



LIVE WISELY

STUDY GUIDE

WEEK ONE — AUGUST 6

LIVE WISELY—BEGIN BY TRUSTING THE LORD



READ: Proverbs 3:1-8

BOTTOM LINE: This first section of Proverbs chapter 3 focuses on how to begin to trust in the Lord and gain wisdom—while also realizing the physical self as well as the spiritual/intellectual self are connected and affect one another.

As we look at, think about, and get in touch with this passage, we find—if we’re going to **LIVE WISELY**—Solomon teaches us to:

BE WILLING TO LEARN FROM THE WISDOM OF OTHERS (Proverbs 3:1, 2)

Solomon is writing this passage to his son—and encouraging him to learn his lesson by listening to his father. For many of us, our first teachers were our parents and grandparents—and early on, we learned there were things we didn’t know—and we were blessed to learn from their experience and knowledge. Likewise, there have been people in our lives who have served as mentors in one way or another. Words and knowledge have their power, but the real power is found in understanding and applying the lessons we learned. Remember: information plus application results in transformation.

- Who are the mentors who’ve shaped and molded your life and character?
- Who are you mentoring?

YOUR NAME REFLECTS WHO OWNS YOUR HEART (Proverbs 3:3, 4)

A good family name is a gift—and a name that reflects the love, holiness, and character of God is invaluable. We’re called to remember who we are and to Whom we belong. Early in his forty-year reign, King Solomon’s name and reputation preceded him—even Jesus refers to “Solomon in all of his glory” (Matthew 6:29). In this passage, Solomon is telling his son the value of his name will be determined by his character. Your name and what you are known for matters to God—because your name makes an impact. People are waiting to see and hear about God from you.

- What “brand message” does your name suggest when someone hears it?
- When people look at your life, what do they hear it saying about God?

TRUST IN GOD’S TRUTH AND NOT YOUR OWN (Proverbs 3:5, 6)

Trust in the Lord. He is absolute, objective, eternal truth. Don’t trust in or lean on your own version of truth—which all too often is fickle, thin, and changes depending on the situation. The battle raging in our culture today is a battle for truth. Is it transcendent and eternal—or does it shift and change with the circumstance? This is not a new concept. The night before Jesus was crucified, King Herod Antipas wanted to know what is truth.

While “truth incarnate” was standing right in front of him, Herod wanted to engage in an intellectual exercise and debate the nature or existence of truth. We’re called to ensure we don’t place all our weight on what we understand—rather, we’re to lean on the Lord and put our weight on Him.

- Do you believe in absolute truth? What does it mean to you? What or who is your source?

BE HUMBLE ENOUGH TO ADMIT YOU MAY BE WRONG (Proverbs 3:7, 8)

A thin line exists between confidence and arrogance. All too often, we tend to think we must always be right. We’re reminded in this passage to be careful not be wise in our own eyes—always looking to ourselves—but rather to look to the Lord.

- What does it mean to “not be wise in your own eyes”—and how do we do that?

RESPOND:

- What do you hear the Holy Spirit saying to you?
- What are you going to do about it?
- Who do you need to tell?
- How can the group help?

WEEK TWO – AUGUST 13

LIVE WISELY—IN YOUR HOME



READ: Proverbs 3:9-18

BOTTOM LINE: This second section of Proverbs chapter 3 begins to bring wisdom “home” and make it more personal. Our finances, our families, our lives can all show and share what true wisdom is and how true wisdom changes our view of everything.

As we look at, think about, and get in touch with this passage, we find—if we’re going to **LIVE WISELY**—Solomon teaches us to:

HONOR GOD WITH WHAT BELONGS TO GOD (Proverbs 3:9, 10)

Wisdom determines our priorities by first honoring the Lord with our first fruits and trusting He’ll provide more than enough to meet our needs. The Israelites understood God’s economy: the first tenth (a tithe) —the first fruits—the first-born—all belonged to God. God was the source of all blessings in their lives, and the way they stewarded those resources was a reflection of faithfulness on their part. Likewise, their faithfulness opened the hand of blessing from God on their lives. God’s economy involves our obedience with what He’s given us to stretch and grow our faith.

BE WILLING TO SUBMIT TO GOD’S DISCIPLINE (Proverbs 3:11, 12)

Wisdom is found in not only letting the Lord provide—but allowing the Lord to discipline, correct, rebuke, get our attention, and change our course for the sake of love and delight. The Lord is a good God who also disciplines. Children don’t “love” discipline at the outset—but those who’ve been blessed by parents who taught them boundaries, right from wrong, proper ways to treat and live with others, to revere and serve God, and a host of other patterns that are being forgotten in our “permissive” society understand discipline is administered from a place of love.

PRODUCE THE KIND OF FRUIT THAT HONORS GOD (Proverbs 3:13-17)

Wisdom is the most beautiful and valuable part of life. Godly wisdom affects every aspect of our lives. We’re called to seek it, find it, and apply it to our lives.

MAKE SURE YOU’RE ROOTED IN THE THINGS OF GOD (Proverbs 3:18)

Wisdom is like a tree of life that continues to grow, continues to be present, continues to provide. When someone is deeply connected to God, the life they lead and the fruit they bear flow from a changed heart. Two powerful images in scripture speak to this text. The first is Psalm 1—which speaks clearly about the kind of life and fruit a righteous life produces and the importance of being connected to water (Jesus, the Living Water). And the second is Jesus’ teaching on the Vine and the branches in the John’s Gospel, chapter 15—which vividly describes the importance of being connected to Jesus—the Vine.

- What do you hear being said in these verses of Proverbs?
- Do you think we understand all we have comes from God and that we're to honor Him with it?
- How willing do you think we are to submit to God's discipline? Do we accept it—or resist it?
- Do you think we understand the importance of seeking godly wisdom and the role it plays in our lives?
- How serious do you think we are in seeking to be rooted in the things of God?

RESPOND:

- What do you hear the Holy Spirit saying to you?
- What are you going to do about it?
- Who do you need to tell?
- How can the group help?

WEEK THREE — AUGUST 20

LIVE WISELY—AS A STEWARD OF LIFE AND CREATION



READ: Proverbs 3:19-26

BOTTOM LINE: This third section of Proverbs chapter 3 reminds us wisdom impacts all of creation and all that is within us. This section also begins to describe the personal benefits of wisdom and how wisdom from the Lord impacts the individual.

As we look at, think about, and get in touch with this passage, we find—if we're going to **LIVE WISELY**—Solomon teaches us to:

REMEMBER GOD'S WISDOM IS REFLECTED IN CREATION (Proverbs 3:19, 20)

The Lord's wisdom created the earth. We're called to look around and see His wisdom right in front of us and all around us. The creation story in Genesis chapters 1 and 2 reveal something amazing about our world at every turn. When God had finished speaking some aspect of creation into existence, He announced it was "good." We need to see the hand of God all around us in His creation—and as we do, we likewise see His wisdom in the divine design of it all.

UNDERSTAND WISDOM IS TO BE TREASURED MORE THAN TEMPORARY WEALTH (Proverbs 3:21-24) See wisdom as your most prized jewelry that reminds you and gives you pride because wisdom will keep you safe and allow you to have one of the greatest gifts in life—sound sleep because of peace. While wisdom comes with age and experience in the school of life, the deeper and enduring lessons are found in submission and obedience to God—the source of wisdom. One of the things wisdom gives us is the long view—the ability to rise above the fray of day-to-day concerns and measure them against the long arch of God's faithfulness and justice. God is faithful. The sun rises and the rain falls upon the just and the unjust, but God turns all circumstances together for the good of those who love Him and live as called according to His purposes.

TAKE COURAGE—REMEMBER GOD IS WITH YOU WHEREVER YOU GO (Proverbs 3:25, 26)

The Lord's wisdom promises He is with you and all around you—no matter what happens. Life happens. This sinful, broken world hurts us. People die. Tragedies unfold. Adversity strikes—but we're not alone. In the first chapter of Joshua, Moses has died—and his young Lieutenant, Joshua, is about to step up to lead the Israelites. Joshua is understandably nervous and apprehensive. In that moment, God speaks these words of truth into his soul: "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9). This passage from Solomon—and God's words to Joshua—remind us God is faithful, and He's always with us—no matter what we face.

- Do you think we see the wisdom of God’s design in His creation—or do we tend to miss it? Are we even looking?
- Do we seek God’s wisdom that gives us “the long view”—or do we tend to utilize the wisdom of the world and miss what God has for us?
- How difficult is it to sense God is with you when you face trying or difficult times? What helps you sense His closeness?

RESPOND:

- What do you hear the Holy Spirit saying to you?
- What are you going to do about it?
- Who do you need to tell?
- How can the group help?

WEEK FOUR — AUGUST 27

LIVE WISELY—IN RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS



READ: Proverbs 3:27-35

BOTTOM LINE: This fourth section of Proverbs chapter 3 reveals how wisdom impacts our treatment of others—and the Lord’s response to how we treat others. Note that wisdom isn’t just for us to know (knowledge puffs up)—wisdom should cause us to act and live and love as the Lord calls us (love builds up).

As we look at, think about, and get in touch with this passage, we find—if we’re going to **LIVE WISELY**—Solomon teaches us to:

BE GENEROUS WITH WHAT YOU HAVE (Proverbs 3:27, 28)

The Lord’s wisdom calls us to respond in real time to real people with real needs. We’re to have a generous spirit—which is often the first glimpse of others seeing God at work in us. God has strategically placed us in the lives of other people and given us the opportunity to be salt and light in real time. This means being responsive to both expected and unexpected times of generosity.

BE CAREFUL ABOUT MISPLACED BLAME (Proverbs 3:29, 30)

Misery and lack of wisdom can cause us to blame others or wish ill on them when they’ve done nothing wrong. One of the signs of immaturity is the unwillingness or inability to accept responsibility for our own actions or inactions. We tend to live our lives in open animosity toward “them” for what “they” did. We need to understand the best place to begin making an honest assessment is in the mirror—and even when there’s some form of offense that’s occurred, our soul is better served—and we’re much more ready for reconciliation when we’ve done the heart work in ourselves first.

CHOOSE PEACE WHENEVER POSSIBLE (Proverbs 3:31)

Violence and personal power isn’t the goal—nor is it the wisdom of the Lord. One of the most important things we can do is seek the capacity to forgive and avoid retaliation—and to have the capacity to take the high road. Unfortunately, this attribute is lacking in many places these days—especially among followers of Jesus. Our philosophy leans more toward an “eye for an eye”—rather than “turn the other cheek.” We tend to want God to “dash our enemies against the rocks” rather than “love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us.”

MAKE YOUR HOME YOUR FIRST MISSION FIELD (Proverbs 3:32-35)

The wisdom of the Lord creates upright people with blessed homes filled with favored people living for an honorable inheritance. We are to live our lives in a consistent manner—both privately and publicly. Too often, we find ourselves publicly demonstrating a godly lifestyle—while something far from godly exists at home. When this happens, the primary mission field (the home) suffers.

In these instances, the legacy of the family isn't determined by public appearance—but by private reality. Do all you can—so much as it depends upon you—to shape the legacy of your home by being the same person in private you're known to be in public—to make your home your first mission field.

- When it comes to responding to someone else's needs, do you find it easy—or difficult?
- What are some ways you've been able to respond to another's need?
- Do you think we take the time to look in the mirror before we place blame on another? Why is this important?
- What tends to get in the way of our seeking peace instead of revenge?
- Do you think we see our homes as a primary mission field? Why is this so important?

RESPOND:

- What do you hear the Holy Spirit saying to you?
- What are you going to do about it?
- Who do you need to tell?
- How can the group help?