

June 7, 2020

“Listen to God’s Wisdom”
Lesson 1 of Unit

Psalm 1:1-4, 7-8, 10,
20-22, 32-33

Intro

Our lives are constantly about choice. Simply things daily like what to wear (easier these days than usual) or what to have for breakfast are done without much thinking. But the moral, ethical, and spiritual parts of our lives call for a great deal of thinking and searching to find answers that contain truth worth applying.

Today we start our summer unit, called “Many Faces of Wisdom”. July’s lessons will be the wisdom of Jesus found in the gospels, and August’s lessons will come from the wisdom found in the book of James. But where do we start in studying wisdom? With Proverbs.

All four lessons for June will come from Chapters 1-9, from which we will study two “Fatherly Appeals” this week and next, and then two other foundational wisdom sections.

Read Psalm 1

1. Verse 1 identifies the verses of chapter 1 to be proverbs of Solomon. According to I Kings 4:30-32, how many proverbs did Solomon speak? How do the events later in Solomon’s life emphasize the value and importance of heeding the proverbs that he himself has written/spoken?
2. Verses 2-6 tell in general the value of the proverbs. From vs. 2, how would you define “wisdom”? Use a dictionary if needed. What does the word “instruction” suggest is happening on a regular / daily basis? What is needed for someone to understand “words of insight”?
3. Verse 3 mentions actions: prudent behavior, doing what is right and just and fair. What is “prudent” behavior? How might doing what is “right and just and fair” relate to “gaining wisdom” (vs. 2)?
4. What does it mean to be “simple” (vs. 4)? How would prudence help these people? What is “discretion”? How will having discretion help the young?

5. What does it mean to “fear the Lord”? (vs. 7) How is this the beginning of knowledge / wisdom? Why do fools “despise wisdom”? According to Prov. 13:18 and 15:32, what are some consequences of rejecting wisdom?

6. What does vs. 8 suggest about the value of parental instruction to their children?

7. Verse 10 has the father warning his son not to give in to enticement, to peer pressure. Look at verses 11-19; what reasons, stated or implied, are presented to the son for following this advice?

(Note on vs. 20: The perspective changes from the father giving advice to wisdom itself calling out to all who will listen. Wisdom is presented as “she”, with at least two possible reasons. First, the Hebrew word for wisdom is feminine. Second, the ones being taught are young men. In the book of Proverbs, folly is portrayed as a loose woman who tempts men to their ruin.)

8. In vs. 21, where are the two places where wisdom cries out? Why might wisdom be crying out in those two places?

9. What is the point or purpose of the questions wisdom asks in vs. 22? Read vs. 23-31 for additional insights or thoughts for answering this question.

10. In vs. 32, there are different phrasings for what the simple are doing. NIV uses “waywardness”. The NKJV, RSV, and ESV uses “turning away”. What is being said by these phrases about why the simple are not heeding wisdom’s call? What are the consequences?

11. What does it mean in vs. 33 to “listen” to wisdom? How/why will doing so bring about the benefits the verse describes?

Application: This call to wisdom is note-worthy because of who said it. Solomon. The acknowledged wisest man who ever lived did not follow his own advice. He married women of other cultures who drew him away from following what he had been taught and the advice and warning he gave in Proverbs.

This observation should draw compassion and humility from us. The phrase that I was reminded of was “There but for the grace of God go I.” Paul warned the Corinthians that “If you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!” (I Cor. 10:12). We all need more wisdom, no matter how long we have been washed in the blood of Christ.

Prayer: Father God, help us to hear your call to gain more wisdom, and to heed it. Help us to do this not only for the benefits it will bring to our lives, but so that it will enable others to see Christ in us and be drawn to Him. In Jesus’ name, Amen.