

OLD TESTAMENT GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASS

Green Mountain 1st Ward, Lakewood, Colorado

22 August 2010

Page 1

Lesson 31: "Happy Is the Man That Findeth Wisdom" (Proverbs and Ecclesiastes)

Introduction

PRIDE GOETH BEFORE
DESTRUCTION
-PROVERBS 16:18

A soft
answer turneth
away wrath:
but grievous
words stir
up anger
-Proverbs 15:1

Train up a
child in the way
he should go:
and when he
is old, he will
not depart
from it.
-Proverbs 22:6

To every thing
there is a season,
and a time
to every purpose
under the heaven
-Ecclesiastes 3:1

TRUST IN THE LORD
WITH ALL THINE
HEART, AND LEAN
NOT UNTO THINE
OWN UNDERSTANDING
-PROVERBS 3:5

For as he
thinketh
in his heart,
so is he: Eat and
drink, saith he to
thee; but his heart
is not with thee.
-Proverbs 23:7

Lesson Highlights

- Wisdom
- Trust in the Lord
- The words we speak
- Pride
- Friendship
- Raising children
- Happiness and good humor

A study of this lesson will help inspire us to be more Christlike by applying the wise counsel in the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

Proverbs are short sayings that generally give counsel about living righteously. The Old Testament records that Solomon "spake three thousand proverbs" (1 Kings 4:32). Some of these wise sayings are included in the book of Proverbs. Although Solomon and the other authors of this book were not prophets, much of what they wrote was inspired by the Lord. Their writings generally reflect a belief that true wisdom comes from God.

The book of Ecclesiastes also contains wise sayings, and some people believe Solomon to be its author. The message of Ecclesiastes is that life is meaningful only through God.

This lesson is divided into seven sections that focus on important topics in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

Next Week

#32 "I Know That My Redeemer Liveth"
(Job 1-2; 13; 19; 27; 42)

Wisdom

The books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes emphasize the importance of wisdom.

Proverbs 1:7; Proverbs 9:9-10 – There is a difference between being learned and being wise. In biblical language, to “fear the Lord” means to reverence and obey him. Wisdom is more than knowledge; it is the proper application of

knowledge. To the Israelites, wisdom meant obedience to God’s laws.

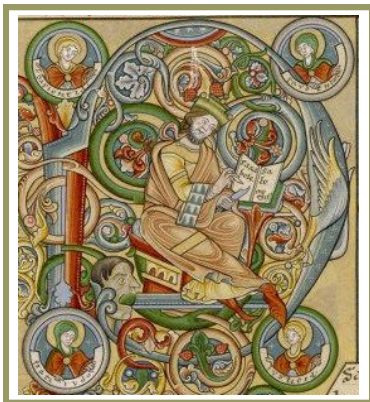
Proverbs 2:2-6 teaches the need for diligence in obtaining the knowledge of God.

Proverbs 3:13-18;

Ecclesiastes 7:12 - The value of wisdom surpasses the value of earthly treasures. Wisdom brings happiness and peace.

Proverbs 3:18 - wisdom “is a tree of life” to those who possess it. It leads to righteousness.

Proverbs 9:9-10 and Proverbs 15:31-33 - Qualities of wise people include reverence for that which is holy and the ability to accept instruction and apply it for their benefit.



King Solomon Writing his Proverbs, German Bible

Trust in the Lord

Proverbs 3:5-7 - Counsel is given to trust in the Lord and follow his direction.

Proverbs 3:6 - To acknowledge God means to worship Him and seek His counsel and guidance. Then, when guidance or inspiration is received, the wise follow it.

The words we speak

Proverbs 6:16-19 lists seven things the Lord hates. Three of these things—lying, bearing false witness, and sowing discord—apply to the words we speak.

Proverbs 16:27-28; Proverbs 18:8; Proverbs 25:18 - The Lord is so concerned with the words we speak because they reflect our thoughts... and our thoughts become

actions which, when continued, become habits. The problems of lying, gossiping, or speaking negatively about others are to be avoided.

Proverbs 16:24; Proverbs 12:25-16:24 says “pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul.” Pleasant words make us happy—both the speaker and the listener.

Proverbs 15:1 - Benefits come from speaking softly when a disagreement arises, as **Elder Gordon B. Hinckley** explained: “*We seldom get into trouble when we speak softly. It is only when we raise our voices that the sparks fly and tiny molehills become great mountains of contention*” (Ensign, June 1971, 72).



King Solomon Writing his Proverbs, Gustave Dore

Pride

Proverbs 8:13 states that the Lord hates pride. He considers it a serious sin.

President Ezra Taft Benson said: “*The central feature of pride is enmity—enmity toward God and enmity toward our fellowmen. Enmity means ‘hatred toward, hostility to, or a state of opposition.’ It is the power by which Satan wishes to reign over us. Pride is essentially competitive in nature. We pit our will against God’s. When we direct our pride toward God, it is in the spirit of ‘my will and not thine be done.’ As Paul said, they ‘seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s’ (Philippians 2:21). ...Our will in competition to God’s will allows de-*

sires, appetites, and passions to go unbridled (see Alma 38:12; 3 Nephi 12:30). The proud cannot accept the authority of God giving direction to their lives (see Helaman 12:6). They pit their perceptions of truth against God’s great knowledge, their abilities versus God’s priesthood power, their accomplishments against His mighty works. Our enmity toward God takes on many labels, such as rebellion, hard-heartedness, stiff-neckedness, unrepentant, puffed up, easily offended, and sign seekers. The proud wish God would agree with them. They aren’t interested in changing their opinions to agree with God’s. ... Pride is

a damning sin in the true sense of that word. It limits or stops progression (see Alma 12:10-11). The proud are not easily taught (see 1 Nephi 15:3, 1 Nephi 15:7-11). They won’t change their minds to accept truths, because to do so implies they have been wrong” (Ensign, May 1989, 4, 6).

Proverbs 13:10 and 16:18 teach that pride leads to contention and destruction. As **President Ezra Taft Benson** said: “*Another face of pride is contention. Arguments, fights, unrighteous dominion, generation gaps, divorces, spouse abuse, riots, and disturbances all fall into this category of pride.*

Contention in our families drives the Spirit of the Lord away. It also drives many of our family members away. ... Pride adversely affects

all our relationships—our relationship with God and His servants, between husband and wife, parent and child” (Ensign, May 1989, 6).

Proverbs 16:19 – Counsels us to overcome pride.

Friendship

Proverbs 13:20; Proverbs 22:24-25 – Here we are warned about unrighteous friends. Their companionship can lead to destruction. They can teach us their habits and ensnare us in sin.

Proverbs 17:17; Proverbs 27:9 - Characteristics of good friends include loyalty, love, and devotion.

Proverbs 18:24 - To have good friends we need to be good friends. Uplift others and they will be there for you when you need them.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 - True friends react when we make unwise choices...they help us recover.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton said:

“Someone has said, ‘A friend is a person who is willing to take me the way I am.’ Accepting this as one definition of the word, may I quickly suggest that we are something less than a real friend if we leave a person the same way we find him. ... No greater reward can come to any of us as we serve than a sincere ‘Thank you for being my friend.’ When those who need assistance find their way back through and with us, it is friendship in action. When the weak are made strong and the strong stronger through our lives, friendship is real. If a man can be judged by his friends, he can also be meas-

ured by their heights.

... Yes, a friend is a person who is willing to take me the way I am but who is willing and able to leave me better than he found me”

(Ensign, Jan. 1973, 41, 43).

We are expected to strengthen friendships among family members as well as acquaintances.

Jesus Christ has often called his followers his friends (D&C 88:62; D&C 93:45). He has shown that he is our friend as referenced in John 15:13.

We show that we are his friends by following his teachings—as taught in John 15:14.

Raising children

Proverbs 22:6 says to “train up a child in the way he should go.”

D&C 68:25-28 - Parents need to follow this counsel. When we effectively teach children the principles of the gospel and nurture their testimonies, we are following divine guidance. **Elder Richard G. Scott** said: *“You must be willing to forgo personal pleasure and self-interest for*

family-centered activity, and not turn over to church, school, or society the principal role of fostering a child’s well-rounded development. It takes time, great effort, and significant personal sacrifice to ‘train up a child in the way he should go.’ But where can you find greater rewards for a job well done?” (Ensign, May 1993, 34).

Proverbs 19:18; Proverbs

29:17 - Children need rules, boundaries, and loving correction. Properly disciplined and corrected, a child will later appreciate your loving actions.

Proverbs 6:20-23 - Children should respond to the righteous counsel of their parents with enthusiasm and diligence. Parents should give correction as directed in D&C 121:41-44.

Happiness and good humor

Proverbs 15:13; Proverbs 17:22 - It is very important to develop a happy attitude (“a merry heart”) and a good sense of humor, as **President Hugh B. Brown** said: *“I would like to have you smile because after all we must*

keep a sense of humor whatever comes. I think of all the people in the world we should be the happiest. We have the greatest and most joyous message in the world. I think when we get on the other side; someone will meet us

with a smile (unless we go to the wrong place and then someone will grin), so let us be happy. But let our happiness be genuine—let it come from within” (The Abundant Life [1965], 83).

Remember and follow the wise counsel in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. You may also want to memorize a favorite passage from one of those books. Post some Proverbs on your refrigerator door.

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the teachings discussed in this lesson.

- Why do you think it requires diligence to obtain this knowledge of God?
- How does wisdom bring happiness and peace?
- How does the Lord direct our paths? What experiences have taught you to trust the Lord?
- How are we blessed as we acknowledge God?
- How can we overcome the problems of lying, gossiping, or speaking negatively about others?
- Why is pride such a serious sin? What can we do to be more humble in our relationships with our family members and with God?
- What can we do to encourage uplifting humor in our families?