



Proverbs

WEEK 1 ♦ JULY 23

Principles for Reading

Introduction

You make thousands of choices every day, but how do you know if they're wise ones? When you decide to follow Jesus, it changes how you make choices. In this series on Proverbs, we'll explore this unique piece of wisdom literature to find the right wisdom to live by. In week one, Pastor Jesse set us up with several principles we must hold to when engaging with this particular piece of Old Testament literature.

Discussion

1. How would you describe your current relationship with the Bible? Do you find it easy or challenging to read and understand it regularly? Share your experiences with the group.
2. Proverbs offers probable principles, not promised outcomes. Living God's way gives us the best chance of a long and full life, but there are no guarantees. How does this perspective change your understanding of the book's teachings? Share any specific instances where this principle has been true in your life.
3. The idea that living a life aligned with God's character and commands doesn't guarantee immunity from pain and tragedy can be difficult to accept. How do you reconcile this concept with your understanding of God's character? How does an awareness of this truth help set expectations for you and your family's life?
4. Some wisdom in Proverbs can only be caught through a personal relationship with God because you'll only follow it if you trust Him. How have you seen and felt this play out in your life? Share any specific, personal stories you may have about choosing what was right in God's eyes, even when it was challenging or counterintuitive. What impact did that decision have on you?
5. Have you ever encountered a proverb that seemed contradictory to your experiences or expectations? Or, it didn't pan out the way the Bible said it should? Share these with your group. How do you process moments like this with God and others?

Application

- **Start reading Proverbs.** Keeping these principles in mind, take time to read or revisit Proverbs with this renewed perspective. Note what you're learning or noticing that you've missed before.
- **Stay Open-Handed.** Take time to practice a prayer of surrender with God. Everything in the world belongs to Him and He continues to be in control and in charge. Even when our lives suffer an injustice or don't work out in a way that's aligned with our expectations from Proverbs, remember they're principles, not outcomes, and you can continue to trust God with your everyday life.
- **Extend Some Trust.** What step do you need to take to trust God in a new way this week? You may already believe in Him and trust Him to some extent, but do you trust Him with your entire life? Every aspect, nook, and cranny? Take time to discover what you're still holding onto, and invite God to help loosen your grip on it because you trust He has your best interest in mind.