

The purpose of each of the Lifespan series is to point the participants to the beauty, wonder, wisdom and grace of Jesus Christ. These studies are designed to be discussion-rich quests into some of the most profound words ever written. Professors, instructors, post docs, and/or graduate students may be surprised to discover that the Bible has a lot to say about their world as academics. Both Christian and non-Christian professors will find that there is much to wrestle with in these Bible studies.

Many book studies turn into arguments about the author's views. This study will be different. In this study, passages of the Bible are the focus and the study itself is more of a tour guide, providing background information and questions that open up the meaning of the passage for the participants to extract for themselves.

There are four of these Lifespan Bible studies for professors. Each one has six lessons each. The following will give you a glimpse into each study:

1. Parables for Professors is designed to explore Jesus' unique perspective of life and godliness. Since many of Jesus' parables were given while interacting with the Pharisees, who were the intellectual leaders of the day, it is not a far stretch to say that these very same parables have more than passing relevance to the intellectual leaders of our day – university professors.
2. Psalms for Professors looks at six of the Psalms that explore vastly different ways that professors experience God. Academicians tend to focus on things of the mind, but the Psalms help us to integrate the heart with the mind. It is amazing how these Psalms reveal Christ to be the apex of our experience.
3. 1st Peter for Professors is oriented towards Christian professors who may experience a sense of isolation in the university because of their faith in Christ. 1st Peter was written to a people who had been persecuted and scattered and was low on hope. This study shows how looking at difficulty from an eternal perspective can change one from being downcast to being joyful.
4. Proverbs for Professors looks at significant themes in the book of Proverbs and what they have to say about the world of the professors. These themes examine the professor's heart, tongue, attitudes, fears, friends, and intellect.

This is meant to be a participatory study with lots of interaction, with the scriptures alone serving as the authority. The value of this study will be in direct proportion to the willingness of the group to extract and share with one another truth derived *from the text itself*.

With that in mind, the following notes may be helpful:

1. Each of the six lessons follows the same format: Launch, Explore, Apply.
  - **Launch** is meant to create interest in the topic of the text. The discussion should be robust before leaving the "Launch"
  - **Explore** is designed to get the meat out of the text. Don't let participants glibly give their opinions. Make them wrestle with what the text is actually saying.
  - **Apply** will give opportunities to personalize the lessons of the study.
2. The vital part of each lesson comes at the end of the Explore section when the group is asked to discover the **Big Idea** of the passage. If the group will wrestle with that before sneaking a peek at the conclusion, the study will be far richer because of it.

3. Preparation prior to the group study is encouraged, but not necessary.
4. The scripture passage for each lesson is embedded in the lesson. There should be no need for participants to bring their Bible with them to the study unless they want to so.
5. Background information is given in the plain text and should be read out loud by someone in the group. *Discussion questions are given in italics. Time should be taken to allow each question to be answered adequately.* Each person is encouraged to write down his/her answer for future reflection.
6. Even allowing for extensive discussion on several of the questions, each lesson should be adequately covered in 50 minutes.
7. After the first or second lesson, the facilitator should give others a chance to lead some of the lessons.

The biggest benefit to this study will be in discovering and discussing what the passage has to say to us. For each question, keep going back to the text and look at it as if for the first time.

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"So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom." Psalm 90:12 | [www.cruprof.com](http://www.cruprof.com)

**LAUNCH**

*On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being high, how important is it to you to have a close friend or a few close friends? Do you see friendship as optional or as a necessity?*

*For you personally, what are the most important qualities that you desire to have in a friend?*

*What are the biggest obstacles to friendship for you?*

**EXPLORE****Survey the Big Picture:**

The Bible exalts godly friendships throughout its pages. Ruth and Naomi, David and Jonathan, Paul and Timothy come immediately to mind. Jesus referred to his followers as friends for whom he would lay down his life. As believers, we are called to live in community with one another as a body, not in isolation, but putting the needs of others ahead of our own. Christian friends are often God's instruments for bringing about His sanctifying work in our lives.

Unfortunately, Christians in academia are often isolated from one another because of the culture's tendency toward individualism and independence, as well as the extraordinary time demands on faculty. Often the quest for significant, life-changing friendships is one that runs against the current. But if we give up on the quest of meaningful friendships, it is at our own peril.

The book of Proverbs looks at the topic of friends from many different angles – good friends, bad friends, difficult friends, fake friends, etc.... There are two lessons:

- 1- You need to be a good friend yourself.
- 2- You need to choose good friends.

**Explore the Text:**

*Examine each passage below carefully and discuss what each proverb reveals about friends. If possible, try to relate what you learn to having friends in an academic setting.*

*Good Friends:*

Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm. – Proverbs 13:20 (ESV)

Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.

– Proverbs 27:5-6

Oil and perfume make the heart glad, and the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel. – Proverbs 27:9

### *Fake Friends:*

Wealth brings many new friends, but a poor man is deserted by his friend. – Proverbs 19:4

Many seek the favor of a generous man, and everyone is a friend to a man who gives gifts. – Proverbs 19:6

### *Sinful friends:*

A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends. – Proverbs 16:28

Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends. – Proverbs 17:9

<sup>24</sup>Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man, <sup>25</sup>lest you learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare. – Proverbs 22:24-25

### *Difficult friends:*

Let your foot be seldom in your neighbor's house, lest he have his fill of you and hate you. – Proverbs 25:17

Trusting in a treacherous man in time of trouble is like a bad tooth or a foot that slips. – Proverbs 25:19

Whoever sings songs to a heavy heart is like one who takes off a garment on a cold day, and like vinegar on soda.  
– Proverbs 25:20

### *Devoted friends:*

A friend loves at all times,... – Proverbs 17:17

A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. – Proverbs 18:24

Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another. – Proverbs 27:17

### **Discover the Big Idea:**

*What's the big lesson here when it comes to friends?*



*Is it possible that you need to move “friendship” up in the priorities of your life? How would you go about making it a higher priority?*

*How can you become a better friend?*

*Whom do you need to pursue more intentionally?*



“So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.” Psalm 90:12 | [www.cruprof.com](http://www.cruprof.com)

**LAUNCH**

One of the themes of Proverbs is that there are two kinds of people: the wise and the foolish. From your experience, what distinguishes between the two?

**EXPLORE****Survey the Big Picture:**

According to tradition, as well as the text, Solomon is the editor and primary contributor to the book of Proverbs. Solomon was the son of King David and Bathsheba, eventually becoming King of Israel. At a young age, God granted him his request for wisdom. Solomon wrote 3000 proverbs, *Song of Solomon*, *Ecclesiastes* and 1005 songs. At the time he lived, he was the wisest man on earth, and apart from Jesus, the wisest man to ever live.

According to I Kings 11, during the latter part of his life, Solomon's heart turned away from God. He entered into unholy alliances by marrying 300 wives and he had 700 concubines. He went so far as to construct temples for false gods. Tragically, the wisest man to live became the biggest fool. Some believe he wrote *Ecclesiastes* before he died as a book of repentance.

The book of Proverbs is part of the wisdom genre of the Old Testament. This Hebraic wisdom literature is nearly 3000 years old and predates western Greek philosophy. Proverbs is practical, not theoretical – giving instruction about money, friends, family, work, and many other aspects of everyday life. These proverbs are truisms, not promises. They are generally true, but not always. For instance, Proverbs 3:1-2 says that by following this teaching, peace and length will be added to one's life. It is *generally* true that a man who does not make passes at his neighbor's wife or who doesn't seek to harm his neighbor will have more peace and live longer, but it is not meant to be a *promise* that a person who follows this teaching will not succumb to a disease and die at a young age.

Proverbs is all about wisdom. That's the big idea of the whole book. Proverbs continually gives the impression of an older man telling a younger man what he has learned about life. For example, chapters 2-7 begin with the words, "My son." There is a parallel to this in the New Testament. There we learn that wisdom comes from living under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. He is the One with experience and wisdom, who knows how to live life to its fullest (John 10:10). To live wisely is to live all of life in the context of a relationship with Christ.

I Corinthians 1:22-24 says, <sup>22</sup>"For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, <sup>23</sup>but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup>but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." To desire to live wisely is to desire to live in the fullness of a relationship with Christ.

Colossians 2:2-3 says "in (Christ) are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." If you really want to know wisdom, you really want to know Christ.

All the hope of finding wisdom in Proverbs is satisfied in Jesus. The book of Proverbs will continually point us to the incarnate wisdom of God, Jesus Christ.

As we study Proverbs, we will look at some of the major themes that are addressed. The theme of this study is the fear of the Lord.

**Explore the Text:**

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and knowledge.” – Proverbs 1:7 (ESV)

Verse 7 is the big idea of the book of Proverbs. This is the bell that will ring early and which will resonate throughout the book. Fear, in this sense, does not mean terror, but means to have awe, reverence, honor, respect, obey, be submissive to, and be cognizant of the danger.

One fears God in a similar sense to the way one might fear electricity. There is a sense of awe, wonder, and amazement when we see a lightning bolt. Yet, as incredibly powerful as it is, when used properly, there is no need to be terrorized by electricity; it can be very beneficial to us. But when it is abused, it can have deadly consequences. As with electricity, one must approach God with awe, amazement, a healthy respect, and expectation of danger when one is not mindful of Him.

*Why do you think this is the first piece of instruction in this book? Why does the “fear of the Lord” have to be the beginning place to find wisdom? Why not the “love of the Lord”?*

*What else in life rivals the Lord for what we fear (reverence, honor, respect, obey, etc...)?*

<sup>28</sup>“Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently but will not find me. <sup>29</sup>Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord, <sup>30</sup>would have none of my counsel and despised all my reproof, <sup>31</sup>therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way, and have their fill of their own devices.” – Proverbs 1:28-31

*What actions and attitudes demonstrate a lack of fear of the Lord?*

*Read each proverb below and discuss together what each one reveals about the “fear of the Lord.” How does each verse relate to our role as professors?*

“The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate.” – Proverbs 8:13

<sup>26</sup>“In the fear of the LORD one has strong confidence, and his children will have a refuge. <sup>27</sup>The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, that one may turn away from the snares of death.” – Proverbs 14:26-27

“Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble with it.” – Proverbs 15:16

“By steadfast love and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for, and by the fear of the LORD one turns away from evil.” – Proverbs 16:6

“The fear of the LORD leads to life, and whoever has it rests satisfied; he will not be visited by harm.” – Proverbs 19:23

“My son, fear the Lord and the king, and do not join with those who do otherwise, for disaster from them will rise suddenly, and who knows the ruin that will come from them both?” – Proverbs 24:21-22

“The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is safe.” – Proverbs 29:25

“Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.” – Proverbs 31:30

### **Discover the Big Idea:**

*Why is the fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom?*

*How does the fear of the Lord point us to Jesus Christ?*



*Besides the Lord, what or whom do you fear?*

*How would it change your life to replace your misplaced fear with fear of God?*

*What are some practical ways that you can begin to demonstrate a healthy fear of God?*

*\*Some of the background information for this Bible study is from a sermon series by Mark Driscoll. One is encouraged to view this sermon series at <http://www.marshillchurch.org/media/proverbs-2009/fear>*



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## LAUNCH

In a physical sense, it is possible for a person to operate normally in everyday life and ignore the symptoms of a weak or diseased heart. Everyone is shocked to find out his/her friend has suffered a severe heart attack. “He seemed so healthy.” In much the same manner, it is easy to ignore the symptoms of weakness or disease in our spiritual heart. From the outside, everything seems fine, but inside, a time bomb is ticking.

*In what other ways is a bad physical heart similar to a bad spiritual heart?*



## EXPLORE

### Survey the Big Picture:

When the Bible refers to the “heart,” it is referring to the inner person. “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” – Proverbs 23:7 (ESV) The heart is the seat of desire, inclination, will, emotions, conscience and moral character. *Nelson Expository Dictionary of the Old Testament*

The heart is that part of us that gets beyond our actions and looks at our motives. The heart is where every person determines what he/she wants the most.

Jesus said the heart really matters. The greatest commandment is “to love the Lord with all your heart...”(Matthew 22:37) “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” (Matthew 5:8) Jesus taught that problems that seem like behavior problems are really heart problems. Our lust problem is really a heart problem – “... has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” (Matt 5:28); our spending problem is really a heart problem - “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Matt 6:21); our tongue problem is really a heart problem “...out of the heart of man come ... deceit, slander...” (Mark 7:20-23).

Proverbs 4:23 pictures life as a river and our hearts as the source. “Keep your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.” Instead of addressing our problems on a behavioral level, we need to go upstream to our hearts, to the source of our problems.

The book of Proverbs gives insight to our hearts in 75 verses. Let’s explore some of the themes related to our hearts.

How serious is the problem when one has a bad heart?

“Those of crooked heart are an abomination to the Lord.” – Proverbs 11:20

“Anxiety in a man’s heart weighs him down.” – Proverbs 12:25

“Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord; be assured, he will not go unpunished.” – Proverbs 16:5

“Before destruction a man’s heart is haughty.” – Proverbs 18:11

“Whoever hardens his heart will fall into calamity.” – Proverbs 28:14



*In what ways is it easy for an academic to fall into having a crooked or anxious or arrogant heart?*

*What are some misleading indicators that professors use to assure ourselves that everything is okay when, in fact, our hearts may be crooked?*

The verses below show various ways that a diseased heart manifests itself?

“How I hated discipline, and my heart despised reproof.” – Proverbs 5:12

“(a person) with perverted heart devises evil, continually sowing discord.” – Proverbs 6:14

“Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked are sin.” – Proverbs 21:4

“Let not your heart envy sinners” – Proverbs 23:17

“For their (evil men) hearts devise violence and their lips talk of trouble.” – Proverbs 24:2

“Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and let not your heart be glad when he stumbles.” – Proverbs 24:17

*In what ways do the issues above manifest themselves in the lives of faculty?*

What are the residual benefits of a good heart?

“The backslider in heart will be filled with the fruit of his ways, and a good man will be filled with the fruit of his ways.”  
– Proverbs 14:14

“A tranquil heart gives life to the flesh.” – Proverbs 14:30

“A glad heart makes a cheerful face.” – Proverbs 15:13

“The heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge.” – Proverbs 15:14

“All the days of the afflicted are evil, but the cheerful of heart has a continual feast.” – Proverbs 15:15

“The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.” – Proverbs 15:28

“He who loves purity of heart, and whose speech is gracious, will have the king as his friend.” – Proverbs 22:11

*What are some of the benefits that you experience as an academic when your heart is clean?*

Proverbs 20:9 asks the universal question, “Who can say, “I have made my heart pure, I am clean from my sin?” The universal answer is obvious – no one can say “My heart is pure.” Only through Jesus Christ can we be righteous and pure before God. Praise be to Him who became sin on our behalf so that we could become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

With Christ alone as our hope, what can we do to diligently keep our hearts right?

<sup>5</sup>“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. <sup>6</sup>In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. <sup>7</sup>Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. <sup>8</sup>It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.” – Proverbs 3:5-8

### Discover the Big Idea:

*What is the main message from these verses in Proverbs as they relate to our heart?*



*What keeps you from regularly checking the condition of your heart?*

*In what areas do you try to address your behavior but don't examine the condition of your heart?*



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**LAUNCH**

Give an example of something you wish you had not said recently. Why was it a mistake for you to say it? What wisdom would have prevented you from saying it?

**EXPLORE****Survey the Big Picture:**

Perhaps one of the ways we are most like God, and at the same time most unlike God is that we have the capacity to speak. From Genesis, when God said, “Let there be...” and right through the New Testament where Jesus is introduced to us as “The Word made flesh” (John 1:14), God speaks. When He speaks, He never lies (Titus 1:2), He always tells the truth (John 8:14), and what he says always comes to pass. (Matthew 5:18). As for us, not so much.

We spin, we deceive, we prevaricate, we hurt, we shade, we fabricate, we boast, we assault, we vent, we condemn, we judge, and we flatter with our words.

According to James 3:1-12, controlling the tongue may be the most difficult challenge a person ever faces, “For we all stumble in many ways, and if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body. ... the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life.... From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.”

The problem is not really the tongue though. The problem is that the tongue reveals what is in the heart. As Jesus said, “How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.” (Matthew 12:34-37) We can only hide the content of our heart for so long, eventually it will erupt through the words of our mouth.

Not surprisingly, the book of Proverbs has a lot to say about the tongue, and what the tongue reveals about the heart.

**Explore the text:**

*Read the following verses: note in each the relationship between the heart condition and what subsequently comes out the mouth.*

“The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.” – Proverbs 10:11 (ESV)

“The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked, what is perverse.” – Proverbs 10:32

“There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.” – Proverbs 12:18

“The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.” – Proverbs 15:28

*Read the following verses and identify the **positive** effects that result from a good tongue. How can you apply these with your supervisor, faculty colleagues and students?*

“Anxiety in a man’s heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad.” – Proverbs 12:25

“Righteous lips are a delight to a king, and he loves him who speaks what is right.” – Proverbs 16:13

“The heart of the wise makes his speech judicious and adds persuasiveness to his lips.” – Proverbs 16:23

“Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body.” – Proverbs 16:24

“With patience a ruler may be persuaded, and a soft tongue will break a bone.” – Proverbs 25:15

*Read the following verses and identify the **negative** effects of a tongue. How can you learn from these in your interactions with your colleagues and students?*

“A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends.” – Proverbs 16:28

“A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion.” – Proverbs 18:2

“A fool’s lips walk into a fight and his mouth invites a beating.” – Proverbs 18:6

“A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who breathes out lies will not escape.” – Proverbs 19:5

“The north wind brings forth rain, and a backbiting tongue, angry looks.” – Proverbs 25:23

“As charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife.” – Proverbs 26:21

“Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.” – Proverbs 29:20

*In what ways can you apply the wise advice from the following verses?*

“The beginning of strife is like letting out water, so quit before the quarrel breaks out.” – Proverbs 17:14

<sup>27</sup>“Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding. <sup>28</sup>Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent.” – Proverbs 17:27-28

“If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.” – Proverbs 18:13

<sup>7b</sup>“What your eyes have seen <sup>8</sup>do not hastily bring into court, for what will you do in the end when your neighbor puts you to shame? <sup>9</sup>Argue your case with your neighbor himself, and do not reveal another’s secret, <sup>10</sup>lest he who hears you brings shame upon you and your ill repute have no end.” – Proverbs 25:7b-10

“Whoever rebukes a man will afterward find more favor than he who flatters with his tongue.” – Proverbs 28:23

### Discover the Big Idea:

No matter how hard we try to hide it, our tongues often reveal a rotten, stinky heart. This brings us to the reality that no matter how hard we try to hide our selfish ways, none of us is righteous. All of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. But thankfully, totally apart from our personal attempts at righteousness, we can have a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ. (Romans 3:20-24) For all who put their trust in Christ, God takes our filthy garments of self-righteousness and replaces them with Christ’s righteousness. (II Corinthians 5:21) We stand in his righteousness alone. Our tongue often reminds us of our inadequate righteousness and our need for His amazing grace.



### APPLY

What is the “heart issue” that is at the root of your tongue issues?

Which of these Proverbs would help you the most if you applied it in your role as a professor?



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**LAUNCH**

Would you say that the academic culture is a better environment for fostering pride or for fostering humility? Why?

**EXPLORE****Survey the Big Picture:**

From the beginning of the Bible to the end, one continuous story of God's redemptive work unfolds. Likewise, from the beginning to the end, we see mankind's pride and self-centeredness revealing itself, opposing God. Adam thought that by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he could be like God. Cain was resentful of his brother; the people of Babel erected a tall tower to make a name for themselves; and on and on.

But God always prefers the humble to the proud. The Bible describes Moses as the most humble man on the face of the earth (Numbers 12:3). David humbled himself after his sin with Bathsheba and received mercy (Psalm 51). Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:3). Jesus humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death (Philippians 2:8). If this wasn't enough, I Peter categorically states, "Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.'" (5:5)

In the 21st century, humility is not likely to be chosen as a Top Ten virtue. Quite the opposite, our culture in subtle, and not-so-subtle, ways encourages us to put self first, to market ourselves, and to be judgmental of others who don't measure up. Of course, it doesn't take much prodding for us to join the pride parade. Being prideful isn't second nature to us, it's first nature. It is truly moving against the tide to be humble.

It's not surprising that Proverbs picks up on this theme as well.

**Explore the Text:**

*How does God view pride and arrogance?*

"The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil. Pride and Arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate." – Proverbs 8:13

"Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord; be assured, he will not go unpunished." – Proverbs 16:5

"Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, are sin." – Proverbs 21:4

The following four verses have the phrase "right in his own eyes" embedded in them. Read the verses:

"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice." – Proverbs 12:15

"All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the spirit." – Proverbs 16:2

"Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the heart." – Proverbs 21:2

"Do you see a man who is right in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him." – Proverbs 26:12

*According to what you see in the above verses, what do you think it means to be “right in your own eyes”? How does that make a person foolish?*

*How/when does “being wise in your own eyes” occur in the academic world?*

Proverbs 3:7 says, “Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil.” *What is the relationship between being wise in one’s own eyes and the fear (respect, reverence) of the Lord?*

*From the following verses, what are some of the signs of pride and arrogance in our lives?*

“Better to be lowly and have a servant than to play the great man and lack bread.” – Proverbs 12:9

“Whoever mocks the poor insults his Maker; he who is glad at calamity will not go unpunished.” – Proverbs 17:5

“‘Scoffer’ is the name of the arrogant, haughty man who acts with arrogant pride.” – Proverbs 21:24

“It is not good to eat much honey, nor is it glorious to seek one’s own glory.” – Proverbs 25:27

“Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered.” – Proverbs 28:26

“He who is often reproved, yet stiffens his neck, will suddenly be broken beyond healing.” – Proverbs 29:1

*Which of the above have you noticed the most in yourself and other professors?*

*After reading each verse below, identify one benefit of humility from the verse.*

“When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom.” – Proverbs 11:2

“It is better to be of lowly spirit with the poor, than to divide the spoil with the proud.” – Proverbs 16:19

“Before destruction a man’s heart is haughty, but humility comes before honor.” – Proverbs 18:12

“One’s pride will bring him low, but he who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor.” – Proverbs 29:23

*What does the following verse mean and how is it applicable to professors?*

Proverbs 27:21 “The crucible is for silver, and the furnace is for gold, and a man is tested by his praise.”

**Discover the Big Idea:**

*If you were writing a paper on the verses we have studied in this lesson, what would be the theme of the paper?*



**APPLY**

*Where does pride and arrogance show up in your life?*

*What is the root cause of pride in your life?*

*What do you need to do to get at the root?*



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**LAUNCH**

*Would you say that, as a whole, professors are wiser than people who choose other occupations (plumbers, bankers, pharmacists, real estate agents, etc....)? Why or why not?*

Identify and share one way in which you have become wiser in the past year.

**EXPLORE****Survey the Big Picture:**

One of the main ways that the book of Proverbs teaches about wisdom is by comparing it and contrasting it with folly. While it is often folly that underlies sin (squandering money can lead one to steal from others), folly and sin aren't always the same thing. Something can be foolish without being sinful (i.e. climbing over a fence and taunting a bull). True wisdom is not only avoiding sinful behavior, but living in the fear (reverence) of the Lord in all aspects of our lives. (Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. Proverbs 1:7)

There are three myths associated with wisdom:

1. age = wisdom; you can be old and foolish too.
2. intellect = wisdom; you can be in Mensa and not be wise.
3. education = wisdom; you can have a PhD and still be foolish.

The instruction of the book of Proverbs is not given so that we can ridicule or judge others who are foolish. But rather, it is for humble people to learn lessons for themselves vicariously from the foolish attitudes and actions of others so that they don't have to experience the folly themselves in order to learn the consequences.

The wisdom in the book of Proverbs is meant to be intensely practical. Rather than just speaking theoretically about life, it gives wise advice about specific areas of daily life.

*Read one passage at a time, discussing the significance of the wisdom in each passage from a professor's perspective. (How would applying the wisdom of this proverb benefit you as a professor? How might it affect you as a professor if you ignore it? Etc....)*



### Explore the Text:

<sup>6</sup>Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. <sup>7</sup>Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, <sup>8</sup>she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest. <sup>9</sup>How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? <sup>10</sup>A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, <sup>11</sup>and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man. – Proverbs 6:6-11 (ESV)

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice. – Proverbs 12:15

Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm. – Proverbs 13:20

Whoever guards his mouth preserves his life; he who opens wide his lips comes to ruin. – Proverbs 13:3

A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds back. – Proverbs 29:11

Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you. – Proverbs 9:8

A scoffer does not like to be reproved; he will not go to the wise. – Proverbs 15:12

When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom. – Proverbs 11:2

One who is wise is cautious and turns away from evil, but a fool is reckless and careless. – Proverbs 14:16

### Discover the Big Idea:

*What is the big idea about wisdom that can be drawn from these verses?*



### APPLY

*What are the greatest sources of folly in your life?*

*Where are you reaping the fruit of folly in your life presently? (diet, work habits, budget, relationships, etc....)*

*What piece of wisdom from the passages above do you most need to apply to your life?*



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