

RBCPC
2011 Study Series



Week #11
Study Guide

Proverbs, Ecclesiastes &
Song of Songs

Posting date: March 16, 2011

www.rbcpc.org/mark-up-your-bible/

Overview

Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs are a continuation of the wisdom literature books of the Bible. They are primarily authored by Solomon who was gifted by God with wisdom. Proverbs offer general guidelines for daily living. Ecclesiastes explores the deeper concepts of “meaning in life” and the ultimate pursuit of wisdom through “fear of the Lord.” Song of Songs uses allegorical symbolism of love between a man and woman to suggest the deeper meaning of God’s love.

Scripture Study

Open your Bible and read the following passages:

Proverbs 3:5-6

1. How does trusting in God differ from trusting another person?
2. Does God need to prove that he is worthy of our trust? Why, or why not?
3. How has God shown you that you can trust him?
4. How might you allow God to “make your paths straight?” What might you have to change in order to allow him to do that?

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13

1. Why do you think God created “seasons of activity” under heaven?
2. Is wisdom *acquired* through the ups and downs of life, or is wisdom *required* in order to successfully ride out the ups and downs? Explain.
3. What is the value of working hard in this life? What is God’s gift?
4. Describe God’s eternal perspective in these scriptures.
5. Do you think this passage is optimistic or pessimistic? Why?

Song of Songs 8:6-7

1. As described in this passage, how powerful is love? How can it be measured?
2. Does reading this passage make you want that kind of love? Why?
3. Does the allegorical symbolism in Song of Songs help you better understand Christ’s love? Explain.
4. What “nugget” of *wisdom* do you think God wants you to take from this passage?
5. What relationship does *love* have with *wisdom*?

Key Concepts

Proverbs:

1. Proverbs are generalizations that offer insight into wisdom.
2. There are no cause-and-effect guarantees.
3. Wisdom results from appropriate application of the proverbs.

Ecclesiastes:

1. Neither “meaning” nor self-fulfillment will be experienced in this life.
2. We should pursue a God-centered life.

Song of Songs:

1. Love is powerful.
2. Wisdom will come from discipline and understanding.

Reflection

Each one of the wisdom books approaches the quest for wisdom from a different perspective. Which one works best for you: Poetry and song? General guidelines for godly living? An eternal perspective of a God-centered life? Focusing on Christ's love? Perhaps a combination?

Prayer

Pray for wisdom, gained from studying God's word and growing closer in relationship with Him. Pray through these scriptures, practicing the prayerful exercise of ACTS:

A = Adoration:

Psalm 106:1, *Praise the Lord. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.*

C = Confession:

Proverbs 4:3-4, *For I too was a son to my father, still tender, and cherished by my mother. Then he taught me, and he said to me, "Take hold of my words with all your heart; keep my commands, and you will live."*

T = Thanksgiving:

Ecclesiastes 9:7-8, *Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for God has already approved what you do. Always be clothed in white, and always anoint your head with oil.*

S – Supplication:

Song of Songs 8:6, *Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame.*

Thank Jesus for sharing his wisdom and his love with you!

Homework

Read **Proverbs 20:5**, in preparation for the sermon on Mar. 26/27, "What Do You Think You Are?" Mark words, or phrases, that stand out to you.

Notes & Reflections:

