Conclusion:  
From Generation to Generation

This has been an overview, a taste, of what the Holy Spirit through King Solomon has to teach us about being wise. It begins with the foundations of faith in the fear, love, and trust in God above all things for the sake of Christ and putting that foundation into practice throughout our lives as we train ourselves and wrestle with how to live out that faith with the gifts that the LORD has given us. This is a great and noble calling and one that will occupy all of your days from youth to adulthood.

Remember that this book of Proverbs was written to people just like yourself—to youth about to enter into a much harder world, whom Solomon wanted to know ahead of time how to act wisely and how to be blessed by the LORD. As you grow and face life’s many challenges, don’t forget the wisdom of Proverbs. And, while it may seem like a long time off, when you, God willing, have kids of your own, remember Solomon and how this book was written to pass down wisdom to kids. Don’t just keep it to yourself and don’t expect others to learn these lessons on their own. They have to be taught. So, in every generation, whether it be now when you’re a youth learning wisdom or when you’re a young parent trying to pass down wisdom to your children or when, God willing, you’re a grandparent seeking to be that godly influence in the lives of your children and grandchildren, remember the book of Proverbs and pass down this godly wisdom from generation to generation. God bless.
will fall into it. Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him. Whoever oppresses the poor to increase his own wealth, or gives to the rich, will only come to poverty.”

**Discussion Topics**

- Why do you think money is such an easy idol to have? How do your friends view money? Is it the way Proverbs has advised or something else? What is the easiest way to avoid treating money as an idol? Is it only the rich who make money into an idol? Why or why not?
- For what things do you need loans in this world? Why? How do you make a distinction between something you “need” right now and something you “want”? Do you know how to determine what you can and can’t afford to buy or get on credit?

**What Would You Do?**

- You've just gotten your first paycheck at your first job. It's $300. What do you do? How do you think about that money wisely? (80/10/10)
- One of your friends offers you something you know has been stolen. What do you do?
- You graduate and get out into the workforce at a job where it's easy to slack off if you wanted to. Other employees are playing games during work or otherwise wasting time. What do you do? Why? What do you think will happen if you do? How do you think your fellow employees will treat you if you do that?

**Devotions**

Try to go back and reread the book of Proverbs now that you've been through this study and see what pops out at you as lessons and godly advice for how to live out your faith.
ing of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.”

Pro 11:15 “Whoever puts up security for a stranger will surely suffer harm, but he who hates striking hands in pledge is secure.”

Pro 22:7, 26-29 “The borrower is the slave of the lender... Be not one of those who give pledges, who put up security for debts. If you have nothing with which to pay, why should your bed be taken from under you? Do not move the ancient landmark that your fathers have set. Do you see a man skillful in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men.”

And, to wrap it all up, just about all of the lessons on the Wisdom of money are to be found gathered together here in Proverbs 22:

Pro 22:1-16 “A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold. The rich and the poor meet together; the LORD is the maker of them all. The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it. The reward for humility and fear of the LORD is riches and honor and life. Thorns and snares are in the way of the crooked; whoever guards his soul will keep far from them. Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is the slave of the lender. Whoever sows injustice will reap calamity, and the rod of his fury will fail. Whoever has a bountiful eye will be blessed, for he shares his bread with the poor. Drive out a scoffer, and strife will go out, and quarreling and abuse will cease. He who loves purity of heart, and whose speech is gracious, will have the king as his friend. The eyes of the LORD keep watch over knowledge, but he overthrows the words of the traitor. The sluggard says, "There is a lion outside! I shall be killed in the streets!" The mouth of forbidden women is a deep pit; he with whom the LORD is angry

Introduction

What does it mean to be wise? Is there a difference between being wise and smart, or wise and successful? As you begin this study, take some time to give examples of what you think wisdom is and people you would consider to be wise:

What did those descriptions have in common? If you can begin to outline what you believe it is to be wise, you’ll probably come to see that much of it has to do with being able to observe what’s going on in the world around you and then to make decisions that benefit you or others based on those observations. It’s not just making choices, it’s also recognizing reality. If you can identify what’s really going on in the world—past all the hype, all the gossip, the labeling, the spin, and what people are trying to sell you—then you have learned one of the most essential aspects of wisdom. Then you can truly make good choices that benefit you and your neighbor.

That’s what Solomon has set out to teach his children and all of us in the book of Proverbs: how to be truly wise. Throughout this study, you’ll learn what God’s Word has to say about wisdom while also trying to apply that wisdom to situations you face everyday. Because, as wisdom will teach, it’s not just knowing the information that makes one wise, but actually making decisions and living them out.

That’s a challenge to each of you—to not only download or file away the wisdom of this study, but to seek to live it out. Are you up for that challenge?
Week 1: The Fear of the LORD is the beginning of Wisdom

Congratulations on accepting the challenge of learning God’s Word and committing to living it out in your life. Going through the book of Proverbs, each week we’ll dig a new tool out of God’s toolbox and every day throughout that week encourage you to use it. This week we begin at the beginning.

First things first, in order to act wisely, you need to know what Wisdom is to the creator of wisdom: God. So the first two weeks will be about training and growing you in the foundations of God’s truth. So, open your Bible to the book of Proverbs chapter 1. Place the bookmark included with this study there on the page of Proverbs 1. Then, take turns reading out loud the passage.

Read Proverbs 1:1-9

That’s the point of the book of Proverbs: to teach young folks like yourself wisdom. Solomon was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write Proverbs, primarily, for his sons so that they would grow up to be good leaders, good people, good children. And by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, these same words are written for us and to us that we may come to know God’s wisdom and learn to share that with others. So then note what Solomon says is the key to wisdom: "The fear of the LORD."

What do you want to grow up to be? (Survey the group to see what they want to be) Successful? Wealthy? Capable? What about wise? Throughout the book of Proverbs, Solomon is teaching his sons, the soon-to-be kings of Israel, that the most important thing that they can be is wise and he defines wisdom as fearing the LORD. Before anything else, before learning reading, writing, arithmetic, any other life skills, even before the pursuit of happiness, Solomon says the chief need of any person on God’s green earth is the fear of the LORD.

discipline him. The righteous has enough to satisfy his appetite, but the belly of the wicked suffers want.”

Pro 12:10-12, 24 “Whoever is righteous has regard for the life of his beast, but the mercy of the wicked is cruel. Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits lacks sense. Whoever is wicked covets the spoil of evildoers, but the root of the righteous bears fruit... The hand of the diligent will rule, while the slothful will be put to forced labor.”

You’ll notice integrity, honesty, and hard work are the chief characteristics of Wisdom when it comes to money and greed, haste, and laziness are chief sins of Folly. The poor are protected by those who work diligently and God has planned the care for the poor through such, so that in their efforts which God will bless, they will have enough to share with the poor, with their family, even their children’s children; all because God blesses their hard work done in the fear, love, and trust in Him.

The next major issue Solomon wants us to know about and act wisely in is in the category of debt and loans. If at all possible, Wisdom discourages debt and encourages you to get out of debt as quickly as you possibly can. So Solomon says:

Pro 6:1-11 “My son, if you have put up security for your neighbor, have given your pledge for a stranger, if you are snared in the words of your mouth, caught in the words of your mouth, then do this, my son, and save yourself, for you have come into the hand of your neighbor: go, hasten, and plead urgently with your neighbor. Give your eyes no sleep and your eyelids no slumber; save yourself like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, like a bird from the hand of the fowler. Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest. How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little fold-
Pro 1:10-16, 19 “My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent. If they say, "Come with us, let us lie in wait for blood; let us ambush the innocent without reason; like Sheol let us swallow them alive, and whole, like those who go down to the pit; we shall find all precious goods, we shall fill our houses with plunder; throw in your lot among us; we will all have one purse"--my son, do not walk in the way with them; hold back your foot from their paths, for their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed blood... Such are the ways of everyone who is greedy for unjust gain; it takes away the life of its possessors.”

Pro 10:2-5 “Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death. The LORD does not let the righteous go hungry, but he thwarts the craving of the wicked. A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. He who gathers in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who brings shame.”

Pro 20:13-17 “Love not sleep, lest you come to poverty; open your eyes, and you will have plenty of bread. "Bad, bad," says the buyer, but when he goes away, then he boasts. There is gold and abundance of costly stones, but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel. Take a man’s garment when he has put up security for a stranger, and hold it in pledge when he puts up security for foreigners. Bread gained by deceit is sweet to a man, but afterward his mouth will be full of gravel.”

Pro 14:31 “Whoever oppresses a poor man insults his Maker, but he who is generous to the needy honors him.”

Pro 13:22-25 “A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, but the sinner's wealth is laid up for the righteous. The fallow ground of the poor would yield much food, but it is swept away through injustice. Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to

Just look at what Solomon says about the fear of the LORD throughout Proverbs: (Take turns reading)

Pro 1:7 "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction."

Pro 1:28-31 "Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently but will not find me. Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD, would have none of my counsel and despised all my reproof, therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way..."

Pro 2:1, 5 "My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you... then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God."

Pro 8:13 "The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate."

Pro 9:10 "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight."

Pro 10:27 "The fear of the LORD prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be short."

Pro 14:26-27 "In the fear of the LORD one has strong confidence, and his children will have a refuge. The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, that one may turn away from the snares of death."

Pro 15:16, 33 "Better is a little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble with it... The fear of the LORD is instruction in wisdom, and humility comes before honor."

Pro 16:6 "By steadfast love and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for, and by the fear of the LORD one turns away from evil."
Pro 19:23 "The fear of the LORD leads to life, and whoever has it rests satisfied; he will not be visited by harm."

Pro 22:4 "The reward for humility and fear of the LORD is riches and honor and life."

Pro 23:17 "Let not your heart envy sinners, but continue in the fear of the LORD all the day."

This fundamental tool from God's toolbox, the fear of the LORD, is the foundation of wise living; without this, there is only foolish living and foolish people. So says Solomon and so says the Holy Spirit. With the fear of the LORD, though, to summarize the verses above, there is knowledge, blessing, life, confidence, contentment, forgiveness, satisfaction, peace, and reward. If that's the kind of things you want out of life, this is how you get it.

So what is the fear of the LORD? You learned from Confirmation that the simplest explanation of the 1st Commandment (Exodus 20:1-17, Deuteronomy 5:6-21) is "You should fear, love, and trust in God above all things." That means you shouldn't fear, or worry about, what the neighbors are going to say, or what someone at school is going to say, or what anyone else thinks or says about your life, except for what God says. That must come first and foremost above all things.

That's why this is a call for repentance on your parts for all the times you've made something more important than the fear of the LORD in your lives, and it's a call to seek the absolution that comes through the blood of Jesus Christ shed for you for the forgiveness of sins – even of not putting Him first. It's a call to start fresh and to realize that every day – not just Sunday – is a day given to you to live out your faith in praise and service. This won't be easy. For that very reason God has given us His Word to equip us, to encourage us, and to feed and strengthen us with the Law and the Gospel so that we can commit ourselves to be His people every single day. Only by the fear of the LORD above all things can we truly be wise as God would have us.

Pro 11:4 “Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.”

Pro 11:24-29 “One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered. The people curse him who holds back grain, but a blessing is on the head of him who sells it. Whoever diligently seeks good seeks favor, but evil comes to him who searches for it. Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like a green leaf. Whoever troubles his own household will inherit the wind, and the fool will be servant to the wise of heart.”

Pro 14:9 “Fools mock at the guilt offering, but the upright enjoy acceptance.”

Pro 30:8-9 “Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, lest I be full and deny you and say, "Who is the LORD?" or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God.”

Note how we try to teach this with what we put on our money.

Remember, we are to “fear, love, and TRUST in God above all things,” especially our money.

With that foundation of the fear of the LORD, Solomon is going to then expect us to treat money as a tool for the good of our neighbor and not as an end and goal unto itself. He’s going to warn you away from greed and easy money, and instead encourage you to be part of the economic system that keeps the wheel turning so that everyone is benefitted.
Week 6:  
The Almighty Dollar

Lastly, let’s look at what wisdom has to say about how we get money, and then, once we get it, how to wisely use it. Let’s begin with a brief look at economics: if you have money, it’s likely not worth much. Really. It’s either a piece of paper (bill), common metals (coins), plastic (card), or ethereal numbers floating in a computer (e.g., Apple Pay or Bank Transfers). Very few actually mine for precious materials to trade for valuables anymore. Rather we are a cash/credit economy. That means that you put in a certain amount of labor in return for a certain amount of numbers in your account. You use your wages to pay for your needs for survival and wants for pleasure. Where you work gets the money to pay you by taking in money for the goods or services they provide to a consumer. That consumer, in turn, gets their money from another place of business that gets their money from another consumer. And thus the wheel goes round and round. If where you work doesn’t do enough business, they don’t have enough money to pay you and you don’t have enough money to buy something else. That’s simple economics. So most of what Solomon has to say about money will be about you putting in the effort to make sure that enough business gets done so that there’s enough for you to get paid what you need to survive.

Though, before he talks about how to get it and what to do with it, Solomon would have us remember the first lesson—the Fear of the LORD—applies even to our money. So let’s begin by letting Wisdom put our money in the proper, godly, perspective—where our mouth is.

Pro 3:9-10 “Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.”

Pro 15:16-17 “Better is a little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble with it. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a fattened ox and hatred with it.”

Can you commit to that?

Discussion Topics

- What we do with what we have, our time, talents, and treasures, is often the best indicator of what we believe in our hearts. So really confront your habits. What do you do with your treasures (your money and possessions) that show yourself, your family, and the world that you fear God above all things? What do you do with your talents (your skills, jobs, hobbies, and responsibilities) that show yourself, your family, and the world that you fear God above all things? What do you do with your time to show the same?

- If you could change one of your habits or patterns of time, talent, or treasure to best show yourself, your family, and your world the commitment to fear God above all things, what would it be? What would you be showing people about God’s Word by changing just that one thing? Do it.

Each day this week, commit to making one change that would show yourself, your family, and the world that you fear God above all things. And next time you meet for Bible Study, ask each other if they saw any results from that change—either within themselves or from others’ reactions.

What Would You Do?

- It’s finally summer and perfect vacation weather. You and your family decide to go on a trip over the weekend, Friday night through Sunday night. How do you show yourself, your family, and your world that God is the first priority in your life even while you’re on vacation?

  - Examples: Pray as a family before driving, or at meals; check online or in the phonebook where the closest church is to your vacation destination.
spot and go to one of their worship times, etc...

- Imagine you’re an adult with a kid your age. Just this afternoon little Jack or Jill came up to you and said they want to play every sport they have at school. It means they'll be gone with practice or games every day after school until supper, games on every Saturday, and tournaments on Sunday mornings all through the school year. As a parent committed to instilling the fear of the LORD in your son or daughter regarding their time, talents, and treasures, how would you discuss this issue?

  - Examples: Simply ask the question, "How would playing all of those sports demonstrate to yourself, your family, and the world that we're putting God first?" Is there a compromise position between everything or nothing? Will there be limits to the amount of time and days they are allowed to participate? Now consider the wisdom of the schedule you're keeping in light of how you answered above.

**Devotions**

Maybe you prefer to listen to the Bible on mp3. Maybe you prefer to read it on your phone. Maybe you read it first thing when you wake up or last thing before you go to bed. Maybe it’s in the bathroom or at a coffee house or on the bus. Try to find what works best for you because the important thing is being in the Word.

Commit this week to reading one chapter of Proverbs 1-7 each day and note what Solomon has to say to his son. Next week we'll begin at chapter 8, so make sure you've read 1-7 or you'll miss out.

you find guidance? What questions might you ask? Where might you look for help?

- Maybe you want to stay home all day and play video/computer games but you know/have heard that you need to be physically and mentally active to be healthy. What about your hands, feet, and heart and Wisdom’s call to good and Godly activities? Be specific. What do you do?

**Dig a little deeper:**

A high school student recently said, "Everyday I live my life for other people and not myself. I can never rest and just be me. I have to be the cheerleader or the honor roll student or the football player’s woman. I can never just be me." It's pretty easy to feel like that, today. With all the expectations of parents, teachers, churches, even the ones you set for yourself, it can leave you always trying to be someone else.

This study of the book of Proverbs isn't about making you become what the Church wants you to be, but it's about giving you the tools from God’s Holy Word to equip you to go and live life as fully as you can. So many forces are competing for the use of your hands, heart, and feet that unless you're prepared you can quickly be overcome. Think, who do you really want to be? What would that look like?
Pro 29:5-6 "A man who flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his feet. And evil man is ensnared in his transgression, but a righteous man sings and rejoices."

The point is again clear: idolatry in heart and idleness in hands are detriments to living wisely and knowing all the blessings of God. And we can either be surprised when our misuse of heart and hands leads us into trouble and despair, or we can make a purposeful effort from the start to avoid idolatry and idleness.

Discussion Topics

- What are some of the issues you experienced growing up that have to do with your hands, heart, or feet? What are some of the issues your friends are struggling with now? Did you know what God expected of your use of the hands, heart, and feet He gave you before you struggled with these issues? How would it help you to know this ahead of time?
- What do you think of the old expression, "Idle hands are the Devil’s playground"? Is there such a thing as too much free time? Is there such a thing as too much busy-ness? How do you reach a Godly and God-pleasing balance for yourself, your family, and your world?
- How do you find the right path of balance between your freedom and the expectations of others for your actions? How do you go back or correct for bad decisions you’ve made? How does your faith in Christ help you do that?

What Would You Do?

- You’re about to graduate High School but you still don’t know what you want to do with your life. If you move forward in life without a set path, this can be wasteful or even dangerous for your future. How do

Week 2:
Wisdom is Christ

Last week we focused on the fear of the LORD. This week we’ll look at the second part of the verse – "is the beginning of wisdom." So open up your Bibles and let’s see what Solomon has to say about wisdom.

Read Proverbs 8:22-36

In your devotional reading throughout the week, you heard Solomon personify wisdom as the lady of most noble character who works with the utmost honor and for the purest purposes. In languages like Hebrew, in which Solomon wrote Proverbs, nouns like wisdom are either masculine, feminine, or neutral (neuter) because of the presence or thoughts they convey (like a guy would frequently refer to a car as a girl, feminine, because it complements the man). Wisdom is a feminine noun and so it is only natural for Solomon to speak of Wisdom as a lady. Yet note the description of lady Wisdom in Proverbs 8:22-36. Who does this sound like? (Take turns reading)

Genesis 1:1-3 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said…"

John 1:1-4, 10-14 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men... He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh..."
not of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from Father, full of grace and truth."

Colossians 1:15-20 "He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the Church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross."

So who is Solomon describing when he describes Lady Wisdom in Proverbs 8? He's describing Christ, the eternal second person of the Trinity who was the Word by which God spoke all creation into being; the very same Word that became flesh and was crucified for our sins, risen again on the third day and ascended into heaven, from whence he will come to judge the living and the dead. Wisdom is Christ. If you want to be wise according to God's advice, according to God's standards, you've got to have a living and active faith in Christ. The Son of God was made man to give us the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation; that believing in Jesus we may know – not just the fear of God – but the love of God, as well, every single day.

In the same way, as you read through the book of Proverbs you then begin to discover that, as Solomon defines wisdom as Christ and our faith in Christ, so he defines foolishness as unbelief. The most foolish, life-wasting characteristic that anyone can have or do, is to refuse to believe in Jesus as their Savior and to refuse to live for Him.

God’s desire for all people, especially you, is that they know Jesus Christ as He is revealed in the Bible. The Apostle Paul quotes David’s psalm when he says of Jesus, God
Pro 6:14, 20-21, 25 "With perverted heart [a worthless person, a wicked man] devises evil, continually sowing discord... My son, keep your father's commandment and forsake not your mother's teaching. Bind them on your heart always; tie them around your neck... Do not desire the beauty of the adulteress in your heart, and do not let her capture you with her eyelashes."

Pro 7:1, 3, 5, 10, 25-27 "My son, keep my words and treasure up my commandments within you... bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart... to keep you from the forbidden woman, from the adulteress with her smooth words... And behold the woman meets him, dressed as a prostitute, wily of heart... Let not your heart turn aside to her ways; do not stray into her paths, for many a victim has she laid low, and all her slain are a mighty throng. Her house is the way to Sheol, going down to the chambers of death."

Pro 11:20, 16:5 "Those of crooked heart are an abomination to the LORD, but those of blameless ways are his delight. Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the LORD; be assured, he will not go unpunished."

Pro 12:20 "Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, but those who plan peace have joy."

Pro 15:28 "The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things."

Pro 16:9 "The heart of a man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps."

Pro 18:12 "Before destruction a man's heart is haughty, but humility comes before honor.

Pro 19:3 "When a man's folly brings his way to ruin, his heart rages against the LORD.

the Father has "given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet." Jesus is our Lord and King – the King of Kings and Lord or all Lords, and we owe him our very lives because of his mighty work of redemption. Do you know Jesus as your Lord? What does it mean to know Jesus as your Lord? (Have everyone share what they know about having Jesus as Lord)

That's why it's not enough just to pray to or to love a "generic" God, but we're called to pray to the Father, through His Son, in the Holy Spirit. We're called to always have Christ upon our lips and upon our hearts. And this isn't natural for sinful human beings. Knowledge of the Christ who is wisdom must be revealed through the Word of Scripture and that means that in order to be truly wise you need to be constantly in God's Word. The easiest way to do this is by coming to church and Bible Study/Sunday School every week so that you can constantly stay in God's Word in Christ and so be filled with that Wisdom which God says is the best way to know all of his blessings.

Discussion Topics

- How does the world define Wisdom? How does the world define foolishness? What's the difference?
- Can you picture any reason why this would be a difficult thing to teach children? What will happen if you aren't living in such a way to show yourself, your family, and your world that you put God first and that you owe your life to Christ – for example, if you don't go to church or Bible Study and yet tell other people it's important?
- Can you commit to showing yourself, your family, and your world the importance and impact of Christ for the sake of others?
What Would You Do?

- If you ran out into the street and at that very moment a truck was driving too fast on a collision course with you, and at just the right time someone ran in and pushed you out of the way only to be run over himself, how would you feel about that man? What would you tell others about that man? That is exactly what Jesus did for you.
- Examples: You would celebrate a yearly remembrance of what happened, similar to celebrating a baptismal birthday or Good Friday and Easter. You would probably celebrate his birthday by retelling the story, like on Christmas. You would make these events big deals in your life so that everyone would better appreciate what happened to give you life.
- Jesus died to forgive us our sins and give us new life. Sometimes you’re going to do something wrong – either against your parents, your friends, or someone else in your world. How would you show the Wisdom of God to the one you’ve wronged? In what ways does this help prevent hypocrisy?
  - Example: If you wrong someone, ask for forgiveness. If someone wrongs you, be willing and free to give forgiveness. Say, "I'm sorry I wronged you. Please forgive me." And, "I forgive you because God forgave me in Christ."

Devotions

Commit this week to reading one chapter of Proverbs 8-14 each day and note what Solomon has to say about practical wisdom. Note down any proverbs that really strike you.

Pro 19:24, 26:15 "The sluggard buries his hand in the dish and will not even bring it back to his mouth... The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; it wears him out to bring it back to his mouth."

Pro 21:25 "The desire of the sluggard kills him, for his hands refuse to labor."

Pro 30:32 "If you have been foolish, exalting yourself, or if you have been devising evil, put your hand on your mouth."

Pro 31:10, 13, 20 "An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels... She seeks wool and flax, and works with willing hands... She opens her hand to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy."

Proverbs about Heart — since there are so many, we’ll only take here a representative sample

Pro 2:1-2, 5, 10 "My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding... then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God... For wisdom will come into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul."

Pro 3:1, 3, 5 "My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments... Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart... Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding."

Pro 4:4, 21-23 "Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments, and live... Let them not escape from your sight; keep them within your heart. For they are life to those who find them, and healing to all their flesh. Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life."
Week 5:  
Hands, Heart, and Feet

Still from the perspective of Proverbs 6:16-19, we continue looking at how we’re called to use the bodies that God has given to us. As you continue to commit yourselves to living wisely God’s way, notice how this all fits together. The fear, love, and trust in God isn’t separated from life lived out, but is the core of a life well lived. So Luther taught regarding the First Article of the Apostles’ Creed: "I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them... He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life... All this he does only out of Fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey him." So, let’s continue diving into what Solomon has to teach us about praising, serving, and obeying God with our bodies.

Proverbs about Hands –

Pro 6:9-11, 24:33 "How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man."

Pro 10:4 "A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich."

Pro 12:14, 24 "From the fruit of his mouth a man is satisfied with good, and the work of a man's hand comes back to him... The hand of the diligent will rule, while the slothful will be put to forced labor."

Pro 14:1 "The wisest of women builds her house, but folly with her own hands tears it down."

Week 3:  
Train Up a Child in the Way He Should Go

So put it all together: The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and wisdom is Christ – the eternal second person of the Trinity made flesh for us men and for our salvation. Believe in God, put Him first, and trust in Christ as your Savior. That’s the foundation of being wise according to God. Now you’ve got the foundation. Let’s put it to work – because it doesn’t do any good for you to know it if you don’t try to live it out.

How do you go about living in the fear, love, and trust of God in Christ? Again, God has inspired Solomon to put this down for us as well in one of the best known verses of Proverbs.

Pro 22:6 "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it."

Even at face value this verse says it all – make the purposeful effort to raise a child in the way God has advised and he will not depart from that way. Looking closer at the verse, we find even more. The Hebrew word for "Train up" means to dedicate or initiate and is most frequently used for the devoting over of one’s life to the priesthood of the Old Testament. Thus it also means to lead into a certain way of life or discipline, specifically implying the life dedicated to the discipline of God. So ask yourself, Where do we take a child and initiate them into the priesthood of God’s people in Christ? Where is there a specific action that signs a child up as one of God’s saints? That’s right: in Baptism. In Baptism the parents take the responsibility of instilling faith into their child by bringing them into the New Testament Covenant of the blood of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. The parents decide for their child that this little boy or girl will be brought to faith and life from the darkness of sin and death. Here the words of Solomon do not allow for any idea of "We want to let him decide what to believe." Parents are the parents – the one’s God has put on
this earth to care for and to grow this little blessing of life from God. Solomon points out that it's the family's duty to raise a child according to God's ways, and first and foremost His way is to give this little child faith through the Holy Spirit poured out upon them in Baptism. That's why Paul says

Titus 3:5-6 "He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior."

And Jesus said that the parental role doesn't stop at simply Baptizing the baby. If you're bringing a baby to the font just so you can say you've fulfilled a duty and never again encourage them in their life in the Church, you're missing the point. Jesus says

Matthew 28:19-20 "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."

Baptize and teach; both are parts of raising children according to God's standards. Baptism initiates a child into the Church; it makes him or her heirs of the kingdom with other believers who are themselves learning to grow in their faith as they strive to follow the commands of Christ. Confirmation is just one public step on the way to continuing this life-long pursuit of learning and growing in Christ.

But keeping the faith is hard to do. Even the best kids don't always want to hear what God has to say. Do you always want to obey the commandments or confess Christ – the wisdom of God – in every situation? That's why we all must be “trained” in following Christ. Frequently that involves doing something we don't like to do. That means parents, teachers, and pastors often have to be their motivation to do good according to God's ways. When you don't

What Would You Do?

- Something provocative comes on the television while you're in the room. What do you say or do? What if your friends or parents are the ones watching it? What message does it send if you keep watching?
- One of your friends or relatives says a profane word in your presence. What do you say to them? You're listening to a song and you hear constant profanity or godless language, what do you do? Even if it's the new, popular song?
- There's an old adage parents often confront: “If you're daughter was dating a boy like you, what would you do?” Or, for girls, “If your son were dating a girl like you, what would you do?” When you’re older, looking back on this time in your life, do you think you’ll be proud of how you used the body that God has given you? If not, if when you're older you wouldn’t want your kid dating someone like you, how do you change?

Devotions

Commit this week to reading one chapter of Proverbs 22-28 each day and note what Solomon has to say to his son.
Pro 21:6, 23 "The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor and a snare of death... Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble."

Overall the message is plain: Our eyes should be focused on God and on His people, not focused in on ourselves, and our tongues should be used for his glory such as is commanded by the second and eighth commandments. If it's been a while since you've looked at your Small Catechism, this might be a good time to review a basic Christian way of understanding the 10 Commandments.

Discussion Topics

- What are some of the issues you experience growing up that have to do with your eyes and with your mouth? What are some of the issues other kids in your class struggle with? Did you know what God expected of your use of the eyes and mouth He gave you before you struggled with these issues?
- Which is easier—to try to correct a mistake after it's happened or to prevent it from happening in the first place? Which does Proverbs recommend?
- You're growing up in an age of constant visual stimulation; bombarded with images wanting to sell you things and assaulting you with sexual images. What we see as normal and what we speak of as normal becomes normal for us. What do you think God wants to be "normal" for you to see and say? What changes might you have to make to what you see and say to live wisely as God has called you?
- What do you consider profane language? Is anywhere an appropriate place to use profane language? Is there anywhere that is inappropriate to use profane language?
- Pornography is a rampant evil in our time. Most people who get hooked on pornography do so as an adolescent. With the ease of access through modern technologies, youth like you are too easily getting ad-

want to go to Church on Sunday morning, you need to be dragged out of bed or out from in front of the television and into church BECAUSE GOD SAID SO. Just because you don't like doing something doesn’t mean we need to change that something to make it more appealing to you. That's not discipline. That's not observing what Christ commands. That's turning everything into our kids' commands and letting them get away with playing God. You don't want us to change church to fit kids, because then you wouldn't get Jesus—you'd just get what you want. Rather, kids need to change to fit church. That's discipline. That's wisdom God's way. Thus Solomon says of discipline: (Take turns reading)

Pro3:11-12 "My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights."

Pro 5:12-14, 22-23 "How I hated discipline, and my heart despised reproof! I did not listen to the voice of my teachers or incline my ear to my instructors. I am at the brink of utter ruin in the assembled congregation... The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him, and he is held fast in the cords of his sin. He dies for lack of discipline, and because of his great folly he is led astray."

Pro 6:23 "For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life."

Pro 12:1 "Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid."

Pro 13:24 "Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him."

Pro 15:10 "There is severe discipline for him who forsakes the way; whoever hates reproof will die."

Pro 19:18 "Discipline your son, for there is hope; do not set your heart on putting him to death."
Pro 22:15 "Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him."

Pro 23:13 "Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you strike him with a rod, he will not die."

Pro 29:17-18 "Discipline your son, and he will give you rest; he will give delight to your heart. Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restrain, but blessed is he who keeps the Law."

Remembering that in the book of Proverbs "folly" is the absence of Wisdom, and wisdom is the fear of the Lord and the love of God in Christ who died for us, then discipline is all about being led into the ways of faith in Christ. If, then, this isn't happening, it's not your church's fault, but yours. Accept your parents' and church's discipline so that you may go God's way and so not leave it behind when you're older. Discipline works by rewarding the good, punishing the bad, praising the positive, and warning against before-hand the negative, so that when someone purposefully chooses the negative, bad path, they'll know that the punishment incurred is their own fault for leaving the way of the good. That's discipline. That's godly wisdom. And, yes, sometimes it hurts, and sometimes it hurts people's feelings. But the alternative is foolish living in disbelief.

Discussion Topics

- Be open and honest. What do you think about what God has to say regarding discipline? These are some rather counter-cultural opinions that have met with much controversy in the 20th and 21st century world. Can you commit to trusting God above all things that these truths about discipline are the best things for you? Are you ready to stand against the crowd and give an answer to those who reject the Bible for why mouth of the wicked conceals violence... The wise lay up knowledge, but the mouth of a fool brings ruin near... The tongue of the righteous is choice silver; the heart of the wicked is of little worth... The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom, but the perverse tongue will be cut off. The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked, what is perverse."

Pro 11:9, 11 "With his mouth the godless man would destroy his neighbor, but by knowledge the righteous are delivered... By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it is overthrown."

Pro 12:6, 14, 18-19, 22 "The words of the wicked lie in wait for blood, but the mouth of the upright delivers them... From the fruit of his mouth a man is satisfied with good, and the work of a man's hand comes back to him. There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment... Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who act faithfully are his delight."

Pro 13:2-3, 14:3 "From the fruit of his mouth a man eats what is good, but the desire of the treacherous is for violence. Whoever guards his mouth preserves his life; he who opens wide his lips comes to ruin... By the mouth of a fool comes a rod for his back, but the lips of the wise will preserve them."

Pro 15:2, 4 "The tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouth of fools pour out folly... A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit."

Pro 17:20 "A man of crooked heart does not discover good, and one with a dishonest tongue falls into calamity."

Pro 18:21 "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits."
come upon him suddenly; in a moment he will be broken beyond healing... Whoever winks the eye causes trouble, and a babbling fool will come to ruin."

Pro 17:24 "The discerning sets his face toward wisdom, but the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth."

Pro 20:8, 12 "A king who sits on the throne of judgment winnows all evil with his eyes... The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the LORD has made them both. Love not sleep, lest you come to poverty; open your eyes, and you will have plenty of bread."

Pro 21:4, 10 "Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, are sin. The soul of the wicked desires evil; his neighbor finds no mercy in his eyes."

Pro 22:9 "Whoever has a bountiful eye will be blessed, for he shares his bread with the poor."

Pro 23:29-31, 33 "Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who tarry long over wine; those who go to try mixed wine. Do not look at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly... Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart utter perverse things."

Pro 28:27 "Whoever gives to the poor will not want, but he who hides his eyes will get many a curse."

Pro 30:17 "The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother will be picked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures."

Proverbs about the Mouth and Tongue
Pro 10:6, 11, 14, 20, 31, 32 "Blessings are on the head of the righteous, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence... The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the you're following God’s advice rather than the world's?
- What happens when you do hard things—things you don't want to do? Why would a loving God want you to undergo discipline?
- In what ways can you train yourself to better know and live God’s Word now? What struggles do you think you'll have in the future and so what training will you need to face them?

What Would You Do?
- You grew up going to church every Sunday. (We go to Church every Sunday in celebration of the resurrection of Christ on that day). Suddenly, when you enter High School, going to church isn't "cool" or you'd rather sleep in, or someone wasn’t nice to you at church. What will you do? (Obviously, you’re here, so this might be preaching to the choir). Now, what if you’re friends or family don’t want to go to church?
- You’ve got a baseball game or play or other school activity Sunday morning. What do you do? What does that action show the world about your faith? When schedules are made by authorities over you, what can you do?
- What about dating? What discipline is required to keep your hormones and the hormones of your date in check in order to please God? What rules or guides will you set in place for helping yourself and your boyfriend remain in control at a time when your bodies are going out of control?
  - Note: God really meant it when he said in Hebrews 13:4 "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous." His advice for dating is to wait until marriage for every sexual act. Therefore, simply wanting to "be safe" isn't
enough when it comes to God's advice. Yes, He wants you "safe," but He truly wants you pure.

**Devotions**

Commit this week to reading one chapter of Proverbs 15-21 each day and note what Solomon has to say to his son.

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**Dig a little deeper:**

You know what Wisdom is and how God wants you to grow in Wisdom—knowing Him and serving Him. But, What Does This Mean? especially when it comes to learning discernment—the ability to judge between two or more different ways?

Have you learned yet that every presentation of any information is always biased in some way? There is, of course, a Christian bias, and there is a personal/emotional bias, there are political biases, manipulative, commercial, faith and even anti-faith biases. There is no such thing as being unbiased. Even in science, you must choose first whether you believe that there is only material causes or also divine causes before you CAN even do an experiment. Everything is biased.

Discernment then becomes finding out for yourself what is biasing the presentation AND THEN WHETHER YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THAT BIAS. Facts are facts, yet any presentation of facts will always be biased. Consider any major event you've heard about lately and try to discern what biases were presented when you heard it...

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**Week 4:**

**Haughty Eyes and a Lying Tongue**

With such a foundation and commitment, the book of Proverbs gets into the practical advice in short concise sayings. Keep these words of wisdom on your heart so you can live them out and even pass them on to others. These aren't just platitudes but they are God's opinions and God's guidance for the best life we can live. You can spend your whole life trying to learn and apply these Proverbs, and I encourage you to do so – but here we'll summarize what Solomon has to teach with his words about how we use the very bodies God has given us in light of what God prohibits.

Pro 6:16-19 "There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers."

This week we'll look at Solomon's advice about your eyes and tongue. As you read through these, share with each other if something strikes you as unique or hard to handle. Share with each other which of these you think would be helpful to share with your friends and why you think that verse would help him or her, or you.

**Proverbs about Eyes** –

Pro 3:7 "Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.

Pro 4:25 "Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you."

Pro 6:12-15, 10:10 "A worthless person, a wicked man, goes about with crooked speech, winks with his eyes, signals with his feet, points with his finger, with perverted heart devises evil, continually sowing discord; therefore calamity will