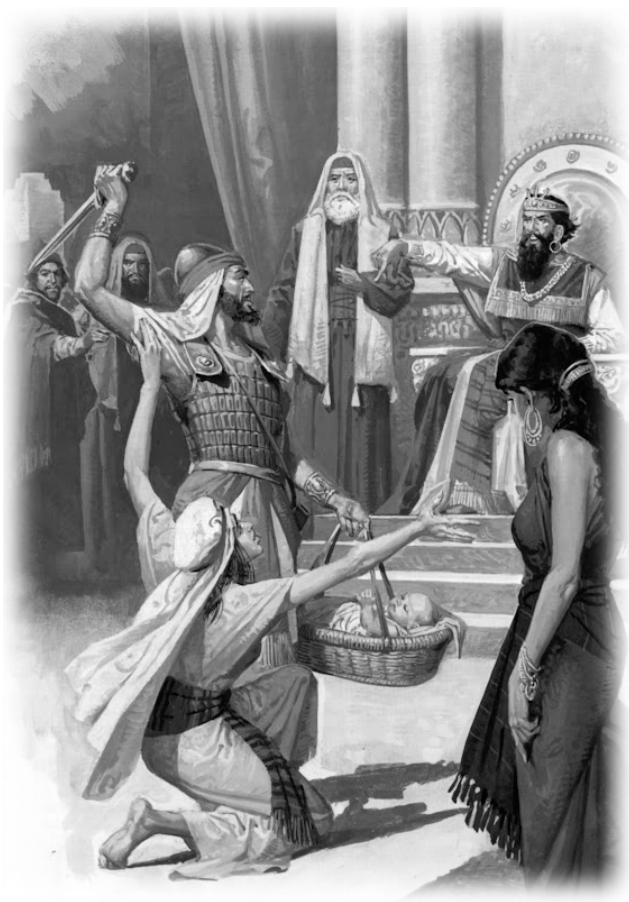


To know wisdom and instruction



Sabbath School Quarterly
April May June 2023

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General Introduction

'To know wisdom and instruction'

Lessons for 2nd Quarter, 2023

General Introduction

'Solomon's divinely inspired wisdom found expression in songs of praise and in many proverbs. "He spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes." 1 Kings 4:32, 33.

In the proverbs of Solomon are outlined principles of holy living and high endeavour, principles that are heaven-born and that lead to godliness, principles that should govern every act of life. It was the wide dissemination of these principles, and the recognition of God as the One to whom all praise and honour belong, that made Solomon's early reign a time of moral uplift as well as of material prosperity.

"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom," he wrote, "and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her." Proverbs 3:13-18.

"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding." Proverbs 4:7. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Psalm 111:10. "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate." Proverbs 8:13.


Prophets and Kings pages 33-34.

Compiler's Note: The compilation of these lessons was the result of much hard work over several years by two faithful servants of God, who feel that much wisdom, needed in these last days, is to be discovered by studying the book of Proverbs. The decision to include 'thought questions' to make personal applications of the wisdom found in this book was theirs.

These lessons are largely their own work, my part being limited, first, to editing them into the format normally used in these lessons, second, in adapting them to fit more closely the overall mission of the Truth for Today Sabbath School lessons, which is 'to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.' and, third, in ensuring at times that the questions posed are answered more definitely by the Bible verses proposed.

Lesson 1

'All is Vanity'

 **MEMORY VERSE:** 'Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.' Ecclesiastes 12:13.

 **STUDY HELP:** Prophets and Kings, pages 75-86.

 **LESSON SCRIPTURE:** 1 Kings 11:1-4.

 **LESSON AIM:** To understand why life without God is vanity.

Introduction

'Age after age, the curiosity of men has led them to seek for the tree of knowledge; and often they think they are plucking fruit most essential, when, like Solomon's research, they find it altogether vanity and nothingness in comparison with that science of true holiness which will open to them the gates of the city of God. The human ambition has been seeking for that kind of knowledge that will bring to them glory and self-exaltation and supremacy. Thus Adam and Eve were worked upon by Satan until God's restraint was snapped asunder, and their education under the teacher of lies began in order that they might have the knowledge which God had refused them, to know the consequence of transgression.' SDA Bible Commentary, volume 1, page 1083.

1. Who wrote the book of Ecclesiastes? Ecclesiastes 1:1.

NOTE: 'The book of Ecclesiastes was written by Solomon in his old age, after he had fully proved that all the pleasures earth is able to give are empty and unsatisfying. He there shows how impossible it is for the vanities of the world to meet the longings of the soul. His conclusion is that it is wisdom to enjoy with gratitude the good gifts of God, and to do right; for all our works will be brought into judgment. Solomon's autobiography is a mournful one. He gives us the history of his search for happiness. He engaged in intellectual pursuits; he gratified his love for pleasure; he carried out his schemes of commercial enterprise. He was surrounded by the fascinating splendour of court life. All that the carnal heart could desire was at his command; yet he sums up his experience in this sad record: "I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge. And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit. For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." Ecclesiastes 1:16-18.' Health Reformer, June, 1878.

2. What did the lessons did life teach Solomon? Ecclesiastes 1:2-4, 13-14.

NOTE: 'Solomon had great learning; but his wisdom was foolishness; for he did not know how to stand in moral independence, free from sin, in the strength of a character moulded after the divine similitude. Solomon has told us the result of his research, his painstaking efforts, his persevering inquiry. He pronounces his wisdom altogether vanity.' Review & Herald, April 5, 1906.

‘3. Do money and the things of this world bring happiness? Ecclesiastes 1:14.

NOTE: 'Solomon sat upon a throne of ivory, the steps of which were of solid gold, flanked by six golden lions. His eyes rested upon highly cultivated and beautiful gardens just before him. Those grounds were visions of loveliness, arranged to resemble, as far as possible, the Garden of Eden. Scenes of revelry, music, sports, and games were arranged for his diversion at an extravagant expenditure of money. But all this did not bring happiness to the king. He sat upon his magnificent throne, his frowning countenance dark with despair. Dissipation had left its impress upon his once fair and intellectual face. He was sadly changed from the youthful Solomon.' SDA Bible Commentary, volume 3, page 1165.

4. What counsel had God given to stop kings from falling into apostasy? Deuteronomy 17:15-20.

NOTE: 'Hundreds of years before Solomon came to the throne, the Lord, foreseeing the perils that would beset those who might be chosen as rulers of Israel, gave Moses instruction for their guidance. Directions were given that he who should sit on the throne of Israel should "write him a copy" of the statutes of Jehovah "in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites." "It shall be with him," the Lord said, "and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.'" Deuteronomy 17:18-20.' Prophets and Kings, page 52.

5. What was one of the underlying causes of Solomon's fall? 1 Kings 3:1 first part.

NOTE: 'In seeking to strengthen his relations with the powerful kingdom lying to the southward of Israel, Solomon ventured upon forbidden ground. Satan knew the results that would attend obedience; and during the earlier years of Solomon's reign, years glorious because of the wisdom, the beneficence, and the uprightness of the king, he sought to bring in influences that would insidiously undermine Solomon's loyalty to principle and cause him to separate from God. That the enemy was successful in this effort, we know from the record: "Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the City of David." 1 Kings 3:1.' Prophets and Kings, page 53.

6. How did Solomon seek to carry out the Lord's purpose in his own way and what command did he disregard? 2 Corinthians 6:14.

NOTE: 'But Solomon had begun to lose sight of the Source of his power and glory. As inclination gained the ascendancy over reason, self-confidence increased, and he sought to carry out the Lord's purpose in his own way. He reasoned that political and commercial alliances with the surrounding nations would bring these nations to a knowledge of the true God; and he entered into unholy alliance with nation after nation. Often these alliances were sealed by marriages with heathen princesses. The commands of Jehovah were set aside for the customs of surrounding peoples.' Prophets and Kings, page 54.

THOUGHT QUESTION: How can we avoid making the mistake of trying to carry out the

LESSON 1

Lord's purpose in our own way?

7. What was the result of Solomon's course of action? 1 Kings 11:3-5. See also Nehemiah 13:23-26.

NOTE: 'Solomon flattered himself that his wisdom and the power of his example would lead his wives from idolatry to the worship of the true God, and also that the alliances thus formed would draw the nations round about into close touch with Israel. Vain hope! Solomon's mistake in regarding himself as strong enough to resist the influence of heathen associates was fatal. And fatal, too, the deception that led him to hope that notwithstanding a disregard of God's law on his part, others might be led to revere and obey its sacred precepts.' Prophets and Kings, page 54.

8. What else contributed to Solomon's apostasy? 2 Chronicles 1:15.

NOTE: 'Wealth, with all its attendant temptations, came in Solomon's day to an increasingly large number of people; but the fine gold of character was dimmed and marred. So gradual was Solomon's apostasy that before he was aware of it; he had wandered far from God. Almost imperceptibly he began to trust less and less in divine guidance and blessing, and to put confidence in his own strength. Little by little he withheld from God that unswerving obedience which was to make Israel a peculiar people, and he conformed more and more closely to the customs of the surrounding nations. Yielding to the temptations incident to his success and his honoured position, he forgot the Source of his prosperity. An ambition to excel all other nations in power and grandeur led him to pervert for selfish purposes the heavenly gifts hitherto employed for the glory of God. The money, which should have been held in sacred trust for the benefit of the worthy poor and for the extension of principles of holy living throughout the world, was selfishly absorbed in ambitious projects. Engrossed in an overmastering desire to surpass other nations in outward display, the king overlooked the need of acquiring beauty and perfection of character.' Prophets and Kings, page 55.

9. Why does God's word tell us about trying to serve God and mammon? Matthew 6:24.

NOTE: 'Solomon was endued with wonderful wisdom, but the world drew him away from God. Men today are no stronger than he; they are as prone to yield to the influences that caused his downfall. As God warned Solomon of his danger, so today He warns His children not to imperil their souls by affinity with the world. "Come out from among them," He pleads, "and be ye separate, . . . and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Corinthians 6:17, 18. In the midst of prosperity lurks danger. Throughout the ages, riches and honour have ever been attended with peril to humility and spirituality. It is not the empty cup that we have difficulty in carrying; it is the cup full to the brim that must be carefully balanced. Affliction and adversity may cause sorrow, but it is prosperity that is most dangerous to spiritual life. Unless the human subject is in constant submission to the will of God, unless he is sanctified by the truth, prosperity will surely arouse the natural inclination to presumption." Prophets and Kings, page 59.

10. After Solomon had tried the ways of the world and found them to be all vanity, what conclusion did he come to? Ecclesiastes 12:13.

NOTE: 'He [Solomon] gives us the history of his search for happiness. He engaged in intellectual pursuits; he gratified his love for pleasure; he carried out his schemes of commercial enterprise. He was surrounded by the fascinating splendour of court life. But all this did not bring happiness to the king. Dissipation had left its impress upon his once fair and intellectual face. He was sadly changed from the youthful Solomon. His brow was furrowed with care and unhappiness. His lips were prepared to break forth into reproaches at the slightest deviation from his wishes. His shattered nerves and wasted frame showed the result of violating Nature's laws. He confessed to a wasted life, an unsuccessful chase after happiness. The way to true happiness remains the same in all ages. Patient continuance in well-doing will lead to honour, happiness, and eternal life.' *My Life Today*, page 167.

11. We can search for all kinds of wisdom, but what is really the most important thing and where do we find it? Ecclesiastes 12:13.

NOTE: 'In the Bible the whole duty of man is defined. Solomon says, "Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." The will of God is revealed in His written word, and this is the essential knowledge. Human wisdom is a help but it is not positively necessary to know these things. The wayfaring man may find the pathway cast up for the ransomed to walk in, and there will be no excuse found for any one who perishes through misapprehension of the Scriptures. In the Bible every vital principle is declared, every duty made plain, every obligation made evident. The whole duty of man is summed up by the Saviour. He says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Fundamentals of Christian Education, pages 186 and 187.

12. What should we always remember? Ecclesiastes 12:14.

NOTE: 'Every man's work passes in review before God and is registered for faithfulness or unfaithfulness. Opposite each name in the books of heaven is entered with terrible exactness every wrong word, every selfish act, every unfulfilled duty, and every secret sin, with every artful dissembling. Heaven-sent warnings or reproofs neglected, wasted moments, unimproved opportunities, the influence exerted for good or for evil, with its far-reaching results, all are chronicled by the recording angel. The law of God is the standard by which the characters and the lives of men will be tested in the judgment. Says the wise man: "Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment." Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14. The apostle James admonishes his brethren: "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." James 2:12.' *Great Controversy*, page 482.

Lesson 2

'Diligent in his business'

🗨️ MEMORY VERSE: 'Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.' Proverbs 22:29.

📖 STUDY HELP: Education, page 135-145.

LESSON 2

 LESSON SCRIPTURE: Romans 12:4-11.

 LESSON AIM: To teach how we should manage our financial affairs in God's way.

Introduction

'There is no branch of legitimate business for which the Bible does not afford an essential preparation. Its principles of diligence, honesty, thrift, temperance, and purity are the secret of true success. These principles, as set forth in the book of Proverbs, constitute a treasury of practical wisdom. Where can the merchant, the artisan, the director of men in any department of business, find better maxims for himself or for his employees than are found in these words of the wise man.' The Adventist Home, page 391.

1. Who really is the owner of everything? Psalm 24:1.

NOTE: 'That which lies at the foundation of business integrity and of true success is the recognition of God's ownership. The Creator of all things, He is the original proprietor. We are His stewards. All that we have is a trust from Him, to be used according to His direction. This is an obligation that rests upon every human being. It has to do with the whole sphere of human activity. Whether we recognise it or not, we are stewards, supplied from God with talents and facilities, and placed in the world to do a work appointed by Him.' Education, page 137.

2. Should we do our work diligently? Proverbs 22:29. See also Proverbs 14:23. Consider Ecclesiastes 9:10.

NOTE: 'The many admonitions to diligence found in both the Old and the New Testament plainly indicate the intimate relation existing between our habits of life and our religious feelings and practices. The human mind and body are so constituted that plenty of exercise is necessary in order to a proper development of all the faculties. While many are too much engaged in worldly business, others go to the opposite extreme and do not labour sufficiently to support themselves or those dependent upon them. --- is one of this class. While he occupies the position of husband to his family he is not this in reality. The heaviest responsibilities and burdens he allows to rest upon his wife, while he indulges in careless indolence or busies himself about small matters that tell little for the support of his family. He will sit for hours and chat with his sons or his neighbours upon matters of no great consequence. He takes things easy and enjoys himself while the wife and mother does the work which must be done to prepare food to eat and clothes to wear. This brother is a poor man and always will be a burden to society unless he asserts his God-given privilege and becomes a man.' Testimonies, volume 5, page 178.

3. To what does lack of diligence lead? Proverbs 10:4. Consider Proverbs 6:10-11.

NOTE: 'The religion you profess makes it as much your duty to employ your time during the six working days as to attend church on the Sabbath. You are not diligent in business. You let hours, days, and even weeks pass without accomplishing anything. The very best sermon you could preach to the world would be to show a decided reformation in your life, and provide for your own family. Says the apostle: "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."' Testimonies, volume

5, page 179.

4. What is the outcome of hard work? Proverbs 28:19. Consider Genesis 3:17-19.

NOTE: 'What you need, my brother, is active exercise. Every feature of your countenance, every faculty of your mind, is indicative of this. You do not love hard work nor to earn your bread by the sweat of your brow. But this is God's ordained plan in the economy of life.' Testimonies volume 5, page 181.

5. What are we told concerning those who amass riches by dishonest means? Proverbs 21:6.

NOTE 'The psalmist's words, "The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver" (Psalm 119:72), state that which is true from other than a religious point of view. They state an absolute truth and one that is recognised in the business world. Even in this age of passion for money getting, when competition is so sharp and methods are so unscrupulous, it is still widely acknowledged that, for a young man starting in life, integrity, diligence, temperance, purity, and thrift constitute a better capital than any amount of mere money.' Education, page 137.

6. What are we told about those who seek to get rich quickly? Proverbs 28:20, 22. Consider Proverbs 13:11.

NOTE 'Many rich men have obtained their wealth by close deal, by advantaging themselves and disadvantaging their poorer fellow-men, or their brethren; and these very men glory in their shrewdness and keenness in a bargain. But the curse of God will rest upon every dollar thus obtained, and upon the increase of it on their hands.' Testimonies, volume 1, page 537.

7. What does God say of those who practise deceit in their business dealings? Proverbs 11:1 first part.

NOTE: 'A false balance is a symbol of all unfair dealing, all devices to conceal selfishness and injustice under an appearance of fairness and equity. God will not in the slightest degree favour such practices. He hates every false way. He abhors all selfishness and covetousness. Unmerciful dealing He will not tolerate, but will repay in kind. God can give prosperity to the working men whose means are acquired honestly. But His curse rests upon all that is gained by selfish practices. When one indulges in selfishness or sharp dealing, he shows that he does not fear the Lord or reverence His name. Those who are connected with God will not only shun all injustice, but will manifest His mercy and goodness toward all with whom they have to do. The Lord will sanction no respect of person; but He will not approve the course of those who make no difference in favour of the poor, the widow, and the orphan.' Our High Calling, page 225.

8. How does God commend those who are faithful in their business dealings? Proverbs 11:1 second part.

NOTE: 'In all business transactions, we are to let the light shine decidedly. There is to be no sharp practice. Everything is to be done with the strictest integrity. Better consent to lose

LESSON 2

something financially than to gain a few shillings by sharp practice. We shall lose nothing in the end by fair dealing. We are to live the law of God in our world, and perfect a character after the divine similitude. All business, with those in the faith and those not in the faith, is to be transacted on square, righteous principles. Everything is to be seen in the light of God's law, everything done without fraud, without duplicity, without one tinge of guile.' Sons & Daughters of God, page 185.

9. What happens if we spend our time talking and not working? Proverbs 14:23.

NOTE: 'Every little while I heard talking and laughing at the wagon. I called out to those who were there, "What are you doing?" They answered, "We could not find any berries, and as we were tired and hungry, we thought we would come to the wagon and take a lunch. After we have rested awhile, we will go out again." "But," said I, "you have brought in nothing as yet. You are eating up all our supplies, without giving us any more. I cannot eat now; there is too much fruit to be picked. You did not find it, because you did not look close enough. It does not hang on the outside of the bushes; you must search for it. True, you cannot pick it by handfuls; but by looking carefully among the green berries, you will find very choice fruit." My small pail was soon full of berries, and I took them to the wagon. Said I, "This is the nicest fruit that I ever picked, and I gathered it near by, while you have wearied yourselves by searching at a distance without success.'" Gospel Workers, page 329.

10. How important is it to learn how to labour properly? Proverbs 13:11.

NOTE: 'At the creation, labour was appointed as a blessing. It meant development, power, happiness. The changed condition of the earth through the curse of sin has brought a change in the conditions of labour; yet though now attended with anxiety, weariness, and pain, it is still a source of happiness and development. And it is a safeguard against temptation. Its discipline places a check on self-indulgence, and promotes industry, purity, and firmness. Thus it becomes a part of God's great plan for our recovery from the Fall. The youth should be led to see the true dignity of labour. Show them that God is a constant worker. All things in nature do their allotted work. Action pervades the whole creation, and in order to fulfil our mission we, too, must be active.' Education, page 214.

11. Why is it important to avoid debt? Proverbs 22:7.

NOTE: 'Many poor families are poor because they spend their money as soon as they receive it. You must see that one should not manage his affairs in a way that will incur debt. When one becomes involved in debt, he is in one of Satan's nets, which he sets for souls. Abstracting and using money for any purpose, before it is earned, is a snare. You ought not to allow yourself to become financially embarrassed, for the fact that you are in debt weakens your faith and tends to discourage you; and even the thought of it makes you nearly wild. You need to cut down your expenses and strive to supply this deficiency in your character. You can and should make determined efforts to bring under control your disposition to spend means beyond your income. The world has a right to expect strict integrity in those who profess to be Bible Christians. By one man's indifference in regard to paying his just dues, all our people are in danger of being regarded as unreliable. Those who make any pretensions to godliness should adorn the doctrine they profess, and not give occasion for the truth to be reviled through their inconsiderate course of action. "Owe no man any thing," says the apostle. Be determined never to incur another debt. Deny yourself a thousand things rather than run in

debt. This has been the curse of your life, getting into debt. Avoid it as you would the smallpox. Make a solemn covenant with God that by His blessing you will pay your debts and then owe no man anything if you live on porridge and bread. It is so easy in preparing your table to throw out of your pocket twenty-five cents for extras. Take care of the pennies, and the dollars will take care of themselves. It is the mites here and the mites there that are spent for this, that, and the other that soon run up into dollars. Deny self at least while you are walled in with debts. Do not falter, be discouraged, or turn back. Deny your taste, deny the indulgence of appetite, save your pence, and pay your debts. Work them off as fast as possible. When you can stand forth a free man again, owing no man anything, you will have achieved a great victory.' The Adventist Home, pages 392-393.

12. What sort of life insurance policy should we have? 2 Peter 1:10,11.

NOTE: "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 1:10, 11. Here a life insurance policy is offered us which insures for us eternal life in the kingdom of God. I ask you to study these words of the apostle Peter. There is understanding and intelligence in every sentence. By taking hold upon the Lifegiver, who gave His life for us, we receive eternal life. We are each deciding our eternal destiny, and it rests wholly with us whether we shall gain eternal life. Will we live the lessons given in the Word of God, Christ's great lesson book?' My Life Today, page 339.


THOUGHT QUESTION: Should we as Christians have life insurance policies?

13. What has God asked us to be faithful in giving back to Him? Proverbs 3:9-10. Compare Malachi 3:8.

NOTE: 'God has a claim on us and all that we have. His claim is paramount to every other. And in acknowledgment of this claim, He bids us render to Him a fixed proportion of all that He gives us. The tithe is this specified portion. By the Lord's direction it was consecrated to Him in the earliest times. When God delivered Israel from Egypt to be a special treasure unto Himself, He taught them to devote a tithe of their possessions to the service of the tabernacle. This was a special offering, for a special work. All that remained of their property was God's, and was to be used to His glory. But the tithe was set apart for the support of those who ministered in the sanctuary. It was to be given from the first fruits of all the increase, and, with gifts and offerings, it provided ample means for supporting the ministry of the gospel for that time.' Counsels on Stewardship, page 71.

Lesson 3

'It is not good that the man should be alone'

 **MEMORY VERSE:** 'Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.' Genesis 2:24.

 **STUDY HELP:** Adventist Home, pages 114-120.

 **LESSON SCRIPTURE:** Ephesians 5:22-33.

LESSON 3

🔗 LESSON AIM: To show how husbands and wives should ideally relate to each other.

Introduction

'We must have the Spirit of God, or we can never have harmony in the home. The wife, if she has the spirit of Christ, will be careful of her words; she will control her spirit, she will be submissive, and yet will not feel that she is a bonds slave, but a companion to her husband. If the husband is a servant of God, he will not lord it over his wife; he will not be arbitrary and exacting. We cannot cherish home affection with too much care; for the home, if the Spirit of the Lord dwells there, is a type of heaven. If one errs, the other will exercise Christlike forbearance and not draw coldly away. Neither the husband nor the wife should attempt to exercise over the other an arbitrary control. Do not try to compel each other to yield to your wishes. You cannot do this and retain each other's love. Be kind, patient, and forbearing, considerate, and courteous. By the grace of God you can succeed in making each other happy, as in your marriage vow you promised to do.' The Adventist Home, page 118.

1. What should a virtuous wife be like? Proverbs 31:10-12. Read Proverbs 31:10-31.

NOTE: 'Let a young man seek one to stand by his side who is fitted to bear her share of life's burdens, one whose influence will ennoble and refine him, and who will make him happy in her love. "A prudent wife is from the Lord." "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her. . . . She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life." "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her," saying, "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all." He who gains such a wife "findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord." Proverbs 19:14; 31:11, 12, 26-29; 18:22.' Ministry of Healing, page 359.

2. What other qualities is it useful that a woman should have? Proverbs 31:25-28.

NOTE: 'A woman who has been taught to take care of herself is also fitted to take care of others. She will never be a drug in the family or in society. When fortune frowns, there will be a place for her somewhere, a place where she can earn an honest living and assist those who are dependent upon her. Woman should be trained to some business whereby she can gain a livelihood if necessary. Passing over other honourable employments, every girl should learn to take charge of the domestic affairs of home, should be a cook, a housekeeper, a seamstress. She should understand all those things which it is necessary that the mistress of a house should know, whether her family are rich or poor. Then, if reverses come, she is prepared for any emergency; she is, in a manner, independent of circumstances. A knowledge of domestic duties is beyond price to every woman. There are families without number whose happiness is wrecked by the inefficiency of the wife and mother. It is not so important that our daughters learn painting, fancywork, music, or even "the cube root", or the figures of rhetoric, as that they learn how to cut, make, and mend their own clothing, or to prepare food in a wholesome and palatable manner. When a little girl is nine or ten years old, she should be required to take her regular share in household duties, as she is able, and should be held responsible for the manner in which she does her work. That was a wise father who, when asked what he intended to do with his daughters, replied, "I intend to apprentice them to their excellent mother, that they may learn the art of improving time, and be fitted to become wives and

mothers, heads of families, and useful members of society.” The Adventist Home, page 91.

3. What blessing do you get if you choose the right wife? Proverbs 19:14, last part; Proverbs 18:22; Proverbs 12:4 first part.

NOTE 'Woman should fill the position which God originally designed for her, as her husband's equal. The world needs mothers who are mothers not merely in name but in every sense of the word. We may safely say that the distinctive duties of woman are more sacred, more holy, than those of man. Let woman realise the sacredness of her work and in the strength and fear of God take up her life mission. Let her educate her children for usefulness in this world and for a home in the better world. The king upon his throne has no higher work than has the mother. The mother is queen of her household. She has in her power the moulding of her children's characters, that they may be fitted for the higher, immortal life. An angel could not ask for a higher mission; for in doing this work she is doing service for God. Let her only realise the high character of her task, and it will inspire her with courage. Let her realise the worth of her work and put on the whole armour of God, that she may resist the temptation to conform to the world's standard. Her work is for time and for eternity.' The Adventist Home, page 231.

4. What happens if you marry the wrong woman (person)? Proverbs 12:4, last part; Proverbs 21:9, 19; Proverbs 25:24; Proverbs 27:15.

NOTE: 'Just such unsanctified marriages are filling up the ranks of Sabbath-keepers. God wants His children to be happy, and, if they would learn of Him, He would save them from the daily misery which comes in consequence of these unhappy unions. Many marriages can only be productive of misery; and yet the minds of the youth run in this channel because Satan leads them there, making them believe that they must be married in order to be happy, when they have not the ability to control themselves or support a family.' Testimonies, volume 5, pages 122-123.

'An unsanctified wife is the greatest curse that a minister can have. Satan is ever at work to dishearten and lead astray ministers whom God has chosen to preach the truth. The most effectual way in which he can work is through home influences, through unconsecrated companions.' The Adventist Home, page 355.

Having an unsanctified wife or husband will be a great curse to any Christian.

5. How do we solve the problems mentioned in Proverbs 21:9, 19, Proverbs 25:24; Proverbs 27:15?

NOTE: 'I have received a letter from your husband. I would say that there is only one thing for which a husband may lawfully separate from his wife or a wife from her husband, and that is adultery. If your dispositions are not congenial, would it not be for the glory of God for you to change these dispositions? A husband and wife should cultivate respect and affection for each other. They should guard the spirit, the words, and the actions so that nothing will be said or done to irritate or annoy. Each is to have a care for the other, doing all in their power to strengthen their mutual affection. I tell you both to seek the Lord. In love and kindness do your duty one to the other. The husband should cultivate industrious habits, doing his best to support his family. This will lead his wife to have respect for him. My sister, you cannot please God by maintaining your present attitude. Forgive your husband. He is your husband,

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and you will be blessed in striving to be a dutiful, affectionate wife. Let the law of kindness be on your lips. You can and must change your attitude. You must both study how you can assimilate, instead of differing, with one another. The use of mild, gentle methods will make a surprising difference in your lives.' *The Adventist Home*, page 345.

6. What counsel does Paul give to those married to unbelievers? 1 Corinthians 7:13-15.

NOTE: The Bible clearly states that it is wrong for a believer to marry an unbeliever, and the example of Solomon himself shows all too clearly the dangers of this unwise course of action. But Paul considers the case of the believer whose spouse does not believe. Possible scenarios include the wife or husband who has become a believer after their marriage, or a believer whose spouse has apostatised. How is the believer to cope in a home divided in this way? Paul is very clear that the believer should not be the one that breaks up such a marriage. The influence of the believing partner on the unbeliever may be for good. But if the marriage is broken by the unbeliever, the believer is not to contest this decision. As Paul says: the [believing] brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases.

7. What was God's purpose in giving us the blessing of marriage? Genesis 2:18.

NOTE: 'God Himself gave Adam a companion. He provided "an help meet for him," a helper corresponding to him, one who was fitted to be his companion, and who could be one with him in love and sympathy.' *The Adventist Home*, page 25.

8. How does Paul expand on Genesis 2:18? 1 Corinthians 11:8-9.

NOTE: 'Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him. A part of man, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, she was his second self; showing the close union and the affectionate attachment that should exist in this relation. "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it." "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one." ' *The Adventist Home*, page 25.

9. How did sin change the relationship that God originally gave husbands and wives? Genesis 3:16.

NOTE 'Eve was told of the sorrow and pain that must henceforth be her portion. And the Lord said, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." In the creation God had made her the equal of Adam. Had they remained obedient to God, in harmony with His great law of love, they would ever have been in harmony with each other; but sin had brought discord, and now their union could be maintained and harmony preserved only by submission on the part of the one or the other. Eve had been the first in transgression; and she had fallen into temptation by separating from her companion, contrary to the divine direction. It was by her solicitation that Adam sinned, and she was now placed in subjection to her husband. Had the principles joined in the law of God been cherished by the fallen race, this sentence, though growing out of the results of sin, would have proved a blessing to them; but man's abuse of the supremacy thus given him has too often rendered the lot of woman very bitter and made her life a burden. Eve had been perfectly happy by her husband's side in her Eden home; but, like restless modern Eves, she was flattered with the hope of entering a

higher sphere than that which God had assigned her. In attempting to rise above her original position, she fell far below it. A similar result will be reached by all who are unwilling to take up cheerfully their life duties in accordance with God's plan. In their efforts to reach positions for which He has not fitted them, many are leaving vacant the place where they might be a blessing. In their desire for a higher sphere, many have sacrificed true womanly dignity and nobility of character, and have left undone the very work that Heaven appointed them.' Patriarchs and Prophets, pages 58-59.

10. How were husbands affected by sin? Genesis 3:17-19.

NOTE: 'To Adam the Lord declared: "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it was thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." It was not the will of God that the sinless pair should know aught of evil. He had freely given them the good, and had withheld the evil. But, contrary to His command, they had eaten of the forbidden tree, and now they would continue to eat of it, they would have the knowledge of evil, all the days of their life. From that time the race would be afflicted by Satan's temptations. Instead of the happy labour heretofore appointed them, anxiety and toil were to be their lot. They would be subject to disappointment, grief, and pain, and finally to death.' Patriarchs and Prophets, page 59.

THOUGHT QUESTION: Why do the Proverbs talk about the duties of wives but say nothing about the duties of husbands?

11. What is the duty of the husband? Ephesians 5:25, 28-31.

NOTE: 'Husbands should study the pattern and seek to know what is meant by the symbol presented in Ephesians, the relation Christ sustains to the church. The husband is to be as a saviour in his family. Will he stand in his noble, God-given manhood, ever seeking to uplift his wife and children? Will he breathe about him a pure, sweet atmosphere? Will he not as assiduously cultivate the love of Jesus, making it an abiding principle in his home, as he will assert his claims to authority? Let every husband and father study to understand the words of Christ, not in a one-sided manner, merely dwelling upon the subjection of the wife to her husband, but in the light of the cross of Calvary, study as to his own position in the family circle. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." Jesus gave Himself up to die upon the cross in order that He might cleanse and keep us from all sin and pollution by the influence of the Holy Spirit.' The Adventist Home, page 117.

12. How should the husband use his God-given headship? Colossians 3:18-19.


NOTE: "When husbands require the complete subjection of their wives, declaring that women have no voice or will in the family, but must render entire submission, they place their wives in a position contrary to the Scripture. In interpreting the Scripture in this way, they do violence to the design of the marriage institution. This interpretation is made simply that they may exercise arbitrary rule, which is not their prerogative. But we read on, "Husbands, love

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your wives, and be not bitter against them.” Why should the husband be bitter against his wife? If the husband has found her erring and full of faults, bitterness of spirit will not remedy the evil.’ The Adventist Home, page 116.

‘The Lord Jesus has not been correctly represented in His relation to the church by many husbands in their relation to their wives, for they do not keep the way of the Lord. They declare that their wives must be subject to them in everything. But it was not the design of God that the husband should have control, as head of the house, when he himself does not submit to Christ. He must be under the rule of Christ that he may represent the relation of Christ to the church. If he is a coarse, rough, boisterous, egotistical, harsh, and overbearing man, let him never utter the word that the husband is the head of the wife, and that she must submit to him in everything; for he is not the Lord, he is not the husband in the true significance of the term.’ The Adventist Home, page 117.

Lesson 4 'Pride goeth before destruction'

 **MEMORY VERSE:** 'Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.' Proverbs 16:18-19.

 **STUDY HELP:** Ye Shall Receive Power, page 54.

 **LESSON SCRIPTURE:** Philippians 2:1-11.

 **LESSON AIM:** To look at how we can overcome pride, one of the most common of human sins.

Introduction

'The evil that led to Peter's fall and that shut out the Pharisee from communion with God is proving the ruin of thousands today. There is nothing so offensive to God or so dangerous to the human soul as pride and self-sufficiency. Of all sins it is the most hopeless, the most incurable.' Christ's Object Lessons, page 154.

1. What will pride eventually lead to? Proverbs 16:18.

NOTE: 'In self-love, self-exaltation, and pride there is great weakness; but in humility there is great strength. Our true dignity is not maintained when we think most of ourselves, but when God is in all our thoughts and our hearts are all aglow with love to our Redeemer and love to our fellow men. Simplicity of character and lowliness of heart will give happiness, while self-conceit will bring discontent, repining, and continual disappointment. It is learning to think less of ourselves and more of making others happy that will bring to us divine strength. In our separation from God, in our pride and darkness, we are constantly seeking to elevate ourselves, and we forget that lowliness of mind is power. Our Saviour's power was not in a strong array of sharp words that would pierce through the very soul; it was His gentleness and His plain, unassuming manners that made Him a conqueror of hearts. Pride and self-importance, when compared with lowliness and humility, are indeed weakness. We are invited to learn of Him who was meek and lowly of heart; then we shall

experience that rest and peace so much to be desired.' Testimonies, volume 3, pages 476-477.

2. What is the better trait of character to have? Proverbs 16:19.

NOTE: 'Humility, self-denial, benevolence, and the payment of a faithful tithe, these show that the grace of God is working in the heart. The greatest Teacher, the greatest Physician the world has ever known, gave many lessons on the need of humility. These lessons His followers are to bring into the practical life. They are to live lives of self-denial and self-sacrifice. To many this will be a new experience, but on it their salvation depends. "Whosoever will come after Me," Christ said, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." Mark 8:34. Following Christ produces the virtues of Christ's character. Humility is a precious grace, peculiarly pleasing to God. Christ says, "Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Matthew 11:29. Those who follow Christ will overcome temptation and will receive the glorious reward of eternal life. And to Christ they will render all the praise and glory.' Counsels on Health, page 590.

3. If we want true honour what should we be like? Proverbs 18:12, last part.

NOTE: 'Before honour is humility. To fill a high place before men, Heaven chooses the worker who, like John the Baptist, takes a lowly place before God. The most childlike disciple is the most efficient in labour for God. The heavenly intelligences can co-operate with him who is seeking, not to exalt self, but to save souls. He who feels most deeply his need of divine aid will plead for it; and the Holy Spirit will give unto him glimpses of Jesus that will strengthen and uplift the soul. From communion with Christ he will go forth to work for those who are perishing in their sins. He is anointed for his mission; and he succeeds where many of the learned and intellectually wise would fail. But when men exalt themselves, feeling that they are a necessity for the success of God's great plan, the Lord causes them to be set aside. It is made evident that the Lord is not dependent upon them. The work does not stop because of their removal from it, but goes forward with greater power. It was not enough for the disciples of Jesus to be instructed as to the nature of His kingdom. What they needed was a change of heart that would bring them into harmony with its principles. Calling a little child to Him, Jesus set him in the midst of them; then tenderly folding the little one in His arms He said, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." The simplicity, the self-forgetfulness, and the confiding love of a little child are the attributes that Heaven values. These are the characteristics of real greatness.' Desire of Ages, pages 436-437.

4. What characteristic do the truly humble possess? Proverbs 11:2, last part.

NOTE: 'Obtain an experimental knowledge of God by wearing the yoke of Christ. He gives wisdom to the meek and lowly, enabling them to judge of what is truth, bringing to light the why and wherefore, pointing out the result of certain actions. The Holy Spirit teaches the student of the Scriptures to judge all things by the standard of righteousness and truth and justice. The divine revelation supplies him with the knowledge that he needs. And the needed knowledge will be given to all who come to Christ, receiving and practising His teachings, making His words a part of their lives. Those who place themselves under the instruction of the great Medical Missionary, to be workers together with Him, will have a knowledge that the world, with all its traditionary lore, cannot supply. Make the Bible the man of your

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counsel. Your acquaintance with it will grow rapidly if you keep your mind free from the rubbish of the world. The more the Bible is studied, the deeper will be your knowledge of God. The truths of His word will be written in your soul, making an ineffaceable impression.' Counsels on Health. page 371.

5. What sort of men can God use? Proverbs 15:33. Consider Judges 6:14-16.

NOTE: 'The leader whom God chose to overthrow the Midianites occupied no prominent position in Israel. He was not a ruler, a priest, or a Levite. He thought himself the least in his father's house. But God saw in him a man of courage and integrity. He was distrustful of himself and willing to follow the guidance of the Lord. God does not always choose for His work men of the greatest talents, but He selects those whom He can best use. "Before honour is humility." Proverbs 15:33. The Lord can work most effectually through those who are most sensible of their own insufficiency, and who will rely upon Him as their leader and source of strength. He will make them strong by uniting their weakness to His might, and wise by connecting their ignorance with His wisdom. If they would cherish true humility, the Lord could do much more for His people; but there are few who can be trusted with any large measure of responsibility or success without becoming self-confident and forgetful of their dependence upon God. This is why, in choosing the instruments for His work, the Lord passes by those whom the world honours as great, talented, and brilliant. They are too often proud and self-sufficient. They feel competent to act without counsel from God.' Patriarchs & Prophets, pages 553-554.

6. Where did pride originate? Ezekiel 28:14-19; Isaiah 14:12-14.

NOTE: 'Little by little Lucifer came to indulge the desire for self-exaltation. The Scripture says, "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness." Ezekiel 28:17. "Thou hast said in thine heart, . . . I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. . . . I will be like the Most High." Isaiah 14:13, 14. Though all his glory was from God, this mighty angel came to regard it as pertaining to himself. Not content with his position, though honoured above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator. Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of all created beings, it was his endeavour to secure their service and loyalty to himself. And coveting the glory with which the infinite Father had invested His Son, this prince of angels aspired to power that was the prerogative of Christ alone.' Patriarchs & Prophets, page 35.

7. What important principle did Paul seek to instil in those he brought to Christ? Philippians 2:3.

NOTE: 'Many are cherishing an unholy desire for the supremacy. Many love to be flattered and are jealously watching for slights or neglect. There is a hard, unforgiving spirit. There is envy, strife, emulation. Nothing is more essential to communion with God than the most profound humility. "I dwell," says the High and Holy One, "with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit." While you are so eagerly striving to be first, remember that you will be last in the favour of God if you fail to cherish a meek and lowly spirit. Pride of heart will cause many to fail where they might have made a success. "Before honour is humility," "and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit." "When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted

himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died.” “Many are called, but few are chosen.” Many hear the invitation of mercy, are tested and proved; but few are sealed with the seal of the living God. Few will humble themselves as a little child, that they may enter the kingdom of heaven. Few receive the grace of Christ with self-abasement, with a deep and permanent sense of their unworthiness.’ Testimonies, volume 5, page 50.

8. What lesson must we learn about the dangers of pride and the blessings that result from humility? Proverbs 29:23.

NOTE: ‘Man may lift himself up in pride and boast of his power, but in an instant God can bring him to nothingness. It is Satan’s work to lead men to glorify themselves with their entrusted talents. Every man through whom God works will have to learn that the living, ever-present, ever-acting God is supreme, and has lent him talents to use, an intellect to originate; a heart to be the seat of His throne; affections to flow out in blessing to all with whom he shall come in contact, a conscience through which the Holy Spirit can convict him of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.’ Youth’s Instructor, March 28th 1905.

9. Why is it unwise to be boastful? Proverbs 27:1-2.

NOTE: “The love of praise has corrupted many hearts. . . It is a wicked pride that delights in the vanity of one’s own works, that boasts of one’s excellent qualities, seeking to make others seem inferior in order to exalt self, claiming more glory than the cold heart is willing to give to God. The disciples of Christ will heed the Master’s instruction. He has bidden us love one another even as He has loved us. Religion is founded upon love to God, which also leads us to love one another. It is full of gratitude, humility, long-suffering. It is self-sacrificing, forbearing, merciful, and forgiving. It sanctifies the whole life and extends its influence over others.’ Testimonies, volume 4, page 223.

10. What may we do that might lead to pride in others? Proverbs 29:5.

NOTE: ‘All flattery should be put away, for it is Satan’s work to flatter. Poor, weak, fallen men generally think enough of themselves and need no help in this direction. Flattering your ministers is out of place. It perverts the mind and does not lead to meekness and humility; yet men and women love to be praised, and it is too frequently the case that ministers love it. Their vanity is gratified by it, but it has proved a curse to many. Reproof is more to be prized than flattery.’ Testimonies, volume 2, page 338.

11. What does the Bible say is the result of flattery? Proverbs 26:28, last part.

NOTE: Notice how flattery is linked with lying in this verse. Revelation 21:8, Revelation 21:27 and Revelation 22:15 show the abhorrence that the Lord has for lying. Flattery endangers both the flatterer and the one that is flattered.

“Our people are making very dangerous mistakes. We cannot praise and flatter any man without doing him a great wrong; those who do this will meet with serious disappointment. They trust too fully in finite man and not enough in God, who never errs. The eager desire to urge men into public notice is evidence of backsliding from God and of friendship with the world. It is the spirit which characterises the present day. It shows that men have not the mind of Jesus; spiritual blindness and poverty of soul have come upon them. Often persons of

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inferior minds look away from Jesus to a merely human standard, by which they are not made conscious of their own littleness, and hence have an undue estimate of their own capabilities and endowments. There is among us as a people an idolatry of human instrumentalities and mere human talent, and these even of a superficial character. We must die to self and cherish humble, childlike faith. God's people have departed from their simplicity. They have not made God their strength, and they are weak and faint, spiritually." Testimonies, volume 5, page 75.

12. How does God regard pride? Proverbs 16:5.


NOTE: 'God does not regard all sins as of equal magnitude; there are degrees of guilt in His estimation, as well as in that of man; but however trifling this or that wrong act may seem in the eyes of men, no sin is small in the sight of God. Man's judgment is partial, imperfect; but God estimates all things as they really are. The drunkard is despised and is told that his sin will exclude him from heaven; while pride, selfishness, and covetousness too often go unrebuked. But these are sins that are especially offensive to God; for they are contrary to the benevolence of His character, to that unselfish love which is the very atmosphere of the unfallen universe. He who falls into some of the grosser sins may feel a sense of his shame and poverty and his need of the grace of Christ; but pride feels no need, and so it closes the heart against Christ and the infinite blessings He came to give.' Steps to Christ, page 30.

13. What should we do about pride? 1 Peter 5:5-6.

NOTE: 'All who study the life of Christ and practise His teaching will become like Christ. Their influence will be like His. They will reveal soundness of character. They are established in the faith, and will not be overcome by the devil because of vanity and pride. They seek to walk the humble path of obedience, doing the will of God. Their character exerts an influence that tells for the advancement of the cause of God and the healthful purity of His work.' Evangelism, page 315.


Lesson 5

'He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty'

 **MEMORY VERSE:** 'He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.' Proverbs 16:32.

 **STUDY HELP:** Testimonies to the Church, volume 2, pages 421-427.

 **LESSON SCRIPTURE:** Ephesians 4:31-32.

 **LESSON AIM:** To help those who are given to anger to understand their problem and how to overcome it.

Introduction

'Never should we lose control of ourselves. Let us ever keep before us the perfect Pattern. It is a sin to speak impatiently and fretfully or to feel angry, even though we do not speak. We are to walk worthy, giving a right representation of Christ. The speaking of an angry word is like

flint striking flint: it at once kindles wrathful feelings. Never be like a chestnut burr. In the home do not allow yourself to use harsh, rasping words. You should invite the heavenly Guest to come into your home, at the same time making it possible for Him and the heavenly angels to abide with you. You should receive the righteousness of Christ, the sanctification of the Spirit of God, the beauty of holiness, that you may reveal to those around you the Light of life. "He that is slow to anger," says the wise man, "is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city." The man or woman who preserves the balance of the mind when tempted to indulge passion stands higher in the sight of God and heavenly angels than the most renowned general that ever led an army to battle and to victory. Said a celebrated emperor when on his dying bed, "Among all my conquests there is but one which affords me any consolation now, and that is the conquest I have gained over my own turbulent temper." Alexander and Caesar found it easier to subdue a world than to subdue themselves. After conquering nation after nation, they fell, one of them "the victim of intemperance, the other of mad ambition." Child Guidance, page 95.

1. What is the result of anger? Proverbs 30:33. See also Proverbs 29:22.

NOTE: 'Anger, getting touched, stirred up, will never pay. How many prodigals are kept out of the kingdom of God by the unlovely character of those who claim to be Christians? Jealousy, envy, pride, and uncharitable feelings, self-righteousness, easily provoked, thinking evil, harshness, cold, unsympathetic, these are the attributes of Satan.' Fundamentals of Christian Education, page 277.

2. What does anger reveal about the person who becomes angry? Ecclesiastes 7:9.

NOTE: 'Anger rests in the bosom of fools, transforming those who have been made in the image of God, into the image of the evil one.' Signs of the Times, October 19, 1888.

3. How did Jesus regard anger? Matthew 5:21-22. Consider 1 John 3:15.

NOTE: 'It is a sin to cherish anger against any one. Christ looks upon anger as murder. He declares, "I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." God has a controversy with that man. A man may think he has occasion for feeling angry, but his passionate words are a savour of death unto death. He who utters them is under the control of Satan. In heaven his wicked railing is placed in the same list as swearing.' Southern Watchman, January 1, 1903.

4. What admonition did Paul give regarding anger and with what other sins did Paul associate anger? Colossians 3:8.

NOTE: 'When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the light of heaven. No one sees the hand that lifts the burden, or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see creates a new being in the image of God.' Desire of Ages,

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page 173.

5. What value did Solomon place on self-control? Proverbs 16:32.

NOTE: 'Self, the strongest foe man has to meet. The highest evidence of nobility in a Christian is self-control. He who can stand unmoved amid a storm of abuse is one of God's heroes. He who has learned to rule his spirit will rise above the slights, the rebuffs, the annoyances to which we are daily exposed, and these will cease to cast a gloom over his spirit. It is God's purpose that the kingly power of sanctified reason, controlled by divine grace, shall bear sway in the lives of human beings. He who rules his spirit is in possession of this power. The man or woman who preserves the balance of the mind when tempted to indulge passion, stands higher in the sight of God and heavenly angels than the most renowned general that ever led an army to battle and to victory. What young men and women need is Christian heroism. God's Word declares that he that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city. To rule the spirit means to keep self under discipline.'" My Life Today, page 70.

6. How can we have self control in our lives? Galatians 5:22-26.

NOTE: 'Meekness is a fruit of the Spirit, and evidence that we are branches of the living God. The abiding presence of meekness is an unmistakable evidence that we are branches of the True Vine, and are bearing much fruit. It is evidence that we are by faith beholding the King in His beauty and becoming changed into His likeness. Where meekness exists, the natural tendencies are under the control of the Holy Spirit. Meekness is not a species of cowardice. It is the spirit which Christ manifested when suffering injury, when enduring insult and abuse. To be meek is not to surrender our rights; but it is the preservation of self-control under provocation to give way to anger or to the spirit of retaliation.' Signs of the Times, August 22, 1895.

7. How important is prayer if we want a Christlike temper? Matthew 7:7-8.

NOTE: 'Prayer is heaven's ordained means of success in the conflict with sin and the development of Christian character. The divine influences that come in answer to the prayer of faith will accomplish in the soul of the suppliant all for which he pleads. 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; and the promise is, "Ye shall receive.'" Acts of Apostles, page 564.

8. What does he who is angry need to learn? Proverbs 14:29; 19:11. See also James 1:20.

NOTE 'I saw that the Lord had given you light and experience, that you might see the sinfulness of a hasty spirit and control your passions. So surely as you fail to do this, just so surely you will fail of everlasting life. You must overcome this disease of the imagination. You are extremely sensitive, and if a word is spoken favouring an opposite course from that which you have been pursuing, you are hurt. You feel that you are blamed, and that you must defend yourself, save your life; and in your earnest effort to save your life, you lose it. You have a work to do to die to self and to cultivate a spirit of forbearance and patience. Get over the idea that you are not used right, that you are wronged, that somebody wants to crowd or

harm you. You see through false eyes. Satan leads you to take these distorted views of things... You had ever failed to exercise true self-government. You have made efforts; but these efforts have only reached the external, they have not touched the spring of action. Your hasty temper often causes you sincere and painful regret and self-condemnation. This passionate spirit, unless subdued, will increase to a peevish, faultfinding spirit; indeed, this is already upon you in a degree. You will be ready to resent everything. If jostled upon the sidewalk, you will be offended, and a word of complaint will spring to your lips. When driving in the street, if full half the road is not given you, you will feel stirred in a moment. If asked to put yourself out of your course to accommodate others, you will chafe and fret, and feel that your dignity is imposed upon. You will show to all your besetting sin. Your very countenance will indicate an impatient spirit, and your mouth will seem always ready to utter an angry word. In this habit, as in tobacco using, total abstinence is the only sure remedy. An entire change must take place in you. You frequently feel that you must be more guarded. You resolutely say, "I will be more calm and patient;" but in doing this you only touch the evil on the outside; you consent to retain the lion and watch him. You must go further than this. Strength of principle alone can dislodge this destroying foe and bring peace and happiness.' Testimonies, volume 2, page 424.

THOUGHT QUESTION: Our anger will keep us out of heaven. How important is it to overcome this trait of character, and how should we do it? What is the only sure remedy?

9. How can we overcome impatience? Colossians 3:3, 8. Consider Psalm 119:11.

NOTE: 'You have repeatedly said: "I can't keep my temper." "I have to speak." You lack a meek, humble spirit. Self is all alive, and you stand guard continually to preserve it from mortification or insult. Says the apostle: "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Those who are dead to self will not feel so readily and will not be prepared to resist everything which may irritate. Dead men cannot feel. You are not dead. If you were, and your life were hid in Christ, a thousand things which you now notice, and which afflict you, would be passed by as unworthy of notice; you would then be grasping the eternal and would be above the petty trials of this life.' Testimonies, volume 2, page 425.

10. Instead of an impatient spirit what sort of spirit should we have? 1 Peter 3:4.

NOTE: 'If we have the truth, we can afford to be calm and unexcited. Our language should be modest and elevated. The spirit you have cherished within has left its impression upon the countenance. Christ, enthroned in the soul-temple, will efface that fretful, peevish, unhappy look; and as the cloud of witnesses look upon a man reflecting the image of Christ, they will realise that he is surrounded by a pleasant atmosphere. The world will see that amid storms of abuse he stands unmoved, like the lofty cedar. That man is one of God's heroes. He has overcome himself. The largest share of the annoyances of life, its daily corroding cares, its heartaches, its irritation, is the result of a temper uncontrolled. The harmony of the domestic circle is often broken by a hasty word and abusive language. How much better were it left unsaid. One smile of pleasure, one peaceful, approving word spoken in the spirit of meekness, would be a power to soothe, to comfort, and to bless. The government of self is the best government in the world. By putting on the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, ninety-nine out of a hundred of the troubles which so terribly embitter life might be saved. Many excuse their hasty words and passionate tempers by saying: "I am sensitive; I have a hasty

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temper.” This will never heal the wounds made by hasty, passionate words. Some, indeed, are naturally more passionate than others; but this spirit can never harmonize with the Spirit of God. The natural man must die, and the new man, Christ Jesus, take possession of the soul, so that the follower of Jesus may say in verity and truth: “I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” Testimonies to the Church, volume 4, page 348.

11. How bad are hasty words? Proverbs 29:20; 25:28.

NOTE 'In the use of language, there is, perhaps, no error that old and young are more ready to pass over lightly in themselves than hasty, impatient speech. They think it is a sufficient excuse to plead, “I was off my guard, and did not really mean what I said.” But God's word does not treat it lightly. The Scripture says: “Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him.” “He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.” The largest share of life's annoyances, its heartaches, its irritations, is due to uncontrolled temper. In one moment, by hasty, passionate, careless words, may be wrought evil that a whole lifetime's repentance cannot undo. Oh, the hearts that are broken, the friends estranged, the lives wrecked, by the harsh, hasty words of those who might have brought help and healing! In his own strength man cannot rule his spirit. But through Christ he may gain self-control. In His strength he may bring his thoughts and words into subjection to the will of God. The religion of Christ brings the emotions under the control of reason and disciplines the tongue. Under its influence the hasty temper is subdued, and the heart is filled with patience and gentleness. Hold firmly to the One who has all power in heaven and in earth. Though you so often fail to reveal patience and calmness, do not give up the struggle. Resolve again, this time more firmly, to be patient under every provocation. And never take your eyes off your divine Example.' Messages to Young People, pages 134 to 136.

12. How do we turn away wrath? Proverbs 15:1.

NOTE: 'Under a storm of stinging, faultfinding words, keep the mind stayed upon the word of God. Let mind and heart be stored with God's promises. If you are ill-treated or wrongfully accused, instead of returning an angry answer, repeat to yourself the precious promises: “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” Romans 12:21. “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.” Psalm 37:5, 6. “There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.” Luke 12:2. “Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.” Psalm 66:12. We are prone to look to our fellow men for sympathy and uplifting, instead of looking to Jesus.' Ministry of Healing, page 486.

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'And to knowledge temperance'

🗨️ MEMORY VERSE: 'And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.' 1 Corinthians

9:25.

STUDY HELP: Ministry of Healing, pages 325-335.

LESSON SCRIPTURE:

LESSON AIM: To show the danger of unhealthy habits common in the world around us.

Introduction

'True temperance teaches us to abstain entirely from that which is injurious, and to use judiciously only healthful and nutritious articles of food.' Health Reformer, 1st April 1877.
 'The principles of temperance must be carried further than the mere use of spirituous liquors. The use of stimulating and indigestible food is often equally injurious to health, and in many cases sows the seeds of drunkenness. True temperance teaches us to dispense entirely with everything hurtful and to use judiciously that which is healthful. There are few who realise as they should how much their habits of diet have to do with their health, their character, their usefulness in this world, and their eternal destiny. The appetite should ever be in subjection to the moral and intellectual powers. The body should be servant to the mind, and not the mind to the body.' Patriarchs and Prophets, page 562.

1. What warnings do the scriptures give against drinking alcohol? Proverbs 20:1, Proverbs 23:29-32.

NOTE: 'Never was traced by human hand a more vivid picture of the debasement and the slavery of the victim of intoxicating drink. Enthralled, degraded, even when awakened to a sense of his misery, he has no power to break from the snare; he "will seek it yet again." No argument is needed to show the evil effects of intoxicants on the drunkard. The bleared, besotted wrecks of humanity, souls for whom Christ died, and over whom angels weep, are everywhere. They are a blot on our boasted civilisation. They are the shame and curse and peril of every land. And who can picture the wretchedness, the agony, the despair, that are hidden in the drunkard's home? Think of the wife, often delicately reared, sensitive, cultured, and refined, linked to one whom drink transforms into a sot or a demon. Think of the children, robbed of home comforts, education, and training, living in terror of him who should be their pride and protection, thrust into the world, bearing the brand of shame, often with the hereditary curse of the drunkard's thirst. Think of the frightful accidents that are every day occurring through the influence of drink.' Ministry of Healing, pages 330-331.

2. Should people in responsible positions drink alcohol? Proverbs 31:4-5. Compare 1 Timothy 3:3.

NOTE: 'These words of warning and command are pointed and decided. Let those in positions of public trust take heed lest through wine and strong drink they forget the law, and pervert judgment. Rulers and judges should ever be in a condition to fulfil the instruction of the Lord. "Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto Me, I will surely hear their cry; and My wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless."' Temperance, page 53.

'Some who are never considered really drunk are always under the influence of mild intoxicants. They are feverish, unstable in mind, unbalanced. Imagining themselves secure, they go on and on, until every barrier is broken down, every principle sacrificed. The

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strongest resolutions are undermined, the highest considerations are not sufficient to keep the debased appetite under the control of reason.' Ministry of Healing, page 333.

3. How was intemperance responsible for the death of John the Baptist? Mark 6:21-28.

NOTE: 'The king was dazed with wine. Passion held sway, and reason was dethroned. He saw only the hall of pleasure, with its revelling guests, the banquet table, the sparkling wine and the flashing lights, and the young girl dancing before him. In the recklessness of the moment, he desired to make some display that would exalt him before the great men of his realm. With an oath he promised to give the daughter of Herodias whatever she might ask, even to the half of his kingdom. Salome hastened to her mother, to know what she should ask. The answer was ready, the head of John the Baptist.' Desire of Ages, page 221.

'Oh, how often has the life of the innocent been sacrificed through the intemperance of those who should have been guardians of justice! He who puts the intoxicating cup to his lips makes himself responsible for all the injustice he may commit under its besotting power. By benumbing his senses he makes it impossible for him to judge calmly or to have a clear perception of right and wrong. He opens the way for Satan to work through him in oppressing and destroying the innocent. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." Proverbs 20:1. Thus it is that "judgment is turned away backward, . . . and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey." Isaiah 59:14, 15. Those who have jurisdiction over the lives of their fellow men should be held guilty of a crime when they yield to intemperance. All who execute the laws should be law-keepers. They should be men of self-control. They need to have full command of their physical, mental, and moral powers, that they may possess vigour of intellect, and a high sense of justice.' Desire of Ages, page 222.

4. What type of wine was Timothy advised to use for his stomach? 1 Timothy 5:23.

NOTE: The literal translation of this verse is: No longer drink water alone, but use with a little stomach wine, because of your frequent infirmities. 'Stomach wine', according to surviving ancient Greek medical texts, was grape juice prepared as a thick, unfermented syrup for use as a food for dyspeptic and weak persons. Pliny, a contemporary of Paul writes: 'The beverage is given to invalids to whom it is apprehended that fermented wine may prove injurious.' Certain facts emerge from this verse: 1.) that Timothy had been drinking only water. 2.) Timothy was having trouble with his stomach. 3.) Timothy's trouble was caused by the type of water he was drinking. 4.) Timothy's frequent illnesses were not a case for healing, but rather he needed to change what was causing his problem. The water in Ephesus was strongly alkaline. Even today it remains the custom to mix this alkaline water with syrup or jam, made by boiling grape juice, to neutralise the harmful properties of the water.

This verse could seem to contradict what the Bible said previously about not drinking alcohol, but if we understand how the use of the word wine has changed there is no contradiction. In English until the 19th century, the word wine could mean either unfermented or fermented grape juice. In Modern English it has changed its meaning to mean only fermented grape juice. Therefore when the Bible was translated in the time of King James it could mean either, depending on its context. Medically it is known that alcohol is bad for stomach problems and grape juice is helpful. Therefore this verse must refer to unfermented grape juice.

5. What sort of wine did Jesus make from the water at the wedding of Cana? John 2:1-11. Consider Habakkuk 2:15.

NOTE 'The wine which Christ provided for the feast, and that which He gave to the disciples as a symbol of His own blood, was the pure juice of the grape. To this the prophet Isaiah refers when he speaks of the new wine "in the cluster," and says, "Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it." Isaiah 65:8. It was Christ who in the Old Testament gave the warning to Israel, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." Proverbs 20:1. And He Himself provided no such beverage. Satan tempts men to indulgence that will becloud reason and benumb the spiritual perceptions, but Christ teaches us to bring the lower nature into subjection. His whole life was an example of self-denial.' Desire of Ages, page 149.

n.b. The Greek word translated 'well drunk' in John 2:10, King James Bible, ['methusthosin'] does not mean 'intoxicated'; it rather means 'satisfied', having taken sufficient to gratify. Christ was not making drunken men even more inebriated.

6. What counsel did Peter give regarding bad habits? 1 Peter 2:11.

NOTE 'Tobacco using is a habit which frequently affects the nervous system in a more powerful manner than does the use of alcohol. It binds the victim in stronger bands of slavery than does the intoxicating cup; the habit is more difficult to overcome. Body and mind are, in many cases, more thoroughly intoxicated with the use of tobacco than with spirituous liquors, for it is a more subtle poison.' Testimonies, volume 3, page 562.

"Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul," is the language of the apostle Peter. Many regard this warning as applicable only to the licentious; but it has a broader meaning. It guards against every injurious gratification of appetite or passion. It is a most forcible warning against the use of such stimulants and narcotics as tea, coffee, tobacco, alcohol, and morphine. These indulgences may well be classed among the lusts that exert a pernicious influence upon moral character. The earlier these hurtful habits are formed, the more firmly will they hold their victim in slavery to lust, and the more certainly will they lower the standard of spirituality." Counsels on Diet and Foods, pages 62, 63.

7. What principle should govern not only our eating and drinking, but all aspects of our lives? 1 Corinthians 10:31.

NOTE: 'People need to be taught that drugs do not cure disease. It is true that they sometimes afford present relief, and the patient appears to recover as the result of their use; this is because nature has sufficient vital force to expel the poison and to correct the conditions that caused the disease. Health is recovered in spite of the drug. But in most cases the drug only changes the form and location of the disease. Often the effect of the poison seems to be overcome for a time, but the results remain in the system, and work great harm at some later period. By the use of poisonous drugs, many bring upon themselves lifelong illness, and many lives are lost that might be saved by the use of natural methods of healing. The poisons contained in many so-called remedies create habits and appetites that mean ruin to both soul and body.' Counsels on Health, page 89.

8. What forms of intemperance did Jesus warn might render us unprepared for His coming? Luke 21:34. Compare Matthew 13:22.

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NOTE 'The condition of things in the world shows that troublous times are right upon us. The daily papers are full of indications of a terrible conflict in the near future. Bold robberies are of frequent occurrence. Strikes are common. Thefts and murders are committed on every hand. Men possessed of demons are taking the lives of men, women, and little children. Men have become infatuated with vice, and every species of evil prevails. Everything in the world is in agitation. The signs of the times are ominous. Coming events cast their shadows before. The Spirit of God is withdrawing from the earth, and calamity follows calamity by sea and by land. There are tempests, earthquakes, fires, floods, murders of every grade. Rapidly are men ranging themselves under the banner they have chosen. Restlessly are they waiting and watching the movements of their leaders. There are those who are waiting and watching and working for our Lord's appearing. Another class are falling into line under the generalship of the first great apostate. Few believe with heart and soul that we have a hell to shun and a heaven to win. The crisis is stealing gradually upon us. The sun shines in the heavens, passing over its usual round. Men are still eating and drinking, planting and building, marrying, and giving in marriage. Merchants are still buying and selling. Men are jostling one against another, contending for the highest place. Pleasure lovers are still crowding to theatres, horse races, gambling hells. The highest excitement prevails, yet probation's hour is fast closing, and every case is about to be eternally decided. Solemnly there come to us down through the centuries the warning words of our Lord from the Mount of Olives: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." Maranatha, page 35.

9. What principle should always be foremost in the Christian's thinking? Matthew 6:33.

NOTE: 'We have no enemy without that we need to fear. Our great conflict is with unconsecrated self. When we conquer self, we are more than conquerors through Him who has loved us. My brethren, there is eternal life for us to win. Let us fight the good fight of faith. Not in the future, but now, is our probation. While it lingers, "seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things," the things which now so often serve Satan's purpose as snares to deceive and destroy, "shall be added unto you.'" Review & Herald, March 5, 1908.

10. What often goes with drunkenness according to Proverbs 23:20-21?

NOTE: 'Gluttony is the prevailing sin of this age. Lustful appetite makes slaves of men and women, and beclouds their intellects and stupefies their moral sensibilities to such a degree that the sacred, elevated truths of God's word are not appreciated. The lower propensities have ruled men and women. In order to be fitted for translation, the people of God must know themselves. They must understand in regard to their own physical frames that they may be able with the psalmist to exclaim: "I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." They should ever have the appetite in subjection to the moral and intellectual organs. The body should be servant to the mind, and not the mind to the body.' Testimonies, volume 1, page 486.

11. What counsel is given to help us avoid overeating? Proverbs 23:1-3.

NOTE: 'Many turn from light and knowledge, and sacrifice principle to taste. They eat when the system needs no food, and at irregular intervals, because they have no moral stamina to resist inclination. As the result, the abused stomach rebels, and suffering follows. Regularity in eating is very important for health of body and serenity of mind. Never should a morsel of food pass the lips between meals. Many indulge in the pernicious habit of eating just before retiring. They may have taken their regular meals, yet because they feel a sense of faintness, they think they must have a lunch. By indulging this wrong practice it becomes a habit, and they feel as though they could not sleep without food. In many cases this faintness comes because the digestive organs have been too severely taxed through the day in disposing of the great quantities of food forced upon them. These organs need a period of entire rest from labour, to recover their exhausted energies. A second meal should never be eaten until the stomach has had time to recover from the labour of digesting the preceding meal. When we lie down at night, the stomach should have its work all done, that it, as well as other portions of the body, may enjoy rest. But if more food is forced upon it, the digestive organs are put in motion again, to perform the same round of labour through the sleeping hours. The sleep of such is often disturbed with unpleasant dreams, and in the morning they awake unrefreshed. When this practice is followed, the digestive organs lose their natural vigour, and the person finds himself a miserable dyspeptic. And not only does the transgression of nature's laws affect the individual unfavourably, but others suffer more or less with him. Let any one take a course that irritates him in any way, and see how quickly he manifests impatience! He cannot, without special grace, speak or act calmly. He casts a shadow wherever he goes. How can any one say, then, "It is nobody's business what I eat or drink"? It is possible to eat immoderately, even of wholesome food. It does not follow that because one has discarded the use of hurtful articles of diet, he can eat just as much as he pleases. Overeating, no matter what the quality of the food, clogs the living machine, and thus hinders it in its work.' Christian Temperance & Bible Hygiene, pages 50-51.

12. What principle should parents teach to ensure their children will remain temperate in adulthood? 1 Corinthians 9:25.

NOTE: 'In order to reach the root of intemperance we must go deeper than the use of alcohol or tobacco. Idleness, lack of aim, or evil associations, may be the predisposing cause. Often it is found at the home table, in families that account themselves strictly temperate. Anything that disorders digestion, that creates undue mental excitement, or in any way enfeebles the system, disturbing the balance of the mental and the physical powers, weakens the control of the mind over the body, and thus tends toward intemperance. The downfall of many a promising youth might be traced to unnatural appetites created by an unwholesome diet. Tea and coffee, condiments, confectionery, and pastries are all active causes of indigestion. Flesh food also is harmful. Its naturally stimulating effect should be a sufficient argument against its use; and the almost universally diseased condition of animals makes it doubly objectionable. It tends to irritate the nerves and to excite the passions, thus giving the balance of power to the lower propensities.' Education, pages 202-203.


13. In all our activities, what important fact should the Christian remember? 1 Corinthians 6:19.

NOTE: 'We want a share in the eternal inheritance. We want a place in the city of God, free from every impurity. All heaven is watching to see how we are fighting the battle against

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temptation. Let all who profess the name of Christ so walk before the world that they may teach by example as well as precept the principles of true living. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Christian Temperance & Bible Hygiene, page 24.

Lesson 7 'Train up a child'

 **MEMORY VERSE:** "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6

 **STUDY HELP:** Child Guidance, pages 244-257.

 **LESSON SCRIPTURE:** Ephesians 6:1-4.

 **LESSON AIM.** To impress upon parents the importance of educating and training their children for the future, immortal life.

Introduction

'No work ever undertaken by man requires greater care and skill than the proper training and education of youth and children. There are no influences so potent as those which surround us in our early years. The nature of man is threefold, and the training enjoined by Solomon comprehends the right development of the physical, intellectual, and moral powers. To perform this work aright, parents and teachers must themselves understand "the way the child should go." This embraces more than a knowledge of books or the learning of the schools. It comprehends the practice of temperance, brotherly kindness, and godliness; the discharge of our duty to ourselves, to our neighbours, and to God. The training of children must be conducted on a different principle from that which governs the training of irrational animals. The brute has only to be accustomed to submit to its master, but the child must be taught to control himself. The will must be trained to obey the dictates of reason and conscience. A child may be so disciplined as to have, like the beast, no will of its own, his individuality being lost in that of his teacher. Such training is unwise, and its effect disastrous. Children thus educated will be deficient in firmness and decision. They are not taught to act from principle; the reasoning powers are not strengthened by exercise. So far as possible, every child should be trained to self-reliance. By calling into exercise the various faculties, he will learn where he is strongest, and in what he is deficient. A wise instructor will give special attention to the development of the weaker traits, that the child may form a well-balanced, harmonious character.' Child Guidance, page 39.

1. What promise are conscientious parents given concerning the upbringing of their children? Proverbs 22:6.

NOTE: 'To parents is committed the great work of educating and training their children for the future, immortal life. Many fathers and mothers seem to think that if they feed and clothe their little ones, and educate them according to the standard of the world, they have done their duty. They are too much occupied with business or pleasure to make the education of their

children the study of their lives. They do not seek to train them so that they will employ their talents for the honour of their Redeemer. Solomon did not say, Tell a child the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it. But, “train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Child Guidance, page 38.

2. What benefit will come to parents who correct their children's wrong behaviour? Proverbs 29:17.

NOTE 'Fathers and mothers may study their own character in their children. They may often read humiliating lessons as they see their own imperfections reproduced in their sons and daughters. While seeking to repress and correct in their children hereditary tendencies to evil, parents should call to their aid double patience, perseverance, and love. When a child reveals the wrong traits which it has inherited from its parents, shall they storm over this reproduction of their own defects? No, no! Let parents keep a careful watch over themselves, guarding against all coarseness and roughness, lest these defects be seen once more in their children. Manifest the meekness and gentleness of Christ in dealing with the wayward little ones. Always bear in mind that they have received their perversity as an inheritance from the father or mother. Then bear with the children who have inherited your own trait of character. Parents must trust implicitly in the power of Christ to transform the tendencies to wrong which have been transmitted to their children. Have patience, fathers and mothers. Often your past neglect will make your work hard. But God will give you strength if you will trust in Him. Deal wisely and tenderly with your children.' The Adventist Home, page 173.

3. Are the rod and reproof necessary? Proverbs 13:24, Proverbs 19:18 & Proverbs 23:13.

NOTE “The mother . . . should not use the rod if it is possible to avoid doing so. But if milder measures prove insufficient, punishment that will bring the child to its senses should in love be administered. Frequently one such correction will be enough for a lifetime, to show the child that he does not hold the lines of control. And when this step becomes necessary, the child should be seriously impressed with the thought that this is not done for the gratification of the parent, or to indulge arbitrary authority, but for the child's own good. He should be taught that every fault uncorrected will bring unhappiness to himself and will displease God. Under such discipline children will find their greatest happiness in submitting their wills to the will of the heavenly Father.' Child Guidance, page 250.

4. What is the result of leaving children to their own devices? Proverbs 29:15.

NOTE 'A great wrong is done our children when we permit their faults to go uncorrected. Many foster wrong traits of character in their children, urging as an excuse, “They are too young to be punished. Wait until they become older, and can be reasoned with. They will outgrow many of these evil tendencies.” Thus their wrong habits are left to grow and strengthen until they become second nature. Sometimes the father and mother are united in this error. Sometimes one would gladly pursue a wiser course; but when that one attempts to enforce obedience, the other takes the part of the child, and will not allow it to be brought into submission. The sad results of such a course can be fully seen only in eternity. They can never be estimated in this life.' Signs of the Times, November 24, 1881.

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5. What did Eli neglect to do in the training of his sons? 1 Samuel 3:13.

NOTE: 'Eli was an indulgent father. Loving peace and ease, he did not exercise his authority to correct the evil habits and passions of his children. Rather than contend with them or punish them, he would submit to their will and give them their own way. Instead of regarding the education of his sons as one of the most important of his responsibilities, he treated the matter as of little consequence. The priest and judge of Israel had not been left in darkness as to the duty of restraining and governing the children that God had given to his care. But Eli shrank from this duty, because it involved crossing the will of his sons, and would make it necessary to punish and deny them. Without weighing the terrible consequences that would follow his course, he indulged his children in whatever they desired and neglected the work of fitting them for the service of God and the duties of life.' Patriarchs and Prophets, page 575.

6. What is needed to make a wise son? Proverbs 1:8.

NOTE: 'In the present state of society it is no easy task for parents to restrain their children and instruct them according to the Bible rule of right. Children often become impatient under restraint and wish to have their own way and to go and come as they please. Especially from the age of ten to eighteen they are inclined to feel that there can be no harm in going to worldly gatherings of young associates. But the experienced Christian parents can see danger. They are acquainted with the peculiar temperaments of their children and know the influence of these things upon their minds; and from a desire for their salvation, they should keep them back from these exciting amusements.' The Adventist Home, page 529.

'Lessons on obedience, on respect for authority, need to be often repeated. This kind of work done in the family will be a power for good, and not only will the children be restrained from evil and constrained to love truth and righteousness, but parents will be equally benefited. This kind of work which the Lord requires cannot be done without much serious contemplation on their part, and much study of the Word of God, in order that they may instruct according to His directions.' Child Guidance, page 88.

'In the heart of a child'

7. What is a bad behavioural trait found in many children? Proverbs 22:15.

NOTE 'Many Christian parents fail to command their children after them, and then wonder that their children are perverse, disobedient, unthankful, and unholy. Such parents are under the rebuke of God. They have neglected to bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. They have failed to teach them the first lesson of Christianity: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." "Foolishness," says the wise man, "is bound in the heart of a child." The love of folly, the desire to do evil, the hatred of holy things, are some of the difficulties that parents must meet in the home mission field. In the strength of God, parents must arise and command their households after them. They must learn to repress wrong with a firm hand, yet without impatience or passion. They should not leave the children to guess at what is right, but should point out the way in unmistakable terms and teach them to walk therein.' Child Guidance, page 87.

8. How important is it for parent to guard their tongues? Proverbs 16:23.

NOTE: 'Guard well your words and actions, that by example as well as by precept you may

give the lessons God has instructed you to give. Respond to the striving of the Holy Spirit. Thus you prepare the way for your children to respond to this striving.' Review & Herald, July 15, 1902.

'There is need of guarding the conversation, that the words shall be pure, chaste, elevated. If parents would strictly guard their words, they would by precept and example teach their children to be select in their words.' Notebook Leaflets, volume 1, page 92.

9. What are the evils of angry, hasty words, particularly when speaking to our children? Proverbs 29:22. Compare Ephesians 6:4.

NOTE: 'When you speak angry words to your children, you are helping the cause of the enemy of all righteousness. Let every child have a fair chance from babyhood up. The work of teaching should begin in childhood, not accompanied by harshness and fretting, but in kindness and patience; and this instruction should be continued through all their years to manhood and womanhood. Let every family seek the Lord in earnest prayer for help to do the work of God. Let them overcome the habits of hasty speech and the desire to blame others. Let them study to be kind and courteous in the home, to form habits of thoughtfulness and care. What harm is wrought in the family circle by the utterance of impatient words, for the impatient utterance of one leads another to retort in the same spirit and manner. Then come words of retaliation, words of self-justification, and it is by such words that a heavy, galling yoke is manufactured for your neck; for all these bitter words will come back in a baleful harvest to your soul. Hard words beat upon the heart through the ear, awakening to life the worst passions of the soul and tempting men and women to break God's commandments. Words are as seeds which are planted.' The Adventist Home, pages 438-439.

10. How is the one who is hasty of temper compared with the one who controls his temper? Proverbs 14:29.

NOTE: 'It would be well for every man to sign a pledge to speak kindly in his home, to let the law of love rule his speech. Parents, never speak hastily. If your children do wrong, correct them, but let your words be full of tenderness and love. Every time you scold, you lose a precious opportunity of giving a lesson in forbearance and patience. Let love be the most prominent feature in your correction of wrong.' Adventist Home, page 440.

11. Rather than provoking them to wrath, how should fathers educate their children? Ephesians 6:4.

NOTE: 'Be pleasant in the home. Restrain every word that would arouse unholy temper. "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath," is a divine injunction. Remember that your children are young in years and experience. In controlling and disciplining them, be firm, but kind. Children do not always discern right from wrong, and when they do wrong, they are often treated harshly, instead of being kindly instructed.' Child Guidance, page 259.


12. What encouraging promise may persevering parents claim? Galatians 6:9.

NOTE: 'The work of parents is continuous. It should not be laid hold of vigorously for one day and neglected the next. Many are ready to begin the work, but are not willing to persevere in it. They are eager to do some great thing, to make some great sacrifice; but they shrink from

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the unceasing care and effort in the little things of everyday life, the hourly pruning and training of the wayward tendencies, the work of giving instruction, reproof, or encouragement, little by little, as it is needed. They wish to see children correct their faults and form right characters at once, reaching the mountaintop at a bound, and not by successive steps; and because their hopes are not immediately realised, they become disheartened. Let all such persons take courage as they remember the words of the apostle, "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Child Guidance, page 242.

Lesson 8 'Keep thy heart with all diligence'

 **MEMORY VERSE:** "Keep thy heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life." Proverbs 4:23.

 **STUDY HELP:** The Faith I Live By, page 222.

 **LESSON SCRIPTURE:** Proverbs 4:10-27.

 **LESSON AIM:** To study how to keep the heart with all diligence.

Introduction

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." Diligent heart-keeping is essential to a healthy growth in grace. The heart in its natural state is a habitation for unholy thoughts and sinful passions. When brought into subjection to Christ, it must be cleansed by the Spirit from all defilement. This can not be done without the consent of the individual. When the soul has been cleansed, it is the duty of the Christian to keep it undefiled. Many seem to think that the religion of Christ does not call for the abandonment of daily sins, the breaking loose from habits which have held the soul in bondage. They renounce some things condemned by the conscience, but they fail to represent Christ in the daily life. They do not bring Christlikeness into the home. They do not show a thoughtful care in their choice of words. Too often, fretful, impatient words are spoken, words which stir the worst passions of the human heart. Such ones need the abiding presence of Christ in the soul. Only in His strength can they keep guard over the words and actions.' SDA Bible Commentary, volume 3, page 1157.

1. What important counsel are we given concerning our hearts? Proverbs 4:23.

NOTE: 'Christians should be careful that they keep the heart with all diligence. They should cultivate a love for meditation, and cherish a spirit of devotion. Many seem to begrudge moments spent in meditation, and the searching of the Scriptures, and prayer, as though the time thus occupied was lost. I wish you could all view these things in the light God would have you; for you would then make the kingdom of heaven of the first importance. To keep your heart in heaven, will give vigour to all your graces, and put life into all your duties. To discipline the mind to dwell upon heavenly things, will put life and earnestness into all our endeavours. Our efforts are languid, and we run the Christian race slowly, and manifest indolence and sloth, because we so little value the heavenly prize. We are dwarfs in spiritual attainments. It is the privilege and duty of the Christian to be "increasing in the knowledge of

the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” [Ephesians 4:13.] As exercise increases the appetite, and gives strength and healthy vigour to the body, so will devotional exercises bring an increase of grace and spiritual vigour.’ SDA Bible Commentary, Volume 3, page 1157.

n.b. In the above passage, the word 'meditation' is used in its correct, historic sense, not in the sense it has been given by those who practise Eastern religions. To meditate is to reflect upon, to study, to ponder, to think deeply. For those who practise Yoga and other Eastern religious exercises, meditation has come to mean emptying the mind, deliberately choosing not to think, lowering the mind's defences, so that it becomes susceptible to outside influences. This type of meditation is the opposite of keeping 'thy heart with all diligence.'

2. As well as keeping our heart, over what else do we need to keep careful watch? Proverbs 13:3. Compare Psalm 141:3-4.

NOTE: 'Speech is one of the great gifts of God. It is the means by which the thoughts of the heart are communicated. It is with the tongue that we offer prayer and praise to God. With the tongue we convince and persuade. With the tongue we comfort and bless, soothing the bruised, wounded soul. With the tongue we may make known the wonders of the grace of God. With the tongue also we may utter perverse things, speaking words that sting like an adder. The tongue is a little member, but the words it frames have great power. The Lord declares, “The tongue can no man tame” (James 3:8). It has set nation against nation and has caused war and bloodshed. Words have kindled fires that have been hard to quench. Satan puts into the mind thoughts which the Christian should never utter. The scornful retort, the bitter, passionate utterance, the cruel, suspicious charge, are from him. How many words are spoken that do only harm to those who utter them and to those who hear! Hard words beat upon the heart, awaking to life its worst passions. Those who do evil with their tongues grieve the Holy Spirit; for they are working at cross purposes with God. Guard well the talent of speech, for it is a mighty power for evil as well as for good. You cannot be too careful of what you say; for the words you utter show what power is controlling the heart. If Christ rules there, your words will reveal the beauty, purity, and fragrance of a character moulded and fashioned by His will. But if you are under the guidance of the enemy of all good, your words will echo his sentiments. Only through Christ can we gain the victory over the desire to speak hasty, un-Christlike words. When in His strength we refuse to give utterance to Satan's suggestions, the plant of bitterness in our hearts withers and dies. The Holy Spirit can make the tongue a savour of life unto life.' In Heavenly Places, page 174.

THOUGHT QUESTION: What does it mean to keep your heart with all diligence?

3. If we are truly repentant, what will Christ do for us? Psalm 51:10.

NOTE: 'Let the prayer go up to God, “Create in me a clean heart” (Psalm 51:10); for a pure, cleansed soul has Christ abiding therein, and out of the abundance of the heart are the issues of life. The human will is to be yielded to Christ. Instead of passing on, closing the heart in selfishness, there is need of opening the heart to the sweet influences of the Spirit of God. Practical religion breathes its fragrance everywhere. It is a savour of life unto life.' God's Amazing Grace, page 295.

4. What two paths are open to us and where does each path lead? Proverbs 4:14-19.

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Consider 2 Corinthians 6:17-18.

NOTE: 'The Lord will not compel men to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God; He sets before the human agent good and evil, and makes plain what will be the sure result of following one course or the other. Christ invites us, saying, "Follow Me." But we are never forced to walk in His footsteps. If we do walk in His footsteps, it is the result of deliberate choice. As we see the life and character of Christ, strong desire is awakened to be like Him in character; and we follow on to know the Lord, and to know His goings forth are prepared as the morning. We then begin to realise that "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."' Review & Herald, March 31, 1896.

5. What counsel from the Proverbs has a special spiritual application for those who live in these last days? Proverbs 24:33-34. Compare 1 Thessalonians 5:2-6.

NOTE: 'A man cannot be a happy Christian unless he is a watchful Christian. He who overcomes must watch; for, with worldly entanglements, error, and superstition, Satan strives to win Christ's followers from Him. It is not enough that we avoid glaring dangers and perilous, inconsistent moves. We are to keep close to the side of Christ, walking in the path of self-denial and sacrifice. We are in an enemy's country. He who was cast out of heaven has come down with great power. With every conceivable artifice and device he is seeking to take souls captive. Unless we are constantly on guard we shall fall an easy prey to his unnumbered deceptions. . . Many today are asleep, as were the disciples. They are not watching and praying lest they enter into temptation. Let us read and study those portions of God's word that have special reference to these last days, pointing out the dangers that will threaten God's people.' Testimonies, volume 8, page 100.

6. What, in particular, may be a snare to those living in the last days? Proverbs 6:2, Proverbs 12:13, Proverbs 18:7.

NOTE: 'The evil servant says in his heart, "My lord delayeth His coming." He does not say that Christ will not come. He does not scoff at the idea of His second coming. But in his heart and by his actions and words he declares that the Lord's coming is delayed. He banishes from the minds of others the conviction that the Lord is coming quickly. His influence leads men to presumptuous, careless delay. They are confirmed in their worldliness and stupor. Earthly passions, corrupt thoughts, take possession of the mind. The evil servant eats and drinks with the drunken, unites with the world in pleasure seeking. He smites his fellow servants, accusing and condemning those who are faithful to their Master. He mingles with the world. Like grows with like in transgression. It is a fearful assimilation. With the world he is taken in the snare.' Desire of Ages, page 635.

7. How can our words and thoughts be acceptable unto God? Proverbs 2:1-6, Proverbs 22:20-21. Compare Psalm 19:14.

NOTE: 'By our words we are to be justified or condemned. When in the final judgement we stand before the tribunal of God, it is our words that will justify or condemn us. Much more than we realise is involved in the matter of speech. Let your lips be touched with a live coal from the divine altar. Utter only words of truth. Watch and pray, that your words and deeds may ever confess Christ. Let your words be seasoned with wisdom and purity.' The Voice in

Speech and Song, page 21.

8. How thoroughly and earnestly should we seek the things of God? Proverbs 7:1-3. Proverbs 4:7. Compare Proverbs 9:10.

NOTE: 'The Lord looks with pity on those who allow themselves to be burdened with household cares and business perplexities. They are cumbered with much serving, and neglect the one thing essential. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness," the Saviour says; "and all these things shall be added unto you." That is: look away from this world to the eternal. Put forth your most earnest endeavours to obtain those things upon which God places value, and which Christ gave His precious life that you might secure. His sacrifice has thrown open wide to you the gates of heavenly commerce. Lay up your treasure beside the throne of God, by doing with His entrusted capital the work that He desires done in the winning of souls to a knowledge of the truth. This will secure you eternal riches.' Counsels on Stewardship, page 225.

9. If we are willing to commit our lives to the Lord, what will happen to our thoughts? Proverbs 16:3; Compare 2 Corinthians 10:5.

NOTE: 'In trusting faith commit the keeping of your souls to God as unto a faithful Creator. Be not continually in fear and apprehension that God will leave you. He never will unless you depart from Him. Christ will come in and dwell with you if you will open the door of your hearts to Him. There may be perfect harmony between you and the Father and His Son if you will die to self and live unto God.' Testimonies, volume 3, page 542.

10. What promise is made to those whose lives are upright? Proverbs 10:9

NOTE: 'The very first step in the path of life is to keep the mind stayed on God, to have His fear continually before the eyes. A single departure from moral integrity blunts the conscience, and opens the door to the next temptation. "He that walketh uprightly walketh surely: but he that perverteth his way shall be known." We are commanded to love God supremely, and our neighbour as ourselves; but the daily experience of life shows that this law is disregarded. Uprightness in deal and moral integrity will secure the favour of God, and make a man a blessing to himself and to society; but amid the varied temptations that assail one whichever way he may turn, it is impossible to keep a clear conscience and the approval of Heaven without divine aid and a principle to love honesty for the sake of the right.' Sons & Daughters of God, page 111.

11. What blessing do we receive from the word of God? Proverbs 4:20-22. Consider Psalms 16:8-9.

NOTE: 'Light and truth are within the reach of all, but if they do not set their minds to searching God's Word, Satan will find chaff to fill their minds, leaving no room for the growth of the precious seed of truth. We are surrounded with temptations so disguised that they allure while they taint and corrupt the soul.' Our High Calling, page 277.

12. What promise is made to those who keep Christ's words? Revelation 3:10. Consider

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Proverbs 22:17-19.

NOTE: 'All heaven is interested in the work going on in this world, which is to prepare men and women for the future, immortal life. It is God's plan that human agencies shall have the high honour of acting as co-workers with Jesus Christ in the salvation of souls. They should look upon the work of God as sacred and holy, and should bring to Him, every day, offerings of joy and gratitude, in return for the power of His grace, by which they are enabled to make advancement in the divine life. It is not necessary that anyone should yield to the temptations of Satan and thus violate his conscience and grieve the Holy Spirit. Every provision has been made in the Word of God whereby all may have divine help in their endeavours to overcome. In the religious life of every soul who is finally victorious there will be scenes of terrible perplexity and trial; but his knowledge of the Scriptures will enable him to bring to mind the encouraging promises of God, which will comfort his heart and strengthen his faith in the power of the Mighty One. He reads: "that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 1:7). The trial of faith is more precious than gold. All should learn that this is a part of the discipline in the school of Christ, which is essential to purify and refine them from the dross of earthliness. Summon all your powers to look up, not down at your difficulties; then you will never faint by the way. You will soon see Jesus behind the cloud, reaching out His hand to help you; and all you have to do is to give Him your hand in simple faith and let Him lead you. A great name among men is as letters traced in sand, but a spotless character will endure to all eternity. God gives you intelligence and a reasoning mind, whereby you may grasp His promises; and Jesus is ready to help you in forming a strong, symmetrical character.' God's Amazing Grace, page 81.

Lesson 9

'Where no council is, the people fall'

🗨️ MEMORY VERSE: 'Where no council is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.' Proverbs 11:14.

📖 STUDY HELP: Testimonies to Ministers, pages 485-505.

📖 LESSON SCRIPTURE: James 1:5-8.

🎯 LESSON AIM: To study what the Bible teaches concerning seeking and taking counsel.

Introduction

'The evils of self-esteem and an unsanctified independence, which most impair our usefulness and which will prove our ruin if not overcome, spring from selfishness. "Counsel together" is the message which has been again and again repeated to me by the angel of God. By influencing one man's judgment, Satan may endeavour to control matters to suit himself. He may succeed in misleading the minds of two persons; but, when several consult together, there is more safety. Every plan will be more closely criticised; every advance move more carefully studied. Hence there will be less danger of precipitate, ill-advised moves, which would bring

confusion, perplexity, and defeat. In union there is strength. In division there is weakness and defeat.' Testimonies, volume 5, page 29.

1. What pitfall may we avoid by taking counsel? Proverbs 12:15.

NOTE: 'God will not bless those who work without taking counsel with their brethren. All have a work to do. But we must view matters from every side. . . Anyone who supposes that in himself he is a complete whole, and that he can safely follow his own mind and judgment, is not to be trusted; for he is not walking in the light, as Christ is in the light. There are many who have false views of what they are doing. God desires those in His service to move wisely. He desires them to have clear ideas and deep spirituality, and to weigh carefully the motives which prompt them to action.' Special Testimonies, series B, no. 5, page 21.

2. What sound advice are we given concerning seeking counsel? Proverbs 11:14. Compare Proverbs 15:22.

NOTE: 'Many lack wise management and economy. They do not weigh matters well, and move cautiously. Such should not trust to their own poor judgment, but counsel with their brethren who have experience. Those who lack good judgment and economy are often unwilling to seek counsel. They generally think that they understand how to conduct their temporal business, and are unwilling to follow advice. They make bad moves, and suffer in consequence. Their brethren are grieved to see them suffer, and they help them out of difficulty. Their unwise management affects the church. It takes means from the treasury of God which should have been used to advance the cause of present truth. If these poor brethren would take an humble course, and be willing to be advised and counselled by their brethren, and then are brought into straightened places, their brethren should feel it their duty to cheerfully help them out of difficulty. But if they choose their own course, and rely upon their judgment, they should be left to feel the full consequences of their unwise course, and learn by dear experience that "in a multitude of counsellors there is safety." God's people should be subject one to another. They should counsel with each other, that the lack of one be supplied by the sufficiency of the other.' Spiritual Gifts, volume 4b, page 55.

'There are a thousand temptations in disguise prepared for those who have the light of truth; and the only safety for any of us is in receiving no new doctrine, no new interpretation of the Scriptures, without first submitting it to brethren of experience. Lay it before them in a humble, teachable spirit, with earnest prayer; and if they see no light in it, yield to their judgment; for "in the multitude of counsellors there is safety."' Testimonies, volume 5, page 293.

3. What Bible example are we given of wise and constructive counsel given and heeded? Exodus 18:13-18.

NOTE: 'The Lord had greatly honoured Moses, and had wrought wonders by his hand; but the fact that he had been chosen to instruct others did not lead him to conclude that he himself needed no instruction. The chosen leader of Israel listened gladly to the suggestions of the godly priest of Midian, and adopted his plan as a wise arrangement.' Patriarchs & Prophets, page 301.

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4. What was the counsel given to, and accepted by, Moses? Exodus 18:21-24.

NOTE: 'When Moses was much burdened the Lord raised him up in Jethro an advisor and helper. The advice was taken and the burdens that had come upon him were divided with others and a two-fold object was gained; Moses was relieved and he had a better chance for his life, and men were learning to bear responsibilities to qualify them to do work in positions of trust so that Israel should not learn to look to one man and trust in one man and think that no one could do any thing for them unless it came before that one man. Now it is hard, I know, to let go some responsibilities and give others an opportunity to get hold, with all the advantages and counsel of your knowledge to help them. Unless this is done, they will ere long have to carry an unwieldy load without the instruction and counsel which now it is their privilege to have.' Christian Leadership, page 55.

5. What example is given of one who took counsel from the wrong people and what was the result? 1 Kings 12:6-14.

NOTE: 'Desirous of taking counsel with his advisers before outlining his policy, Rehoboam answered, "Come again unto me after three days." And the people departed. "And King Rehoboam took counsel with the old men that had stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, saying, What counsel give ye me to return answer to this people? And they spake unto him, saying, If thou be kind to this people, and please them, and speak good words to them, they will be thy servants forever." 2 Chronicles 10:3-7. Dissatisfied, Rehoboam turned to the younger men with whom he had associated during his youth and early manhood, and inquired of them, "What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter?" 1 Kings 12:9. The young men suggested that he deal sternly with the subjects of his kingdom and make plain to them that from the very beginning he would brook no interference with his personal wishes. Flattered by the prospect of exercising supreme authority, Rehoboam determined to disregard the counsel of the older men of his realm, and to make the younger men his advisers.' Prophets and Kings, page 89.

6. To whom should Rehoboam have gone for counsel? 1 Kings 12:6.

NOTE: 'The most tender regard should be cherished for those whose life interest has been bound up with the work of God. These aged workers have stood faithful amid storm and trial. They may have infirmities, but they still possess talents that qualify them to stand in their place in God's cause. Though worn, and unable to bear the heavier burdens that younger men can and should carry, the counsel they can give is of the highest value.' Acts of the Apostles, page 573.

THOUGHT QUESTION: When seeking counsel, what qualities should we be seeking in the ones we consult?

7. Which is the only truly reliable counsel? Proverbs 19:21.

NOTE: 'Christ is our only hope. We may look to Him, for He is our Saviour. We may take Him at His word, and make Him our dependence. He knows just the help we need, and we can

safely put our trust in Him. If we depend on merely human wisdom to guide us, we shall find ourselves on the losing side. But we may come direct to the Lord Jesus, for He has said: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." It is our privilege to be taught of Him who said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." We have a divine audience to which to present our requests. Then let nothing prevent us from offering our petitions in the name of Jesus, believing with unwavering faith that God hears us, and that He will answer us. Let us carry our difficulties to God, humbling ourselves before Him. There is a great work to be done; and while it is our privilege to counsel together, we must be very sure, in every matter, to counsel with God, for He will never mislead us. We are not to make flesh our arm. If we do, depending chiefly upon human help, human guidance, unbelief will steal in, and our faith will die.' Testimonies to Ministers, pages 486-487.

8. What should we understand about counsel which is not in harmony with God's Word? Proverbs 21:30.

NOTE: 'The Lord had, through His prophets, foretold that Israel would be governed by a king; but it does not follow that this form of government was best for them or according to His will. He permitted the people to follow their own choice, because they refused to be guided by His counsel. Hosea declares that God gave them a king in His anger. Hosea 13:11. When men choose to have their own way, without seeking counsel from God, or in opposition to His revealed will, He often grants their desires, in order that, through the bitter experience that follows, they may be led to realise their folly and to repent of their sin. Human pride and wisdom will prove a dangerous guide. That which the heart desires contrary to the will of God will in the end be found a curse rather than a blessing.' Patriarchs & Prophets, page 605.

9. What principle should we apply to those who claim to be 'Christian counsellors'? Isaiah 8:20.

NOTE: 'There is to be no compromise with those who make void the law of God. It is not safe to rely upon them as counsellors.' Selected Messages, book 2, page 371.

'There is great danger in encouraging these things that come from the human agent, which are but a weak repetition of the words of inspiration from God, and that make feeble that which is sufficient, full, and complete. I would counsel everyone, Study your Bibles, and obey the Word so plainly given to us. None need to turn from the Word to human agencies, and accept a lower standard than that which is given in the exposition of the ten holy requirements of God. The great principles of the law of God are made plain to the comprehension of all who in their hearts desire to discern truth from error. "To the law and to the testimony." Let the Word of God dwell in you richly. Let every one of the messengers lead souls to plant their feet on the sure Word of God.' Manuscript Releases, book 14, page 198.

10. What solemn warning are we given concerning where we place our trust? Jeremiah 17:5-9.

NOTE: 'It is no degradation for man to bow down before his Maker and confess his sins, and plead for forgiveness through the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour. It is noble to

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acknowledge your wrong before Him whom you have wounded by transgression and rebellion. It lifts you up before men and angels; for “he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” But he who kneels before fallen man and opens in confession the secret thoughts and imaginations of his heart is dishonouring himself by debasing his manhood and degrading every noble instinct of his soul. In unfolding the sins of his life to a priest corrupted with wine and licentiousness his standard of character is lowered, and he is defiled in consequence. God is degraded in his thought to the likeness of sinful humanity, for the priest stands as a representative of God. It is this degrading confession of man to fallen man that accounts for much of the increasing evil which is defiling the world and fitting it for final destruction. Says the apostle: “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.” This scripture has been interpreted to sustain the practice of going to the priest for absolution; but it has no such application. Confess your sins to God, who only can forgive them, and your faults to one another. If you have given offence to your friend or neighbour you are to acknowledge your wrong, and it is his duty freely to forgive you. Then you are to seek the forgiveness of God because the brother whom you wounded is the property of God, and in injuring him you sinned against his Creator and Redeemer. The case is not brought before the priest at all, but before the only true mediator, our great High Priest, who “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin,” and who is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities” and is able to cleanse from every stain of iniquity.’ Testimonies, volume 5, pages 638-639.

11. What wise words of counsel are we given in God's Word? Psalm 1:1.

NOTE: 'The ungodly are those who do not love and obey the commandments of God, but go contrary to them. This is the class of counsellors you are warned to shun, the class which Satan uses to lead youth astray. Their counsel, their suggestions, are of a character to make light of sin, to ridicule righteousness. They are represented as standing in the way of sinners, always leading them out of the straight path of duty and obedience to God's commandments into paths of disobedience. If it were not for those persons who do wrong and tempt others to do wrong, many sinners might have chosen the path of duty, the life of purity and godliness.' Sons & Daughters of God, page 211.

12. What counsel does James give to those who are seeking the wisest course of action? James 1:5.

NOTE: 'You will be wise if you will decide to come to God. Believe in Him. He will hear your prayers, and come to your assistance, in much less time than the public conveyances could take one, two, three, or four men from a long distance, at a great expense, to decide questions which the God of wisdom can decide far better for you. He has promised, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” If you will sincerely humble your hearts before Him, empty your souls of self-esteem, and put away the natural defects of your character, and overcome your love of supremacy, and come to God as little children, He will bestow on you His Holy Spirit.' Testimonies to Ministers, page 323.


13. What warning does the Lord concerning those who seek counsel from others rather than from Him? Isaiah 30:1.

NOTE 'Some of our conferences are weak in Christian experience because their leading men, and the people have followed the example, have sought for the approval of man with far greater anxiety than for the approval of God; they have looked to man for help and counsel more than they have looked to God. They have made men their burden-bearers, and have accepted human wisdom just when and where they should depend upon God. And too often those of whom they seek counsel, need help themselves; for their souls are not right with God. The presidents of our conferences have become weak and inefficient by making flesh their arm. Trust in the wisdom of man does not facilitate growth in grace and in the knowledge of Christ.' Gospel Workers, 1892, ed., page 234.

THOUGHT QUESTION: For our own personal problems should we go to God alone or is it ever appropriate to go to someone who has more wisdom on the subject than we do for advice?


Lesson 10

'Go to the ant thou sluggard'

 **MEMORY VERSE:** 'Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?' Proverbs 6:6-9.

 **STUDY HELP:** Testimonies, volume 1, pages 405-409.

 **LESSON SCRIPTURE:** Proverbs 6:6-11.

 **LESSON AIM:** To understand the part that laziness plays in our everyday lives and spiritual lives and how to overcome it.

Introduction

'God never designed that man should live in idleness. When Adam was in Eden, means were devised for his employment. Though the race is not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong, yet he that dealeth with a slack hand will become poor. Those who are diligent in business may not always be prospered; but drowsiness and indolence are sure to grieve the Spirit of God and destroy true godliness. A stagnant pool becomes offensive; but a pure, flowing brook spreads health and gladness over the land. A man of persevering industry will be a blessing anywhere. The exercise of man's physical and mental powers is necessary to their full and proper development. God has no use for lazy men in His cause; He wants thoughtful, kind, affectionate, earnest workers. Indolence is proof of depravity. Every faculty of the mind, every bone in the body, every muscle of the limbs, shows that God designed these faculties to be used, not to remain inactive.' Testimonies, volume 4, pages 410-411.

1. What example do the ants give us? Proverbs 6:6-8; 30:25.

LESSON 10

NOTE: 'The wise man addresses the indolent in these words: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise; which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her fruit in the harvest." The habitations which the ants build for themselves show wonderful skill and perseverance. Only one little grain at a time can they handle, but by diligence and perseverance they accomplish wonders. Solomon points to their industry as a reproach to those who waste their hours in sinful idleness, or in practices which corrupt soul and body. The ant prepares for future seasons. This lesson is, by many gifted with reasoning powers, entirely disregarded. They fail entirely to prepare for that future life which God has secured for those of the fallen race who are obedient to Him.' Bible Echo, August 7, 1899.

2. What will be the result of idleness? Proverbs 6:9-11.

NOTE: 'Laziness and indolence are not the fruit borne upon the Christian tree. Indolence is a great curse. God has blessed human beings with nerves, organs, and muscles; and they are not to be allowed to deteriorate because of inaction, but are to be strengthened and kept in health by exercise. To have nothing to do is a great misfortune, for idleness ever has been and ever will be a curse to the human family.' Child Guidance, page 124.

'There must be earnest study and close investigation. Sharp, clear perceptions of truth will never be the reward of indolence. No earthly blessing can be obtained without earnest, patient, persevering effort. If men attain success in business, they must have a will to do and a faith to look for results. And we cannot expect to gain spiritual knowledge without earnest toil. Those who desire to find the treasures of truth must dig for them as the miner digs for the treasure hidden in the earth. No half-hearted, indifferent work will avail. It is essential for old and young, not only to read God's Word, but to study it with wholehearted earnestness, praying and searching for truth as for hidden treasure. Those who do this will be rewarded, for Christ will quicken the understanding.' Reflecting Christ, page 117.

3. What will happen if we choose to be lazy? Proverbs 24:30-34.

NOTE: 'Among the evils resulting from wealth, one of the greatest is the fashionable idea that work is degrading. The prophet Ezekiel declares: "Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy." Ezekiel 16:49. Here are presented before us the terrible results of idleness, which enfeebles the mind, debases the soul, and perverts the understanding, making a curse of that which was given as a blessing. It is the working man or woman who sees something great and good in life, and who is willing to bear its responsibilities with faith and hope.' Counsels to Teachers, Parents & Students, page 279.

'Man can never be saved in indolence. Christ has said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work;" and man, for whom Christ has given His life, is designated as a co-labourer with Him. No one can be saved in idleness and slothfulness.' Signs of the Times, August 18, 1890.

4. When especially does idleness cause shame? Proverbs 10:5.

NOTE: 'There is no time to sleep now, no time to indulge in useless regrets. He who ventures to slumber now will miss precious opportunities of doing good. We are granted the blessed

privilege of gathering sheaves in the great harvest; and every soul saved will be an additional star in the crown of Jesus, our adorable Redeemer. Who is eager to lay off the armour when by pushing the battle a little longer he will achieve new victories and gather new trophies for eternity?' Christian Service, page 90.

5. What will happen if we desire to do something but make no effort in that direction? Proverbs 21:25-26. Consider Proverbs 18:9.

NOTE: "There are many who want to rise in the world without effort. They are ambitious to do some great work of usefulness, while they disregard the little everyday duties which would render them helpful and make them ministers after Christ's order. They wish to do the work others are doing, but have no relish for the discipline necessary to fit them for it. This yearning desire by both men and women to do something far in advance of their present capabilities is simply causing them to make decided failures in the outset. They indignantly refuse to climb the ladder, wishing to be elevated by a less laborious process.' Testimonies, volume 4, page 417.

6. In what area especially should we put forth effort? Proverbs 4:7-9.

NOTE: '[Christians] should devote time to reading, to study, to meditation and prayer. They should store the mind with useful knowledge, committing to memory portions of Scripture, tracing out the fulfilment of the prophecies, and learning the lessons which Christ gave to His disciples. Take a book with you to read when travelling on the [train] or waiting in the depot. Employ every spare moment in doing something. In this way an effectual door will be closed against a thousand temptations. Had King David been engaged in some useful employment, he would not have been guilty of the murder of Uriah. Satan is ever ready to employ him who does not employ himself. The mind which is continually striving to rise to the height of intellectual greatness will find no time for cheap, foolish thoughts, which are the parent of evil actions. There are men of good ability among us, who, by proper cultivation, might become eminently useful; yet they do not love exertion, and, failing to see the crime of neglecting to put to the best use the faculties with which they have been endowed by the Creator, they settle down at their ease, to remain uncultivated in mind. But very few are meeting the mind of God." Testimonies, volume 4, page 412.

7. What counsel did Jesus give concerning our eternal destiny? Luke 13:24.

NOTE: The marginal reading for 'strive' is 'strive as in agony'.
'We are to do all that we can do on our part to fight the good fight of faith. We are to wrestle, to labour, to strive, to agonise to enter in at the strait gate. We are to set the Lord ever before us. With clean hands, with pure hearts, we are to seek to honour God in all our ways. Help has been provided for us in Him who is mighty to save. The spirit of truth and light will quicken and renew us by its mysterious workings; for all our spiritual improvement comes from God, not from ourselves. The true worker will have divine power to aid him, but the idler will not be sustained by the Spirit of God.' Faith & Works, page 48.

8. How much effort should you put into searching for wisdom in the things of God?

Proverbs 2:3-5.

NOTE: "“This is life eternal,” [Jesus] 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. 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. “If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.” Proverbs 2:3-5.' Christ's Object Lessons, page 114.

9. What is the reward for those who are diligent in their spiritual search? Proverbs 3:13-15.

NOTE: 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the man who consents to be moulded and fashioned after the divine similitude is the noblest specimen of the work of God. The experimental knowledge of true godliness, in daily consecration and service to God, ensures the highest culture of the mind, soul, and body. The impartation of divine power honours our sincere striving after wisdom for the conscientious use of our highest faculties to honour God and bless our fellow men. As these faculties are derived from God, and not self-created, they should be appreciated as talents from God to be employed in His service.' In Heavenly Places, page 141.

10. Who does not face up to the demands of life? Proverbs 26:14.

NOTE: 'You should have regular hours for rising, for praying, and for eating. Many waste hours of precious time in bed because it gratifies the natural inclination and to do otherwise requires an exertion. One hour wasted in the morning is lost never to be recovered. Says the wise man: “I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travelth; and thy want as an armed man.” Testimonies, volume 5, page 181.

11. What does laziness lead to? Proverbs 26:16.

NOTE: 'One reason why the sluggard is more sure of himself and his wisdom than all the men of understanding is that he is too lazy to think things out for himself. He is satisfied with preconceived opinions and adopts any view that comes to his ears as long as it suits his fancy. The kind of men who can render a reason have pondered problems long enough to be aware that there are several sides to many questions. They avoid the dogmatic ignorance of the

unthinking.' SDA Bible Commentary, volume 3, page 1038.

12. What will be the cry of those who neglected spiritual things? Jeremiah 8:20.


NOTE: 'Let church members bear in mind that the fact that their names are registered on the church books will not save them. They must show themselves approved of God, workmen that need not be ashamed. Day by day they are to build their characters in accordance with Christ's directions. They are to abide in Him, constantly exercising faith in Him. Thus they will grow up to the full stature of men and women in Christ, wholesome, cheerful, grateful Christians, led by God into clearer and still clearer light. If this is not their experience, they will be among those whose voices will one day be raised in the bitter lamentation: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and my soul is not saved! Why did I not flee to the Stronghold for refuge? Why have I trifled with my soul's salvation, and done despite to the Spirit of grace?"' Testimonies, volume 9, page 48.


13. What is the result of lethargy? Proverbs 13:4.

NOTE: 'Shake off your spiritual lethargy. Work with all your might to save your own souls and the souls of others. It is no time now to cry, "Peace and safety." It is not silver-tongued orators that are needed to give this message. The truth in all its pointed severity must be spoken. Men of action are needed, men who will labour with earnest, ceaseless energy for the purifying of the church and the warning of the world. A great work is to be accomplished; broader plans must be laid; a voice must go forth to arouse the nations. Men whose faith is weak and wavering are not the ones to carry forward the work at this important crisis. We need the courage of heroes and the faith of martyrs.' Testimonies, volume 5, page 187.
'Vigilant action is called for. Indifference and sloth will result in the loss of personal religion and of heaven.' Selected Messages, book 1, page 195.

Lesson 11

'That thou mayest prosper and be in health'

 **MEMORY VERSE:** 'If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee.' Exodus 15:26.

 **STUDY HELP:** Ministry of Healing, pages 234-240.

 **LESSON SCRIPTURE:** 3 John v.2.

 **LESSON AIM:** To educate everyone in some of the ways to look after his own health.

Introduction

'So closely is health related to our happiness that we cannot have the latter without the former.

LESSON 11

A practical knowledge of the science of human life is necessary in order to glorify God in our bodies. It is therefore of the highest importance, that among the studies selected for childhood, physiology should occupy the first place. How few know anything about the structure and functions of their own bodies, and of nature's laws! Many are drifting about without knowledge, like a ship at sea without compass or anchor; and what is more, they are not interested to learn how to keep their bodies in a healthy condition and prevent disease.' Counsels on Health, page 38.

1. How is shown the relationship between obedience to God and good health? Proverbs 3:1-2, 7-8; 4:20-22.

NOTE: The word health in Proverbs 3:8 and 4:22 can be translated 'medicine' (margin).

'The only hope of better things is in the education of the people in right principles. Let physicians teach the people that restorative power is not in drugs, but in nature. Disease is an effort of nature to free the system from conditions that result from a violation of the laws of health. In case of sickness, the cause should be ascertained. Unhealthful conditions should be changed, wrong habits corrected. Then nature is to be assisted in her effort to expel impurities and to re-establish right conditions in the system. Pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power, these are the true remedies. Every person should have a knowledge of nature's remedial agencies and how to apply them. It is essential both to understand the principles involved in the treatment of the sick and to have a practical training that will enable one rightly to use this knowledge.' Ministry of Healing, page 127.

2. How did God make this truth clear to the people of Israel? Exodus 15:26.

NOTE: 'Christ gave to Israel definite instruction in regard to their habits of life, and He assured them, "The Lord will take away from thee all sickness." [Deuteronomy 7:15.] When they fulfilled the conditions, the promise was verified to them. "There was not one feeble person among their tribes." [Psalm 135:37.] These lessons are for us. There are conditions to be observed by all who would preserve health. All should learn what these conditions are. The Lord is not pleased with ignorance in regard to His laws, either natural or spiritual. We are to be workers together with God for the restoration of health to the body as well as to the soul.' Counsels on Diet & Foods, page 121.

3. What precious gift does God bestow upon all? Acts 17:25, last part.

NOTE: 'In order to have good blood, we must breathe well. Full, deep inspirations of pure air, which fill the lungs with oxygen, purify the blood. They impart to it a bright colour and send it, a life-giving current, to every part of the body. A good respiration soothes the nerves; it stimulates the appetite and renders digestion more perfect; and it induces sound, refreshing sleep. The lungs should be allowed the greatest freedom possible. Their capacity is developed by free action; it diminishes if they are cramped and compressed. Hence the ill effects of the practice so common, especially in sedentary pursuits, of stooping at one's work. In this position it is impossible to breathe deeply. Superficial breathing soon becomes a habit, and the lungs lose their power to expand . . . Sufficient room is not given to the lower part of the chest;

the abdominal muscles, which were designed to aid in breathing, do not have full play, and the lungs are restricted in their action. Thus an insufficient supply of oxygen is received. The blood moves sluggishly. The waste, poisonous matter, which should be thrown off in the exhalations from the lungs, is retained, and the blood becomes impure. Not only the lungs, but the stomach, liver, and brain are affected. The skin becomes sallow, digestion is retarded; the heart is depressed; the brain is clouded; the thoughts are confused; gloom settles upon the spirits; the whole system becomes depressed and inactive, and peculiarly susceptible to disease. The lungs are constantly throwing off impurities, and they need to be constantly supplied with fresh air. Impure air does not afford the necessary supply of oxygen, and the blood passes to the brain and other organs without being vitalised. Hence the necessity of thorough ventilation. To live in close, ill-ventilated rooms, where the air is dead and vitiated, weakens the entire system. It becomes peculiarly sensitive to the influence of cold, and a slight exposure induces disease. It is close confinement indoors that makes many women pale and feeble. They breathe the same air over and over until it becomes laden with poisonous matter thrown off through the lungs and pores, and impurities are thus conveyed back to the blood.' Ministry of Healing, pages 272-274.

4. How does Solomon speak of sunlight? Ecclesiastes 11:7.

NOTE: "There are but few who realise that, in order to enjoy health and cheerfulness, they must have an abundance of sunlight, pure air, and physical exercise. We pity little children who are kept confined indoors when the sun is shining gloriously without. Clothe your boys and girls comfortably and properly. Then let them go out and exercise in the open air, and live to enjoy health and happiness. The pale and sickly grain-blade that has struggled up out of the cold of early spring puts out the natural and healthy deep green after enjoying for a few days the health-and-life-giving rays of the sun. Go out into the light and warmth of the glorious sun, and share with vegetation its life-giving, healing power. No room in the house should be considered furnished and adorned without the cheering, enlivening light and sunshine, which are Heaven's own free gift to man. When God had made our world, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, He said, Let there be light, and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good. Shall we close our houses, and exclude from them the light which God has pronounced good? If you would have your homes sweet and inviting, make them bright with air and sunshine. The precious sunlight may fade your carpets, but it will give a healthful colour to the cheeks of your children. If you have God's presence, and possess earnest, loving hearts, a humble home, made bright with air and sunlight will be to your family a heaven below. Exercise and a free abundant use of the air and sunlight, blessings which Heaven has freely bestowed upon all, would give life and strength." My Life Today, page 138.

Even with sunlight, we should practise temperance. It is bad for our health to get sunburnt. Also, if we eat a diet high in saturated and hydrogenated fats and go out in the sun a lot, this may cause skin cancer.

5. What is to be our motive in our eating? Ecclesiastes 10:17.

NOTE: 'The laws of health are to be obeyed. It is important that the digestive organs shall not be overtaxed. There are many who keep the stomach continually at work. It has not opportunity to recruit its strength, and the result must be digestive disorders. There should be

no eating between meals, and at least five hours should be allowed to elapse between the meals. Indigestion is the result of food taken into the stomach before the digestive organs have had time to dispose of the foregoing meal. Three meals are sufficient, and two meals are better than three. For the past thirty years I have eaten only two meals a day. The dullness from which people suffer is often caused by overeating, and by eating at irregular periods. Dyspepsia brings despondency, and one suffering from this disease, though he may profess to be a Christian, acts in an un-Christlike manner. Some claim that the inclination to eat is sufficient guide. But one may get into the habit of eating several times a day, yet this would not be best. Such a habit would produce disease, because the digestive organs would be overtaxed.' This Day With God, page 210.

6. What was mankind created to eat? Genesis 1:29. See Genesis 3:18, last part.

NOTE: 'Grains, fruits, nuts, and vegetables constitute the diet chosen for us by our Creator. These foods prepared in as simple and natural a manner as possible, are the most healthful and nourishing. They impart a strength, a power of endurance, and a vigour of intellect, that are not afforded by a more complex and stimulating diet.' Counsels on Diet and Foods, page 310.

'Health reform is an intelligent selection of the most healthful articles of food prepared in the most healthful, simplest form. Our bodies are built up from the food we eat. There is a constant breaking down of the tissues of the body; every movement of every organ involves waste, and this waste is repaired from our food. Each organ of the body requires its share of nutrition. The brain must be supplied with its portion; the bones, muscles, and nerves demand theirs. It is a wonderful process that transforms the food into blood and uses this blood to build up the varied parts of the body; but this process is going on continually, supplying with life and strength each nerve, muscle, and tissue. Let the table be made inviting and attractive, as it is supplied with the good things which God has so bountifully bestowed. Let mealtime be a cheerful, happy time. As we enjoy the gifts of God, let us respond by grateful praise to the Giver. God has given us the fruits and grains of the earth for food, that we might have unfevered blood, calm nerves, and clear minds.' My Life Today, page 132.

THOUGHT QUESTION: The typical diet consists of foods that are processed and contain colourings, flavourings, additives, etc. Can such a diet be healthy?

7. What picture of the blessing of water does Proverbs give us? Proverbs 25:25, first part.

NOTE: 'In health and in sickness pure water is one of Heaven's choicest blessings. Its proper use promotes health. It is the beverage which God provided to quench the thirst of animals and man. Drunk freely, it helps to supply the necessities of the system and assists nature to resist disease. The external application of water is one of the easiest and most satisfactory ways of regulating the circulation of the blood.' Ministry of Healing, page 237.

'Water is the best liquid possible to cleanse the tissues.' Review & Herald, July 29th 1884.

'Water treatments, wisely and skilfully given, may be the means of saving many lives. Let diligent study be united with careful treatments. Let prayers of faith be offered by the bedside of the sick. Let the sick be encouraged to claim the promises of God for themselves.' Medical Ministry, page 227.

8. What precious promise does God make to His people? Isaiah 44:3.

NOTE: 'Isaiah describes [Christ] as the “rock of ages,” and “the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” Isaiah 26:4 (margin); 32:2. And he records the precious promise, bringing vividly to mind the living stream that flowed for Israel: “When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.” “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground;” “in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.” The invitation is given, “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.” Isaiah 41:17; 44:3; 35:6; 55:1. And in the closing pages of the Sacred Word this invitation is echoed. The river of the water of life, “clear as crystal,” proceeds from the throne of God and the Lamb; and the gracious call is ringing down through the ages, “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Revelation 22:17.' Patriarchs & Prophets, page 413.

9. How did Jesus reveal His understanding of the need for rest? Mark 6:31. Consider Matthew 11:28.

NOTE: 'Though time is short, and there is a great work to be done, the Lord is not pleased to have us so prolong our seasons of activity that there will not be time for periods of rest, for the study of the Bible, and for communion with God. All this is essential to fortify the soul, to place us in a position where we shall receive wisdom from God to employ our talents in the Master's service to the highest account.' Youth's Instructor, February 3rd 1898.

10. What are we told of the unwise ness of cutting short our time for sleep? Psalm 127:2.

NOTE: 'The importance of regularity in the time for eating and sleeping should not be overlooked. Since the work of building up the body takes place during the hours of rest, it is essential, especially in youth, that sleep should be regular and abundant.' Education, page 205.

11. How are we warned about spending too much time in bed? Proverbs 6:9.

NOTE: 'The bright morning hours are wasted by many in bed. These precious hours, once lost, are gone never to return; they are lost for time and for eternity. Only one hour lost each day, and what a waste of time in the course of a year! Let the slumberer think of this, and pause to consider how he will give an account to God for lost opportunities.' Gospel Workers, 1892 ed., page 168.

12. Does our attitude to life affect our health? Proverbs 17:22.

NOTE: 'The relation that exists between the mind and the body is very intimate. When one is affected, the other sympathises. The condition of the mind affects the health to a far greater degree than many realise. Many of the diseases from which men suffer are the result of mental depression. Grief, anxiety, discontent, remorse, guilt, distrust, all tend to break down the life forces and to invite decay and death. Disease is sometimes produced, and is often greatly aggravated, by the imagination. Many are lifelong invalids who might be well if they only thought so. Courage, hope, faith, sympathy, love, promote health and prolong life. A contented mind, a cheerful spirit, is health to the body and strength to the soul. Gratitude,


rejoicing, benevolence, trust in God's love and care, these are health's greatest safeguard. The power of the will and the importance of self-control, both in the preservation and in the recovery of health, the depressing and even ruinous effect of anger, discontent, selfishness, or impurity, and, on the other hand, the marvellous life-giving power to be found in cheerfulness, unselfishness, gratitude should also be shown. There is a physiological truth, truth that we need to consider, in the scripture, "A merry [rejoicing] heart doeth good like a medicine." The true principles of Christianity open before all a source of inestimable happiness. We should encourage a cheerful, hopeful, peaceful frame of mind; for our health depends upon our so doing." My Life Today, page 151.

13. What has God given to enable us to have 'a merry heart'? Isaiah 58:13-14.

NOTE: 'All heaven was represented to me as beholding and watching upon the Sabbath those who acknowledge the claims of the fourth commandment and are observing the Sabbath. Angels were marking their interest in, and high regard for, this divine institution. Those who sanctified the Lord God in their hearts by a strictly devotional frame of mind, and who sought to improve the sacred hours in keeping the Sabbath to the best of their ability, and to honour God by calling the Sabbath a delight, these the angels were specially blessing with light and health, and special strength was given them. But, on the other hand, the angels were turning from those who failed to appreciate the sacredness of God's sanctified day, and were removing from them their light and their strength. I saw them overshadowed with a cloud, desponding, and frequently sad.' Testimonies, volume 2, page 704.


Lesson 12

'The stranger which flattereth with her words'

 **MEMORY VERSE:** 'For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and He pondereth all his goings.' Proverbs 5:21.

 **STUDY HELP:** Patriarchs and Prophets, pages 453-461.

 **LESSON SCRIPTURE:** Proverbs 5.

 **LESSON AIM:** To study what Proverbs has to say about moral standards.

Introduction

'Satan has ever achieved his greatest successes through the neglect of God's people to maintain their separation from the world, its customs, its practices and principles. There are but two great parties among men, the servants of Christ, and the servants of Satan. Their leaders are opposites in every particular. Our Lord Jesus Christ, who came to conquer the prince of darkness, says, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Here Christ makes a marked distinction between His followers and the world. Those who are of the world are in direct opposition to those who love God and keep His commandments. The heart must be kept with all diligence, that the human be not exalted above the Divine. If those who profess to love and serve God, follow blind impulse, rather than reason and conscience,

they will fall by the artifice of Satan. The affections should be guarded and controlled, lest they be placed upon unworthy objects that are forbidden in the Word of God.' Signs of the Times, January 7, 1903.

1. How can wisdom keep thee from the strange women (or men)? Proverbs 2:10-16, Proverbs 7:4-5.

NOTE: 'In the battle with inward corruption and outward temptation, even the wise and powerful Solomon was vanquished. His life began under favourable auspices. He was beloved of God; and, had virtue been preserved, his life might have closed in prosperity and honour. But he surrendered this special grace to lustful passion. In his youth he trusted in God, and looked to Him for guidance; and the Lord gave him power and wisdom that astonished the world. His fame reached to all lands. But when he began to descend the declivity of life, he yielded principle, thus placing himself in the current of evil, and separating himself from God, the foundation and source of his strength; he lost his firmness of character, and wavered, like a giddy youth, between right and wrong. His love of women was his sin. This passion he did not control in his manhood, and it proved a snare to him. He took many wives, some of whom were daughters of heathen kings; and they led him into idolatry. In his youth, wisdom had been more precious to him than the golden wedge of Ophir. But, alas! lustful passions gained the victory. He was deceived and ruined by women. What a lesson is here taught! What a demonstration of the need of strength from God to the very last! It is not safe to permit the least departure from strict integrity.' Christian Temperance & Bible Hygiene, page 128.

2. What are the results of entangling with strange women? Proverbs 2:16-19, Proverbs 5:3-6.

NOTE: 'When one commandment of the Decalogue is broken, the downward steps are almost certain. When once the barriers of female modesty are removed, the basest licentiousness does not appear exceeding sinful. Alas, what terrible results of woman's influence for evil may be witnessed in the world to-day! Through the allurements of "strange women," thousands are incarcerated in prison cells, many take their own lives, and many cut short the lives of others. How true the words of Inspiration, "Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell." Beacons of warning are placed on every side in the pathway of life, to prevent men from approaching the dangerous, forbidden ground; but, notwithstanding this, multitudes choose the fatal path, contrary to the dictates of reason, regardless of God's law, and in defiance of His vengeance. Those who would preserve physical health, a vigorous intellect, and sound morals, must "flee youthful lusts." Those who will put forth zealous and decided efforts to check the wickedness that lifts its bold, presumptions head in our midst, are hated and maligned by all wrong-doers, but they will be honoured and recompensed of God.' Sign of the Times, 1st July 1903.

3. How were Israel separated from God at the vale of Shittim? Numbers 25:1-3.

NOTE: 'At first there was little intercourse between the Israelites and their heathen neighbours, but after a time Midianitish women began to steal into the camp. Their appearance excited no alarm, and so quietly were their plans conducted that the attention of

Moses was not called to the matter. It was the object of these women, in their association with the Hebrews, to seduce them into transgression of the law of God, to draw their attention to heathen rites and customs, and lead them into idolatry. These motives were studiously concealed under the garb of friendship, so that they were not suspected, even by the guardians of the people. At Balaam's suggestion, a grand festival in honour of their gods was appointed by the king of Moab, and it was secretly arranged that Balaam should induce the Israelites to attend. He was regarded by them as a prophet of God, and hence had little difficulty in accomplishing his purpose. Great numbers of the people joined him in witnessing the festivities. They ventured upon the forbidden ground, and were entangled in the snare of Satan. Beguiled with music and dancing, and allured by the beauty of heathen vestals, they cast off their fealty to Jehovah. As they united in mirth and feasting, indulgence in wine beclouded their senses and broke down the barriers of self-control. Passion had full sway; and having defiled their consciences by lewdness, they were persuaded to bow down to idols. They offered sacrifice upon heathen altars and participated in the most degrading rites. It was not long before the poison had spread, like a deadly infection, through the camp of Israel. Those who would have conquered their enemies in battle were overcome by the wiles of heathen women. The people seemed to be infatuated. The rulers and the leading men were among the first to transgress, and so many of the people were guilty that the apostasy became national. "Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor." When Moses was aroused to perceive the evil, the plots of their enemies had been so successful that not only were the Israelites participating in the licentious worship at Mount Peor, but the heathen rites were coming to be observed in the camp of Israel. The aged leader was filled with indignation, and the wrath of God was kindled. Their iniquitous practices did that for Israel which all the enchantments of Balaam could not do, they separated them from God.' Patriarchs & Prophets, pages 454-455.

4. Who was the one who had proposed this strategy for corrupting Israel? Numbers 31:15-16. Compare Revelation 2;14.

NOTE: 'The crime that brought the judgments of God upon Israel was that of licentiousness. The forwardness of women to entrap souls did not end at Baal-peor. Notwithstanding the punishment that followed the sinners in Israel, the same crime was repeated many times. Satan was most active in seeking to make Israel's overthrow complete. Balak by the advice of Balaam laid the snare. Israel would have bravely met their enemies in battle, and resisted them, and come off conquerors; but when women invited their attention and sought their company and beguiled them by their charms, they did not resist temptations. They were invited to idolatrous feasts, and their indulgence in wine further beclouded their dazed minds. The power of self-control, their allegiance to God's law, was not preserved. Their senses were so beclouded with wine, and their unholy passions had such full sway, overpowering every barrier, that they invited temptation even to the attending of these idolatrous feasts. Those who had never flinched in battle, who were brave men, did not barricade their souls to resist temptation to indulge their basest passions. They first defiled their conscience by lewdness, and then departed from God still farther by idolatry, thus showing contempt for the God of Israel. Near the close of this earth's history Satan will work with all his powers in the same manner and with the same temptations wherewith he tempted ancient Israel just before their entering the land of promise. He will lay snares for those who claim to keep the commandments of God, and who are almost on the borders of the heavenly Canaan. He will

use his powers to their utmost in order to entrap souls, and to take God's professed people upon their weakest points. It is now the duty of God's commandment-keeping people to watch and pray, to search the Scriptures diligently, to hide the word of God in the heart, lest they sin against Him in idolatrous thoughts and debasing practices, and thus the church of God become demoralised.' Conflict & Courage, page 115.

5. Why do the scriptures give such strong warnings about strange women? Proverbs 6:23-29.

NOTE: 'Israel's sin at Beth-peor brought the judgments of God upon the nation, and though the same sins may not now be punished as speedily, they will as surely meet retribution. "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." 1 Corinthians 3:17. Nature has affixed terrible penalties to these crimes, penalties which, sooner or later, will be inflicted upon every transgressor. It is these sins more than any other that have caused the fearful degeneracy of our race, and the weight of disease and misery with which the world is cursed. Men may succeed in concealing their transgression from their fellow men, but they will no less surely reap the result, in suffering, disease, imbecility, or death. And beyond this life stands the tribunal of the judgment, with its award of eternal penalties. "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God," but with Satan and evil angels shall have their part in that "lake of fire" which "is the second death." Galatians 5:21; Revelation 20:14. "The lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil: but her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword." Proverbs 5:3, 4. "Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house: lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel: lest strangers be filled with thy wealth; and thy labours be in the house of a stranger; and thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed." Verses 8-11. "Her house inclineth unto death." "None that go unto her return again." Proverbs 2:18, 19. "Her guests are in the depths of hell." Proverbs 9:18.' Patriarchs & Prophets, page 461.

6. How does Solomon vividly describe the fate of the one unwise enough to be ensnared by a promiscuous woman? Proverbs 7:21-23.

NOTE: 'Religion should dictate and guide you in all your pursuits, and should hold absolute control over your affections. If you yield yourselves unreservedly into the hands of Christ, making His power your strength, then will your moral vision be clear to discern quality of character that you may not be deceived by appearances and make great mistakes in your friendship. Your moral power must be keen and sensitive, that it may bear severe tests and not be marred. Your integrity of soul should be so firm that vanity, display, or flattery will not move you. Oh, it is a great thing to be right with God, the soul in harmony with its Maker, so that, amid the contagion of evil example, which by its deceitful appearance would lure the soul from duty, angels may be sent to your rescue! But bear in mind, if you invite temptation, you will not have divine aid to keep you from being overcome.' Testimonies, volume 3, page 47.

7. What principles should govern all our relations with people? 2 Corinthians 6:17. See also 1 John 2:15 and James 4:4

NOTE: 'It was by associating with idolaters and joining in their festivities that the Hebrews were led to transgress God's law and bring His judgments upon the nation. So now it is by leading the followers of Christ to associate with the ungodly and unite in their amusements that Satan is most successful in alluring them into sin. "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean." 2 Corinthians 6:17. God requires of His people now as great a distinction from the world, in customs, habits, and principles, as He required of Israel anciently. If they faithfully follow the teachings of His word, this distinction will exist; it cannot be otherwise. The warnings given to the Hebrews against assimilating with the heathen were not more direct or explicit than are those forbidding Christians to conform to the spirit and customs of the ungodly. Christ speaks to us, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." 1 John 2:15. "The friendship of the world is enmity with God; whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." James 4:4. The followers of Christ are to separate themselves from sinners, choosing their society only when there is opportunity to do them good. We cannot be too decided in shunning the company of those who exert an influence to draw us away from God. While we pray, "Lead us not into temptation," we are to shun temptation, so far as possible. Many of the amusements popular in the world today, even with those who claim to be Christians, tend to the same end as did those of the heathen. There are indeed few among them that Satan does not turn to account in destroying souls. Through the drama he has worked for ages to excite passion and glorify vice. The opera, with its fascinating display and bewildering music, the masquerade, the dance, the card table, Satan employs to break down the barriers of principle and open the door to sensual indulgence. In every gathering for pleasure where pride is fostered or appetite indulged, where one is led to forget God and lose sight of eternal interests, there Satan is binding his chains about the soul.' Patriarchs & Prophets, page 458-460.

8. What warning have we been given regarding entering into relationships with unbelievers? 2 Corinthians 6:14.

NOTE: 'Never should God's people venture upon forbidden ground. Marriage between believers and unbelievers is forbidden by God. But too often the unconverted heart follows its own desires, and marriages unsanctioned by God are formed. Because of this many men and women are without hope and without God in the world. Their noble aspirations are dead; by a chain of circumstances they are held in Satan's net. Those who are ruled by passion and impulse will have a bitter harvest to reap in this life, and their course may result in the loss of their souls.' The Adventist Home, page 63.

9. What conclusion did Solomon reach after his wide experience of women? Ecclesiastes 9:9. Consider 1 Peter 3:7, Ephesians 5:33.

NOTE: 'God celebrated the first marriage. Thus the institution has for its originator the Creator of the universe. "Marriage is honourable" (Hebrews 13:4); it was one of the first gifts of God to man, and it is one of the two institutions that, after the Fall, Adam brought with him beyond the gates of Paradise. When the divine principles are recognised and obeyed in this relation, marriage is a blessing; it guards the purity and happiness of the race, it provides for man's social needs, it elevates the physical, the intellectual, and the moral nature.' Patriarchs

& Prophets, page 46.

10. What should husbands remember? Proverbs 18:22.

NOTE: 'Let a young man seek one to stand by his side who is fitted to bear her share of life's burdens, one whose influence will ennoble and refine him, and who will make him happy in her love. "A prudent wife is from the Lord." "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her. . . She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life." "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her," saying, "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all." He who gains such a wife "findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord.'" The Adventist Home, pages 45-46.

11. Will immorality be prevalent in the last days? 2 Timothy 3:1, 6. Consider Revelation 21:8.


NOTE: 'A terrible picture of the condition of the world has been presented before me. Immorality abounds everywhere. Licentiousness is the special sin of this age. Never did vice lift its deformed head with such boldness as now. The people seem to be benumbed, and the lovers of virtue and true goodness are nearly discouraged by its boldness, strength, and prevalence. The iniquity which abounds is not merely confined to the unbeliever and the scoffer. Would that this were the case, but it is not. Many men and women who profess the religion of Christ are guilty. Even some who profess to be looking for His appearing are no more prepared for that event than Satan himself. They are not cleansing themselves from all pollution. They have so long served their lust that it is natural for their thoughts to be impure and their imaginations corrupt. It is as impossible to cause their minds to dwell upon pure and holy things as it would be to turn the course of Niagara and send its waters pouring up the falls. Every Christian will have to learn to restrain his passions and be controlled by principle. Unless he does this, he is unworthy of the Christian name.' The Adventist Home, page 328.

12. What counsel does Peter offer to wives? 1 Peter 3:1-5.

NOTE: 'I write with a distressed heart that the women in this age, both married and unmarried, too frequently do not maintain the reserve that is necessary. They act like coquettes. They encourage the attentions of single and married men, and those who are weak in moral power will be ensnared. These things, if allowed, deaden the moral senses and blind the mind so that crime does not appear sinful. Thoughts are awakened that would not have been if woman had kept her place in all modesty and sobriety. She may have had no unlawful purpose or motive herself, but she has given encouragement to men who are tempted, and who need all the help they can get from those associated with them. By being circumspect, reserved, taking no liberties, receiving no unwarrantable attentions, but preserving a high moral tone and becoming dignity, much evil might be avoided.' The Adventist Home, pages 331-332.


Lesson 13

'Get wisdom, get understanding'

 **MEMORY VERSE:** “For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.” Proverbs 8:11.

 **STUDY HELP:** Prophets and Kings, pages 27-34.

 **LESSON SCRIPTURE:** Proverbs 4:7-27.

 **LESSON AIM:** What is wisdom and how do we obtain it? And why do we need wisdom to develop Christian character?

Introduction

'Its [the Bible's] principles of diligence, honesty, thrift, temperance, and purity are the secret of true success. These principles, as set forth in the book of Proverbs, constitute a treasury of practical wisdom.' Education, page 135.

1. What is wisdom? Proverbs 1:2-6.

NOTE: 'Wisdom is distinguished from knowledge in that wisdom has to do with character and conduct, whereas knowledge is primarily intellectual enlightenment. Knowledge may be merely an accumulation of unrelated and unorganised facts without the ability to apply these facts to practical life. Wisdom is the faculty of being able to make a practical use of these facts.' SDA Bible Commentary, volume 3, page 946.

2. What is the difference between wisdom and understanding? Proverbs 4:5

NOTE: Understanding is the ability to think about and organise knowledge. It is an intermediate step between knowledge and wisdom. Wisdom is the ability to apply knowledge and understanding to practical life.

See also Matthew 22:15-22, for an example of Jesus Christ's ability to apply knowledge and understanding to practical life. 'Christ's reply was no evasion, but a candid answer to the question. Holding in His hand the Roman coin, upon which were stamped the name and image of Caesar, He declared that since they were living under the protection of the Roman power, they should render to that power the support it claimed, so long as this did not conflict with a higher duty. But while peaceably subject to the laws of the land, they should at all times give their first allegiance to God.' Desire of Ages, page 602.

3. 'The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.' Proverbs 9:10. What does this verse mean? Consider Proverbs 1:7.

NOTE: The marginal reading for Proverbs 1:7 has, for 'beginning,' 'the principal part.' Fear means reverence. So the verse could read the reverence of the Lord is the main part of wisdom. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” Better than all other knowledge is an understanding of the word of God. In keeping His commandments there is great reward, and no earthly inducement should cause the Christian to waver for a moment in his allegiance. Riches, honour, and worldly pomp are but as dross that shall perish before the fire of God's

wrath.' Testimonies, volume 4, page 27.

4. When we have listened to a truth-filled sermon, what should we do? Matthew 7:24-28. Consider Proverbs 4:7.

NOTE: 'There are defects in your Christian character that must be overcome before you can perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. You love the truth, but you need to be sanctified by it.' Testimonies, volume 4, page 125.

5. Why does Solomon say wisdom is so precious? Proverbs 2:1-6. Compare Proverbs 16:16.

NOTE: 'Accepting new theories does not in itself bring new life to the soul. Even an acquaintance with facts and theories important in themselves is of little value unless put to a practical use. We need to feel our responsibility to give our souls food that will nourish and stimulate spiritual life.

“Incline thine ear unto wisdom, . . .”

“Apply thy heart to understanding . . .”

“Seek her as silver . . .”

“Search for her for hid treasures.” Ministry of Healing, page 456.

6. Why do we need wisdom? Proverbs 2:10-12. Compare Proverbs 4:5-9.

NOTE: 'Solomon declares that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” Proverbs 9:10. Concerning the value and importance of this wisdom, he writes: “Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.” Proverbs 4:7. “For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.” Proverbs 3:14, 15. He who is seeking with diligence to acquire the wisdom of human schools should remember that another school also claims him as a student. Christ was the greatest teacher the world ever saw. He brought to man knowledge direct from heaven. The lessons which He has given us are what we need for both the present and the future state. He sets before us the true aims of life, and how we may secure them. In the school of Christ, students are never graduated. Among the pupils are both old and young. Those who give heed to the instructions of the divine Teacher constantly advance in wisdom, refinement, and nobility of soul, and thus they are prepared to enter that higher school where advancement will continue throughout eternity. Infinite Wisdom sets before us the great lessons of life, lessons of duty and happiness. These are often hard to learn, but without them we can make no real progress. They may cost us effort and tears, and even agony, but we must not falter or grow weary. We shall at last hear the Master's call, “Child, come up higher.” Councils to Parents, Teachers & Students, page 51.

7. What have we been given to enable us to distinguish between the wisdom of God and worldly wisdom? 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

NOTE: 'The truths of God's word are not mere sentiments, but the utterances of the Most High. He who makes these truths a part of his life becomes in every sense a new creature. He is

LESSON 13

not given new mental powers, but the darkness that through ignorance and sin has clouded the understanding is removed. The words, "A new heart also will I give you" (Ezekiel 36:26), mean, A new mind will I give you. This change of heart is always attended by a clear conception of Christian duty, an understanding of truth. The clearness of our view of truth will be proportionate to our understanding of the word of God. He who gives the Scriptures close, prayerful attention will gain clear comprehension and sound judgment, as if in turning to God he had reached a higher plane of intelligence.' Councils to Parents, Teachers & Students, page 452.

8. How did Solomon get wisdom? 1 Kings 3:5-14. See 2 Chronicles 1:7-12.

NOTE: 'The language used by Solomon while praying to God before the ancient altar at Gibeon reveals his humility and his strong desire to honour God. He realised that without divine aid he was as helpless as a little child to fulfil the responsibilities resting on him. He knew that he lacked discernment, and it was a sense of his great need that led him to seek God for wisdom. In his heart there were no selfish aspirations for a knowledge that would exalt him above others. He desired to discharge faithfully the duties devolving upon him, and he chose the gift that would be the means of causing his reign to bring glory to God. Solomon was never so rich or so wise or so truly great as when he confessed, "I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in." Prophets & Kings, page 30.

9. What was the result of Solomon receiving wisdom? 1 Kings 4:29-31. See 1 Kings 3:16-28.

NOTE: 'The name of Jehovah was greatly honoured during the first part of Solomon's reign. The wisdom and righteousness revealed by the king bore witness to all nations of the excellency of the attributes of the God whom he served. For a time Israel was as the light of the world, showing forth the greatness of Jehovah. Not in the surpassing wisdom, the fabulous riches, the far-reaching power and fame that were his, lay the real glory of Solomon's early reign; but in the honour that he brought to the name of the God of Israel through a wise use of the gifts of Heaven.' Prophets & Kings, page 32-33.

10. How do we get wisdom? James 1:5.

NOTE: 'The God whom we serve is no respecter of persons. He who gave to Solomon the spirit of wise discernment is willing to impart the same blessing to His children today. "If any of you lack wisdom," His word declares, "let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." James 1:5. 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.' Prophets & Kings, page 31.

11. How are the wise and the foolish contrasted? Proverbs 12:15-23. Consider Matthew 25:1-12.

NOTE: 'Without the Spirit of God, a knowledge of His word is of no avail. The theory of truth, unaccompanied by the Holy Spirit, cannot quicken the soul or sanctify the heart. One may be

familiar with the commands and promises of the Bible; but unless the Spirit of God sets the truth home, the character will not be transformed. Without the enlightenment of the Spirit, men will not be able to distinguish truth from error, and they will fall under the masterful temptations of Satan.' Christ's Object Lessons, page 408.

12. What sort of wisdom was Eve promised from eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Genesis 3:5.

NOTE: 'By partaking of this tree, [the tempter] declared, they would attain to a more exalted sphere of existence and enter a broader field of knowledge. He himself had eaten of the forbidden fruit, and as a result had acquired the power of speech. And he insinuated that the Lord jealously desired to withhold it from them, lest they should be exalted to equality with Himself. It was because of its wonderful properties, imparting wisdom and power, that He had prohibited them from tasting or even touching it.' Patriarchs & Prophets, page 54.

13. How may we know our understanding of scripture is correct, when others have a completely different understanding? Isaiah 28:10.

NOTE: 'We know that there are heresies and fables in our world at the present time, and we want to know what is truth. It becomes us to search carefully for ourselves that we may gain this knowledge. We cannot do this with a mere reading of the Scriptures, but we must compare scripture with scripture. We must search the Scriptures for ourselves, so that we shall not be led astray; and while many may be led astray because there are all kinds of doctrines in our world, there is one truth. Many may come to you and tell you that they have the truth, but it is your privilege to search the Scriptures for yourself. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." We must be acquainted with the Scriptures ourselves, that we may understand the true reason of the hope that is within us. The apostle tells us that we are to give to every man that asks us a reason of the hope that is within us, with meekness and fear. "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." It is not enough to merely read, but the Word of God must enter into our hearts and our understanding, in order that we may be established in the blessed truth. If we should neglect to search the Scriptures for ourselves, that we may know what is truth, then if we are led astray, we are accountable for it. We must search the Scriptures carefully, so that we will know every condition that the Lord has given us; and if we have minds of limited capacity, by diligently searching the word of God we may become mighty in the Scriptures, and may explain them to others.' Lift Him Up, page 114.

Closing Thoughts

'Through his own experience Solomon learned that, "though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before Him: but it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God."

'In meekness and lowliness Solomon "taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs." He "sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth." "The words of the wise," he declared, "are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd. And further, by these, my son, be admonished."

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”

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NOTE



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