

HIGH SCHOOL

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Lesson 1

The
fear
of the
LORD
is the
beginning
of
knowledge

PROVERBS 1:7

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by Jenny Lundquist

PROVERBS

POCKET

When Dave played basketball, he had a teammate who was a sore loser.

After a tough loss, the hothead slammed his fists around the locker room. Dave pushed him a little further with a sarcastic remark and was promptly slammed in the face. Dave should have known better. "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Prov. 15:1). If Dave had taken this advice, he might have saved himself an aching jaw.

A mentor is a wise and trusted guide, a friend who usually says the right thing at the right time. Christians have often looked to Solomon, the primary writer of Proverbs, as such a guide. This son of David and Bathsheba did not live a blameless life himself. Why then should we listen to him? Because, despite his wrong choices, he learned the ultimate meaning of life.

A gentle answer turns

A right relationship with God is the most important thing anyone can ever pursue. "Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13). The written results of Solomon's pondering, his proverbs, are not only wise human thought, but also God-breathed. God chose the flawed king to give us these words of authority that would limit preventable pain for the obedient.

When I heard that Alan was picked up by the police, I pressed Dan for details. He simply said, "I don't want to talk about it."

Solomon would have considered his silence wise.

"Hatred stirs up dissension, but

love covers over all wrongs." (Prov.

10:12). Aware of Alan's weaknesses, Dan still considered him a friend.

There was no need to stir up dissension over him between the two of us.

A nagging worry prompted me to phone Gloria (my mentor) for her thoughts on whether I was doing the right thing with one of my children. With the candor I usually admire,

she told me that I was making a bad situation worse. After mulling over her I'm-telling-this-for-your-own-good comments, I realized that my bruised feelings were not the important issue. She was right again, after all. "Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses" (Prov. 27:6).

My little boy once protested, "A whole dime for a torn comic book? You're nuts!" But as soon as the salesman was out of earshot, Paul gloated about his bargain, "I really got a good buy for only a dime." Perhaps Solomon eavesdropped on sales transactions in Jerusalem's marketplace. He wrote, "'It's no good, it's no good!' says the buyer; then off he goes and boasts about his purchase" (Prov. 20:14). Solomon had great insight into human nature; some things never change.

A young businessman, anxious about finishing a job, got panicky when his regular worker was unavailable. In desperation, Hank hired someone off the street. Bad idea. "Never again," he moaned. "Nothing but trouble. Took me longer to clean up the mess than if I had done the whole job myself." "There's a proverb about you," I replied. "'Like an archer who wounds at random is he who hires a fool or any passer-by'" (Prov. 26:10).

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The What Fors of Proverbs

Some books of the Bible give very specific reasons about why they were written. Luke wrote his Gospel so that his friend Theophilus might know with certainty the

facts about Jesus (Luke 1:4). John wrote his first epistle so that Christians might know that they have eternal life (1 John 5:13).

Solomon began the Book of Proverbs

telling us why he wrote them. When the Lord told Solomon that he could have anything he wanted, just for the asking, he asked for wisdom. The Book of Proverbs contains much of this wisdom.



Read Proverbs 1:1-6.

List the eight reasons why Solomon wrote the Book of Proverbs.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

If by reading the proverbs you gained each of these things, how could you use them?

Read Proverbs 1:7.

Fearing God means respecting His power and control over your life. Why is this kind of respect a good starting point for gaining wisdom?

Why is it foolish to treat wisdom and discipline lightly?

Lesson Scripture

Proverbs 1:1-7

¹The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel: ²for attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight; ³for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; ⁴for giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young—⁵let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance—⁶for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise. ⁷The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

Continued from page 3.

As Michelle sipped her Coke and nibbled on homemade cookies, she laughed about her day downtown. "I saw a bag lady poke around in a garbage can. She found a half-eaten sandwich and ate it! It was so gross!"

In contrast, a friend had taken her 14-year-old foster son, Elvin, back to Brooklyn to visit his relatives. They stopped at a fast-food restaurant, and the boy

There's always someone out here who's hungry

ordered two large cheeseburgers. He walked outside, carrying one, and handed it to a grubby stranger. "There's always someone out here who's hungry."

"He who despises his neighbor sins, but blessed is he who is kind to the needy" (Prov. 14:21).

The storehouse of wisdom in the Book of Proverbs cannot be exhausted in a lifetime. If you follow its guidelines early, much of the road before you will be clearly mapped out. Try to get as much out of it as you can—a good mentor is hard to find.

**He who
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Proverbs 14:21

Not

So Wise Guy

Art Bicklebyer was smart, no doubt about it. The guy aced everything—every test, every pop quiz, every report. He could polish off a lab experiment by the time the rest of the class had just figured out how to put on their goggles. Forget about watching a game show with him, and pity the fool who challenged him to a trivia contest.

Yep, Art was smart, but one Friday he was too smart for himself.

You know those days in early September, when everyone's still got summer on the brain? Well, it was a day like that when Art figured that he could score some popularity points by hot-wiring the school fire alarm system and getting everyone out into the sun and off into their weekend a little earlier than planned.

It was right after fifth hour Advanced Calculus and Experimental Trigonometric Graphing that Art slipped into the second-floor maintenance closet using the precisely chiseled end of his 3-in-1 protractor as a key. With another turn of his protractor, he was into the west wing electrical box. He'd approximated the circuitry after two weeks of careful mapping of every switch and fixture in the whole school, and now he began to work wonders.

First the fire alarm went off. Perfect. But then the sprinklers kicked in. Oops. Toilets began to back up. The air conditioning sent temperatures plummeting

into the fifties. Amps blew in the band room. Electric pencil sharpeners devoured helpless writing utensils. The computer lab began playing an electronic rendition of the *1812 Overture*. The pool began to drain.

And somewhere over behind the industrial arts wing, something blew up.

A half hour later, after Art had a chance to show the fire department exactly which circuits he'd crossed, Art had a nice long talk with Mrs. Offenwright, the principal. It turned out that Mrs. Offenwright didn't much like Art's smarts when he didn't apply them properly. "Mr. Bicklebyer, you've got a lot of brains, but you sure don't think much!"

Proverbs 14:16. *A wise man fears the LORD and shuns evil, but a fool is . . . reckless.*

Cindy Miller



The fear of the
LORD is the
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— Proverbs 1:7

Monday In Proverbs 1:7, fear doesn't mean fright. It means being in awe of who God is and what He is capable of doing. Write down one way God has demonstrated His power in your life sometime in the past week. Praise God for His ability to do anything.

Tuesday Learning without any respect for God only results in academic arrogance. When He is ignored, people begin to believe what is false. Praise God today for being the source of all that is true.

Wednesday Read Proverbs 13:16. Everyone behaves foolishly sometimes. What was the last foolish thing you did? What were the consequences? Ask God to help you learn from foolish decisions so that you don't repeat them.

Thursday It often takes courage to act wisely and to do the right thing. What's the most difficult "right" thing you ever did? Ask God for the same courage when you face those kinds of choices in the future.

Friday Read Proverbs 10:17. Discipline is as essential to the growing Christian as training is to the committed athlete. What are the best 10 to 15 minutes of your day? Consider giving that time to God by focusing on Him. Ask the Lord to help you be consistent.

Saturday Ideally, everyone should continue to learn throughout their life. Do you remember your perception of God when you were 10? Has it changed? If so, how? Thank God for the spiritual growth you have experienced.

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