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**Adult  
Bible Study  
in  
Simplified  
English**

**Teaching  
Guide**



**Psalms and Proverbs**  
***SONGS AND SAYINGS OF FAITH***

Jack Merritt

# **ADULT BIBLE STUDY IN SIMPLIFIED ENGLISH** **Teaching Guide**

## **Psalms and Proverbs: Songs and Sayings of Faith**

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Writer for Psalms and Proverbs Teaching Guide

Jack Merritt, Columbus Avenue Baptist Church, Waco, Texas

Editor for Psalms and Proverbs Teaching Guide

Cindy Dake, First Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas

Director, Office of Intercultural Initiatives

Patty Lane

# Introduction for Teachers

**T**he purpose of this teaching guide is to provide teachers with a plan for teaching a quality Bible lesson while helping participants improve their English language skills. Use of this material is suggested for International Sunday School classes or any Bible study group taught at a Basic English level.

The Teaching Guide begins with listings of the Lesson Focus, Focal/Background Text, and Memory Verse, all of which provide the premise for the lesson. This information is followed by a teaching plan under headings of Connect with Life, Guide the Study, and Encourage Application. At the end of each lesson, Supplemental Teaching Ideas are provided under those same headings. As the teacher, you may pick and choose from these helps to use along with the student's Study Guide to fit the lesson to your class members' abilities and needs.

The Bible text printed in the lesson material is from the NEW LIFE Version of the Bible (NLV), an inexpensive translation (not a paraphrase) which uses only an 850-word vocabulary. The NLV is available from Christian Literature International, P. O. Box 777, Canby, Oregon 97013; e-mail christian@canby.com; telephone (orders only) 1-800-324-9734.

The NLV Bible often uses simplified phrases to express terms generally familiar to anyone raised in a Christian environment. In the Teaching Guide, these terms will usually be expressed using the NLV terminology, followed by the more common term in parentheses; for example, "proud religious law-keeper (Pharisee)" or "early preacher (prophet)." The teacher has the option of using the NLV term for new Christians or beginning students, or the common term where it will be better understood and less cumbersome in teaching. Once a word or phrase has been introduced in the Word List or teaching procedures, however, the familiar expression may be used to help students add it to their vocabulary.

Prayer is sometimes specifically suggested in the teaching procedures. It should be an integral part of your lesson plan. Use your own judgment as to where it best fits into the teaching session.

The writers and editors wish you success and give you prayerful support in your teaching of this Adult Bible Study in Simplified English.

**Adult Bible Study in Simplified English is published by the Baptist General Convention of Texas and follows the same curriculum plan as the Bible Study for Texas materials, but has no Texas emphasis. Teachers may wish to purchase Bible Study for Texas lesson comments and teaching guides as additional resources. These may be ordered through your church or directly from the Sunday School/Discipleship Division, Baptist General Convention of Texas, 333 North Washington, Dallas, TX 75246-1798, e-mail baptistway@bgct.org; FAX 214-828-5187; or toll-free telephone 1-800-355-5285.**

## About the writer

*Jack Merritt wrote the Teaching Guide for Psalms/Proverbs. He is a preacher's son who graduated from Baylor University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Phyllis, were missionaries for 32 years in the US, working in New York City, pastor of the Dulce Baptist Indian Mission in New Mexico, and recently served three years as Missionary-in-Residence with International Students at Baylor University. He is substitute teacher for the International Sunday School class at Columbus Avenue Baptist Church, Waco, Texas.*

# Suggestions for Teaching

## General Suggestions

1. Provide language edition Bibles so students can read the focal passage in their native languages.
2. Beginning students may require three sessions to complete one lesson.
3. Review the Word Study before beginning the study. Provide page (see resources) for class to keep vocabulary studies in their notebooks.
4. Prepare 9-12 core sentences which tell the most important part of the Bible focal text. Illustrate each sentence with stick figures and symbols in *picture sequence* form (see details below).
5. Prepare lesson outlines or written materials before class—make your own cling sheets by cutting apart white plastic garbage bags and writing on them with markers. The plastic bags will cling to the wall.

## Bible Comments/Focal Text

1. Help students hear English and practice their pronunciation by modeling phrases and sentence. Allow the entire class to repeat. Be consistent with stress and intonation. Speak naturally.
2. Allow individual students to read a sentence or paragraph at a time. For further practice, ask students to tell sections from Bible comments in their own words.
3. When time allows, pairs may read the lesson again to each other.
4. Class may close books and listen as a native speaker reads the section again.
5. Discuss lesson using “Things to Think About.”

## Memory Verse

1. Challenge class members to say the Memory Verse several times each day.
2. Provide Study Sheets for students to write Memory Verses.
3. Write phrases or individual words on separate pieces of paper. Give to students to place in order.
4. Write entire verse on board. Read in unison. Erase key words a few at a time. Recite verse until entire verse is erased and class can repeat by memory.
5. Make a symbol for each word or phrase of the

verse. 6. Use the symbols as a reminder for saying the verse.

## Picture Sequencing (Lipson Method)

This method is especially suited for teaching beginners. It consists of a series of pictures with accompanying sentences that tell a story. It may be used solely for oral production (using pictures alone) or for integrated skills (engaging students in reading and writing the story).

You may use real pictures, videotape, pictures that are professionally drawn, or stick figures

Other benefits include the following:

1. Relaxed, low-anxiety atmosphere as students focus on the pictures and create their own sentences to tell the story
  - Focus on fluency, not just accuracy
  - Focus on a message or task rather than form or grammar
  - Minimal error-correction as students tell the story
2. Pictures (even stick figures) convey meaning in every language.
3. The same set of pictures can be used with more than one level of students by making the sentences easier or more difficult.
4. The use of pictures helps students learn the language in “chunks” rather than words in isolation.
5. The only item needed is a piece of chalk—or a marker, if using a cling sheet or overhead transparency.

## Preparation

1. Put a story into sentences that are suitable for the level of your students. Try to tell the story with a maximum of ten sentences. For low beginners, choose the simplest and fewest words possible. Keep sentences in their most basic form, so students can combine sentences later.
2. Draw simple pictures or stick figures to illustrate key points in the story. These serve as prompts for the telling of the story. Other drawing tips:
  - An “x” in a small square beside a picture enables you to cue for a negative as you tell the story.
  - Direct quotations may be indicated with a cartoon-type bubble.

# Suggestions for Teaching

## **Procedure**

1. Introduce the story by following your prepared script of sentences (for consistency) and pointing to the pictures as you speak. This will give students the main idea and help them think in chunks of language (as in real-life language use).
2. Introduce the new words as you again reference the pictures. Use props and/or dramatization as needed to establish understanding. Work on individual sounds and word stress as students repeat new words.
3. Lead students in repetition of the story, one sentence at a time, working on sentence stress and intonation.
4. Lead the class in one more repetition of the story (going straight through and continuing to refer to the pictures throughout the story).
5. Ask the class to tell you the story as you cue the story sequence by pointing to the pictures. (You become “stage prompter” at this point.)
6. Then ask for a single volunteer to tell the story. (This may open the door for several more proficient students to use what they know.)
7. Divide the class into small groups of 3-5 students to give each person practice in telling the story. (Inevitably, the most eager student will go first, followed by another “semi”-eager student. By the time it is the least proficient student’s turn, he/she will have learned a lot by listening, will have observed a good model at least a couple of times, and will have bolstered courage for risk-taking.)
8. Follow with questions to review story (begin by naming the setting, the characters, etc.—easy questions).
9. Conclude with life application questions that require some thought and give students opportunity to express opinion, emotion, and their own ideas.

## **Lesson Expansion**

If the setting and circumstances permit, use these ideas:

- Sequencing pictures (a set for each pair of students) while listening to you or to a taped voice tell the story
- Picture sequencing without hearing the story told
- Matching pictures and sentences
- Scrambled sentences to arrange in order (writing numbers or letters in front of sentences to show sequence; cutting up sentences and moving around to position correct order)

- Strip story (cutting up sentences, issuing one strip per student, asking students to arrange themselves in order, having them retell the story by contributing the portion on their paper strip)
- Cloze (supplying a written copy with every n<sup>th</sup> word blank; students work in pairs to fill in the missing words)
- Dictation (teacher or student telling the story while students write what they hear)
- Provide a copy of the sentences for each student. Ask that they read the story to a partner.
- Ask students to write the story in their own words.

## **Bible passage as content for reading**

### *Procedure:*

1. Tell the parable or story using pictures. Use animation and simple sentences.
2. Ask questions about the main idea of the story.
3. Read story aloud while students follow along and underline unknown words. Go over the meaning of these words with the whole class.
4. Intermediate or advanced students: Have students read silently a second time to look for answers to two or three questions about details that you have written on the board. Ask students to discuss their answers with a partner. Then go over answers with the whole class.
5. Beginning or low-intermediate students: Read story again and ask students to repeat it with you line by line.
6. Invite the class to read the story with you in unison.
7. Ask pairs to read the story to each other.
8. Ask for volunteers to tell the story in their own words.
9. Make drawings large enough for the back row to see.
10. Select a list of new words in the story—unfamiliar words that the students would not likely be able to figure out from context (generally 8-10 new words per lesson).
11. List the new words in categories: verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs. When listing verbs, you may write both simple present and past tense forms (e.g., eat/ate, walk/walked). Basic beginners would do well to tell the story in present tense, but high beginners could work in present tense, then retell the story in past tense.

# Suggestions for Teaching

## Checklist for Successful Classrooms

### *Right Kind of Input*

1. New language in every lesson
2. Input that is slightly above the students' current level of proficiency
3. Content relevant to the students' real-life needs and interests
4. Language learned in meaningful chunks, not words in isolation
5. Comprehensibility achieved by use of the following:
  - Realia or authentic materials
  - Simplified language (rephrasing, repeating, clear enunciation)
  - Demonstration and multiple examples rather than explanation
  - Lots of gestures and nonverbal language

### *Low Anxiety Environment*

Students should not be afraid to make mistakes or take risks in language learning. The following factors contribute to a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere and build a sense of community:

- Personally greeting and bidding farewell to students
- Sincere and frequent affirmation
- Minimal error correction from the teacher
- Frequent reference to the culture(s) of the students
- Smiles and laughter that are commonplace
- Connecting with students through eye contact and positioning yourself on students' eye level
- Calling students by name

### *Checklist for Real-Life Interaction*

1. Pace activities with a balance of noisy/quiet and still/active
2. Attention to different learning styles (visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic)
3. Variety in grouping (predominately pairs and small groups of three or five; using whole class in initial presentation and again for feedback and wrap-up at the end)
4. A focus on a task or message rather than form (grammar)
5. Provision for all four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing)
6. Avoidance of questions for which answers are known

7. Use of information gap activity in which partners have different pieces of information and must ask each other questions in order to fill in their gaps of understanding
8. Other useful activities: surveys, interviews, role-play, problem-solving, and interactive games
9. Review previous material.

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Some suggestions based on material developed for the EFL Training Manual—Beyond our Borders.

# Resources for *Psalms and Proverbs*

## **From BaptistWayPress**

[www.baptistwaypress.org](http://www.baptistwaypress.org)

Posted a week in advance of the first Sunday of use.

### **Additional Adult Bible Study Comments**

By Dr. Jim Denison, pastor of Park Cities Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas. Free to download.

### **Teaching Resource Items**

Permission is granted to download teaching resource items, print them out, copy as needed, and use in your class. Look for them in “Teaching Plans” for each lesson. Go online and click on “Teaching Resource Items.”

## **From Baptist Standard**

### **Additional Teaching Plan**

Enrichment teaching help is provided in the internet edition of the Baptist Standard.

Access the free internet information by checking the Baptist Standard website at [www.baptiststandard.com](http://www.baptiststandard.com). Or call 214-630-4571 to begin your subscription to the printed edition of the Baptist Standard.

# Teaching Guide

## Unit 1 Introduction

### Background Information

The following information may be shared with your class as an introduction to this study. Additional information is found in the *Adult Study Guide* and *Adult Teaching Guide*.

In Hebrew, the word *psalms* means “praise.” Our word *hallelujah* comes from the same word. These are the songs of the people of Israel. Psalms are often called the “Psalms of David,” although other authors wrote many of them.

The psalms tell the life of God’s people. They are written about the feelings we all have. Psalms are often used as a prayer book. Psalms are a source of comfort.

The Book of Psalms can be divided into five books. These are like the first five books of the Old Testament. This study includes at least one psalm from each of the five books in Psalms:

#### Book 1—Psalms 1-41

(**Genesis:** The story of the first people God made and a revelation of the needs of the human heart. It is the book of foundations)

**Study Guide Lesson 1:** Psalm 1

**Study Guide Lesson 2:** Psalms 3:1-8; 13:1-6; 22:1-5, 22-24

#### Book 2—Psalms 42-72

(**Exodus:** The book of redemption, the story of God’s moving in human history to change and redeem people and save them from themselves)

**Study Guide Lesson 4:** Psalm 42

#### Book 3—Psalms 73-89

(**Leviticus:** Israel learned how to draw near to God and how to worship Him in tabernacle.)

**Study Guide Lesson 5:** Psalm 73

#### Book 4—Psalms 90-106

(**Numbers:** The book of wilderness wandering, of testing and failure)

**Study Guide Lesson 7:** Psalm 90

#### Book 5—Psalms 107-150

(**Deuteronomy:** The second law)

**Study Guide Lesson 9:** Psalm 116

In addition, this study will include some of the most well-known and best-loved psalms.

**Study Guide Lesson 3:** Psalm 23

**Study Guide Lesson 6:** Psalm 84

**Study Guide Lesson 8:** Psalm 100, 103

Each of the five books ends with a praise to God, usually found within the last verses of each psalm. In the case of Book 5, all of Psalm 150 is a “concluding” praise.

### Teaching Notes

The word *psalm* is pronounced with a silent *p* (thus, “salm”). Explain that it sounds more like the word *song*. Explain the difference between a *psalm* and the book of Psalms. When we speak of “the book of Psalms,” the word is plural and capitalized, referring to the collection of many psalms/songs. But when referring to an individual psalm/song, the word is singular and capitalized (Psalm 102, for example). When speaking of psalms in general, it is not capitalized and may be plural or singular.

#### Remember these things about the psalms:

1. They were written for singing.
2. They were written over a period of 1,000 years, from the time of Moses to the time of Ezra.
3. They tell of strong feelings the writers experienced toward life situations, toward other people, toward themselves, and toward God.
4. Hebrew poetry differs from English poetry. Hebrew poetry uses “thought rhyme,” where the thoughts are written a second or third time using different words.
5. Alphabetic or Acrostic: These psalms were written in Hebrew. They have lines which start with words whose first letters follow a certain pattern. For example, in Psalm 119, the first eight lines start with words beginning with the Hebrew letter ALEPH, the second eight lines with words beginning with BETH, etc. It may have been written this way to help people remember the psalm.

# Teaching Guide

## Lesson 1: The Way to True Happiness

### Lesson Focus

Following God with faith leads to a full and happy life. Psalm 1 teaches that true happiness comes from having a right relationship with God by following His ways and not doing what the wicked say.

### Focal Text

Psalm 1:1-6

### Background Text

Psalm 1:1-6

### 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)

### Connect with Life

1. Provide Bibles for class members. Ask them to find the middle of the Bible. Ask: *What book is it?* (Psalms) *How many chapters are in the book of Psalms?* (150)

2. Say: *This book is probably one of the best known books in the Bible. The New Testament quotes from Psalms more than any other Old Testament book—at least 93 times. Psalms is the longest book in the Bible. It has 150 chapters. Psalms also has the longest chapter in the Bible—Psalm 119, which has 176 verses. The shortest chapter in the Bible is Psalm 117 with only two verses.*

3. Hold up a hymnbook. Say: *Churches today sing songs from hymnbooks like this. But the book of Psalms is the song book of the Old Testament.*

4. Bring pictures to class of people with different facial expressions. Hold up one happy face and one sad face.  
Ask: *Which would you rather be? Today’s lesson shows true happiness comes from learning how to obey God and staying away from the wrong path.*

### Guide the Study

5. Read Psalm 1:1. Use the Study Guide to explain these

words: *wicked, sinners, mockers.*

6. Reproduce this diagram to show how Hebrew poetry uses repetition, rather than rhyme or rhythm.

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

7. Ask a volunteer to act out the three verbs showing what the happy man does not do: *Walk, stand, or sit with the sinful.* Enlist others to be the “wicked friends.” Explain that, at first, sinful men advise him to go along with what they do. Then he takes his place alongside those who choose to do wrong. Finally, he sits and becomes a teacher with those who make fun of God’s ways. Remind the class that in that day, the teacher sat while the students stood.

8. Ask: *Where are some places you should not go if you want to stay away from sinful people and their influence? What should you not do?*

9. Read Psalm 1:2. Bring pictures of road signs or ask the class to describe road signs they have seen (stop sign, yield sign, etc.). Ask: *Do these signs make you happy?* (Probably not.)

Discuss how to find joy in God’s laws. Share that when we choose God’s ways, we choose the plan that is best for our life. Invite the class to share a time when God’s laws helped them choose the right thing.

10. Invite class to suggest how you can think about God’s Law day and night.

11. Read Psalm 1:3. Bring a dead tree branch to class. Ask: *What is wrong?* Explain that it died from lack of water.

Discuss the man who finds joy in the Law of the Lord. Say: *He is like a tree that has been planted where the natural flow of water will keep it alive. This tree will give fruit at the right time.*

12. Ask class to think about God’s timing. Share how God does things at the right time. Ask for any in the

class to share their experiences of waiting for God to work in their lives.

13. Read Psalm 1:4. Explain: *Chaff is the seed coverings which are separated from the seeds when threshing grain. Chaff is useless.*

Ask: *Which would you rather be? The useful seed or the useless chaff?*

14. Read Psalm 1:5. Place two people on opposite sides of the room. Ask: *Can you be with both people at the same time?* Remind the class of the last part of verse 1.

Say: *If you choose to sit with those who disobey God, you cannot stand with God's people.*

15. Read Psalm 1:6. Draw a road that divides and goes two ways. Draw a question mark at the top.

Say: *We have a choice. We can go the direction which God knows and where He can guard and bless us. Or we can walk away from God and be lost forever.*

Ask: *Which way do you want to go?*

### Encourage Application

16. Write "Happiness Is" on the top of a marker board. Share these definitions and ask others to contribute: *Learning to tell time, learning to whistle, tying your shoe for the first time, sharing a sandwich with a friend.*

Ask: *What have you learned from this lesson that would make you give a different definition of true happiness?*

17. Encourage class to learn this psalm by reading it twice a day and writing it once a day.

### Supplemental Teaching Ideas

#### Connect with Life

• Say: *Today we begin studying our first lesson from the Book of Psalms. The psalms are:*

—*The Christian's "hymnal" to help us praise God*

—*The Christian's "prayer book" where we learn how to come to God in prayer*

—*The Christian's "book of evidences" to strengthen our faith in Jesus Christ*

—*The Christian's "training guide" for living right lives before God.*

• Share the following:

*If you want happiness for an hour, take a nap.*

*If you want happiness for a day, go fishing.*

*If you want happiness for a year, inherit a fortune.*

*If you want happiness for a lifetime, help someone.*

Explain that this study will teach how to find true happiness.

### Guide Bible Study

• Use this lesson to see if class members know how to be right with God. Say: *Tell God you are sorry you broke His rules. God calls this sin. Ask God to forgive you (God gives your sin to Jesus, Who carries it away). Tell God you believe His Son died for your sins. Ask God to make you into a new person.*

• Share background information from the Unit Intro. Say: *This psalm expresses the deep feelings of the writer. We read his cries, his praise for God Who cares for him, his confession of sin, and his joy when he finds forgiveness. This psalm helps us learn to praise our God Who made us and loves us.*

• Read Psalm 1:1. Discuss how sins can get worse as we do them more. List activities which people do that hurt them as they try to find happiness in the wrong way.

• Read Psalm 1:2. Discuss how "the Law of the Lord" can bring delight. Prepare the following chart. Read Psalm 1:3-6 and ask class to fill in the chart. Place the tree/river in left column. In right column, use illustration of chaff blowing away in the wind. (Enlarge art on a copy machine.) Ask: *Which are you?*

Consequences—What Happens to:	
Those Who Follow God	Those Who Do Not Follow God
	

### Encourage Application

• Prepare the following on a poster. Ask half the class to read the first part of each sentence and the other half to read the second part (in italics). All read the last line.

Money can buy a house, *but not a home.*

Money can buy a clock, *but not time.*

Money can buy food, *but not an appetite.*

Money can buy position, *but not respect.*

Money can buy blood, *but not life.*

Money can buy medicine, *but not health.*

**You see, money is not everything.**

# Teaching Guide

## Lesson 2: Asking God for His Help

### Lesson Focus

God will take care of us no matter what happens.

### Focal Text

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

### Background Text

Psalms 3; 6; 13; 22

### Memory Verse

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

### Connect with Life

1. Say: *Psalms speak to our hearts.* Remind the class that the psalms are poems. Poetry tells about a writer’s feelings. These are songs of faith written in special way.
2. Summarize the story of David and Absalom found in 2 Samuel 13-18. Ask: *Do you think David felt sad or depressed?* On the board, list words the class suggests which tell how David felt.

3. On a copy machine, enlarge the facial expressions shown below. Distribute different faces to class members. Ask them to hold up their picture if that face fits the verse being read during the lesson.



### Guide the Study

4. Read Psalm 3:1-8. List the ways David said God was taking care of him. List what David wanted God to do for him. Discuss ways this psalm helps class remember when they have felt the same way.

Ask: *When David felt sad, whom did he call out to?* (verse 1)

Say: *David wrote that men turned their backs on*

*him. He thinks God has also forgotten him. Recall David’s sin with Bathsheba, and Absalom’s rebellion.*

Ask: *Does David still have faith in God?* (verse 3) Ask: *Why does David have faith?* (verse 4) *What does David say in verses 5 and 6?*

David has faith to see these enemies overcome, and he praises God as the One Who conquers his enemies and saves him (verses 7-8).

5. Ask: *Were you ever lost from your parents when you were small?* Allow time for answers. Say: *David might have felt this kind of fear when he wrote Psalms 13.*

Read Psalm 13. Ask members to list the four questions found in verses 1-2.

Place a piece of cloth over the eyes of a volunteer. Ask: *Can you see anyone?* Then ask the class: *Can you see the volunteer?* Say: *When we cannot see God, it does not mean that He cannot see us.*

Discuss what David did when he felt God had forgotten him (verses 5-6).

6. Ask: *Did your mother ever tell you to do something because it would be “good for you”?* Discuss times when something caused suffering but it was for our own good (exercise, doctor’s knife, etc.).

Read Psalm 22:1-2. Bookmark two Bibles, one at Matthew 27:46 and the other at Mark 15:34. Ask two people to read these verses. Explain these words from Psalms were what Jesus spoke on the cross. Ask: *How and why would Jesus know these verses?*

Read Psalm 22:3-5. Say: *David remembered God always gave help to His people in the past.* Ask: *Why did this make David sad?* (David wanted to know why God did not help him now.)

Read Psalm 22:22-24. Ask: *Have you ever made God’s name known to someone who did not know Him?* Discuss how to praise God when you are having troubles. Ask: *Why is it important to trust God will not “hide His face” from the one in trouble?* (verse 24)

### Encourage Application

7. Discuss how the class feels about the questions David asked God. Write on a poster/board: “Can Good Come from Times When We Suffer?” Allow members to share their own experiences.

8. Suggest the following actions during the next week:
- List those who might feel God has forgotten them (those in hospitals; those who have had family members or friends die; those who are lonely). Pray for those who are having hard times.
  - Think back to a time when you had a hard time. Write down how God helped you so you can share these words with others.
9. Prepare a poster with the following:

## The Death of Jesus

- Matthew 27:35:** They crucified Jesus.
- Mark 15:34:** At 3 o'clock in the afternoon Jesus said, "My God! My God, why have You left me by myself?"
- John 19:24:** They said, "Don't tear his coat. Throw the dice for it. The winner will have the coat."
- Luke 22:35:** All the people stood and watched Jesus.
- Matthew 27:41, 43:** The leaders of the priests made fun of Jesus. They said, "He trusted in God. We want to see God save him!"
- John 19:29:** Before He died, Jesus said, "I am thirsty."
- John 19:34:** After He died, one of the soldiers pushed a spear into Jesus. Then blood and water came out.

10. Write the following verses on seven pieces of paper, one per sheet. (Answers are in parentheses, so do not list answers on students' sheets.) Students will match these verses from Psalms with items 1-7 on the poster (above). Distribute and ask the class to match verses to the poster.

Psalm 22:14-17	(1)
Psalm 22:1	(2)
Psalm 22:18	(3)
Psalm 22:17	(4)
Psalm 22:8	(5)
Psalm 22:15	(6)
Psalm 22:14	(7)

11. Say: *Psalm 22 is more than a psalm about the sufferings of David. He also thought about the others who needed to hear his testimony. He spoke for God in the place of worship.*

Read Acts 2:29-30: *Peter said, "Brothers, I can tell you in plain words that our early father David not only died but was buried. We know where his grave is today. He was one who spoke for God. He knew God had made a promise to him. From his family, Christ would come and take His place as King."*

## Supplemental Teaching Ideas

### Connect with Life

- Ask class to "Agree or Disagree" with this statement: *God is not angry when we tell Him how we feel.*

Bring a clock and a calendar to display. Ask: *Have you ever waited for God to answer your prayers? Did you need a clock or a calendar as you waited (moments/hours or days/months/years)?*

Explain that this lesson is about psalms of lament or sadness. David asks God to help him in his time of trouble.

### Guide Bible Study

- Before class, write these questions on a poster or marker board. Refer to them while reading the Bible verses:
  - Does the psalmist *praise, thank, or ask* God for things?
  - Does the psalmist complain to God? What about?
  - What are the names used to address God?
  - What words are used to describe God?

- Read Psalm 13:1-6 and Psalm 22:1-5; 22-24. Discuss if class members would have felt the way David felt.

- Discuss how David's feelings changed from the beginning to the end of these psalms. Ask: *Does the psalmist praise God, thank God, or ask God for things? Say: These psalms are about David's problems and about David's faith.*

### Encourage Application

- Say: *You cannot trust God and worry at the same time. We don't have to worry because God is always present.*

Ask the class to learn Psalm 3:5 this week.

- Prepare this poster:

#### When trouble happens

- Tell God about it
- Look away from the trouble and look to God
- Wait for the answer

- "Homework" Assignment: Challenge members to write or re-write a psalm in their own words. Ask: *What name or names will you use to address God? Will you blame God, others, or yourselves for your troubles?*

- Ask class members to make a list of songs they can sing as praise to God for His help. Close by singing one or more of these songs.

# Teaching Guide

## Lesson 3: Trust God—He Cares

### Lesson Focus

We can trust God to care for us even in the worst of times.

### Focal Text

Psalms 23:1-6; 27:1-6

### Background Text

Psalms 23; 27

### Memory Verse

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

### Connect with Life

1. Write these words on the board or a poster: “I will take care of you.” Ask volunteers to see how many ways they can say the words (as if they really mean it, as if they don’t really mean it, loudly, softly, etc).

2. Instruct class to turn to the middle of their Bibles and explain that this study will be two songs of trust in God and God’s care—Psalm 23 and Psalm 27. Say: *These two psalms tell us that no matter what happens, God loves us and will take care of us.*

### Guide the Study

3. Write the following on a poster/board to display as you begin the study of Psalm 23:

- God takes care of us the way a shepherd takes care of sheep.
- God is with us even when we are afraid.
- God’s love and kindness are always with us.
- God guides us to make good choices.

4. Say: *This is known as the Twenty-Third Psalm. Psalm 23 is one of the best loved psalms in the world. We learn from this psalm how to be still and have courage and strength. It shows how we can have faith even when we may be near death.*

5. Read Psalm 23:1. Ask: *What is a shepherd? What does this person do? Is it dangerous? What makes a*

*good shepherd? What does it mean, “I shall have everything I need?”*

Discuss the life of sheep and shepherds. Present the following details:

#### Sheep

- Will go anywhere; don’t really watch where they are going
- Need to be led to food and water
- Will drink anything if thirsty, even bad or poisoned water
- Wild animals can attack them easily; sheep don’t have a way to protect themselves
- Sheep are not as strong as other farm animals

#### Shepherds

- Used sticks to protect sheep and themselves
- Were not wealthy
- Worked long, hard hours
- Lived in the fields with the sheep
- Spent their time outdoors, rain or shine
- Protected sheep from wild animals
- Made sure sheep had enough food and water
- Put oil on a sheep’s wound to keep it from getting infected
- Used a stick to protect or discipline the sheep

6. Read Psalm 23:2. Ask: *What do green grass and quiet waters mean to sheep?* (Food and drink). Ask: *What are some things which God gives to refresh us?*

7. Read Psalm 23:3. Discuss what “being strong again” means. Say: *The good shepherd leads the sheep along the right path.*

Ask: *In what ways are we like sheep? How often do we go the wrong way? Where are some of the wrong paths we may go on?*

8. Read Psalm 23:4. Say: *There are times when we must go on a dangerous path to reach the green pastures and quiet waters.*

Ask: *What kinds of dangers might there be in dark valleys today? Discuss how the shepherd’s stick helped the sheep. Ask: Does God’s power help you feel safer?*

9. Read Psalm 23:5. Say: *These words are a picture of a host with visitors. He gave food to the travelers. Explain*

that when guests came to visit, the host put oil and perfume on their heads as a sign of good will or joy. Discuss how God gives us more than we need.

10. Read Psalm 23:6. List some of the good things which God gives. Ask: *What does it mean to “live in the house of God forever?”*

11. Transition to an overview of Psalm 27. Read Psalm 27:1-6 (or ask several volunteers to read portions aloud).

Say: *This psalm tells how God cares for His people. He is our “light” and our “strength.” He hears His people. David writes of his great desire to meet God. We should be like this. David shows how God takes care of us in every problem.*

Use the following outline to guide discussion. Use information from the Study Guide to supplement your discussion.

- We can be sure of God (Psalm 27:1-3).
- There are many reasons for fear (Psalm 27:2, 3).
- There is one reason to not be afraid (Psalm 27:1).
- God is our light and strength (Psalm 27:1).
- We can be close to God (Psalm 27:4-6).
- This gives us safety (Psalm 27:5-6a) so we can sing with joy (Psalm 27:6b).

## Encourage Application

12. Bring a stick like a shepherd might use. Pass it around the group. Ask each member to say a favorite verse from Psalm 23 as they receive the stick. Or as each student is handed the stick, ask them to say, “The Lord is my Shepherd,” and to think about ways God helps them.

13. Pass out hymnbooks. Say: *Look at the titles to find songs about shepherds and sheep* (for example, “Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us”). Let class select one or more to sing as a group. Some students will be new to these songs or their lyrics, so be ready to explain phrases as needed.

## Supplemental Teaching Ideas

### Connect with Life

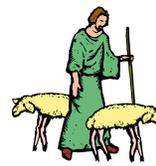
- Show a picture of a sheep and a tent. Say: *We will learn in this lesson how God loves and cares for us.*

## Guide Bible Study

- Explain that most people learn Psalm 23 in “old English” from the King James Version. They like the flow of the words and find it easier to memorize.

Prepare KJV copies of Psalm 23 or make copies

of the handout below. Explain the meanings of older words, such as *Thou, maketh, leadeth*, etc. Explain that many of our songs and Christmas carols use these older words.



## The Twenty-Third Psalm

The LORD is my shepherd;  
I shall not want.  
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;  
He leadeth me beside the still waters.  
He restoreth my soul;  
He leadeth me in paths of righteousness  
for his name's sake.  
Yea, though I walk through  
the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil; for thou art with me;  
thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.  
Thou preparest a table before me  
in the presence of mine enemies;  
thou anointest my head with oil;  
my cup runneth over.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life;  
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD  
forever.

- Read Psalm 23 aloud. Divide the class into six small groups and give each group a large paper and markers. Assign each verse from Psalm 23 to one of the small group. Encourage groups to make a drawing based on what their verse says. Let each group explain their drawing. Display the posters in order.

## Encourage Application

- If you can access the Internet during class, go to this site and show the Psalm 23 text set to music and video: [www.interviewwithgod.com/psalm23.htm](http://www.interviewwithgod.com/psalm23.htm)
- Conclude with prayer thanking God for His care.

# Teaching Guide

## Lesson 4: Desiring God

### Lesson Focus

We need to remember God is always with us. His presence is why we can know true happiness.

### Focal Text

Psalms 42-43

### Background Text

Psalms 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)

### Connect with Life

1. Bring a flashlight and a lamp to class. Plug in the lamp before class starts.

Turn on the flashlight. Say: *Some people think they can store up energy from God like batteries in a flashlight. They feel if they come to church every Sunday they will be recharged.*

Turn on the lamp. Say: *Without the energy source (electricity), this lamp has no power and shares no light. We are more like a lamp; we need to be connected to God all the time.*

Explain that Psalms 42 and 43 are really one psalm which tells how the writer feels when he is not “plugged in” to God.

2. On the wall, place a picture of someone who looks very sad. Refer to it during the study.

### Guide the Study

3. Write this outline on the board or on poster board:

Psalms 42-43—Desire God Because . . .

—Having God near is as important as food or drink

—Being alone in tough times is too hard for us

—Our feelings change but God does not

4. Explain that Psalms 42-43 are psalms of lament (songs of extreme sadness). Point to the sad face on the

wall and say: *These psalms of lament are about more than just being sad. They include: Complaint spoken to God, confession; trust; asking God for something; knowledge that God will hear; and a promise to trust or call on God.*

Invite class to write a lament psalm using the items listed above. Write their psalm on the board.

5. Read Psalm 42:1. Describe how desiring God and a thirsty deer are similar. Explain how a deer might become more fearful as it moved from one dry watering hole to another in the desert.

6. Read Psalm 42:2. Ask: *What does it mean to want to meet with the living God?*

7. Read Psalm 42:3. Ask someone to tell about a time when they cried for a long time. Discuss what it feels like for others to make fun of (joke about) your faith.

8. Read Psalm 42:4. Share a personal experience where you had an important time of worship.

Distribute copies of a church bulletin. Ask class to point out times in the service which bring joy to them.

9. Read Psalm 42:5. Ask someone to read the question in this verse in a sad way, and then read the last part of the verse with a hopeful expression.

10. Read Psalm 42:6-7. Model reading these two verses with much expression. Ask class to repeat.

The writer may have been held captive far away from Jerusalem and could not worship at the Temple. Mount Hermon is in the northernmost part of Palestine.

Discuss the power of ocean waves, which can be dangerous. When the writer uses the word *Your* before *waves*, he is saying God was in control of those waves, which the writer says have “rolled over me.”

11. Read Psalm 42:8. Ask: *What does the writer say will happen in the day and in the night?* (loving-kindness in the day and songs in the night) Discuss how it is possible to know God is real and loving, but still feel sad.

12. Read Psalm 42:9. Point out that our feelings change, sometimes quickly, but God is our rock. Ask: *What are the two “why” questions in this verse?*

13. Read Psalm 42:10. Ask if anyone has ever broken a bone. Share how painful that was. Discuss how the writer felt because his enemies made fun of him. Compare the two kinds of pain—physical and emotional.

14. Read Psalm 42:11. Show how this verse is like 42:5. Say: *The word “yet” shows that verse 5 reminds the writer of better times. He has hope that God will help him in the future.*

15. Read Psalm 43:1. Say: *Psalm 42 gives the words the writer spoke to himself. Psalm 43 continues with the words of the writer to God.* Ask class to underline the words which the writer used when asking God to help him (stand by me, speak to me, save me). Write these above the picture of the sad person. (See #3 above.)

16. Read Psalm 43:2. Point out that the writer knows God is his strength, but he still asks, “Why?” Place the words “God’s Strength” on the poster.

17. Read Psalm 43:3-4. Ask class to find the two words used for God in this verse. Place the words “Light” and “Truth” on the poster. Discuss how the worship of God can bring joy when we see God’s light put out the darkness of evil and God’s truth overcome those who tell lies, as in verse 1.

18. Read Psalm 43:5 (the third repetition of the verse). The words were spoken to God, not just to himself. They show his hope in God despite his problems.

## Encourage Application

19. Read together Psalm 42:5, 11, and Psalm 43:5. Instruct the class to start the first verse with a whisper and the third with strong, loud voices.

Challenge them to memorize Psalm 42:5. Say: *The next time you have trouble, remember these words: Tell God you are unhappy, but you will hope in Him. Then wait for Him to act on your behalf. While you wait, remember the good times (Psalm 42:4) and that God is with you (Psalm 42:8).*

20. Close with a prayer for those who are feeling sad, that they will remember to place their hope in God.

## Supplemental Teaching Ideas

### Connect with Life

- Display a poster with this sentence from *Confessions* by Augustine:  
“Our hearts are restless until they rest in you.”

Discuss times when students were extremely hungry and how they felt. Say: *This lesson is about the need to have God’s presence in our lives. It is even stronger than the need for food. Have you ever felt God was far away? That is how this writer felt.*

## Guide Bible Study

- Prepare the following outline for this study:

Lament #1 (Psalm 42:1-4)

- Longing for God
- Those who are against
- Memories of past worship
- Verse of hope (Psalm 42:5)

Lament #2 (Psalm 42:6-10)

- Sense of loss
- Fear that God has forgotten
- Those who are against
- Verse of hope (Psalm 42:11)

Lament #3 (Psalm 43:1-4)

- Asking God for help
- Desire to worship God
- Promise to worship God
- Verse of hope (Psalm 43:5)

- (Discussion ideas based on above outline) Read Psalm 42:1-4. Discuss the writer’s feelings. Show why the writer might have felt this way:

- He was forced to be away from the Temple of God
- Unbelievers joked about his belief
- Memories of better days
- Difficult times in his life
- He thought God did not act quickly
- Unbelievers tried to hurt him

Ask: *Do you ever talk to yourself?* Discuss how and when this can be a good thing. This is what happened in Psalm 42:5. Read the verse together.

Snap your fingers. Explain: *The writer was not able to overcome his problems with a snap of his fingers, and neither can we.* Read Psalm 42:6-10 Say

Read Psalm 42:11. Explain that these verses showed both the writer’s need and trust.

Read Psalm 43:1-5. Write these words on the board. Ask class to match the verse with the words:

- |                |                              |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| Difficulties   | Asking for help              |
| Promise to God | Repeating the verses of hope |

## Encourage Application

- Download these free inspirational wallpapers from Psalms, including Psalm 42:  
<http://wonders.wallpaperdave.com/psalms03.htm>

# Teaching Guide

## Lesson 5: Look to God—Not to Man

### Lesson Focus

When we doubt the worth of believing in God, we need to get a new look at what life is all about.

### Focal Text

Psalms 73

### Background Text

Psalms 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)

### Connect with Life

- Ask who has been reading from the Book of Psalms. Remind them that Psalms is divided into five smaller “books.” Psalm 73 is the beginning of Book 3 and re-tells many thoughts in the first 72 psalms. It is a *Teaching Psalm*.
- Prepare this review of the first two books of Psalms:
  - Those who live right are blessed, but those who are bad (evil) are not blessed.
  - Right living has rewards. They may not always be money rewards. But when we suffer, it does not mean God is against us.
  - A good life is one in which we depend on God and not our own abilities.
- Explain that Psalm 73 is one of 12 psalms said to be written by Asaph. He was from a family which led singing in the Jerusalem Temple. They played musical instruments mentioned in Psalms. The Old Testament books of Kings and Chronicles tell about Asaph’s sons continuing his work. Say: *We learn four things about Asaph from Chronicles and Nehemiah:*
  - His father was Berechiah (1 Chronicles 6:39).
  - He was a music leader (1 Chronicles 15:17).
  - He was a man of God (2 Chronicles 29:30).
  - He lived at the same time as King David (Nehemiah 12:46).

### Guide the Study

- Prepare and display a poster with these words:
  - What the sinful have now (Psalm 73:1-16)
  - What the sinful will have in the future (Psalm 73:17-20)
  - What we have now and forever: God (Psalm 73:21-23)
- Read Psalm 73:1-16. Ask: *Why does the writer feel jealous of the sinful?* List the answers.
- Pass out the following sentences—without verses attached. Ask class to find the matching verses (answers in parentheses):
  - “I feel so sorry for myself. The wicked are doing so well.” (*verse 3*)
  - “I have all kinds of trouble and problems, but the wicked don’t seem to have problems.” (*verse 5*)
  - “It must pay to be wicked because they have more than any heart could wish for.” (*verse 7*)
  - “The wicked increase in riches, but I have trouble paying the rent.” (*verse 12*)
- Read Psalm 73:17. Ask a volunteer to walk toward the classroom door. Say: *Stop!* Instruct him to turn around and walk back. Explain that this verse was the turning point for the writer.
- Ask: *What was the change in the writer after he went to worship?* Explain that the writer stopped wishing he had what the sinful had when he worshiped God. Then he understood what God knew.
- Ask: *What is worship?* Explain that some say it is not forgetting the worries of our life but bringing those problems to God and learning to see them as He does.
- Read Psalm 73:18-20. Ask class to describe what will happen to those who sin. Compare verse 2 (where the writer almost fell) with verse 18 (where the wicked will fall).
- Prepare poster board with a large piece of paper in the center which looks like a door. Make the door so that it opens. On the outside of the door, list all the good things which evil men seem to have. Open the door and

on the back side, ask the class to list what will happen to evil men. Say: *We are not like God. We do not know what is on the other side of the door for other people. This psalm teaches that the sinful will not win.*

12. Ask someone to read Psalm 73:21-22 in a sad, soft voice, then read Psalm 73:23 in a strong, loud voice.

13. Tell how we hold the hand of a child to keep them from falling. Compare verse 2 and verse 23.

14. Before class, ask someone to be ready to share of a time when they had doubts, but learned to lean on God.

## Encourage Application

15. Ask: *Which do you spend more time thinking about—what others have and you do not, or God?*

16. Ask: *What doubts have you had or do you have about the Christian life? Tell them to God.*

Explain:

*It is all right to tell God about our doubts  
Believers need worship  
Learn to see how God sees  
Our reward is knowing God*

17. Read the Memory Verse in unison. Close by singing this chorus:

*In His time, in His time;  
He makes all things beautiful in His time.  
Lord, please show me every day as You're  
teaching me Your way,  
That You do just what You say in Your time.*

## Supplemental Teaching Ideas

### Connect with Life

• Bring copies of ads (not food) which come in the mail. On a poster, place pictures of kitchen gadgets, jewelry, furniture, etc. Say: *Until I looked at these, I didn't know there were so many things I wanted!*

Ask: *What are some things you or your children have seen which other people had that you didn't know you needed until you saw them?* (allow discussion) *This lesson tells us how unhappy we become when we envy what others have and forget what God has done for us.*

## Guide Bible Study

• Prepare the following outline for the class to follow:  
—Following God faithfully does not mean we will become healthy and wealthy

—Sharing our hard times can help others  
—Worshiping God it helps us find answers  
—Being near to God helps us see what is important

• (Discussion ideas based on above outline) Read Psalm 73:1-12. Ask: *If verse 1 is true, how can verses 11-12 also be true?* Ask class to list from these verses what bad people seem to be able to do.

On the board, write a question mark, then write “Me.” Read Psalm 73:13-16. Ask class to list how the writer felt.

Write an arrow which points to the word “Worship.” Read Psalm 73:17. Ask class to discuss how worship changed the writer. Say:

—*The writer found the right way of looking at others and himself.*

—*He stopped thinking only about what evil men had.*

—*He thought about what their end would be when they were judged.*

—*He stopped thinking of himself as good when he compared himself to others.*

—*He saw how good God was to him.*

—*He stopped being jealous of the sinful and began to think about what he should be doing. He learned that these hard times made him feel God in a closer way.*

—*He learned suffering can be a gift from a loving God.*

On the board, place a right arrow with these words: →The End

Say: *These words are used at the back of a book or when a movie is over.* Read Psalm 73:18-20. Describe what will happen in “the end” to those who are sinful.

Write an exclamation point on the board, then write: “God is all I need!” Read Psalm 73:21-28. Draw stick figure pictures for these verses (a wild animal, a hand, shining light for heaven, a globe, stick figure body, barbell, a triangle with the words “God and me” written inside).

Draw a heart on the board. Write in it these numbers: vv.1,7,13,21,26. Ask the class to underline these verses and circle the word “heart” in each. Say: *The writer says it's better for our heart to be right with God than to worry about what happens to us.*

## Encourage Application

• Ask how we can share the things God has done (v. 28).

Ask: *What does this quotation by Søren Kierkegaard mean? “Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards.”*

Pray for faith to look to God and not at man.

# Teaching Guide

## Lesson 6: Worship Together in Joy

### Lesson Focus

Worshipping God together brings joy to the believer.

### Focal Text

Psalm 84

### Background Text

Psalm 84

### Memory Verse

“O Lord of all, how happy is the man who trusts in You!” (Psalm 84:12)

### Connect with Life

1. Ask students to think of a time when they were homesick and to share how they felt. Explain: *Today’s lesson is about someone who was homesick to go to God’s house.*

Say: *Psalm 4 was written by someone who was homesick for the house of God. He was homesick for the place where he had worshiped as a child. He was homesick to be with God in God’s house.*

### Guide the Study

2. Bring a map of Israel from the time of David (check the back of a study bible). Ask someone to find Jerusalem. Say: *Another name for Jerusalem is “Zion.”*

3. Prepare a poster for the different meanings of the word *Zion*:

- the name of the hill David conquered (2 Sam. 5:6-10)
- the capital city for Israel. It was also called “the City of David.” (2 Samuel 5:9)
- what the psalm writers called the temple of Solomon
- the powerful rule of God who would conquer all His enemies
- the City of God
- the heavenly city

4. Sing: “We’re Marching to Zion.” First, define any problematic words. Say: *As you sing this song, imagine you are with a group of worshipers on your way to Jerusalem.*

5. Write *Worship* on the board. Ask the class to tell what worship means to them.

Read the definition of worship from the Study Guide. Say: *Real worship begins with God, meets with God, and leads us to serve God. Worship is when we tell someone that they are very great and that you love them. Real worship teaches us that nothing in our life is more important than God.*

6. Explain that Psalm 84 is a special psalm of praise to God. It is one of those called *Songs of Zion*. These songs all praise God for His rule through the king in Jerusalem. These psalms talk about the power of God to conquer His enemies. Psalm 84 also teaches the joy of worship.

7. Read Psalm 84:1-2. Ask: *On a scale of 1-10, how much did the writer want to go and worship God? (10+)* Ask students what number they would give themselves. Allow time for any who wish to share a testimony.

8. As the psalm is read, ask members to circle and count the different words the writer uses for God. Use the following to explain the meanings of the words:

—Lord of All: *All* means everything and everyone, including the millions of angels who live with God in heaven.

—*Lord* is the name for God used by the people when they made the agreement to love and obey Him.

—Living God: This means God has always been and will always be alive; He makes everything live.

—King: God, not an earthly king, like the king of Israel

—God of Jacob: *Jacob* is another name for Israel. Jacob was the son of Isaac and the grandson of Abraham.

9. Read Psalm 84:3-4. Bring pictures of sparrows and swallows. Explain that these birds, which were very common, were found in God’s house. The writer wished he could be like them and live in God’s house.

Say: *The sparrow is a bird used to show something that is not worth much. They are very common. The swallow is a fast bird, always flying to something new. They are restless. Even the swallow can find a place to build a nest and raise babies.*

10. Read Psalm 84:5. Discuss how those who were going to worship were happy.

11. Read Psalm 84:6-7. Explain that the hard valley the travelers went through might teach us about times that are hard in our lives. We find that God still gives us His help.

12. Read Psalm 84:8-12. Bring pictures of a shield and explain that the king was a shield or safe-covering to protect His people (verse 8) and later God is called a “safe-covering.”

13. Discuss that the person who stands at the back of God’s house (near the door) is happier than the one who lives in the tents of sinners far from God. Ask: *Where are you living?*

14. Show a picture of the sun and ask: *Have you ever been cold, and then lifted your face to feel the warmth of the sun?* Explain that the writer said God is our warmth and a shield that protects.

15. Say: *God gives us what we need to bring glory to those who worship Him.* Write *Trust God* on the board.

16. Read Psalm 84 again. Ask half the class to read the even-numbered verses and the other half to read the odd-numbered verses.

## Encourage Application

17. Hand out the following sentences and ask members to agree or disagree:

### How to worship

—Prepare: Before you worship, expect to meet with God so you can be renewed and find strength

—Desire: Have a desire in your heart to meet with God

—Pray: Tell God how great He is when you worship

—Decide: Do not let anything keep you from worship

18. Say: *What you want or love tells (shows, explains) a lot about you. Do you want to worship God?*

19. Pray that all those present will learn the joy of worshipping God together.

## Supplemental Teaching Ideas

### Connect with Life

• Ask: *What do you look for when you go to church?* Answers might include joy, hope, help, fellowship, service, friendship, understanding, and worship—those things needed for living our lives.

Say: *Psalm 84 shows us what to do in worship*

*and what God does for us when we worship together.*

## Guide Bible Study

• Prepare the following outline on a poster for the class to see as you study Psalm 84. Discuss each section as you read:

### Blessings for Those Who Go to Worship God

Psalm 84:1-4—A Great Desire to Meet with God

Psalm 84:5-8—Blessings on the Way to Worship

Psalm 84:9—Prayer that God Will Bless Their King

Psalm 84:10-12—Great Joy to Meet With God and Faith that God will Answer Prayer

Discuss why worshiping with others is important. Ask: *How does it help you to worship with others?*

Ask class to read Psalm 84:11 and underline that verse. Ask: *Have you ever asked God for something which you did not get? Did you discover later that God had something better for you?* Allow time to share.

Discuss verse 12 and why the man is happy who trusts God.

## Encourage Application

• Ask: *What does your heart want? Are you homesick for God’s house or are you living in the tents of the sinners?*

• Ask class to list the verses which start with “how happy.” Discuss why living in the house of God, finding strength in God and trusting in God, would help a person to be happy.

• Ask someone to sing “His Eye is On the Sparrow” or play a recording.

• Pray for those who do not have the ability to worship freely with others. Pray for those who do not have joy because they do not trust God.

# Teaching Guide

## Lesson 7: Live a Life That Matters

### Lesson Focus

We may have many troubles in the short time we live on earth. We can have joy and purpose when we have faith in God.

### Focal Text

Psalms 90

### Background Text

Psalms 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)

### Connect with Life

1. Write these words on the board: “Life is Short . . .”. Ask members to add what they think should come after these words. If necessary, suggest: *Life is Short...Play Hard. Other possibilities: Pray Hard, Laugh Hard..*
2. Explain that this study is about a psalm which teaches how to live a life that matters. Part 1 tells who God is (Psalm 90:1-4); Part 2 tells what happens when we do not recognize God (Psalm 90:5-11); Part 3 asks for God’s help (Psalm 90:12-17).

### Guide the Study

3. Prepare a poster with the following, “How to Live a Life that Matters.” Say: *As we read Psalm 90, let’s list the truths found in these Scriptures.*

Write these points on poster strips to add to the title poster as you lead discussion following this outline:

- God is forever: verses 1-4
- From beginning to end—always God: verses 1-3
- 1,000 years are as yesterday or a few hours: verses 5-11
- Man has problems and his life is short: verses 5-6, 10
- Our lives are as grass, fresh in the morning and dry at night: verse 6
- We are sinful. God knows our secret sins and our

open (or easily seen) sins: verses 7-8

—We live an average of 70 years: verse 10

—Our days are full of sorrow with pain and trouble: verses 9-11

—We ask God for the following blessings: verses 12-17

—to teach us to make the most use of our time and to grow in wisdom

—to satisfy us so we can know God’s love and sing for joy and see God’s work again

—to make our children free from sin so they can see God’s glory

—to find God’s favor and approval

—to let our work make a real and lasting difference in the world

4. Say: *Until recent times, people didn’t know or care what the exact time was. Today we can know the exact time wherever we go—from the radio or TV, our cars, wrist watches, marquees that flash the time and temperature, mobile phones, microwaves, or computers.*

Ask: *Have we become slaves to time?*

5. Say: *The only way we can use time wisely is when we give our time to God and ask Him to help us know how to use it.*

Ask: *What are some ways we can make good use of the wisdom in Psalm 90?* Use these suggestions to guide discussion:

—Realize how few days/years we have

—Spend them more wisely

Learn to say no

Think about what is really important

Make God the most important part of our lives

Give God room in our lives to make a difference

Spend time alone with God everyday

Gain wisdom from God

### Encourage Application

6. Lead the class in a responsive reading using the Psalm 90 text found in the Study Guide. You (or a class member) serve as the leader and read the text in regular type. The rest of the group reads in unison the bold print.

7. Give inexpensive egg timers (small hourglasses) to each person. Photocopy and attach this tag to each timer:

“Teach us to understand how many days we have.  
Then we will have a heart of wisdom to give You.”  
(Psalm 90:12)

8. Say: *A television show begins with these words: “Like sands through the hourglass...so are the days of our lives.”* Turn over an egg timer and ask students to think about their lives. Ask: *When the sands of your life have run out, will your life have made a difference?*

9. Close with this prayer: *Teach us to count our days, O Lord, so that we may gain a wise heart. May we receive each day as a wonderful gift from You. Teach us to count our days, to find our meaning in Your dwelling place, O everlasting God.*

## Supplemental Teaching Ideas

### Connect with Life

- Prepare a poster or individual copies of the following:

### A Life That Matters

Mark each as:

1 Very important    2 Important

3 Don't know    4 Not important at all

- \_\_\_\_\_ The amount of money you have
- \_\_\_\_\_ Helping other people every day
- \_\_\_\_\_ How many people who know who you are
- \_\_\_\_\_ Knowing God
- \_\_\_\_\_ Being active in church
- \_\_\_\_\_ Being married
- \_\_\_\_\_ Having children
- \_\_\_\_\_ Telling God when you sin
- \_\_\_\_\_ Where you live

- Bring different kinds of timepieces (or pictures of the same items): sundial, clock, watch, egg timer, digital timer, kitchen timer, etc. Say: *This psalm teaches us to use our time wisely so we will live a life that matters.*

## Guide the Study

- Say: *This psalm is spoken as a prayer to God. He is powerful, eternal, and the only God. God is our shield, our protection through hard times. God is the One Who made everything. Man lives for only a short time, yet God has no beginning and no end.*

As class looks at Psalm 90, encourage them to identify the descriptive phrases that fit in one of the following two categories:

Who God Is

Who Man Is

- Read Psalm 90 to find verses showing how short man's

life is. For example:

- Carried away by a flood (90:5a)
- As short as sleep (90:5b)
- Like grass (90:5c-6; 103:15-16)
- Helpless before God (90:7-8)
- Fly away (90:10)

- Write the following time-related phrases on the board or prepare as a handout. (For over 100 uses of the word *time*, see: <http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/time>.)

There's not enough time in a day  
How time flies, How do you find the time?  
The time is right, Kill some time  
Time flies when you're having fun  
Spend time, Waste time, On time, Run out of time  
Save time, Plenty of time, Time is money  
Time waits for no man, Time is of the essence

## Encourage Application

- Prepare as a handout or poster to be read aloud:

### The True Value of 86,400

Imagine there is a bank that credits your account each morning with \$86,400. It carries over no balance from day to day. Every evening, it deletes whatever part of the balance you failed to use during the day. What would you do? Draw out every cent, of course!

Each of us has such a bank. Its name is TIME.

Every morning, it credits you with 86,400 seconds. Every night it writes off as lost whatever of this you have failed to invest to good purpose. It carries over no balance. It allows no overdraft. Each day, it opens a new account for you. Each night, it burns the remains of the day. If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours. There is no going back. There is no drawing against "tomorrow." You must live in the present day on today's deposits. Invest it to get from it the utmost in health, happiness, and success! The clock is running. Make the most of today.

To realize the value of ONE YEAR,  
ask a student who failed a grade.

To realize the value of ONE MONTH,  
ask a mother who gave birth to a premature baby.

To realize the value of ONE HOUR,  
ask the friends who are waiting to meet.

To realize the value of ONE MINUTE,  
ask a person who missed the train.

To realize the value of ONE SECOND,  
ask a person who just avoided an accident.

To realize the value of ONE MILLISECOND,  
ask the person who won a silver medal in the Olympics.

# Teaching Guide

## Lesson 8: Praise for God's Goodness

### Lesson Focus

Praise God for all the ways He shows His goodness to us.

### Focal Text

Psalms 100; 103

### Background Text

Psalms 100; 103; 105

### 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)

### Connect with Life

1. Distribute sticky notes and pens. Ask members to write, during class, as many praises for God as they can. When the class ends, place the notes on a poster that says: “Praise God for His Goodness.” Use as a display for Lesson 9.
2. Say: *The psalms we will study today answer two questions, “Why should we praise God?” and “How can we praise God?”*  
Write these questions on the board.

### Guide the Study

3. Ask for volunteers to read aloud portions of Psalms 100 and 103.
4. Prepare the following outline to discuss the verses in Psalm 100. Also refer to material in the Study Guide to supplement your comments.

#### How to Praise

- Joyfully thank (Psalm 100:1a)
- Serve thankfully (Psalm 100:2a)
- Come thankfully (Psalm 100:2b)

#### To Know God is to Thank Him

- He is God (Psalm 100:3a)
- He made us (Psalm 100:3b)
- We are His people (Psalm 100:3c)

### Continue to Thank God

- Public praise (Psalm 100:4a)
- Personal praise (Psalm 100:4b)
- Honoring praise (Psalm 100:4c)

### Reasons to Thank God

- God is good (Psalm 100:5a)
- God is full of loving-kindness (Psalm 100:5b)
- God is faithful (Psalm 100:5c)

5. Direct class to look at Psalm 103. Ask: *How many times do you find the word “all”?* (Psalms 103:1b, 2b, 3a, 3b, 6b, 19b, 21a, 22a, 22b). Explain that in each case, *all* is used to indicate something positive (even when referring to our sins, wrong-doings, or diseases, the verses explain how God has forgiven or healed them *all*).
6. Ask class to take turns reading the verses with the word *all*. Write them in poetry form on the board. Remind the class that Hebrew poetry repeats ideas and words. For example: *God rules over all and does all good things for all people. God should be praised in all places by all creatures with all they are.*
7. Read Psalm 100 again. Write on the board: *Why should the whole earth praise God?*  
List answers. Explain that God is over all He made. Ask a volunteer to pray, thanking God for His goodness to the whole earth.

### Encourage Application

8. On a poster or on the board, write “PRAISE GOD FOR” vertically, from top to bottom. Ask class to think of words beginning with each letter in the acrostic, such as:  
P Prayer  
R Right living  
A ...  
Write their suggested words beside each letter.
9. Give a blank thank-you card to each person. Allow a few minutes for each person to write a thank-you note to God for Who He is. Ask class to address the cards to themselves. Collect the cards and either mail them or save them to hand out after Lesson 9 is completed (the last week Psalms is studied in this unit).

10. Instruct students to place their sticky notes on the poster. If time allows, students can read their praises as they place them on the poster. Save poster for Lesson 9.

11. Close by reading Psalm 103 as a responsive reading. Make copies for all students.

### 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.**
  18. And what is right with God is given forever to  
their children's children,  
**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!**

## Supplemental Teaching Ideas

### Connect with Life

- Write the word *Doxology* on the board. Instruct class to look at their Study Guide for the meaning of this word. Prepare copies of the song or use hymnbooks so the class can sing this together.

*Say: The words from this song were written by Thomas Ken. He used Psalm 100, 103, and 105 to write them. We will study two of these psalms in this lesson. Tell the class that only Psalm 23 is more popular than Psalm 100.*

### Guide the Study

- Write: *An Invitation to Praise God* under the word *Doxology* on the board. Read Psalm 100:1-4 and Psalm 103:1-2. Ask class to list the seven commands to praise God and write them on the board. Ask for other reasons to praise God and list them.

- Write on the board: *God's Goodness*. Read Psalm 100:5; 103:3-19. Write the words: *good*, *love*, and *faithful*. Ask class to list at least five things God has done for them for which they can praise Him.

- Write: *All God Made Praises Him*. Read Psalm 103:20-22. List the personal invitations to praise God.

- Prepare copies of another psalm of praise, Psalm 136, using the New Life Version (for an online version, go to [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)). Read the psalm aloud, with the class responding to each sentence by saying, "His loving-kindness lasts forever."

### Encourage Application

- Read "Things to Think About" from the Study Guide. Discuss each item. Start the list of five blessings from God and see how many more can be added.

- Close by singing a hymn of praise, such as "Holy, Holy, Holy" or "All People That On Earth Do Dwell."

# Teaching Guide

## Lesson 9: Give Thanks for God's Blessings

### Lesson Focus

When God helps us in times of great need, we want to give thanks.

### Focal Text

Psalm 116

### Background Text

Psalm 107; 116

### Memory Verse

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

### Connect with Life

1. Before class starts, display the poster (Lesson 8) with the students' sticky notes. Also, remember to bring the students' thank-you cards which were written to God (unless you chose to mail them).

2. Say: *When God helps us in times of great need, we want to give thanks. In the last session, we praised God for all He has done for us (point to sticky notes on poster). Today we will learn how to offer thanks to God for His blessings.*

3. Discuss: *Does suffering draw people closer to God or drive them further away?*

Ask: *For what are you most thankful? Is being thankful a choice or just a feeling? How will you continue to give thanks to God each day?*

### Guide the Study

4. Say: *Psalm 116 is one of the “Hallel Psalms” and is from the final Book of Psalms, Book 5. They are called Hallelujah Psalms because they all include the word “hallel,” which is Hebrew for “hallelujah.” Another way to say hallelujah is “Praise the Lord.” The word “hallelujah” is the same in almost every language. These psalms were used at the time of great festivals.*

5. Hold up a newspaper and point to the headlines. Say: *The first verses in Psalm 116 are like a headline. The*

*headline tells the most important part of the story. It lets you know what the rest of the story will be about.*

6. Read Psalm 116:1-2. Say: *These verses sum up Psalm 116. This believer had been suffering. But instead of giving up his faith, he trusted, prayed, and received an answer from God. This made him more determined to love, trust, and pray to the Lord in the future.*

7. Read Psalm 116:3. List the needs of the writer.

8. Read Psalm 116:4. Ask: *What did he beg God to do? (save his life)*

Ask if anyone has ever felt the same fears of death that the writer felt, or if anyone has ever actually been sick enough to be close to death. Transition by explaining that we don't know how much time passed between verse 3 and verse 4, between the writer being overcome by his fears, and then making his plea to God.

9. Read Psalm 116:5-9. List what the writer said about the faithfulness of God. Discuss why we are thankful. Say: *Thanksgiving comes from knowing God and what He has done for us.*

10. Read Psalm 116:10-11. Ask class to underline the words, “I love the Lord,” (verse 1) and “I believed,” (verse 10). Say: *The writer looked at his troubles. He trusted God. He prayed and got an answer.*

11. Explain that we don't know exactly what the trouble was. This actually allows us to use this psalm to describe our own trouble or sorrow. Say: *Read verses 3, 8, 10-11 and put yourself in the place of the writer.*

12. Say: *The writer asked God to save him.* Discuss how it feels when trouble and sorrow come. Ask: *Is it easy to think God has stopped being good to you? Do you ever think God is not there at all—and never was?*

13. Read Psalm 116:12-19. Ask:

—*What are some blessings we might forget to thank God for?*

—*How can we repay God for His goodness?*

—*What can you tell others that would help them be more thankful to God?*

—*How do we say thank you when we worship together?*

14. Discuss what we can give to God for all He has given. Say: *We can never equal what God has done.*

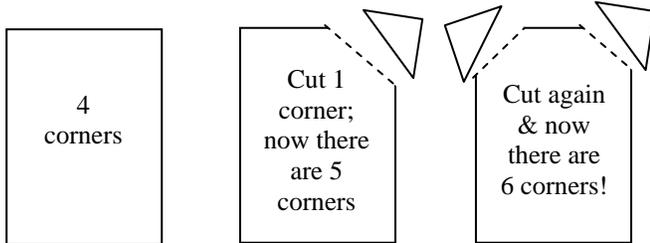
### Encourage Application

15. Explain that God always gives us what we need and blesses us more than we can ever thank Him for.

Show a piece of paper. Ask: *How many corners do you see? If I cut this paper, will I have more corners or fewer corners?* Explain that God’s blessings are like these four corners. Cut a large corner off the paper and give it away.

Say: *When I give away one corner from this paper, how many corners are there now?* (5 corners)

Cut a second corner away from the paper and ask how many corners (6 corners). Say: *The first corner I gave away is now a piece of paper with three corners. That’s the way it is when God gives us blessings. He multiplies His blessing to us and gives us more than we give away (just as the one corner became three).*



16. Distribute the thank-you cards written in the last session and let the students read silently what they wrote about their thankfulness for Who God is.

Give blank index cards to each person. Ask: *Has this lesson brought to mind other things for which you are thankful? Write these on one side. On the other side, write a way you can serve God out of your thankfulness.*

Read aloud Psalm 116:16-17. Pass around a basket for class to place their cards in as an offering.

### Supplemental Teaching Ideas

#### Connect with Life

• Ask: *Have you ever sent a nice gift in the mail to someone, but never heard if the gift arrived? How did you feel?*

Explain that today’s lesson is about saying thank you to God.

#### Guide Bible Study

• Read Psalm 116:3-4. Discuss: *God used the writer’s troubles to strengthen his faith.*

Read Psalm 116:5-6. Ask: *Do you think the writer is thinking of how God forgave him for his sins?*

Read Psalm 116:7-12. Say: *In Psalm 116, the writer wonders how he can show thanksgiving to God, “How can I repay the Lord for all his goodness to me?”*

Remind the class that before we can thank God, we must remind ourselves of how good God is to us. We find God’s goodness in our lives all the time. Using Psalm 116, list all God had done for the writer.

Read Psalm 116:13-19. Say: *The writer ends with a promise that he would offer public thanksgiving for all the Lord had done for him.*

Discuss ways we can give thanks to God as a testimony to others.

### Encourage Application

• Read the following by Elizabeth Barrett Browning: “I love you not only for what you are but for what I am when I am with you.” Ask: *How does this compare with what the author said in Psalm 116:1?*

• Prepare the “THANKFUL List” poster for the class to fill out together. Or enlarge and make handouts for everyone to fill out, then discuss the words they selected.

Ask the class to think of some things to be thankful for and some words which describe God. (For example: *Thankful* begins with the letter *T*. I am thankful for *teachers*, and I know God is *trustworthy*.)

#### T-H-A-N-K-F-U-L List

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| <b>T</b> | I am thankful for <b>t</b> _____,<br>and I know God is <b>t</b> _____. |
| <b>H</b> | I am thankful for <b>h</b> _____,<br>and I know God is <b>h</b> _____. |
| <b>A</b> | I am thankful for <b>a</b> _____,<br>and I know God is <b>a</b> _____. |
| <b>N</b> | I am thankful for <b>n</b> _____,<br>and I know God is <b>n</b> _____. |
| <b>K</b> | I am thankful for <b>k</b> _____,<br>and I know God is <b>k</b> _____. |
| <b>F</b> | I am thankful for <b>f</b> _____,<br>and I know God is <b>f</b> _____. |
| <b>U</b> | I am thankful for <b>u</b> _____,<br>and I know God is <b>u</b> _____. |
| <b>L</b> | I am thankful for <b>l</b> _____,<br>and I know God is <b>l</b> _____. |

# Teaching Guide

## Unit 2 Introduction

### Background Information

The following information may be shared with your class as an introduction to this study. Additional information is found in the *Adult Study Guide* and *Adult Teaching Guide*.

King Solomon collected many of the proverbs in the Book of Proverbs. Like the Book of Psalms, they are a kind of Hebrew poetry. Almost a third of the Hebrew Bible is written in poetry. Hebrew poetry has three styles of repetition:

(1) synonymous: the same idea is repeated in both lines of the poem with line 2 using slightly different words.

(2) antithetical: line 2 is the opposite idea from line 1.

(3) formal or synthetic: the following lines complete or advance the thoughts of line 1.

The purpose of the Book of Proverbs is to use sayings to teach wisdom, to learn what is right, to grow in learning, and to know that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of much learning. Proverbs is divided into several books. Lessons 10-13 are from the first four books of Proverbs:

### Teaching Notes

#### Book 1—Proverbs 1-9

Solomon's advice to his son. Proverbs 1:2-6 says the writings are a textbook to explain the choice between wise behavior and foolish behavior. Good people are wise because they respect God. But evil people are fools. God will punish evil people. Solomon told his son to study wisdom. The Hebrew words used for fool in Proverbs meant one who is not living the way God wants him to live.

**Study Guide Lesson 10:** Proverbs 1:7; 3:1-20

#### Book 2— Proverbs 10-22

375 proverbs (or wise words). These proverbs teach us how to be wise in many different situations.

**Study Guide Lesson 11:** Proverbs 11:1-11, 17-21, 23-25, 28

#### Book 3— Proverbs 22-24

30 Wise Sayings

**Study Guide Lesson 12:** Proverbs 22:17-25; 3:10-11, 19-28; 24:10-12, 15-20

#### Book 4—Proverbs 25-29

A Second Collection of Solomon's Proverbs

**Study Guide Lesson 13:** Proverbs 25:11-23; 26:18-28

#### Collections—Proverbs 30-31

Dialogues, puzzles, and a poem

Solomon also wrote Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon. There are other books about wisdom in the Bible: Job, Ecclesiastes, and James. Jesus taught lessons about wisdom in The Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7 and Luke 11-16.

# Teaching Guide

## Lesson 10: The Beginning of Wisdom

### Lesson Focus

Following the wisdom that comes from God brings true happiness and the best kind of life.

### Focal Text

Proverbs 1:7; 3:1-20

### Background Text

Proverbs 1-9

### 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)

### Connect with Life

1. Bring a list of proverbs to share with the class. (See <http://www.bartleby.com/59/3/> for others):

An army of sheep led by a lion would defeat an army of lions led by a sheep. (Arabic Proverb)

Between true friends, even water drunk together is sweet enough. (African Proverb)

When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced. Live your life so that when you die, the world cries and you rejoice. (Cherokee Proverb)

An inch of time is an inch of gold, but you can't buy that inch of time with an inch of gold. (Chinese Proverb)

He who asks is a fool for five minutes, but he who does not ask remains a fool forever. (Chinese Proverb)

The road to a friend's house is never long. (Danish Proverb)

There is no pillow so soft as a clear conscience. (French Proverb)

Put a silk on a goat and it is still a goat. (Irish Proverb)

First, the man takes a drink. Then the drink takes a drink. Then the drink takes the man. (Japanese Proverb)

Do not throw the arrow which will return against you. (Kurdish Proverb)

Speak the truth, but leave immediately after. (Slovenian Proverb)

After all, to make a beautiful omelet, you have to break an egg. (Spanish Proverb)

Don't throw away the old bucket until you know whether the new one holds water. (Swedish Proverb)

2. Ask class to share other proverbs which they learned as children.

3. Ask: *What is the difference between wise sayings and proverbs from the Bible?* Explain that biblical proverbs teach us about faith in God. They are about living the right way, so that good things will happen. A proverb is a short, wise saying. It uses words in a special way to teach important truths. Proverbs are easy to remember because they use word pictures and word patterns. They have power because they sound good and give us pictures in our minds.

4. Say: *Like Psalms, Proverbs is written in poetry. Remember that Hebrew poetry does not use rhyme or regular rhythm. Hebrew poetry mainly uses repetition. The most important part of poetry is that it expresses thoughts in a more powerful way than ordinary words.*

### Guide the Study

5. Read Proverbs 1:7. Prepare a poster with these words on it and display for Lessons 10-13:

*The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Much Learning.*

Include the outline of Proverbs from “Background Information” in the Unit 2 Introduction in this Teaching Guide (Books 1-4, Collections).

Point out that the first section of the Book of Proverbs is chapters 1-9. It begins and ends with the same thought: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of much learning” (Proverbs 1:7 and 9:10). Discuss what “fear of the Lord” is and what kind of learning we need.

Say: *Real wisdom begins with deep reverence or fear of God Who is great and good and holy.*

6. Read Proverbs 3:1-4; 3:5-8; 3:9-12; 3:13-20. For each section, follow the steps below:

—List on the board the most important thoughts

—Discuss how these thoughts can come true in life

—Suggest a practical application.

7. Ask class to name the words used in these verses which are like “wisdom” (understanding, learning, teachings).

## Encourage Application

8. Ask the class to name favorite proverbs in this lesson. Discuss why that proverb is important.

9. Read together the Memory Verse and challenge the class to learn it by heart this week.

10. Say: *There are 31 chapters in Proverbs. You can read a chapter for each day of the month.*

Ask: *How many of you will read a chapter from Proverbs each day?*

11. Conclude by singing, “Trust and Obey.”

## Supplemental Teaching Ideas

### Connect with Life

- Say the beginnings of these common proverbs:

*An apple a day keeps the . . .*

*A stitch in time saves . . .*

*A penny saved is a . . .*

Explain that these are proverbs which most everyone born in the US will finish in the same way: “An apple a day keeps the *doctor away*, A stitch in time saves *nine*, A penny saved is a *penny earned*.” Explain that every culture has its own proverbs.

- Ask the class to list three earthly treasures they enjoy. List these on the board. Ask these questions:

—*Where do these treasures come from?*

—*How do we decide why something is a treasure?*

Say: *The proverbs and wise sayings in the Bible are a treasure for the wise man. We will study some of them in this lesson.*

## Guide Bible Study

- Ask: *What is the definition of a proverb?* Explain that a proverb is a truth said in a way that is easy to remember because it is short and clever. Proverbs teach us what is right and wrong.

- Draw a picture of a house and write on the top of the house, “Wisdom.” On the front door of the house write, “The fear of the Lord.”

Say: *If you want to enter the house of wisdom,*

*you must go through this door. To know true wisdom, you must know the God of all wisdom.*

- Read Proverbs 1:7. Prepare the following chart and ask the class to help fill in the right side:

Those Who Fear God	Those Who Do Not Fear God (Fools)
—Have the beginning of much learning —Afraid to displease God —Aware and conscious of God —Include God in their thoughts and plans —Respect and honor God because of who He is —Take God’s Word seriously	—do not want to learn what God has for them) —care only about pleasing self) —try to pretend God does not exist) —leave God out of their thoughts and plans) —show no respect for God; use His name in vain, etc.) —do not read God’s Word

- Prepare the following outline:  
Teachings About Living with God and Others—  
Proverbs 3:1-4

God’s Wisdom—Proverbs 3:5-8

Wise with Money—Proverbs 3:9-10

Wisdom in Discipline—Proverbs 3:11-12

Desire Wisdom—Proverbs 3:13-20

Read the verses above. Ask class to explain the main thoughts in each part of the outline. Ask class to suggest one thing from each that they can do.

## Encourage Application

- Ask: *What do verses 13-18 promise for those who seek wisdom? How do these benefits compare with the Beatitudes found in Matthew 5:3-12?*

- Discuss how making right decisions based on the wisdom that comes from God will help us make better decisions in the areas of jobs, marriage, teaching our children, etc.

Say: *In the end, foolish people find that wealth or beauty or success is not enough.*

- Close with prayer that members will learn to apply the Book of Proverbs to their lives.

# Teaching Guide

## Lesson 11: Wisdom for Right Living

### Lesson Focus

Wise people live the right way.

### Focal Text

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

### Background Text

Proverbs 10:1—22:16

### 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)

### Connect with Life

1. Say: *The Book of Proverbs gives good advice for right living each day.*

2. Review the poster you made for this unit: “The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Much Learning.” (See Lesson 10.)

Say: *Knowledge is learning what God wants us to do. It is knowing what God teaches about right and wrong. Right living is choosing to obey God. The person who is foolish knows what God wants, but chooses to do the wrong thing.*

3. Ask: *What do we need to know about right living?* Explain that right living does not mean sinlessness. No one is perfect, but the person who chooses what to do that is right in the eyes of God will ask God to help them.

### Guide the Study

4. Prepare a handout for the proverbs in this study. See the chart on page 30 or find a similar one at [www.baptistwaypress.org](http://www.baptistwaypress.org). Or, make one large chart for the class.

5. Read the verses as outlined on the chart. Fill in the chart for each verse using verse 17 as an example.

6. Use materials in the Study Guide as a guide. Point out

that verses 5-6 and 10-11 are pairs and verse 25 is a different pattern from the others.

7. Discuss each proverb. Ask: *How do these verses show that people must live with what happens after they do wrong?*

8. Discuss which of the proverbs show activities that lead to evil. Ask: *How can a desire for wealth lead to evil? How can wealth be used for good?*

### Encourage Application

9. Read together the Memory Verse. Ask: *Which other of these proverbs could become a proverb that would help your life?*

10. Close with prayer thanking God for the wisdom in Proverbs. Thank God that we can make sense of our lives when we trust Him. Remember that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of much learning.

### Supplemental Teaching Ideas

#### Connect with Life

Ask the following questions:

*If you owned your own company, would you make sure all your customers received fair and honest treatment? How would you make sure the people who worked for you received fair and honest treatment?*

*Why do people talk and gossip about others?*

*Proverbs 11:7 says that when a sinful man dies, his hope dies with him. Why do so many sinful people have long and healthy lives?*

*What makes our wants/desires either good or bad?*

*Do you enjoy giving to others? Do you want them (or others) to know that you give?*

Say: *Proverbs 11 will contrast the actions of the person who lives in the right way with the actions of one who is dishonest.*

### Guide Bible Study

• Prepare a chart to fill in as the verses are read. Begin by filling in the title (make two columns):

Column 1: Wise People: Right Living  
 Column 2: Evil People: (*Wrong Living*)

• Read Proverbs 11:1-11, 17-21, 23-25, 28. As you read the verses, stop to list on the chart what the verses say about the differences between wise people and evil people.

**Encourage Application**

• Say: *A man came into a restaurant wearing a cap with the name “Jesus” on the front. He ordered expensive items to eat. He asked for many things to be brought to the table. But when he left, he gave a tip that was very small even though the service had been good.*

Ask: *How do you think the server felt about this person who wore Jesus’ name telling everyone he was a Christian, but acted in a selfish way?*

• Read again the questions in “Connect with Life” in the Study Guide. Allow time for discussion based on Proverbs 11.

• Close by singing, “Take My Life, And Let it Be.”

*Chart for #4, Guide the Study*

Prov. 11	Describe Right Living	Results of Right Living	Describe Sinful living	Results of Sinful Living
verse 1				
2				
3				
4				
5-6				
7				
8				
9				
10-11				
17	Loving-kindness	Helps Self	Without Pity	Hurts Self
18				
19				
20				
21				
23				
24				
25				
28				

# Teaching Guide

## Lesson 12: Wisdom for Every Area of Life

### Lesson Focus

The wise person will want to have right living in every area of his life.

### Focal Text

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

### Background Text

Proverbs 22:17—24:22

### Memory Verse

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

### Connect with Life

1. Bring a couple of fortune cookies and ask someone to read the fortunes found inside. Or, bring one for each person.

*Ask: How are the messages in fortune cookies different from proverbs in the Bible? Allow time for discussion.*

2. Remind the class of what a proverb from the Bible is. Write on the board:  
—Inspired by God  
—Based on faith in God  
—Teach us to be faithful to God

3. Point to the poster made for Lessons 10-13 and read the unit theme together: “The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Much Learning” (Proverbs 1:7).

4. Say: *This section of the Book of Proverbs was written “so that your trust may be in the Lord” (Proverbs 22:19).*

### Guide the Study

5. Write the following outline (without the questions) on a poster, or prepare as a handout. Read the verses aloud. Use the questions to discuss each proverb:

### Wisdom for Every Area of Life

#### Respecting Others

(Proverbs 22:22-23; 23:10-11)

What teachings are given about how to treat the poor?  
Have you ever been able to help the poor but did not?  
What does God think about poor people being treated in wrong ways?  
After reading these verses, what is something we should do?

#### Be Careful Who You Spend Time With

(Proverbs 22:24-25)

What sort of people do these verses say we should not be with?  
How can we keep away from angry people?  
How can we use our anger in the right way?  
How can good people help evil people and not become like them?  
After reading these verses, what is something we should do?

#### Don’t Drink and Eat Too Much

(Proverbs 23:19-21)

What sort of people do these verses say we should stay away from?  
Why?  
Many studies show that American children are too fat.  
How can we change this?  
Is overeating in any way like abuse of drugs or alcohol?  
How can good people help evil people and not become like them?  
After reading these verses, what is something we should do?

#### Honor Your Parents

(Proverbs 23:22-25)

How does a person who wishes to be wise treat his or her parents?  
How do these verses say we get wisdom and learning?  
Why do we need discipline for this?  
What gives a parent joy?  
After reading these verses, what is something we should do?

**Don't Do Sex Sins**  
(Proverbs 23:26-28)

What are some things today which tempt people to be unfaithful in marriage?

After reading these verses, what is something we should do?

**Difficult Times**  
(Proverbs 24:10-12)

When we see people in danger, what should we do?

Would we help some people and not help others?

What happens if we do not help someone who needs it?

After reading these verses, what is something we should do?

**Be Responsible for Those Accused Wrongly**  
(Proverbs 24:15-16)

What is the command in verse 15?

What are the reasons for the command in verse 16?

After reading these verses, what is something we should do?

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

What are we not to do when our enemies fall?

Why not?

If we did this, would it change our lives?

After reading these verses, what is something we should do?

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

When life does not seem fair, and when those who do wrong seem to have everything, what are we to do?

Why is it important to remember that God is a fair judge?

After reading these verses, what is something we should do?

6. Ask: *Which of the proverbs studied in this lesson give you the best advice for how you should live every day? Which verses would you want to underline to help you remember them?*

## Encourage Application

7. Read the Memory Verse together.

8. Ask: *When you want to remember to buy something at the grocery store, what do you do?* (Write it down, make a list, etc).

Ask: *When you read something in Proverbs that helps you, what should you do?*

9. Say: *Proverbs teaches us that God is on the side of the poor.* Ask class to list ideas for ways they can help poor people. Include changing local, state, national policies. Discuss how wrongs to poor people can be changed.

Invite someone to speak to the class who works with the poor, providing food, or housing. Make plans to help in a Habitat for Humanity Building project, etc. Invite members to bring food for a food drive.

10. Read Proverbs 24:12 again. Ask: *What does it mean that God knows when good people look away (or ignore) as bad things are being done to others?*

Ask: *What should we do?*

## Supplemental Teaching Ideas

### Guide Bible Study

• Write “Proverbs for Everyday Living” at the top of a poster. Say: *As we read these proverbs, we want to think about how they apply to our own lives. Some are like warning signs on the highway telling us what to avoid. Others are more like directions, telling us which way to go.* Make your own “Warning” sign for each verse which is a warning, and a “Go This Way” sign for those verses which give advice.

Read and discuss the following verses. Prepare the following sentence strips to add to the poster after each section is read:

#### Proverbs for Everyday Living

Proverbs 22:22-23: Warning Not to Rob the Poor

Proverbs 22:24-25: Warning Not to Associate with the Hot-Tempered

Proverbs 23:10-11: Warning Not to Cheat the Poor

Proverbs 23:19-21: Warning Not to be with Those who

Drink Too Much Wine or Eat Too Much Meat

Proverbs 23:22-23: Advice to Honor Your Father;

Warning Not to Despise Your Mother

Proverbs 23:24-25: Warning Not to Ignore Good Advice

Proverbs 23:26-28: Warning Not to Do Sex Sins

Proverbs 24:10: Advice to be Strong

Proverbs 24:11-12: Advice to Help People Who Are Hurt by Others

Proverbs 24:15-16: Warning Not to Rob a Godly Person's House

Proverbs 14:17-18: Warning Not to Be Glad When an Enemy Falls

Proverbs 24:19-20: Warning Not to Envy Sinners

# Teaching Guide

## Lesson 13: Wisdom with Other People

### Lesson Focus

Wisdom learned from the Book of Proverbs helps you get along with other people.

### Focal Text

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

### Background Text

Proverbs 25-31

### Memory Verse

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

### Connect with Life

1. Ask: *Do you always get along with everyone? Is this a problem in your life? Do you wish you knew how to get along better with others?*

*Say: This lesson teaches us how to have wisdom as we work with other people.*

### Guide the Study

2. Read the unit poster (“The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Much Learning” Proverbs 1:7). See Lesson 10. Remind class of the theme for this study of the Book of Proverbs. Point out on the unit poster where this lesson is on the outline of Proverbs.

*Say: This part of the Book of Proverbs tells us that “These also are wise sayings of Solomon, which were written down by the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah” (Proverbs 25:1).*

3. Prepare the following matching activity as a handout for each person or on a large poster. You can find a similar copy at [www.baptistwaypress.org](http://www.baptistwaypress.org). Read the verses on the right hand side in order. As you read them, match them to the headings in the left column:

### Wisdom with Other People

\_\_People You Can Trust and People You Cannot Trust a. Proverbs 25:11-12

\_\_Think of Others b. Proverbs 25:13-14

\_\_The Importance of Wise Words c. Proverbs 25:15

\_\_Watch Your Words d. Proverbs 25:16-17

\_\_Warning about People Who are Not Faithful e. Proverbs 25:18-19

\_\_Do Not Overdo Anything f. Proverbs 25:20

\_\_How to Get Those with Power to Listen to You g. Proverbs 25:21-23

\_\_How to Treat Your Enemies h. Proverbs 26:18-28

4. Ask class to think of examples of people or events that remind them of each of the major headings on the left side in the chart above. After the stories have been shared, discuss one question they would like to ask the writer of Proverbs about that heading.

### Encourage Application

5. Ask class to look back at the Study Guide and list the “Top Ten” most practical ideas from this study of Proverbs. Ask class to share a favorite proverb they have discovered during this study.

6. Sing, “Wonderful Words of Life.”

7. Pray that the class will use what God has taught them from this study.

8. Read Proverbs 3:5-6 as a closing blessing: “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.”

## Supplemental Teaching Ideas

### Connect with Life

- Read the following poem:

“To love the whole world for me is no chore,  
The problem for me is the person next door.”

Say: *Life would be easier if you didn't have to worry about getting along with other people. Do you agree or disagree?* Allow time for discussion.

Say: *Life would be harder if there was no one to help you. Do you agree or disagree?* Allow time for discussion and then ask: *What makes the difference?* (How we get along with others). Explain that this lesson is full of advice to help us learn to wisdom for getting along with others.

### Guide Bible Study

- Read Proverbs 25:11-12. Bring an apple to class. Ask members to imagine that this apple is made of gold and is placed on a silver platter.

Say: *The writer of Proverbs said that beautiful words spoken at the right time are like an apple made of gold.*

Ask: *Can you think of a time when someone said something that helped you when you were having a time of trouble?* Allow time for discussion or share an experience of your own.

- Share this information: In many families, there are many more negative words spoken than positive words.

Discuss what happens to children in homes where negative words are all they hear. Explain that negative words can be gossip or lies or arguing.

Ask: *Is there someone you know who needs to hear kind words from you today?*

Ask: *How do we get the chance to offer wise words?* Remind the class that the right words teach about God. They comfort and help.

- Read Proverbs 25:13-14. Ask: *What do these proverbs say about being loyal? About keeping promises?*

- Read Proverbs 25:15. Ask: *Can you think of someone in power that you have been able to speak to in the right way? Can you think of a time you wish you had used the advice in this proverb?* Allow time for discussion.

- Read Proverbs 25:16-17. Bring a jar of honey. Find out who in the class likes honey. Ask how much of the honey could be eaten before becoming sick.

Ask: *Is this a proverb that can help you?*

- Read Proverbs 25:18-19. Ask: *How do we relate to people who act in this way? How do we show them love?*

- Read Proverbs 25:20. Bring a recording of a happy or silly song such as “Zippity Do Dah.”

Say: *This might not be the right song to sing when someone has a heavy heart.*

Ask: *Have you ever heard someone say this: “You shouldn't be sad. You are a Christian.” What does this proverb teach about what to do to help someone with a heavy heart?*

- Read Proverbs 25:21-23.

Ask: *Is it hard to keep from feeling proud if we put into practice what these verses says?*

Ask: *What is the best way to help someone who is not kind to us?*

- Read Proverbs 26:18-28. Discuss:
  - How harmful practical jokes can be
  - How to keep from talking about others (gossiping)
  - How to be real and not false in what we say
  - How to say kind things that are true and not flatter others in a false way
  - The dangers of lying
  - The importance of being a truthful person

### Encourage Application

- Encourage class to continue reading from the Book of Proverbs. Hold up a calendar for the current month as a reminder that it would be a good idea to read one chapter of Proverbs every day of every month.

- Say: *The teachings of Proverbs can help you get along with other people. Think about what you have learned about being wise during this study.* Discuss:

—Is it possible to take back hurtful words after you have said them? Have you ever wished you had not said something?

—A wrong word at the wrong time can cause big problems.

—The wise word spoken at the right time brings healing. How wise are your words?

Can other people believe you when you say you will do something?

- Close with prayer that God will continue to teach the class through these Proverbs.