

# lesson 1

## Bible Basis:

Proverbs 1:1-7

## Lesson Focus:

Be wise in God's eyes.

## Get Smart!

### STEP 1 Connecting with God's Word

Defining Wisdom: Your teens will define wisdom and discuss.

### STEP 2 Studying God's Word

Looking at the Textbook: Your teens will complete the *Blueprint* Bible study and discuss God's wisdom as seen in the Book of Proverbs.

☐ Bibles, copies of *Blueprint*, pencils or pens, paper

### STEP 3 Interacting with God's Word

Reviewing Your Notes: Your teens will practice what they've learned about wisdom.

☐ Bibles, markers, poster board, pencils or pens  
☐ "Word to the Wise" worksheet from *Blueprint*

### STEP 4 Applying God's Word

Acing the Test: Your teens will discuss wisdom, create reminder bookmarks, and pray together.

☐ Pencils or pens, paper

## Memory Verse

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge,  
but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

—Proverbs 1:7

☐ indicates items you will need to prepare before class

## UNDER- STANDING THE BIBLE

At one time, wise individuals made up an established class like prophets and priests.

The Bible's wisdom literature is the fruit of this long tradition of wise teaching in Israel.

The Book of Proverbs was written as a kind of textbook. Originally its primary use was to instruct upper-class Jewish boys who were about the age of your students. Most of the proverbs were written by Solomon, professed to be the wisest man who ever lived. But the wisdom he imparted was not simply his own; it was a gift from God. The Lord granted Solomon's request for wisdom because He knew that Solomon loved and respected Him and would encourage the people of Israel to do the same (see 1 Kings 3:5-15).

Proverbs 1:7, which in many ways is the motto for the whole book, states that true wisdom is learned only in the context of faith. There must be reverence for God in our hearts before we can become wise in a biblical sense. This is because God Himself is the ultimate source of wisdom.

Solomon said that a wise person is self-disciplined and has the ability to discern between right and wrong. A wise person has good sense and knows how to succeed. A wise person knows how to receive truth and understand wise teachings, including those that make up the Book of Proverbs.

# Teacher Devo



A new school year may require meeting teens for the first time. As you do, try not to make judgments based on their appearance or how they act in the first few minutes. Your teens' clothes or jewelry might seem strange to you, but to them, it's a part of who they are. As each teen enters your classroom, consider how God would view them.

First Samuel 16:7b says: "Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

As Christians seek God's wisdom they will begin to see people the way He does—with compassion, love, forgiveness, and the grace to look on the inside.

What kinds of preconceived notions might you have to change to view your teens as God does?

Pray that God will give you His eyes when you look at your students this first time—and every time.

## CLASSROOM TIPS

It's a new school year. Take time both in and out of class to develop friendships with your students. Start by learning their names. It is an act of love to learn and use a person's name. Take an interest in their lives. Where do they go to school? What activities are they involved in? Do they work? What about their families? What you learn will help you in preparing future lessons. The better you understand the needs of your students, the more effective your lessons and prayers will become.

Also, make sure your teens are getting to know one another. High schoolers tend to stick with people they know. Make sure that new students are being introduced and welcomed in. Try to make your classroom a positive experience for every student who enters. If you notice one or two students who haven't yet connected with the rest of the group, be sure to talk to them and introduce them to others.

## WHEN TEACHING THE BIBLE TO TEENS . . .

Welcome to the world of teaching teens! If you are a little nervous about your new task, remember that youth work is 80 percent caring about students and 20 percent mechanics. Your students will remember far more about how you cared about them than the specifics of how you taught. So remember to be concerned and consistent.

Teens have a difficult time seeing others the way God does. Their tremendous desire for acceptance and often fragile self-esteem may cause them to judge others more harshly and criticize more freely. In order to bolster their own standing in a group, they may resort to put-downs or teasing.

In order to keep a positive, emotionally-safe environment in your class, make a rule that only

kind words can be spoken. Encourage students to react to one another the way Jesus would, rather than choosing the insults of a stand-up comedian. If you start the class out with the right tone, the results are likely to last throughout the year—and your students are likely to form lasting relationships with their Christian brothers and sisters.

As you teach about God's wisdom, remind your teens that only God can help them understand their world. His wisdom is far greater than that of their teachers, parents, and peers. Only He can make sense out of what may seem senseless. Having God's wisdom will provide peace and comfort for your teens as they face difficult times.

# STEP 1

Connecting with God's Word

## Lesson Focus:

Be wise in God's eyes.

### BEFORE CLASS OPTION

Invite each student to share with another teen the names of people who he or she thinks are wise. Ask them to discuss, "What characteristics make these individuals seem wise?"

LES. 1

**Students will discuss the difference between being smart and being wise.**

Begin today's discussion by asking:

- ▶ **What does it mean to be smart?**
- ▶ **On the flip side, now define the word "dumb."**
- ▶ **Who are some smart people you know, and what shows they are smart?**

Help your students grapple with the idea that "smart" and "dumb" can be hard to define. Does "being dumb" mean that you "hold little or no knowledge" or does it mean that you have a "low IQ"? Does it mean neither of those things or a combination of both? Does knowing lots of facts make you smart? What about being a good problem-solver? After your students have discussed this, throw another wrench into the mix by asking,

- ▶ **What's the difference between being smart and being wise? Can you be both? Can you be one without the other?**

This is a key question that sets up the entire lesson. Up until now, most of your students will have felt some internal pressure to be "smart." People all over the world feel it's very important for students to be well educated (for good reason).

But when was the last time you heard anyone speaking on a national level regarding the importance of teenagers being wise? This question quickly turns the table from "being smart" as the top priority to being wise! Help your students see the difference.

- ▶ **If you could only choose to be one (smart or wise) what would you choose?**
- ▶ **Which do you think Jesus cares more about? Why?**

In today's study we will learn what true wisdom really is and how we can be wise in God's eyes.



Free! Downloadable  
Options for Steps 1 and 4.  
**RealLifeDownloaded.com**

# STEP 2

Studying God's Word

## Bible Basis:

Proverbs 1:1-7



### MORE BIBLE INFO

The following Bible verses show the differences between God's wisdom and human wisdom.

"Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?" (1 Cor. 1:20).

"For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: 'He catches the wise in their craftiness'" (1 Cor. 3:19).

"The wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere" (Jas. 3:17).

**Your teens will complete the *Blueprint* Bible study and discuss God's wisdom in the Book of Proverbs to understand why God's wisdom is necessary and help them learn how to get it.**

### Materials:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Copies of *Blueprint*
- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ Paper

This is the Bible study section of the lesson. Your students will study the wisdom of God as seen in Proverbs and will discuss questions and complete their *Blueprint* pages. Distribute copies of *Blueprint* and pencils or pens, and have your teens turn to page 7. Have a volunteer read the introduction on page 7 aloud.

Some books of the Bible give very specific reasons about why they were written. Luke wrote his Gospel so that his friend Theophilus might know with certainty the facts about Jesus (Luke 1:4). Among other reasons, John wrote his first epistle so that Christians might know that they had eternal life (1 John 5:13).

Solomon began the Book of Proverbs telling us why he wrote them. When the Lord told Solomon that he could have anything he wanted, just for the asking, he asked for wisdom. The Book of Proverbs contains much of this wisdom.

Have a teen read the Lesson Scripture, Proverbs 1:1-7, aloud. Then have teens work in pairs to complete the first question where they will list eight reasons why Solomon wrote the Book of Proverbs. (Answers to all *Blueprint* questions can be found on page 12 of this teacher's guide.)

Next, as a class, discuss the remaining two questions. After teens have completed the *Blueprint* questions, give them the following "wisdom test" by reading the questions aloud and asking for volunteers to answer or by asking the students to write their answers. If time permits, read the Bible verses as you review. Explain:

**When true wisdom is the objective, the Bible is the textbook. The wisdom given in the Bible isn't the same as the wisdom of the world. To find out if you know what God's wisdom is all about, answer these questions.**

1. **If you were trying to conquer a city with high, thick stone walls, how would worldly wisdom suggest you go about it?** (As movies and military battles show, you would probably attack it with strong weapons or try to besiege the city.)
2. **What did God's wisdom have the Israelites do at Jericho?** (God had the Israelites march around the city for seven days and blow their trumpets. See Joshua 6:1-20.)
3. **If you were waiting for a divine Savior to conquer the world for God, what would worldly wisdom suggest He be like?** (Generally people would think a king or a mighty warrior would be needed to save the world.)
4. **In God's wisdom, how did the Savior come into our world?** (The Savior of the world came as a little baby to a poor family. See Matthew 2.)

The Book of Proverbs is about the wisdom of God as told by Solomon and a few others. We've seen this today in Proverbs 1:1-7. The wisdom of God isn't about facts and worldly smarts. It's about "fearing" Him, which means respecting and loving God and acknowledging His power.

# Lesson 1 Bible Study

## the what-fors of proverbs

Proverbs 1:1-7

Some books of the Bible give very specific reasons about why they were written. Luke wrote his Gospel so that his friend Theophilus might know with certainty the facts about Jesus (Luke 1:4). John wrote his first epistle so that Christians might know that they have eternal life (1 John 5:13).

Solomon began the Book of Proverbs by telling us why he wrote it. When the Lord told Solomon that he could have anything he wanted, just for the asking, he asked for wisdom. The Book of Proverbs contains much of this wisdom.

### ▶ Read Proverbs 1:1-6.

▶ List the eight reasons Solomon wrote the Book of Proverbs.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

▶ If by reading the proverbs you gained each of these things, how could you use them?

### ▶ Read Proverbs 1:7.

▶ Fearing God means respecting His power and control over your life. Why is this kind of respect a good starting point for gaining wisdom?

▶ Why is it foolish to treat wisdom and discipline lightly?

#### Proverbs 1:1-7

"The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel: 'for attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight;

'for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; 'for giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young—'let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance—for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise. 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

1. For attaining wisdom and discipline.
2. To understand insightful ideas.
3. To obtain a disciplined life.
4. For doing what is right, just, and fair.
5. For making simple-minded people wise.
6. For giving knowledge to young people.
7. To add to the learning of the wise.
8. To give guidance to the discerning person.

Answers may vary. Some teens may share that if they gained all of these things, they would be better Christians or they would feel more confident witnessing and being an example. Some may say that they could share their wisdom or teach others.

Answers may vary, but should include something about putting God first and allowing His wisdom to affect everyday decisions. Encourage students to see that respecting God leads to wise choices, even though worldly wisdom may disagree—for example, turning down a high-paying job that would involve behaving in an unethical way.

God's wisdom is where the real power lies. All the security that the world is looking for can be found in a relationship with God. God has given us access to His power, and it would be absurd to ignore His insight and wisdom.



# STEP 3

Interacting with God's Word

## WISE WORDS ANSWERS

- A. Solomon, Proverbs 11:22  
B. Benjamin Franklin  
C. Albert Einstein  
D. Abraham Lincoln  
E. Socrates

1. tragedy  
2. stupidity  
3. time  
4. foolishness

### Your teens will practice what they've learned about wisdom.

In this section your students will have a choice of three activities on wisdom. The "Worldly Wise" activity will get your teens into their Bibles looking up verses and listing information. In the "Choice Challenge" activity your teens will roleplay what a wise decision might look like. In "Wise Words" they will discuss quotes about wisdom and make up wise quotes of their own.

To introduce this interaction step, explain:

**In Solomon's day, many nations didn't seek God's wisdom. Their countries ended up in ruin. But Israel flourished to the extent that Solomon and his people used the wisdom God had given them to seek His truth. The same things happen today. Those who seek what the world considers wise fall flat. Those who follow God's path to wisdom come out on top. The following activities will help us recognize the differences between God's wisdom and the world's foolishness.**

### WORLDLY WISE

- ☐ Bibles  
☐ Markers  
☐ Poster board

Look up these verses in your Bibles about wisdom and foolishness and hold their place for future reference (Ps. 14:1; 111:10; Prov. 8:11; 11:30, 12:15; 13:1; 14:6; 15:5; 28:26; 29:11; Dan. 2:21; and 1 Cor. 1:17). Use markers to make two lists on a poster—one of the foolishness of the world, the other about the things God considers wise. Refer to the Bible verses for help in making your lists.

### CHOICE CHALLENGE

Roleplay a teen making poor decisions in the following situations and facing the consequences: deciding to try drugs, cheating on a test, or lying to cover up a car accident that he or she was involved in.

Now roleplay the same situations with the teen making the wise decisions instead of the unwise ones. For example, when the teen gets into a car accident, instead of driving away, he or she will leave a note explaining the situation and offering to pay for any repairs. Discuss as a group:

- ➊ How did the end results differ?
- ➋ What are the common characteristics of the unwise decisions?
- ➌ What is similar in the wise ones?

### WISE WORDS

- ☐ "Word to the Wise" worksheet from *Blueprint*  
☐ Pencils or pens

Take a few minutes to complete the "Word to the Wise" worksheet on page 8 of *Blueprint*. Feel free to compare your answers or discuss with other students. (The answers are shown on this page under Wise Words Answers.) When you're finished, discuss:

- ➊ If someone wanted to quote you, what wise saying would you give them?
- ➋ Would you consider an astronaut, a genetic scientist, or a mathematician "smart" or "wise"?



- ➌ How are wisdom and common sense similar? How are they different?

# STEP 4

Applying God's Word

## Lesson Focus:

Be wise in God's eyes.

**Students will discuss how they can put their new godly wisdom principles into practice.**

### Materials:

- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Pencils or pens

We all know from our look at Proverbs that true wisdom comes from God. We all know where we need to look for wisdom, but how often do we actually look there?

- ➊ **Where does the world look for wisdom?** (*Celebrities, self-help specialists, politicians, etc.*)
- ➋ **Is wisdom a highly prized commodity these days? What are some things people tend to pursue instead of wisdom?** (*Money, fame, love, happiness, etc.*)

Hand out the paper and writing utensils. Have the teens answer the next few questions in the privacy of their hearts. Encourage them to write down their answers. Words that are written down often carry more meaning for people.

- ➌ **In your free time, what do you like to do? What do you pursue?**

Remind them that some of the stuff they're pursuing may be very honorable and admirable. They may work extremely hard. There may be absolutely nothing morally wrong with their pursuit. And yet, their pursuit should never take the place of their pursuit of God. That should always come first.

- ➍ **Look at each item on your list. How is it a quality pursuit? How is it a wise pursuit?**
- ➎ **Have you ever considered yourself a "pursuer of wisdom"? Why or why not?**
- ➏ **How can you pursue truth and wisdom more regularly?** (*Ask God for wisdom in prayer, read my Bible, find a mentor and meet regularly, read a chapter in Proverbs every day, etc.*)
- ➐ **Will you honestly try to do this? When it gets tough to stay committed, who can you turn to for strength? Choose one person you'll tell about this commitment, and ask them to hold you accountable.**

Make sure your teens understand that God will always be there to strengthen and support them. They may fail and falter, but He is always faithful. Encourage your students to sign and date their papers. Tell them to take their paper home and bookmark it in their Bibles or somewhere where they'll regularly see it. Tell them that you hope it will be a helpful reminder to them to pursue the source of all wisdom—God Himself!

Close in prayer, asking the Lord to help everyone in the room seek His wisdom from above. Pray that you and all your students would be passionate about pursuing God first and foremost. Pray that all of us would be a city on a hill, each of us an example of His love, truth, and wisdom.

Remind your teens that they have a "Daily Faith" devotion section on page 8 of their *Blueprint* magazine.



**Seeing God throughout the Week** As students leave your group today, remind them that being smart and being wise are different. Encourage them to be wise in God's eyes.