

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

First Quarter 2015: *Proverbs*

Lesson 1 “The Call of Wisdom”

Read for this week’s study

Proverbs 1–3; Gen. 1:1; Exod. 19:16; 20:20; Prov. 11:30; 13:12; 15:4.

Memory Text

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction”
(Proverbs 1:7, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Beginning of Wisdom
- III. True Education
- IV. The Call of Wisdom
- V. The Benefit of Wisdom
- VI. Do Not Forget!
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Moderator: Zdravko Stefanović

THE CALL OF WISDOM (PROVERBS 1-3)

A. Wisdom in Words

1. Practical, short, memorable, universal
2. Mesopotamia (The Words of Ahiqar), Egypt (*maat*), Edom
3. The Apocrypha (Ben Sirach, Wisdom of Solomon)
4. A key office in Israel (Jeremiah 18:18)
5. King Solomon (1 Kings 3-4) and International Wisdom Movement
6. Books, chapters, verses
7. Basic forms of wisdom in the Bible

B. The Book of Proverbs

1. A collection (named, anonymous)
2. Solomon, Hezekiah, Agur, Lemuel & his mother
3. “Proverbs”
4. Topics
 - a) Supremacy of wisdom

- b) Power of words
- c) Wealth & poverty
- d) Family & self-control
- e) Suffering & justice
- 5. General rules about life
- 6. Uses (walnuts, candies)
- 7. Abuses (rigidity, absolute promises from God)

C. The Opening Chapter (Proverbs 1)

1. How does the author contrast the following types of persons: Wise and prudent, simple and young, fool and mocker?
2. Home appears to be the best place to learn wisdom. Is this statement exaggerated or even outdated? Is there hope for those who did not acquire wisdom at home?
3. Young men are taught to embrace wisdom that is personified as an attractive lady. Why is the author using this type of language here? Is he implying that love of wisdom works better than complying with mere prohibitions?
4. Accepting or rejecting the call to wisdom is presented in this chapter as a life or death issue. Why is it that the wise path is not chosen by many, nor are these warnings widely heeded?

Basic Forms of Biblical Wisdom

1. Proverb

“A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son grief to his mother” (Proverbs 10:1).

2. Riddle

“Out of the eater, something to eat; out of the strong, something sweet” (Judges 14:14).

3. Admonition

“Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning” (Proverbs 9:9).

4. Hymn

“Praise be the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are His” (Daniel 2:20).

5. Prayer

“Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips” (Psalm 141:3).

6. Monologue

“A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work”
(Ecclesiastes 2:24).

7. Blessing

“Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God” (Matthew 5:8).

“In this world there are only two tragedies. One is not getting what one wants, and the other is getting it.” (Oscar Wilde)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Lou: A question came in last week that really touched my heart. This person wrote, “How are we who have been raised as Seventh-day Adventist Christians, and have been taught to fear God and His judgments, to change to a love relationship? When you asked last Friday night, ‘Would you be comfortable if the Father walked in?’ I hesitated to answer, and then I said ‘I hope so.’ I am afraid! How do I dispel this fear?”

Graham: Oh, I know the One who would love to hear that question, would be God Himself. If you would look at God and say, “God, I hesitate to tell You this, but I’m scared.”

And I wonder what He would do. Would He say, “I appreciate that”?

Or would He say, “I think maybe I’d better not talk to you any longer, you’re so scared. I’ll send for My Son.”

Well, in practicality I think the solution is to become convinced in Scripture that the One who came is fully God. We’re not afraid of Jesus. But to realize the One who was with us is no less than God! And that’s what the Sabbath reminds us of, that gentle Jesus—who was afraid of Him? He is the Almighty Creator. And then if we could just come to the place where we would truly accept what we call the “testimony of Jesus.” The ultimate testimony of Jesus is, “Do you want to know what My Father is like? If you’ve seen Me, you’ve seen the Father.” We find it hard to believe that. So I think we need to read it over and over and come to the place where we really are convinced. You want to know what God is like? Look at Christ, for Christ is God. And as we think of it, number one, it seems incredible, for it takes a little time. And number two, the enemy is opposed to our knowing this, so he will throw up every roadblock he can to keep us from believing this incredible truth. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, session 10 with Lou Venden, “Reminder of the Evidence” recorded March, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/10MMCAG>*

Yet, as you look down that Bible Reference Sheet, doesn't the Bible emphasize, make it very plain, that we are supposed to fear God and be His God-fearing people? Look at that first one on the list. You recognize it is the message of the first of the three angels, in Revelation 14:7: "Fear God and give him glory, for the hour of his judgment has come." (RSV)

It even gives a good reason why we should fear Him. But one needs to understand the word fear. If you will forgive the Greek, it's pronounced *phobos*, from which we do get phobia. But it doesn't always mean terror. Sometimes it means respect. It means reverence. Look for example at the next verse, Psalm 128:1, 2: "Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord. [You mean blessed is everyone who is terrified of God? Well, read on.] You shall be happy, and it shall be well with you." (KJV)

Surely the Psalmist isn't saying, "Happy is everyone who is scared of God." This is the other meaning that the word may have. Blessed is everyone who reveres and respects the Lord. You shall be happy and it will be well with you. Note, for example, Proverbs 9:10: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." (KJV) You mean to be terrified of God is the beginning of wisdom and learning? No, there again the context determines the meaning of the word. So the translation in the *Good News Bible*, right beside it, is to be preferred: "To be wise you must first have reverence for the Lord."

Where there is no respect, there is no reverence, and very little learning can take place. Think of all the lengths to which our God has gone through the centuries to gain the respect of His people and hold it long enough to tell them some more of the truth about Himself. Perhaps the most famous example is the one provided at Mt. Sinai. God came down to speak to His people. Did they all line up quietly to listen? They were noisy. They were complaining. They were fussing about the food and the water. There was no respect for God. So God could not speak to them softly that day. Instead there was thunder and lightning, and fire and smoke and earthquake. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, session 9, "There is No Need to Be Afraid of God" recorded March, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/9MMCAG>

Further Study with Ellen White

Religion, pure and undefiled, ennobles its possessor. You will ever find with the true Christian a marked cheerfulness, a holy, happy confidence in God, a submission to His providences, that is refreshing to the soul. By the Christian, God's love and benevolence can be seen in every bounty he receives. {3T 377.1}

When a burden bearer desires wisdom more than he desires wealth, power, or fame, he will not be disappointed. Such a one will learn from the Great Teacher not only what to do, but how to do it in a way that will meet with the divine approval. {PK 31.1}

O that we might have a consuming desire to know God by an experimental knowledge, to come into the audience chamber of the Most High, reaching up the hand of faith, and casting our helpless souls upon the One mighty to save. His loving kindness is better than life (MS 38, 1905). {3BC 1147.1}

We cannot obtain wisdom without earnest attention and prayerful study. Some portions of Scripture are indeed too plain to be misunderstood, but there are others whose meaning does not lie on the surface to be seen at a glance. Scripture must be compared with scripture. There must be careful research and prayerful reflection. And such study will be richly repaid. As the miner discovers veins of precious metal concealed beneath the surface of the earth, so will he who perseveringly searches the word of God as for hid treasure find truths of the greatest value, which are concealed from the view of the careless seeker. The words of inspiration, pondered in the heart, will be as streams flowing from the fountain of life. {SC 90.3}

For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; then we are to believe that we receive, and return thanks to God that we have received. {Ed 258.1}

We need look for no outward evidence of the blessing. The gift is in the promise, and we may go about our work assured that what God has promised He is able to perform, and that the gift, which we already possess, will be realized when we need it most. {Ed 258.2}

To live thus by the word of God means the surrender to Him of the whole life. There will be felt a continual sense of need and dependence, a drawing out of the heart after God. Prayer is a necessity; for it is the life of the soul. Family prayer, public prayer, have their place; but it is secret communion with God that sustains the soul life. {Ed 258.3}

All things are possible to those that believe. No one coming to the Lord in sincerity of heart will be disappointed. {HP 81.5}

What higher power can man require than this—to be linked with the infinite God? Feeble, sinful man has the privilege of speaking to his Maker. We utter words that reach the throne of the Monarch of the universe. We pour out our heart's desire in our closets. Then we go forth to walk with God as did Enoch. {HP 81.6}

To gain the higher education means to become a partaker of the divine nature. It means to copy the life and character of Christ so that we shall stand on vantage ground as we fight the battles of life. It means to gain daily victories over sin. As we seek for this education, angels of

God are our companions; when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard for us against him. {CT 388.4}

Higher education is an experimental knowledge of the plan of salvation, and this knowledge is secured by earnest and diligent study of the Scriptures. Such an education will renew the mind and transform the character, restoring the image of God in the soul. It will fortify the mind against the deceptive whisperings of the adversary, and enable us to understand the voice of God. It will teach the learner to become a co-worker with Jesus Christ, to dispel the moral darkness about him, and bring light and knowledge to men. It is the simplicity of true godliness—our passport from the preparatory school of earth to the higher school above. {CT 11.1}

In His prayer to the Father, Christ gave to the world a lesson which should be graven on mind and soul. “This is life eternal,” He said, “that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.” John 17:3. This is true education. It imparts power. The experimental knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent, transforms man into the image of God. It gives to man the mastery of himself, bringing every impulse and passion of the lower nature under the control of the higher powers of the mind. It makes its possessor a son of God and an heir of heaven. It brings him into communion with the mind of the Infinite, and opens to him the rich treasures of the universe. {COL 114.2}

This is the knowledge which is obtained by searching the word of God. And this treasure may be found by every soul who will give all to obtain it. {COL 114.3}

There are veins of truth yet to be discovered, but spiritual things are spiritually discerned. One passage of Scripture will prove a key to unlock other passages, and in this way light is shed upon the hidden meaning of the word. By comparing different texts treating on the same subject, viewing their bearing on every side, the true meaning of the Scriptures will be made evident. {CT 437.2}

When you search the Scriptures with an earnest desire to learn the truth, God will breathe His Spirit into your heart and impress your mind with the light of His word. The Bible is its own interpreter, one passage explaining another. By comparing scriptures referring to the same subjects, you will see beauty and harmony of which you have never dreamed. There is no other book whose perusal strengthens and enlarges, elevates and ennoble the mind, as does the perusal of this Book of books. {4T 499.1}

In a knowledge of God all true knowledge and real development have their source. Wherever we turn, in the physical, the mental, or the spiritual realm; in whatever we behold, apart from the blight of sin, this knowledge is revealed. Whatever line of investigation we pursue, with a sincere purpose to arrive at truth, we are brought in touch with the unseen, mighty Intelligence that is working in and through all. The mind of man is brought into communion with the mind

of God, the finite with the Infinite. The effect of such communion on body and mind and soul is beyond estimate. {Ed 14.2}

And the education begun in this life will be continued in the life to come. Day by day the wonderful works of God, the evidences of His wisdom and power in creating and sustaining the universe, the infinite mystery of love and wisdom in the plan of redemption, will open to the mind in new beauty. . . . Even in this life we may catch glimpses of His presence and may taste the joy of communion with heaven, but the fullness of its joy and blessing will be reached in the hereafter. Eternity alone can reveal the glorious destiny to which man, restored to God's image, can attain.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 601, 602. {RC 279.5}