

LIFE GRID

*Wisdom from Above
for Living Here Below*

Based on
Poetical Books: Poetry and Wisdom in the Bible by Colleen Carter
and the Life Grid Bible Study Series from Capital Community Church,
Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada

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Suggestions for Teachers

LESSON 1–11

Each lesson, with the exception of the last—Lesson 12, has a reading assignment. Consider giving the students ten to fifteen minutes to begin their homework assignment at the end of your session.

LESSONS 2–3

Lessons 2 and 3 are a study of Proverbs. The Bible indicates that Solomon collected proverbs from wise men. Have your students collect proverbs from secular sources and/or parents.

LESSONS 4–5

The theme of lessons 4 and 5 is the suffering of Job. Choose seven students to play the roles of narrator, God, Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, and Elihu. Have them read the passages that pertain to them orally as in a radio play.

LESSONS 6–7

The Song of Solomon is the subject of lessons 6 and 7. Choose students to play the roles of the Shulamite maiden, King Solomon, and the “daughters of Jerusalem.” Have them rewrite the story in modern language and then present a radio play.

LESSONS 8–9

Lessons 8 and 9 focus on Solomon’s degeneration in Ecclesiastes. Have the students graph his decline.

LESSONS 10–12

The Psalms is the topic of lessons 10, 11, and 12. Have each student memorize two psalms that they had not memorized before.

LESSON 12

Give a comprehensive, instructor-created test in the last half of this lesson.

LESSON 1

Introduction to Wisdom Literature

Key Verse

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever" (Psalm 111:10).

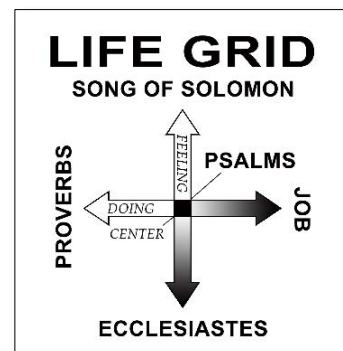
Lesson Objectives

After this lesson, the students should be able to

- Contrast the style of Hebrew poetry with modern English poetry
- Name the five books of wisdom literature
- Summarize the five books of wisdom literature
- Define the Old Testament meaning of *wisdom*
- Explain the Life Grid

Life Grid

In the Bible's five books of wisdom literature, we can see a Life Grid. This grid consists of a horizontal axis and a vertical axis: The horizontal line is the Doing Line, our everyday life. The vertical line is the Feeling Line, our relationship with God.



The Doing Line is where we live. It's what we do every day: work, school, and so on. It is the day-to-day activities of our lives: what we eat, when we sleep, where we work, and so forth. It is the physical, earthly, temporary life. Proverbs and Job are the outer life and on the Doing Line. On one end of this axis is Proverbs. It tells us that if we obey the Word of God, it should bring blessings to our lives. On the other end of the axis, we have Job. This is the dark side of this life. Job did everything right. He honored God, he prayed, he gave, but for some reason everything went wrong.

The Feeling Line is our relationship with God – the inner, spiritual life. It goes far beyond the earth into eternity. You are doing the right things because they are right even when feeling isn't there. Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes are the inner life and on the Feeling Line.

The Center of it all in the human grid is the wonderful 150 chapters of Psalms. Prayer expresses every emotion known to mankind. Sometimes it is praising, rejoicing, thanking, whining, God-break-the-teeth-of-my-enemies, wipe-out-enemies, and so forth.

Everyone is on the Life Grid. No matter what happens in life, keep on praying. Keep on living for God. Keep on worshiping. Keep your relationship good with God.

Poetry and Wisdom

Poetry and wisdom literature in the Old Testament are closely related. Five Old Testament books are clearly poetic: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. Of these books, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon are considered to be wisdom literature. Psalms is full of praises with some chapters of wisdom (i.e. 1 and 119). (Lamentations is also poetic but is usually studied with the Major Prophets. It follows Jeremiah in the Christian Bible.)

Most types of poetry use rhyme (the endings of two lines have the same sound) and meter (rhythm as in verse or music). Rhyme and meter can make translating such poetry into a foreign language difficult.

On the other hand, Hebrew poetry is unusual, for it focuses on parallelism. Parallelism is when ideas are set side by side, forming two thoughts in the mind.

These thoughts may work together or be opposites, emphasizing the meaning of each other. For example,

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want” (Psalm 23:1).

“Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy” (Psalm 126:2).

“A kind man benefits himself, but a cruel man brings himself harm” (Proverbs 11:17).

Because of the parallelism of thoughts, Hebrew poetry translates well into foreign languages.

Hebrew poetry appeals to human emotions and will as the writings are charged with feeling. It deals with experiences and problems that are common to man; these incidents are relayed to us for examples. Its purpose is to persuade, exhort, and reprove.

Wisdom literature is the Old Testament’s “Instruction Manual for Life.” It is poetic in form but practical in content. It teaches practical living skills instead of offering facts or abstract knowledge.

The Hebrew meaning of *wisdom* is much broader than the English. *Wisdom* in English speaks more about knowledge, but in Hebrew it relates to the skill of making things, which we consider to be craftsmanship.

In Hebrew *wisdom* includes the willingness and ability to rightly perceive and relate to the created world in all its aspects. God has created the world in a certain way, and He has given us wisdom to live according to that basic structure.

Many of the prophets thought wisdom to be important. For example, Jeremiah wrote, “For the teaching of the law by the priest will not be lost, nor will counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophets” (Jeremiah 18:18). Wisdom was so important that it was mentioned with the Law and the Prophets.

Just the Facts:

- Out of the sixty-six books in the Bible (thirty-nine in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New Testament), five are written in poetic form. (As stated above, Lamentations is also poetic but is paired in the Christian Bible with the prophecies of Jeremiah, as he is considered the author.)
- The wisdom literature is the third section in the Bible.
- It is located in the Old Testament.
- These books were primarily written during Israel's Golden Age in the time of David and Solomon (1040–931 BC).
- They spoke to Israel then, but also speak to us today.
- The value of this portion of Scripture is in the beautiful balance between the work of the Holy Spirit and the deepest human emotions and expressions. "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:20–21).

Overview of Poetical Books

- **Proverbs** (the bright side of everyday life) is a collection of wise sayings and principles to live by. Proverbs teaches good things *normally* happen in life to those living by God's principles. Obedience to God's Word equals blessings!
- **Job** (the dark side of everyday life) is the story of a man who did everything right by the rules and principles as far as we know. At the opposite end of everyday life, everything falls apart for some reason. Like Job, you have fasted, prayed, and lived as righteously as possible but still life does not go right.
- **Song of Solomon** (bright side of spiritual/inner life) is a love story between King Solomon and the Shulamite maiden. Everything is wonderful, romance is in the air, all is absolutely great. This is a high point of his life, everything is good and right.
- **Ecclesiastes** (dark side of spiritual/inner life) is Solomon's comments after a life of disillusionments and disappointments: everything is vanity, vanity, all is vanity. He told us all is vanity when feelings evaporate and things don't make sense. Solomon was just putting one foot in front of the other, going through the motions with no feeling left. Sometimes in the Christian life we live for God because the Bible says to

but not because we feel to. With no heart in it, we go through the motions.

- **Psalms** (the center of human life) is 150 songs of prayers and anthems of praise. David wrote most of the Psalms, and he experienced all of the emotions expressed on the Life Grid.

Study Questions

1. Names the five poetical books in our study.
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
 - D. _____
 - E. _____
2. When were the poetical books written?

3. How does Hebrew poetry differ from modern English poetry?

4. Why is Hebrew poetry easier to translate into a different language than poetry with rhyme and meter?

5. Write a poetical stanza in the Hebrew style.

6. What is considered the Old Testament's "Instruction Manual for Life?"

7. What is the Life Grid?

8. On the Life Grid, what is the difference between the *Doing Line* and the *Feeling Line*?

9. In one sentence summarize each of the five poetical books.

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

LESSON 2

Proverbs (Part I)

A Book of Practical Ethics

Key Verse

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding” (Proverbs 9:10).

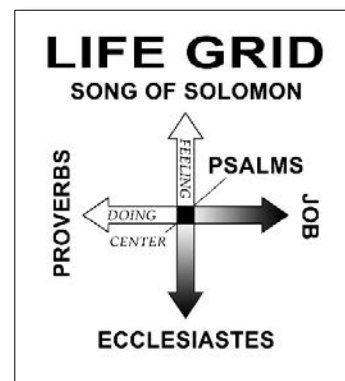
Lesson Objective

After this lesson, the student should be able to

- Identify the authors of the proverbs
- Comprehend the biblical meaning of *wisdom*
- Outline the Book of Proverbs
- Know Proverbs’s place on the Life Grid
- Apply the wisdom of Proverbs to one’s daily life

Life Grid

In the Bible’s five books of wisdom literature, we can see a Life Grid. This grid consists of a horizontal axis and a vertical axis: The horizontal line is the Doing Line. The vertical line is the Feeling Line, our relationship with God. Proverbs is on the left end of the horizontal axis.



The Doing Line is where we live. It's what we do every day: work, school, and so on. It is the day-to-day activities of our lives: what we eat, when we sleep, where we work, and so forth. It is the physical, earthly, temporary life. Proverbs and Job are the outer life and on the Doing Line. On one end of this axis is Proverbs. It tells us that if we obey the Word of God, it should bring blessings to our lives. On the other end of the axis, we have Job. This is the dark side of this life. Job did everything right. He honored God, he prayed, he gave, but for some reason everything went wrong.

The Feeling Line is our relationship with God – the inner, spiritual life. It goes far beyond the earth into eternity. You are doing the right things because they are right even when feeling isn't there. Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes are the inner life and on the Feeling Line.

The Center of it all in the human grid is the wonderful 150 chapters of Psalms. Prayer expresses every emotion known to mankind. Sometimes it is praising, rejoicing, thanking, whining, God-break-teeth-of-my-enemies, wipe-out-enemies, and so forth.

Everyone is on the Life Grid. No matter what happens in life, keep on praying. Keep on living for God. Keep on worshipping. Keep your relationship good with God.

Just the Facts

- **Authors:** Solomon, Hezekiah, Agur, King Lemuel, and the Wise.
- **Number of Chapters:** 31
- **Key Thought:** Wisdom
- **Key Theme:** Wisdom for Right Living
- **When:** Primarily during the reign of Solomon, but also during the reign of Hezekiah.
- **Where:** Solomon's court in Jerusalem

Introduction

Proverbs is the third of the five books considered wisdom literature, but the first of our study because of its place on the Life Grid. (See previous page.) The name is a combination of the Latin *pro* ("instead of") and *verba* ("words"). The

Hebrew title *Mishle Shelomoh* is translated “Proverbs of Solomon.” A proverb is a short statement that summarizes a wise principle.

The Book of Proverbs is a collection of the most important 513 of the three thousand wise sayings King Solomon wrote or collected (I Kings 4:32). According to Ecclesiastes 12:9, Solomon “set in order many proverbs,” indicating that he organized the proverbs he had written as well as the ones he had collected from other sages of renown.

The subject of Proverbs is wisdom, which in Scripture is a matter of the heart more than of the mind—real wisdom is, at its most basic level, simply obedience to God. “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding” (Proverbs 9:10).

In “Introduction to the Book of Proverbs,” Roger Hahn states:

The Old Testament uses the word “wisdom” to refer to any educated discipline or skillful performance. The word was used in Isaiah 10:13 for successful military leadership. The Hebrew word appears in Exodus 35:26 to describe skill in turning goat’s hair into cloth. . . . Beyond the skills and training of specialized people, the Old Testament speaks of wisdom as skill in life. In this sense the wisdom tradition and the wise men and women were the ancient ancestors of modern social and natural scientists. (Roger Hahn, “Introduction to the Book of Proverbs,” <http://www.crivoice.org/biblestudy/bbproverbs1.html> Accessed November 21, 2016)

According to Bruce K. Walkte in “The Book of Proverbs and Ancient Wisdom Literature”:

The book [of Proverbs] is a compendium of moral instruction. It deals with sin and holiness. And the vehicle of instruction is a favorite Semitic device—teaching by contrast. The style of Proverbs with its trenchant contrasts or more extended climactic poems can be paralleled in ancient literature in Egypt and Mesopotamia. The Hebrew author, however, has given instruction on life and holiness in proverbial form. (<https://www.biblicaltraining.org/library/book-proverbs> Accessed September 2, 2016)

Most people are not aware that the proverbial statements in the Book of Proverbs are really parables. They are sayings that use natural and normal illustrations to show comparisons to moral, social or religious principles. In other words, the use of the proverbs (parables) is intended to portray spiritual truths through the ordinary usage of words and explanations. The intended result, however, may involve the revelation of many “dark sayings” that the ordinary person may be unaware of. Or, to put it simply, there is often more to the proverb than at first meets the eye. (<http://askelm.com/restoring/res041.htm> Accessed August 30, 2016)

Author

As the Hebrew title indicates, King Solomon is the primary author of the Book of Proverbs.

Solomon was brilliant. God had blessed him with insight and understanding. He was wiser than anyone else in the world, including the wisest people of the east and of Egypt. . . . Solomon became famous in every country around Judah and Israel. Solomon wrote three thousand wise sayings and composed more than one thousand songs. He could talk about all kinds of plants, from large trees to small bushes, and he taught about animals, birds, reptiles, and fish. Kings all over the world heard about Solomon’s wisdom and sent people to listen to him teach (I Kings 4:29-34, CEV).

Solomon, however, was not the only author. The Bible specifically mentions the Wise (Proverbs 22:22-24:22), Agur (Proverbs 30), and Lemuel (Proverbs 31).

The comparison made in 1 Kings 4:29-34 between Solomon’s wisdom and that of the ancient Near Eastern sages strongly implies that his proverbs were a part of an international, pan-oriental, wisdom literature. (<https://ai2-s2-pdfs.s3.amazonaws.com/6149/1358c5b-27719444aeba2edc769bf-0e3ce331.pdf> Accessed September 2, 2016)

Outline

Proverbs is easily divided into seven sections, plus an introduction.

Introduction

Proverbs 1:1-6

The first six verses of the book set forth its purpose. It is to give wisdom, instruction, understanding, justice, judgment, equity, subtlety to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young, learning, wise counsel, "and the interpretation; the words of the wise [plural], and their dark sayings."

I. "Instructions"

Proverbs 1:7-9:18

The "instructions" are twelve speeches addressed to "my son," as if Solomon was giving parental advice to a son or a tutor was addressing his charge. In the speeches, wisdom is personified as a virtuous woman, advising "my son" to refraining from following the "strange woman" with loose morals.

II. "The Proverbs of Solomon"

Proverbs 10:1-22:16

These are proverbs that Solomon penned. Some scholars think this section may have been the core of the original collection. With the exception of the triplet in Proverbs 19:7, all of the other proverbs in this section are couplets. (A couplet has two successive rhyming lines in a verse and had the same meter to form a complete thought. A triplet has three rhyming lines.)

III. "The Words of the Wise"

Proverbs 22:22-24:22

Wise is used as a plural and indicates the these saying were collected from sages of ancient days or other oriental kingdoms. Interestingly enough, "the most intriguing thing about the Words of the Wise Men is that the teaching here appears to be almost copied from an Egyptian wisdom writing known as the *Teaching of Amenemope*." (<http://www.crivoice.org/biblestudy/bbproverbs1.html> Accessed September 22, 2016) This is in keeping with the idea that Solomon collected wise, practical sayings from the then-known world.

IV. “These belong to the wise”

Proverbs 24:23–24:34

These are more sayings from “the wise.” After he cited Akkadian, Sumerian Babylonian, Assyrian, and Egyptian proverbs, Bruce Waltke stated in his article “The Book of Proverbs and Ancient Wisdom Literature,” “Wisdom literature existed around the Fertile Crescent not only before Solomon but even before the Hebrews appeared in history!” (Bibliotheca Sacra 136 (July-Sept. 1979): 211-38. Copyright © 1979 by Dallas Theological Seminary. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/6149/1358c5b27719444aeba2edc769bf0e3-ce331.pdf> Accessed September 22, 2016)

**V. “These are also proverbs of Solomon,
which the men of Hezekiah king of
Judah copied out.”**

Proverbs 25:1–29:27

King Hezekiah led Judah in a religious revival. Apparently a part of that revival was a compilation or possible expansion of Solomon’s proverbs.

[Proverbs] 25:1 states, “These are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out.” This indicates that a group of wise men or scribes compiled these proverbs as editors and added chs. 25–29 to the earlier collections. (<http://www.bible-studytools.com/proverbs/> Accessed September 21, 2016)

The role of Hezekiah’s men (see 25:1) indicates that important sections of Proverbs were compiled and edited from 715 to 686 b.c. This was a time of spiritual renewal led by the king, who also showed great interest in the writings of David and Asaph (see 2 Ch 29:30). (<http://www.biblestudytools.com/proverbs/> Accessed September 21, 2016)

VI. “The word of Agar the son of Jakeh”

Proverbs 30

The identity of Agar the son of Jakeh is unknown. Neither Agar nor Jakeh are mentioned in other biblical writings. Some maintain that Agar is a pseudonym for Solomon. Others contend this cannot be based on Agar’s prayer in Proverbs 30:7-9 where he asked that God give him neither poverty or riches. Why would Solomon make this request, since at the beginning of his reign Jehovah promised to make him rich?

VII. “The words of king Lemuel”**Proverbs 31**

Like Agar’s, Lemuel’s identity is unknown. “Lemuel’s sayings contain several Aramaic spellings that may point to a non-Israelite background” (<http://www.biblestudytools.com/proverbs/> Accessed September 21, 2016). Nevertheless, “Ferrar Fenton tried to identify this ‘Lemuel’ with King Solomon himself. This was done by stretching the meaning of ‘Lemuel’ to signify ‘The One Who Forgot God.’ This is a rather fanciful interpretation and little weight should be attached to it. However, we know of no king in the Bible (or in secular history) with such a name. It may well be a cipher for Solomon himself, but no one can be sure of this.” (<http://askelm.com/restoring/res041.htm> Accessed September 22, 2016)

“The words of Lemuel are a mother’s plea to her royal son for chastity, temperance and justice, the kingly virtues. . . . The Book of Proverbs ends in a manner eminently worthy of its high standard of sanity and wisdom. Without any heading . . . the last 22 verses (31:10–31) constitute a single poem in praise of a worthy woman, extolling especially her household virtues. In form these verses begin in the original with the successive 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet; a favorite form of Hebrew verse, as may be seen (in the original) in several of the psalms, notably Ps 119, and in Lamentations 1–4” (<https://www.Biblical-training.org/library/book-proverbs> Accessed September 21, 2016)

While Proverbs began with a father instructing a son, it concludes with a mother instructing a son. Our study of the Book of Proverbs will continue in the next lesson.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What is a proverb?

2. What is the Old Testament’s general definition of *wisdom*?

3. What does Proverbs 9:10 say that wisdom is?

4. Who is the primary author of Proverbs?

5. Name two other authors of Proverbs.

6. Explain the statement, "The proverbial statements in the Book of Proverbs are really parables."

7. What is the purpose of the Book of Proverbs?

8. What are the eight sections of the Book of Proverbs?

- A.

- B.

- C.

- D.

- E.

- F.

- G.

- H.

LESSON 3

Proverbs (Part II)

Guidelines for Daily Living

Key Verse

“How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?” (Proverbs 1:22)

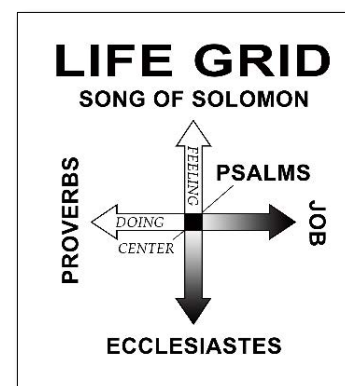
Lesson Objectives

After this lesson, the student should be able to:

- Identify the three kinds of people who desperately need wisdom
- Recognize the traits of a wise person
- Apply the precepts of Proverbs to his or her personal life
- Define *wisdom* and *folly*.
- Summarize the Book of Proverbs

Life Grid

In the Bible’s five books of wisdom literature, we can see a Life Grid. This grid consists of a horizontal axis and a vertical axis: The horizontal line is the Doing Line. The vertical line is the Feeling Line, our relationship with God. Proverbs is on the left end of the horizontal axis.



Everyone is on the Life Grid. No matter what happens in life, keep on praying. Keep on living for God. Keep on worshipping. Keep your relationship good with God.

Review

A proverb is a short statement that summarizes a wise principle. The Book of Proverbs is a collection of the most important 513 of the three thousand wise sayings King Solomon wrote or collected (I Kings 4:32). The subject of Proverbs is wisdom, which in Scripture is a matter of the heart more than of the mind – real wisdom is, at its most basic level, simply obedience to God. “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding” (Proverbs 9:10).

Four Kinds of People

Proverbs mentions four kinds of people. Three of these desperately need wisdom: “How long, ye *simple ones*, will ye love simplicity? and the *scorners* delight in their scorning, and *fools* hate knowledge?” (Proverbs 1:22, emphasis added).

The Simple

- The simple are naïve people who believe everything, because they don’t have convictions about anything. (What they think is “tolerance” is only spiritual ignorance, because they can’t distinguish truth from error.) “The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going” (Proverbs 14:15).
- The wise learn from instruction and avoid trouble, but the simple have to learn the hard way. “When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise: and when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge” (Proverbs 21:11).
- The simple cannot see ahead so they repeatedly walk into trouble. “A prudent man foreseeeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished” (Proverbs 22:3).
- The simple are simple because they reject the truth of God’s Word that gives common sense. “To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion” (Proverbs 1:4).

The Scorner

- Scorners can't understand God's truth because they are not humble. "A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth" (Proverbs 14:6).
- Scorners show how ignorant they are by the way they respond to advice and correction. "Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee" (Proverbs 9:8).
- Scorners have toxic attitudes that spread trouble and create problems. "Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease" (Proverbs 22:10).
- Scorners bring reproach on anything they touch. "The thought of foolishness is sin: and the scorner is an abomination to men" (Proverbs 24:9).

The Fool

- In Proverbs, three different Hebrews words are translated "fool": *kesyl* means "dull," *ewiyl* means "perverted," and *nabal* means "subborn."
- Fools think that their sin is "really living." "Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom: but a man of understanding walketh uprightly" (Proverbs 15:21).
- Fools are light about spiritual things. "The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness" (Proverbs 15:2).
- Fools constantly meddle in trivial affairs. "It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling" (Proverbs 20:3).
- Fools continually return to their sin. "As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly" (Proverbs 26:11).

The Wise

- The wise associate with wise people. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed" (Proverbs 13:20).
- The wise flee from sin. "A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident" (Proverbs 14:16).
- The wise discipline their speech. "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise" (Proverbs 10:19).
- The wise win souls. "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30).

Wisdom and Folly

Proverbs contrasts *wisdom* and *folly* (and even personifies them as women out to woo us). Folly is defined as lack of good sense or foolishness. (www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/foolly Accessed October 4, 2017) It often appears dumb to everybody, but sometimes—and this is the tricky part—it actually appears smart from a worldly perspective. That is why we need to meditate on God's Word.

“Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (I Corinthians 2:13-14)).

“If you are wise and understand God's ways, live a life of steady goodness so that only good deeds will pour forth. And if you don't brag about the good you do, then you will be truly wise! But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your hearts, don't brag about being wise. That is the worst kind of lie. For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and motivated by the Devil. For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and every kind of evil. But the wisdom that comes from Heaven is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and good deeds. It shows no partiality and is always sincere. And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of goodness” (James 3:13-18, NLT).

Possibilities not Promises

In the Book of Proverbs, King Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived (II Chronicles 1:10; I Kings 4:29), gives us insight and advice regarding many of the issues of life that are not directly addressed in the Law or the Prophets (i.e. principles and applications).

That is why Proverbs are *probabilities* and not *promises*. Generally, the wise prosper while fools do not—but it doesn't always happen that way. These general

principles of life are balanced by the reality that the wicked sometimes prosper but only temporarily.

“But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end” (Psalm 73:2-3, 16-17).

So, whatever the result, we still need to live by God’s principles. God does not guarantee uniform outcomes for each proverb, but in studying them and applying them, we begin to understand the wisdom, character, and blessings of God. And that alone will make us grow. The aim of Proverbs is to give us skill in all our human relationships.

We don’t automatically get wisdom. It has to be known (1:2), received (1:3), heard (2:2), taken into the heart (2:10), found (3:13), kept (3:21), gotten (4:7), learned (4:11), attended to (5:1), understood (8:5), valued (8:11), purchased (23:23), and loved (29:3).

All of the wisdom expressed in Proverbs is hidden in Christ, so we need to know Him, receive Him, hear Him, take Him into our hearts, find Him, keep Him, get Him, learn Him, attend to Him, understand Him, value Him, purchase Him, and love Him.

“In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:3).

Conclusion

Life doesn’t have a “rule” for every situation. We have to acquire and apply the wisdom of God (His Word) to our own lives. It is dangerous to try to “claim” a verse from Proverbs while ignoring the total message of the book!

The Book of Proverbs tells us that good things are likely to happen if we do right. The Book of Job tells us that sometimes bad things happen even when we do right. The Book of Romans tells us that God can use even the bad things for our good – if we will allow Him to do so (Romans 8:28).

Study Questions

1. What are the four types of people mentioned in the Book of Proverbs?

A. _____
B. _____
C. _____
D. _____

2. Describe simple people.

3. Describe scorners.

4. Describe foolish people.

5. Describe the wise

6. Define *wisdom*.

7. Define *folly*.

8. What is the real lesson of Proverbs?

9. What is your favorite proverb?

10. What non-biblical proverb has your father or mother passed on to you.

Personal Study Notes

Lesson 4

Job (Part I)

The Mystery of Suffering along the Journey of Faith

Key Verse

“For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God” (Job 19:25-26).

Lesson Objectives

After this lesson, the student should be able to

- Summarize the events in Job’s life
 - Explain what happened
 - Explain where it happened
 - Explain when it happened
 - Explain why it happened
- Identify Job’s friends
- Summarize the speeches of
 - Elihaz
 - Bildad
 - Zophar
- Identify the Book of Job’s place on the Life Grid

Life Grid

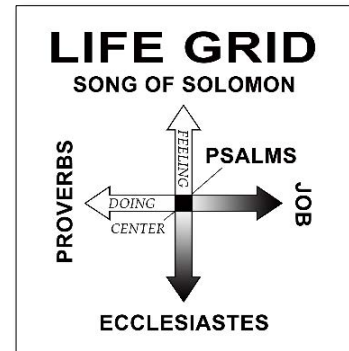
Through these lessons, we will be using a Life Grid. The horizontal line is the Doing Line. The vertical line is the Feeling Line. The intersection of these two line is the Center.

The Doing Line is where we live. It's what we do every day: work, school, and so on. It is the physical, earthly, temporary life. Proverbs and Job are the outer life and on the Doing Line.

The Feeling Line is our relationship with God – the inner, spiritual life. It goes far beyond the earth into eternity. You are doing the right things because they are right even when feeling isn't there. Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes are the inner life and on the Feeling Line.

The Center of it all in the human grid is the wonderful 150 chapters of Psalms. Prayer expresses every emotion known to mankind. Sometimes it is praising, rejoicing, thanking, whining, God-break-teeth-of-my-enemies, wipe-out-enemies, and so forth.

Everyone is on the Life Grid. No matter what happens in life, keep on praying. Keep on living for God. Keep on worshipping. Keep relationship good with your God.



Just the Facts

- **Author:** Unknown. Possibly Moses, Elihu, or Job.
- **Number of Chapters:** 42
- **Key Theme:** Why (How) Do the Righteous Suffer?
- **Key Thought:** Testing
- **Key Verse:** "Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?" (1:9).
- **When It Happened:** Scholars are uncertain when Job lived. The best guess is after the Flood – Eliphaz makes reference to the Flood (Job 22:16) – and long before Moses and the Law. (<http://apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=11&article=2516>, accessed June 8, 2016)

The designations of “Temanite,” “Shuahite,” and “Naamahite” may indicate these events transpired a few generations after Abraham.

- **Where It Happened:** In the land of Uz, Job’s homeland, whose location is uncertain. According to Wayne Blank of Daily Bible Study, “The two most likely locations for the land of Uz is in Arabia, east of Petra (today, northwestern Saudi Arabia), or more likely, in Bashan, east of the Sea of Galilee and south of Damascus (today, western Jordan or southern Syria.)” (<http://www.keyway.ca/htm2002/20021230.htm> Accessed June 7, 2016)
- **Why It Happened:** To explore faith’s response to human suffering. Christ is seen as the “Risen Redeemer.” “For I know that my redeemer liveth” (Job 19:25).
- **Some Extras:**
 - Job is the first of the poetical books in the Bible.
 - Job is considered the oldest book in the Bible.
 - Job is the eighteenth book of the Old Testament.

“Trial is the school of trust—not always given as chastisement, but sometimes for our education.” (Keith L. Brooks)

Outline

- I. Introduction (1-2)
- II. Conversations between Job and his friends (3-31)
- III. Speeches by Elihu (32-37)
- IV. God speaks to Job (38:1-42:6)
- V. Conclusion (42:7-17)

I. Introduction

Job is the first of the five Poetical Books but the second in our study because of its place on the Life Grid. Its author is unknown, although scholars have suggested Job, Elihu, Moses, and Solomon. The date of Job is a much-discussed topic. Because of its lack of reference to the Mosaic law, it is regarded by many scholars to be the oldest book of the Bible. Others place the book as late as the Exile.

The Book of Job is not religious fiction; Job was a real person, with real problems. The Bible tells us he was “perfect and upright” and that he “shunned

evil” and had “integrity” – in other words, he was not a hypocrite in the sight of God. What Job was on the outside, he was on the inside – he was *real*.

Job was a prosperous man with a large family and an abundance of land, animals, and servants. But being rich did not turn Job away from God. He acknowledged that the Lord gave him his wealth, and he used it generously for the good of others. Job also had friends. Today, we disparagingly call them “Job’s comforters,” but they were still friends.

In one fateful twenty-four-hour period, Job was stripped of his wealth and his family. One after another, four frightened messengers reported that five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred donkeys, and three thousand camels were stolen in enemy raids; seven thousand sheep were struck by lightning and killed; and all ten of his children (seven sons, three daughters) were killed as a windstorm collapsed the house they were in. All of Job’s ranch hands and servants were also killed in the raids and by lightening. Shortly afterward, Job lost his health, and his wife turned angrily against him.

Job knew *what* happened, but he did not know *why* it had happened. This is the crux of the matter. Because the Book of Job allows us to visit the throne room of Heaven and hear God and Satan speak, we know whom caused the destruction. However, Job did not have the benefit of this knowledge. And if we did not have this insight, we would probably take the same approach as Job’s friends and blame Job himself for the tragedy (even if we did not say it, we would probably think it).

“And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?” (Job 1:8).

This verse states clearly that God had no reason to punish Job. However, He allowed Job’s trials for a higher purpose. James said, “Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy” (James 5:11).

The biblical definition of *patience* is “consistent, cheerful, hopeful endurance.” (<http://www.gotquestions.org/Bible-patience.html> Accessed June 8, 2016)

Most people say that the theme of Job is the age-old question, “*Why* does a loving and righteous God permit the godly to suffer?” But if that is the theme of

this book, the question is never answered! Instead, this book answers the question, “How do the righteous endure suffering?”

God does not have to explain His ways us. It is enough for us to know that He cares and that He never makes a mistake.—Warren Wiersbe

We don't live by God's explanations but by His promises.

We don't live by God's explanations but by His promises. One of these promises is found in Hebrews 13:5–6, “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”

God is sovereign, and even Satan can do nothing to God's people without permission. The opening chapters of Job are a courtroom scene, but God and Satan deliver very different verdicts about Job. Satan said, “Guilty!” because he is the accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:10). However, God said, “Not guilty!” In the end that is all that matters.

“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28).

Satan's accusation against Job was really an attack on God. We might paraphrase it like this: “The only reason Job fears You is because You pay him to do it. You two have made a contract: You protect him and prosper him as long as he obeys You and worships You. You are not a God worthy of worship! You have to pay people to honor You.”

Can you imagine it? The fundamental reason for Job's suffering was to silence the blasphemous accusations of Satan and prove that a man would honor God even though he had lost everything. It was actually a war in the heavenlies, but Job did not know it. Job's life was a battlefield where the forces of God and Satan were engaged in a spiritual struggle to decide the question, “Is Jehovah God worthy of person's worship—even if He does not meet his or her expectations?”

Paul stated, “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12). Some of the so-called

tragedies and trials in the lives of God's people have really been weapons of God to "still the enemy and the avenger." Or as David said, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger" (Psalm 8:2).

Some of the so-called tragedies and trials in the lives of God's people have really been weapons of God to "still the enemy and the avenger."

Matthew 21:16 states, "And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?"

Notice that David said, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength" while Jesus said, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise." Jesus did not misquote David; rather He interpreted the Scripture and explained the truth David had discovered. When we praise God – even though we do not understand situations (we are "children") – we win the battle in the heavenlies.

Where praise lies, strength lies. If you worship God in situations you don't understand, God's supernatural strength will help you

When life is difficult, it's easy to give up; but giving up is the worst thing we can do. A professor of history said, "If Columbus had turned back, nobody would have blamed him—but nobody would have remembered him either." If you want to be memorable—even in God's kingdom—sometimes you have to be miserable first!

Too many Bible readers avoid studying the Book of Job, with the exception of the first two and the last chapters. The rest of the book appears at first to be a collection of long speeches from Job and his friends, and the conversation never seems to make much progress. However, incredible lessons are there for those of us who are suffering!

II. Conversations Between Job and His Friends (3–31)

The term "Job's comforters" is a familiar phrase for describing people whose help only makes you feel worse. But Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar had some

admirable qualities—for one thing, they cared enough for Job to travel a long distance to visit him. And when they sympathized with him, they didn't sit in a comfortable place; they sat with him on the ash heap, surrounded by refuse. Because their grief was so great for him, they couldn't even speak for seven days.

Job and his friends started out on the same level of faith in the School of Wisdom. They all had the same chance of going to a higher plane. However, when the circumstances of Job's suffering did not fit their faith experience, they left Job to climb higher alone. They bounced between the two levels of defending and retreating. They were unwilling to enter the level where their faith could be changed. Though Job didn't understand all that was happening to him and even asked why, he still knew that God was just and was working all things together for his good. (See Romans 8:28.)

Paul stated, "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Romans 12:3). God has given every person a measure of faith. However, He will not force anyone to use it.

Finally, after a week, Job's friends eventually began to speak and regrettably chose to become prosecuting attorneys instead of supportive witnesses. In the end, the Lord even rebuked them, and they had to ask Job for forgiveness. Job's friends heard his words, but they did not feel the anguish of his heart. Instead, they took the wrong approach in trying to help him handle his trials. They argued with his expressions instead of ministering to his feelings. They tried to give explanations when none were to be given! (Have you ever been in a similar situation?)

Eliphaz the Temanite

Eliphaz, whose name means, "God is pure gold" or "God is his strength," is described as "the Temanite." Hence, it is inferred that he was from Teman in Idumaea. Genesis 36:11 refers to Teman as Eliphaz's son and Esau's grandson. In three speeches, Eliphaz tried to reconcile Job to God and to induce Job to repent of his sins. First (Job 4:1-5:27), he told of a mystic vision that let him realize the universal sinfulness of man, which indicated that suffering is never unmerited. Second (Job 15:1-35), "he belittle[d] Job's self-justifications by describing the uncaring transcendence of God." And third (Job 22:1-36), based on the old Hebrew assumption that suffering always implies sinful actions, he accused Job of

unethical deeds. (<http://www.britannica.com/biography/Eliphaz-the-Temanite> Accessed June 8, 2016)

Eliphaz based his opinions on a spiritual experience he had.

In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up: It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying, Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker? (Job 4:13–17)

He thought he had a word from the Lord for Job.

Eliphaz thought Job had committed some sin and God was punishing him. Therefore, Job simply needed to accept God's discipline. Job in turn defended God and his innocence, never blaming God for what was happening to him. Nevertheless, he asked God why he was chosen to lose everything he owned and treasured.

Bildad the Shuahite

Bildad, whose name means, "Bel [a Babylonia diety] has loved," was a descendant of Shuah, one of Abraham's sons by Keturah (Genesis 25:2). Like Eliphaz, he made three speeches. They are contained in Job 8:1–22; 18:1–21, and 25:1–6. They basically restated Eliphaz's arguments, but the tone is harsher "because he deems Job's words so impious and wrathful. He is the first to attribute Job's calamity to actual wickedness." (<http://www.internationalstandardbible.com/B/bildad.html> Accessed June 9, 2016)

His first speech began with him surmising that Job's children brought their death upon themselves by their evil actions and that Job's suffering was the result of his sins.

Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice?
If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away
for their transgression; if thou wouldest seek unto God betimes, and
make thy supplication to the Almighty; if thou wert pure and

upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous. (Job 8:3–6).

In his arguments, Bildad appealed to tradition. If Job would simply do what was done in the past, everything would be okay. He advised, “For enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers: (For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow:) Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?” (Job 8:8–10).

“His second speech is an intensified description of the wicked man’s woes . . . His third speech . . . is brief, subdued in tone, and for substance is a kind of Parthian shot, reiterating Eliphaz’s depravity idea, the doctrine that dies hardest. This speech marks the final silencing of the friends” (<http://www.internationalstandardbible.com/B/bildad.html> Accessed June 9, 2016).

Zophar the Naamathite

Zophar the Naamathite may have been the youngest of Job’s three miserable comforter as he was the last to speak. He is undoubtedly the most hotheaded. The designation “the Naamathite” indicates that he was from the area of Naamah, probably a region in Arabia. He made only two speeches: Job 11:1–20; 20:1–29.

Like Bildad and Eliphaz, Zophar emphasized an old Hebrew concept—suffering is the inevitable lot of an evil man. He therefore considered Job’s protests of innocence deceptive—even sinful. He “is the first to accuse Job directly of wickedness; averring indeed that his punishment is too good for him (Job 11:6); he rebukes Job’s impious presumption in trying to find out the unsearchable secrets of God (Job 11:7–12); and yet, like the rest of the friends, promises peace and restoration on condition of penitence and putting away iniquity (Job 11:13–19).” (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zophar> Accessed June 9, 2016)

Zophar based his opinion on hard line legalism. He thought, “*It doesn’t really matter what you do anyway because it can’t be fixed.*” He said, “Should not the multitude of words be answered? and should a man full of talk be justified? Should thy lies make men hold their peace? and when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed? For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes. But oh that God would speak, and open his lips against thee; and that

he would shew thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is! Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth" (Job 11:2-6).

Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar were supposed to be comforting Job but failed to comprehend what the Lord was trying to do. Throughout their attacks, Job still blessed the Lord and held on to hope.

Study Questions

1. Describe Job's character.

2. Why did God allow Satan to attack Job?

3. Explain "Satan's accusation against Job was really an attack on God."

4. What does the author say is the real theme of Job?

5. Who were Job's three friends?

A.

B.

C.

6. Read Job 4:1-15:27; 15:1-35; 22:1-36 and summarize Eliphaz's speeches

7. Read Job 8:1-22; 18:1-21; 25:1-6 and summarize Bildad's speeches.

8. Read Job 11:1-20; 20:1-29 and summarize Zophar's speeches.

9. According to most scholars, where and when did Job's struggles take place?

10. What personal lesson have you learned from the Book of Job?

Personal Study Notes

Lesson 5

Job (Part II)

Hurt Happens

Key Verse

I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee" (Job 42:5).

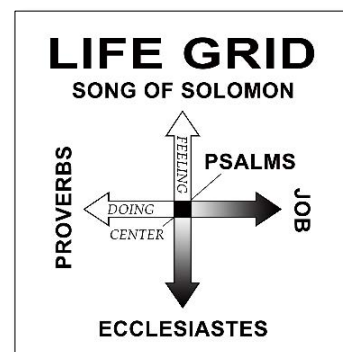
Lesson Objectives

After this lesson, the student should be able to

- Know who Elihu is
 - understand the importance of his genealogy
 - summarize his speech
- Understand Job's revelation of Jehovah God.
- Know what Job confessed about God's character
- Know the scope of God's questions to Job
- Realize the depth of Job's faith
- Recognize the results of Job's trial

Life Grid

In the Bible's five books of wisdom literature, we can see a Life Grid. This grid consists of a horizontal axis and a vertical axis: The horizontal line



is the Doing Line. The vertical line is the Feeling Line, our relationship with God. Job is on the right end of the horizontal axis.

Review

Job was one of the wealthiest men of the East. He was upright and feared God. However, in one day he lost all of his children and possession. God then allowed Satan to physically attack Job. Afterwards his three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, berated him. They assumed that Job's calamity was God's punishment for Job's sins.

Outline Continued from Part I

III. Speeches by Elihu (32–37)

Job's fourth comforter was Elihu, whose name means, "My-God-is-He." He was the son of Barachel the Buzite. Genesis 22:20–21 indicates that Buz was Abraham's nephew, the son of Abraham's brother Nahor. This genealogy is important for it reminds us that Elihu was a real character and gives more credence to the Book of Job. Consequently, one can conjecture that Elihu was related to Abraham although the time and place of the events in the Book of Job are uncertain.

What is certain is that Elihu was an angry young man. His youth is indicated in the he waited until Job and the other three friends had concluded their arguments. "He was angry against Job because he felt that Job justified himself rather than God. Elihu felt that Job was more concerned about being right himself than God being right. . . . Elihu was also angry at Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar because they had failed to solve the controversy . . . while at the same time they were (in Elihu's opinion) too harsh against Job." (<https://enduringword.com/commentary/job-32/> Accessed June 14, 2016)

In Job 32:7–10, Elihu stated:

I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom. But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding. Great men are not always

wise: neither do the aged understand judgment. Therefore I said,
Hearken to me; I also will shew mine opinion.

Elihu based his opinions merely on the fact that no one else's ideas had worked. It seems that his attitude was "let's just try anything to try and fix it."

In Job 32:37, Elihu told Job that he shouldn't keep saying he was innocent and rebuked the friends for not properly answering Job. He also stated that Job considered himself too righteous. Elihu knew that God does not condemn unfairly and answers questions with His wisdom. He believed that Job's attitude was sour and needed to be adjusted. We do not tell God what to do nor do we question Him for what happens in our life. God should be revered. The difference between Elihu and the other three is the Elihu maintained that suffering could be God's merciful chastisement to enlighten the soul and bring about a more intimate relationship with God.

It is in the final chapters of Job where the story turns around for good. Job has stood the test. His complete trust in God has proven true. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him" (13:15).

IV. God Speaks to Job

In Job 38, God finally began to speak. He humbled Job by revealing how little humans know and understand about God. He did this with a series of questions about Creation (Job 38-41). For example, He asked Job, "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge" (38:2)? Since Job thought he should know all things, then where was he when God was forming the foundation of the earth (38:4)? Now God wanted answers. He told Job to "gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me" (38:3).

The scope of God's questions included

- The earth (38:1-7, 17-18)
- The oceans (38:8-11, 16)
- Light (38:12-15, 19-21)
- Snow and rain (38:22-30, 34-38)
- The stars (38:31-33)
- Several animals (38:39-39:30)

Job received a revelation of God's constant presence, mercy, and love through God's questions and answers. His revelation was like someone meeting a person he had heard about for a long time but had never come face to face with him. Job confessed, "I heard about you from others; now I have seen you with my own eyes" (Job 42:5, CEV).

Humans know and understand little about the workings of the Almighty. It is through God's questions and answers to Job that "Job's final answer to God was one of absolute humility and submission to His revelation. He confessed that (1) God does all things well; (2) that everything that God permits to occur he so in wisdom and with purpose; and thus (3) even the suffering of the righteous has meaning and divine purpose" (Life in the Spirit Study Bible, 805).

Job's revelation consists of three things (Job 38):

- Job's prayers and yearnings to find God were finally answered. He knew that everything was still alright between himself and God.
- Sometimes our prayers may come from hearts of confusion, frustration, and anger, but God still comes to anyone who will call upon His name. As we continue to call upon His name, the Lord comes to comfort.
- We don't need to understand all of God's ways to experience His divine presence and fellowship. As long as everything is kept good between us and God, we will be able to endure all trials.

But after all of the postulating and arguments, there was still no answer to why? The devil accused God of putting a hedge of blessing around Job. Satan said, "Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land" (Job 1:10). Consequently, God allowed the devil to tear that hedge down.

However, once Satan torn down that hedge, he found another hedge that Job built—his unshakable faith. Job said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him" (Job 13:15).

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me" (Job 19:25-27).

Job's attitude was, "The worst thing that can happen to me is death."

Daniel's three friends echoed Job's sentiments standing before Nebuchadnezzar:

"If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (Daniel 3:17-18).

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21).

What can you do to a man who will worship in spite of the "whys" of life? Absolutely nothing!

"And the Holy Spirit helps us in our distress. For we don't even know what we should pray for, nor how we should pray. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will. And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn, with many brothers and sisters. And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And he gave them right standing with himself, and he promised them his glory. What can we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us?" (Romans 8:26-31, NLT).

All things in life are not good. But God promises that all things will "work together" for our good – if we let it.

When Job remembered just how great God is, he repented. He confessed that God has all wisdom and who is he to question God's intent? Now that the questions were out, God told Job that whoever can teach God, should step forward and answer. "Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it" (40:2). Job replied, "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth" (40:4). He confessed that he

was nothing and how could he ever find answers to the questions? He decided to close his mouth and remain silent while God talked to him.

God humbled Job by His wisdom and then also by His power when He asks Job if he could capture two fearful creatures:

- The behemoth (40:15-24)
- The leviathan (41:1-34)

God wanted Job to realize that if he couldn't tame these mighty creatures, how would he ever have the knowledge of their Creator. Job realized that God has all wisdom and power and who was he to question Him?

God's persistence in arguing with Job made Job fully realize the extent of His love. This revealed the unending mercy, patience, and genuine care that God has for His suffering children.

It is in the midst of the pile of dust and ashes that Job fully repented to God. He submissively confesses that:

- God does all things well.
- Everything that God permits is done in wisdom and with a purpose.
- The suffering of the righteous has meaning and divine reason. (The Full Life Study Bible, page 802)

"Then Job answered the LORD, and said, I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:1-6).

Since the nineteenth century, many scholars have associated the behemoth with a hippopotamus and the leviathan with a crocodile or whale. However, Mart-Jan Paul of Creation Ministries International states, "Behemoth and leviathan may well be now extinct species that were still living in Job's day. While what is known about several species of dinosaurs may appear to fit some aspects of God's description of behemoth and leviathan, the most we can say with confidence is that the descriptions do not match any known living species today. At the same time, to call them 'mythological' creatures is to do violence to the text and context of Job; therefore, we affirm that these were actual creatures of which Job had knowledge (although we cannot state whether Job had direct or indirect knowledge of them). They symbolize the power of evil, connected with Satan, who is mentioned in the first chapters of the book. The words of God humbled Job and showed him that God is above all powers in this world." (<http://creation.com/behe-moth-and-leviathan> Accessed November 22, 2016).

Job considered himself and his life as dust and ashes before a holy and righteous God. He repented for saying that God was unfair. Job's suffering gave him new insight to God's mercy and grace. It is as if he had only heard about God before, but now he had an intimate relationship with God, a face-to-face encounter: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee" (Job 42:5).

God rebuked the three friends and said that Job would pray for them. God fully restored Job to His favor and gave him spiritual authority. God heard Job's prayer for his friends because of his righteous standing with God. Job's fortunes were then restored, and he received twice as much as before. He was blessed with seven more sons and three more daughters, and lived another 140 years.

Job had finally passed the test of Faith Development, reaching a higher level than ever!

Conclusion

God's purpose is revealed in Job's restoration. God never allows His children to suffer without a spiritual purpose. Though we may not understand the reasons why, we must continue to trust God through all circumstances. He will do what is eternally best for us and His Kingdom.

In God's own time, He will reach out and help all those who need restoration and healing.

"Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (James 5:11).

It is after we endure the trials of life, with full confidence in God that we come to the joyous and blessed place where we will enjoy the presence of God for all eternity.

Although the Book of Job never gives a final solution to the problem of the righteous suffering, it comes when we have communion with God. Fellowship with God brings the personal presence of a caring comforter. We can have confidence in His grace and stand upon His promises. Believers find that the Holy Spirit is a constant help and comfort. We can have confidence in God's love whether in the midst of trials or blessings. The Holy Spirit is the presence of God

and it points us to the cross. God is for us and He does all things for our good. “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).

God brings good out of all trials and sufferings. He allows things to happen in our lives so that He can conform us to the image of Christ and bring about our glorification.

“Even when God permits suffering, His ultimate intent is to bless”
—Larry Richards

One day we will be with God in Heaven. We can hold on to the wonderful truth that we serve a risen savior. Our Redeemer lives! He is alive and we’re forgiven. He is involved in our everyday lives, taking us to a higher level of faith. Sometimes it is a mystery why we suffer, but God only wants to draw us closer to Himself.

Study Questions

1. Who was Elihu?

2. Why is Elihu’s genealogy important?

3. Why was Elihu angry?

4. Quote two verses of Scripture that shows that Job retained his faith in God.

5. Read Job 38–41 and list five questions that God asked Job

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

6. Why did God rebuke Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar?

7. Why did God tell Job to pray for his three friends?

8. What happened to Job after he prayed for Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar?

9. Why do you think that Elihu was not included in God's rebuke to the three friends or Job's prayer for them?

10. Satan said that God had built a hedge around Job. What hedge did Job build for himself?

11. How did God humble Job?

12. List three personal lessons you have learned from the Book of Job.

A.

B.

C.

LESSON 6

Song of Solomon (Part I)

Finding True Love

Key Verse

"I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies" (Song of Solomon 6:3).

Lesson Objectives

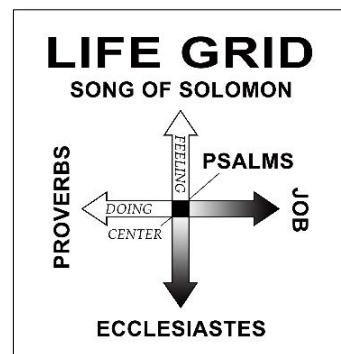
After this lesson, the student should be able to

- Explain the spiritual significance of Song of Solomon
- Pinpoint the location of Song of Solomon on the Life Grid
- Identify the cast of characters
- Understand the structure of Song of Solomon
- Realize God's intent for a perfect marriage

Life Grid

In the five books of wisdom literature in the Bible, we can see a Life Grid. This grid consists of a horizontal axis and a vertical axis.

The horizontal line is the Doing Line. It is where we live. It's what we do every day: work,



school, and so on. It is the day-to-day activities of our lives: what we eat, when we sleep, where we work, and so forth. It is the physical, earthly, temporary life. Proverbs and Job are the outer life and on the Doing Line. On one end of this axis is Proverbs. It tells us that if we obey the Word of God, it will bring blessings to our lives. On the other end of the axis, we have Job. This is the dark side of this life. Job did everything right. He honored God, he prayed, he gave, but for some reason everything went wrong.

The vertical line is the Feeling Line. It is our relationship with God – the inner, spiritual life. It is about how we feel about our life, God, and so forth. It goes far beyond the earth into eternity. You are doing the right things because they are right even when feeling isn't there. Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes are the inner life and on the Feeling Line. On one end of this axis we have Song of Solomon, which is a love story. This is the bright end of the axis, and Solomon is feeling good. On the other end of the axis is Ecclesiastes. Here Solomon is nearing the end of his life, and after much disillusionment, the feeling is gone. He is doing what he knows is right, but he does not feel like it.

The intersection of these two axes is the Center. The Center in the human grid is the wonderful 150 chapters of Psalms. Prayer expresses every emotion known to mankind. Sometimes it is praising, rejoicing, thanking, whining, God-break-teeth-of-my-enemies, wipe-out-enemies, and so forth. David, who wrote most of the Psalms, sometimes lived in each of the experiences of Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.

Everyone is on the Life Grid. No matter what happens in life, keep on praying. Keep on living for God. Keep on worshiping. Keep relationship good with your God.

Just the Facts

- **Author:** Solomon
- **Number of Chapters:** 8
- **Key Thought:** Love
- **Key Theme:** Marital love
- **When it Happened:** During Solomon's reign as king of Israel.
- **Where it Happened:** Jerusalem, Israel
- **Why it Happened:** As a celebration of married love.
- **Christ is seen as:** the "Altogether Lovely One"

Introduction

Poetry and wisdom literature in the Old Testament are closely related. Five Old Testament books are clearly poetic: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. Of these books, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon are considered to be wisdom literature. Psalms is full of praises with some chapters of wisdom (i.e. 1 and 119).

The Song of Solomon was written by King Solomon of Israel, who reigned circa 970 to 931 BC. It is also known as the “Song of Songs,” an expression that means “The Greatest Song” —just as “King of kings” means “the Greatest King.” It is often called “Song of Songs” because Solomon could have considered it to be the most wonderful song of the 1,005 songs he wrote. Some scholars believe that Song of Solomon was written to celebrate marriage to his favorite wife.

This book is a love song, set in blossoming springtime, which shows Solomon’s fondness for nature, gardens, meadows, vineyards, orchards, and flocks (I Kings 4:33).

When Song of Solomon was written, Solomon’s harem was still relatively small. He had approximately sixty wives and eighty concubines. (See Song of Solomon 6:8.) Later it grew to seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines.

The question arises: How could Solomon have used such monogamous (life-long commitment to a single spouse) language if he already had wives and concubines? It is possible that the Shulamite maiden was Solomon’s first wife from his youth, before he became king. The Bible gives no explanation, but whatever the reason, Solomon was deeply and emotionally committed as one would be to his first love.

Looking for Meaning

Was the poem written out of Solomon’s experience of true love? Or is it an allegory (a story used to make a point), intended to show God’s love for Israel and believers today? Though ancient Bible scholars felt strongly that the song was a symbolic expression of either God’s love for Israel or Christ’s love for the church, modern experts argue that the poem is a celebration of God’s gift of love and sexuality. Song of Solomon could also be considered a model for romance. It is a

reminder that true love feeds on tender words of endearment (whether poetic or plain), spoken straight from the heart.

Outline

The content of Song of Solomon is not easily analyzed because it does not flow like a story but rather moves in a series of interlocking circles revolving around a central theme of love.

Most of the conversations in the book are between the bride (the Shulamite maiden), Solomon the king, and a chorus of friends of the bride and bridegroom called the “daughters of Jerusalem.” (The conversations run together in the King James Version of the Bible and it is difficult to know whom is speaking. Some modern translations, such as the New International Version and the Holman Standard Christian Bible, distinguishes between speakers.) When the bride and groom are together, they are mutually fulfilled; when they are apart, they experience a longing for each other’s presence.

The Outline Bible, pages 325-327, divides Song of Solomon into three sections.

- I. The Courtship (1:1-3:5)** – The events preceding the wedding.
 - A. “You light up my life” – The bride speaks to the groom.
 - B. “You light up my life” – The groom speaks to the bride.
 - C. “They light up each other’s life” – The young women of Jerusalem speak to the couple.
- II. The Wedding (3:6-5:1)** – The events accompanying the wedding.
 - A. The wedding day
 - 1. The coming of King Solomon
 - 2. The carriage of King Solomon
 - 3. The crown of King Solomon
 - B. The wedding night
 - 1. The husband praises his wife.
 - 2. The wife tells her husband to take her love.
 - 3. The young women of Jerusalem tell the bride and groom to “Eat and drink deeply of this love!”
- III. The Deepening Relationship (5:2-8:14)** – The events following the wedding.
 - A. In regard to the wife

1. Her dream
2. Her desire
3. Her description of her lover and love.
- B. In regard to the husband
 1. He characterizes the beauty of his wife
 2. He contrasts the beauty of his wife
- C. In regard to the young women of Jerusalem
 1. They ask the wife several questions.
- D. In regard to the wife's brothers
 1. The question—"What will happen to our little sister?"
 2. The answer—"We will help her remain pure until she marries."

SONG OF SOLOMON IS DIFFERENT

Four major characteristics make Song of Solomon different from the rest of the books in the Bible.

- Song of Solomon is the only book in the Bible that deals exclusively with the unique love of a bride and groom. Throughout, it describes courtship, married life, and the bliss of newlyweds.
- Song of Solomon is a masterpiece of imagery, primarily drawn from the world of nature. The descriptive language shows the emotion, power, and beauty of romantic and wedded love.
- Song of Solomon is one of a small number of Old Testament books that are neither quoted nor alluded to in the New Testament.
- Song of Solomon is one of the two books in the Old Testament (the other being the book of Esther) that do not explicitly mention God in the text. (The Full Life Study Bible, page 982)

GOD ORDAINED MARRIAGE

In the beginning, God ordained marriage and the family unit as the first and most important institution on earth. He considers a godly family and the raising of children of utmost priority. God's plan for marriage consists of one male and one female who become "one flesh." "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). They are to be united physically and spiritually.

Song of Solomon is a song of praise to the joys of married life. Its essence is found in its tender and devoted expressions of the intimate delights of married love. Human happiness and welfare depend to a very large extent on proper mutual attitudes in the intimate relationship of married life.

The writer of Hebrews penned, “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled” (Hebrews 13:4). Christians should enjoy romantic love within the bonds of the marriage relationship.

Song of Solomon was inspired by the Holy Spirit and incorporated into the Word of God to underscore the divine origin of the joy and dignity of human love in marriage. God wants us to know that it can be pure, wholesome, and beautiful.

SOMETHING USEFUL FOR TODAY

Studying the Song of Solomon reveals four things marriage needs today:

1. Personal Attention – Physical love cannot grow unless it is nurtured.
2. Leisure – Creativity, enjoyment, and playfulness only blossom in a relationship when they are cultivated in the soil of time.
3. Meaningful Getaways – Special times away from the clutter and clamor of constant demands can refresh a relationship.
4. Security – Reaching the deepest level of secure, peaceful love takes commitment. (Larry Richards, *The Bible – God’s Word for the Biblically – Inept*, 81)

What an ideal we have in Solomon’s Song for Christian marriages!
What freedom to be wildly in love, romantic, tender, and sensual.
To be committed, secure, and happy – Charles Swindoll

Study Questions

1. What is the other name that Song of Solomon is sometimes called? Why is it called this? _____

2. What is Song of Solomon and what does it show about Solomon?

3. What did ancient Bible scholars think about Song of Solomon?

4. What is the opinion of modern experts?

5. Instead of flowing like a story, what is the book of Song of Solomon like?

6. What is God's plan for marriage? Give a scriptural reference to support this statement.

7. Quote Hebrews 13:4. _____

8. What are the three sections of the book of Song of Solomon?

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____

9. Cite one way that Song of Solomon is different from the other books of the Bible. _____

10. What are the four things marriages need today?
A. _____
B. _____
C. _____
D. _____
11. How can Jesus be seen in Song of Solomon? _____

12. The love between _____ and His _____
is an exclusive, committed, and intensely _____
that allows for _____

LESSON 7

Song of Solomon (Part II)

Love Is Blind

Key Verse

“My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away” (Song of Solomon 2:10).

Lesson Objectives

After this lesson, the student should be able to

- Understand the obscurity of the Song of Solomon and why its inclusion in the Canon of Scripture was questioned
- Appreciate human sexual desire as God intended it to be
- Compare the condescension of King Solomon to the incarnation of Jesus
- Value the romantic similes used in Song of Solomon
- Recognize the various conversations in Song of Solomon
- Identify the “greater than Solomon”

Life Grid

In the Bible’s five books of wisdom literature, we can see a Life Grid. This grid consists of a horizontal axis and a vertical axis: The horizontal line is the Doing Line. The vertical line is the Feeling Line, our relationship with God. The Song of Solomon is at the top of the Feeling line.

Everyone is on the Life Grid. No matter what happens in life, keep on praying. Keep on living for God. Keep on worshipping. Keep relationship good with your God.

Review

The Song of Solomon is the fifth of the poetical books but is the third in our study because of its place on the Life Grid. The “Song of Songs” is regarded today as probably one of the most obscure and difficult books in the Bible. At one point, it looked like Song of Solomon might even be excluded from the canon of Scripture because of its frank references to sexual love. But the Jews revered this book, and always sang these words at Passover in the spring.

This book was written by Solomon, the wisest and richest man in the ancient world. It is called the “Song of Songs” – a Hebrew idiom like “Holy of Holies” (King of Kings, Lord of Lords, and so on) meaning “chiefest, greatest, most superlative.” First Kings 4:32 states, “And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five.”

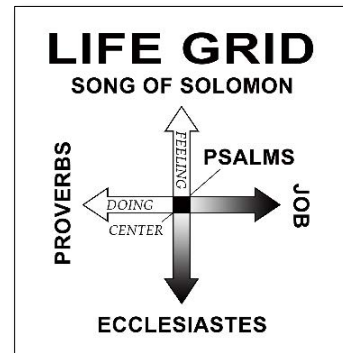
“The song of songs, which is Solomon’s” (Song of Solomon 1:1).

Love Story

First and foremost, Song of Solomon is a love song describing with frankness and yet with purity the physical attraction of a man and a woman to each other. It shows human sexual desire as God intended it to be expressed – not pornographically or prudishly (both harmful extremes), but in purity.

The ancient Hebrew mind (because of its foundation in the Word of God) could not isolate and alienate the sexuality of man from God. The modern capacity of man to think of himself as a purely biological creature in a purely physical world is not evidence of his sophistication but of his spiritual poverty. God is the originator of human sexuality.

Of course, we have not discovered the deepest message of this song until we pass behind the description of human love to read it as an expression of communion between man and God. The Jews took it to be an allegory of the love



between Jehovah and Israel; we Christians understand it on a deeper level as a type of the love between Christ and His Church.

The condescension of God to dwell among men as the Shekinah in the Tabernacle pales in comparison to the incredible condescension we see in the New Testament, when God took on a body of flesh to walk among men as a man to “woo us” to Himself as His Bride.

In his younger days, before he became entangled with the gods of his many pagan wives, Solomon wrote this book on the joys of courtship and married love. He ultimately had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. Or as I Kings 11:3 states, “And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.”

He married many of his wives mainly to establish peaceful and profitable relations with their countries, but in so doing he violated the law of the Lord. The mosaic law stated, “Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold” (Deuteronomy 17:17).

However, the Song of Solomon predates all of this, and we find here a story of King Solomon and his first, true love.

Ancient eastern courtship differs in many ways from what we are familiar with, especially in the imagery of their expressions of love. For example, in Song of Solomon 1:9, Solomon states, “I liken you, my darling, to a mare harnessed to one of the chariots of Pharaoh” (Song of Solomon 1:9, NIV). If today a man compared his wife or girlfriend to a mare pulling a chariot, he would probably be in trouble, but in their day that simply meant “you are unique” – because a mare would not be harnessed among stallions.

Other examples include:

- You have dove’s eyes
- Your hair is like a flock of goats
- Your teeth are like a flock of sheep
- Your navel is like a round goblet
- Your belly is like an heap of wheat
- Your nose is like a tower

Unlike modern novels, the Song of Solomon doesn't present an obvious story line, but it has a definite plot that is "discovered" as you read the book carefully. The cast of characters is small:

- King Solomon
- the "Shulamite" girl who becomes his wife
- the Shulamite's brothers
- the daughters of Jerusalem, who function as a "background chorus"

It is not always clear from the English who is speaking, but in most cases this can be determined by looking at the Hebrew pronouns (i.e. masculine, feminine, singular, plural). Most modern translations of Scripture attempt in some way to indicate who is speaking, but they can't be definite in every case. The King James Version translators did not even attempt this. For example, the KJV states,

"I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters. As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste" (Song of Solomon 2:1-3, KJV),

whereas, the New International Version states,

"**[Beloved]** I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys. **[Lover]** Like a lily among thorns is my darling among the maidens. **[Beloved]** Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest is my lover among the young men. I delight to sit in his shade, and his fruit is sweet to my taste" (Song of Solomon 2:1-3, NIV).

In spite of what "The Lily of the Valley" by Charles W. Fry, 1881, a familiar gospel song, says, in this passage it is the Shulamite maiden, the bride, who compared herself to a rose of Sharon and a lily of the valley, not Solomon, the groom. She was actually putting herself down, for she compared herself to a common crocus (rose) from Sharon and an ordinary hyacinth (lily) of the fields. But Solomon would have none of it, because that was not the way he looked at her – he compared her to a single beautiful lily among a bunch of thorns. (God doesn't see you the way you see yourself!)

The Shulamite responded by comparing Solomon to a beautiful apple tree in a forest, under which she could sit down and find protection from the sun and

food to eat. It would be unusual to find an apple tree in a common forest, so she was actually saying that he was “one in a million.” In Song of Solomon 5:16, she described him as “altogether lovely”: “His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.” She also stated, “I am my beloved’s, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies” (Song of Solomon 6:3).

More to the Story

There is even more to this story when you study it.

King Solomon owned a vineyard in the hill country of Ephraim, about fifty miles north of Jerusalem. It was here the Shulamite and her family worked as keepers.

“Solomon had a vineyard at Baalhamon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver” (Song of Solomon 8:11).

She was the “Cinderella” of the family, with a natural beauty that went unnoticed. Her step-brothers (and sisters) treated her harshly and made her work outside. She became dark from the sun and had no time to care for her personal appearance. She stated, “Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother’s children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept” (Song of Solomon 1:6).

Later, in the Book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon told us that he often undertook expeditions to discover what life was like in various levels of society, or to check on his vast land holdings. One day he disguised himself as a shepherd and went to check on this vineyard. There he met the Shulamite and they fell in love. However, she still did not know His true identity. She inquired, “Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?” (Song of Solomon 1:7).

The beauty of the story is that majestic King Solomon made a long journey from the beautiful city of Jerusalem to the rough and dangerous mountain country, clothed like a peasant, fell in love with a poor peasant girl who had

absolutely nothing to offer him in return, and promised to take her away with him! His invitation was to a place that the Shulamite has never seen (and had to wait for)—so she must accept his marriage proposal by faith. She reported, “My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away” (Song of Solomon 2:10).

The story of the king and the Shulamite maiden should remind us of Paul’s statement in Philippians 2:5–11:

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The world just doesn’t “get it” because they only see Jesus as a “humble shepherd” and not as the “King of kings.” We have never seen Him in His ultimate glory either, but we love Him above all others anyway!

“What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us? My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand” (Song of Solomon 5:9–10).

The day finally came when the groom returned as promised for his bride. But, to her amazement, the Shulamite looked up from the field to see King Solomon returning for her in all his kingly splendor. She could hardly believe that this is her beloved “shepherd boy.” She questioned, “Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?” (Song of Solomon 3:6).

Later, the women of Jerusalem would see the happy couple in their royal honeymoon procession and would also ask, “Who is this?” They could hardly believe that “Cinderella” had become Solomon’s beloved queen. They cried, “Who

is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?" (Song of Solomon 8:5a).

Love is blind! She lived for many months in love with Solomon, waiting faithfully for him, even though all she had was a promise.

"For we walk by faith, not by sight" (II Corinthians 5:7).

"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (I Peter 1:8).

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (I John 3:1-3).

"The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here" (Matthew 12:42).

But in the Song of Solomon, Christ is so magnificent that the heart which falls in love with Him will never be able to fully discover the depths of His love, because the object of love is so much greater than the heart. As Bill and Gloria Gaither penned, "The longer I serve Him, the sweeter He grows." (Bill and Gloria Gaither, "The Longer I Serve Him," © 1965 Hanna Street Music [admin. by Gaither Copyright Mgmt.] All rights reserved. Used by permission.)

Conclusion

As Charles R. Swindoll stated:

We should heed the Song's sublime words by continuing to value marriage as one of the bedrocks of society, appreciating the goodness

and the beauty borne out of the union of two people in holy matrimony.

Would you consider your marriage a sign of God's goodness and beauty working in your life, or has it become something less than that over time? Song of Solomon reminds us that both marriage and the physical union that follows originate in God; we should therefore consider each of them as evidence of His grace working itself out in the world. (<https://www.insight.org/resources/bible/the-wisdom-books/song-of-solomon> Accessed October 31, 2016)

Study Questions

1. Why is Song of Solomon the third book of study of the Bible's Wisdom Literature. _____

2. Why was the Song of Solomon's inclusion in the Cannon of Scriptures questionable at one time? _____

3. The Jews considered the Song of Solomon to be an _____
of the love between Jehovah and Israel.
4. According to Deuteronomy 17:17, what was the king forbidden to do?

5. List four similes Solomon used to describe his maiden.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

6. Write four similes to describe your spouse or significant other.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

7. Who were the “daughters of Jerusalem”?

8. How did the Shulamite maiden describe herself?

9. Why did Solomon dress as a peasant? What was his purpose?

10. Why doesn't the word "get it"?

11. Where did the Shulamite and her family work?

12. How do you see Jesus in Song of Solomon?

13. Who is "the greater than Solomon" in Matthew 12:42?

14. What personal wisdom did you learn from studying Song of Solomon?

LESSON 8

Ecclesiastes (Part I)

Searching for Life's Meaning apart from God

Key Verses

And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under Heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith. I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit" (Ecclesiastes 1:13-14)

Lesson Objectives

At the end of this lesson, the student should be able to

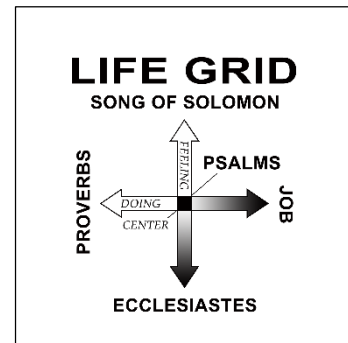
- Know why it is assumed that Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes
- Understand the reasons for Solomon's spiritual decline
- Defend why Ecclesiastes is included in the Bible
- Recognize Solomon's purpose in writing the book
- Identify Solomon's target audience
- Realize Ecclesiastes's place on the Life Grid

Life Grid

In the five books of wisdom literature in the Bible, we can see a Life Grid. This grid consists of a horizontal axis and a vertical axis.

The horizontal line is the Doing Line. It is where we live. It's what we do every day: work, school, and so on. It is the day-to-day activities of our lives: what we eat, when we sleep, where we work, and so forth. It is the physical, earthly, temporary life.

Proverbs and Job are the outer life and on the Doing Line. On one end of this axis is Proverbs. It tells us that obeying the Word of God will bring blessings to our lives. On the other end of the axis, we have Job. This is the dark side of this life. Job did everything right. He honored God, he prayed, he gave, but for some reason everything went wrong.



The vertical line is the Feeling Line. It is our relationship with God – the inner, spiritual life. It is about how we feel about our life, God, and so forth. It goes far beyond the earth into eternity. You are doing the right things because they are right even when feeling isn't there.

Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes are the inner life and on the Feeling Line. On one end of this axis we have Song of Solomon, which is a love story. This is the bright end of the axis, and Solomon was feeling good. On the other end of the axis is Ecclesiastes. Here Solomon was nearing the end of his life, and after much disillusionment, the feeling was gone. He was doing what he knew is right, but he did not feel like it.

The intersection of these two axes is the Center. The Center in the human grid is the wonderful 150 chapters of Psalms. Prayer expresses every emotion known to mankind. Sometimes it is praising, rejoicing, thanking, whining, God-break-teeth-of-my-enemies, wipe-out-enemies, and so forth. David, who wrote most of the Psalms, sometimes lived in each of the experiences of Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.

Everyone is on the Life Grid. No matter what happens in life, keep on praying. Keep on living for God. Keep on worshiping. Keep relationship good with your God.

Just the Facts

- **Author:** Solomon, the son of David
- **Number of Chapters:** 12
- **Key Thought:** Meaning of life
- **Key Verse:** Ecclesiastes 1:13–14
- **When:** c. 935 BC
- **Where:** Jerusalem
- **To Whom:** Solomon's message is for all people but he especially encouraged the youth to remember the Lord

Introduction

Ecclesiastes “takes its name from the Greek *ekklesiastes*, a translation of the title by which the central figure refers to himself: *Kohelet*, meaning something like ‘one who convenes or addresses an assembly.’” (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecclesiastes>) The entire writings of Ecclesiastes are a series of lessons by a teacher, preacher, or well-known public speaker. The contents of Ecclesiastes are not easily organized, for they are like excerpts from a journal where the author randomly placed his thoughts and feelings, creating an autobiography.

Solomon is thought to be the author even though his name does not appear in the book. However, several facts support this theory. Among them are:

- The author identified himself as a son of David who was a king in Jerusalem (Ecclesiastes 1:1, 12).
- He referred to himself as the wisest ruler of God's people (Ecclesiastes 1:16).
- He said he is a writer of many proverbs (Ecclesiastes 12:9).
- His kingdom was known for its wealth and splendor (Ecclesiastes 2:4-9).

All of these facts compare to the Biblical description of King Solomon, who was known for gathering people together and speaking to them. (The Full Life Study Bible, page 965)

Experience Talks

According to Jewish tradition, Solomon wrote the Book of Ecclesiastes during the last years of his life, when he seemed to be analyzing his life. After his spiritual decline into idolatry and a life of self-indulgence, he came to an unhappy ending filled with disillusionment and dissatisfaction. He said that all things “under the sun” are meaningless. What could he have meant by this? One opinion is, “Without God no one can find lasting satisfaction and meaning in their work, their diversions, or their life” (Stephen M. Miller).

It is only when Solomon learns to look “above the sun” to God that he found meaning for his life.

Ecclesiastes records Solomon’s reflections on the part of his life spent apart from God and His Word. During that time, he experienced wealth, power, honor, fame, and sensual pleasures in abundance. These all added up to emptiness in the end where he commented, “Vanity of vanities; all is vanity” (Ecclesiastes 1:2).

Why would Solomon write such a book? Many have asked why it is included in the Bible. One very important reason for it being in the Word of God is to remind us today that if we attempt to find meaning apart from God, we will fail. Human life is meaningless without God and His loving purpose for us.

In writing Ecclesiastes, Solomon shared his regrets and testimony with people before he died. Most importantly he wanted to help young people so they wouldn’t make the same mistakes he had. So he wrote:

- It is important for youth to enjoy life (Ecclesiastes 11:9–10).
- It is more important that they give themselves to their Creator (Ecclesiastes 12:1).
- They should fear God and keep His commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13–14), since this is the only way that life has meaning. (The Full Life Study Bible, page 965)

When Solomon lost his spiritual joy, he began to worship the gods of his foreign wives. It is at this time he wrote, “And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under Heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith. I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit” (Ecclesiastes 1:13–14). He searched for happiness outside of God. He would not

consider truth revealed by God, but searched for meaning in the brief years that humans have on earth. Despite all his findings, he concluded with the tragic saying, “Meaningless! Meaningless! Says the teacher. Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless” (Ecclesiastes 1:2, NIV).

The Book of Ecclesiastes seems like a book of contradictions if read like a sermon or essay. Solomon first said life is unfair, unfulfilling, and makes no sense; but in the next sentence he wrote that we should enjoy life, work hard, and obey God. As Solomon struggled with doubt, disillusionment, and despair, we see him working his way through it all, finding comfort worth sharing.

Where Did Solomon Look for Meaning?

In the first half of the Book of Ecclesiastes (chapters one through six), Solomon searched for the answer to his question, “Does life have any meaning?”

- **Chapter 1 – Solomon devoted himself to searching out the purpose of life.** He concluded that life is useless. History merely repeats itself; wrongs cannot be righted; and the dead are quickly forgotten.
- **Chapter 2 – Can pleasures provide meaning?** Solomon searched for peace and purpose through:
 - Alcohol
 - Great building projects
 - Planting vineyards
 - Creation of beautiful parks with exotic trees
 - Possessions
 - Universal reputation
 - Total indulgence

He could not find the answer and concluded that everything is empty and useless. He said to be content with what you have, and enjoy your work (Ecclesiastes 2:24–26).

- **Chapter 3 – Can humans make any changes in the way things are?** Solomon saw life in the human perspective and also from God’s perspective. “To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the Heaven” (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Everything has its time;

that is the way life is. He also saw what God had done, is doing, and will do in the lives of His people.

- **Chapter 4 – Solomon continued his observations concerning life.** He found all types of people. He talked about life and death and prisoners and potentates. He stated that it is better to be a poor but wise youth with a prison record than to be a rich but foolish king (Ecclesiastes 4:13–16). He also stated that two are better than one, and three are better than two because the triple-braided cord is not easily broken.
- **Chapter 5 – Solomon observed humanity.** He thought that since man is unable to affect God's work, life is meaningless. In birth, we have nothing. During our life, we can be reduced to nothing. When we die, we will take nothing with us. Therefore, possessions don't give meaning to life.
- **Chapter 6 – Where does our joy come from?**
 - Fortune does not bring joy. Wealthy people are unhappy with their possessions.
 - Families do not bring joy.
 - Fullness of years does not bring joy. (The Outline Bible, page 317–323; *The Bible – God's Word for the Biblically – Inept*, page 79–80)

Making the Best of Meaningless Lives

In chapters seven through twelve, Solomon pointed out some better courses of action:

- **Chapter 7 –** Make the best choices you can, adopt a fatalistic attitude, and avoid extremes. Be wise and avoid folly.
- **Chapter 8 –** Be God-fearing, submitting to authorities. Enjoy the good things that life offers.
- **Chapter 9 –** Enjoy life while we can because death will come soon enough. Follow wisdom all the days of your life.
- **Chapter 10 –** Follow wisdom, for it is the heart of the wise man that directs him to do right. The heart of the foolish man directs him to do evil.

- **Chapter 11**—Prepare for the future but also enjoy your youth. Remember that one day you will give account for all that you have done.
- **Chapter 12**—Honor God in your youth. Fear God and obey His commandments, for you will be judged according to all that you do. (The Outline Bible, page 317–323; *The Bible – God’s Word for the Biblically – Inept*, page 79–80.)

As the book ends, we see Solomon looking back over his life, reflecting on the bright promises of youth. He concluded by instructing young people to remember God while they are young, so that they do not grow old with bitter regrets and the sad task of giving an account to God for a wasted life.

“Youth is the time to decide for Christ and for Righteousness”
— Billy Graham

Solomon looked back over his life and gave some recommendations.

“Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole [duty] of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13–14, NIV)

New Testament Fulfillment

Ecclesiastes is quoted in the New Testament only once (Ecclesiastes 7:20 quoted in Romans 3:10, universal sin). However, Jesus spoke about the uselessness of pursuing worldly possessions when He said:

- We should not lay up treasures on earth (Matthew 6:19–21, 24).
- It is senseless to gain the whole world but lose your own soul (Matthew 16:26).

The whole theme of Ecclesiastes—life apart from God—sets the stage for the New Testament message of grace, joy, salvation, and eternal life provided for us by a God who loves and forgives.

Solomon, the wisest man in the Old Testament, could not find happiness and peace in worldly possessions and self-centered pleasures. We too must look for our answers in Someone, not something. The New Testament says that there is One who is “greater than Solomon” (Matthew 12:42), and “in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:3). Look to Jesus Christ for your answers! (The Full Life Study Bible, page 966)

The teacher in Ecclesiastes could be a foreshadow of the great teacher to come. Jesus was often called “teacher” while He ministered on earth.

He is the meaning and purpose of our lives.

“I believe that Jesus is the answer to every individual’s search for meaning.” – (Billy Graham)

Study Questions

1. The entire writings of Ecclesiastes are a series of what?

2. What facts support the theory that Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes?

3. According to Jewish tradition, when did Solomon write the book of Ecclesiastes? _____

4. Where did Solomon look to find meaning for his life?

5. After his search, what does he conclude in 1:2?

6. What is one reason why Ecclesiastes is a part of the Bible today?

7. To whom did Solomon want to tell his testimony to? Why?

8. List four places where Solomon searches for peace and purpose.

A.

B.

C.

D.

9. What is meaning of "three are better than two because the triple-braided cord is not easily broken"?

10. What is Solomon's message in chapters seven through twelve?

11. What is the common instruction of chapters nine and ten?

12. What did Solomon say in chapter twelve?

13. What instructions did Solomon give to young people in the conclusion of this book? _____

14. What does Billy Graham say about youth

15. What did Jesus say about the value of worldly possessions?

16. The Bible says that there is One who is " _____
_____ " (Matthew 12:42), and " _____
_____ " (Colossians 2:3).

18. Jesus Christ is the _____ and _____
_____ of our lives.

Personal Study Notes

LESSON 9

Ecclesiastes (Part II)

What's the Point?

Key Verses

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

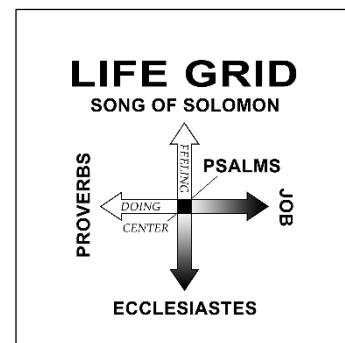
Lesson Objectives

At the end of this lesson, the student should be able to

- Trace Solomon's fall
- Define Solomon's use of *vanity*
- Understand Solomon's disillusionment of life without God
- Support Solomon's conclusions about life
- Internalize Solomon's message to youth of all ages

Life Grid

In the five books of wisdom literature in the Bible, we can see a Life Grid. This grid consists of a horizontal axis and a vertical axis. The horizontal line is the Doing Line. It is where we live.



The vertical line is the Feeling Line. It is our relationship with God — the inner, spiritual life. It is about how we feel about our life, God, and so forth. It goes far beyond the earth into eternity. You are doing the right things because they are right even when feeling isn't there. Ecclesiastes is at the bottom of the Feeling Line. Here Solomon was nearing the end of his life, and after much disillusionment, the feeling was gone. He was doing what he knew is right, but he did not feel like it.

Review

Poetry and wisdom literature in the Old Testament are closely related. Five Old Testament books are clearly poetic: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. Of these books, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon are considered to be wisdom literature. Psalms is full of praises with some chapters of wisdom (i.e. 1 and 119). (Lamentations is also poetic but is usually studied with the Major Prophets. It follows Jeremiah in the Christian Bible.)

Ecclesiastes—What's the Point?

The title Ecclesiastes comes from the Greek word *ekklesia*, which in the New Testament is translated “church” or “assembly.” It carries the idea of a preacher (or debater) speaking to a group of people. In this case it is King Solomon, who speaks from his vast life experience to discuss the problems he has encountered and seek to find answers. He is actually “debating with himself,” discussing life from many viewpoints and then coming to a conclusion. Ecclesiastes was written near the end of his life.

“The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.
Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.
What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the
sun?” (Ecclesiastes 1:1–3).

Solomon is partial to the word *vanity*, using it thirty-eight times in this book. It means “emptiness, futility, vapor, that which vanishes quickly and leaves nothing behind.” From the human point of view, life does sometimes appear futile, and it is easy for us to get pessimistic. But life is not “in vain” if it is lived according to the will of God, and that is what Solomon ends up concluding in this neglected and often misunderstood book.

"I, the Teacher, was king of Israel, and I lived in Jerusalem. I devoted myself to search for understanding and to explore by wisdom everything being done in the world. I soon discovered that God has dealt a tragic existence to the human race. Everything under the sun is meaningless, like chasing the wind. What is wrong cannot be righted. What is missing cannot be recovered. I said to myself, "Look, I am wiser than any of the kings who ruled in Jerusalem before me. I have greater wisdom and knowledge than any of them." So I worked hard to distinguish wisdom from foolishness. But now I realize that even this was like chasing the wind. For the greater my wisdom, the greater my grief. To increase knowledge only increases sorrow" (Ecclesiastes 1:12-18, NLT).

Twenty-nine times Solomon wrote about life "under the sun," which indicates a human perspective rather than Heaven's point of view. He tried to apply his own wisdom to life and comes up short, much like we do when we try to understand our internal spiritual life by external physical principles.

He told us in the last chapter exactly why he wrote the book, to provide us with words that would prod us to good works ("goads") and provide us with something sure to hang our lives on ("nails"). He also says that finding all of this out was exhausting ("weariness of the flesh").

"Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity. And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth. The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd. And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh" (Ecclesiastes 12:8-12).

We have no need to repeat Solomon's experiments! We need to just accept his conclusions and avoid the heartache and pain that must be endured when you experiment in the laboratory of life. These experiments are costly and one of them could prove spiritually fatal!

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36).

Solomon's Initial Reactions (1-2)

Life is just a pointless cycle.

- Solomon the scientist tells us that the world is a closed *system*; Solomon the historian tells us that life is a closed *book*; Solomon the philosopher tells us that life is a closed *cycle*. Everything around us is predictable and pretty much unchangeable.
- We get dissatisfied and long for things that are “new,” but they are really just temporary distractions—they ultimately bring weariness
- Sometimes our spiritual life feels the same!

Pleasure and wealth do not satisfy.

- Solomon had the means and the authority to do just about anything his heart desired, so he decided to examine two common experiences of life, enjoyment and employment.
- He found if we live only for pleasure, enjoyment decreases unless the intensity of pleasure increases. Then you reach a point of diminishing returns where there is no enjoyment, only bondage. Why? Because pleasure appeals only to part of a human being.
- He also found that if we live only for accomplishments, we also come up empty. Overachievers are often people who are trying to escape themselves and their pain by becoming workaholics—vanity!

Solomon's Deeper Observations (3-10)

Solomon was too wise to let his own arguments and first impressions go unchallenged. So in the next eight chapters, he reflected on his initial reactions in more detail, honestly facing the injustices of life that make us ask why. He began to take a balanced view of life by including God's eternal perspective. He didn't recommend blind optimism, depressing pessimism, or critical cynicism . . . he recommended “spiritual realism.” Some of his conclusions are:

Look up: God is in control.

“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the Heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to kill, and a time to

heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace" (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8).

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

Look within: We are eternal creatures.

"God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end" (Ecclesiastes 3:11, NLT).

Look ahead: Death is unavoidable.

"After looking at the way things are on this earth, here's what I've decided is the best way to live: Take care of yourself, have a good time, and make the most of whatever job you have for as long as God gives you life. And that's about it. That's the human lot. Yes, we should make the most of what God gives, both the bounty and the capacity to enjoy it, accepting what's given and delighting in the work. It's God's gift! God deals out joy in the present, the now. It's useless to brood over how long we might live" (Ecclesiastes 5:18-20, MES).

Look around: Life is unpredictable.

"Here is something else I have learned: The fastest runners and the greatest heroes don't always win races and battles. Wisdom, intelligence, and skill don't always make you healthy, rich, or popular. We each have our share of bad luck. None of us know when we might fall victim to a sudden disaster and find ourselves like fish in a net or birds in a trap" (Ecclesiastes 9:11-12, CEV).

“These trials are only to test your faith, to show that it is strong and pure. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold – and your faith is far more precious to God than mere gold. So if your faith remains strong after being tried by fiery trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world” (I Peter 1:7, NLT).

SOLOMON’S FINAL CONCLUSIONS (11-12)

“**What’s the point?**” was the question raised when Solomon began the book of Ecclesiastes. When he first began experimenting, he came to the conclusion that “life is not worth living.” But being a wise man, Solomon brought God into the picture – and what a difference it made! By the end of the book, Solomon had come full circle. He gave us four pictures of life, along with a practical admonition for each one ...

1. Life is an adventure: life by faith.

“If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done. God’s ways are as hard to discern as the pathways of the wind, and as mysterious as a tiny baby being formed in a mother’s womb. Be sure to stay busy and plant a variety of crops, for you never know which will grow – perhaps they all will” (Ecclesiastes 11:4–6, NLT).

2. Life is a gift: enjoy it.

“Even if you live a long time, don’t take a single day for granted. Take delight in each light-filled hour, Remembering that there will also be many dark days And that most of what comes your way is smoke” (Ecclesiastes 11:8, MES).

3. Life is a school: learn your lessons.

“The words of the wise prod us to live well. They’re like nails hammered home, holding life together. They are given by God, the one Shepherd” (Ecclesiastes 12:11, MES).

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine [what to believe], for reproof [what not to believe], for

correction [how not to behave], for instruction in righteousness [how to behave] (II Timothy 3:16).

4. Life is a stewardship: put God first.

“That’s the whole story. Here now is my final conclusion: Fear God and obey his commands, for this is everyone’s duty” (Ecclesiastes 12:13, NLV).

“With all this going for us, my dear, dear friends, stand your ground. And don’t hold back. Throw yourselves into the work of the Master, confident that nothing you do for him is a waste of time or effort” (I Corinthians 15:58, MES).

Every year at the Feast of Tabernacles, the Jewish people read the book of Ecclesiastes. Why? Because Tabernacles is their great time of thanksgiving and rejoicing for God’s abundant provision of their needs while they were wandering in the wilderness!

“Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:11-13).

Study Questions

1. Where is Ecclesiastes on the Life Grid? Why?

2. The King James Version uses *vanity*. What is the meaning of this word?

3. When do the Jewish people read the Book of Ecclesiastes? Why?

4. What four pictures of life did Solomon give us? What was his admonition for each?

A.

B.

C.

D.

5. Solomon made four observations. Complete the following statements.

A. Look up:

B. Look within:

C. Look ahead:

D. Look around:

6. What personal lesson have you learned from Ecclesiastes?

LESSON 10

Psalms (Part I)

Praise . . . Renewal of Worship

Key Verse

“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness” (Psalm 29:2).

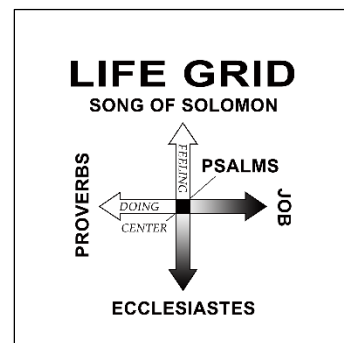
Lesson Objectives

After this lesson, the student should be able to

- Know who wrote the psalms
- Comprehend the span of time needed to write the psalms and the geography involved
- Understand the structure of the Book of Psalms
- Realize how the psalms were used in worship
- See the beatitudes in the psalms

Life Grid

In the Bible’s five books of wisdom literature, we can see a Life Grid. This grid consists of a horizontal axis and a vertical axis: The horizontal line is the Doing Line. The vertical line is the Feeling Line, our relationship with God.



The Doing Line is where we live. It's what we do every day: work, school, and so on. It is the day-to-day activities of our lives: what we eat, when we sleep, where we work, and so forth. It is the physical, earthly, temporary life. Proverbs and Job are the outer life and on the Doing Line. On one end of this axis is Proverbs. It tells us that if we obey the Word of God, it will bring blessings to our lives. On the other end of the axis, we have Job. This is the dark side of this life. Job did everything right. He honored God, he prayed, he gave, but for some reason everything went wrong.

The Feeling Line is our relationship with God—the inner, spiritual life. It goes far beyond the earth into eternity. You are doing the right things because they are right even when feeling isn't there. Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes are the inner life and on the Feeling Line.

The Center of it all in the human grid is the wonderful 150 chapters of Psalms. Prayer expresses every emotion known to mankind. Sometimes it is praising, rejoicing, thanking, whining, God-break-teeth-of-my-enemies, wipe-out-enemies, and so forth.

Everyone is on the Life Grid. No matter what happens in life, keep on praying. Keep on living for God. Keep on worshipping. Keep relationship good with your God.

Just the Facts

- **Authors:** David, Moses, Asaph, Ethan, sons of Korah, Hemen, Solomon. Fifty of the psalms are anonymous, but the New Testament credits David with writing two of them.
- **Number of Chapters:** 150
- **Key Thought:** Praise
- **Key Theme:** Prayers and Praises
- **Key Verse:** "Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness" (Psalm 29:2).
- **When It Happened:** The writing of the psalms spans the time from Moses (c. 1407 BC, Psalm 90) to the destruction of Jerusalem (c. 586 BC, Psalm 74, 79).
- **Where It Happened:** The psalms were written throughout the Middle East, from the Sinai desert where Moses led the Hebrews, to Israel where David built a powerful Jewish nation, to Babylon where the defeated

Jews were in exile. They stretched over a thousand miles from Egypt to Babylon, and a thousand years from the Exodus to the Exile.

- **Why It Happened:** To be an aid to private and congregational worship.

“The LORD is my strength and song, and is become my salvation” (Psalms 118:14).

Some Extras

- Psalms is the second of the Poetic Books in the Bible.
- It is the nineteenth book of the Old Testament.
- It is the Bible’s longest book and has the longest chapter (Psalm 119:1–176), shortest chapter (Psalm 117:1–2), and the middle verse (Psalm 118:8).

“Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name” (Psalm 100:4).

Introduction

The Psalms is a collection of worship songs sung to God by the people of Israel with musical accompaniment. The Hebrew title for the Psalms is *tehillim*, meaning “praises.” The psalms were written to be sung, and the Bible is full of singing as an act of worship. The grouping of these 150 psalms into one book served as the first hymnal. Some psalms express joy and gratitude, while others express sorrow and lament.

The psalms, as spirit-filled prayers and praises, express the inner emotions of the human heart in relation to God.

- Many were written as prayers to God, expressing:
 - trust, love, adoration, praise, thanksgiving, and a longing for close fellowship
 - discouragement, distress, fear, anxiety, humiliation, and a cry for deliverance, or healing
- Others were written as songs expressing praise, thanksgiving, and adoration for who God is and the great things He has done.

- Some psalms contain important messianic sections. (The Full Life Study Bible, page 806.)

As the Hebrew songbook and devotional, the Book of Psalms, with its spiritual depth and breadth, is considered to be the most important book of the Old Testament by many believers. No other book expresses the human emotions better than the Psalms. Its choruses of praise and devotion flow down from the highest mountains, and its cries of desperation arise from the deepest valleys.

Hallelujah when translated means, “Praise the Lord.” Twenty-four of the twenty-eight times that it appears in the Bible are found in the Book of Psalms. Psalms also has a majority of the “favorite chapters” of the Bible (Psalm 1; 23; 24; 34; 37; 84; 91; 103; 119; 121; 139; and 150).

The 150 psalms cover many topics. One reason for this could be that many people in many situations needed God’s touch. Some of the subjects are:

- Revelation about God
- Creation
- Humankind
- Salvation
- Sin
- Evil
- Justice
- Righteousness
- Worship
- Praise
- Prayer
- Judgment

(The Full Life Study Bible, page 806.)

Warren Wiersbe wrote:

“The book of Psalms is a collection of very personal songs and poems. As the book grew over the centuries, its contents were adapted by the Jews for their corporate worship as well as for their personal devotions. In this collection you find prayers from sufferers, hymns of praise, confessions of sin, confessions of faith, nature hymns, and songs that teach Jewish history, and in each one the focal point for faith is the Lord. Whether the writer is looking

back at history, looking up into the Heavens, or looking around at his problems, he first of all looks by faith to the Lord. The psalms teach us to have a personal relationship with God as we tell Him our hurts and our needs and as we meditate on His greatness and glory” (Warren Wiersbe, *Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines*, Page 425).

The psalms remind us that no matter what we are feeling, we can freely express it to the Lord. Then we can be confident that He has heard us, cares, and will work within our hearts as well as our circumstances.

Authors

While most biblical books were written by one person, a few have multiple authors. Proverbs is one such example. Psalms is one of the rare books in the Bible that was written by several people. It is a joint effort of many authors who wrote from many diverse experiences of life over a time span of almost a thousand years. Familiarity with the varied writers of the Psalms is important.

- David (c. 1013–967 BC), the second king of Israel and “sweet psalmist of Israel” (II Samuel 23:1), is the chief author of the Psalms. He is directly credited with writing seventy-three of the psalms, but the New Testament affirms his authorship of two more. Thus he wrote seventy-five of the 150 psalms, which is one-half of the Psalms (3–9; 11–32; 34–41; 51–65; 68–70; 86; 101; 103; 108–110; 122; 124; 131; 133; 138–145. Psalm 2 is identified by Acts 4:25 as being written by David, as is Psalm 95 by Hebrews 4:7).
- Asaph (c. 979 BC), a priest who served as the worship leader of ancient Israel, wrote twelve psalms (Psalms 50; 73–83).
- The sons of Korah (c. 970–967 BC), a guild of singers and composers of music, are credited with writing ten psalms (Psalms 42; 44–49; 84–85; 87).
- Solomon (c. 967–950 BC), David’s son and the third king of Israel, accounted for two psalms (Psalms 72; 127).
- Moses (c. 1407 BC), the great leader of the Exodus from Egypt, wrote one psalm (Psalm 90).
- Heman (c. 979 BC), a wise man, musician, an Ezrahite, a son of Korah, and founder of the Korahite choir (II Chronicles 5:12; 35:15), wrote one psalm (Psalm 88).
- Ethan (c. 979 BC), a wise man and Ezrahite, probably a Levitical singer (I Chronicles 6:42; 15:17, 19), wrote one psalm (Psalm 89).
- Anonymous authors account for the remaining forty-eight psalms.

- Ezra (c. 480–440 BC), scribe and priest of Israel, is thought to be the author of some of the anonymous psalms.
(http://www.danielakin.com/wpcontent/uploads/old/Resource_620/1%20The%20Book%20of%20Psalms.pdf Accessed November 15, 2016)

David wrote half of the psalms. Some of his predominant thoughts concerned

- Trust
- Praise
- Rejoicing
- Unfailing love (mercy)
(*Halley's Bible Handbook*, page 321)

The idea of *trust* is most common. It didn't matter what the problem was, how joyous the occasion, or just how terrified David became, we see him trusting God. "Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah" (Psalm 62:8).

Throughout the Psalms, David asked God for things and then gave thanks with his whole soul for the answer to his prayers. *Praise* was always on David's lips. "For the LORD is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods" (Psalm 96:4).

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4, NIV). "Rejoicing" is another one of David's favorite ideas. Whether on the mountaintop or in the valley low, David expressed his joy in his God. He repeatedly said, "Sing", or "Shout for joy."

"I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever, I will sing, I will sing. I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever, I will sing of the mercies of the Lord" ("I Will Sing," a song written from Psalm 89:1 by Robert J. Powell, Published by Lyrics © the Lorenz Corporation). Many times David turned to the *mercy* of the Lord or spoke of His unfailing love.

God in Psalms

In the Book of Psalms, God is viewed in a variety of ways. Some are:

- A fortress (18:2; 91:2)
 - Rock (28:1; 42:9)
 - Shield (3:3; 144:2)
 - Shepherd (23:1; 80:1)
 - Ruler (105:21)
 - Judge (50:6; 75:7)
 - Redeemer (19:14; 78:35)
 - Avenger (8:2; 44:16)
- (The Full Life Study Bible, page 806.)

God is omnipotent (almighty), omnipresent (everywhere present), and omniscient (all knowing). As He talks to His children. He expresses His love, compassion, and anger.

Throughout Psalms, God's people are viewed in a variety of ways:

- The apple of His eye
 - Sheep
 - Saints
 - The upright
 - The righteous, whom He has delivered from the miry pit, placed their feet upon a rock, and given a new song to sing.
- (The Full Life Study Bible, page 806.)

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way" (Psalm 37:23). The Lord directs the steps of His people. He also satisfies their spiritual longings, forgives their sins, heals all their diseases, and provides for them an eternal home.

The Psalms in Our Lives

The renewal of the church begins with a renewal of worship. The psalms help us move into a deeper place with God, showing us how to praise Him properly. We renew our minds in the unending mercy of God. Our walk of faith is strengthened, knowing we will one day meet Jesus Christ face to face.

The suffering and lamenting are so real, having a great relevance to our troubled society today. The Christian is continually fighting against the deception of Satan. However, the Psalms do not only reflect crisis and conflict, but also show

the awesome power of God's healing love. He will restore the broken, making them whole in spirit, soul, and body. The psalms will renew if they are viewed not only as wonderful devotionals, but also as the mighty Word of God among His people, transforming them for Himself.

Structure

In the original Hebrew, the 150 psalms were arranged in to five books. This division is not readily delineated the traditional King James Version, but it is in the Hebrew texts.

An ancient commentary on Psalm 1:1 says: "Moses gave to the Israelites the five books of the Law; and corresponding with these David gave them the five books of the Psalms." Most commentaries today provide a good discussion on the parallels between the books of the Law and the five divisions of Psalms.

The five books of the Psalms and the books of the Law [Pentateuch]:

Psalm 1-41	Book I	Genesis
Psalm 42-72	Book II	Exodus
Psalm 73-89	Book III	Leviticus
Psalm 90-106	Book IV	Numbers
Psalm 107-150	Book V	Deuteronomy

(<http://afaithfulversion.org/appendices-b/> Accessed November 14, 2016)

A Closer Look at Book V

Book V deserves a closer look, for in it are five sets of specialized psalms.

- Hallel Psalms Psalms 113-118 (Hallel = praise)
Chanted in the Temple as the Passover lamb was slain. It was chanted also on other festival occasions, as at Pentecost, the feast of Tabernacles, and the feast of Dedication. (<http://biblehub.com/topical/h/hallel.htm> Accessed November 15, 2016)
- Songs of Degrees Psalms 120-134
Chanted as the people went up to the Temple
- Psalms of Thanksgiving Psalms 135-139

- Psalms for Protection Psalms 140-143
Psalms of David while hiding
- Hallelujah Psalms Psalms 146-150
The conclusion to the Psalms
(*Halley's Bible Handbook*, page 321)

The following chart from *The Full Study Bible* (page 805) shows more detail about the structure of the Book of Psalms:

	Book I 1–41	Book II 42–72	Book III 73–89	Book IV 90–106	Book V 107–150
Total Psalms	41	31	17	17	44
Authorship	Mainly David	Mainly David and the sons of Korah	Mainly Asaph	Mainly Anonymous	Mainly David or Anonymous
Predominant Divine Name	Yahweh (the LORD)	El/Elohim (God)	El/Elohim (God)	Yahweh (the LORD)	Yahweh (the LORD)
Frequent Topics	Humans and Creation	Deliverance and Redemption	Worship and Sanctuary	Wilderness and God's Ways	God's Word and Praise
Resemblance to Pentateuch	Genesis	Exodus	Leviticus	Numbers	Deuteronomy
Benediction	41:13	72:19	89:52	106:48	150:1-6

* Psalm 150 is not only the last psalm and a benediction for Book V, but is also a doxology (a short song of praise to God) for the entire Book of Psalms.

Beatitudes in the Psalms

The Book of Psalms begins with a blessing or beatitude. Several verses have the word *blessed* in them. Some of those are:

- “Blessed is the man . . . (whose) delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night” (Psalm 1:1-2)
- “Blessed are all they that put their trust in him” (Psalm 2:12).
- “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered” (Psalm 32:1).

- “Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile” (Psalm 32:2).
- “Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD: and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance” (Psalm 33:12).
- “O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him” (Psalm 34:8).
- “Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble” (Psalm 41:1).
- “Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah” (Psalm 84:4).
- “Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them” (Psalm 84:5).
- “Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law” (Psalm 94:12).
- “Praise ye the LORD. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments” (Psalm 112:1).
- “Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart” (Psalm 119:2). (*Halley’s Bible Handbook*, page 324.)

Study Questions

1. Where does the Psalms appear on the Life Grid? Why?

2. What does the Hebrew title for Psalms mean?

3. What does *Hallelujah* mean? How many times is it mentioned in the Bible?

4. Some of the psalms express inner human emotions in relation to God. List six.
- A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
 - D. _____
 - E. _____
 - F. _____
5. Who wrote one-half of the Psalms?
- _____
6. Name three other authors of the Psalms.
- A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
7. Into how many books are the psalms divided?
- _____
10. What is the correlation between the Book of Psalms and the five books of the Pentateuch?
- _____
- _____
- _____
11. What is the importance of the Hallel psalms?
- _____
- _____
- _____
12. According to Warren Wiersbe, what do the psalms teach us?
- _____
- _____
- _____

13. In Psalms, God is viewed in a variety of ways. List four with Scripture references.
- A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
 - D. _____
14. God is _____, _____, and _____.
15. As He talks to his children He expresses His _____, _____, and _____.
16. Quote Psalm 37:23.
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
17. God not only directs the steps of His people, but He also does what four things?
- A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
 - D. _____
18. What were David's predominant thoughts throughout the psalms?
- _____
- _____
- _____
19. Which thought is the most common one?
- _____

20. What was always on David's lips?

21. What does David repeatedly say?

22. Many times David turned to the _____ of the _____ or spoke of His _____.

23. What does the renewal of the church begin with?

24. The psalms help us do what?

25. The psalms will renew if what?

26. The Book of Psalms begins with what?

27. "Blessed is the nation whose _____ is the
_____."

28. "Blessed are they that keep his _____, and that
seek him with the _____."
_____."

LESSON 11

Psalms (Part II)

Finding Jesus in the Psalms

Key Verse

“I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. But be not thou far from me, O LORD: O my strength, haste thee to help me” (Psalm 22:14-19).

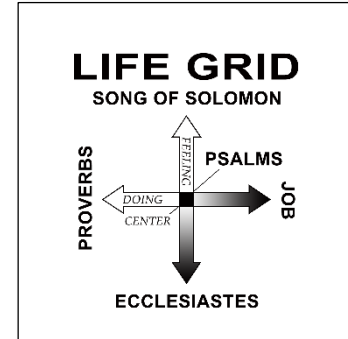
Lesson Objectives

After this lesson, the student should be able to

- Define a psalm
- Understand the prophecies in the psalms concerning Jesus Christ
- Identify the New Testament fulfillments of the messianic prophecies in the Psalms
- Recognize Jesus as the Good Shepherd
- Grasp the importance of meditating on the psalms.

Life Grid

In the Bible's five books of wisdom literature, we can see a Life Grid. This grid consists of a horizontal axis and a vertical axis: The horizontal line is the Doing Line. The vertical line is the Feeling Line, our relationship with God.



The Center of it all in the human grid is the wonderful 150 chapters of Psalms. Prayer expresses every emotion known to mankind. Sometimes it is praising, rejoicing, thanking, whining, God-break-teeth-of-my-enemies, wipe-out-enemies, and so forth.

Everyone is on the Life Grid. No matter what happens in life, keep on praying. Keep on living for God. Keep on worshipping. Keep relationship good with your God.

Review

The Psalms is a collection of worship songs sung to God by the people of Israel with musical accompaniment. The Hebrew title for the Psalms is *tehillim*, meaning “praises.” The psalms were written to be sung, and the grouping of these 150 psalms into one book served as the first hymnal. The Bible is full of singing as an act of worship. Some psalms express joy and gratitude, while others express sorrow and lament.

Messianic Psalms

Messianic psalms point ahead to Jesus Christ. They are the hope of God's people awaiting the coming Messiah. These psalms begin by talking about David, but find their fulfillment in the King of kings and Lord of lords. Jesus said in Luke 24:44, “These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.”

These messianic psalms describe Jesus in a variety of ways. He was:

- the Son (Psalm 2)
- the One chosen by God (Psalm 45)
- a teacher of parables (Psalm 78)
- and a priest forever (Psalm 110)
- betrayed by a friend (Psalm 41)
- lied about (Psalm 35)
- mocked and eventually crucified (Psalm 22)

However, this beautiful story does not stop there.

- He then came back to life (Psalm 16)
- Returned to Heaven to reign with the Father (Psalm 68)
- Then He will come back again and rule over the new Heaven and earth (Psalm 72) (The Knowing Jesus Study Bible, page 676.)

The messianic psalms show:

- Jesus as prophet, priest, and king
- Christ's first and second advent (comings)
- His sonship and character
- His sufferings and atoning death
- His resurrection (The Full Life Study Bible, page 807.)

The psalms are among the most detailed of all Old Testament prophecies about Christ and are everywhere deeply planted in the message of the New Testament writings. Ron Graham stated in "Psalms About Christ":

The Psalms are inspired songs used in worship of God, and many of them predict events from the life of Jesus Christ. The following list shows eighty-nine specific references to Christ in the Psalms fulfilled in the New Testament. . . . In total, twenty-five different psalms (one in six psalms) include at least one Messianic prophecy. They are quoted in eleven New Testament books, especially the Gospels and Acts. In the following table, the prophecy is followed by its reference in the Psalms and its fulfillment in the New Testament:

1. The Messiah will be rejected by Gentiles (Psalm 2:1; Acts 4:25-28).
2. Political/religious leaders will conspire against the Messiah (Psalm 2:2; Matthew 26:3-4; Mark 3:6).

3. The Messiah will be King of the Jews (Psalm 2:6; John 12:12-13; 18:32).
4. The Messiah will be the Son of God (Psalm 2:7a; Luke 1:31-35; Matthew 3:16-17; Hebrews 1:5-6).
5. The Messiah will reveal that He is the Son of God (Psalm 2:7b; John 9:35-37).
6. The Messiah will be raised from the dead and be crowned King (Psalm 2:7c; Acts 13:30-33; Romans 1:3-4).
7. The Messiah will ask God for His inheritance (Psalm 2:8a; John 17:4-24).
8. The Messiah will have complete authority over all things (Psalm 2:8b; Matthew 28:18; Hebrews 1:1-2).
9. The Messiah will not acknowledge those who do not believe in Him (Psalm 2:12; John 3:36).
10. Infants will give praise to the Messiah (Psalm 8:2; Matthew 21:15-16).
11. The Messiah will have complete authority over all things (Psalm 8:6; Matthew 28:18).
12. The Messiah will be resurrected (Psalm 16:8-10a; Matthew 28:6; Acts 2:25-32).
13. The Messiah's body will not see corruption (natural decay) (Psalm 16:8-10b; Acts 13:35-37).
14. The Messiah will be glorified into the presence of God (Psalm 16:11; Acts 2:25-33).
15. The Messiah will come for all people (Psalm 18:49; Ephesians 3:4-6).
16. The Messiah will cry out to God (Psalm 22:1a; Matthew 27:46).
17. The Messiah will be forsaken by God at His crucifixion (Psalm 22:1b; Mark 15:34).
18. The Messiah will pray without ceasing before His death (Psalm 22:2; Matthew 26:38-39).
19. The Messiah will be despised and rejected by His own (Psalm 22:6; Luke 23:21-23).
20. The Messiah will be made a mockery (Psalm 22:7; Matthew 27:39).
21. Unbelievers will say to the Messiah, "He trusted in God, let Him now deliver Him" (Psalm 22:8; Matthew 27:41-43).
22. The Messiah will know His Father from childhood (Psalm 22:9; Luke 2:40).

23. The Messiah will be called by God while in the womb (Psalm 22:10; Luke 1:30–33).
24. The Messiah will be abandoned by His disciples (Psalm 22:11; Mark 14:50).
25. The Messiah will be encompassed by evil spirits (Psalm 22:12–13; Colossians 2:15).
26. The Messiah's body will emit blood & water (Psalm 22:14a; John 19:34).
27. The Messiah will be crucified (Psalm 22:14b; Matthew 27:35).
28. The Messiah will thirst while dying (Psalm 22:15a; John 19:28).
29. The Messiah will thirst just prior to His death (Psalm 22:15b; John 19:30).
30. The Messiah will be observed by Gentiles at His crucifixion (Psalm 22:16a; Luke 23:36).
31. The Messiah will be observed by Jews at His crucifixion (Psalm 22:16b; Matthew 27:41–43).
32. The Messiah's hands and feet will be pierced (Psalm 22:16c; Matthew 27:38).
33. The Messiah's bones will not be broken (Psalm 22:17a; John 19:32–33).
34. The Messiah will be viewed by many during His crucifixion (Psalm 22:17b; Luke 23:35).
35. The Messiah's garments will be parted among the soldiers (Psalm 22:18a; John 19:23–24).
36. The soldiers will cast lots for the Messiah's clothes (Psalm 22:18b; John 19:23–24).
37. The Messiah will bring many people into the family of God (Psalm 22:22; Hebrews 2:10–12; Matthew 12:50; John 20:14).
38. The Messiah's enemies will stumble and fall (Psalm 27:2; John 18:3–6).
39. The Messiah will be accused by false witnesses (Psalm 27:12; Matthew 26:59–61).
40. The Messiah will cry out to God, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Psalm 31:5; Luke 23:46).
41. There will be many attempts to kill the Messiah (Psalm 31:13; Matthew 27:1).
42. The Messiah will have no bones broken (Psalm 34:20; John 19:32–33).
43. The Messiah will be accused by many false witnesses (Psalm 35:11; Mark 14:55–59).

44. The Messiah will be hated without cause (Psalm 35:19; John 18:19-23; 15:24-25).
45. The Messiah will be silent as a lamb before His accusers (Psalm 38:13-14; Matthew 26:62-63).
46. The Messiah will be God's sacrificial lamb for redemption of all mankind (Psalm 40:6-8a; Hebrews 10:10-13).
47. The Messiah will reveal that the Hebrew Scriptures were written of Him (Psalm 40:6-8b; Luke 24:44; John 5:39-40).
48. The Messiah will do God's (His Father's) will (Psalm 40:7-8; John 5:30).
49. The Messiah will not conceal His mission from believing people (Psalm 40:9-10; Luke 4:16-21).
50. The Messiah will be betrayed by one of His own disciples (Psalm 41:9; Mark 14:17-18).
51. The Messiah will communicate a message of mercy (Psalm 45:2; Luke 4:22).
52. The Messiah's throne will be eternal (Psalm 45:6-7a; Luke 1:31-33; Hebrews 1:8-9).
53. The Messiah is God (Psalm 45:6-7b; Hebrews 1:8-9).
54. The Messiah will act with righteousness (Psalm 45:6-7c; John 5:30).
55. The Messiah will be betrayed by one of His own disciples (Psalm 55:12-14; Luke 22:47-48).
56. The Messiah will ascend back into Heaven (Psalm 68:18a; Luke 24:51; Ephesians 4:8).
57. The Messiah will give good gifts unto believing men (Psalm 68:18b; Matthew 10:1; Ephesians 4:7-11).
58. The Messiah will be hated and rejected without cause (Psalm 69:4; Luke 23:13-22; John 15:24-25).
59. The Messiah will be condemned for God's sake (Psalm 69:7; Matthew 26:65-67).
60. The Messiah will be rejected by the Jews (Psalm 69:8a; John 1:11).
61. The Messiah's very own brothers will reject Him (Psalm 69:8b; John 7:3-5).
62. The Messiah will become angry due to unethical practices by the Jews in the temple (Psalm 69:9a; John 2:13-17).
63. The Messiah will be condemned for God's sake (Psalm 69:9b; Romans 15:3).
64. The Messiah's heart will be broken (Psalm 69:20a; John 19:34).

65. The Messiah's disciples will abandon Him just prior to His death (Psalm 69:20b; Mark 14:33-41).
66. The Messiah will be offered gall mingled with vinegar while dying (Psalm 69:21a; Matthew 27:34).
67. The Messiah will thirst while dying (Psalm 69:21b; John 19:28).
68. The potter's field will be uninhabited (the Field of Blood) (Psalm 69:25; Acts 1:16-20).
69. The Messiah will teach in parables (Psalm 78:2; Matthew 13:34-35).
70. The Messiah will be exalted to the right hand of God (Psalm 80:17; Acts 5:31).
71. The Messiah will come from the lineage of David (Psalm 89:3-4; Matthew 1:1).
72. The Messiah will call God His Father (Psalm 89:26; Matthew 11:27).
73. The Messiah will be God's only "begotten" Son (Psalm 89:27; Mark 16:6; Colossians 1:18; Revelation 1:5).
74. The Messiah will come from the lineage of David (Psalm 89:29-36; Matthew 1:1).
75. The Messiah will be eternal (Psalm 102:25-27a; Revelation 1:8; Hebrews 1:10-12).
76. The Messiah is the creator of all things (Psalm 102:25-27b; John 1:3; Ephesians 3:9; Hebrews 1:10-12).
77. The Messiah will calm the stormy sea (Psalm 107:28-29; Matthew 8:24-26).
78. The Messiah will be accused by many false witnesses (Psalm 109:2; John 18:29-30).
79. The Messiah will offer up prayer for His enemies (Psalm 109:4; Luke 23:34).
80. The Messiah's betrayer (Judas) will have a short life (Psalm 109:8a; Acts 1:16-18; John 17:12).
81. The Messiah's betrayer will be replaced by another (Psalm 109:8b; Acts 1:20-26).
82. The Messiah will be mocked by many (Psalm 109:25; Mark 15:29-30).
83. The Messiah will be Lord and King (Psalm 110:1a; Matthew 22:41-45).
84. The Messiah will be exalted to the right hand of God (Psalm 110:1b; Mark 16:19; Matthew 22:41-46).
85. The Messiah will be a Priest after the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 6:17-20).

86. The Messiah will be exalted to the right hand of God (Psalm 110:5; 1 Peter 3:21–22).
87. The Messiah will be the “Stone” rejected by the builders (Psalm 118:22; Matthew 21:42–43).
88. The Messiah will come in the name of the Lord (Psalm 118:26; Matthew 21:9).
89. The Messiah will come from the lineage of David (Psalm 132:11–17; Matthew 1:1). (Adapted with permission from Shalach.org) (Ron Graham, <http://www.simplybible.com/f01p-psalms-about-christ.htm> Accessed November 15, 2016)

New Testament Fulfillment

One hundred eighty-six quotations from the Psalms are in the New Testament. Psalms is quoted far more than any other Old Testament book. It is obvious that Jesus Christ and the authors of the New Testament were filled with the psalms. The psalms are evident in Jesus’ teachings and He also fulfills Scripture as the prophesied Messiah.

Psalm 110 may be a small chapter of only seven verses, however, it is the most quoted in the New Testament than any other Old Testament chapter. It contains prophecy about Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, and a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

Jesus Christ the Shepherd

A shepherd is one who tends sheep. Jesus Christ is the Shepherd and we are His sheep. Throughout the Bible there are many references to shepherds. However, none of them can compare to Jesus Christ.

In Psalms, He is the Good Shepherd, the Great Shepherd, and the Chief Shepherd. Over and over again we can feel His tender loving care for us.

- Psalm 22 – The Good Shepherd dying for His sheep (Also read John 10:11.)
- Psalm 23 – The Great Shepherd caring for His sheep (Also read Hebrews 13:20.)

- Psalm 24 – The Chief Shepherd coming again for His sheep (Also read I Peter 5:4) (*The Bible Summarized Handbook*, page 115.)

“Innumerable saints and sinners through centuries of time have been uplifted, consoled, inspired, and changed by reading and meditating on the Psalms” (Albert H. Baylis).

Summary

Many psalms, written 1,000 years before Christ, contain statements that can refer to none other than Jesus Christ. They are called “messianic psalms.” The Greek word *Christ* is the same as the Hebrew word *Messiah*.

Robert E. Reed stated in “The Messianic Psalms,” *The Riches of Grace*:

These Psalms are called Messianic Psalms because they are quoted in the New Testament in direct reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Psalms, also called The Psalter, speaks of Christ more than any other book in the Old Testament. The Psalms are a collection of one hundred-fifty prayers and praise to the Lord and placed in the canon of scripture to be read and sung by God’s people. They portray Christ fully as the divine Messiah. In the Psalter, Jesus Christ is the central figure, and we have a complete picture of His ministry. It records His coming, incarnation, death, sufferings, resurrection, ascension, meditorial offices, (Prophet, Priest, King) life, character, glory and kingdom. The Psalter is rich in that the theme is the King and His kingdom, Amen. (<http://www.biblicaltruth.info/Articles/Booklet%20PDFs/Messianic%20Psalms.pdf> Accessed November 11, 2016)

Study Questions

1. Messianic psalms are the hope of what?

2. The messianic psalms begin by talking about David, but what happens?

3. Quote Luke 24:44.

4. List the four ways that the messianic psalms describe Jesus.

A.

B.

C.

D.

5. What is special about Psalm 110?

6. What is a shepherd?

7. What type of shepherd is Jesus seen as in Psalm 22, 23, and 24? What did He do as this type of Shepherd?

8. What does Albert H. Baylis say about the psalms?

9. Do you agree with Albert Baylis's statement? Why?

10. Give the reference for five different messianic psalms

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

11. Give the reference for five New Testament fulfillments of messianic prophecies in the Psalms.

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

12. How many Psalms are quoted in the New Testament?

Personal Study Notes

LESSON 12

Psalms (Part III)

Wholly Human

Key Verse

“Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer” (Psalm 19:14).

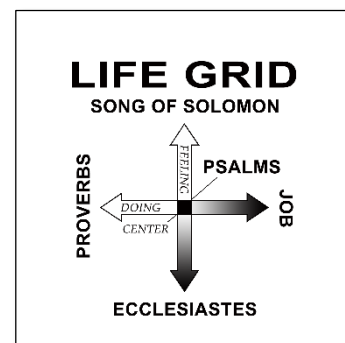
Lesson Objectives

After this lesson the student should be able to

- Explain why the Psalms is at the center of the Life Grid
- Know that it is okay to be wholly human before God
- Recognize the Psalms as a prayer book
- Understand the benefit of praying the Scriptures
- Pray the Scriptures

Life Grid

In the Bible’s five books of wisdom literature, we can see a Life Grid. This grid consists of a horizontal axis and a vertical axis: The horizontal line is the Doing Line. The vertical line is the Feeling Line, our relationship with God.



The Center of it all in the human grid is the wonderful 150 chapters of Psalms. Prayer expresses every emotion known to mankind. Sometimes it is praising, rejoicing, thanking, whining, God-break-teeth-of-my-enemies, wipe-out-enemies, and so forth.

Everyone is on the Life Grid. No matter what happens in life, keep on praying. Keep on living for God. Keep on worshipping. Keep relationship good with your God.

Review

The word *psalm* comes from a Greek word that means “a poem sung to musical accompaniment.” The Hebrew name is *tehillim*, which means “praises.” Thus, the Book of Psalms is a collection of very personal songs and poems that were sung or read in worship. As the book grew over the centuries, its contents were adapted by the Jews for their personal devotions as well. Literally, the Psalms taught God’s people to pray!

In this collection, you will find prayers from suffering people, hymns of praise, confessions of sin, expressions of faith, songs about the glories of nature, prophecies of the Messiah and His coming kingdom, prayers for judgments against one’s enemies, and even songs that teach us the history of God’s people, but in each one the focal point is the Lord. Whether the writer is looking back, ahead, up, down or around, he first of all looks by faith to the Lord. More than anything else, the Book of Psalms teaches us that in our personal relationship with God every expression of human feeling is legitimate and appropriate.

Wholly Human

Much of religion seems to be about making each of us a *holy human*, trying to keep a list of rules that seem to be contrary to who we really are inside. But the Psalms are about a relationship with God where we can be *wholly human*, letting God know through prayer exactly how we are feeling and what we are experiencing – as if He didn’t know already.

The psalms teach us to seek God with our whole heart, to tell Him the truth and tell Him everything, and to worship Him because of Who He is, not just because of what He gives. They show us how to accept trials and turn them into

triumphs, and when we've failed, they show us how to repent and receive God's gracious forgiveness. The God described in the Book of Psalms is both transcendent and immanent, far above us and yet personally with us. He is both "God Most High" and "Immanuel—God with us." He is a God who is *great* and a God who is *good*. But, most of all, *He is a God we can know!*

About two-thirds of the writers of the 150 Psalms are identified to us, with David leading the way with seventy-five Psalms. Remember that David was "a man after God's own heart"—he was not perfect, but his life was an open book before the Lord. Thus, Psalms is a book about communing with God.

"And when he had removed [Saul], he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will" (Acts 13:22)

"God removed [Saul] from office and put King David in his place, with this commendation: 'I've searched the land and found this David, son of Jesse. He's a man whose heart beats to my heart, a man who will do what I tell him'" (Acts 13:22, MES)

A Prayer Book

One thing that many people miss in studying the Bible is that it is fundamentally a prayer book. It commands us to pray over 250 times, speaks of prayer an additional 280 times, gives repeated examples of great men and women praying, and even records many of their prayers, as in the Book of Psalms.

Adam and Eve had no Bible, but they did have direct communication and communion with God. However, through willful disobedience they forfeited this personal relationship and were separated from God's presence due to their sin. This breach of fellowship so grieved God that He immediately began to offer a means of access into His presence for anyone who desired to commune with Him. The Bible is a record of God's restoring to humanity the relationship that was lost in Eden.

"And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD" (Genesis 4:26).

The first people in the Bible who were called God's people were not called Christians or Jews. The first people who ever belonged to God were called "those who call on the name of the Lord." The origin and root of everything we are doing today began with people calling on God. Forget North American Christianity! Forget the religion you were raised in! Forget what you've learned by hanging around a Pentecostal church! There's some meat there, but there's a lot of bones as well. This original episode is the benchmark, the plumbline, the pattern for a relationship with God – "*Call on Me and I will answer you!* When you don't know what to do, I'll tell you what to do! When you're ready to throw up your hands, throw them up to Me and call on Me – and I will help you!" That is how religion began . . . and God has never changed!

We all know we are supposed to pray. But sometimes, one of the most frustrating aspects of prayer is not being able to find the right words to express what dwells deep within your heart. What can you pray about? How should you pray about it? What is really a legitimate prayer? The reasons we have these questions is that we really don't understand what prayer is. We think of it as a religious duty instead of an ongoing, daily relationship which – like every other relationship – includes conversation!

The Bible was given, not just so we could have head knowledge of certain doctrines, but so we could return to a personal relationship with God. Such a relationship demands communication, and prayer is conversation with God. The Bible is a textbook on prayer. It teaches us the need to pray, the nature of prayer, and the rewards of prayer. But what seems to have been forgotten is that the words of the Bible can also become the very prayer that we need to pray!

Psalms is probably the best place to learn to "pray the Scriptures."

Praying the Scriptures

Praying the Scriptures *invites* us to pray and then *initiates* our prayer.

- Prayer is as natural to a person as crying is to a baby. It is a reflex action of the human spirit; it is often an involuntary reaction that bypasses the mind. It almost requires a conscious action of the will to override this impulse.

“And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey” (Exodus 3:7–8a).

- Prayer is not manipulation of God; it is relationship with God

“Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation. Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray. My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up” (Psalm 5:1–3).

- We have communion with God, not because we desire it but because He has declared it. Not because we produce it, but because He has already provided it. We need only to embrace it, express it, and enjoy it.
- The invitation to pray (Bible) contains an explanation of how to pray. Listening to someone else pray is not prayer!

Praying the Scriptures unlocks *intimacy* and breaks *inertia* that we sometimes feel in prayer.

- Say back to God what God says to you (in His Word).
- Complexity wars against prayer; simplicity allows prayer to flow.
- Let prayer be an honest expression of your life – you can’t fool God. Prayer is not supposed to sound like a slick sales pitch.

Praying the Scriptures *illustrates* how to pray and *inspires* us as we pray.

- Note that Hebrew poetry is based on “thought lines” and not rhymes. In the Psalms, sometimes the second line repeats the first in different words (24:3), sometimes the second line contrasts with the first (73:1–2), sometimes the second line explains and expands the first (19:7–9), and sometimes the second line completes the first (47:1).
- The Bible scholars see these literary devices as synonymous parallelism, antithetic parallelism, synthetic parallelism, and climactic parallelism.

(That's helpful, isn't it?!) But can you see these techniques for what they really are—they are instructions for prayer!

- Sometimes we “repeat” ourselves
- Sometimes we “contradict” ourselves
- Sometimes we “express” ourselves
- Sometimes we just “leave it” with God by faith!

“Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?” (Psalm 24:3).

“Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped” (Psalm 73:1-2).

“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether” (Psalm 19:7-9).

“O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph” (Psalm 47:1).

- The Book of Psalms is the thesaurus of prayer.

Praying the Scriptures *illuminates* our hearts and *instructs* our words (so they may stay in keeping with God's will).

- “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit

within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee" (Psalm 51:1-13).

Praying the Scriptures gives *imagery* and *intensity* to our prayers.

- That's why the Psalms are *songs* – because the overflow of the Word and the Spirit produces singing in the soul.
- "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 5:18-20).

Praying the Scriptures brings *intercession* and *immortality* to our prayers.

- "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints" (Revelation 5:8).
- "And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God" (Acts 10:4).

Study Questions

1. The word *psalm* comes from a Greek word that means what?

2. How does one "pray the Scriptures"?

3. List five benefits of praying the Scriptures.

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____

4. Why was the Bible given?

5. What does “the Book of Psalms is the thesaurus of prayer” mean?

6. Using the psalms as a guide, write a prayer of repentance.

7. Using the psalms as a guide, write a prayer of thanksgiving.

8. Using the psalms as a guide, write a prayer of intercession.

9. Using the psalms as a guide, write a prayer of blessing.

Personal Study Notes

Reading Assignment Log

Circle the chapter after you have read it.

Lesson 1: Introduction

Proverbs 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
15 16

Lesson 2: Proverbs (Part I)

Proverbs 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30
31

Lesson 3: Proverbs (Part II)

Job 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
15 16 17 18 19 20 21

Lesson 4: Job (Part I)

Job 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34
35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42

Lesson 5: Job (Part II)

Song of Solomon 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Lesson 6: Song of Solomon (Part I)

Ecclesiastes 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Lesson 7: Song of Solomon (Part II)

Psalms 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13
14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27
28 29 30

Lesson 8: Ecclesiastes (Part I)

Psalms	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44
	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58
	59	60												

Lesson 9: Ecclesiastes (Part II)

Psalms	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74
	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88
	89	90												

Lesson 10: Psalms (Part I)

Psalms	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104
	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118
	119	120												

Lesson 11: Psalms (Part II)

Psalms	121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134
	135	136	137	138	139	140	141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148
	149	150												

Lesson 12: Psalms (Part III)

Question: Have you read all of the reading assignment?

Missionary Spotlight

Daniel and Joretta (Joy) Scott

By Daniel and Joretta Scott

A Missionary Call

It was a warm night in the latter part of August 1968 and the clock was striking two in that early morning. The hand of the Lord began weighing heavily upon my shoulder. I slipped out of bed to a morning that would determine the rest of my family's life. A new day and a new beginning would result from that frightful morning.

My wife and I had been serving as the pastors of one of the most wonderful churches God had ever allowed given birth — or at least that was my opinion. Slipping downstairs, I knelt before the sofa in a state of humility that I had rarely known.



Suddenly a scene transformed the wall behind the sofa into infinity. I looked upon a picturesque, unpaved street. What I would later realize were split-bamboo structures with thatched roofs lined both sides of the street. I asked, "Lord, what does this mean?"

Incredible as it may seem, an audible voice spoke out of the stillness, "Son, I am going to take you from the church you love so dearly and send you to Ecuador, South America, as a missionary." I was also given instructions that confused me until I arrived on the field, where God's voice was confirmed by what I experienced. Little did I know that the Foreign Missions Board had been praying for a missionary to serve in Ecuador. The experience in my living room that morning was my unmistakable and dynamic call to missions, and a place in the purpose of God for world evangelism.

Preparing for Our New Life on the Field

After receiving our appointment to serve in Ecuador, we attended a few night classes to learn the language we would need on the field. Our language studies were pitifully insufficient, and time would tell us that. We applied for the necessary passports that would allow us to travel. Visiting pastoral friends such as Paul Hosch in Dallas, Texas, we crowned us with blessing, both financial and physical.

The time for departure was surprisingly short. However, by the time our legality and resident papers had been processed, a new pastor had been elected for our dear congregation, and separation tears had saturated our garments many times. Other than that, we had little additional preparation time before departure.

When the call came from Foreign Missions secretary Paul Box that we could leave for Ecuador, we purchased our tickets, packed, and shipped what we felt to be used on the field. We gave other items of furniture and household goods to family members. We sold our house.

Our roots were being abruptly dragged from the soil of all we had ever known. More than two hundred of our former congregation and family surrounded us as we walked out the door of Kanawha Airport in Charleston, West Virginia, with our children clinging to their aging grandparents. We felt it doubtful they would live through the four or five years we had promised to remain on the field.

My First Experience of God's Divine Direction

As the plane in the first stage of our flight to Quito entered the cloud cover, my wife tearfully asked, "Dan, do you think we will ever find a people that will love us as much as the Open Door people?" I did not have an answer at that moment, but after years on the field, I could say emphatically that, "Yes, we found a people that loved us, and who endeared us to them as close knit spiritually family members."

We arrived in Quito as the sun was rising to illuminate one of the most beautiful countrysides I had ever seen. However, as we exited from the airport security, there was no one to meet us. I had sent a telegram several days earlier to missionary Lucille Farmer, listing our scheduled arrival. In a city of nearly one million, what were we to do? It was God's time to confirm His call and lead us to her when all we had as an address was a post office box number. That wonderful

lady was so well known in the city, that a taxi driver who could understand our request in English, and no Spanish, said, "I will help you find her."

Questions in Spanish along the way directed our driver to the San Blas Plaza, and he volunteered to walk up the steps to a small house on the hill. Sister Farmer burst out, "Brother and Sister Scott, I did not know you were yet to arrive!" That was a powerful experience that God would continue to lead us as unerringly in the future.

Fear and Dread Experienced in Our First Great Trial

We did not know, nor were we briefed on the fact, that shortly before our arrival, the United Pentecostal Church of Colombia, our daughter organization in Colombia and Ecuador, had separated from our international organization.

Being individuals that love peace and harmony, our first reaction was a feeling of fear that we were entering a battlefield where friendly fire would exist. My feeling had always been, "Nothing is important enough to divide God's church!"

However, as soon as the unexpected feelings rushed to the surface, the instructions God had given in the living room the morning of my call came into sharp focus. He had said that my responsibility would be to "bring my people together!"

How the heart of God would bleed over the next many stages of action cannot be described in words. In short, it was a great trial that I sought to resolve for myself and those under my leadership. "Never use the pulpit to launch accusations or retaliation . . . use it for evangelism!" I had determined that if a fight results, let it be launched by others. We would depend upon God for peace.

The solution came rapidly. Wynn Stairs, the former Foreign Missions director, and my friend, now superintendent of the Colombian work, visited Ecuador and held services in one of their local churches. I went to reinforce my friendship and in a few words informed him there would never be a fight from our side. God had called my family and me to Ecuador, and I fully intended to win the precious people of Ecuador to a living relationship with Christ.

Over the years of my service in Ecuador, I would confirm that vow many times though my heart was broken to realize how vicious brethren could be. The end result was that we began to win the battle with brotherly love and fellowship, "binding

God's family together." Friendship more than hostility resulted. That was our greatest trial on the field, but I valued the instructions God gave me that morning.

Many High Points Were Experienced on the Field

I felt frustration learning a new language. Both my wife and I were deeply stressed when we could not adequately use the pulpit to lift up Christ. I announced that I would preach with satisfaction within six months. God indeed blessed both Joy and me with the ability to communicate with confidence. With God's help, I fulfilled my promise.

The greatest thrill was when the Holy Spirit of God began falling like showers during our services. The first time was an outpouring that within minutes left fifty new converts filled with the Holy Ghost . . . then hundreds were being filled during our national gatherings. This was the climax of our purpose, and God honored our desires to serve.

Another extreme high was the missionary fellowship of Sister Lucille Farmer, who became the surrogate grandmother to our children and one of the dearest friends we could have ever possessed. A low point was experienced when she returned to the United States. Then God gave us a missionary family partnership with the Elga Battle family. We were more like two brothers fighting a common enemy, and rejoicing over the common victories, and the wives were inseparable.

One of the greatest high points to be experienced was a result of persecution against one of our ministers. He was beaten and severely injured by a priest and some eighty people as his small congregation was worshiping in a house meeting. A neighbor, sympathetic to our cause, reported the incident, and we were called into a court session. The end result was that the Catholic judge, upon hearing the witnesses, and even with some five hundred people in the patio to support their priest, ruled in our favor and severely chastised the priest and those attending. He threatened the priest, or any other, that he would jail any perpetrator of that type of action. This gave us credibility with the people.

Another fantastic experience concerned the emerging church in Puyo, a jungle-area town. We had heard that believers were there. I decided I would go and try to locate them. We had no name, nor knowledge where to locate these people.

After registering in a small hotel, the national pastor and I prayed. Suddenly God spoke and asked us to go the next morning to the outdoor market.

The Land Rover had the sign on the door, "Sheaves For Christ - The United Pentecostal Church" in Spanish. As we parked the next morning by the entrance, a man walked up and asked if we were Pentecostal.

"Yes," we replied, "and we are looking for individuals who are believers. We have learned that some were living here." The result was we found believers of the name and held services in their home before returning to Quito.

The church was in its infancy and my wife and I were visiting to show support to the pastor we had installed there. I had spoken a highly anointed message on faith. After I had concluded and extended the invitation to the altar, two men walked to the front, literally dragging an obviously paralyzed man. They announced they believed my message and asked that would I pray for their friend.

My thoughts went to the paralytic Jesus had healed when friends had torn the roof from the house where He was teaching. Now, in a congregation that had hardly experienced a move of the Holy Spirit, God was called upon to heal a paralytic! However, as the pastor and I prayed, God miraculously healed the paralyzed man. What a victory!

There were so many highs experienced in Ecuador that it would be difficult to express them all, even a small number of them.

My Wife's and My Favorite Missionary Story

A couple from a small, diminishing Indian tribe in central Ecuador happened to pass one of our church services in session. Hearing the worship, they entered and subsequently asked our pastor to pray God's blessings upon their marriage that the witch doctor of the tribe had performed.

As a result, my wife and I were invited to visit the Colorado compound. As the people of that community experienced a warm feeling, the gospel found a foothold and soon hungry souls were being evangelized. With the same joy and happiness, they soon were singing in their language, "At the cross, at the cross where I first saw the light, and the burden of my heart rolled away"

Where was our church located? In the house of a former witch doctor who among many, lifted his hands in worship to the God of gods and the Lord of lords!

The town of Urcutombo was eleven kilometers from a main road. Walking those eleven kilometers had become a real task, especially during the rainy season. I studied the horse path that we walked and thought, "I can bring the Land Rover across this path with some help!" With the brethren of the congregation assisting with pick and shovel, we arrived with a cry of victory from the people.

Seeing our success, a trucker began following our tracks, and a road resulted that is yet a part of the road system, paved and with no one actually knowing how it was given birth. This story has been portrayed by a SFC video called, *"Opening New Roads."*

The Most Serious Thing that Happened on the Field

Again, there were numerous happenings that were serious, but never taken in that context. I and my family felt that opposition was merely the lubrication of the wheels of revival, and therefore was accepted that way. However, neither my family nor I were ready for the serious illness that attacked my body.

As I traveled through the jungle areas, many times those living in those isolated areas would invite us to 'rest' a while in their home. The home was a mere thatch roof over a platform. They offered lemonade, and knowing the water came from the brook running along the house, I would accept the offered drink.

Over time I would began losing consciousness, and at times have fainting spells. Arriving stateside for my deputation travels, I knew I was very ill. Then on a visit to a K-Mart store, I suddenly had a severe hemorrhage and landed in a hospital. The result was a sadly broken heart and a feeling of failure when I was unable to return to my people.

Later I was divinely healed from a "walking palace of parasites." General Superintendent Nathaniel Urshan usually laughed from the pulpit of a Spanish Evangelism Conference, saying that God had allowed me to become ill so I could initiate the North American Spanish Evangelism Ministry program. Well, it had been given birth, but I have always said that my heart is yet deeply buried in the soil of Ecuador.

The Most Comical Thing that Happened on the Field

When I was baptizing new converts in the emerging congregation of Puyo, a man who was terrified of water reluctantly presented himself as a candidate for

baptism. When I would try to baptize him, he would walk backwards in the water to the mirth of the entire congregation on the shore. After some four tries, when he started walking backward, I stopped the treads with my foot and stumbling backwards, he was baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Another humorous event also involved a baptismal service. In a small rural area, I was again baptizing in an irrigation channel. The earthen bank was straight down so it was jump in, baptize, and hand the candidate to someone waiting to help them emerge from the water. A short lady was handed me by one of the brethren. I held her and began to lower her into the water. When the water reached her throat, I realized she was no where near standing on the bottom. Feeling mirth, holding her in my arms, I baptized her by merely dunking her head below the surface. Well, she was baptized!

The years I spent in Ecuador were unforgettable! When my wife and I return to visit, the people crowd around us and call us their spiritual mother and father. What spiritual pride we feel as the church reaches some forty thousand constituents from that small two car garage where we began with twelve ladies and a Quechua Indian pastor. How can you tell the story of such incredible years, crammed into a few words. However, the story is forever sealed in Heaven's records.