

The Way of the Wise

A Call to Wisdom

Pre-Session Warm Up

We have been learning that the Bible says there are only two roads in life: The *Highway of Holiness*, leading to heaven and eternal life with God; and, the *Road to Destruction*. If you want to be on the *Highway of Holiness*, then you are called to learn the wisdom of God.

[Teacher, ask the class what skill they are trying to achieve, i.e., piano, guitar, violin, basketball, soccer, etc.] Supposed you wanted to play on the basketball team at your school. Becoming a good basketball player would mean a call to some things and a call away from other things.

For instance, becoming a basketball player on the school team would be a call to practice dribbling and shooting baskets. But it would not mean just dribbling a few times. It would mean a call to hours of dribbling and shooting baskets every week.

It would be a call to run and do pushups to keep in shape so you are strong. Not just a few pushups, it would mean doing hundreds of pushups every day.

It would be a call to study the rules of basketball. It would be a call to get on the basketball team and play lots of basketball games.

It would also be a call away from some other things.

- What couldn't you do if you were on the school basketball team? What would it be a call away from?

Well, if you were on the basketball team you probably couldn't be in the school band or in gymnastics. You certainly couldn't be a "couch potato". You couldn't go home and watch a movie during the practices or go over to your friend's house when a game is scheduled.

In the same way, if we desire to be on the *Highway of Holiness*, then that's a call to something and a call away from something.

Opening Prayer

Father, none of us wants to be a fool. We all desire to be wise. Give us teachable hearts this morning. Show us the way to wisdom. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

My child, never forget the things I have taught you. Store my commands in your heart. (Proverbs 3:1).

Lesson

[Teacher, write the letters: **D O S M I W** on the board. Ask the children to unscramble the letters to find out what the word is.]

If you want to be on the *Highway of Holiness*, then you have a call on your life to go after **W I S D O M**. You are to love wisdom.

- What is the definition of Wisdom?

Wisdom is loving what is right and good, and doing it.

The book of Proverbs was written to prepare young men in Israel for positions in leadership. Thankfully, God has preserved this book down through the centuries so that we can learn the wisdom of God from it, too.

Right in the beginning of the book of Proverbs we are told why the book of Proverbs was written.

Sword Drill: Proverbs 1:1-6

¹These are the proverbs of Solomon, David's son, king of Israel. ²Their purpose is to teach people wisdom and discipline, to help them understand the insights of the wise. ³Their purpose is to teach people to live disciplined and successful lives, to help them do what is right, just, and fair. ⁴These proverbs will give insight to the simple, knowledge and discernment to the young. ⁵Let the wise listen to these proverbs and become even wiser. Let those with understanding receive guidance ⁶by exploring the meaning in these proverbs and parables, the words of the wise and their riddles.

- Why was the book of Proverbs written?

The book of Proverbs is full of wise sayings that show us what is right to do. Proverbs helps us understand how to act in godly ways, how to make decisions, and how to know what is best.

Phone Illustration:

[Teacher, show the children a piece of equipment or an appliance, such as a phone or a clock.]

- How could I find out how to set the time on this phone? [Show them the manual for it.]

The manual tells what all the parts are and how to use them. [Briefly demonstrate this by reading something from the manual and demonstrate how to put the instructions into practice.]

- Can this manual help me if I never open it?
- Is it a good idea to read the instructions and then not follow them? No!

The company that made the phone knows how it works, and following the instructions will save you a lot of problems with the phone. It may even keep you from breaking it.

The book of Proverbs is like an instruction manual for life. Just like this manual shows us how to use the phone, the book of Proverbs tells us the right way to live. It gives us good instructions.

Just as it is not a good idea to read the instructions in the phone manual and then ignore them, it is not a good idea to read the life instructions in the book of Proverbs and then ignore them. The instructions the Bible gives are to be followed just like we follow the instructions in the manual.

Let's explore the meaning in some Proverbs:

Sword Drill: Proverbs 16:24

Kind words are like honey—sweet to the soul and healthy for the body.

- Why does this say that kind words are *healthy for the body*? (Kind words help make people feel happy.)

We are not just supposed to read these words, but we are to follow these instructions. We are to use kind words with each other.

Sword Drill: Proverbs 17:22

A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit saps a person's strength.

- Why does this say that a cheerful heart is good medicine? (Grumpiness makes everyone feel awful.)

If we just read this verse and ignore it by being grumpy, not only will we will feel awful, but we'll make everyone around us feel awful, too.

Sword Drill: Proverbs 15:1

A gentle answer deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers flare.

- What should you do when someone is angry with you? (Answer their anger with gentleness; that is, with kindness.)

When you return anger with kindness, it is a good way to help cheer up an angry person.

Proverbs are wise sayings that are generally true most of the time. Sometimes a gentle answer doesn't turn away anger. But this is a good thing to practice, because it usually works well.

Sword Drill: Proverbs 19:11

Sensible people control their temper; they earn respect by overlooking wrongs.

- What do we earn by controlling our tempers? (Respect)

Yelling back insults at another person is not living in the way that pleases God. When someone offends you, it is good to just ignore it if possible. Overlook their wrongs, just as you would want them to do to you.

You must read and DO what Proverbs tells us.

Sword Drill: Proverbs 1:8-9

*⁸My child, listen when your father corrects you. Don't neglect your mother's instruction. ⁹What you learn from them will **crown you with grace** and be a **chain of honor** around your neck.*

Notice that this last Proverb starts by saying, “*My child, listen when your father corrects you. Don't neglect your mother's instruction.*”

None of us are born with wisdom; we need to be taught what is wise and how to think wisely; we must learn how to make good choices. God has given your moms and dad an important job to do. Their job as parents is to teach you to love what is right and good and to want to do it. God expects your parents to teach you wisdom so that you'll know how to act and how to make good choices in life.

Crown of grace

This Proverb speaks of a *crown of grace*. This Proverb is saying if you listen to your mom and dad and do what is right and good, your life will be crowned with grace. You will have a good life full of joy and happiness.

Have you ever seen a girl wearing a beautiful wreath of flowers on her head? [Show picture of girl with a wreath of flowers in her hair.]

This Proverb is telling us that, just like a beautiful wreath of flowers on a girl's head, wisdom brings beauty to a person. Remember, *Wisdom is loving what is right and good, and doing it.*

Chain of honor

This Proverb also speaks of a *chain of honor around your neck*.

[Teacher, show the children two chains, a heavy-duty chain and a beautiful chain necklace.]

Which kind of chain do you think this verse is talking about?

Is it a heavy chain binding you and forcing you to follow the way of wisdom? Or is more like a gold medal awarded to someone for being the best?

[Show two pictures, one of a prisoner in shackles and one of Olympic gold-medal winners.]

You put a *chain of honor around your neck* as a decoration to make yourself look more beautiful. [Teacher, put a chain necklace around the neck of a girl in the class.]

This Proverb is saying that Wisdom is like a special necklace—it brings beauty to you. Whereas foolishness makes you look silly and it will imprison you.

Listening to, obeying, and loving the good things our parents have taught us, brings beauty and happiness into our lives and makes us beautiful to others. People of good character are admired by others.

The book of Proverbs is a collection of all these wise sayings that our parents are supposed to be teaching us. The Proverbs tell us how to live our lives in a way that pleases God.

Sword Drill: Proverbs 2:10

For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will fill you with joy.

- Where should wisdom be? (In your heart not just in your head.)

What this is saying is that we shouldn't just know these things in our heads, but we need to love wisdom so it is in our hearts.

- How can you get wisdom into your heart and not just in your head? (Loving wisdom and wanting to please God by doing what is right and good.)

Loving wisdom is wanting to obey the wise instruction of God; it is wanting to follow the good advice of your parents and wanting to do what is right. When you love what is good and right and wise, then all the teachings of wisdom are happy things to you. You want to learn more and more about the right way to do things; you want to become wiser and wiser so that you know how to make good choices, and so that you will make those good choices joyfully.

Unless Jesus gives us a love for what is good and right, the wise instruction of God and the good advice of parents feels like a strong binding chain [show the heavy-duty chain] instead of the beautiful chain necklace.

We are all born walking on the *Way of the Foolish*. Only Jesus can change our hearts so that we love wisdom.

If you are a child of God, you have a call to wisdom on your life. Wisdom is a beautiful thing that brings you happiness. But, remember, Wisdom needs to be in your heart; not just in your head.

Closing Prayer

Father, please help us all to gain a heart of wisdom, to love what is right and good and to want to do it so that we live lives that are pleasing to You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Wisdom Necklaces

Have the children braid thin pieces of ribbon as a "chain" to hold a pendant. (Or, link colored paper clips together). Make a heart-shaped "pendant" from heavy card stock and have them write one of the

Proverbs from today's lesson on it. Punch two holes at the top of the heart so that it will lie flat when it is threaded onto the ribbon chain.

Tell them that when they wear it, to remember that following the good teaching of their parents is like a beautiful necklace.

Proverbs Chains

Copy the Proverbs strips on colored paper and cut them apart.

Have the children make paper chains from the strips of Proverbs. Tell the children to tear off a link each day this week and read the Proverb.

Game Center

"Bowling" Game:

Write a brief description of a situation kids might experience on separate index cards. Tape each scenario card to toy plastic bowling pins or empty plastic bottles. Using a rubber ball, have the students line up behind a line. Each player gets two tries to knock a pin over. Lead student to discuss how they might react to the situation if they were wise and loved what is right and good, or if they were foolish and loved what is bad and wrong. Replace each card after it has been discussed. Continue the game until each student has a turn.

Ideas for scenarios:

- Your friend wants you to spray paint graffiti on the school ways.
- Someone called you a mean name in front of your friends.
- You threw a baseball and broke a neighbor's window.
- Your friend cheated in a game.
- Someone copied your answers during a test.
- Your friend wrecked your bike.

- You found a wallet with lots of money in it.
- Somebody stole money from you.

Or, use the following questions in a game of your choice:

1. Why do you think Proverbs 16:24 tells us that kind words are *healthy for the body*? (Kind words help make people feel happy.)
2. Why does Proverbs 17:22 tell us that a cheerful heart is good medicine? (Grumpiness makes everyone feel awful.)
3. What does Proverbs 15:1 tell us do to someone who is angry with us? (Answer their anger with gentleness and kindness.)
4. What does Proverbs 19:11 tell us we can earn by controlling our tempers? (Respect)
5. In Proverbs 1:8-9, what does it mean to listen to your father's instructions? (To obey your parents.)
6. Can you give me an example from your life of a time when you listened to your father's or mother's instructions?
7. Can you give me an example from your life of a time when you didn't listen to your father's or mother's instructions? What happened?
8. Do your parents' instructions and advice sometimes feel like a strong binding chain instead of a beautiful necklace? Why?
9. Where does Proverbs 2:10 say that wisdom should be? (In your heart not just in your head. We need to love wisdom; not just know about it.)
10. How can you get wisdom into your heart and not just in your head? (Loving wisdom and wanting to please God by doing what is right and good.)

