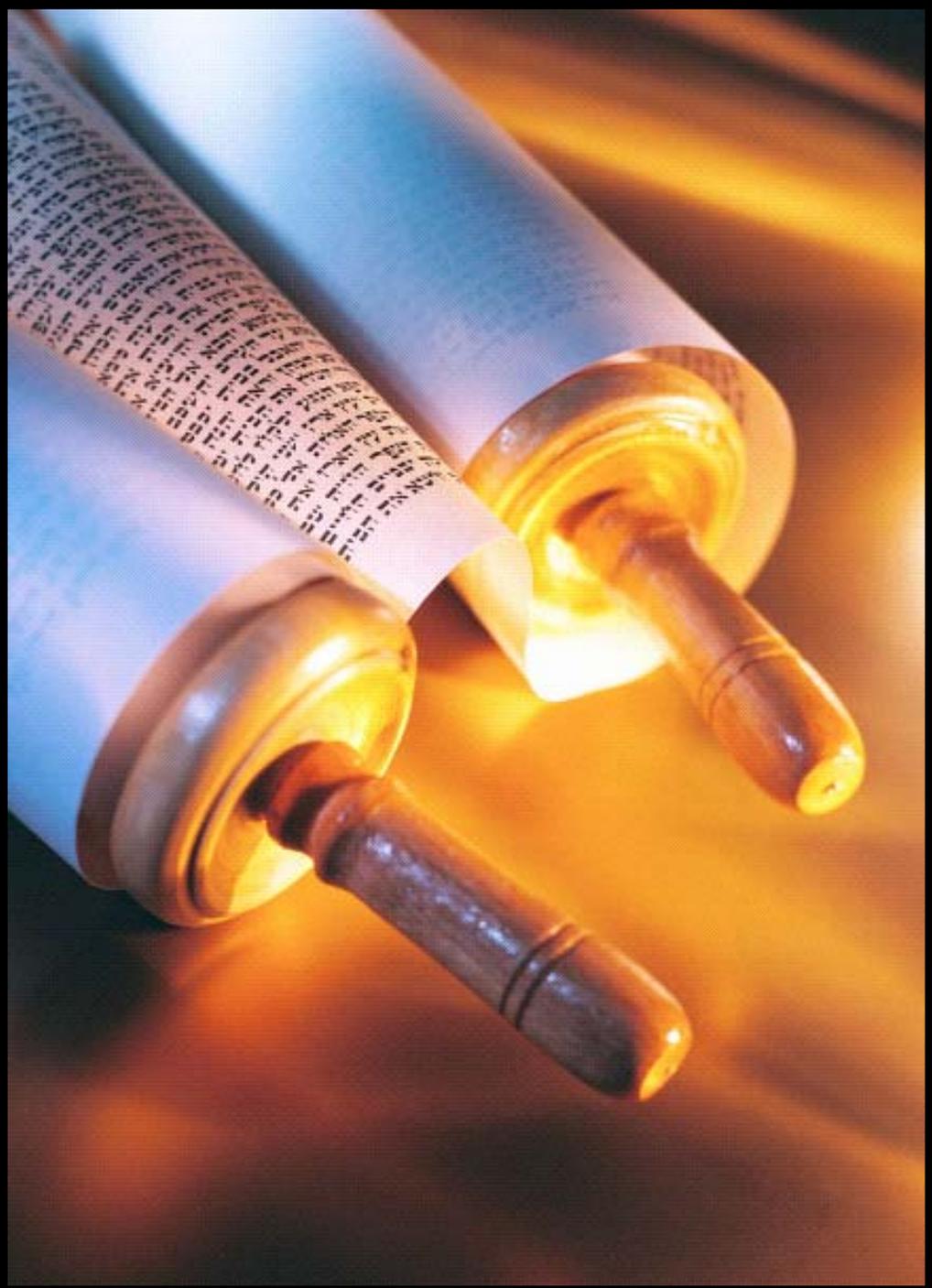


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**Adult
Bible Study
in
Simplified
English**

**Study
Guide**



Psalms and Proverbs
SONGS AND SAYINGS OF FAITH

Phyllis Merritt

ADULT BIBLE STUDY IN SIMPLIFIED ENGLISH **Study Guide**

Psalms and Proverbs: Songs and Sayings of Faith

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Introduction

Psalms and Proverbs: *Songs and Sayings of Faith*

The Book of Psalms is the most read book in the Bible. The 150 chapters are songs used by the people of Israel and by believers in the past. We use them now as a word of praise *to* God in worship and a word of teaching *from* God.

It is good to read Psalms when we are feeling happy and when we are feeling sad. They give us help when we have problems. Psalms help us praise God. Psalms help us pray to God, help us have faith, and teach us to live the right way.

The book of Psalms is easy to find in the Bible. It is in the middle of the Bible. Some were written by David. Others were not. They were placed in an order to help us know what God’s people went through in the past. There are different kinds of psalms: (1) hymns of praise to God, (2) songs from many asking for help from God, (3) the song of one person asking for help, (4) thanksgiving, and (5) hymns to the king.

A psalm often starts by looking at the world with its troubles and problems. Then the writer turns to God, sometimes in anger, or in a cry for help, or in thanksgiving. When he sees God, he sees things differently. The writer finds hope and strength from God. This leads him to give praise to

Unit 1: The Book of Psalms: Songs of Faith

Lesson 1	The Way to True Happiness	Psalms 1
Lesson 2	Asking God for His Help	Psalms 3:1-8; 13:1-6; 22:1-5, 22-24
Lesson 3	Trust God—He Cares	Psalms 23:1-6; 27:1-6
Lesson 4	Desiring God	Psalms 42-43
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Lesson 9	Give Thanks for God’s Blessings	Psalms 116

Unit 2: The Book of Proverbs: Sayings of Faith

Lesson 10	The Beginning of Wisdom	Proverbs 1:7; 3:1-20
Lesson 11	Wisdom for Right Living	Proverbs 11:1-11, 17-21, 23-25, 28
Lesson 12	Wisdom for Every Area of Life	Proverbs 22:17-25; 23:10-11, 19-28; 24:10-12, 15-20
Lesson 13	Wisdom with Other People	Proverbs 25:11-23; 26:18-28

Psalms and Proverbs: Songs and Sayings of Faith

Word List

Unit 1

Lesson 1

wicked: people whose hearts are not at rest because they do not do what God wants; they cannot give good advice

sinners: people who choose to do what is wrong; their wrong way of living becomes a habit, a way of living

scoffers: people who laugh at God or say there is no God

habit: something you always do; you can do it without thinking about it

temptations: a thing or person which makes us think about doing something wrong

Lesson 2

lament: psalms that tell your struggles, sufferings, and disappointments to the Lord
complaint: an expression of displeasure, or anger

petition: to ask God for something

depressed: to feel heavy inside because you are very sad

Lesson 3

shepherd: one who herds or takes care of sheep

host: the one who invites people to his or her home and takes care of them while they are there

Lesson 4

thirsty: to want water

desire: to want, wish for, feel a need for

soul: the part of us that lives on after our bodies die

Lesson 5

jealous: to want what others have; to wish you could do something someone else can do

envy: desire to have what another person has

punish: to correct so that a person will change his bad ways

Lesson 6

worship: tell someone that they are very great and that you love them

shield: what a soldier holds over himself to stop things from hitting him

Word List

Lesson 7

everlasting: having no end

God's anger: because God is holy and pure, His anger is against that which is unholy and wrong; God loves enough to hate what hurts us, to hate what is evil

loving-kindness: God's beauty and mercy and kindness; giving without expecting to take

Lesson 8

doxology: from the Greek word *doxa* (glory) and *logos* (word or speaking); a short hymn of praise to God

holy: the pure, loving nature of God; separate from evil

punish: to correct so the person doing wrong will change his ways

Lesson 9

mercy: loving-kindness; to hold back judgment; God's love to people; when God does not remember the bad things we do; the love which God shows when He forgives

rest: trust, rely; to be safe

Unit 2

Lesson 10

discipline: to train; to teach the one who is disciplined some lessons in life; self-control; sometimes punishment

fear God: knowing God's power; giving honor, respect, and reverence to God

motto: a brief statement used to express a principle, goal, or ideal

Lesson 11

greed: wanting to get more than you need or deserve

generosity: willing to give freely

humble: not proud; not thinking too much of yourself

right living: living the way God says; choosing to do what is right in God's eyes

Lesson 12

abuse: to use in the wrong way

pornography: words or pictures used to make people want to commit sex sins

Lesson 13

appropriate: the right thing to do at the right time; correct; proper

branding iron: a piece of metal that is bent into a special shape (letter or symbol), then heated, and placed on an animal's skin. The symbol is burned into the skin to show who owns the animal

gossip: talking about others, whether true or not

rude: not polite; to have bad manners; not showing respect

Psalms



Adult Bible Study
in Simplified English

Lesson 1

The Way to True Happiness
Psalm 1

Lesson 2

Asking God for His Help
Psalms 3:1-8; 13:1-6;
22:1-5, 22-24

Lesson 3

Trust God—He Cares
Psalms 23:1-6; 27:1-6

Lesson 4

Desiring God
Psalms 42-43

Lesson 5

Look to God—Not at Man
Psalm 73

Lesson 6

Worship Together in Joy
Psalm 84

Lesson 7

Live a Life That Matters
Psalm 90

Lesson 8

Praise for God's Goodness
Psalms 100, 103

Lesson 9

Give Thanks for God's
Blessings
Psalm 116

THE BOOK OF PSALMS: SONGS OF FAITH

The Book of Psalms is probably the most read and best loved book in the Old Testament. Psalms are used to sing praises to God and to bring His message to God's people. They are used as prayers of thanksgiving. They are a way to tell God how we feel when we hurt. Reading psalms is a way of talking to God.

We will study only a few of the 150 psalms in the Bible. They will be taken from the five Books of Psalms. All of these psalms speak of faith in a personal way. True happiness comes from God. Living God's way brings joy. These psalms also tell how we suffer when we do not live in the right way.

It has been said that the psalms are "a school of prayer." They give us examples of how to pray and praise. They also teach us to share with God our deepest feelings and dreams. The psalms we will study show how to find strength and comfort in God. Praying the words of the psalms help us to tell God about our hope and trust in Him.

*Phyllis Merritt wrote the study guide for **Psalms/Proverbs**. She is a graduate of the University of New Mexico and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. She was a missionary for 32 years in the United States, working in New York City and on the Jicarilla Apache Indian reservation in New Mexico. She has taught English-as-a-Second Language since 1970 and has traveled to China to teach seven times. She and her husband, Jack, recently spent three years as Missionary-in-Residence with International Students at Baylor University. They are members of Columbus Avenue Baptist Church in Waco where she is co-director of Neighbors International Program.*



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Psalm 1

Memory Verse

“Happy is the man who does not walk in the way sinful men tell him to, or stand in the path of sinners, or sit with those who laugh at the truth.”
(Psalm 1:1)

Word List

wicked: people whose hearts are not at rest because they do not do what God wants; they cannot give good advice

sinners: people who choose to do what is wrong; their wrong way of living becomes a habit, a way of living

scoffers: people who laugh at God or say there is no God

(continued on
next page)

The Way to True Happiness

What would it take to make you happy? Lots of money? A new job? If you were better looking? Good health? Family members who did what you wanted? If your team wins a game? We can find the way to be truly happy in Psalm 1. This psalm has two parts. First, we learn about the happy man. Then we learn what will happen to bad people.

Psalm 1 was an important start for this book of songs. It tells about faith and why we must obey God to find the only path to true and lasting happiness.

This is a *Wisdom Psalm* because it teaches the difference between the lives of the wise and foolish, between the lives of the good and the bad. We learn we can be happy if we have a right relationship with God and do not follow those who do wrong.

Learning to Say No (Psalm 1:1)

This verse begins with words that mean: “How very happy is the one who learns to say no to what is bad for him.” We learn first what *not* to do if we want to be happy. Do not:

—Walk where the **wicked** say to go;

—Stand with **sinners**;

—Sit with **scoffers**, those who laugh at what God teaches.

Three sets of words in this first verse tell us about those who do wrong. These words are like steps going from smaller to bigger wrongs. When men are living in sin, they often go from bad to worse:

habit: something you always do; you can do it without thinking about it

temptations: a thing or person which makes us think about doing something wrong

Things to Think About

1. Are you ever tempted to listen to others who may not tell you the right things to do?
2. How do those who are right with God differ from those who are wicked?
3. What happens to the person who finds joy in the law of the Lord?
4. What advice can you give to someone so they can live a happy life?
5. Read Psalm 1 every morning and every evening for one week. Each day write the six verses. At the end of the week, see how much more you understand about

Actions	Wrong kinds of friends	Steps to sin
walk with	wicked	listening
stand with	sinful	doing what sinners do
sit with	mockers—those who laugh	teaching others to sin

Sin may start with something simple, but it always grows. God wants to bless us. He cannot do that if we walk in the way sinful people tell us. This is the way of unrest. We cannot choose to stand where sinners stand or stay with those who do evil.

God’s Way Is the Way to Happiness (1:2)

If we obey God’s laws, we will have joy. Joy is when our hearts feel happy. We may need to change the way we think about God’s laws. This is the old way of thinking—if we drive too fast, something happens. We get a ticket. We think, “If I obey the traffic law, *nothing* happens.” But if we obey God’s laws, *something very important* happens. We have joy.

What are God’s laws? They are not just a list of “Do this” or “Don’t do that.” God’s laws are God’s plans to show us how to have a life which gives us joy.

How can we know God’s laws? Think about them all the time—not just night and day, but in good times or bad times. Repeat God’s Words again and again. Thinking about God and His Word should be a **habit**.

If you could not read or did not have your Bible, how much of God’s Word could you remember? What would your answer be if someone asked you, “What is in the Bible?” Can

you repeat many words from the Bible to yourself? Think about God's law. Choose to know God's truth.

Picture of the Happy Life (1:3)

The writer said the man who finds joy in the Lord's law is like a tree growing by the water. The tree is planted where it has plenty of water. This tree will give fruit and have leaves that never dry up.

The water which God gives us is new life. The fruit is the good things we do. The person who does what God wants is blessed. He is always fresh and full of life.

Troubles and **temptations** will come. We can still stand strong. Roots grow deeper as we hold on to God's law. We will know what God wants us to do.

Have you ever had a plant and forgotten to water it? It dries up and dies. That will not happen to the person who obeys God's laws. We will not dry up like those trees planted far away from water.

Results of the Wicked Life (1:4-5)

The godless do not want to know God's laws. They begin to want to do bad things. They ask, "How close to sin can I get without getting into trouble?" We

should ask, "How far away can I get from evil?" One day, God will blow the wicked away like straw.

When I was teaching English in China, I saw rice growing. When it was ready, the farmers gathered it. They beat it to separate the good grains from the part you cannot eat. Farmers separated the good part from the bad part by throwing it in the air over a cloth. The bad part blew away. They kept the good part.

This is a picture of what happens to those who do not do what God wants. They are blown away. The wicked will be judged. Those who are right with God stay close to Him. They are blessed.

God Knows Our Ways (1:6)

We must decide which way we will go. God is ready to help us if we trust Him. He watches over us.

What happens to the one who is sinful? The sinful will be lost from God forever. If we do not put God first, we sin.

Do not follow the advice of bad people. Do not live like sinners. Do not feel at home with people who do not respect God. Be right with God. This is how to be truly happy.

Psalm 1

1 Happy is the man who does not walk in the way sinful men tell him to, or stand in the path of sinners, or sit with those who laugh at the truth.

2 But he finds joy in the Law of the Lord and thinks about His Law day and night.

3 This man is like a tree planted by rivers of water, which gives its fruit at the right time and its leaf never dries up. Whatever he does will work out well for him.

4 Sinful men are not like this. They are like straw blown away by the wind.

5 So the sinful will not stand. They will be told they are guilty and have to suffer for it. Sinners will not stand with those who are right with God.

6 For the Lord knows the way of those who are right with Him. But the way of the sinful will be lost from God forever.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Psalms 3:1-8; 13:1-6;
22:1-5, 22-24

Memory Verse

“I will sing to the
Lord, because He has
been good to me.”
(Psalm 13:6)

Word List

lament: psalms that
tell your struggles,
sufferings, and
disappointments to the
Lord

complaint: an
expression of
displeasure, or anger

petition: to ask God
for something

depressed: to feel
heavy inside because
you are very sad

Asking God for His Help

One of the first questions children learn to ask is, “Why?” My two sons asked this question many times every day. “Why is grass green instead of red?” “Why do I have to brush my teeth?” “Why do we have to go to school?”

When we are adults, we still ask, “Why?” Lesson 1 promised the man who obeys God will be happy. Does this mean we will never be sad? Lesson 2 answers that question. The writer tells God of his sad feelings. David talks about things he thinks are wrong. He asks God, “Why are You waiting so long to answer me?” We can always ask God for His help. And we can have faith to know He will answer.

Help Comes Only From God (Psalm 3)

Psalm 3 has many “firsts.” It is the first prayer for help in the Book of Psalms. This is also the first psalm written by King David or about him. Psalm 3 is one of 60 “**lament** psalms.” It begins with protest or **complaint** (verses 1-2), followed by **petition** (verses 3-4), and ends with praise (verses 5-6).

David was in trouble. His son, Absalom, wanted to kill David and become king. Those who hated David were all around him. David was in hiding, just as he was when Saul was king. David asked God for help. Read this story in 2 Samuel 15-19.

Prayer—the Only Thing to Do (3:1-2)

We can imagine David waking up in the morning. He remembers his troubles. The first thing he does is talk to God in a personal way about these troubles. With God’s help, he has lived

**Things to
Think About**

1. Why do you think that David was not afraid, even when his enemy was all around him?
2. Which is better—to look at people for help or look to God for help?
3. Can good come from our suffering?

through the night. David used the word “many” three times in these verses—many who hate, many who rise up against him, many who say God will not help. David cannot count the number of people who are against him. He feels afraid. “Many” were not on God’s side.

God—the Only One Who Can Help (3:3-8)

David learned in the past that only God can help him.

Three pictures describe how God helps:

- God is a shield for those who need help.
- God gives honor even though David is no longer the king.
- God lifts David’s head so it is not bowed down with shame. David has not become king again but he is still able to lift his head. He knows God will be with him.

David was afraid. Others were saying God would not help. David prayed aloud. Then he was able to lie down and sleep because he knew God would help him. David would not be afraid of all those people. God was for him. Who could be against him? Read Romans 8:31-39. We must trust God. We can rest even when troubles are all around.

An Honest Question (Psalm 13:1-8)

David may have written Psalm 13 at a time when Saul tried to kill him. It is a short psalm about a long wait. David asks God four times, “How long?”

Do you remember hearing children ask, “How long till we get there?” When we are happy, we do not think about how long something takes. David asks God, “How long?” He is asking, “Can you hear me when I cry out to You? Do you care what is

happening to me?”

David asks this question four different times in only two verses. He thought God had hidden His face from him. David thought God had left him. David was very sad. Today we would say David was **depressed**. Perhaps he wanted to die.

Instead, David prayed. He asked God for what he needed. God did not answer right away. But David believed God would answer. In the same way, we can praise God for His faithfulness in the past.

The Psalm of the Cross (Psalm 22)

Now we look at another of David’s psalms. When Jesus died on the cross, His last words were from Psalm 22:1. Read Matthew 27:46 or Mark 15:34 to see why this is called the Psalm of the Cross.

The Cry and the Hope (22:1-5)

The first half of the psalm tells how the writer felt. He thought God had left him all alone during the time he was having troubles with his enemy. He asks, “Why does God not help? Why does God not hear?” David felt pain and sorrow. He asked God for help. God did not answer. David said, “I am still crying because You

give me no help.” He wondered if God forgot him.

David remembered God helped him in the past. God helped the Jews who lived before David. This made David sad. Why did God not help him now? The psalm begins, “Why have you left me by myself?”

David still has hope. He has hope because: (1) God is holy, the praises of Israel are His throne; (2) The early fathers trusted God, and He helped them; (3) They cried to Him, and God did not disappoint them.

God Saves (22:22-24)

The psalm changes. Now it is full of praise. God heard David when he prayed. David promised to praise God’s name because God had not forgotten him. David could tell this to others. They would give praise to God also. This psalm is no longer about suffering. David praises God. He heard when David prayed. God does not turn His face from us. He hears us.

When you feel sad, read these psalms. Tell God you feel sad. Ask God for help. Then tell God you believe He will answer you. Remember—the love of God never fails.

Psalm 3

1 O Lord, How many are they who hate me!
How many rise up against me!

2 Many are saying of me, “There is no help
for him in God.”

3 But You, O Lord, are a covering around me,
my shining-greatness, and the One who lifts
my head.

4 I was crying to the Lord with my voice.
And He answered me from His holy
mountain.

5 I lay down and slept, and I woke up again,
for the Lord keeps me safe.

6 I will not be afraid of ten thousands of
people who stand all around against me.

7 Rise up, O Lord! Save me, O my God! For
You have hit on the face all those who hate
me, and you have broken the teeth of
the sinful.

8 It is You Who saves, O Lord. May You
bring happiness to Your people.

Psalm 13:1-6

1 How long, O Lord? Will You forget me
forever? How long will You hide Your face
from me?

2 How long must I plan what to do in my
soul, and have sorrow in my heart all the day?
How long will those who hate me rise above
me?

3 Look on me and answer, O Lord, my God.
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep
of death.

4 Or the one who hates me will say, “I have

power over him.” And those who hate me will
be happy when I am shaken.

5 But I have trusted in Your loving-kindness.
My heart will be full of joy because You will
save me.

6 I will sing to the Lord, because He has been
good to me.

Psalm 22:1-5

1 My God, my God, why have You left me
alone? Why are You so far from helping me,
and from the words I cry inside myself?

2 O my God, I cry during the day, but You do
not answer. I cry during the night, but I find
no rest.

3 Yet You are holy. The praises Israel gives
You are Your throne.

4 Our fathers trusted in You, and You saved
them.

5 They cried to You and were set free. They
trusted in You and were not ashamed.

Psalm 22:22-24

22 I will make Your name known to my
brothers. In the center of the meeting of
worship I will praise You.

23 You who fear the Lord, give Him praise.
All you children of Jacob, honor Him. Fear
Him, all you children of Israel.

24 For He has not turned away from the
suffering of the one in pain or trouble. He has
not hidden His face from him. But He has
heard his cry for help.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Psalm 23:1-6

Psalm 27:1-6

Memory Verse

“The Lord is my
Shepherd. I will have
everything I need.”
(Psalm 23:1)

Word List

shepherd: one who
herds or takes care of
sheep

host: the one who
invites people to his or
her home and takes
care of them while
they are there

Trust God—He Cares

Sheep have been interesting to me for a long time. When my grandfather retired, he moved to a farm and raised sheep. Sometimes I was able to feed the baby lambs. Some of his sheep were so good, they were sold in South America.

When I was in 6th grade, I could walk to school and watch a **shepherd** bringing his sheep to find grass. Years later, I played the piano at a Navajo church in New Mexico. I watched Native Americans work long hours taking care of their sheep.

All these people had to make sure their animals were safe. I understand more about Psalm 23 because I have watched people who care for sheep.

The Lord, My Shepherd (Psalm 23)

Psalm 23 is the best known of all psalms. It is probably the best known chapter in the whole Bible. It has brought comfort to millions of people since David wrote it 800 years before the birth of Christ. This psalm says God is like a shepherd. David had been a shepherd. He knew a shepherd would never leave his sheep alone. Instead, he would set up a tent and stay with the sheep day and night. He would take them to the best grass and the best place for water. He would look for any lost sheep. He would care for them when they were hurt.

No Wants (23:1-3)

David said God is his shepherd because He gives him everything he needs. God watches over us the way a shepherd watches over his sheep. He takes care of all our needs. David

**Things to
Think About**

1. If you were having a hard time, what part of the Bible would you read to help you?
2. Write Psalm 23 in your own words, telling how God cares for us.
3. Psalm 27 tells about troubles. What do you do when you have trouble? What song would you sing?
4. Can you say to God: “I will live with You in Your house forever?”

uses a special word for God—“Lord.” This reminded him of the time God led His children out of slavery.

God knows what is good for us even when we do not understand our own needs. He knows exactly what we need and when we need it. He knows when we need to slow down or lie down in safety. He leads us beside still waters. Sheep cannot drink from fast-running waters. God slows things down for us so we can find what we need.

Sheep are afraid of loud noises and other animals. They try to run away. Sheep need to see their shepherd and hear his voice to know they are safe. Then they can lie down and rest.

The Good Shepherd leads us on the right paths. God leads us—through His word, through prayer, and the Holy Spirit. He tells us how to live so we will be happy and successful. God gives us a sense of direction and puts us on the right path.

Danger, Faith, and Help (23:4-5)

We do not need to be afraid because God is watching over us. He protects and comforts us when we are afraid. He is by our side no matter what happens. The shepherd has a walking stick to guide the sheep and to guard them from danger.

David begins to speak to God as “You” in these verses. This happens as he talks about danger. He knows from his own life that God can be trusted. David has no need to fear.

God shows us we are special to Him by providing for our needs and giving us even more than we need. Instead of a shepherd, God is now shown as a **host**, the one who invites you into his home, giving you food and drink.

Goodness and God's House (23:6)

When we follow the Good Shepherd, we have a life of goodness and loving-kindness. God brings these things into our lives. The psalm ends with words of faith that we will live with God forever.

David says because of what God does for us, we will have rest and safety. God will guide, feed, and give us all we need. He is both the shepherd Who guides and the host Who provides.

Prayer of Trust in God (27:1-6)

Psalm 27 begins with strong words: God is my “light” and my “strength.” “The Lord is my light” means God shows us what to do in life.

God takes care of us when we are in danger. David sees the enemy is not nearby. He says, “Whom should I fear?” Then he sees all who hated him are coming near to destroy his flesh. Still, David is not afraid. He saw the sinful men trip and fall down. God helped David in the past, and God would continue to help him.

David saw danger many times:

(1) Saul's army chased him; (2) The bear, the lion, and the giant all tried to destroy him; (3) The Philistines and other groups

tried to kill him. David thanks God, his light and strength. He is not in danger now.

Every time God gives us help, we learn to have more faith that He will help us in the future.

David says he wants to live where God is. We read four words for where God lives: House, holy house, holy tent, and secret place of His tent. These are not four different places. They are all words for where God is. Heaven is where God lives. If we are Christians, God's Spirit lives in us to help us through this life on earth.

David says he will look for one thing only. Whatever good thing or bad thing happens to him, David wants to live always in God's house and look upon the beauty of the Lord. That is the answer to everything we need: Look to God. Want only God.

David says God will keep him safe in His tent. God will lift him up on a high rock. God will lift up his head above those who hate him. Two times David says he will sing with joy. He has good reason to sing. He knows he can trust God fully.

We also can sing with joy because God cares for us. We can trust God to be our light and our strength.

Psalm 23

- 1** The Lord is my Shepherd. I will have everything I need.
- 2** He lets me rest in fields of green grass. He leads me beside the quiet waters.
- 3** He makes me strong again. He leads me in the way of living right with Himself which brings honor to His name.
- 4** Yes, even if I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will not be afraid of anything, because You are with me. You have a walking stick with which to guide and one with which to help. These comfort me.
- 5** You are making a table of food ready for me in front of those who hate me. You have poured oil on my head. I have everything I need.
- 6** For sure, You will give me goodness and loving-kindness all the days of my life. Then I will live with You in Your house forever.

Psalm 27

- 1** The Lord is my light and the One Who saves me. Whom should I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life. Of whom should I be afraid?
- 2** When sinful men, and all who hated me, came against me to destroy my flesh, they tripped and fell.
- 3** Even if an army gathers against me, my heart will not be afraid. Even if war rises against me, I will be sure of You.
- 4** One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I will look for: that I may live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to look upon the beauty of the Lord, and to worship in His holy house.
- 5** For in the day of trouble He will keep me safe in His holy tent. In the secret place of His tent He will hide me. He will set me high upon a rock.
- 6** Then my head will be lifted up above all those around me who hate me. I will give gifts in His holy tent with a loud voice of joy. I will sing. Yes, I will sing praises to the Lord.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Psalm 42-43

Memory Verse

“Why are you sad, O my soul? Why have you become troubled within me? Hope in God, for I will praise Him again, my help and my God.” (Psalm 42:11 and Psalm 43:5)

Word List

thirsty: to want water
desire: to want, wish for, feel a need for
soul: the part of us that lives on after our bodies die

Desiring God

Have you ever been so sad you could not eat? Have you ever cried so long that the tears stopped coming? We all have troubles, and the psalms in this lesson can help us when those times come.

Psalm 42 and 43 are psalms of lament or sadness. The writer tells God about his sadness and pain. He told God three times how bad things were for him. Then he told himself three times to trust God no matter what happens. It is helpful to read Psalm 42 and 43 together.

Desire God When Times Are Hard (Psalm 42:1-5)

Imagine a deer in a hot, dry place. If it does not find water soon, the deer might die. The person who wrote this psalm was also **thirsty**. It was not his body which was thirsty. It was his soul which was thirsty for God. He was in a place where he could not worship in God’s house. His enemy had taken him away from his home. He feels separated from God. He was thirsty for God, but all he could do was drink his own salty tears.

We should **desire** God in such a strong way. We need to know the real God, the God Who lives. It is important to meet with God. The writer spoke of God three times in two verses.

He said his enemies laughed at him. They asked, “Where is your God?” They were really saying, “God has no power. God does not care about you.” He remembered better times when he worshiped in God’s house with others. They sang and had great joy together. Now, perhaps his enemies were right. Perhaps he

**Things to
Think About**

1. Do you remember a time in the past when you felt very near to God?
2. If someone asked you to tell what these psalms meant to you, what would you say about them?
3. Do you feel like you can share your deepest sorrows with God?
4. Do you feel a desire to know God better?
5. What songs do you sing when you want to feel close to God?

had left God in Jerusalem.

The writer was crying. His only food was his tears. His **soul** was sad. Then he said, “Put your hope in God.” When we are sad, it is good to remember past times when our faith was strong. It is good to remember that God is always with us.

More Troubles (42:6-11)

Things seem to be more difficult. Before, the writer was in a dry country. Now, he tells about a river and mountains. When it rained, the water ran over the rocks and made waterfalls. It was very deep in places. When he saw the deep water, it made the writer think of his life. He felt his enemy was pushing him along like the water and would push so hard that he would fall in.

My husband and I visited Alaska and saw where the rivers of ice meet the ocean. Pieces of ice would fall off and make a sound louder than thunder. It was very powerful. That experience reminds me of these verses about the power of water.

The writer told God his soul was troubled and sad. Then, a change for the better begins in verse 8. First, the writer called God by the name “Lord.” This was how God’s friends talked to God in the Old Testament. The writer said God will give him a song to sing in the night. What songs do you sing in hard times?

The writer still had questions. Why had God forgotten him? Why was he so sad? Why did God let his enemies hurt him? The enemies had asked him the same question in verse 3. So he told himself again to praise and hope in God.

We can do the same when we have hard times. Strongly desire for God to be near. Cry out and ask God whatever you

want to ask Him. Remember God's past help. Hope in God! Sing! Pray!

God Is My Help and My Hope
(Psalm 43)

The rivers, mountains, and streams reminded the writer of God. He learned God was not just in Jerusalem, but God was with him. He told himself two times: "Hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, my help, and my God."

The writer asked God to be his judge. He believed he was right. He asked God to tell that to everyone. God would free him so he would not be a prisoner any longer. "The people who tell lies" were his enemies, perhaps from Israel, Assyria, Babylon, or somewhere else.

God did not answer his prayer quickly. He still had bad times. He wondered if God cared what happened to him. We may feel this same way. We pray and do not hear an answer. We suffer and still feel pain. The writer wanted to hear from God.

He prayed for God to send light and truth. Jesus would later say, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John 14:6, NLV). The writer wanted to go back to Jerusalem,

to the holy mountain and the house of God. The time would come when he would play music on his harp again. He promised to praise the name of the Lord.

It is hard to worship when there is trouble in your heart. Trust in God that He will lead you to a time when you will have joy again. We are to praise Him for what He has done and is doing for us.

We read for a third time, "Why are you sad, O my soul? Why have you become troubled within me? Hope in God, for I will praise Him again, my help and my God." Each time the writer becomes more certain God would answer him. He was still in the dark valley. But he knew God would bring him through it.

We will have hard times until we get to heaven. We learn from Psalms 42 and 43 to put our hope in God. He is with us.

Have the troubles and valleys of life made you sad? The writer of this psalm teaches us to:

Take our problems to the Lord.

Praise Him in the hard times.

Live in faith that God will give us His help.

Psalm 42

1 As the deer desires rivers of water, so my soul desires You, O God.

2 My soul is thirsty for God, for the living God. When will I come and meet with God?

3 My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me all day long, “Where is your God?”

4 These things I remember, and I pour out my soul within me. For I used to go with many people and lead them to the house of God, with the voice of thankful joy, among the many happy people.

5 Why are you sad, O my soul? Why have you become troubled within me? Hope in God, for I will praise Him again for His help of being near me.

6 O my God, my soul is troubled within me. So I remember You from the land of the Jordan and the tops of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.

7 Sea calls to sea at the sound of Your waterfalls. All Your waves have rolled over me.

8 The Lord will send His loving-kindness in the day. And His song will be with me in the night, a prayer to the God of my life.

9 I will say to God my Rock, “Why have you forgotten me? Why do I have sorrow because those who hate me come against me with power?”

10 As a breaking of my bones, those who hate me speak sharp words to me. All day

long they say to me, “Where is your God?”

11 Why are you sad, O my soul? Why have you become troubled within me? Hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, my help and my God.

Psalm 43

1 Stand by me, O God, and speak in my favor against a sinful nation. Save me from the lying and sinful man.

2 For You are the God of my strength. Why have You turned away from me? Why do I have sorrow because those who hate me come against me with power?

3 Send out Your light and Your truth. Let them lead me. Let them bring me to Your holy hill and to the places where You live.

4 Then I will go to the altar of God, the God of my joy. And I will praise You with the harp, O God, my God.

5 Why are you sad, O my soul? Why have you become troubled within me? Hope in God, for I will praise Him again, my help and my God.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Psalm 73

Memory Verse

“My body and my heart may grow weak, but God is the strength of my heart and all I need forever.” (Psalm 73:26)

Word List

jealous: to want what others have; to wish you could do something someone else can do

envy: desire to have what another person has

punish: to correct so that a person will change his bad ways

Look to God—Not at Man

When I was a child, there was no medicine to keep us from getting an illness like polio. My mother made us take naps in the afternoon to keep us from catching a virus from other children. We could hear children playing outside and having fun. We were not happy. We told our mother, “It’s not fair!”

We often ask, “Why do bad things happen to me? It’s not fair!” “Why do bad people have so many good things?” In this psalm, the writer asks the same things.

When we look around, we see bad people who are rich. They seem happy and well. We may feel **jealous**. The writer of Psalm 73 spent the first half of the psalm looking with **envy** at the world. Then he learns something important. He looks to God and understands what happens to bad people after they die. He no longer looks at people and what they have.

We have a choice. We can look at the world or look at God. When we do not have our eyes on God, we can fall. Have you ever tried to walk on ice or snow? It is easy for your feet to slip and for you to fall down. This almost happened to the writer.

Why Do Bad People Have Good Things? (Psalm 73:1-12)

The writer is called Asaph. He wrote 12 psalms. He was the chief “worship leader.” He believed God is good to those who are pure in heart. But Asaph saw other people in Israel who did not love and obey God. They were sinful. They had plenty of money and things. God did not seem to **punish** them. Asaph wanted to have plenty of things, too. Seeing all this almost made

Things to Think About

1. Does this psalm teach us it is all right to tell our doubts to God? Do you think we can become stronger in our faith after hard times?

2. Have you worshiped God in a way that helped your faith grow?

3. Have you shared your journey of faith with others?

4. Do you agree or disagree: “The goodness of God is not about what God might give to us. It is...God Himself.”

him stop loving and obeying God. This is what the writer said about the sinful:

- they have so many things that it makes God’s people, whose hearts are clean, want to be like them (verse 3);
- they do not suffer pain when they die, and they are fat and healthy (verse 4);
- they do not have trouble like most people (verse 5);
- they are full of pride and they seem to enjoy fighting (verse 6);
- they do what they want (verse 7);
- they laugh and make it hard for other people (verse 8);
- they say bad things about heaven and say the earth belongs to them (verse 9);
- they do bad things, saying, “How does God know?” (verse 11).

Verse 12 says it best: “They always have it easy and their riches grow.”

Why Be Good? (73:13-17)

Asaph wanted what the sinful had. He asked in verse 13, “What good is it to even try to be good?” He had so many troubles, and evil people seemed to have all the good things. God invites us to talk to Him when we have these kinds of questions.

Then the writer decided it would hurt others if he kept feeling this way. He went to the house of God. Something wonderful happened to the writer when he worshiped God. When we worship with others, our faith grows.

God Will Judge (73:18-26)

The last part of the psalm tells what he learned. He found out what will happen to evil people. He saw the truth. Evil people will only have good things for now. God will destroy the evil.

One minute they will be here, the next minute they will not. All the good things they had will be like a dream. God knows what He is doing.

When God's people get to heaven, they will have good things forever. Because God knows the future, we can trust Him in the present time.

The writer was ashamed for thinking God would allow the sinful to “get by” with doing wrong. He said he knew nothing, like a wild animal. His body and his heart might be weak, but God was his strength. He had learned the most important thing in life:

- God would be with him and hold his hand and tell him what to do (verses 23-24)
- God would take him into shining-greatness in heaven (verse 24)
- God would give him everything on earth he needed (verses 25-26)
- God would make him strong, and be all he ever needed (verse 26).

He learned God was his “safe place.” This is the place where you find shelter. When a tornado comes, people want to find the strongest room in the house. Sometimes they have a special room underground so trees and buildings will not fall on them.

When life's storms come, God will keep you safe. Asaph learned it is better to be “near to God” than to have plenty of money and things. In a moment they will all be gone, but God will always be with us.

Psalm 73 is called a Teaching Psalm. It teaches us:

1. *God is more important than anything else in life.* Asaph said God is all he had and all he needed. God was his safe place.
2. *God is all the strength we need.* We are not strong enough by ourselves. We are not promised an easy life, but God gives what we need now and forever.
3. *God will be fair.* The writer learned to trust that God would take care of what seems unfair to us. God will do this in His time and wisdom. It is not our job to judge the world. God is in control. We may suffer and not know why. But even when life seems unfair, God will always be fair.
4. *God draws near to those who draw near to Him.* Have faith in God because God will take care of us. We do not have to worry. God is near. Verse 1 is true: “For sure God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart.”

Psalm 73

1 For sure God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart.

2 But as for me, my feet came close to falling. My steps had almost tripped.

3 For I was jealous of the proud when I saw that all was going well with the sinful.

4 For they suffer no pain in their death, and their body is fat.

5 They do not have the troubles of other men or suffer like other men.

6 So they wear pride around their neck. Fighting covers them like a coat.

7 They are so fat that their eyes are pushed out. The crazy thoughts of their hearts run wild.

8 They laugh at the truth, and speak sinful things about making it hard for others. They speak from a high place.

9 They say bad things against heaven, and their tongue walks through the earth.

10 And so his people return to this place and drink water from a full cup.

11 They say, “How does God know? Is there much learning with the Most High?”

12 See, this is what the sinful are like. They always have it easy and their riches grow.

13 For no good reason I have kept my heart pure and have not sinned.

14 For I have suffered all day long. I have been punished every morning.

15 I would not have been true to Your children if I had spoken this way.

16 It was too hard for me when I tried to

understand this,

17 until I went into the holy place of God. Then I understood their end.

18 For sure, You set the sinful in places where there is danger at every step. You throw them down to be destroyed.

19 How they are destroyed right away! They come to an end with much fear.

20 Like a dream when one wakes up, so You will hate what they look like when You rise up, O Lord.

21 My heart was troubled and I was hurt inside.

22 I was without reason and did not know better. I was like an animal before You.

23 Yet I am always with You. You hold me by my right hand.

24 You will lead me by telling me what I should do. And after this, You will bring me into shining-greatness.

25 Whom have I in heaven but You? I want nothing more on earth, but You.

26 My body and my heart may grow weak, but God is the strength of my heart and all I need forever.

27 For, see, those who are far from You will be lost from You forever. You have destroyed all those who are not faithful to You.

28 But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Lord God my safe place. So I may tell of all the things You have done.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Psalm 84

Memory Verse

“O Lord of all, how happy is the man who trusts in You!”

(Psalm 84:12)

Word List

worship: tell someone that they are very great and that you love them

shield: what a soldier holds over himself to stop things from hitting him

Worship Together in Joy

When we lived in New York City, I watched a man who came each Sunday to **worship** with us in our apartment church. No matter what else was happening when he came in, he sat down, folded his hands, bowed his head, and prayed. Then he was ready to sing, pray, read the Bible, or listen to the sermon with everyone. I learned how to worship better by the joy Philippe showed in his worship.

The Joy of Living in God’s House (Psalm 84:1-4)

This psalm teaches us that we should find great joy when we go to God’s house to worship. The writer can hardly find the words to write how wonderful it is. We learn that the writer wants to be with God. God is the purpose of worship. We see God’s name at least 15 times in these 12 verses.

What does it mean to worship God? This is something we could spend all of our lives learning how to do. Sunday is a special day when Christians come together to worship. We come on this day to remember when Jesus arose from the dead. We also worship to think about God’s greatness, to allow the Holy Spirit to teach us, and to learn to follow Jesus. This psalm teaches us how important it is to worship with others. As we think about God in worship, it helps us live our everyday lives.

Psalm 84 is known as a hymn of praise to Zion—the hill where the temple was built. Sometimes we use the word “Zion” as the time God will show His power over all the world. Other times, it means the City of God in heaven.

**Things to
Think About**

1. Why do you need to worship?
2. What keeps you from worshipping?
3. What do you do each week to prepare for worship? Can you do better?
4. If you planned the worship service for your church, what would you do?

This psalm is a song about those who were on a trip to the temple. The one who wrote Psalm 84 was far away from God's house and not allowed to go on the trip to worship God. He remembered the wonderful times in his past when he had gone on this trip.

All the places God lives are beautiful. They remind the writer of who God is and all God has done for him. The words, "Lord of all," help us understand God is over all the earth. God is the Lord for all the people of the earth. God has the power to meet the needs of everyone.

Look at the words used for God: "Lord," "living God," and especially "*my King*." It is a wonderful thing that God can be the *God of all* and still be interested in each one of us. He cares about you and He cares about me.

The writer wants to be where God is. He wants this with all of his being. The words *soul*, *heart*, and *flesh* show how much he wants to be in the house of the Lord. He wanted this with his thoughts, his feelings, and his will. Today, we might say, "I want to worship God with everything I am and have." Can you say this?

The writer had seen little birds living in the temple. He thought how wonderful to be like these simple birds. The temple was their home. How great to be in the place where it is possible to worship God all the time. Those who spent their time at God's house could spend all their time giving thanks to God.

The birds had found a home. They had found a place to build a nest for their baby birds. This could be a lesson about how important it is for us to bring our children to God's house.

The Joy of Finding Strength in God

(84:5-7)

Those who make the trip up the mountain to God's house found great joy. The writer tells us that those who find strength in God are happy. The trip might take them through some hard times but they have a road in their hearts to take them to worship God.

The bad times we have can make us stronger in our faith. Those who love God's house will go from "*strength to strength.*" They do not get tired from such a long trip. They become stronger. When the travelers were going to God's house, they sometimes needed water. God sent rain to fill the pools along the way. When we need help, God will give it to us. Are you on your way to worship God?

The Joy of Trusting God (84:8-12)

What is the difference between a life with God and a life without God? The writer said a day in God's house is better than a thousand outside of it. He said he would rather be the one who opens the door in the house of God, than to live in the tents of the sinful. He would rather be on the

outside part of God's house than inside the house of the sinful.

What if you loved basketball but hated baseball? You would rather have tickets to a basketball game than a baseball game. Even if the tickets were top row, far from the players on the court, it would be better than sitting right behind the players at a baseball game.

There is a reason we want to be with God. Children are sometimes taught a prayer, "God is great, and God is good, now we thank Him for our food." These words are true. God is great and good. The writer said God is our sun and our **shield**. He is our safe-covering. If there is no sun, we are in the dark and do not know where to go. We need help. God is our shield and will take care of us. The writer says God gives favor and honor. He may not take away all of our problems, but God will give us what we need.

God gives us everything we need when we walk in the way that is right. Sometimes we do not get what we need from God because we are not walking in the way He wants. All that is necessary to have joy is to obey God. We can trust Him.

Psalm 84

1 How beautiful are the places where You live, O Lord of all!

2 My soul wants and even becomes weak from wanting to be in the house of the Lord. My heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God.

3 Even the bird has found a home. The swallow has found a nest for herself where she may lay her young at Your altars, O Lord of all, my King and my God.

4 How happy are those who live in Your house! They are always giving thanks to You.

5 How happy is the man whose strength is in You and in whose heart are the roads to Zion!

6 As they pass through the dry valley of Baca, they make it a place of good water. The early rain fills the pools with good also.

7 They go from strength to strength. Every one of them stands before God in Zion.

8 O Lord God of all, hear my prayer. Listen, O God of Jacob.

9 Look upon our safe-covering, O God. And look upon the face of Your chosen one.

10 For a day in Your house is better than a thousand outside. I would rather be the one

who opens the door of the house of my God, than to live in the tents of the sinful.

11 For the Lord God is a sun and a safe-covering. The Lord gives favor and honor. He holds back nothing good from those who walk in the way that is right.

12 O Lord of all, how happy is the man who trusts in You!



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Psalm 90

Memory Verse

“Before the mountains were born, before You gave birth to the earth and the world, forever and ever, You are God.” (Psalm 90:2)

Word List

everlasting: having no end

God’s anger: because God is holy and pure, His anger is against that which is unholy and wrong; God loves enough to hate what hurts us, to hate what is evil

loving-kindness: God’s beauty and mercy and kindness; giving without expecting to take

Live a Life That Matters

When I was young, my family asked my father all kinds of questions. “How far is it to the moon? How big around is the earth? How many miles to the middle of the earth?” Somehow, he always knew the answer to our questions. Recently, I asked him a question about the Internet. Though he is 85 and does not use a computer, he knew the answer. He has been a Christian for many years. I know he would tell us it is more important to think about how we live our lives than to know all those other answers.

Psalm 90 is the first psalm of Book 4. It is the only one of the psalms said to be written by Moses or by those who used his words. Moses lived to be 120. This seems like a long time to us. Still, he was not able to finish his journey into the Promised Land. This psalm is about the shortness of our lives on earth. It teaches God is forever. We have joy and purpose if we trust God.

God Is Forever (Psalm 90:1-2)

This psalm is a prayer. Can you pray these words to God as you read them?

It begins with God. If we want to live a life that matters, we must make God most important. In the first two verses, we learn these things about God:

- God is our comfort, our safety;
- God made the world;
- God has always been and always will be.

We say God is **everlasting**. He is the one true God. He has no beginning and no end. He is not limited by time. God has all

Things to Think About

1. Have you ever thought about the anger of God? Can God's anger be a good thing? Do you think God is angry at our sin because it hurts us?
2. What are some things you can do every day to show that you are faithful to God?
3. Can you use each day to help other people?

power. There is no other like Him. He is above us but He is also with us.

Man's Life Is Short (90:3-6)

God made the world. God made man. Genesis tells us that God made the first man from dust. Psalm 90:3 says we will return to dust again. God made time. He decides how long we will live. We can see in these verses that our time on earth is short. Our lives have a beginning and an end.

Do you wear a watch? How many times do you look at it? In other times, people watched the sun to learn what part of the day it was. Now, we can look at clocks to see even the seconds pass. But being able to do that does not give us any more time.

In verse 4, "a thousand years" makes us think of Genesis. Men and women lived for a very long time. Methuselah was nearly 1,000 years old when he died. This verse means: "What is a very long time to us is a very short time to God."

Verse 5 talks about death as "sleep." One day, after we die, we will all awake...and see God. Grass in Israel did not stay alive for a long time. The sun was hot, and it soon blew away. Verse 6 says the grass will soon die. People are the same. God will always be alive, but men and women will soon die.

Man Has Not Obeyed God's Rules (90:7-11)

God sees the wrong things that we do, even if they are in secret. God is angry with sin. We read three times in these verses about **God's anger**. This is serious. This shows that we matter to God. He does not want us to live and do wrong. Our sins make us unhappy. God will not allow wrong-doing to continue.

Today we say people who live for 70 or 80 years have lived a “good, long life.” Troubles come during these years. The longer the life, the more problems for those who do not follow God’s ways. God is not our enemy. Sin is our enemy. But God has a plan to show us the right way to live.

Verse 11 asks a question and gives the answer. Who knows the power of God’s anger? Everybody will know when God becomes angry. God is angry when His people do not do what they should. We should fear to do wrong.

Pray to God for His Kindness (90:12-17)

When we know we have done wrong, this psalm says we can ask God for His help. We are to ask for understanding and wisdom. We ask God to help us understand how to live so our days are lived for God.

God made time. He is the One who can show us how to understand how many days we have. We will want to use our time for God. Then we can have a heart of wisdom. A change of heart always brings about a change in life.

Frank Laubach was a great missionary who worked to help people read the Bible. He decided to think about God

for at least one second of every minute. This made a great difference in his life and in the lives of thousands of people around the world.

We should pray to see things as God sees them. This makes us want to obey His rules and not do wrong things. Then we will get a heart which thinks as God thinks.

We need the kind of love that God keeps on giving us, even when we do not obey Him. God never stops loving us. We can wake up every day to God’s **loving-kindness**. We can sing for joy all our days because of God’s love.

God makes His people safe. He stops their enemies from hurting them. Then their children will see it also. Nobody will destroy the things that His people do.

This psalm begins with the God Who is forever, shows us how short are man’s years, and closes by asking God for His help to number our days. We do not wish for a sinful life. We can ask God to guide us so we can live life well. We want to live a life that matters. We need God’s help to do that. We fail when we try to live life our own way. We can ask for God’s work to be our work.

This psalm is shown in a format which can be used as a responsive reading, as explained in the Teaching Guide.

Psalm 90

1 Lord, You have been the place of comfort for all people of all time.

2 Before the mountains were born,
before You gave birth to the earth and the world, forever and ever, You are God.

3 You change man into dust again,
and say, “Return, O children of men.”

4 For a thousand years in Your eyes are like yesterday when it passes by,
or like the hours of the night.

5 You carry men away as with a flood. They fall asleep.

In the morning they are like the new grass that grows.

6 It grows well in the morning, but dries up and dies by evening.

7 For we are burned up by Your anger.
By Your anger we are troubled and afraid.

8 You have set our wrongdoing before You,
our secret sins in the light of Your face.

9 For all our days pass away in Your anger.
We finish our years with a quiet cry.

10 The days of our life are seventy years, or eighty if we have the strength. Yet the best of them are only hard work and sorrow.

For they are soon gone and we fly away.

11 Who understands the power of Your

anger?

Your anger is as great as the fear that we should have for You.

12 Teach us to understand how many days we have.

Then we will have a heart of wisdom to give You.

13 Return, O Lord. How long will it be? Have pity upon those who work for You.

14 Fill us in the morning with Your loving-kindness.

Let us sing for joy and be glad all our days.

15 Make us glad for as many days as You have made us suffer,

and for the years we have seen trouble.

16 Let Your work be shown to Your servants.

And let Your wonderful greatness be shown to their children.

17 Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us. And make the work of our hands stand strong.

Yes, make the work of our hands stand strong.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Psalm 100, 103

Memory Verse

“Know that the Lord is God. It is He Who made us, and not we ourselves. We are His people and the sheep of His field.”

(Psalm 100:3)

Word List

doxology: from the Greek word *doxa* (glory) and *logos* (word or speaking); a short hymn of praise to God

holy: the pure, loving nature of God; separate from evil

punish: to correct so the person doing wrong will change his ways

Praise for God's Goodness

People praise God in different languages. Some praise Him with song. I have heard God praised with drums in Africa and by choirs in China. Some praise Him with prayers. Others praise Him by serving Him. Some praise God by reading psalms.

The psalms in this study are two of the greatest praise songs in the Bible. There are no words in them asking God for anything. They are all words of praise. About half the psalms (74 of 150) are praise songs. Most begin with an invitation or a command to praise God. Next, they tell why we should praise Him. At the end, they tell us again to praise. We can praise God for everything, because He is always loving and kind to us.

An Invitation to Praise God (Psalm 100:1-4; 103:1-2)

Both these psalms begin with a command to praise. In Psalm 100, the writer says all the earth should praise God. In Psalm 103, he tells himself to praise God for His goodness.

Praise means to bless. God is the One Who first blesses us, and this is why we praise Him. Psalm 100 invites all the earth to praise God for His goodness. The psalm tells everybody to come to God's house and tell Him how great He is. Psalm 100 has seven commands: (1) Call out with joy; (2) Serve the Lord; (3) Come before Him with songs; (4) Know that the Lord is God; (5) Go into His gates giving thanks and praise; (6) Give thanks to Him; (7) Honor His name.

It is most important to know who God is. God is the One and only living God. Our lives begin and end with God. He made

**Things to
Think About**

1. What songs do you know which praise God as these psalms do?
2. Think of some ways God has been good to you. Make a list of five things God has done for you. Make another list tomorrow and another list the next day. See how much you can write down.
3. Check the list you made from above. Did you list only blessings that cost money?

man, and He made Israel to be His people. God allows us to know Him. This is a great reason for praise!

When we truly understand who God is, we want to serve Him. We want to belong to Him. We want to worship Him. We cannot worship God without serving Him, too. Words are not enough. To serve God is to find real joy.

This psalm says for us to call out with joy to God. This is what people do when they see a king coming. We can go into the house of God showing how much we respect God. God is the “King of kings.” We give thanks as we praise God.

God made us, and we belong to Him. We praise Him because He made us and because He cares for us. This psalm says we are the sheep of His pasture. This reminds us of Psalm 23.

Those who came to God’s house sang Psalm 100 as they came to worship God and give their offerings. God said when we thank Him, it is a praise of worship. We often sing a song in church called the **Doxology**. It is called “Old 100th” because the words come from Psalm 100:

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;

Praise Him, all creatures here below;

Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

We read in Psalm 103:1 to “praise God’s holy name.” This means to praise God for Who He is. He is **holy**. He has never done anything wrong. Only God should be worshiped. We are told not to forget all God’s acts of kindness.

Praise God for He is Good (100:5; 103:3-19)

Psalm 100:5 teaches us about God. God is good. His

loving-kindness lasts forever. He is faithful. We praise God because He gives all blessings: (1) *God is good*. God made all the world and said it was good. He made this good world for us. (2) *God is love*. He promises to love us. (3) *God is faithful*. God will always love us. He will also love all those who come after us.

In Psalm 103, the writer tells himself to praise God. Count how many times you read the word “all” in Psalm 103. God rules over *all* and does *all* good things for *all* persons in need. *All* He made in *all* places are to praise God with *all* they have.

Verses 3-5 begin by listing all God has done for the writer of Psalm 103. Sometimes we think of the things we own as the blessings from God. This writer begins by remembering that God has forgiven his sins. That is the most important blessing. God is greater than our sin.

But that is not all God has done. These verses remind us God also heals, redeems, crowns us, and fills our lives. God makes us feel young again.

To God, our lives are very short, just as the life of a flower seems short to us. Our days may be as short as a flower's life,

but God's love lasts forever.

When we ask, God will forgive our sins. That means He will not **punish** us because we have broken His rules. He takes our sins as far as the east is from the west.

We have the promises of God's blessings. Our part is to obey and fear God (verses 11, 13, 17). What does it mean to fear God? It does not mean to be afraid. We fear God when we understand how awesome He is, how much more holy He is than we are. When we are humble or bowed down before Him, we show our honor for God. This causes us to live in the right way and gives joy.

All God Made Will Praise Him (103:20-22)

Man is not alone in praising God. Angels praise God. God's armies praise Him. They also obey God and do His work. Everything God made is invited to praise God. The writer first called on himself to praise God, then the people, then angels, and then all God made. Psalm 103 ends where it started, with praise for God. The writer reminds himself to join all that God made and praise God. When we read these psalms, they also remind us to praise God.

Psalm 100

- 1** Call out with joy to the Lord, all the earth.
- 2** Be glad as you serve the Lord. Come before Him with songs of joy.
- 3** Know that the Lord is God. It is He Who made us, and not we ourselves. We are His people and the sheep of His field.
- 4** Go into His gates giving thanks and into His holy place with praise. Give thanks to Him. Honor His name.
- 5** For the Lord is good. His loving-kindness lasts forever. And He is faithful to all people and to all their children-to-come.

Psalm 103

- 1** Praise the Lord, O my soul. And all that is within me, praise His holy name.
- 2** Praise the Lord, O my soul. And forget none of His acts of kindness.
- 3** He forgives all my sins. He heals all my diseases.
- 4** He saves my life from the grave. He crowns me with loving-kindness and pity.
- 5** He fills my years with good things and I am made young again like the eagle.
- 6** The Lord does what is right and fair for all who suffer under a bad power.
- 7** He made His ways known to Moses and His acts to the people of Israel.
- 8** The Lord is full of loving-pity and kindness. He is slow to anger and has much loving-kindness.
- 9** He will not always keep after us. And He will not keep His anger back forever.

10 He has not punished us enough for all our sins. He has not paid us back for all our wrong-doings.

11 For His loving-kindness for those who fear Him is as great as the heavens are high above the earth.

12 He has taken our sins from us as far as the east is from the west.

13 The Lord has loving-pity on those who fear Him, as a father has loving-pity on his children.

14 For He knows what we are made of. He remembers that we are dust.

15 The days of man are like grass. He grows like a flower of the field.

16 When the wind blows over it, it is gone. Its place will remember it no more.

17 But the loving-kindness of the Lord is forever and forever on those who fear Him. And what is right with God is given forever to their children's children,

18 to those who keep His agreement and remember to obey His Law.

19 The Lord has set up His throne in the heavens. And His holy nation rules over all.

20 Praise the Lord, you powerful angels of His who do what He says, obeying His voice as He speaks!

21 Praise the Lord, all you armies of His who work for Him and do what pleases Him.

22 Praise the Lord, all His works in all places under His rule. Praise the Lord, O my soul!



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Psalm 116

Memory Verse

“The Lord is loving and right. Yes, our God is full of loving-kindness.” (Psalm 116:5)

Word List

mercy: loving-kindness; to hold back judgment; God’s love to people; when God does not remember the bad things we do; the love which God shows when He forgives

rest: trust, rely; to be safe

Give Thanks for God’s Blessings

Have you ever been in trouble? Have you ever needed help? Did God answer your call for help?

Read Psalm 116. You will find words to tell God you love Him. You will find words to thank God for saving you from great danger. You can pray for God’s help and praise God. This psalm will teach you how to promise to praise God in the future, and how to walk holy before Him now.

Psalm 116 is the story of someone who was very sick and thought he might die. The word *death* occurs many times. But God heard his prayers and saved him. Then he gave praises to God. He promised to give an offering in the House of God.

Where Does Thanksgiving Come From? (Psalm 116:1-7)

The people of the Old Testament had no word exactly like the word *thank*. The word they used means to recognize something. They spoke of the great things God did. They spoke of who God was. When they spoke of who God was, it came to mean confession or praise. It meant to give thanks. This was something given only to God, never to a person. What God has done for us, no one else can do.

We can learn to be thankful to God. Thanksgiving grows as we love God more. It grows because we see how He helps us. The writer starts out by saying, “I love the Lord.”

The writer says God heard his cry for help in the past and continued to hear him. Does it make you feel good when a friend listens to you? It is even more wonderful that God, Who made

**Things to
Think About**

1. Which do you think comes first, love for God or giving thanks to God?
2. What should we give to the Lord for all the good things He has done for us (Psalm 116:12)?
3. Do you say thank you to God every time He blesses you?
4. Ask God to show you how you can serve Him. Then do it to show God that you love Him.

the world, will listen to you. Even if you do not know how to pray, God listens to your heart. God is loving and full of **mercy**.

The writer thought he might die. He asked God to save his life. God heard his prayer. He could not **rest** or sleep at night. God saved him. He could now rest. He was safe. Has there been a time in your life when you could not go to sleep? Was it because of pain or worry? Remember how good it feels to be able to return to rest?

We do not know what problems the writer had. The important thing is knowing God saved him. God saves because He is kind and loves us. He keeps His promises to us even when we are as helpless as a child. We cannot understand God's great love. But we can praise Him for it. Many times, we forget to say thanks to God for what He does for us.

How Do We Thank God? (116:8-14)

When we see what God has done and when we tell God how much we love Him, we will have the right kind of thanksgiving. The writer was happy because God saved him from death. God had saved his eyes from tears and his feet from falling. Now he can walk with the Lord in the land of the living. He has a purpose. He will live the life God wants. He will obey God. We know God has a purpose for our lives also.

In the first verse of the psalm, the writer said, "I love God." Now in verse 10, he tells his story and he says, "I believe." He believed in God, and this helped him understand his problem. He understood that all people do wrong. They tell lies. But only God can be trusted to always be truthful. He is worthy of our trust. Can you say with all your heart, "I love God"? Can you also say,

“I believe”?

We read in verse 12 a great question: “What shall I give Him?” We learn the answer in this psalm: Giving thanks is the best thing we can give God. Remember how much the Lord has done for each of us in giving us salvation. Live in the right way and be faithful to God. Even when we have trouble, we can be strong in our belief.

The writer said he will offer a cup of wine to God (verse 13). In the time this psalm was written, a cup of wine was lifted up in the house of God during the time of the Thank Offerings. The writer promises to tell others what God had done for him by saying thanks to God in front of all the people (verse 14). He will do this at the house of God in Jerusalem (verse 18).

Every week when we come to church, it is a way of saying thanks for what God has done. All we can give God is ourselves and our praise. We praise Him by going to His house. We praise Him with thankful prayers and by obeying.

When we praise God, we meet God and He touches our hearts. We look at what is happening to us in a new way. We receive the power to face our problems. We

learn God is with us.

True thanksgiving gives honor to God. It shows that we know it is God Who has done great things. True thanksgiving does not look at what we have done. It focuses on God and His goodness.

Psalm 116:15 is sometimes read when someone dies. This verse reminds us that the death of a faithful person is important to God. A believer who dies is received into heaven and God's presence.

God chose to save the writer from death at that time. Now the writer promises to keep on honoring God and serving God.

God delivers, heals, answers prayer, provides, encourages, loves, and protects us. He does many other things, too. We cannot give to God anything equal to what He has given to us. We can show our love to the Lord by loving Him above all others and serving Him faithfully.

The first words in Psalm 1:1 are, “Happy is the man.” The last words in this psalm and the last words in the final psalm (Psalm 150:6) are the same: “Praise the Lord!” The happy man is the one who knows God's blessings and praises God for them.

Psalm 116

1 I love the Lord, because He hears my voice and my prayers.

2 I will call on Him as long as I live, because He has turned His ear to me.

3 The strings of death are all around me. And the fear of the grave came upon me. I suffered with trouble and sorrow.

4 Then I called on the name of the Lord: "O Lord, I beg You, save my life!"

5 The Lord is loving and right. Yes, our God is full of loving-kindness.

6 The Lord takes care of the childlike. I was brought down, and He saved me.

7 Return to your rest, O my soul. For the Lord has been good to you.

8 For You, O Lord, have saved my soul from death, my eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.

9 I will walk with the Lord in the land of the living.

10 I believed when I said, "I am very troubled."

11 I said in my fear, "All men are liars."

12 What should I give to the Lord for all the good things He has done for me?

13 I will show Him my thanks for saving me with a gift of wine and praise His name.

14 I will keep my promises to the Lord before all His people.

15 The death of His holy ones is of great worth in the eyes of the Lord.

16 For sure I am Your servant, O Lord. I am Your servant, the son of the woman who served You. You have set me free from my chains.

17 I will give a gift of thanks to You and call on the name of the Lord.

18 I will keep my promises to the Lord before all His people,

19 in the holy place of the Lord, and in the center of you, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord!

Proverbs



*Adult Bible Study
in Simplified English*

Lesson 10

The Beginning
of Wisdom
Proverbs 1:7; 3:1-20

Lesson 11

Wisdom for Right Living
Proverbs 11:1-11; 17-21,
23-25, 28

Lesson 12

Wisdom for Every Area
of Life
Proverbs 22:17-25;
23:10-11, 19-28;
24:10-12, 15-20

Lesson 13

Wisdom with
Other People
Proverbs 25:11-23;
26:18-28

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS: SAYINGS OF FAITH

The Book of Proverbs has many words of wisdom. The main writer was Solomon, the son of King David. God asked Solomon what he wanted. Solomon told God he wanted an understanding heart to judge His people. He wanted to know the difference between good and bad. So God gave him a “wise and understanding heart” (1 Kings 3:11-14).

First Kings 4:32 says Solomon collected 3,000 proverbs. The Book of Proverbs contains many of these. The book also has other lessons and poems about wisdom. The most important lesson about wisdom in the Book of Proverbs is to learn to respect God. All knowledge, wisdom, and discipline comes from one command: “Fear the Lord.” Learning from this book will help us live with wisdom and understanding, too.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Proverbs 1:7; 3:1-20

Memory Verse

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not trust in your own understanding. Agree with Him in all your ways, and He will make your paths straight.” (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Word List

discipline: to train; to teach the one who is disciplined some lessons in life; self-control; sometimes punishment

fear God: knowing God’s power; giving honor, respect, and reverence to God

motto: a brief statement used to express a principle, goal, or ideal

The Beginning of Wisdom

Here are a few sayings I have heard over the years:

About losing weight: *It is easier to keep it off than take it off* (from my mother).

About children: *You will always love your children, but you must raise them so others will love them also* (from a church friend).

About getting hurt: *I’ve had worse places than that on my eyeball* (from my father).

What is the main difference between a proverb we hear from a friend and a proverb from the Bible? When you hear a proverb from family or friends, it may or may not be true. Proverbs from the Bible are from God and are always true.

Proverbs are a collection of wise sayings to teach how to live in the right way. They are written in a special way to make us think about them. This makes them easy to remember. The theme of the book of Proverbs is wisdom. Following the wisdom from God brings true happiness in life.

Begin with the Most Important (Proverbs 1:7)

The Book of Proverbs begins by saying all followers of the one true God would do well to read this book. The **motto** for the whole book is Proverbs 1:7.

If you want to learn a new language like English, you start with easy words. When you learn math, you start with addition. If you want wisdom, the first lesson you learn is to **fear God**. This is not only the first lesson, it is the most important. “Fear the Lord” is written at least 18 times in Proverbs.

**Things to
Think About**

1. What proverbs do you know that help you in your life?
2. How many people do you know who are kind and truthful?
3. Have you made any mistakes because you did not ask for God's wisdom?
4. What is the difference between God's kind of wisdom and human wisdom?

What does “fear the Lord” mean? It means to respect, honor, trust, worship, adore. It means to obey and serve God. It means to feel unworthy of being in the presence of holy God. In the Old Testament, those who met God hid their eyes or fell on their faces. Isaiah would not speak until his lips were cleaned with burning coals. In the New Testament when John was on the island of Patmos, he fell on his face when he saw the risen Christ.

God made everything. He is greater than we are. We must respect and give honor to Him. A person who does not know God may be very smart and know how to do many things. But something is missing. He has missed the first and most important lesson. Wisdom begins when a person fears God.

The opposite of a wise person is a fool. In the Bible when a person is called a fool, it means a person who plans to do evil things. A simple person may do evil because he does not have wisdom. But a fool chooses to do wrong. We can learn from the mistakes of fools. We can learn what *not* to do. A fool hates wisdom and discipline. The wise love wisdom and discipline.

Teachings about Living with God and Others (3:1-4)

If you follow God's teachings and are wise, you will find that wisdom brings a life of peace. Those who are foolish do not follow God's teachings. They do not even think of the plan God has for their lives. They may get many things by the end of their lives—money, fame, or power. But in the end, the foolish will see that these things leave their souls empty.

The wise person is respected by other people because of his goodness. His actions show kindness, and his words are always truthful. Just as the wise person honors God, so God will also

bring honor to those who choose wisdom.

God's Wisdom (3:5-8)

True followers have learned to trust God no matter what happens. No one knows what to do all the time. We need God's help. God has a plan for our lives. We can go to Him when we have troubles. Trying to live our lives using our own wisdom only makes things worse.

When we trust God, He shows us what to do. We must begin, continue, and end everything we do with God. Our biggest sin is to trust ourselves and not put God first. Trusting God brings healing to our bodies and strength to our bones.

Foolishness is an easy choice. But choosing to be wise takes work. Read and study the Bible. Seek God through prayer every day.

Wise with Money (3:9-10)

Wise followers honor God with their money. When they give to God, it shows that they know He is the One who has blessed them with what they have. When we give back to God, we are trusting God to provide for us.

Wisdom in Discipline (3:11-12)

We do not usually ask to be **disciplined** or punished. When God disciplines us, He does it so we can learn lessons about life. We should not give up or be angry. He wants us to be wise and to honor Him. He wants us to lean on His understanding.

Desire Wisdom (3:13-20)

What can God's wisdom do for us? Proverbs says wisdom will bring us long life, riches, honor, happiness, and peace. We should want God's wisdom. It will bring a life of joy. What is better than silver or gold? What is better than beautiful stones? What is better than anything you could wish for? Wisdom from God!

Do you want to know how great this wisdom from God really is? This wisdom is the same wisdom God used when He made the world. There are still many truths to learn about the world God made.

We are part of the world God made. We are part of His plan. If we trust God, we may not understand everything now, but the time is coming when we will understand all things. For now, do not rely on human wisdom. Trust God's wisdom.

Proverbs 1:7

7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of much learning. Fools hate wisdom and teaching.

Proverbs 3

1 My son, do not forget my teaching. Let your heart keep my words.

2 For they will add to you many days and years of life and peace.

3 Do not let kindness and truth leave you. Tie them around your neck. Write them upon your heart.

4 So you will find favor and good understanding in the eyes of God and man.

5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not trust in your own understanding.

6 Agree with Him in all your ways, and He will make your paths straight.

7 Do not be wise in your own eyes. Fear the Lord and turn away from what is sinful.

8 It will be healing to your body and medicine to your bones.

9 Honor the Lord with your riches, and with the first of all you grow.

10 Then your store-houses will be filled with many good things and your barrels will flow over with new wine.

11 My son, listen when the Lord punishes you. Do not give up when He tells you what you must do.

12 The Lord punishes everyone He loves. He whips every son He receives.

13 Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gets understanding.

14 For it is better than getting silver and fine gold.

15 She is worth more than stones of great worth. Nothing you can wish for compares with her.

16 Long life is in her right hand. Riches and honor are in her left hand.

17 Her ways are pleasing, and all her paths are peace.

18 She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her. Happy are all who hold her near.

19 The Lord built the earth by wisdom. He built the heavens by understanding.

20 By what He knows, the seas were broken up and water falls from the sky.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Proverbs 11:1-11,
17-21, 23-25, 28

Memory Verse

“Riches are of no use
in the day of God’s
anger, but being right
with God saves from
death.” (Proverbs
11:4)

Word List

greed: wanting to get
more than you need or
deserve

generosity: willing to
give freely

humble: not proud;
not thinking too much
of yourself

right living: living
the way God says;
choosing to do what is
right in God’s eyes

Wisdom for Right Living

I remember when I was a child sitting and listening to my grandparents, parents, aunts, and uncles as they talked. They had lived good lives and knew interesting stories. My grandfather talked about how important it was to give to the church. My grandmother talked about sewing clothes for workers on the farm who didn’t have sewing machines. I learned a lot.

Proverbs 11 comes from Book 2 of Proverbs (chapters 10-22). Reading these verses is like sitting and listening to wise people talk. There is much to learn. Book 2 has 375 short poems. Each is a proverb or wise saying. Each is like a poem of one verse with two lines. The proverbs discuss many different subjects. But they all teach about **right living**. They teach us about wisdom. They can help us in all parts of our lives.

Choose to Live the Right Way (Proverbs 11:1-4)

God wants us to be honest. This is the teaching of verse 1. The person who worships the right way will not cheat others in his business. He will be fair. In Bible times, the businessman weighed what he sold on a scale that used stones. If he was not honest, he could change the size of the stones so that he was paid more. In my grandparents’ time, a dishonest man who sold meat could put his thumb on the scale to make the meat appear to weigh more, so the customer would have to pay more.

Some people are proud of what they can do without God’s help. They leave God out of their lives. They will suffer for this. Verses 2-3 say being full of pride leads to shame. **Humble**

**Things to
Think About**

1. Which of the proverbs in this lesson means the most to you? Why?
2. What would you do if someone gave you \$1 million dollars today? How would you use it?
3. Where, how, or from whom did you learn right from wrong?

people know that God is great. When we think of all God has done for us, it is easy to remember where our help comes from.

A good judge does not care if a guilty man is rich or poor. We learn in verse 4 that God will be the judge of everyone. We have all done evil things, so we all deserve punishment. Our money cannot save us from God's punishment. What good will a bank account, cars, or houses be in 1,000 years? We must trust in God. Only He can forgive us and teach us to do the right things.

Verses 5-6 explain we are like travelers who must choose the right way in life. If we are right with God, we will take the right path. This path is straight. We will be without blame and be saved. If we choose to do wrong things, we will be on the wrong path. We will fall, or be trapped, by wrong desires. The decision to obey God is a choice. A wise person asks God what to do. But a foolish person will not listen to God's wisdom.

Verses 7-8 begin and end with "the sinful man." His hope dies when he does. His power is nothing. All he had in life is gone. But whoever is right with God is kept from trouble.

Verses 9-11 teach why it is good for our communities when people live in the right way. A sinful man can hurt other people by his words alone. He is dangerous because he does not do what God says. But the words of good men can do great things. God blesses the whole city because of those who follow Him. Good people pray, and God helps the city.

What We Do Matters (11:17-21, 23-25, 28)

What we do today makes a difference for the rest of our lives. People who are kind help themselves when they help others. People who show no pity to others are hurt by acting this

way. They hurt their own souls. There is a price to be paid. Does this verse remind you of Jesus' words when He said, "If you forgive people their sins, your Father in heaven will forgive your sins also" (Matthew 6:14)?

Verses 18-19 belong together. It may seem that a sinful life will win over a life that is lived in the right way. But a wise person knows there is more to life than what we have today. Death is the payment for sin. The person who trusts God to forgive their sins will live forever in heaven. Heaven is God's gift to us, but we must trust in Him. Good works do not save us. Faith in God saves us.

Verses 20-21 teach that God hates those who have a sinful heart. God hates our evil actions. It is certain that the sinful will be punished.

Yet God finds joy with those who walk without blame. No one is good all the time. We all need God's forgiveness. Jesus came to live and die to pay for our sins. We can be free from the evil things in our lives. Those who are right with God will be saved and go to heaven when they die.

Verse 23 tells about two kinds of

living and what happens with each. Those who have a real desire to live right will have a good reward. Those who are sinful will be punished by God.

Do you like puzzles? Here it is: *When we give, we get.* How is this possible? Verses 24-25 teach about **greed** and **generosity**. When we try to find our happiness in things, we will never be happy. But when we give, we also receive. We can give more than money. We can give love, hope, time, and kindness.

Think about planting seeds in the garden. We might "lose" the seeds in the ground, but they grow into plants and flowers. If we keep our flower seeds, they will never grow into something beautiful.

Verse 28 explains that we must not put our trust in money or things. Trust only in God. Then we will grow like a green leaf—healthy and strong.

These proverbs have taught us of the rewards for the person who does the right thing. There is punishment for the person who does evil things. Wisdom brings us happiness because we learn to use our money and things in the right way to please God.

Proverbs 11

- 1** The Lord hates a false weight, but a true weight is His joy.
- 2** When pride comes, then comes shame, but wisdom is with those who have no pride.
- 3** The honor of good people will lead them, but those who hurt others will be destroyed by their own false ways.
- 4** Riches are of no use in the day of God's anger, but being right with God saves from death.
- 5** Those right with God, who are without blame, make a straight way for themselves, but the sinful will fall by their own wrongdoing.
- 6** Being right with God will save the honest man, but those who hurt others will be trapped by their wrong desires.
- 7** When a sinful man dies, his hope dies with him, and all his power comes to nothing.
- 8** The one who is right with God is kept from trouble, but the sinful get into trouble instead.
- 9** The sinful man destroys his neighbor with his mouth, but those who are fair will be saved through knowing God.
- 10** The city is glad when everything goes well with those who are right with God, and there are shouts of joy when the sinful are destroyed.
- 11** A city is honored by the good things that come to the faithful, but it is torn down by the mouth of the sinful.
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- 17** The man who shows loving-kindness does himself good, but the man without pity hurts himself.
- 18** The sinful man earns false pay, but he who spreads what is right and good gets pay that is sure.
- 19** He who will not be moved from being right with God will live, but he who goes for what is bad will bring about his own death.
- 20** The Lord hates those who are sinful in heart, but those who walk without blame are His joy.
- 21** Know for sure that the sinful man will not go without being punished, but the children of those who are right with God will be saved.
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- 23** The desire of those who are right with God is only good, but the hope of the sinful is anger.
- 24** There is one who is free in giving, and yet he grows richer. And there is one who keeps what he should give, but he ends up needing more.
- 25** The man who gives much will have much, and he who helps others will be helped himself.
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- 28** He who trusts in his riches will fall, but those who are right with God will grow like a green leaf.



*Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English*

Bible Text

Proverbs 22:17-25;
23:10-11, 19-28;
24:10-12, 15-20

Memory Verse

“Open your heart to teaching, and your ears to words of much learning.” (Proverbs 23:12)

Word List

abuse: to use in the wrong way
pornography: words or pictures used to make people want to commit sex sins

Wisdom for Every Area of Life

When my sons were young, if I had something important to tell them, I would say, “Look at me when I talk to you.” I wanted to make sure they were listening carefully. This way they could not tell me later, “But I didn’t hear you.”

This lesson begins with: “Turn your ear and hear the words of the wise, and open your mind to what they teach” (Proverbs 22:17). This lesson is from Book 3 of Proverbs. There are 30 “sayings” of the wise in Proverbs 22:17—24 :22. Some are positive; some are negative. They give reasons to obey God. “You” and “your” are often used, so we know these words apply to us. Sayings 1-10 discuss the desire for wealth. Sayings 11-17 are teachings by parents. Sayings 18-30 teach different subjects.

Saying 1: Care for the Poor (Proverbs 22:22-23)

Many Americans have never known what it is like to be poor. Some think being poor is the fault of the poor. But this is not always true. For example, many children do not have health care. Their parents may have jobs but no insurance. A free or low-cost clinic may be far from home. If a parent misses work to take the child to the clinic, he may lose his job. Then what?

We read often in the Bible that we are to help and not hurt the poor. Some evil people do bad things to poor people. They like to show their power. Yet God is on the side of the poor.

Saying 2: Be Careful Who You Spend Time With (22:24-25)

We learned in Psalm 1:1 that if we spend time with people who do bad things, we will begin to do evil also. This proverb

Things to Think About

1. Do people with bad habits give others their bad habits? How about the people you know? Do they help you or hurt you?
2. How does God feel about those who treat the poor badly?
3. Do you feel happy or sad when something bad happens to your enemies?
4. What areas of your life do these proverbs say you should change?

teaches that those who are angry all the time will make us angry. We begin to act the same way. Do not spend time with them.

Saying 10: Don't Take the Land of Poor People (23:10-11)

This is number 10 of the “30 Sayings.” (Read Proverbs 22:26—23:9 for Sayings 3-9.) In Bible times, people marked their land by making a short fence with stone markers. Some of the stones made a fence all around the owner's land. Sometimes the stones were only at the corners. When set up only at the corners, bad people could move the stones during the night so they could have more land. These verses say God will defend the child who has no parents from having his land taken.

Saying 15: Don't Drink and Eat Too Much (23:19-21)

This saying starts with “Listen and be wise.” This is important. Drinking and overeating are sins. We are not to stay around those who drink or eat too much, or **abuse** drugs. We should eat good food and take care of our bodies.

Saying 16: Honor Your Parents (23:22-25)

This proverb is a reminder of the fifth commandment: Show respect and honor toward your parents. Listen to (or remember) their wise teachings. Parents have joy when their children show wisdom. Learn God's ways and live by them.

Saying 17: Do Not Do Sex Sins (23:26-28)

God made humans to enjoy sex as husband and wife. The ones who remember this and keep their marriage promises will be happy. Those who do sex sins are not wise. Sex sins cause many troubles. Movies, television, and Internet **pornography** are some things which tempt people today.

In verse 28, a woman who sells her body is like a robber waiting to attack. She sins and leads others to sin.

Saying 24: Difficult Times (24:10)

Difficult times come to everyone. Hard times, not the good times, test us most. Do you blame others for your problems? Do you blame God? Do you think God should keep bad things from happening to you, but not others? The wise person knows difficult times can happen to anyone. They are part of life. The test is if we will depend on God in hard times.

**Saying 25: Be Responsible
for Those Accused Wrongly (24:11-2)**

This is a command, not just a good idea. When we see someone in trouble, we are to help. We cannot just stand and look and say we did not know. Many are in need. God wants us to help them.

**Saying 27: Evil Cannot Win
Over Those Who Live Right (24:15-16)**

The wicked try to make others do wrong things, just as they do. They do not want to change. But God helps those who do right. Even if they fall again and again, He helps them get up each time.

**Saying 28: Do Not Be Happy
When the Evil Fall (24:17-18)**

Have you heard children say, “Nyah, nyah, I told you so,” when another child is caught doing wrong? Are we secretly glad when something bad happens to the person who did wrong to us? God watches over those who are trying to live right to see how they act when the wicked suffer. God can turn from His anger towards the wicked. God does not want us to be happy when our enemies are punished. God is not happy to punish them. It is His wish that all would repent and come to Him in faith.

**Saying 29: Do Not Envy
Those Who Do Wrong (24:19-20)**

Do you feel jealous or angry when good things happen to the evil? Wise men know the wicked have no future. Proverbs says their lamp will go out. This is another way of saying God will cut off their name, and those who come after them, from the land of the living. They will not experience good things God has for His people.

If we learn from these proverbs, we will not worry about those who do wrong. We will put our trust in God.

Proverbs 22

17 Turn your ear and hear the words of the wise, and open your mind to what they teach.

18 For it will be pleasing if you keep them in your heart, so they may be ready on your lips.

19 I have taught you today, even you, so that your trust may be in the Lord.

20 Have I not written to you great things of wise teaching and much learning

21 to show you that the words of truth are sure, so you may give a true answer to him who sent you?

22 Do not rob the poor because he is poor, or crush those who suffer at the gate.

23 For the Lord will stand by them and help them, and take the life of those who rob them.

24 Do not have anything to do with a man given to anger, or go with a man who has a bad temper.

25 Or you might learn his ways and get yourself into a trap.

Proverbs 23

10 Do not take away the old landmark, or go into the fields of those without a father.

11 For the One Who saves them is strong. He will stand by them and give them help against you.

12 Open your heart to teaching, and your ears to words of much learning.

19 Listen, my son, and be wise. Lead your heart in the way.

20 Do not be with those who drink too much wine or eat too much meat.

21 For the man who drinks too much or eats too much will become poor, and much sleep will dress a man in torn clothes.

22 Listen to your father who gave you life, and do not hate your mother when she is old.

23 Buy truth, and do not sell it. Get wisdom

and teaching and understanding.

24 The father of one who is right with God will have much joy. He who has a wise son will be glad in him.

25 Let your father and mother be glad, and let her who gave birth to you be full of joy.

26 Give me your heart, my son. Let your eyes find joy in my ways.

27 For a woman who sells the use of her body is like a deep hole. A sinful woman is a narrow well.

28 She lies in wait as a robber, and makes many more men not faithful.

Proverbs 24

10 If you are weak in the day of trouble, your strength is small.

11 Save those who are being taken away to death. Keep them from being killed.

12 If you say, "See, we did not know this," does not He Who knows what is in hearts see it? Does not He Who keeps watch over your soul know it? And will He not pay each man for his work?

15 O sinful man, do not lie in wait against the house of the man who is right with God. Do not destroy his resting place.

16 For a man who is right with God falls seven times, and rises again, but the sinful fall in time of trouble.

17 Do not be full of joy when the one who hates you falls. Do not let your heart be glad when he trips.

18 The Lord will see it and will not be pleased, and He will turn away His anger from him.

19 Do not worry yourself because of those who do wrong, and do not be jealous of the sinful.

20 For there will be no future for the sinful man. The lamp of the sinful will be put out.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Proverbs 25:11-23;
26:18-28

Memory Verse

“A word spoken at the right time is like fruit of gold set in silver.”
(Proverbs 25:11)

Word List

appropriate: the right thing to do at the right time; correct; proper
branding iron: a piece of metal that is bent into a special shape (letter or symbol), then heated, and placed on an animal’s skin. The symbol is burned into the skin to show who owns the animal
gossip: talking about others, whether true or not
rude: not polite; to have bad manners; not showing respect

Wisdom with Other People

Do you want to learn how to get along with all kinds of people? These proverbs teach us how. You can learn to say the right words and show kindness.

The Importance of Wise Words (Proverbs 25:11-12)

There is a time to speak and let people know what you think. A wise thought at the right time is helpful. But you should teach someone in a gentle way. Choose what you say carefully.

No one likes to be told, “You are wrong!” It is better to give a kind word in the right way. This helps us want to change. Good words are like a beautiful piece of jewelry.

People You Can Trust; People You Cannot Trust (25:13-14)

How can you describe a faithful man who brings you news? He is like snow on a day when people are hot from working hard in the fields. It is a good thing to be able to trust what someone says because we know they will tell the truth.

What is a man like who does not do what he says he will do? He is like a hot, dry day when you see clouds which bring no rain. These kinds of people are useless. It would be better to never make a promise if it is not kept.

How to Get Those with Power to Listen to You (25:15)

We all know people who have more power than we do. If you are in school, the teacher tells you what to do. If you are getting on an airplane, someone may tell you to open your suitcase or take off your shoes for inspection. If you are speeding, the policeman can tell you to stop.

If you are quiet and friendly, patient and kind, you will be able to influence a person with power. Have you seen people act in a loud, **rude** way? They make others angry. This does no

Things to Think About

1. Can you remember a time when someone said a kind word to you when you were having a hard time? When was the last time you said good words to someone who was having a hard time?
2. Do you treat your enemies the way Jesus treated His?
3. What is the first thing you do when you hear gossip about someone else? How fast can gossip travel on the Internet?
4. Do you think people tell lies more often than almost any other sin? Why?

good. Soft answers can overcome stubborn rulers.

Do Not Overdo Anything (25:16-17)

My father says, “Fish and guests smell after three days.” He means, “You can have too much of even a good thing.” It is a good thing to learn how to be disciplined and learn how to set limits. That is better than to do too much. I love ice cream, but if I eat too much, I will get sick. We need to learn when enough is enough.

Warning about People Who Are Not Faithful (25:18-19)

A person who does not tell the truth is like a weapon which hurts or kills. It is hard when someone says something about you which is not true. Evil people can say you have done wrong even if you have not. These people are like a bad tooth or a foot that does not work. Stay away from these people.

Think of Others (25:20)

We are to be careful about what we say to those who are suffering. Someone with a broken heart needs wise, kind words. They do not need you to make fun of them or laugh or sing when they are sad. That would be like taking off your coat in a snow storm. It is not **appropriate**.

How to Treat Your Enemy (25:21-23)

At some time in our lives, we all think about hurting a person who has hurt us. But sometimes our enemy may become our friend if we treat him well. Remember that God does not give us what we deserve. He forgives us when we do wrong things. We need to treat our enemies the way God treats every sinner. We are to love as God loves.

Give food and water to the one who hates you. Bad words to your enemy are like a cold rain; it only makes things worse.

When you are good to our enemy, he may still be your enemy, but God will be pleased with you.

Watch Your Words (26:18-28)

When you were a child, do you remember hearing words that hurt you in your heart? Foolish jokes can be like an arrow. Jokes that make fun of others can be like a **branding iron** in their hearts.

No one wants to be around a person who is always arguing. People who talk about others are often unhappy. They only find joy when they can say something bad about others. Do not be like this person.

A fire will go out if it does not have wood to burn. The same is true with **gossip**. Do not repeat words you hear about others and the gossip will stop.

Words of gossip are like food that goes inside your body and stays. You cannot forget them. You cannot get rid of them. Ask yourself, “If I tell this to someone else, will it help or harm the person it is about?” If it is not helpful, even if it is true, do not say anything.

Proverbs 26:23-28 gives a picture of a person who does not tell the truth. This person can pretend to like someone he hates, and he can say words that are not true. Perhaps he wants to sound better than he really is. Or he lies to get out of trouble or to get a better job. The person who lies cannot cover the truth forever. People will

learn the truth.

Verse 23 says, “Burning lips and a sinful heart are like a pot covered with silver waste.” The shine on the pot does not make the pot do its work any better.

For example, my friend saw a dog with a wagging tail. The dog looked friendly. When she leaned down to pet the dog, it bit her. This is like a person who hates someone while his lips say nice things about them. No one should believe him when he speaks words of kindness because his heart is false.

What is a lie? Verse 28 says that lying is a kind of hatred. People want to hurt others. They want power. This is not the kind of talk which a wise person uses. It is also a lie to say things you don’t believe. It is always nice to hear good things about yourself, but only if it is the truth.

These lessons from Proverbs teach that it is important to be a person of truth. It is important to speak the right words with a good heart. This gives us wisdom to get along with others. But most important, we find the wisdom to live as God wants us to live.

Proverbs 25

11 A word spoken at the right time is like fruit of gold set in silver.

12 A wise man speaking strong words to a listening ear is like a piece of gold for the ear and a beautiful object of fine gold.

13 A faithful man who carries news is like the cold of snow at gathering time to those who send him, for he makes the spirit of his owners feel new again.

14 A man who talks much of a gift he never gives is like clouds and wind without rain.

15 When one is slow to anger, a ruler may be won over. A gentle tongue will break a bone.

16 Have you found honey? Eat only what you need or you may become filled with it and spit it up.

17 Do not let your foot be in your neighbor's house too much, or he may become tired of you and hate you.

18 A man who tells a lie against his neighbor is like a heavy stick or a sword or a sharp arrow.

19 In time of trouble, trusting in a man who is not faithful is like a bad tooth or a foot out of joint.

20 He who sings songs to a heavy heart is like one who takes off a coat on a cold day, or like sour wine poured on soda.

21 If the one who hates you is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him water.

22 If you do that, you will be making him more ashamed of himself, and the Lord will pay you.

23 The north wind brings rain, and a tongue that hurts people brings angry looks.

Proverbs 26

18 Like a crazy man who throws pieces of burning wood and arrows of death,

19 so is the man who fools his neighbor with a lie, and says, "I was only joking."

20 When there is no wood, the fire goes out. Where there is no one telling secret stories about people, arguing stops.

21 An arguing man makes fights worse. He is like coals to burning wood and wood to a fire.

22 The words of one who tells secret things about people are like good-tasting bites of food. They go down into the inside parts of the body.

23 Burning lips and a sinful heart are like a pot covered with silver waste.

24 He who hates covers it up with his lips, but stores up false ways in his heart.

25 When he speaks with kindness, do not believe him, for there are seven things that are hated in his heart.

26 Even if his hate is covered with false ways, his sin will be found out in front of the great meeting.

27 He who digs a deep hole will fall into it, and he who rolls a stone will have it return upon him.

28 A lying tongue hates those it crushes, and a mouth that speaks false words destroys.