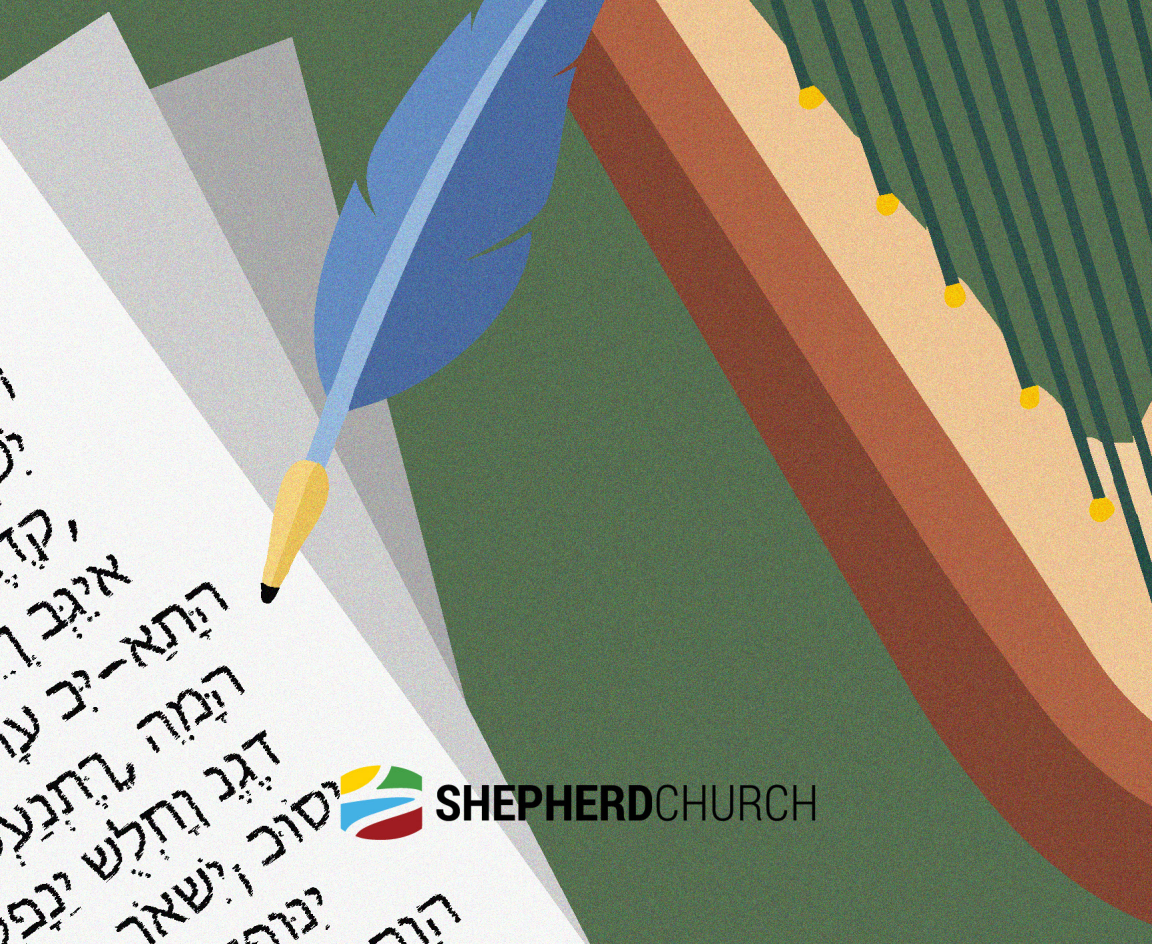


A JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME

PSALMS AND PROVERBS



SHEPHERDCHURCH

Lesson 10: Psalms & Proverbs

Welcome

Choose one of the following questions to answer:

- **What's one of the best pieces of advice that you've received? What made it memorable?**
- **Share a couple of your favorite movie or book quotes. What made these quotes so memorable?**

The connection to the Book of Psalms and the Book of Proverbs is seen in the advice, quotes, and emotional aspects of the questions.

Here are some examples of answers you could give for the first question:

- "Don't let fear make your decisions." It stuck because it challenged me to step out in faith instead of playing it safe.
- "Listen more than you talk." It was memorable because it completely changed how I approach conversations and relationships.
- "Do the next right thing." Simple but powerful—it helped me focus on small steps instead of being overwhelmed.
- "Character is who you are when no one's watching." It left an impression because it shaped my perspective on integrity.
- "You don't have to be perfect, just faithful." That reminder keeps me grounded in God's grace rather than my performance.

Here are some examples of answers you could give as examples for the second question:

- "Even the smallest person can change the course of the future." (The Lord of the Rings) – memorable because it reminds me that no act of faith is too small.
- "Do or do not. There is no try." (Star Wars) – memorable because it pushes me to commit fully instead of making excuses.
- "All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to us." (The Lord of the Rings) – it stuck with me because it reframes life as stewardship, not control.
- "With great power comes great responsibility." (Spider-Man) – memorable because it's a simple truth that applies to leadership and influence in everyday life.

Worship

Psalms 3 is a powerful reminder that God is our shield in the midst of chaos. Written by David while fleeing from his son Absalom, it shows a man surrounded by enemies but anchored in the sustaining presence of God. David opens his heart to the Lord in raw honesty—but doesn't stop there. He worships through the pain. Read [Psalm 3](#) aloud and take a moment to reflect on how worship and honesty can coexist.

Budget about 7-10 minutes for this WORSHIP section. As the leader, it might be good for you to read Psalm 3 out loud. Then, give about 1 minute for people to reflect on what they heard, and ask them a question like, "How do you see worship and honesty in this psalm?" End this time with prayer.

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There are 10 questions/prompts in the WORD section. Your Life Group doesn't have to cover every question below. Life Group Leaders may select the ones that best fit your group. You can also use the remaining questions as personal reflection throughout the week.

Word

Please watch the video lesson before your Life Group meets.

The Books of Psalms and Proverbs sit side by side in the middle of the Bible, but they serve very different purposes. Together, they reflect the full range of human experience in relationship with God. Both books were largely shaped by people with complicated lives but devoted hearts to God. Psalms is a book of songs and prayers that give voice to every emotion imaginable: joy, sorrow, anger, hope, despair, gratitude, and worship. Whether written in moments of celebration or seasons of deep pain, the Psalms remind us that God invites honest conversation. They teach us how to cry out to God, how to praise Him, and how to find our identity and refuge in His presence.

Proverbs, on the other hand, reads more like a field guide for wise living. It's a collection of short, memorable sayings that offer practical advice for everyday life—how to make decisions, handle relationships, manage money, avoid temptation, live with integrity, etc. At the heart of Proverbs is the idea that true wisdom begins with a humble posture toward God.

Think of it this way: Psalms helps us talk to God while Proverbs helps us walk w/ God.

1. Describe what your devotional time with God usually looks like.

This question is subjective and shouldn't take long to answer. However, this question helps to set up the following 9 questions/prompts in the lesson. If some of your Life Group members don't have a devotional time, make sure you let them know that there's no shame in that answer. It could be they have never done a personal devotional, aren't good with time management, etc. Refer them back to some of the answers from other Life Group members so they can get some ideas about what their devotional time might look like.

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2. How does Psalm 1 set the tone for the entire Book of Psalms?

Psalm 1 is like the front door into the Psalms—it sets the agenda for everything that follows. Right away, it paints a picture of two paths:

- The way of the righteous
- The way of the wicked

By contrasting those who delight in God's Word with those who reject it, Psalm 1 reminds us that life is a series of choices, and those choices lead to very different outcomes. This theme of trust, obedience, and the consequences of turning from God will echo again and again throughout the entire Book of Psalms. In other words, Psalm 1 begins the Psalms and sets the tone for how we're supposed to read them.

It also shows us where blessing is found. True happiness and stability come from being rooted in God's Word, not in circumstances, wealth, or power. This is a theme that the Psalms will return to constantly—whether it's David crying out in distress, worshipers praising God in the temple, or the psalmists wrestling with doubt and suffering.

In so many words, Psalm 1 says, "Start here: build your life on God's Word, and everything else in this book will make sense."

It's a guidepost that tells us the Psalms are not just poetry, but instruction for living a life shaped by God's truth.

3. What does *Psalm 8:1-4* teach you about God's majesty and your identity?

Psalm 8 begins and ends with the same exclamation: "O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" (Psalm 8:1, 9). This repetition acts as a bookend, emphasizing that everything in the psalm points back to God's greatness.

- The Hebrew word for majestic is **רִדָּא** ('**addîr**'), which carries the meaning of something mighty, excellent, and surpassingly great.

David is essentially saying, "Your very name—who You are—radiates glory across the entire earth." As he reflects on the vast heavens, the "work of [God's] fingers, the moon and the stars" (v. 3), David is overwhelmed by the magnitude of God's creation. It is not human greatness on display here, but the majesty of the Creator woven into the fabric of the universe.

What's striking is how David moves from the infinite to the fragile. In verse 2, he says that God has established strength "from the mouths of babes and infants." The contrast is intentional: the God who set galaxies in place demonstrates His power through weakness. Much like today, children in the ancient world symbolized dependence and vulnerability, yet their very lives display God's strength and silence His enemies. This shows that God's majesty is not only found in overwhelming grandeur but also in His ability to work through what is small and overlooked.

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The turning point comes in verse 4, when David asks: “What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?” The Hebrew here is rich.

- The word for man is **אָנוֹשׁ** (*’enōsh*), which emphasizes frailty and mortality.
- The title, “son of man,” is **בֶּן-אָדָם** (*ben-’adam*), highlighting humanity’s earthbound, fragile nature.

Yet despite this smallness, God is mindful of humanity and cares for us.

- The verb translated “care” is **דָּקַף** (*pāqad*), which carries the sense of intentional oversight or personal visitation. It’s not passive awareness but active attention—God visits, attends to, and shows concern for His people.

Together, these verses highlight two profound truths:

- God’s infinite majesty
- Humanity’s surprising dignity

On the one hand, the scale of creation reminds us of how small we are. On the other hand, God’s mindfulness of us affirms our value and identity. Our worth does not come from our accomplishments or stature, but from the fact that the Creator of the cosmos sees us, knows us, and cares for us. That combination of humility and honor gives us both perspective and purpose: we are tiny in the grand scheme of the universe, yet immeasurably significant in the eyes of God.

4. Psalm 42:11 reflects a heart in conflict–discouraged, yet determined to praise. How can Christians navigate such tension in their faith journey?

Psalm 42:11 gives us a glimpse into the inner struggle of a believer who is both discouraged and yet determined to trust God. The verse says, “Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.”

- The word for “cast down” in Hebrew is **שָׁחָה** (*shāḥah*), which paints a picture of bowing low or being weighed down, much like a person under a heavy burden.
- The word translated “turmoil” is **הָמָה** (*hāmāh*), a term that can mean to roar or make noise, reflecting the inner restlessness of the psalmist’s heart.

These words remind us that this is not a mild discouragement—it is a storm within, a conflict between despair and faith.

The psalmist doesn’t hide his feelings; instead, he names them honestly. This honesty is important because it shows us that faith is not about pretending everything is fine. Instead, faith acknowledges the pain but also speaks truth to the heart.

- When he says, “Hope in God,” the word used is **יָחַל** (*yāḥal*), which means to wait expectantly or to trust with anticipation. However, the word isn’t a passive “maybe things will get better.” It’s a deliberate choice to place confidence in God’s character and promises, even when circumstances feel overwhelming.

Today, we can follow this example by learning to “preach” to our own souls, reminding ourselves of God’s goodness and faithfulness when emotions try to drag us down.

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Historically, this psalm was written by the sons of Korah, a group of temple singers who knew both worship and hardship. Israel often found itself in times of exile or oppression, and these words likely reflect that experience of being cut off from the temple and the visible presence of God. For them, singing these words was more about survival than shallow optimism. They were choosing to anchor themselves in God's promises when life felt uncertain. Such context adds depth for us today: the psalmist's determination to praise in the middle of discouragement is not an empty sentiment but a battle-tested faith.

For Christians navigating discouragement in modern life, Psalm 42:11 becomes a model of resilience. Whether it's dealing with personal loss, anxiety, cultural pressures, or seasons of doubt, this verse reminds us that it's possible to feel both discouraged and hopeful at the same time. It's okay to wrestle with God, to ask Him hard questions, and to admit to Him when our soul feels heavy. God values our honesty, is big enough to take it, and has promised to walk with us (Isaiah 43:2).

Yet Psalm 42:11 also calls us to respond with determination, focusing on hope, choosing to worship continually, and always trusting that God will bring renewal. Like the psalmist, we can say with confidence, even before the breakthrough comes, "I shall again praise Him." That declaration turns tension into testimony and transforms despair into an opportunity for deeper trust in God.

5. Count how many times the following phrase repeated in *Psalm 136*: His love endures forever. Why do you think this phrase is repeated so many times? Share about a time when God was faithful to you even when you didn't deserve it.

Psalm 136 repeats the phrase "His love endures forever" 26 times, once in every verse of the psalm.

- The Hebrew word used for "love" is **חֶסֶד** (**hesed**), which is rich in meaning. It can be translated as steadfast love, covenantal loyalty, mercy, or loving-kindness.

By repeating this phrase over and over, the psalm drives home the truth that God's love is not fickle or temporary but unchanging and eternal. The repetition serves as a kind of refrain, almost like a congregational response, reminding Israel that everything God has done in creation, redemption, and provision flows from His faithful love.

Historically, Psalm 136 was likely used in public worship, possibly at the temple, with a leader calling out the works of God and the people responding together, "His love endures forever." In that sense, the psalm is both a declaration of theology and an act of remembering God's faithfulness. Each mighty deed that is listed in the psalm (the creation of the heavens, the deliverance from Egypt, the defeat of kings, and the gift of the land) was evidence of God's faithfulness to and love for His people. For the Israelites, remembering God's "**hesed-love**" was a way of anchoring themselves in their identity as God's chosen people, even when they strayed.

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For the Life Group discussion, members could share simple but powerful stories of God's faithfulness. For example, they might share about how:

- God carried them through a season of financial hardship
- God provided a job when they least expected it
- God brought healing in a broken relationship
- God forgave them for being bitter toward someone else
- God restored them after a time of sin or rebellion

Each person's story becomes a modern echo of Psalm 136, reinforcing the truth that God's "hesed-love" has not changed. Encourage your Life Group members to answer with phrases like:

- "I didn't deserve God's faithfulness when... but He showed His love by..."
- "Looking back, I can see His love enduring even when I..."

This practice helps connect the ancient refrain of Psalm 136 to the lived experiences of God's people today.

6. How would you explain **Proverbs 1:7** to someone who read it for the first time?

Proverbs 1:7 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction." If someone were reading this verse for the first time, you might want to explain that it's really the foundation for the whole book of Proverbs.

- The Hebrew word for "fear" is **הָאֵרִי (yir'ah)**, which doesn't mean being scared of God in a terror-filled way. Instead, it carries the idea of reverence, awe, and deep respect for who God is. It's recognizing His greatness and holiness, and responding with humility and obedience.
- The word "beginning" in Hebrew is **רֵאשִׁית (rē'shīt)**, which means the first or chief part.

So, when Proverbs says that the fear of the Lord is the "beginning" of knowledge, it's teaching that true wisdom starts with putting God in His rightful place. It's not just saying that fearing God is the starting point, but also the foundation and priority of wisdom. Without that reverence for God, knowledge can become self-centered, prideful, or even destructive. But when knowledge is rooted in yir'ah—fear, it leads to humility, moral clarity, and a life aligned with God's design. This is why the second half of the verse contrasts the wise with "fools."

- The Hebrew word for "fools" here is **לֵוִיָּא ('ewil)**, describing someone who rejects correction and refuses to learn from God or others.

Historically, Proverbs was written as wisdom literature, meant to guide people in practical, godly living. Ancient Israel valued wisdom as more than just intelligence—it was the skill of living well in the presence of God and others. This verse sets the tone by saying that no matter how much knowledge someone gains, if it isn't built on reverence for God, it misses the point.

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For the Israelites, Proverbs 1:7 and similar verses taught them that wisdom was directly tied to their faithfulness to God—living according to His law and instruction. Today, Proverbs 1:7 reminds us that education, success, and information aren't enough if they're detached from God. In a world that often prizes independence and self-made wisdom, this verse calls us back to dependence on God as the true source of understanding. It challenges us to ask ourselves:

- Do I approach my decisions, relationships, and other life issues with reverence for God, or do I lean only on my own insight?

Explaining it this way shows that Proverbs 1:7 is not just an ancient saying but a timeless truth: real wisdom begins when we learn to honor and trust the Lord in every part of our lives.

7. Read **Proverbs 3:1-8**. According to this passage, what does it look like to “lean not on your own understanding”?

Proverbs 3:1-8 paints a picture of what it means to truly trust God rather than depending only on human reasoning. The key phrase comes in verse 5: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.”

- The Hebrew word for “lean” is **שָׁאֵן (sha'an)**, which means to rest upon, support, or rely on something for stability.
- The Hebrew word for “heart” is **לֵב (lev)**, which can mean and be translated as several related things: heart, desires, will, emotions, mind, thoughts, etc. The word for “heart” can also mean all of those things.

The idea is that human understanding is not a firm foundation, as it can be limited, biased, or flawed. Instead, the heart (aka, our whole inner self—mind, thoughts, will, emotions, etc.) is to place complete trust in God. The passage explains what this looks like in practice, as verse 6 says, “In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”

- The word for “acknowledge” is **יָדָע (yada')**, which means more than simple awareness; it conveys intimate knowledge or relationship.

To acknowledge God is to bring Him into every decision and direction of life, recognizing His authority and seeking His guidance. This acknowledgment results in God “making straight” the paths, a phrase that implies clearing obstacles, guiding decisions, and leading to outcomes aligned with His will. Rather than depending only on human logic or strategy, the believer seeks God's wisdom at every step.

Then, verses 7-8 add further clarity by showing the contrast. “Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil.” The warning is against arrogance and self-sufficiency, which often lead people to ignore God's instruction.

- As mentioned in the explanation of the previous prompt/question, the “fear of the Lord” (**יִרְאָה, yir'ah**) means reverence and humble submission to God's authority.

Turning from evil is the natural outflow of trusting God instead of relying on flawed judgment. The promise attached is that such humility and obedience bring “healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones,” an image of holistic well-being and spiritual renewal.

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The following are some examples of how your Life Group members could answer the second part of this question:

- “When I was going through a job change, a friend kept reminding me of my gifts and how God could use me. Their words helped me move forward instead of giving up.”
- “I still remember something hurtful that was said to me years ago. Even though I’ve forgiven, those words affected the way I saw myself for a long time.”
- “When I intentionally showed appreciation to my spouse, I saw how it changed the tone of our home. It reminded me that little words can set the atmosphere.”
- “Through the years, I’ve noticed how my words shape my kids. When I’m quick to criticize, they shrink back. But when I affirm and encourage them, they light up and take risks.”
- “I once chose to respond gently instead of lashing out, and it de-escalated the situation.”

8. What stood out to you from Susanne’s reflection (from the video) on [Proverbs 18:21](#)? How have you seen the power of words play out in your own relationships?

This question is not only a continuation of the previous question, but it’s also subjective, so it requires some self-reflection. As such, here’s a brief snapshot of how to explain Proverbs 18:21. The verse says, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits.” Three Hebrew words enhance our understanding of this verse:

- The Hebrew word for “power” is **יָד** (yād), which literally means “hand” but is often used metaphorically to express control, strength, or authority. In the context of Proverbs 18:21, it shows that the tongue—though small—has great power, capable of shaping outcomes in people’s lives.
- The Hebrew word for “tongue” is **לָשׁוֹן** (lāshôn), which here represents speech itself.
- The Hebrew word for “fruit” is **פֶּרִי** (perî), often used to describe results or outcomes. Just as a tree produces fruit that nourishes or poisons, the words a person chooses will eventually return to them in the form of consequences.

Proverbs 18:21 reveals the powerful influence of words and reminds us that what’s spoken can bring either destruction or blessing. The imagery of “death and life” is not merely poetic but reflects the ancient Near Eastern understanding of speech as active and effective. By linking the tongue to both life and death, the proverb underscores that words are not neutral—they either build up or tear down. In Israel’s culture, words were not considered empty sounds. Instead, they were believed to have a purpose. A blessing spoken over someone could shape their future, while a curse could bring real harm. In other words, words carry weight, and their impact often stretches far beyond the moment they are spoken.

If people in your Life Group haven’t watched the video lesson, please remind them to do so (even after your Life Group meeting). For anyone in your Life Group who did not watch the video lesson, Susanne shared that Proverbs 18:21 has been transforming her life this year. Specifically, she’s intentionally choosing to bring either life or death into conversations through her words (reminding herself to speak “words of life”). She explained that such a choice affects not only others but also her own heart, as she “eats the fruit” of her words. Then, she encouraged us to regularly “feast” on God’s Word because it brings lasting peace, joy, and hope to every circumstance.

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9. Where in your life are you most eager to gain godly wisdom? Have you asked God for this wisdom? Take a moment with your Life Group, share where godly wisdom is needed in your life, ask God for this wisdom, and pray for each other to receive godly wisdom.

This question is self-explanatory, but if your Life Group members are having trouble with where they need wisdom, you can share some of the following prompts to inspire them to answer:

- Sharing my faith
- Using spiritual gifts
- Growing spiritually
- Dealing with stress
- Processing grief
- Handling friendships
- Dating relationships
- Marriage decisions
- Big life transitions
- Caring for aging parents
- Raising young kids
- Raising teenagers
- Repairing your relationship with your kids
- Time management
- Conflict resolution
- Health concerns
- Making wise choices in everyday life
- Future direction
- Finances
- Career issues

10. David wrote many of the Psalms and his son, Solomon, wrote Proverbs. Even though both had broken pasts, God still used them. How have you seen God use imperfect people?

When looking at David and Solomon, it's clear that God delights in using imperfect people for His purposes.

- David, who wrote many of the Psalms, was known as a man after God's own heart, yet he committed adultery and arranged for the death of Uriah.
- Solomon, who wrote much of Proverbs, was known for his wisdom, yet he later allowed his heart to be led astray by wealth, power, and foreign gods.

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Their stories remind us that God does not wait for people to be flawless before He works through them. Instead, He often chooses broken vessels so that His grace and power shine even more clearly. This truth is seen throughout Scripture and history:

- Moses doubted his abilities and even killed a man, yet God used him to deliver Israel out of Egypt.
- Peter denied Jesus three times, but God still chose him to be a leader in the early church.
- Paul once persecuted Christians, yet became one of the greatest missionaries and writers of the New Testament.

Each of these examples demonstrates that God's strength is not hindered by human weakness; in fact, weakness often becomes the very stage on which His glory is revealed.

Your Life Group members can share about how God used them or others they know. The point to be made is that God still uses imperfect people. Seeing God work through imperfect people is a reminder that no one is disqualified from being used by Him. Instead of being defined by past failures, people can be defined by God's grace and the way He works through their lives to bring hope to others.

Witness

Give an update on your Life Group outreach project. Also, pray for some of the names that you've already mentioned—names that you have been praying for so they can find Jesus.

Budget about 7-10 minutes for this section as people share and your Life Group has a time of prayer.