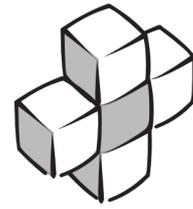




**SMACC**  
*Making Disciples of Jesus Christ*



# **Bible Study Series:**

# **Proverbs**



**Our Mission:**

*To glorify God together in response to his grace  
by making disciples of Jesus Christ*

## **About These Studies**

These studies were written by various SMACC leaders for use among university students. You are most welcome to use and adapt these studies for your own context. Where you do so please provide the following acknowledgment.

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# Study 1: “The Beginning of Knowledge” (Proverbs 1:1-7)

## Getting started

1. What comes to mind when you think of a wise person? What makes a person wise?

## Context

2. Divide the passage into smaller sections and give each section a title.

Verse	Title

3. Before we begin with Proverbs 1:1-7, quickly check out the following verses through Proverbs. Who is talking to whom, and what sort of ‘talk’ is happening?

1:8

3:1-2

4:1

5:1

7:1

8:32-34

4. Briefly pick out any chunk of verses from Proverbs 10-31. How does it differ in style from chapters 1-9? How do you think 1-9 relates with 10-31?

**Digging in**

Proverbs 1-9 is a sort of introduction to the chapters 10-31. It is kind of like a ‘prep talk’ rather than a ‘pep talk’ – the scene is of a father saying, “Come sit down and listen to what life is all about.” Chapters 1-9 provides the framework to view the wise sayings of chapters 10-31, imploring the listener choose wisdom over ignorance. To see how that works, let us begin with the ‘introduction to the introduction’ – Proverbs 1:1-7.

5. Read Proverbs 1:1 and 1 Kings 4:29-34. Why is it so incredible that these are the proverbs “of Solomon”?

6. Based off Proverbs 1:2-6, who and what is the book of Proverbs for?

<b>Who is the book of Proverbs for?</b>	
Proverbs 1:5	

<b>What is the purpose of Proverbs?</b>	
Proverbs 1:2,6	
Proverbs 1:3a, 4-5	
Proverbs 1:3b	

7. According to Proverbs 1:7, what is the key difference between wise people and fools?

8. What does ‘fear of the LORD’ mean? How does it link with wisdom?

### **Application**

9. How has this study changed the way you view the book of Proverbs?

10. In what areas of your life do you think you need the guidance of Proverbs to increase your 'wisdom quotient'?

### **Prayer**

- Pray that we would fear God, being wise and avoiding foolishness, living in the knowledge of his power and Word.
- Ask God, who gives generously, to give your bible study group wisdom to understand the book of Proverbs over the next few weeks, to make us wise people.

# Study 2: “Wisdom Says, ‘Don’t be Stupid’” (Proverbs 1:8-33)

**Getting started**

- 1. Why is it so annoying to hear someone tell you, “I told you so”?

**Digging in**

- 2. Read Proverbs 1:8-33. Divide the passage into smaller sections with a short title for each.

Verses	Title

- 3. Why is Solomon so concerned about how wisdom is treated?

- 4. What do the sinners offer? Will they satisfy?

5. Why is Ms. Wisdom so noisy? Why is she such an attention seeker?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What happens if we don't listen to the cries of Ms Wisdom? Why?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. Why is Ms Wisdom so harsh?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. From her conclusion (v32-33), what is Ms Wisdom really saying about herself?

**Application**

9. Would we regard what our parents teach us as wisdom? Have we given them the honour that is due them?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. How are we enticed by sin? Have we given in to its promotion?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. How different would your life look like if you were treating God as God as compared to those who don't?

## Study 3: “Listen up, Son!” (Proverbs 2-4)

### Getting started

1. Think of the last time you put a lot of effort into doing something. What led you to expending so much time and energy into this ‘something’?

### Context

2. What has the fear of the Lord got to do with wisdom?

### Overview of the text

<b>God, the source of all wisdom.</b>	2:6-8, 3:19-20
<b>Seek wisdom.</b>	2:1-4; 3:1, 3:3, 3:21; 4:1-10, 4:20
<b>Wisdom in action.</b>	3:9, 3:11, 3:25, 3:27-31, 4:14-15, 4:24-27
<b>Perks of wisdom / what wisdom brings about.</b>	2:5, 2:9-20, 3:2, 3:4, 3:13-18, 3:22-24, 4:1b, 4:6, 4:8-12, 4:22, 4:26b
<b>The upright vs the wicked in God’s sight; and their outcome.</b>	2:21-22, 3:32-35

### Digging in

3. From the verses in Box 2, what do they say about the process of seeking wisdom?
  - a. How are you actively seeking wisdom? (If you aren’t, what’s stopping you?)

4. Proverbs 3:5-6 are widely memorised verses. What do these verses (along with 3:7) teach us about what it means to be wise?
  - a. What are the areas in your life in which you are prone to thinking that you'll do just fine without God?
  
5. Why does it make sense to do what v5-7 says? (ref: Box 1)
  - a. Are there times in which God's ways seem inconvenient / "impractical" to us? What do we tend to do in these situations?
  
6. What do 3:9,11 and 3:27-31 imply about wisdom?
  - a. How has wisdom (or our lack of it) affected how we treat God and one another?

7. Compare Proverbs 3:4 with Luke 2:52. What has Jesus got to do with all that we've discussed so far – and what has this got to do with us?

a. What has all of this got to do with us?

8. Look again at the verses in box 5. Is this what's observed in the world today? How then, are we to understand these verses?

9. How are you tempted to be discouraged by the fact that those who foolishly reject God and live their own way seem to be doing so much better than those who "seek wisdom" and "fear the Lord"? What keeps you going in these moments of discouragement?

## Study 4: “Wise is He Who Resists Temptation” (Proverbs 5-7)

### Getting started

1. When was the last time you felt tempted to do something that you knew it’s wrong? What was it that was convincing you to do it?

### Recap

From last week’s study, we learned that:

1. God is the source of all wisdom, by wisdom He created the world.
2. The process of seeking and gaining wisdom is ongoing, requiring constant effort of our hearts and minds.
3. To be wise is to trust in the Lord completely with **all** our hearts, to acknowledge Him in **all** our way and completely submit to Him in **every area** of our lives.
4. This also means recognizing our limits – humbly acknowledging our weaknesses and hence, not leaning on our own understanding.
5. To be wise is also to be loving to those around us.
6. Jesus is wisdom personified, living the perfect life.

**Read Proverbs 5-7.** Divide them into sections and give them a short title each.

Verses	Title



7. List down the things that God hates. What is their similarity? What future are the wicked people who do these things going to face?

***Read Proverbs 5:7-23; 6:20-35; 7:24-27***

8. What are the consequences of adultery?

5:9-14

5:21-23; 7:27

6:26-35

***Read Proverbs 5:15-20; 6:20-25***

9. Instead of giving yourself up to commit adultery, what did the author urge us to do?

**Application: Living Out the Life of Wisdom**

10. What can we do to promote faithfulness in our lives?

11. Often, we are tempted to be lazy, knowing that there are better things to be done, yet we choose to procrastinate. What are some of the actions we can do to change our laziness?

## Study 5: What is True Wisdom? (Proverbs 8-9)

### Getting Started

1. Who out of the following list of people do you think would give the most reliable advice? Why?

- politicians      teachers      friends      family members      talk show hosts  
 work colleagues      doctors      shop assistants      psychologists

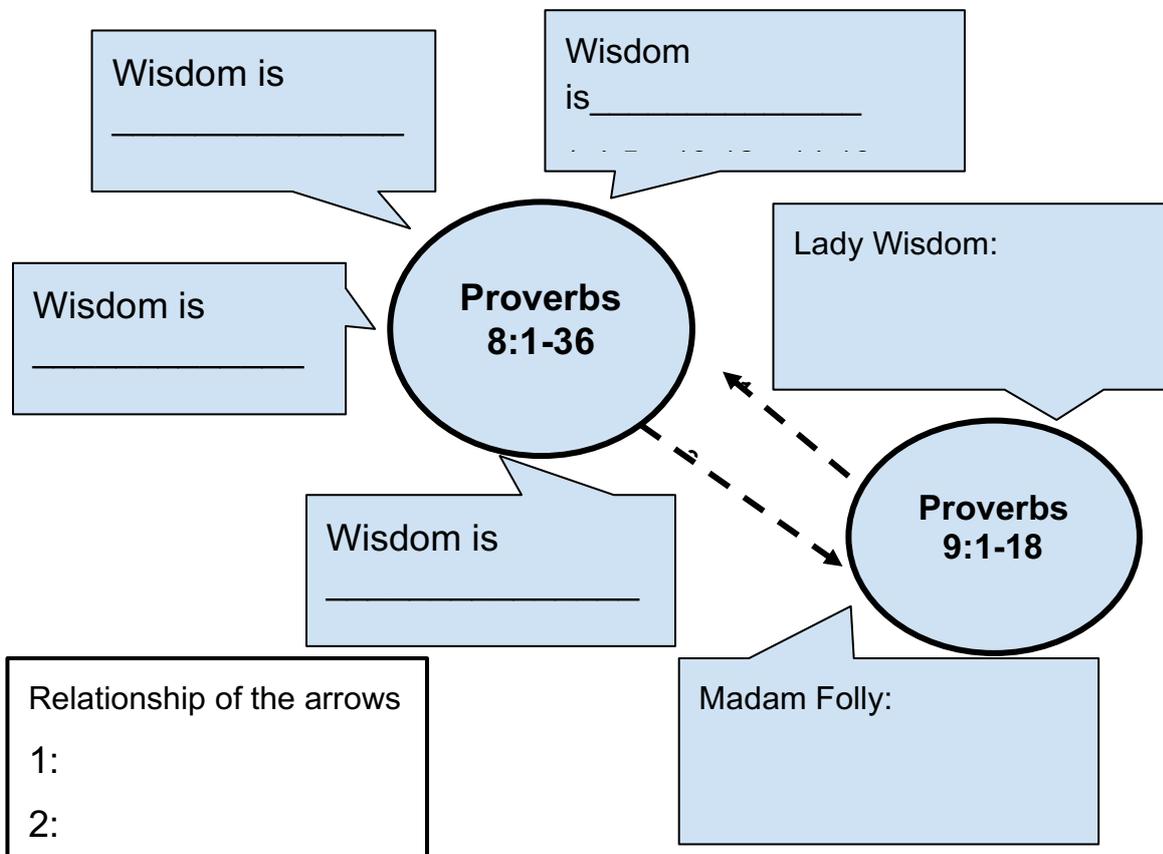
### Context

In Proverbs 5-7, we read about a father advising his son to be wise and not give in to the lure of the adulteress, but rather, resist the temptation.

### Digging in

**Read Proverbs 8:1-9:18.**

2. Fill in the appropriate descriptions for wisdom in the diagram below.



**Proverbs 8:1-36 Characters/Attributes of Wisdom**

*(I) Wisdom is foundational- She is part of the foundation of creation*

3. How is wisdom related with creation?

*(II) Wisdom is practical- She equips her listeners in every area of life*

4. Who does wisdom call out to and what does she offer?

5. What are the evidence that we can see in the practicalities of wisdom?

*(III) Wisdom is moral- She teaches her listeners discernment (to differentiate right & wrong)*

6. What is the difference between earthly wisdom and wisdom from above? (cf. James 3:13-18)


*(IV) Wisdom is relational- She appeals to bring you into relationship with God*

7. So far in Proverbs 8, we have seen some of the distinctive attributes of wisdom. How do we see the relationship between wisdom and God? (cf. Colossians 1:15-20, John 1:1-4)

**Proverbs 9:1-18: The Way of Living in Wisdom**

8. The metaphor of two paths is evident from chapters 1-9, it is gradually subsumed under the theme of the 'two women'. First, with the seductive adulteress (2:16-19 and chapters 5-7) vs Wisdom (1:20-33 and 8:1-31) , and now with two characters, Lady Wisdom herself and Madam Folly.

	Lady Wisdom	Compare & Contrast	Madam Folly
<b>Description</b>			
<b>Calls out to</b>			
<b>Advice Provided</b>			
<b>Consequences of following</b>			

9. On the surface, the contrast between the two women throughout chapter 8 and 9 seems mainly to be about adultery. Do you think it is about more than physical adultery? Discuss why or why not.

10. The recurring theme of fearing the Lord is seen in 9:10. (also in 8:13). Can you see any link between who the Lord is and what it means to fear Him?

### Application

11. Following up from Q8, how are we still clinging dearly onto the earthly wisdom in many areas of our lives? Why?

*We have seen that folly (i.e. living in foolishness (9:13) or not living in the fear of the Lord) will eventually lead to destruction instead of eternal spiritual blessings, even though it seduces us with temporarily attractive rewards.*

12. After going through nine chapters of Proverbs, how do you think by knowing who God is can help you start living according to what Lady Wisdom offers i.e. getting you back on track to wise living?

13. For those who have been walking the way of wisdom, what are some ways that we can encourage one another to also follow Lady Wisdom in the aspects of the head, heart and hands?



2. Choose any part of Proverbs 1-9 to read. How does it feel compared with Chapter 10?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. How do you think these two parts of the books are related?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Observe verses that say “the Lord” (v3, 22, 27, 29), why do you think this is important in our passage?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. There is a long list of topics mentioned in Chapter 10. Are there any that stand out to you and why?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Read onward to Chapter 11. Do you think that the arrangement seems a bit messy? Why do you think it was arranged this way? (hint: why aren't the topics arranged neatly – in topic by topic?)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. Although each individual proverb speaks about different topics, what do you think is the main point of chapter 10?

8. A young Christian says to you, “I don’t have the time and patience to plough through all these verses! Can you just give me a few tips to get me through life?” What would you say?

In the book of Proverbs, we see that acting wisely is the stepping-stone for a good outcome and success. In reality, this isn’t always the case.

9. Do you think the passages in Proverbs guarantees that the righteous will always be blessed and free from any form of suffering? Why or Why not?

10. How do you think Proverbs points towards Jesus?

OT wisdom	Jesus	How is it fulfilled
Proverbs 1:1	Luke 11:31	
Proverbs 2:3-5	Matthew. 13:44 Colossians 2:2-3	
Proverbs 3:4	Luke 2:40,52	
Proverbs 8:22-31	Colossians 1:15-16	

**Prayer**

Thank God for giving us Proverbs 10-31 as a whole (as well as each individual saying) so that we may be challenged to live all of life in wisdom to please him.

## Study 7: Topics - “Work and Career” (Proverbs 10-31)

### Getting started

1. *“Do what you love: Choose a career path that will bring you joy and you’ll never have to work a day in your life!”*

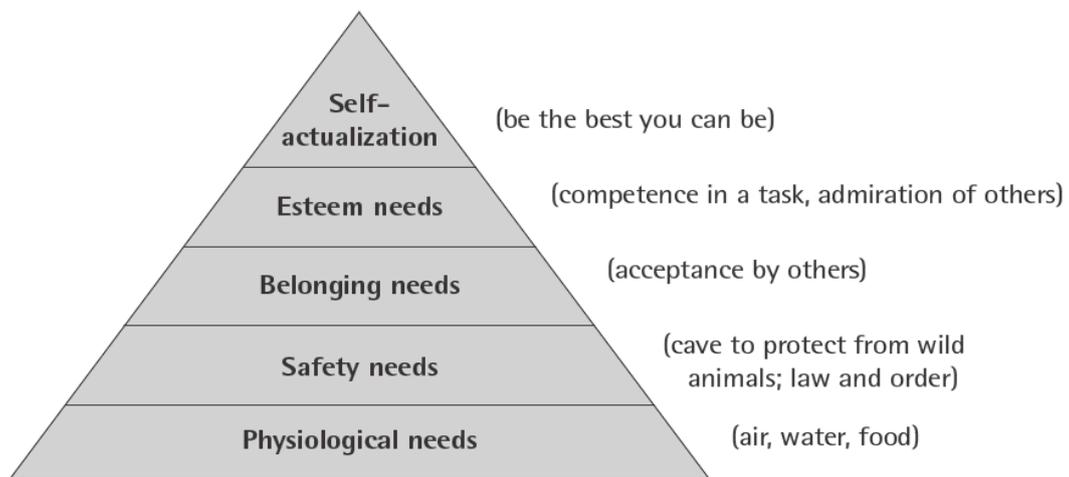
Do you agree with this statement? Why/why not?

### Digging in

#### Part I - Why we work?

1. Read the following verses in Proverbs - **11:26, 16:26, 19:15, 20:13, 27:23-27**

Summarise your findings on the motivations and reasons for work.



2. From **Proverbs 31:13-27**, why does the wife and mother work?

3. How do the motivations and reasons discussed in Q1 & Q2 compared with the motivations and reasons for work found in the following verses?

Passage	Reasons/Motivations for work
Gen 2: 5-8, 15-16	
Eph 4:28	
1 Thess 4: 11-12	
2 Thess 3: 6-12	

4. From the reasons/motivations discussed above, work is commended as a good thing. Are there any negative aspects of work?

**Part II – How should we work?**

5. Read the following verses in Proverbs and fill in the table accordingly.

Verses	Describe how one should work	Benefits of working in the manner described	Implications of not working in the manner described
10:4-5*, 12:24, 13:4*, 18:9*, 20:4, 22:13, 24:30-34*, 26:13-16*			
11:1*, 12:2-3*, 13:25, 16:11-12*, 20:10, 21:6 and 29:24*			
10:9*, 10:16*, 11:18*, 15:6, 20:17* and 29:27*			

6. Read Ephesians 4:28 and 6:5-9, 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12, 1 Timothy 6:1-2 and Titus 2:9-10. Are there any differences in motivation or emphasis from the wisdom of Proverbs?
  
7. In light of what we have learned about why and how should we work, how should we view work as Christians today?

### **Application**

8. "How we work is far more important to God than what work we do." Do you think this is true? Why/why not?
  
9. What wisdom does this give us when we are looking for guidance as to which job we should work in?

### **Key Takeaways**

- *What matters is making those choices for God's glory, not just for personal gains.*
- *If we want to be truly happy in our jobs, we cannot base our happiness on our jobs/our abilities. Our worship and happiness must be anchored and rooted first and only in God. For He alone has done all the work worthy of worship*

## **Study 8: Topics – “Wealth” (Proverbs 10-31)**

### **Getting Started**

1. How much money is too much money?
2. *“The chief goal of humanity should be to eradicate poverty for good!”* What do you think?

### **Context**

Last week we considered wisdom on work - what work is, why we work, how we should work and even what type of work we should or should not get into. Proverbs provides us practical ways of thinking about work through the lens of a person who truly treats God as God (Proverbs 1:7).

### **Digging in**

3. Considering what we now know about work (Pro 10:4, 20:13), how do we get wealth? Is this fair?
4. According to Proverbs (10:22, 22:2, 22:4), where does wealth come from?
5. *“There is no such thing as dirty money. It doesn’t matter where it came from; it’s still money.”* What do you think? What do the authors of Proverbs think? (Pro 13:11, 15:6, 16:8).
6. Since we’re on the topic, what else can’t money do for us? (Pro 11:4, 11:28, 15:16-17, 17:1)

7. What is the potential danger of being crazy rich? (Pro 28:11, 30:7-9,)

8. "Imagine no possessions

*I wonder if you can  
No need for greed or hunger  
A brotherhood of man..."*  
-John Lennon-

*Well, can you imagine? Would giving away all our possessions solve the issue of greed and self-obsession? (Pro 30:9b)*

9. So, what's the real issue? (15:27, 28:20, 28:22, 28:25)

10. What does Jesus say about being overly attached (in love) with money and possessions (Mark 10:17-31)?

### **Application**

11. All of us have some form of wealth (some big and some smaller). What do we do with it? (11:24-26, 14:31, 19:17, 21:13, 2 Cor 8:1-7)

12. Do we use our money to support our church ministries?

13. Does our expenditure show people around us that we are gospel-centred and mission-minded?

## **Study 9: Topics – “Pleasure” (Proverbs 10-31)**

### **Getting started**

1. *“What’s best for you to do is what makes you happy.”*

Do you agree or disagree? Why?

2. What are some things that bring people pleasure? Why?

### **Digging in**

3. Does Proverbs think that pleasure is anti-Christian? (10:28, 15:13, 15:15, 17:22, 29:6)

4. According to Proverbs, what brings happiness and delight? (10:1, 12:4, 24:13-14)

5. What about material pleasures? Contrast Psalms 104:14-15 and 1 Timothy 6:17.

6. Is pleasure always a good thing? (11:6, 18:2, 20:17, 23:26-28)

7. What does Proverbs 23:20-21 and 23:29-35 teach us about pleasure?

8. Why are lovers of pleasure never satisfied, as far as Proverbs is concerned? (14:13, 25:16, 27:7, 27:20)
9. **Read Luke 8:14, Titus 3:3 and James 4:1-3.** How are the dangers of pleasure echoed in the New Testament?

Hopefully it is clear now that pleasure isn't an inherently bad thing, it is a good gift of God. The fallen state of humanity has led to the corruption of this good gift. We find pleasure in sinful activities, and even if not sinful, we let pleasure control us. Things that God gave to make us happy, we crave more and more until it becomes an addiction since we will never be fully satisfied when we get our fix. Our motives then shift from serving God and others to serving ourselves. We are to enjoy pleasure in things that are good and godly without idolising them. Ultimately, these things are there to point us to the God who is good, as reflected in his gifts. We are to find lasting pleasure only in Him! 'Pleasure in Proverbs' informs us to live in the fear of the LORD.

*But is pleasure in Proverbs really all about us?*

10. **Read Psalms 16:11, 19:7-11, 37:4 and Revelations 21:1-6, 22:1-5.** Where can we find good, lasting pleasure?
11. Who should we seek to bring pleasure to? How?

Verses	Who?	How?
11:1, 11:20, 12:22, 15:8		
12:4, 12:25, 23:24-25		

See also Colossians 1:10 and 1 Thessalonians 4:1.

### **Bringing Things Together**

12. How does Proverbs guard us from pursuing pleasure for the sake of pleasure?

### **Application**

13. *“Christianity is just so boring. I’ll wait till I’m on my deathbed, then become a Christian. I just don’t want to miss out on life.”*

Imagine someone tells you this. How would you respond?

14. *“God wants to give you a fulfilling live of happiness, health and wealth!”*

What do you think of this statement, considering today’s study?

15. Reflect on your past week or months. Has pleasure captured your heart? Discuss honestly.

16. What kind of steps can we take to apply Proverb’s wisdom on pleasure?

### **Prayer**

Thank God for providing us with all that we have, not only what for our daily needs, but with even more for our enjoyment.

Pray that we will not be lovers of pleasure, but lovers of God who seek to please him first, that our pursuit of ‘life’s little luxuries’ don’t come at the gargantuan cost of our salvation.

## Study 10: Topics – “Marriage” (Proverbs 10-31)

### Getting started

1. *“Marriage is just a piece of paper – a social construct!”* Do you agree? Why or why not?

### Context

As we’ve seen throughout our study of Proverbs, God’s wisdom is applicable in **every** area of our lives. In order to live the good life here as inhabitants of God’s created world, it would only make sense to live in accordance to His wisdom, the way He’s ordered things.

Today, we’ll be zooming in to one of these many areas: **marriage**.

### A. Faithfulness

2. What do movies (or just people in general) nowadays depict to be important elements in a marriage?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What is deemed to be important in marriage in Proverbs 2:16-17, 5:15-20 and 20:6? Why is it fundamental to marriage?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. In Proverbs 5:18-19; what strengthens marriage as a whole?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. From 1 Corinthians 7:3-5, how does this encourage faithfulness in marriage?

**B. Excellent Spouse**

6. In looking for a spouse, what are some things that are important to you?

7. What characteristics does Proverbs advise women to look for in a husband?

Verses	Characteristics
31:11, 31:28	
20:6, 28:20	
10:4, 20:4, 21:5	
14:29, 15:18	

8. What characteristics does Proverbs advise wise men to look for in a wife?

Verses	Characteristics
12:4	
19:14	
21:9, 21:19, 27:15-16	
31:11	
31:15, 27	
31:19-20	
31:26	
31:30	

**Application**

9. In what ways does God's wisdom (question 7 and 8) conflict with what's usually important to us (question 6)? In your own life, which do you find yourself prioritizing?

10. Looking at the characteristics in question 7 and 8 – how do you fare? How does it make you feel?

## Study 11: Topics – “Family” (Proverbs 10-31)

### Getting started

1. Do you notice a growing trend of younger couples deciding not to have a family (bear children) or to have small families after marriage? What do you think are some reasons for this decision?

### Context

Last week we learnt what Proverbs teaches us about Faithfulness in a Marriage. This week we look at what comes beyond Marriage- building a Family under God’s wisdom in Proverbs.

### Digging in

2. What does Proverbs 10-31 say about this topic – Family? What is the key message from these verses?

Verses	Detail

**Key message:** Parents are called to be involved in their children’s lives, especially fathers who have the responsibility to discipline his son in observing the way of the Lord.

3. What does “rod” in Proverbs symbolize and why is it important?

4. What roles are fathers commonly associated with in today’s context?

5. What are the roles of a father in accordance to the passages below?

Passage	Message

6. What are the key similarities and differences in a Father's role from the Bible as compared to what the world perceives?

7. What roles are mothers commonly associated with in today's context?

8. What is the role of a Mother in accordance to Proverbs 31:10-31?

9. What are the similarities and differences in a Mother's role from the Bible as compared to what the world perceives?

**Application**

10. What are some of the common concerns or practices related to parenting we are familiar with in the Asian family that contrast with what we learnt from Proverbs today?

11. From the discussion of parental roles today, is there anything you would do differently from your parents when you parent your own children?

## Study 12: Topics – “Friendship” (Proverbs 10-31)

### Getting started

1. What do you consider a real friend to be like?

### Digging in

2. Read the passages in Proverbs regarding friendship below:

<b>Passage</b>	<b>What does it say about friendship or being a neighbor?</b>	<b>Categorise them (does it describe who is a good or bad friend or how to get friends)</b>
11:9	A godless man’s speech destroys his neighbor	Bad friend
11:12		
12:26		
14:20		
14:21		
16:28		
16:29		
17:17		
18:24		
19:4		
19:6		
19:7		
22:11		
25:18		
26:18-19		
27:10		
27:14		

3. There are also some important themes that underline Proverbs about friendship. Read Proverbs 10:12 & 13:20 and describe how we should think about the topic of friendship?

### **The New Testament Perspective on Friendship**

4. Read Luke 10:25-37. What is Jesus' answer to "who is my neighbor?"
5. Read Matthew 11:19 (also Luke 7:34). This is the only place where Jesus is called our friend. How is Jesus being their friend? (what are the social dynamics at play here?)
6. Read Romans 12:9-21. Paul quotes proverbs 25:21-22 here. What echoes from Proverbs' teaching on friendship? Are there any new ideas?

Seen through New Testament eyes, the wisdom of Proverbs is not so much about who is my friend or neighbor, or how I can get good friends, but how I can be a friend or neighbor to those around me. This indeed goes beyond real friendship, for it means loving others as I have the opportunity, whether I am in a close 'real friendship' relationship with them or not.

### **Application**

7. Does Proverbs resonate with your experience of what makes friendships work / not work? Is there anything different or surprising?
8. Sometimes Christians tend to be "walked over" where hospitality and good deeds are taken for granted. What are your thoughts?

9. Who do you find it hard to be a neighbor to? Why?

10. If there is one thing to change about how you can be a friend to others, what would it be?

**Prayer**

Thank God for the friends and neighbors he has given you. (Think of specific people, and specific things to thank God for about those people.) Give thanks especially for the wonderful privilege of being Jesus' friend.

Ask God to help you to be a godly and loving neighbor and friend to those around you. (Again, think of specific people and specific ways in which you can be a friend.)

## Study 13: Topics – “Words” (Proverbs 10-31)

### Getting Started

1. *“The tongue has no bone, but it is strong enough to break a heart”.*

Do you agree/ disagree to this statement? Discuss it in your group.

### Digging in

2. Read the following verses in Proverbs. What do you discover about the power of words?

Verses	In what ways can words be powerful for good?	In what ways can words be powerful for ill?
10:18-21 *10:21		
11:9		
12:13-14		
12:17-19		
12:25		
13:3		
15:1		
16:24		
17:27-28		
18:6-7		
25:15		
26:20		

3. What does Proverbs say about the connection between our speech and our hearts? Read verses 15:28, 16:21-23, 17:20.

4. Read Proverbs 26:24-25. Discuss in your group what the problem of this form of speech is.

5. To match these “seven abominations”, read the verses below and list down the seven kinds of malicious and destructive speech in Proverbs—‘seven deadly sins’ of the mouth, as it were.

Verses	Form of speech

6. Following from the table above, which forms of speech are you most prone to or in danger of?

7. What does Jesus say about the connection between our heart and our speech? (Matthew 12:34-37)

8. To have wise speech, we need wise hearts. How do we have wise hearts?

Proverbs 1:20-23	
Proverbs 2:6-10	
Ephesians 1:15-18	

**Application**

9. God’s wisdom about our speech relates to friendship, marriage, work and more. (We know this because of the interconnectedness of the many themes in Proverbs). Are there special challenges or changes you need to make concerning your speech in any aspects of your life?

10. Proverbs tells us that silence can help us avoid sinning (10:19), gain respect (11:12), and is deemed wise and intelligent (17:28). In other words, you may be blessed by holding your tongue. Are there any circumstances where silence is unhelpful or harmful?

## Study 14: Topics – “Pride” (Proverbs 10-31)

### Getting started

1. How does Pride relate to the sin in Genesis 3?

### Context

This study will focus on the topic of “Pride”. It is the perfect theme to help us think about how we respond to the entire series of Proverbs. Are we going to fear God and listen to his commands, or are we too proud to let God be God in our life?

### Digging in

2. Read the following verses in Proverbs and share about what is the nature of pride (or proudness)? What are some consequences we see for those who are proud?

Verses	Detail
11:2	
13:10	
15:25	
16:5	
16:18-19	
18:12	
21:4	
29:23	

3. Proverbs 21:24 tells us that “Scoffer” is the name of the arrogant, haughty man who acts with arrogant pride. How does the scoffer act proudly?

Verses	Detail
13:1	
14:6	
15:12	
17:5	
19:25	
19:28	

4. How else is the proud illustrated in the verses below?

12:15, 18:2, 26:12, 28:26:

25:14, 25:6-7, 27:1, 30:8-9

5. What will happen to the scoffers/mockers?

The previous studies in Proverbs 1-9 is oriented around the key message that the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord. In chapter 9, the father urges his son to choose one path (one Woman) which is Lady Wisdom instead of Lady Folly.

6. From Proverbs 9, both Lady Wisdom and Lady Folly calls out to the “simple”, how are they similar or different to the scoffers/mockers? (Proverbs 1:22, 8:5, 13:1, 15:12, 19:25 and 21:11)

7. What are the consequences of following Lady Wisdom and Lady Folly?

8. In between the calls from Lady Wisdom and Lady Folly, what is the key advice/message in 9:7-12?

9. Read Proverbs 31, how similar is the wife described in the Chapter with Lady Wisdom from Proverbs 9?

**Application**

10. Looking back the past week, have you been tempted to act pridefully (because you think you know better)? How did this study urge you to respond differently?

11. Have you experienced difficulty in accepting rebuke from a caring friend? How did you react at that time and why do you feel that?

12. Is there wisdom from Proverbs in the previous studies that you find difficult to obey God in? Share honestly. How may your pride be getting in the way?



3. What is the difference between how Agur starts his proverbs compared to Solomon? (cf. Pro 1:8, 2:1, 3:1-2, 4:1-2)
  
4. Verse 5-6 says that God's Word which is true in nature protects those who rely on it. What will God's word protect you from and how? (cf. Eph. 4:11-14, 2 Tim 3:16-17, Deut. 8:1-3)
  
5. Why is Agur so fussy with his prayer request? What does it show about Agur's relationship with God?
  
6. What is the real issue with this group of destructive people in V11-14?
  
7. Look at Agur's lists from V18-31. What do they have in common and what do they show us?

Verses	Similarities between the items on the list	Purpose of the list(s)
V18-20		
V21-23		
V24-28		
V29-31		

8. What is Agur's command to foolish people?

9. King Lemuel's mom seems to mean business. Why does she instruct him so strictly?

10. How does the instructions from Lemuel's mother relate to us?

**Application**

11. If we believe that God's word is true and protects us, how should we treat it?

12. We've seen Agur's prayer. What do we pray for? Why?

13. So, do you think you are wise?

## Study 16: “The A-Z of Wisdom” (Proverbs 31:10-31)

### Getting started

1. At first glance, what do you think Proverbs 31:10-31 is about?
  - 10 steps to becoming the Christian woman that every Christian man wants
  - Checklist of things to look for in your wife-to-be
  - Jesus
  - Description of what life could be like if the reader were to live out the book’s instructions
  - Summary of the whole of Proverbs

Because this is meant to be a summary; we’ll be doing a lot of Bible flipping to see the links between this “excellent wife” and the earlier parts of Proverbs that we’ve studied.

### Digging in

2. Recall what we’ve seen in Proverbs 1:1-4 – what is the purpose of the whole of Proverbs? How is this exemplified in the Excellent Wife?

Proverbs teaches us to...	How it’s seen in the “Excellent Wife”

3. Proverbs 1:7 is the central message, the ‘thesis statement’ of the book of Proverbs on wisdom. Recall what being wise ultimately looks like; and compare how it’s observed in the Excellent Wife.
4. In Proverbs 9:1-12, we were introduced to Lady Wisdom. How does the Excellent Wife compare to Lady Wisdom?

5. We've covered a few topics as we looked at Proverbs 10-31; work, wealth, pleasure, marriage, friendship, words and pride. What are we told about the Excellent Wife regarding these areas?
  
6. Given all that we've seen today; do you think Proverbs 31:10-31 is meant for women only? Why or why not?
  
7. In what ways do you think you (as a man / woman) have fallen short of this standard of an Excellent Wife? How do you think you can work on these things?
  
8. In what ways do we see Jesus as the perfect fulfillment of these characteristics of the Excellent Wife?

**Application**

Given that we've covered almost the entire book of Proverbs; have you / how have you lived your life differently? What have you found to be particularly helpful for you?

## Study 17: Proverbs and the New Testament

So, we've reached the final study of Proverbs! Together we have explored how the key to approaching Proverbs is to read it in light of the truth that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge; it is by looking at the world through the lens of treating God as God, that we gain true wisdom. But these Proverbs come from the accumulated knowledge of generations past – Proverbs is an Old Testament book. How then, do we view Proverbs in light of the New Testament, and more importantly, through the lens of Jesus Christ?

### Getting started

1. Before we jump into the New Testament, let's recap. How does Proverbs fit into the Old Testament (discuss the style of the book, the themes, why you think it was written)?
  
2. Having gone through the many topics Proverbs covers, think back to some of the consequences Proverbs gives for an act or way of living (exp: Proverbs 10:27 – “The fear of the LORD prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be short”). Do you think Proverbs promises too much?

### Wisdom in the New Testament

3. Look up these verses and see how Proverbs and Jesus are linked.

OT Passage	Jesus	Link
Proverbs 1:1	Luke 11:31	
Proverbs 2:3-5	Colossians 2:2-3	
Proverbs 3:1-4	Luke 2:40,52	

Proverbs 8:22	Colossians 1:15-16	
Proverbs 10:24-25	Matthew 7:24-27	

4. So, how should we as New Testament Christians view, read and apply Proverbs?

5. New Testament authors have quoted or alluded to some parts of Proverbs when talking about the Christian life. Look at these verses in Proverbs and think about how you would apply them in your Christian life. Then look up the New Testament references and see how it is applied there (think of this as looking at the Proverb through the lens of Jesus). Finally, think about whether the consequence promised (if any) is applied 'Now', 'Not Yet' (will pass when Christ returns to judge) or 'Both' (Now and Not Yet).

Proverb	Application	NT Reference	Now	Not Yet	Both
2:3-6		James 1:5			
3:3-4		2 Corinthians 8:21, Hebrews 12:1-2			
3:34		James 4:6,10, 1 Peter 5:5			
4:26		Hebrews 12:13			

10:12		1 Peter 4:8			
11:24		2 Corinthians 9:6			
15:29		James 5:16			
17:3		1 Peter 1:7			
19:17		Matthew 25:40			
20:22, 25:21- 22		Romans 12:19-21			
23:4, 28:22		1 Timothy 6:9			

24:11-12		Matthew 16:27, Revelations 22:12			
24:21		1 Peter 2:17			
26:11		2 Peter 2:21-22			
27:1		James 4:13-14			
29:23		Luke 14:11			
30:8		Matthew 6:11, 1 Timothy 6:8			

*After going through the exercise:*

6. How does the New Testament apply the book of Proverbs to us today? How is this distinctly Christian?

7. How do the last three columns (Now, Not Yet, Both) help us to understand why our world is the way it is?

### **Application**

8. Assuming you wanted to reread Proverbs on your own, how would you attempt to rightly apply Proverbs?

9. How has this study informed your understanding and appreciation of Jesus?

10. Based on what we studied today, how would you respond if a friend shared these statements with you?

- a. *"I don't know whether God is really there. I pray and commit all my plans and troubles to God, and I strive to be obedient, but things keep turning bad."*

- b. *"Don't you ever want to do the things non-Christians do? They're all happy with how things are for them. It's not wrong to enjoy life, right? I just feel like sometimes we miss out on what life has to offer."*

11. Is there someone at your school/workplace or in your family whom you could share what you have learned today? Write their name down and pray for them.