the human race. They form attachments  
8 for man which are not broken without great suffering to  
9 them.

10 "What man with a human heart, who has ever cared  
11 for domestic animals, could look into their eyes, so  
12 full of confidence and affection, and willingly give  
13 them over to the butcher's knife? How could he devour  
14 their flesh as a sweet morsel?"—*The Ministry of*  
15 *Healing*, pp. 315, 316. After all, humans and animals  
16 are made from the "same stuff" (*Gen. 2:7, 19*).

17 Jesus Himself treasured the things His own hands  
18 had made: " 'Consider the lilies of the field, how they  
19 grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you  
20 that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like  
21 one of these' " (*Matt. 6:28, 29, NKJV*). Ellen G. White  
22 also turns our attention to the wonders of the natural  
23 world: "As we come close to the heart of nature, Christ

1 makes His presence real to us, and speaks to our hearts  
2 of His peace and love.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 26.

3 An educational psychologist argues that if  
4 children spent more time in the restorative powers of  
5 nature than in being unnaturally stimulated by  
6 electronic technology, there would be less trouble and  
7 rebellion in the school system (see Richard Louv, *Last*  
8 *Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-*  
9 *deficit Disorder* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: Algonquin Books of  
10 Chapel Hill, 2008).

11  
12 **Consider This:** The more we understand about the natural  
13 world—plants, animals, composition of water and its  
14 exact fitness for life (let alone necessity for life),  
15 the air we breathe, our precise distance from the sun  
16 necessary for life, et cetera—the more our wonder for  
17 the Creator abounds. His control of time (creating the  
18 first seven days of Creation and then bending them into  
19 the first week) also gives evidence of His power and  
20 love. What, though, has caused humans to become so  
21 estranged from animals and nature?

22  
23 **STEP 3—Apply**



1  
2       **Just for Teachers:** If we are ever to know wisdom, we  
3       must be taught by God, who alone possesses true  
4       knowledge. This attitude, underlying the entire book of  
5       Proverbs, rebuts the rationalism of the Enlightenment,  
6       which contended that unaided, human wisdom could attain  
7       truth. This thinking has proved to be a colossal  
8       failure. Yes, the medieval church has a bloody record,  
9       but modern atheism is even more brutal. Unfortunately,  
10      however, failure of the Enlightenment attitude has led  
11      to a perverse postmodern conclusion—that there are no  
12      absolutes (except that!). The book of Proverbs insists  
13      on an alternative perspective: the reliability and  
14      truth of God's revealed Word.

15  
16      **Thought Questions:** What evidence from the book of  
17      Proverbs reminds us that although the world is now  
18      sinful, God is not aloof, distant, cold, and forbidding  
19      but, rather, intimate, personal, warm, and affirming?

20  
21      **Application Questions:**

22      ❶ What are some of the reasons we have been so slow to

1 appreciate the wonders of nature and thus nature's  
2 Creator?

3 ② Explore reasons that evolutionary theory has  
4 demeaned the value of nature.

5

#### 6 **STEP 4—Create**

7

8 **Just for Teachers:** Solomon, like his father, David, was  
9 impressed with the created world. Find several psalms  
10 wherein David exalts the Creator by praising Him for  
11 His created works (for example, Psalms 19, 33, 104).  
12 Ask the class to share some of their experiences in  
13 nature have drawn them closer to the Creator.

14

15 **Activity:** Bring to class current articles and books on  
16 different animals that reveal their intelligence,  
17 affection, and hard work. Or share instances from your  
18 own interactions with, or observations of, animals that  
19 reveal their intelligence, affection, and hard work. A  
20 number of Web sites also post videos of birds flying in  
21 slow motion, capturing the magnificence of their flight  
22 and tail feathers in action, which our sin-dimmed eyes

1            presently see only as simple flapping.

1 **TE-1Q-2015-13-The Lesson in Brief**

2

3 **Key Text:** *Proverbs 31:4, 5, 29-31*

4

5 **The Student Will:**

6 **Know:** Recognize that lifestyle decisions are not  
7 trivial issues but have major effects reaching far  
8 beyond the person who makes them.

9 **Feel:** Foster an appreciation for lifestyle choices  
10 that will enhance this present life and fitness  
11 for heaven.

12 **Do:** Determine, with the help of the Holy Spirit,  
13 to follow God's lifestyle directives, which are  
14 promised to bring blessings now and to make his or  
15 her life a blessing.

16

17 **Learning Outline:**

18 **I. Know: The Reality and Results of Lifestyle Choices**  
19 **Are Fundamental, According to Proverbs 31.**

20 A. Proverbs 31 aligns two significant issues that  
21 each person must decide on: the use of alcoholic  
22 beverages, plus relationships between men and

1 women in and outside of marriage. How can one  
2 learn to make the best choices in these two areas?

3 B. How does media (radio, television, Internet)  
4 impact a person's thinking about these two  
5 important choices?  
6

7 **II. Feel: The Tension Between the Values of Society**  
8 **Regarding Alcohol and Relationships and Proverbs**  
9 **31.**

10 A. Why is there often such a tension?

11 B. How can a person best sort out the conflicting  
12 values between biblical counsel and societal  
13 pressures?  
14

15 **III. Do: Determine How to Make Optimum Lifestyle**  
16 **Choices.**

17 A. Imagine what a difference it would make if  
18 every person would choose to eliminate harmful  
19 drinks from his or her life and choose to honor  
20 biblical principles of family values and sexual  
21 purity. Describe situations you are aware of in  
22 which such choices would make a difference.  
23

1 **Summary:** The book of Proverbs concludes with reminders of  
2 the importance of the lifestyle choices we make.  
3 The final chapter also goes into great detail  
4 describing a godly woman. While dealing with many  
5 types of work and responsibilities throughout the  
6 book, the last chapter exalts a woman of great  
7 intelligence, wisdom, and kindness in her everyday  
8 tasks. We are instructed that there are no  
9 unimportant decisions and choices and that success  
10 comes from "fearing the Lord" (31:30), a frequent  
11 precept in Proverbs.

1 **TE-1Q-2015-13-Learning Cycle**

2

3 **STEP 1-Motivate**

4

5 **Spotlight on Scripture:** *Proverbs 31:4-9, 10-31*

6

7 **Key Concept for Spiritual Growth:** The last chapter of  
8 Proverbs speaks to two important areas of life: what we  
9 choose to drink and how we live day-to-day, especially  
10 highlighting the daily tasks of a "working mother." As  
11 the chapter closes, again the "fear of the LORD" is  
12 shown to be the fundamental choice undergirding a  
13 righteous life.

14

15 **Just for Teachers:** Throughout the book of Proverbs,  
16 advice and counsel for right living is given for family  
17 members (fathers, mothers, sons, daughters) and for  
18 various occupations in society. Some of the statements  
19 are commands, some practical suggestions; sometimes  
20 results of choices are spelled out. The underlying  
21 framework holding all the chapters together is belief

1       in the Creator God—praised throughout the biblical  
2       canon.

3               This week's lesson urges thoughtful consideration  
4       of the dangerous results of something often readily  
5       indulged in throughout many places and cultures:  
6       drinking alcoholic beverages. Also, the positive  
7       consequences of a well-ordered family are discussed,  
8       with the wife and mother's role underscored.

9  
10       **Opening Activity:** Bring to class, if possible,  
11       statistics on how drunkenness leads to many marriage  
12       difficulties. In the same vein, it is significant that  
13       the consequences of the negative effects of alcohol on  
14       a king's (leader's) critical tasks are coupled, by  
15       contrast, in Proverbs 31 with a lengthy portrayal of a  
16       mother carefully managing her family, who duly honor  
17       her. Ellen G. White portrays the same precept: "The  
18       influence of an ill-regulated family is widespread, and  
19       disastrous to all society. It accumulates in a tide of  
20       evil that affects families, communities, and  
21       governments.

22               "It is impossible for any of us to live in such a



1 way that we shall not cast an influence in the world.  
2 No member of the family can enclose himself within  
3 himself, where other members of the family shall not  
4 feel his influence and spirit. The very expression of  
5 the countenance has an influence for good or evil. His  
6 spirit, his words, his actions, his attitude toward  
7 others, are unmistakable. If he is living in  
8 selfishness, he surrounds his soul with a malarious  
9 atmosphere; while if he is filled with the love of  
10 Christ, he will manifest courtesy, kindness, tender  
11 regard for the feelings of others and will communicate  
12 to his associates, by his acts of love, a tender,  
13 grateful, happy feeling. It will be made manifest that  
14 he is living for Jesus and daily learning lessons at  
15 His feet, receiving His light and His peace. He will be  
16 able to say to the Lord, 'Thy gentleness hath made me  
17 great.' "*The Adventist Home*, pp. 33, 34.

18  
19 **Consider This:** Ask your class to consider why the  
20 warnings against drinking alcohol should be stressed  
21 for everyone, even though Proverbs 31:4, 5 is addressed  
22 to the king. Also, reflect on and discuss how single  
23 men and women can benefit from the description of the

1 married woman who is praised in detail in this chapter.

2

### 3 **STEP 2—Explore**

4

5 **Just for Teachers:** The two topics presented in Proverbs  
6 31, though written thousands of years ago, are still  
7 very contemporary and necessary: (1) harmful results of  
8 intoxicating beverages and (2) the depiction of the  
9 actions of a God-fearing wife and mother.

10

## 11 **Bible Commentary**

12

### 13 **I. Alcoholic Beverages**

14 *(Review Proverbs 31:3-9 with the class.)*

15

16 Even the wonderful fruits of creation can be misused  
17 and lead to substance abuse. Alcoholic beverages cloud  
18 the areas of the brain in which moral thinking is done.  
19 When this happens, grave injustices can occur, such as  
20 not enforcing good laws or passing faulty, defective  
21 legislation that does not defend those who are  
22 oppressed (*Prov. 31:5, 8, 9*). What is warned against

1 here is valid for every person in whatever sphere of  
2 influence he or she has.

3  
4 **Consider This:** The opening “motherly counsel” to Lemuel  
5 in Proverbs 31 shifts to a warning against drunkenness,  
6 describing the tragic results that can occur. Why is it  
7 tempting to “drown” one’s problems in alcoholic  
8 beverages?

9

## 10 **II. Godly Womanhood**

11 *(Review Proverbs 31:10-31 with the class.)*

12

13 The woman described in Proverbs 31:10-31 is the finale  
14 of the book of Proverbs, an exceptional climax.  
15 Throughout the entire book, readers have been warned of  
16 ungodly, “strange” women whose seductive powers cause  
17 ruin. This final portrait is in contrast to those  
18 women, describing a feminine role model of wisdom and  
19 godly values. The first verse, along with the final  
20 verses, skillfully envelope the passage in blessing:  
21 she is a blessing to her husband (*vss. 11, 12*), and he  
22 blesses her (*vss. 28, 29*). Her husband is known in the  
23 city gate (*vs. 23*, the civil center of ancient

1 Israelite communities), and her own works are praised  
2 at the same place (*vs. 31*); and she becomes the praise  
3 of her community (*vss. 30, 31*).

4 She is no self-centered "superwoman" but, rather,  
5 a God-fearing person whom God reveals Himself through,  
6 for she "fears the LORD" (*vs. 30, NKJV*), deriving her  
7 wisdom from His Word. For in Proverbs, wisdom is not  
8 primarily an intellectual and academic achievement but  
9 a relationship with the Creator.

10  
11 **Consider This:** How does understanding of these two  
12 final vital principles of life in the book of Proverbs  
13 inspire your own motives and choices and broaden your  
14 perspective of God's work in the human heart?

15  
16 **STEP 3—Apply**

17  
18 **Just for Teachers:** Recall biblical narratives in which  
19 drunkenness brought terrible, long-lasting results (for  
20 example: Noah and his sons [*Gen. 9:18-27*]; Lot and his  
21 daughters [*Gen. 19:30-38*]).

22 **Find examples of biblical women who exemplify the**

1 character qualities of the Proverbs 31 passage. In  
2 light of this activity, contemplate the following  
3 thought: Jesus is the only human who was able to pick  
4 His mother. Of all the Israelite women living at the  
5 time Jesus was conceived, He selected Mary. Though  
6 Seventh-day Adventists don't worship her, we can  
7 appreciate her as the one with the qualities that Jesus  
8 knew would make her the best human mother for Him. This  
9 exalts the mother's role in society. In the same vein,  
10 Ellen G. White exalts home virtues: "The Lord is served  
11 as much, yea, more, by faithful home work than by the  
12 one who teaches the word. As verily as do the teachers  
13 in the school, fathers and mothers are to feel that  
14 they are the educators of their children.

15 "The Christian mother's sphere of usefulness should  
16 not be narrowed by her domestic life. The salutary  
17 influence which she exerts in the home circle she may  
18 and will make felt in more widespread usefulness in her  
19 neighborhood and in the church of God. Home is not a  
20 prison to the devoted wife and mother."—*The Adventist*  
21 *Home*, p. 236.

1       **Thought Questions:** How can wives and mothers be  
2 encouraged and praised throughout the year and not just  
3 on Mother's Day?  
4

5       **Application Questions:** In what ways can you help the  
6 wives and mothers, including single mothers, in your  
7 local church family feel the love and appreciation,  
8 honor and support, they deserve for their demanding  
9 tasks?  
10

#### 11 **STEP 4—Create**

12

13       **Just for Teachers:** God bids us call Him "Father," but  
14 He also demonstrates qualities of a mother: He compares  
15 His protection of His people to that of a mother hen  
16 (Matt. 23:37). Also, He equates conversion to the  
17 birthing experience only females can know!  
18

19       **Activity:** Have the class plan practical ways in which  
20 they could help any single moms in the church. Or  
21 surprise busy parents with unexpected assistance during  
22 the next week.