Lesson: The Value of Wisdom        Text: Proverbs 2:1—11

I. **Aim for Change**

By the end of this lesson, we will: UNDERSTAND the search for the wisdom that comes from God is most important; YEARN for the wisdom that comes from God; and CENTER our hearts, wills, and thoughts in the wisdom that comes from God.

**Unifying Principle—Seeking Meaning.** People search for life’s meaning through wealth, wisdom, or other worldly things. What is the best method to search for meaning in life? Wisdom’s treasure is more valuable than riches because it can center a person’s heart, will, and thought toward a knowledge of God.

**Key Verse—** “For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding” (Proverbs 2:6, KJV).

**People Places and Times**

**The Book of Proverbs.** Known as a book of wisdom, Proverbs is like a father sitting down with a young son to pass on valuable lessons learned after a lifetime of trials and errors. It is a collection of wise sayings primarily written by King Solomon referred to as having wisdom that “excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt” (1 Kings 4:30).

Notes:

|________________________________________________________________________|
|________________________________________________________________________|
|________________________________________________________________________|
|________________________________________________________________________|

**II. **Background**

A proverb is a short teaching governing conduct and life, often similar to a parable. The reason is that many proverbs are condensed parables. Proverbs are spiritual instructions to ensure a godly, happy life here, and reward in the life to come. Because proverbs were not generally written, memorization was an effective way of teaching and learning. The short, concise phrases that comprise Proverbs lend themselves to the best method to reveal and remember a divine truth so that they are easy to pass on to the next generation.

Notes:

|________________________________________________________________________|
|________________________________________________________________________|
|________________________________________________________________________|
|________________________________________________________________________|

Page | 1
The Lesson At-A-Glance…
1. The Pursuit of Wisdom (Proverbs 2:1–5)
2. The Provider of Wisdom (vv. 6–8)
3. The Purpose of Wisdom (vv. 9–11)

III. In Depth with More Light on the Text

Section 1. The Pursuit of Wisdom (Proverbs 2:1–5)
These first five verses can be viewed as a series of conditions—a list of actions that, if obeyed, will lead to a reward. Within these five short verses are eight verbs used to urge the listener to take action: listen, treasure, tune your ear, concentrate, cry out, ask, search, and seek. Such active language indicates that the pursuit of wisdom is not to be passive but passionate. Wisdom is not attained from desire alone, but because one listens intently and purposefully to the wisdom of others.

Of note in the book of Proverbs is the use of the conditional “if…then”. Philosophically, the use of this set of words puts conditions on the acquisition of wisdom. Conditions that are imposed by the writer of the proverb as learned from how they received such wisdom from God.

Section 2. The Provider of Wisdom (vv. 6–8)
Proverbs 1:7 says that “the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge.” Although wisdom is to be actively sought, it must be understood that God is the one who gives godly wisdom. Mere human effort alone will not produce the wisdom needed to live a godly life and prevent unnecessary failures and pitfalls. Interestingly, God’s involvement in providing wisdom is active as well.

Section 3. The Purpose of Wisdom (vv. 9–11)
One purpose of attaining wisdom is to provide discernment. The closer one grows to the Lord—honoring, respecting, and knowing Him—the more wisdom one gains. Wisdom allows a person to understand what is right, just, fair, and act accordingly. Knowing what is right, but not doing it, is simply knowledge.

Notes:________________________
________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

1 My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; 2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;
The father is giving instruction to the son, who is willing to obey. The ways of instruction are clear and precise. If the son is willing to listen and follow these instructions, the results are clear. Although the results of receiving the father’s words are clear, the full payoff of doing so will not be explained for several verses (v. 5).

3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;
In searching for knowledge, there must be an urgency and desperation for it. When a baby cries because of hunger, it bellows as though nothing else matters, and its only focus is to soothe the hunger pangs. The baby can’t be comforted with anything other than the nourishment that food
will give. Just as we must do when searching for knowledge, we must see the value in knowledge and cry out for it, realizing its worth.

4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;
Here, Solomon is explaining that if you search for wisdom, like a person who wants to be rich would search for silver or treasure, you will be willing to work and enthusiastically determined to reach your goal. Like silver or hidden treasure, wisdom will not be easy to find. Silver must be mined from deep underground; treasure will be hidden away. The goal here is to search for wisdom, which is from God, and we find it in His Word. So, we work diligently searching the Scriptures (2 Timothy 2:15), not becoming easily distracted or giving up soon, looking for wisdom in God’s Word. We set aside structured time to study and consistently pursue the Lord in His Word.

5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. 6 For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.
Here we finally hear the payoff for listening to the father and enjoying our pursuit of wisdom. The result of searching for wisdom is finding the knowledge of God. That is, in pursuit of wisdom, we find God.

The parallel structure of this verse suggests knowledge of the Lord is the same as the fear of the Lord. To know Him is to stand in respectful awe of Him. Developing a personal relationship with the Lord is essential to understanding the fear of the Lord.

Through Scripture, we find how God wants us to live, to love, and to give. We can only know what God wants from us through studying His Word. He teaches us who He is and what He expects from those who love Him, His children. God has wisdom and can distribute it as He chooses. God instructs us to ask Him if we desire wisdom (James 1:5). God is the one to give knowledge and understanding. Studying and searching the Scriptures outside of the Lord is just information. Knowledge and understanding come from God.

7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. 8 He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints. 9 Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.
The Lord “layeth up” (Heb. tsafan, tsaw-FON, hide) wisdom for those who are righteous. He hides wisdom for the righteous, and He also hides the righteous from harm. For those who walk uprightly, the righteous, God is a buckler. The word “buckler” (referring to a small shield worn at the waist) here is the Hebrew magen (maw- Gain), which means a shield. It is the same word God used when establishing His covenant with Abraham, saying, “I am thy shield” (Genesis 15:1). This helps the reader understand that to walk uprightly is to follow the covenant. We must understand: Things will still happen to God’s people; we are not able to escape life situations. However, the difference is, God will protect His people.

Notes:________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Page | 3
10 When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; 11 Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee:

Once wisdom truly becomes a part of us, believers think differently, therefore causing us to act differently. When wisdom is unmistakably in our hearts and not just in our heads, we can have joy in doing what is right. After wisdom enters the heart, righteousness is not enforced but actually pleasant or desirable. Believers want to do what is right. Wisdom causes a believer to take joy in pursuing a deeper relationship with the Lord.

As a conclusion, we get again the promise of protection. God and the wisdom He ordained to guide the universe will “preserve” and “keep,” just as in verse 8 above. Again, this does not mean that nothing tragic will ever happen to the righteous. However, with wisdom in our hearts, we know to use caution in dealing and interacting with others. Our love for God as we diligently study His word causes a desire to do what is right and consequently steers the believer away from unnecessary, dangerous, and avoidable situations.

Notes:__________________________________
______________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________

Liberating Lesson & Application for Activation—see Sunday School book

Vocabulary-New Words To Understand Hebrew Poetry and Wisdom Literature…

In Hebrew poetry there are three types to explain and layover the text to understand them
1. **Synonymous Parallelism**—saying the same
2. **Antithetic Parallelism**—saying the opposite of what is in the previous line
3. **Synthetic Parallelism**—further explaining the content of the first line