

Alive and Well: The Art of Living Wisely

LESSON GOALS

The point of every session is a main idea with the goal of informing our knowing, feeling, and doing.

MAIN IDEA: God's wisdom leads us into an abundant life that impacts the world for His glory.

Head Change: To know that God's wisdom is contrary to the world's wisdom.

Heart Change: To celebrate that God's wisdom is profitable and powerful.

Life Change: To habitually seek out God's wisdom, and intentionally apply it to the circumstances of our everyday lives.

ICEBREAKER:

Does the idea of a silent disco appeal to you – everyone at a party dancing to whatever (different) music they choose, transmitted through wireless headphones? Have you ever been to one, and found it hilarious to watch?

Do you ever feel like people around you are living their lives to the rhythms of music you can't hear?

In this series focusing on the book of Proverbs, we will encourage you to embrace the abundant life Jesus promised us by learning to listen for the music of God's wisdom in a world that marches to a different drumbeat and sings offkey. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we can do just that.

As you watch today, write down how Pastor Lance Watson answers these questions.

Which books of the Bible are known as the 'wisdom literature'?

What are some of the advantages of living according to God's wisdom?

What's the difference between a promise and a principle?

A relationship with _____ is essential for understanding and applying God's wisdom in the book of Proverbs.

REVIEW

Pastor Lance Watson opens this session by explaining that in a world of 'false notes', God's wisdom gives us a 'better music' to live by.

This week, where have you heard the discordant notes of an unwise, ungodly advertisement, TV series, organizational policy, or worldview? Has God shown you that perhaps your own actions and attitudes are off-key?

The Bible doesn't ignore life's hard questions. Rather, it deals with everything from relationships to sexuality to finances to the sheer battle for survival to our hopes for the future, and so much more. The book of Proverbs is a wealth of wisdom for every aspect of our human existence.

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Do you have a favorite verse in Proverbs? Share about a time in your life when it was particularly meaningful, giving you clarity or resolve.

Proverbs 3:13–20 says, ‘Joyful is the person who finds wisdom, the one who gains understanding. For wisdom is more profitable than silver, and her wages are better than gold. Wisdom is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her. She offers you long life in her right hand, and riches and honor in her left. She will guide you down delightful paths; all her ways are satisfying. Wisdom is a tree of life to those who embrace her; happy are those who hold her tightly. By wisdom the Lord founded the earth; by understanding He created the heavens. By His knowledge the deep fountains of the earth burst forth, and the dew settles beneath the night sky.’

Imagine you’re chatting with someone about a decision you’re making. She says, ‘Just do what feels right to you. Follow your heart!’ How might you paraphrase these verses from Proverbs to explain the benefits of getting God to weigh in on things?

Pastor Lance Watson says, ‘The world is constantly telling me what’s valuable. Buy this, wear this, drive this, think like this, live here, watch that, eat this, take that, follow these...’ **Think back over this past month. Where have you been urged to invest your time, money, or attention? Where did those convincing voices come from?**

Proverbs 3:13–20 shows us that wisdom is not only precious and lifegiving but it’s also the raw material God used to create the universe. So, wisdom isn’t just profitable. It’s powerful. **Do you find it hard to believe God’s profitable, powerful wisdom is yours for the taking, and that He *wants* you to have it? Why or why not?**

Pastor Lance Watson explains that the book of Proverbs isn’t a quick fix for life. It’s not a book of personal *promises*. It’s a book of *principles*. **Have you ever read Proverbs and thought, ‘This is so not the real world!’? Can you think of verses in Proverbs that you find overly simplistic, in relation to the complexities of your life? Which principles from Proverbs have you taught your kids or shared with others, knowing they don’t necessarily guarantee plain sailing? How might claiming a principle as a personal promise lead to disappointment?**

The principles found in Proverbs aren’t always easy to adopt because they are diametrically opposed to the ways of the world around us. **How have you experienced this personally?**

The wisdom God calls us to live by only becomes music to our ears when we’re in a relationship with Jesus. **Can you share about a time when you were tempted to do things the world’s way but your relationship with Jesus kept you aligned with true wisdom? Do you regret doing things God’s way? How might the situation have turned out if you’d danced to a different tune?**

BIBLE EXPLORATION

Ecclesiastes and Job are part of the Bible’s wisdom literature, written to teach us how to live life God’s way. Pastor Lance Watson makes the point that while Proverbs is like a roadmap to life, Ecclesiastes and Job are handbooks for what to do when there’s a huge pileup on the highway.

Read Ecclesiastes 7:1–14. **How is the structure of this passage like sections of Proverbs you’ve read?**

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The Teacher – the writer of Ecclesiastes – spends his life looking for meaning and purpose in every possible place. Finally in Ecclesiastes 12:13–14, the last two verses of this book, he tells us he’s discovered the point of it all. **How would you paraphrase his conclusion? Ultimately, what brings satisfaction and peace?**

It’s helpful to contrast the book of Job with the book of Proverbs. Despite doing everything right and living according to God’s wisdom, Job experiences utter disaster. Read Job 42:1-6. **Does Job forsake the principles and purposes of God because of his suffering, or does he continue to live by them? Why?**

LAST WORD

As you continue with this series, considering the wisdom of Proverbs as it relates to various facets of your life, lean into your relationship with Jesus. Listen for the true notes of wisdom above the discordant noise of the world around you. ‘Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take’ (Proverbs 3:5–6).

DEEPER WALK

Select at least one activity below to complete before sharing next week.

Read: The book of Proverbs has exactly 31 chapters. Commit to reading a chapter every day for one month. Underline the principles and instructions that challenge, convict, or comfort you.

Write: Set a timer for ten minutes and spend that time free-writing any thoughts that come to mind as you consider the question: *Am I living according to God’s wisdom, or am I doing it all my way?* Allow God’s Spirit to guide your reflections.

Pray: Write out a prayer, or meet with a friend to pray, asking God to increase your desire for wisdom. Pray that God would turn your life into a symphony of His love and power, to bless those around you.