

# ***Family Seasons***

## ***Wise Words for Families***

Lesson #5 for May 4, 2019

Scriptures: Proverbs 5:3-14; 13:22; 14:26; 17:22; 23:13-14; 31:10-31; Matthew 19:5; 1 Corinthians 7:3-4.

1. In this lesson we will review some of the words of wisdom from Solomon. How would you measure wisdom? Some of those words were not included in the Bible until hundreds of years later when Hezekiah's people added chapters 25-31. Most of the last chapter is probably the only passage in Scripture which apparently was written by a woman.
2. Read 1 Kings 4:32. We only have a few hundred of Solomon's 3000 proverbs; we have only three or four of his songs of which he wrote 1000. Where are the rest? Were they written for some other wives? Were the others not inspired?
3. There is so much advice in the book of Proverbs that it is hard to take it all in. For someone living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century when there is advice of all sorts coming continuously from every direction, there is a problem with the book of Proverbs. We want to ask, "Why did Solomon say those words?" In many cases the answer is probably obvious; but, there are many other cases when one is left with big question marks. There are even passages in Proverbs which seem to be contradictory. So, let us launch into our study of these words, most of which were probably original with Solomon; but, some of which were probably words of wisdom he gathered from other sources.
4. The focus of this lesson, of course, will be on the family. All of us have parents. Some of us may, unfortunately, never have had the opportunity of knowing our fathers or in some cases even our mothers. Others of us have not only parents we grew up with, but also many brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, grandparents, cousins, etc.
5. Much of the book of Proverbs was written in poetic form, easier to memorize. What is that supposed to teach us? Often wise sayings in ancient times were written in poetic form. For example, look at Lamentations, the Song of Solomon, and the book of Psalms. Proverbs would be much more useful to us if we understood the background behind each of the statements. But, a book that included all of that information would be incredibly lengthy.
6. So, let us think of the book of Proverbs as a letter from a wise father to a son or daughter who is about to leave home for college, for a new job, or to get married. Some of the advice in Proverbs seems to be directly taken from the book of Deuteronomy with the advice coming from Moses. That advice from Moses was given in the last month of his lifetime on earth—while they were camped across the flooding Jordan River from Jericho—to Israelites to whom he, no doubt, felt like a father. If only they had followed that advice!
7. Read Proverbs 5:3-14. How many sons did Solomon have? This passage and a number of other passages in Proverbs discuss the problems of illicit sexual relationships. Anyone who has studied history and the lives of even famous people knows that illicit sexual relationships lead to all kinds of disasters. Solomon himself was a second child of an illicit sexual relationship! God's plan, of course, is for us to choose a loving mate and to reserve our sexual relationship for that person. Or, if we are not yet married, to look for the kind of Christian spouse that God would have us marry so we can have that kind of relationship.
8. Compare the proverb that we have just read in Proverbs 5:3-14 addressed to a young man with Song of Solomon 4:12-15 addressed to women. What is implied by calling his bride a "walled garden"? And a "private spring"? Sex was to be a private and intimate relationship.

9. Read Matthew 19:5; 1 Corinthians 7:3-4; and Hebrews 13:4. We should not even need to mention the fact that the sexual relationship was intended to be private between a man and a woman who were married for life. That relationship should help to cement their love for each other. God intends for us to marry when we are relatively young (Proverbs 5:18) and to be excited and thrilled by our relationship with each other for the rest of our lives. (Proverbs 5:19)
10. In 1 Corinthians 7:3-4, Paul advised that we do not even have the right to be attracted by someone who is not our contracted partner. Our bodies belong to our spouses, and their bodies belong to us.
11. But, there is no question about the fact that sexuality is a powerful motivating force. Take a brief look at Hollywood and current movies, and that should be obvious. So, if we recognize that problem, what can we do to control it? Having a wonderful relationship with one's spouse is, of course, the best solution. We can only control ourselves. Would it be appropriate for a faithful Christian to advise someone that s/he knew was being drawn away by sexual temptations to remind him/her of God's guidance? Why do so many people feel like a sexual relationship is their own private business?
12. Read Proverbs 13:22; 27:23-24; 14:26; 15:1,18; 16:32; 15:27; 29:17. These are just a few of the verses in Proverbs that talk about how fathers should relate to their children. Fathers are to be good providers not only from a financial perspective but also of clear, spiritual, biblically-based advice and example. They should not be quick to become angry or harsh but learn to be patient and to be fully in control of their own passions. They should not be greedy and certainly not get involved in shady financial dealings. They should discipline their children in a loving, appropriate way. Think of how fathers discipline their children. Does the child always feel loved at the end of that experience? Does the child see the parent as a loving and wise example, even a Christlike example?
13. It has been stated that: "The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother."— Theodore Hesburgh, President of Notre Dame. What do these words imply? How does it affect children if the parents divorce? What if the parents are continually fighting? As we have mentioned previously, God intended for all of us to learn a great deal about Him from our parents and then, in turn, through our experiences with our own brothers and sisters and especially when we try to raise children.
14. It should be clear that: 1) Loyalty to God, 2) Commitment to our spouses and our families, and 3) Integrity in one's personal and community life are key themes in the book of Proverbs. Whatever sinful attractions might be luring us away from these ideals must be very strongly resisted by a Christian father and mother. Of course, these principles should apply to everyone, not just to fathers.
15. One of the greatest challenges that parents face is how to discipline in love. Parents should never discipline their children while they themselves are angry. That just gives the child an excuse to be angry and rebellious in return. Children must be shown love always and must learn that is the way God treats them as well.
16. Read Proverbs 10:17; 23:13-14; 29:1,15. How do you feel about corporal punishment? There are some entire nations now making laws against it! But, God said, at times, it may be a good idea. This, of course, assumes that the discipline is administered in love. So, why do we need to discipline our children? What should we do if they are exhibiting socially-unacceptable behavior? What if they clearly disobey a command of God or of their parents? Should children be disciplined if they do something embarrassing to the parents?
17. Clearly, the purpose of parenting—and particularly the purpose of discipline—is to lead the

child to love God.

Christ is the “Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” John 1:9. As through Christ every human being has life, so also through Him every soul receives some ray of divine light. Not only intellectual but spiritual power, a perception of right, a desire for goodness, exists in every heart. But against these principles there is struggling an antagonistic power. **The result of the eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is manifest in every man’s experience. There is in his nature a bent to evil, a force which, unaided, he cannot resist. To withstand this force, to attain that ideal which in his inmost soul he accepts as alone worthy, he can find help in but one power. That power is Christ. *Co-operation with that power is man’s greatest need.* In all educational effort should not this co-operation be the highest aim?**—Ellen G. White, *Education*\* 29.1. [Bold type and italic type are added.]

18. We can learn an important lesson from those who plant trees. When the tree is very young, it must be protected and nourished. But, as it grows, it becomes better able to survive the vicissitudes of plant life by itself. That is also true of children. Discipline in a Christian setting should not be regarded as punishment nor proof of the parents authority over the child; instead, it should be viewed as a redemptive correction. Think of how God our heavenly Father has dealt with us as a human race. What if every parent disciplined with “God’s love”?
19. Read Proverbs 13:24; 23:13-14. The Hebrew word for *rod* is not used very often in the Bible. Shepherds used a rod to guide their flocks. Discipline and guidance must be administered in a loving and redemptive way. A child’s loving feelings for his parents are vital if delivered discipline is to have its desired effect or be corrective and redemptive.
20. If we have ever been tempted as parents to lose our tempers and discipline in anger, how do we correct that with our children? There are some people who have admitted that they did not mind being disciplined by their parents because the parent would go so far out of his/her way to make it up to them afterwards!
21. Read Proverbs 21:9,19; 27:15-16. Do you think Solomon knew anything about nagging wives? Remember that he had 700 wives and 300 concubines! (1 Kings 11:3) How long did it take for Solomon to marry all those wives? Did he find himself constantly trying to avoid some of them? Would it actually be better to live on a housetop than with a nagging wife? Would you rather live in a desert than to live with a complaining wife? Does the complaining wife ever give you the impression that she is like a water faucet dripping—drip, drip, drip?
22. Were these verses intended to be serious commentary? Or, was Solomon trying to introduce a little humor? Maybe some wives in the audience would like to add some verses about husbands and their problems!
23. Read Proverbs 25:20. What is the point of this proverb?
24. Dr. Graham Maxwell’s father, affectionately known as “Uncle Arthur,” used to arise very early in the morning and wake up his children to go and work in the garden! He would say:  
**Proverbs 24:33-34:** <sup>33</sup>Have a nap and sleep if you want to. Fold your hands and rest awhile, <sup>34</sup>but while you are asleep, poverty will attack you like an armed robber.—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation*\* (2nd ed., Proverbs 24:33-34). New York: American Bible Society.
25. Graham wished he had known at the time about Proverbs 27:14.

**Proverbs 27:14:** You might as well curse your friends as wake them up early in the morning with a loud greeting.—*Good News Bible*.\*

26. Read Proverbs 17:22. In the *Good News Bible*, it says: “Being cheerful keeps you healthy. It is slow death to be gloomy all the time.” Do you know any people who seem to be gloomy all the time? What kind of influence do they have on people around them?
27. A constant level of quarreling, nagging, and complaining can indicate that there are some serious problems under the surface. Just as when a person has a chronic temperature elevation which might be a sign of some more serious disease, those kinds of problems in a family need to be dealt with. They should not be avoided or ignored. Members need to build on their love for the Lord and their commitment to each other by communicating their needs and feelings and, thus, get to the root of the problem and clear it up.
28. But, why is laughter so important for the home? At times, can it be used for good? What is it that causes us to smile or laugh? It is the unexpected word, action, or visual scene. By exaggerating the unexpected, we cause people to think about what has happened and why. It can serve as an opportunity for considering some necessary correction to one’s behavior.
29. There is an incredible passage of Scripture found in Proverbs 31:10-31. Do you know any young men who have looked at this passage and then sought to find a wife who would fit? Read Proverbs 31:1. Who was King Lemuel? Is that a code name for Solomon? And who was King Lemuel’s mother? If so, this would have been written by Bathsheba. What led her to write these words? These words may be the only words in Scripture written by a woman! Do some women, having read these words, wish that she had not written them?
30. Clearly, the woman described in Proverbs 31 was remarkable. These 22 verses were written in the form of poetry. They are an acrostic poem. Proverbs 31:10 begins with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and each subsequent verse begins with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet until verse 31 begins with the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
31. Many people think that this passage is the best part of Proverbs. If so, why wasn’t this chapter included in the portion of Proverbs originally put together by Solomon?
32. There is an ancient dictum from one of the rabbis which says, “A man’s home is his wife.”

**Proverbs 12:4:** A good wife is her husband’s pride and joy; but a wife who brings shame on her husband is like a cancer in his bones.—*Good News Bible*.\*

33. But, at least it should be clear that Proverbs tells us that there are certain characteristics that would be desirable in a husband or wife: Trustworthiness, compassion, reliability, faithfulness, kindness, and industry. And, of course, these things come about because the husband or the wife has reverence for the Lord.

Christians should be careful that they keep the heart with all diligence. They should cultivate a love for meditation, and cherish a spirit of devotion. Many seem to begrudge moments spent in meditation, and the searching of the Scriptures, and prayer, as though the time thus occupied was lost. I wish you could all view these things in the light God would have you; for you would then make the kingdom of heaven of the first importance. To keep your heart in heaven, will give vigor to all your graces, and put life into all your duties. To discipline the mind to dwell upon heavenly things, will put life and earnestness into all our endeavors. Our efforts are languid, and we run the Christian race slowly, and manifest indolence and sloth, because we so little value the heavenly prize. We are dwarfs in spiritual attainments. It is the privilege and duty of the Christian to be “increasing in the knowledge of the Son of God,

unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”  
[Ephesians 4:13.] As exercise increases the appetite, and gives strength and healthy vigor to the body, so will devotional exercises bring an increase of grace and spiritual vigor.—Ellen G. White, *The SDA Bible Commentary*,\* vol. 3, 1157.5. [Content in brackets is in the source.]

34. Many of the problems discussed in this lesson are ubiquitous. If you have one or more of these temptations, you are certainly not alone. In modern times, it has been found that support groups where all those involved are facing the same kinds of temptations are often very helpful in keeping one safe.
35. We have suggested that humor can help to smooth out the rough spots in a relationship. But, using humor to make fun of someone or even to disgrace that person is never helpful.
36. Think about the type of women who are promoted in Hollywood movies. How would they match up with Proverbs 31?
37. Often, men are attracted to women because of their outward beauty. While that is a great asset for a woman, it may not be lasting. That is one reason it is said:

Men marry women hoping they won't change, but they do. Women marry men hoping they will change, but they don't!—Author Unknown.

38. What is it that often causes men to be attracted to women? What is it that often causes women to be attracted to men? Why do these things change? Or, not change?
39. What ideas do you find developing in and around you and in your culture that are in conflict with what we have learned in this lesson? Should Christians speak up on behalf of biblical principles? There are rising political forces that are doing everything they possibly can to do away with biblical principles. How should we feel about that? Can you identify some of those forces in your own society and environment?
40. Read Proverbs 2:16-19; 5:3-14; 7:4-27. These passages clearly talk about the challenges of illicit relationships. How can parents protect their children who get into such problems?

God is a risk taker. He willingly created free moral agents with the potential of loving Him or wanting nothing to do with Him. In a sense, God lost His own wager. His universe rebelled. [Only Satan and his followers and humans on this world rebelled.] He [God] lost [one-third of] His angels. He lost His humans. Worst of all, His own Son was murdered by the very ones He created. Yet, for God, it was all worth it—for the sake of having a family.

Is there any institution in existence that can possess such opposing realities as that of the family? On one hand, it can provide the apex of security and love. On the other, it can breed the deepest pain and resentment, mask the most shocking violence, and disfigure the souls of its offspring. When we start our own families, *we participate in the divine risk of creating relationships*. We choose a spouse, initially a total stranger to us with an unknown future, to bind our lives with forever. We have children that are “bundles of joy.” But we soon realize they also are bundles of potentialities in which that initial joy is either extended or terminated in pain and heartbreak. And yet we, like God, continue to merge our lives with others to create families. Why? Perhaps the lyrics of a Bob Bennett song nail a truth worth pondering: “Love is the only risk worth taking.”—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 65-66. [Content in brackets is added; italic type is in the source.]

41. God recognizes that true love, which is not possible without freedom, in the setting of an
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ideal marriage is what He really wants and needs in our world today. That is why He gave those guiding principles in the beginning as recorded in Genesis 1:28; 2:24.

God has bound our hearts to Him by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. **Through the things of nature, and the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, He has sought to reveal Himself to us.** Yet these but imperfectly represent His love. Though all these evidences have been given, the enemy of good blinded the minds of men, so that they looked upon God with fear; they thought of [11] Him as severe and unforgiving. **Satan led men to conceive of God as a being whose chief attribute is stern justice,—one who is a severe judge, a harsh, exacting creditor. He pictured the Creator as a being who is watching with jealous eye to discern the errors and mistakes of men, that He may visit judgments upon them. It was to remove this dark shadow, by revealing to the world the infinite love of God, that Jesus came to live among men.**—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*\* 10.3. [Bold type is added.]

42. Clearly, Satan is doing everything he possibly can to misrepresent God and to tear apart loving marriages. Can you think of individuals and/or groups down through history that have misrepresented God in these ways? And tried to tear families apart?
43. God went so far as to picture Himself as a Father and a Husband. (Exodus 4:22; Jeremiah 31:32) Jesus is also pictured as a Son, a Bridegroom, and a Brother. (John 3:16; Mark 2:19; Romans 8:29) Why do you think God is using these types of relationships based on the family to represent His love for us?
44. Obviously, not everyone has lived in or was raised in an ideal family. When he was asked what he thought of God as a Father, a young boy who was taken from a downtown ghetto to a camp for children to get away from the influences of the city said: “If He is like my father, I sure would hate Him!”
45. Read Deuteronomy 6:4-7. As we turn to those words given by Moses to the children of Israel on the border of the land of Canaan, he emphasized that we need to teach our children repeatedly and intensively, drilling biblical principles into their minds and hearts. So, how do we do that?
46. As parents we need to be living, as nearly as possible, Christlike lives. Children look to their parents in the place of God when they are young. Their parents are the only authority figures that they really know. We need not only to live Christlike lives but also we need to teach Christian principles; this needs to be done repeatedly and in love. But, of course, this is not possible unless we as parents have our minds filled with Christian principles and are determined to follow them every day of our lives.
47. Sometimes, children ask why we do certain things. Sometimes they will ask, “Why do we go to Sabbath school?” Or, “Why do we go to church?” What is the point of Christian ceremonies? Are we demonstrating in our own lives what Sabbath school and church mean to us? How well are we doing as a generation of Seventh-day Adventist parents instructing and guiding our children to love the Lord? Our success rate is poor! Why are so many of our children leaving the church? No other group in history has been blessed with as much helpful information as we have been. How well are we using that information?

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