

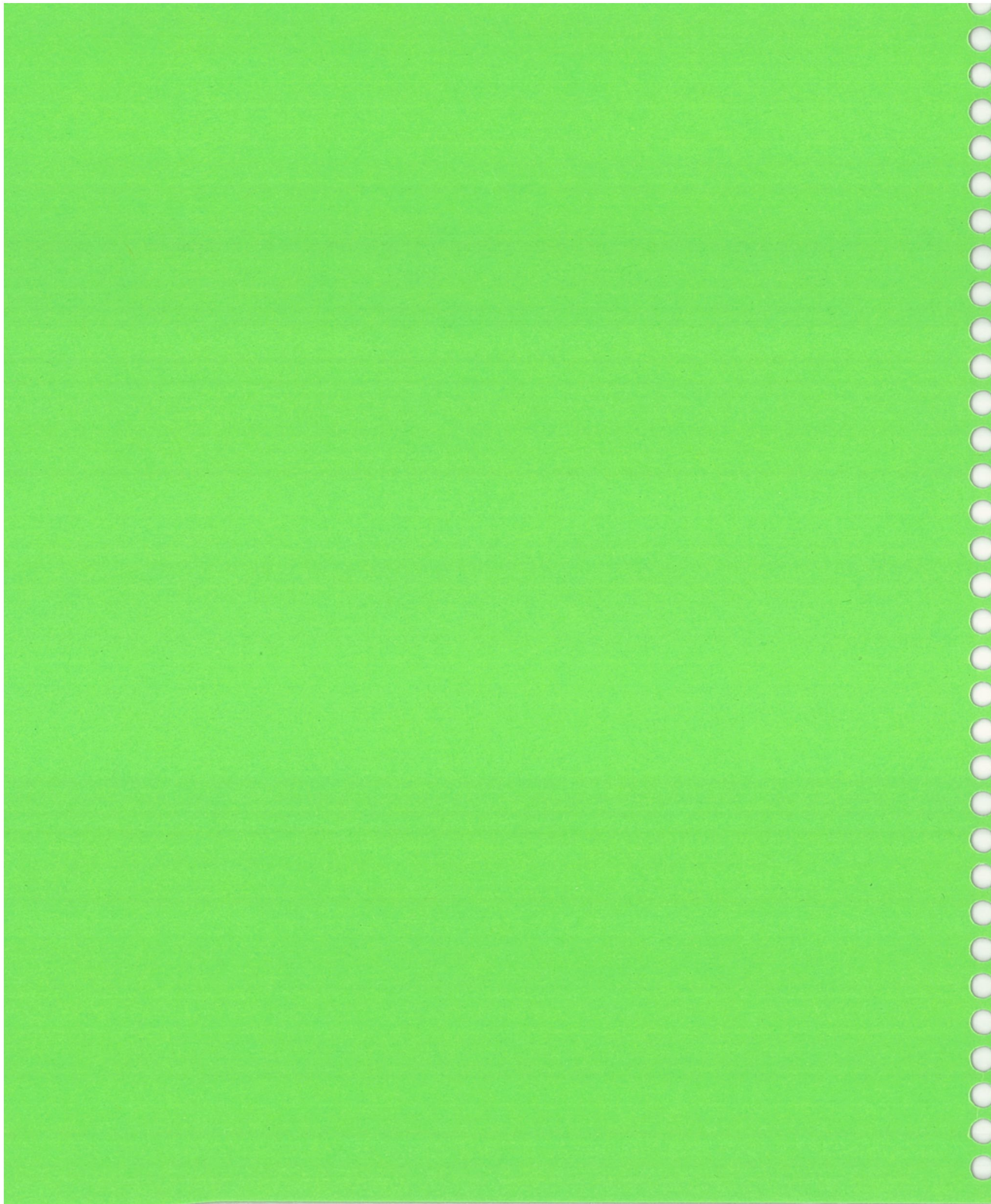
WISE FRIENDSHIPS

"You are My
friends
if you do whatever
I command you."
(Jesus to His disciples
in John 15:14)

Leader's Guide

for both
Boys' & Girl's Editions

by Rev. Ken Anema



Wise Friendships

(Leader's Guide Edited for Boys & Girls)

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Making Sense of this Manual

(Preface)

This Leader's Guide corresponds with *Wise Friendships* which is the student's workbook. The workbook comes in two different editions – one for boys and another for girls. Both contain identical content. Consequently I have written only one leaders guide to be used with either workbook.

The differences between the two student editions consist of gender-appropriate pronouns (he, his, him for the boys and she, hers, her for the girls). Only one of the questions has been changed in order to make it more appropriate to the respective gender (see "Let's Meditate" section of lesson 3, #1.e). For the same reason I changed some of the titles of the lessons. I have listed both titles in the table of contents of the leader's guide. Throughout the book are reminders that I have tried to kill two birds with one stone. Hopefully the "his/hers" and "boy/girl" nomenclatures will not be too annoying.

All the questions from the student workbook are included in the leader's guide. I even left the blanks for the leaders to write their own answers. To distinguish the text of the student's workbook from the notes in the leader's guide I have used two different fonts. Leaders will get the most out of the lesson if they write their answers in the blanks before looking at the comments in the leader's guide. For this reason I would suggest that each leader have their own student workbook.

Additional information about the layout of this book and the student workbook can be found in "A Note for Parents & Teachers" at the end of this manual.

I don't consider myself to be a professional writer or an editor. The workbooks originated out of a need for study material in the church where I have been serving. When requests began coming from others I compiled the lessons into one booklet and published them myself at a local print shop. If you have suggestions for improving this material you may contact me using the information on the last page of this booklet.

Lesson 1

Are You Wise?

Let's Study from the Bible!

1. Read Proverbs 1:7.
 - a. What is the first stage of wisdom? (Compare Psalm 111:10.) The *fear of the Lord* is first for two reasons. It is first because there is nothing greater about wisdom than fearing the Lord. It is also first because everything about wisdom builds upon or follows this principle.
 - b. A fool is the opposite of a wise boy/girl. How does God describe the fool in Prov.1:7? Fools despise wisdom and instruction.

2. Read Proverbs 3:7.
 - a. Verse 7 warns us about a bad kind of wisdom. What kind of wisdom is it? To be wise in your own eyes is a bad kind of wisdom.
 - b. Reread the second part of v.7. Many church people say they fear the Lord, but how can you tell? (What kind of things do they do?) The point is that a fear of the Lord comes to expression in the everyday activities of a person's life. Here are a few examples. People who fear the Lord, obey Him. They strive to keep themselves from evil.

3. Read Proverbs 8:13.
 - a. How does v.13 describe the attitude of the boy/girl who "fears the Lord"? He/she hates evil.
 - b. Reread the second part of v.13. Since God is wise He hates certain things. Verse 13 lists four of them. What are they? God hates ...
 - Pride
 - Arrogance
 - Evil ways
 - A perverse mouth



Let's Meditate on the Bible!

1. Review your "Study From the Bible!" to answer the following questions.

The point of this brief review question is to draw the connection between the inner attitude of the heart and the outward behavior of our lives. Point out that the attitude is both positive (i.e., fearing God) and negative (i.e., hating evil).

 - a. What is the attitude of wisdom?
 - The attitude of wisdom is to fear God
 - The attitude of wisdom is to hate evil
 - b. What is the activity of wisdom?

The activity of wisdom is to depart from evil

2. Hebrews 11:7 gives an example of a wise man.

This exercise illustrates the connection between the inner attitude of fearing God and the outward behavior of obedience.

- a. **Who was he?** Noah
- b. **What was his attitude?** He feared God
- c. **What was his action?** He prepared an ark for the saving of his household.

Use Noah or some other Bible character to talk about how a fear of the Lord motivates us to obedience. To be more specific you could talk about how a fear of the Lord spurs *you* on to obedience in the face of temptation or how a fear of the Lord prompts *you* to a more joyful obedience in the areas where you already being obedient.

3. In your own words what does it mean to "be wise in your own eyes" (Pr.3:7) To do what you think is best. For example, your

mom warns your two-year-old brother not to stick things into the electrical outlet. If he is wise in his own eyes, he will pay no attention to the warning and stick things in there any way. (NOTE: As you get to know the children in your class think of examples that will relate more specifically to them.)

4. Why do you think God hates pride and arrogance? (Pr.8:13)

Use this question to teach the children how to study the Bible. You will want to point out that many of the Proverbs follow a form of Hebrew poetry called parallelism. That simply means that two lines of poetry run parallel to each other in thought. The line of thought in the first line is in some way related to the line of thought in the second line.

- In some cases the second line simply restates the same thought of the first line (Prov. 11:25).
- Some times the second line builds upon the thought of the first line as a further explanation. For example, Psalm 146:1-2 has four parallel lines, each expanding the thought of the one before it.
- The most common form of parallelism is found in Proverbs 8:13.

The thought of the second line is opposite to the thought in the first line.

This is why we conclude that God hates pride and arrogance. It is the opposite to *fearing the Lord*. To fear the Lord is to put God first and to consider Him as being most important. When we consider ourselves to be most important we are proud and arrogant. God hates that.

5. Give three examples of a "perverse mouth." (Pr. 8:13)

Example: A perverse mouth carelessly sings praise to God.

This exercise is intended to train the children to recognize how God's Word applies to their daily lives. Try to think of examples most common to the children's age and situation in life.

- a. _____

- b. _____

- c. _____



Let's Live by the Bible!

1. List three ways you ought to depart from evil.

This question asks for an honest personal answer. Respect each child's privacy, but don't let the personal nature of the question excuse them from doing the assignment. In other words, don't pressure them to share their answers, but check to make sure they have done their work. Parents who work through this material with their children one to one have the primary responsibility to minister to their private lives.

a. Example: I must stop talking back to my mom when she tells me to clean my room. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

2. Read 1 Corinthians 1:30-31.

a. Keep in mind the three ways you ought to "depart from evil." (See number 1 above.)

b. 1 Corinthians 1:30 says, "Christ Jesus became wisdom for us...". How is this good news for you? Keep in mind the title of this lesson – "Are You Wise?" This is not a question about how much you or the children know. Rather it asks the most basic question about our relationship with God. To be wise is to have a right relationship with God and to know that it depends completely on Jesus Christ. That must be our only hope and comfort. After doing the first question in this section each of the children ought to

be keenly aware of the fact that they are not as “wise” as they ought to be. They, too, need a Savior. If Jesus Christ has become “wisdom” in our place then we can be assured that our sins have been forgiven. Therefore, this question also serves to guard against a self-righteousness which is contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

3. Why should you **desire** to “depart from evil”?

Our desire should be motivated by thanksgiving. If Jesus Christ has become “wisdom” for us and in our place on the cross then we will want to be wise and therefore depart from evil.

Lesson 2

Why Are You Friendly?

Let's Study from the Bible!

1. Read Proverbs 14:20-21.
 - a. What kind of problem does the poor person tend to have?
The poor man is far from being popular. In fact, most people tend to hate (or at least dislike) the poor.
 - b. Who gets all the attention? There is a natural tendency for people to be drawn toward the rich.
 - c. According to v.20 what one thing makes the difference between the popular person and the unpopular person?
Material riches are the distinguishing factor – money, possessions, etc.
 - d. God uses another word for hate in v.21. What is it? Here you can draw attention to the method of Bible study. Hebrew poetry is not characterized by rhyming, but by parallel statements of thought. In this case the word “*hated*” in v.20 corresponds with (i.e. parallels) the word “*despises*” in v.21. What does it mean? (Use a dictionary if you need help.) Despise: to look down upon with scorn; to think of someone as worthless.

e. While you still have your dictionary open look up the meaning of "mercy." Mercy: a tenderness of heart which inclines a person to overlook shortcomings or to treat an offender better than they deserve; it involves an attitude of pity and compassion.

f. Reread Proverbs 14:20-21. Match the words on the left with the most appropriate phrase on the right.

(In the student's workbook the phrases on the right are scrambled.)

poor - one who is hated

sin - one who despises neighbor

happy - one who shows mercy

rich - one who has many friends

2. Read Proverbs 19:4, 6-7

a. Who do people usually go to for favors? People naturally go to the rich.

b. What seems to be a sure way of making friends? "Money talks!" The Prodigal son, for example, had plenty of friends until his money was gone. Then his friends left him, too. Riches seem to be a sure way of making friends – at least for a while.

c. Who hate the poor in v.7? The brothers of the poor. The very people who are closest to the poor.

d. How strongly do so called friends hate the poor friend? His friends actually distance themselves from the poor person. They abandon him. They leave him all alone in his poverty.



Let's Meditate on the Bible!

1. What ideas do you usually associate with neighbors? (Circle all the words that apply.) *kind *helpful mean unfamiliar *friendly stranger outsider *generous *favorable disagreeable *companion *partner competitor *sociable *peaceable *close *devoted *warm *faithful hostile
(In this leader's guide the applicable words are marked with an asterisk (*) instead of being circled.)
2. Reread Proverbs 14:20. Why do you think the poor man is hated by his "own neighbor"? His constant needs get to be wearisome after awhile. The poor man can never make a financial contribution to the relationship. From an economic stand point the relationship is only one way. A man might also be poor due to his own laziness or mismanagement.
3. Proverbs 14:21 says despising ones neighbor is sin. Keep in mind that sin is any thought, word or action that breaks God's law. What kind of friendships does sin destroy? (Clue: Matthew 22:37-40) A Friendship with God
Friendships with Neighbors
4. Give two examples of how the "happy" person in Proverbs 14:21 might show "mercy" to the poor.
 - a. Poverty often comes upon a person due to physical disabilities (lame, blind, deaf, crippled, debilitating/prolonged illness, etc) or circumstances beyond a persons control (such as property damage from flooding, drought, fire, etc.). Any act of kindness to alleviate their poverty as it pertains directly or indirectly to their situation would be an example of mercy.

- b. In the times in which we live it seems that a growing number of people are poor as a direct result of sinful, ungodly living. People spend money on things they cannot afford and do not discipline themselves to spend only as much as (or less than) what they have. Poverty strikes the gambler who wastes his money on lottery tickets and at the casinos. When people are drunk on alcohol or high on drugs they neglect their responsibilities which leads to a break down in their families, loss of job, squandering money, trouble with the Law, etc. By the time they realize what they have done to themselves they have ruined their reputation and made it nearly impossible to get a job. They have destroyed their relationships with their family who otherwise would have been willing to help them. There is an increasing number of these kind of poor looking for help at Gospel Rescue Missions.

Usually it is not the most merciful thing simply to give more money to these kind of poor. Unless they have been changed by the power of Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit they will simply use the handout to indulge in their wickedness.

To be merciful is to give them what they need instead of what they want. Their need is both spiritual and physical.

Spiritually they need to hear the gospel, but also to be trained in it. If they are willing to be taught it would be an act of mercy to mentor them.

Physically they have an immediate need for food, clothing and shelter, but soon they need a job or need to gain the skills necessary for getting a job. Some are fathers and mothers who need to be taught how to train their children, how to balance their checkbook or how to budget their income.

To show mercy is to give them what they really need, not what they think they need.

5. Reread Prov. 19:6. Are "favors" and "gifts" good reasons for being friends with someone else? No, unless the gift is the favor of God. Why or why not? The resources of the rich are not infinite. They will come to an end some day. Ultimately the resources of the rich have come from God and belong to God. Furthermore, any friendship built on

what I can get out of it is not a true friendship. When the riches evaporate so does the friendship. See the example of the prodigal son mentioned earlier.

Our relationship with God depends on His good fits to us. We must respond to the goodness of God with repentance (Rom. 2:4) and with thanksgiving (e.g. Psalms 66:16, 138:2, etc.).

6. Proverbs 19:7 describes how the poor man is treated. Describe the opposite treatment. The opposite of hate is love. The opposite of distance and abandonment is to come near and to take a genuine interest in ones well-being.



Let's Live by the Bible!

1. Train your mind to think the way God thinks.
 - a. Who were some of Jesus' friends? (See Matthew 9:10-11; or 11:19.) Jesus interacted with tax collectors who had the reputation for being worldly and thieves. Tax collectors were Jews who agreed to work for the Roman government. A "good" Jew wouldn't think of working for such a heathen system of government. These tax collectors also had the reputation of over charging their own Jewish people in order to keep the extra money for themselves.

Jesus also interacted with "sinners" who had gained their name and reputation from their outwardly sinful lifestyles or qualities. For example, the Samaritan woman had five husbands and the one she was living with was not her husband, yet Jesus befriended her and showed her mercy.
 - b. Give the "only" reason why God would make friends with a boy/girl like you. (See Romans 5:8.) Though we know better we are often tempted to think that we are better than others –

especially better than those to have made themselves poor by their sinful lifestyle choices. It is true that the gospel sets the sinner free and that many who have grown up in Christian homes have been spared the misery of sin. However, the true gospel is still the same for the penitent sinner on skid-row as it is for the penitent child who has restrained from sin by his believing parents. The true believer is made right with God *only* through the blood of Jesus Christ.

2. Think of your best friend (or one of your best friends). Why do you like him/her as a friend? (List three reasons.)

Obviously this question is to be discussed in connection with the next one. Prepare for these two questions by answering them yourself. Also, try to think back to the time when you were the same age as the children are now. Who were your friends? What did you like about them?

- a. _____
b. _____
c. _____

3. Look at the three reasons in number 2. Are these reasons wise or foolish? _____ Explain: _____

Don't be afraid to let the children learn from the immaturity of your earlier years. At the same time, remember to be discreet. Don't expose them to your past if they are not mature enough to process such information. Always direct their attention to the grace of God by which He patiently turned your heart toward Him.

4. In many groups of boys/girls there can be at least one or two that always get left out. (They are the ones who are usually chosen last when picking teams. When the boys/girls get together to tell secrets he/she is the one whom nobody tells.) Do you know any boys/girls like this? (Think hard.) List two ways that you can show "mercy" to the boy/girl who gets left behind.

- a. _____

- b. _____

Be very sensitive to the possibility that the "un-likeable" girl/boy may be in the very group you are leading. Think ahead about who that might be and how you will handle the situation. You might introduce the question by saying, "We are not going to mention any names. That's not the point of this question. What is important for our discussion is that we think of practical ways we can show mercy to the one who often gets left out."

If it is very obvious who is left out this might be the opportunity for reconciling her/him to the rest of the group.

You might also want to address the question, "What should I do if I am the one who is often left out?" Here are several things to keep in mind:

- There will be times in a Christians life when he ought to feel like an outsider. The ungodly will often exclude the true disciple of Jesus Christ. Then it's OK to be "left out."
- Some times a child is left out because they have habits or behaviors that are unnecessarily offensive to others (.e.g. picking one's nose, being loud and obnoxious, being mean, etc.). In this case, the left-out-child ought to do what they can to change.
- Unfortunately, there are times when a child is left out because they don't wear the in-style clothes or have athletic abilities, etc. These are things that a child should not be expected to change in order to fit in.

- A child who is “left out” should be encouraged to go out of their way to be friendly.
- Encourage the “left out” child to ask a trusted adult (e.g. parents, teachers, pastors, uncles/aunts, neighbor, etc.) for advice on how they ought to handle the specific situations in which they are left out.
- Always remember that Jesus Christ is the friend who will never leave you.

Lesson 3

A "Loyal" Friend is a "Loving" Friend

Let's Study from the Bible!

1. Read Proverbs 17:17.

a. How often does a friend love? At all times.

b. List two ways that love behaves. (Hint: Read 1Corinthians 13:4-7.) In this answer you are looking for the positive actions of love – what love does. (Note: You will look for the “negative” actions in the next question.) Look specifically at 1Cor. 13:4a, 6b & 7. There are seven positive actions, but this question only asks for two.

- _____
- _____

c. List two ways that love does not behave. (1Cor.13:4-7) In this answer you are looking for the negative actions of love – what love does not do. (See “a.” above for the positive actions of love.) Look specifically at 1Cor. 13:4b, 5 & 6a. There are eight negative actions, but this question only asks for two.

- _____
- _____

d. **Reread v.17. What is adversity? (Check your dictionary.)**

The Hebrew dictionary indicates that the word literally means “to make narrow.” “Adversity” refers to a distressful or troubling situation or circumstance. If you want to illustrate, Psalm 81:7 refers to a historical instance in which the Israelites experienced adversity/trouble. Very likely it refers to the instance recorded in Exodus 14:10 when Pharaoh was closing in on the Israelites who had become trapped by the Red Sea.

2. **Read Proverbs 18:24 (in the New King James Version).**

Here is a good place to talk about using “cross references” to help understand a passage. A cross reference is another verse in the Bible which has similar phrases or ideas. By seeing how these phrases or ideas are used in another passage or context you might gain insight for interpreting the text which you are studying. In this case the main text is Proverbs 17:17 and the cross reference is Proverbs 18:24.

- a. **Explain how a brother (or sister) can be "close"?** Throughout the course of life friends come and go. Perhaps you, as a leader, can illustrate this from your own life. Mention a childhood playmate with whom you have not kept in contact. Compare that to a family member with whom you maintain ties even though you might live far away. Even if these relationships are strained we are more likely to contact a brother/sister in the event of a family funeral or wedding than we would call some forgotten playmate from childhood.
- b. **Give a real life example of a friend that "sticks close."** You will probably tell of someone who has not abandoned you when you were sick or grieving or unpopular for whatever reason.



Let's Meditate on the Bible!

1. How often does a friend love? Put an "X" in front of the best answers. The purpose of this exercise is to get the children to think of situations in which a true friend demonstrates his love. Notice that some of the situations are sad while others are happy. It might also help them to recognize those "fair weather" friends who only have "love" when it is to their advantage. "Fair weather" friends tend to shy away from the sad times and can become envious or jealous on the happier occasions.
 - a. ___ He/she loves most of the time, but especially during the fun times.
 - b. X He/she loves even when his/her friend is sick.
 - c. ___ He/she loves only when he/she feels like being loving.
 - d. X He/she loves when his/her grandpa dies of a heart attack.
 - e. X He loves when his/her friend is excited about his/her new cowboy hat (girls' edition reads: 'baby brother').
 - f. ___ He/she loves only when his/her friend shares candy.
2. Go back to Proverbs 17:17. Why is it comforting to have a brother (or any close family member) during a time of adversity? Close family members are the most likely to understand you. Their familiarity brings a degree of comfort. To get at this point and to raise discussion you might ask the children, "When you are sick with the stomach flu who do you want to be at home with you to take care of you?" I suspect that in most cases they will say, "My mom." In any case, go on to ask, "Why do you like to have _____ taking care of you when you are sick?" As they give their answers listen for specific details which give them comfort, security and/or assurance.

3. If a brother (or sister) is likely to be a comfort during times of adversity then what is Proverbs 18:24 saying about a special friend? It is saying that even though there is no biological (natural sibling, parent or grandparent) or legal (e.g. by marriage or adoption) family ties a special friend is one who does the kind of things you would expect from a biological or legal family member. They voluntarily do what you could only expect from those who ought to have the obligation/duty to act.
4. In the New Testament the twelve disciples had a friend who stuck closer than a brother. Who was He? (Hint: Read John 15:15. To find out who is speaking in v.15 you will have to back up to John 14:23.) Jesus How does that friend stick closer to them than a brother? (See John 15:13.) He would stick with them even to the point of death. In fact, Jesus demonstrated the greatness of His love by dying on the cross for His "friends."
5. The disciples' friend also made friends with Tax Collectors and Sinners (See Luke 7:34.)



Let's Live by the Bible!

1. On Friday you plan to have your best friend over night. But on Thursday evening the most popular boy/girl phones to invite you to his/her birthday party the next day. What should you do?

Following each option below I have given a critique of that particular choice. In light of questions #2 & #3 below you will want to be careful not to say too much about each one as you go through them. It would probably be best simply to get them to commit themselves to an answer for right now. After discussing #2 & #3 below you can talk further about what is right and wrong about the other options.

- a. **Ask your best friend to come over another night.** This might seem like a reasonable possibility since birthdays cannot be rescheduled. However, if he/she has already made plans he/she ought to keep his/her word.
- b. **Call your friend and tell him/her that you are sick.** (See the comments to #3 below.)
- c. **Just cancel the plans with your best friend. Go to the birthday party. Hope that he/she understands and will forgive you.** If that popular boy/girl is really a friend, he/she should be the one to be understanding. He/she should honor the fact that other plans have already been made. If the popular boy/girl were really a friend, he/she most likely would have given an invitation much earlier. However, it is not up to you to judge the motives of the popular boy/girl. Give him/her the benefit of the doubt and be courteous.
- d. **Tell the popular boy/girl you cannot come this time, but maybe he/she can invite you and your friend next time.** Since it would be another year before he/she would have another birthday you could also propose to do something special with the birthday boy/girl on another day. Ask the children if they have any other suggestions for how to deal with this situation.

2. **Which answer in #1 is the best? d. Give your reasons why:**
Of all the options given "d." is the best. On the one hand, it honors your word to your friend. In this way you show that a friend loves at all times. At the same time this response demonstrates a genuine interest for the birthday boy/girl.

3. Which answer in #1 is the worst? b. Give your reasons why:
Lying not only breaks God's law for our lives, but it is a sure way to break relationships. Think of lying as a sharp piece of glass which is good for nothing, but the garbage. In close relationships lying cuts especially deep and leaves an unusually painful scar.

4. How does loyalty preserve your friendships? Use an example from your own life. It would be best to give them a positive example of a time in which you were loyal to your friend and how that preserved your friendship. You might also have an example of a time when you failed to be loyal. If that is the case, talk about how your failure to be loyal affected your relationship.

5. Why is Jesus' loyal friendship necessary for you to be a loyal friend? 1 John 4:10-11 explains that God first loved us by sending His Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. If God in Christ has loved us in this way then we also ought to love each other. Our love flows out of Christ's love for us and in us.

Lesson 4

Fiery Lips & Burnt Friends

(Boys' edition)

Hot Lipstick

Separates Friends

(Girls' edition)

Let's Study from the Bible!

1. Read Proverbs 16:27.

^{NKJ} **Proverbs 16:27** An ungodly man digs up evil, And it is on his lips like a burning fire.

a. An "ungodly" boy/girl is one who: (Circle the best answers.)

The most fitting answers are marked with an asterisk (*).

- *is mostly selfish.
- *does not desire to live for God.
- loves to go to church every Sunday.
- is happy to please his/her parents.
- *thinks it is fun to tell lies.

b. What is the opposite of "digging up"? (Circle the right answer.) *burying shoveling scooping

c. What does a burning fire do? It consumes (eats up) and destroys whatever it is burning.

d. What is "like a burning fire"? Evil on the lips of an ungodly person.

2. Read Proverbs 16:28.

^{NKJ} **Proverbs 16:28** A perverse man sows strife, And a whisperer separates the best of friends.

a. Use your dictionary to give the following definitions:

"perverse": going away from what is right or good; morally crooked. Think of "perverse" as a deformed, decaying or rotting sense of right and wrong. For example, the person is "deformed" (on the inside) who measures right and wrong based on fun – if it's fun it's right, but if it's not fun it's wrong.

"strife": the act or state of fighting or quarelling, especially bitterly; struggle; conflict

b. What do farmers usually sow? seeds

c. In what way is the "perverse man" like a farmer? When the farmer plants his seed he turns a field of black dirt into a field full of plants. When a "perverse man" plants "strife" he turns his relationships into a field full of weeds.

d. List two reasons why people would lower their voice to a whisper.

- to hide information from others.
- to hide hurtful gossip about another person
- (Maybe you can think of more than two reasons.)



Let's Meditate on the Bible!

1. Reread Proverbs 16:27.

^{NKJ} **Proverbs 16:27** An ungodly man digs up evil, And *it is* on his lips like a burning fire.

- a. List three "evils" that the ungodly might "dig up." (Keep in mind that after he/she digs them up they burn on his/her lips. That means he/she can't wait to tell about them.)
 - (I will get you started with the most difficult one.)
Slander is an evil which spreads a false report.
 - Another evil could be personal sins from the past.
 - A third "evil" could be an area of personal weakness or embarrassment.

b. How do these "evils" destroy like a "burning fire"?

- [This answer corresponds with 1.a.i. above.] Spreading false rumors destroys the reputation of another person.
- [This answer corresponds with 1.a.ii. above.] Suppose an ungodly child remembers how another child cheated on his school work. This information could be used to destroy the reputation of the one who cheated.

Note: there is a proper way of talking about other people's sins. According to Matthew 18 the proper thing to do is to talk directly to the person who has sinned. If they refuse to repent then a witness should be taken. Finally, it should be told to the elders of the church if there is no repentance. All the while the goal is to restore the one who is sinning so that they might live in fellowship with God through the forgiveness of sins in the blood of Jesus Christ.

In some cases it may also be necessary to talk about the sins of another person in order to protect the well being of others.

The point of the proverb however, deals with the destructive nature of words spoken with the intent to do harm.

- [This answer corresponds with 1.a.iii. above.] Suppose one child would share his fear of the dark with another child. An ungodly child takes this private information and makes it public because he knows others will find it interesting, funny or just an opportunity to poke fun of this fear.

2. Reread Proverbs 16:28. List two ways in which boys/girls sometimes "sow strife." (Which "seeds" grow into strife?)

Example: Sometimes I tease my brother or sister by hiding their favorite toy. It soon leads to fighting.

- a. _____

- b. _____

Try to think of illustrations from your own life. By doing so the children under your instruction will better see you as a real person. Hopefully, this will also lead them to see how the grace of God has worked in your own life. In your illustrations keep in mind the following thoughts.

Think of illustrations from your own life that might be most familiar to the age and situation of those whom you are teaching. What kind of things have you said that turned people against you or against each other?

Use illustrations in which you were guilty of "sowing strife." Be careful not to glorify or to make light of your sin. Share how your "sowing strife" hurt other people and dishonored God.

If you use illustrations in which you were hurt or offended by another person's "sowing strife" be careful to guard the reputation of those whom you talk about – even if it has been years ago. By the way you speak of others by whom you were offended you will teach your own children or students how to handle such offenses in a godly fashion.

Also, keep in mind the answers given in the previous question.

There may be some overlap. This question is intended to build upon the previous one.

3. What kind of "whispering" threatens to separate the best of friends? _____
- _____
- _____

Again, keep in mind the guidelines given in questions 1 & 2 above.



Let's Live by the Bible!

1. Which of the following evils have you been digging up? (Reread Proverbs 16:27-28.)

The following list is intended to be personal in its application. It may be that your child or students are too embarrassed to admit their wrong. Do not coerce them to give an answer if they are not ready. If few or none are willing to share specific instances from their own lives then talk about them in general. You might begin by saying something like this, "How does a dirty joke come on one's lips like a 'burning fire'?"

If your child or student does share an instance from their own lives be sure to treat it appropriately. Be careful not to laugh about sin or in any way make light of it. Neither let the others in the class use this information against the one who has shared his fault.

When you teach this section of the lesson it would probably be best to combine this question with the following question.

- a. Sometimes my group of friends tells 'dirty' jokes.
- b. Sometimes I am a tattletale. I dig up the bad things of my brother or sister and tell them to my mom.
- c. Sometimes I tell lies.
- d. Sometimes I remember (dig out of my memory) bad things about other boys/girls. Then I tell them to others.
- e. Sometimes I make up stories about people (parents, brothers, sisters, friends). Then I tell them to others just for fun.
- f. Sometimes I say things to my family members or friends in order to hurt them with my words.
- g. Sometimes I tell secrets about others behind their backs.
- h. Other: _____

2. Reread the evils in #1. Choose four of them and explain how you would "bury" each of these evils?

- a. _____

- b. _____

- c. _____

By "bury" I am trying to get at the matter of "repentance." Practically, what does it mean to turn away from this particular sin? What specific steps can be taken?

If the children cannot think of a specific solution ask others in the group to participate. You might say something like this: "Let's help Ken bury this sin. What do you think he could do to keep from doing the same thing next time the opportunity arises? As a leader don't give your answer right away. First, let the class wrestle with it. After they have

had opportunity to work it out then you may offer your insights. Whatever you do, do not leave the discussion until some specific direction is given. If you can't think of anything tell the class, "I will think about it and come back with a solution at our next meeting."

3. Read Isaiah 53:7-8. According to this passage why is Jesus' sacrifice on the cross necessary in order for you to be friends with God? _____
-

Repentance without the recognition of grace leads to legalism and works' righteousness. Turning from sin is absolutely necessary. Unconfessed sin hinders our prayers and our relationship with God. However, the only way to be right with God is through the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ. Emphasize the fact that Jesus never spoke an inappropriate word. He never committed any sin – not even with His mouth – in order that He might be our sacrifice on the cross.

Lesson 5

"Deceit" Kills Friendships!

Let's Study from the Bible!

Read Proverbs 26:18-19.

1. Circle the words that describe a "madman." (Correct answers are marked by an asterisk (*) instead of being circled.)

*crazy	*rough	*uncaring	considerate
tender	*wild	*violent	*mischief maker
gentle	*hateful	thoughtful	
polite	*ruthless	*destructive	

2. In the left column list the weapons of the "madman" which match the definition in the right column.

a. <u>Arrow</u>	a pointed stick shot from a bow
b. <u>Firebrands</u>	a burning or glowing piece of wood
c. <u>Death</u>	the end of physical life

3. The word "like" at the beginning of v.18 is a word that compares. Which two things are being compared? A deceitful neighbor is being compared to a madman.

4. Define the word "deceive." (Use a dictionary if you need help.)

Deceive: To lead a person to believe something that is not true; to mislead. It usually involves a deliberate misrepresentation of the facts by words and/or actions.

5. Who is your neighbor? (Choose the best answer.)

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| a. your brother/sister | you know |
| b. someone who lives next to you | e. *all the above |
| c. someone you meet in the store | f. none of the |
| d. a bully that | above |

The biblical definition of neighbor comes from Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37). One of the experts in the law asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" After telling the parable Jesus asked the lawyer, "So which of these three [the negligent priest and Levite or the caring Samaritan] do you think was *neighbor* to him who fell among the thieves?" The lawyer answered, "He who showed mercy on him."

6. What does it mean when someone says, "I was only joking"?

He means that what he said is not to be taken seriously. Some times we also use another common phrase, "I was just kidding." This is said as an *excuse*. The thinking goes like this, "If I was just joking then you cannot take me seriously. And if it is not to be taken seriously then I really cannot be held accountable for what I have said."



Let's Meditate on the Bible!

1. Think back to the three weapons used by the "madman." What kind of destruction results from using each one of these weapons? (List your answers in order from the least harmful to the most harmful.)
 - a. Firebrands were usually aimed at buildings – especially those housing people or very necessary supplies. When the firebrand would land on a roof or go through a window it would start the place on fire. The damage would be very great, but the harm done to the individuals inside the house could be quite minimal if they were able to escape the burning building.
 - b. Arrows are designed to kill or at least maim their target. Any one struck by an arrow would immediately be injured. If the arrow struck the right spot it would mean almost instant death.
 - c. Death is the end result when firebrands and arrows are successfully hurled. Fire engulfs the victims to burn them to death or the arrow spills the life-blood on the ground so that the body dies.

2. List three examples of times when you or your friends have heard or said, "I was only joking (teasing)"?
 - a. _____

 - b. _____

 - c. _____

In this Leader's Guide I am giving several common uses (i.e. situations in which people commonly say, "I was only joking."). It will be up to you, the leader, to give specific examples.

- Some times people try to *cover a personal insult* by saying, “I was only joking.” For example, some one says to you, “Hey, ‘nice’ hair cut. Did you get attacked by your lawn mower?” When you don’t laugh when he does he light-heartedly says, “I was only joking.”
- *Practical jokes* are a common use for this phrase. Think of the birthday boy/girl who keeps blowing out the candles that keep relighting. If they’ve never seen them before they might be hurt when they learn that a joke has been played on them. Then they hear these supposedly comforting words, “We were only joking.”
- Children find this line to be very useful to *make teasing seem rather harmless*. Mom hears her daughter’s scream from the next room – not a scream of fear, but of frustration. Then mom calls to her son, “Are you teasing your sister?!” Admittedly he says, “I was only joking.”
- In some cases Some might think it to be very practical to *excuse a lie* by saying, “I was only joking.”

3. For each one of your examples, explain how the joking (teasing) affected the relationship between the one who was teased and the one who did the teasing.

- a. _____

- b. _____

- c. _____

The answers in #3 should prepare the children to complete the activity in #4 below. Together these questions are designed to get the children to see the consequences of their actions. That also seems to be the intent of the proverb.

4. Go back to the examples in #2. (a) With an orange or yellow crayon (or marker) underline those that hurt the friendship like a "firebrand." (b) With a red crayon underline those that hurt the friendship like an "arrow." (c) With a black crayon underline those that brought death to the friendship.



Let's Live by the Bible!

1. Practicing "deceit" is like throwing "firebrands, arrows and death."
- a. What is the opposite of practicing "deceit"? Speaking and living the truth is the opposite of practicing deceit.
- b. What instrument of the body is most often used for throwing these weapons? The tongue
- c. List two ways that you will work toward bringing life to your friendships instead of death.

- _____
- _____

Positively: Speak words of encouragement and kindness. Some times honesty requires us to speak difficult words of correction, but even words of correction or rebuke can build up if they are done in love.

Negatively: Learn to hold your tongue when hurtful joking comes to your mind.

Lesson 6

Friends Wear Christ-like Clothes

Let's Study from the Bible!

1. Match the definition in the right column with the correct words in the left column. Read Ephesians 4:31.

b bitterness

a. loud quarreling

e or d wrath

b. feeling very sorry for yourself,
holding a grudge against someone

d or e anger

c. saying things that hurt people
d. a very strong feeling of displeasure;
rage

a clamor

e. the kind of anger that says, "I am
going to get you back for what you
did to me!"

c evil speaking

The purpose of this exercise is very simple – to define words. The more accurate your definition the more accurate your interpretation and application are likely to be. Instead of having the children look up each word in a dictionary I have supplied a dictionary definition for each one, but they will have to engage their minds to distinguish

between one and the other. Check to see if they have the right answers. If they do not have the right answers they are not likely to have a good grasp of what the text is saying.

2. According to v.31 what ought to be done with bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor and evil speaking? Let it be put away from you."

When you interpret the text of Scripture it is not enough to look at the individual words by themselves. After looking at the individual pieces of a passage all the parts have to be put back together in order figure out the message that is being conveyed.

3. Read Ephesians 4:32 then list the three things that are opposite to bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor and evil speaking.

- a. be kind to one another
b. tenderhearted
c. forgiving one another

Seeing this connection between verses 31 & 32 will be important for discussion question #1 in the next section.

4. Whose example are we to follow in our relationships with friends and family? God's example.

This answer comes from the last phrase in v.32, "... just as God in Christ also forgave you." This phrase is more central than we might realize. The strength and motivation for us to "put off" the old nature and to "put on" the new is rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ. God's forgiveness of our sins provides the supernatural basis for putting away selfishness and for being free to look out for the interests and well-being of others.

Take the time to reflect upon God's forgiveness using the following passages of Scripture. This will prepare your class for further discussion about forgiveness in connection with #4 in the next section.

- God chooses not to remember our sins, that is, He chooses not to bring them up again in order to hold them against us. See **Jeremiah 31:34c** “For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” and **Isaiah 43:25**, “I, *even I, am* He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins.”
- God’s forgiveness removes our guilt and our shame. See **Psalm 103:12**, “As far as the east is from the west, *So far* has He removed our transgressions from us.”
- God chooses not to treat us as we deserve. Only because of Jesus’ sacrifice can God’s justice treat us in this fashion. See **Psalm 130:3**, “If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? ⁴ But *there is* forgiveness with You, That You may be feared.”
- According to God’s love He chooses not to think evil of the believer. See **1Corinthians 13:5d** “[Love] thinks no evil.”



Let's Meditate on the Bible!

1. If you trip and fall in the mud you have to change your clothes. Look again at Ephesians 4:31-32. Notice how these instruction are like changing clothes. In the left column list the lifestyle clothes you must “Put Off.” In the right column list the lifestyle clothes you must “Put On.”

If you begin your discussion at this point it would be helpful to refer back to #3 & #1 in the previous section. This exercise is intended to place verses 31 & 32 side by side in order to compare and to see the contrast.

"PUT OFF"

- bitterness
- wrath
- anger
- clamor
- evil speaking

"PUT ON"

- be kind to one another
- be tenderhearted
- be forgiving one another
-
-

2. Explain what it means to "put off." Use any one of the items in the "Put Off" list in order to illustrate your explanation. _

This pattern of "put off" and "put on" is explained in vv. 17-24. For the "put off" see especially v. 22. The pattern is clearly illustrated in vv. 25-29. Draw on these verses if you need to give further explanation and examples to bring understanding of the pattern to your group.

3. Explain what it means to "put on." Use any one of the items in the "Put On" list in order to illustrate your explanation. __

Remember that the pattern of "put off" and "put on" is explained in vv. 17-24. For the "put on" see especially v. 24. The pattern is clearly illustrated in vv. 25-29. Draw on these verses if you need to give further explanation and examples to bring understanding of the pattern to your group. Use the examples that relate most directly to the individuals in your class.

4. Reread Ephesians 4:32. How would you define "forgive"?
Choose the correct answer.

- a. *"You wronged me, but I promise never to bring it up again. I will not hold it against you any more."

This is the correct answer. Point out to your class that God's forgiveness is really a promise. When we forgive we also choose to make a promise. In fact, Ken Sande, in his worthwhile book *The Peacemaker* includes four promises connected with biblical forgiveness (page 209 in the third edition). Here they are:

- I promise not to dwell on this incident.
- I promise not to bring up this incident again and use it against you.
- I promise not to talk to others about this incident.
- I promise not to let this incident stand between us or hinder our personal relationship.

- b. "I will forget about your wrong doing on the condition that you never do it again."

This second choice is obviously wrong because of what Jesus teaches Peter about being ready to forgive seventy times seven (Matt. 18:21-22ff.).



Let's Live by the Bible!

1. Go back to the previous page and quickly review the "Put Off" list. By using the questions on the next page identify the things in your life that need to be put off.
- a. In which situations of your life can your attitude be compared to the taste of a dill pickle? _____

A dill pickle is bitter. It makes your mouth pucker. If your class had difficulty identifying situations in their lives in which

they experience bitterness here are a few suggestions to prompt their thinking. Ask them to fill in the blanks.

- When I don't get my way about _____ I choose to pout and mope around the house.
- I felt anger inside of me when I had to miss _____.
- I feel resentment (anger) toward others when they _____.

b. When do you find yourself thinking (or saying), "I can't wait to get back at him/her for what he/she has done to me?" _____

Here are a few prompts in case your discussion needs a little boost.

- I felt like getting back/even when a brother or sister hurt my feelings by saying _____.
- I felt like getting back/even when someone deliberately broke my _____.

c. It is not accurate to say, "That makes me angry!" No one or nothing can make you to be angry. Instead you allow yourself to become angry. What were the circumstances last time you became angry? _____

Anger is a choice, not an uncontrollable emotion. To illustrate this point I tell how it often goes when the phone rings in the middle of a heated argument. Within seconds we are able to answer the phone with a controlled voice and a surprisingly pleasant "Hello!"

Here are a few more prompts in case your discussion needs a little boost.

- I remember the time I got so frustrated because _____.
- My pet peeve is _____.
- It really upsets me when they always forget to _____.

- d. Think back to the last time when you were quarreling with your brother, sister or friend. (If you can't remember ask your dad or mom.) What were you quarreling over? ____
-

As they relate their quarrel pay attention to the number of “he did” or “she said” statements compared to the number of “I did” or “I said” statements. Pride usually allows us to see a quarrel only from our own selfish point of view. Point this out if you can recognize it in their story.

- e. How have you hurt someone by the words you have spoken? (List one instance from your life.) _____
-

Here are a few questions to trigger the children' memory banks.

- Was it an unkind word?
- Did you tell a joke to poke fun of someone?
- Did you lie about somebody?

2. Now review the “Put On” list from the previous page [see #1 in the section “Let’s *Meditate* on the Bible!"]. In your mind think how you could follow these instructions to redo the things in your life that need to be “put off.” Talk it over with your parents and bring your insights to class.

As you talk about the necessary “put ons” be sure to integrate the gospel as it was discussed in #4 of the first section, “Let’s *Study* from the Bible!” God’s forgiveness of our sins must be the basis for us dealing kindly with one another and with a tender heart.

Lesson 7

Choosing Friends . . . HOW!?! --- ---

Let's Study from the Bible!

1. Read Proverbs 12:26. Define the righteous by putting a ✓ in the blank before the right answer(s).
 - a. _____ those who always have the right answers
 - b. those whose wrong doing is not held against them by God because of Jesus' death on the cross.
 - c. those who obey the 10 commandments
 - d. those who do nice things for others
 - e. those who love Jesus

In simplest terms the “righteous” are those who live in a right relationship with God. From the New Testament we learn most clearly that a person can be made right with God only through the blood of Jesus Christ. This can belong to the sinner in a most personal way, but only by faith. The converted man is not only *saved* by faith, he also *lives* by faith. The outward expression of being saved by faith is obedience to God – not perfect obedience, but such an obedience that would characterize one’s overall lifestyle as “righteous” as opposed to “wicked.”

We could also explain this in terms of “justification” and “sanctification”. *Justification* is an imputed righteousness. That simply means that the perfect righteousness, holiness and obedience of

Jesus Christ is credited to our account. *Sanctification* is the work of the Holy Spirit by which He removes the corruption of sin from our lives and replaces it with godly ways of living. This is a process which continues until the day we die. Letter “b” fits the category of *justification*; letters “c, d & e” fit the category of *sanctification*. Without justification you cannot have true sanctification. That means without “b” you really cannot have “c, d” or “e”. But if you do not have a beginning in sanctification (“c, d” or “e”) it is highly unlikely that you have justification (“b”).

Note the following descriptions of the righteous from the book of Proverbs.

The righteous are known by what they say.

Proverbs 10:11 The mouth of the righteous *is* a well of life,
But violence covers the mouth of the wicked.

Proverbs 10:20 The tongue of the righteous *is* choice silver;
The heart of the wicked *is worth* little.

Proverbs 10:31 The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom,
But the perverse tongue will be cut out.

Proverbs 10:32 The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable,
But the mouth of the wicked *what is* perverse.

The righteous are known by their attitude toward lying and the truth.

Proverbs 13:5 A righteous *man* hates lying,
But a wicked *man* is loathsome and comes to shame.

The righteous are known by the careful control of their tongues and the thoughtfulness of their words.

Proverbs 15:28 The heart of the righteous studies how to answer,
But the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil.

The righteous are known by their consistent lifestyle of godliness.

Proverbs 20:7 The righteous *man* walks in his integrity;
His children *are* blessed after him.

Proverbs 12:10 A righteous *man* regards the life of his animal,
But the tender mercies of the wicked *are* cruel.

The righteous are known by how they care for the needs of others.

Proverbs 29:7 The righteous considers the cause of the poor,
But the wicked does not understand *such* knowledge.

2. **What are the righteous commanded to do in Proverbs 12:26?**
The righteous should choose his friends carefully,

3. **What is the key word in that command? carefully**

If some of the children in your class chose a word other than “carefully” you might ask them: “Why did you think the word you chose was their key word?” They may have a logical reason for their selection. Encourage them where you can by saying, “I can see why you would say that. Your answer makes good sense.” By encouraging them at this stage of the study they will be more confident to share their answers at a later stage.

It may be difficult for some to pick out the key word because all the words in the command are necessary in order for it to make sense, but the word “carefully” makes an important qualification as to *how* one ought to choose friends.

4. **What word or words is the opposite of the “key” word? carelessly**

In your discussion it would be good to make the question more specific by asking, “What is the opposite of ‘carefully’?” This will draw all the children back into the discussion -- especially those who gave the wrong answer in #3 and therefore have the wrong answer for #4.

5. **What happens if this command is not obeyed?** You will find the in the second half of v.26. If one does not choose his friends carefully he is likely to choose a wicked friend and a wicked friend will lead them astray.

6. In your own words identify the wicked. (Who are they?)

The wicked are those who do not love God or obey God. By looking at other proverbs which speak of the wicked we get a sense of who they are.

The wicked speak what is violent (10:11, cf. 12:6), perverse (10:32), and deceitful (12:5). Their speech overflows with evil things (15:28). Lying brings out wickedness in others (29:12).

The wicked tend to be cruel, even to their animals (12:10). Their religious practices are abominations (15:8, 21:27). They have an appetite for wickedness (19:28). Even their plowing is sinful (21:4). They refuse to do justice; they are unfair (21:7). As the wicked become more numerous and prominent the community becomes less safe and more frightening (28:12, 28; 29:16).

7. Use your dictionary to define "astray"? The term conveys the sense of being led off the right path; to be led in the wrong direction; to be caused to err or to be wrong or to do wrong.



Let's Meditate on the Bible!

1. Read Psalm 1 in order to compare the blessings of the righteous with the character of the wicked. Using Psalm 1 put a ☺ in front of the following statements that apply to the righteous child and a ☹ in front of the ones that apply to the wicked child.

- a. ☺ He/She is happy to obey God's laws
 - b. ☹ He/She trembles at the judgment of God when He comes.
 - c. ☹ He/She will perish in hell.
 - d. ☺ He/She reads the Bible and loves God's word.
 - e. ☺ He/She is secure and strong only in the love of God.
 - f. ☹ He/She is compared to chaff which is tossed to and fro by the wind. He/She has no direction or purpose in life.
 - g. ☺ He/She is productive, that is loving, joyful, patient, etc.
 - h. ☺ He/She will live with God forever.
 - i. ☺ For him/her the Lord has planned a glorious future.
2. **Who receives the greatest blessing?** The answer is found in Psalm 1:2, "But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night." The one who receives the greatest blessing is the one who highly treasures God's law. As a result he thinks upon it often and seeks to apply it to every aspect of ones life.
3. **What would the righteous be giving up if they would follow the leading of the wicked?** In terms of Psalm 1 the righteous would be giving up all the items in #1 which have been marked with a ☺.
4. **What test can you use to determine if another boy or girl would be a good friend?** (Hint: John 14:15 or 1John 2:3)

Obedience to the commands of God is the most obvious outward mark of love toward God. In order to choose friends who love God we need to see if they obey God.

You would do well to make a passing comment about how important this is for choosing a future spouse. Don't think your class is too young for such advice. They need to hear this instruction early and often so that they are prepared for that season in life when they (together with their parents) select a suitable mate.

5. Learn 1 Corinthians 15:33 "by heart." Then try to write it from memory in these blanks.

"Do not be deceived: 'Evil company corrupts good habits.'" (1 Corinthians 15:33).

For the sake of discussion you might want to ask, "How should we treat those who do not love Jesus? What kind of relationship ought we to have with unbelieving neighbors?"

It may be that from time to time God brings into our lives people who do not love God (perhaps an unbelieving neighbor, etc.). We ought not to be rudely cold them, but to show them the love of Jesus Christ through thoughtful acts of kindness. In this way we might befriend them for the sake of the gospel. However, this is much different than building a close relationship with them. Therefore, (children especially) ought to use great caution in developing relationships with those who do not love God.



Let's Live by the Bible!

1. List the three most important things you should look for in choosing your friends.

The single most important thing to look for in choosing friends is whether or not they love Jesus. That ought to come to expression in

three areas. For the sake of easy “memory recall” think of these three areas as the “A,B,C’s” of choosing friends:

A = Attitude

B = Behaviors

C = Confession or Conversation.

If that seems too cumbersome stick with the familiar “Thoughts, Words & Deeds.”

- a. AttitudeThoughts: This can best be evaluated by what the person does or says. What does their attitude in their play or in their work say about their relationship to Jesus Christ?
- b. BehaviorsDeeds: Do they belong to a church and do they worship regularly? Not all who “go to church” are necessarily good friends. Do they lead a godly lifestyle . . . do their lives show obedience to the commands of God?
- c. ConfessionConversationWords: You can measure a person by what they say. Do they confess Jesus Christ as their Savior? What do they talk about? Do they tell sinful jokes?

2. Think about your friends.

- a. Do they have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ? _____

- b. What qualities of a Christian do you see in their lives that show that they love the Lord? _____

If there are those who have friends who do not have a relationship with Jesus Christ it would be fitting to discuss what ought to be done in light of the teaching of this lesson. Here are just a few things that might be considered.

- Limit the amount of time and the number of times you spend with this friend. As long as your friend does not have a relationship with Jesus it is unwise to build your relationship any closer than what it is.

- When you spend time together it ought to be under the supervision of a godly adult -- most naturally your parents. In other words, if you play together it ought to be in your own home when your parents are around. This is for your own protection.
- Have your parents help you to evaluate whether you are being a good influence upon your friend or if they are being a bad influence upon you.
- If they are being a bad influence upon you then it may be necessary to end the relationship completely.

3. Who must be the best friend of a righteous boy/girl? (Hint: See John 15:14-15.) _____ Are you the kind of person that the righteous should make friends with? _____ Why or why not? _____

The purpose of this question is to get the individuals in your class to evaluate their relationship with the Lord. Be ready to discuss ways in which they may need to change in order to be more obedient in following Jesus Christ. But this must always be done in light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our obedience must be our thankful response to the wonderful plan of salvation by which God forgives our sins in the blood of Jesus Christ.

4. Think of a time that you have been led astray by a friend. Tell what you would do differently in that same situation. ____

Since this question is somewhat personal the children in your class may not be eager to share their answers. They are likely to be more willing to share their experience if the leader makes him/herself vulnerable. Consequently, you as a leader ought to be prepared to tell

your own story of how you were misled by someone you thought was your friend.

If no one can think of a time when they were misled by a friend you might ask, “Do you know of a situation in which someone was misled by a friend?”

If time allows you might show an example from Scripture of one who was misled by a “friend.” One example might be the man of God in 1 Kings 13 who was misled by an old prophet.

Lesson 8

ChapStick (boys' edition) Lipstick (girls' edition) For A Royal Friendship

Let's Study from the Bible!

1. Place your bookmark at Proverbs 22:11.
2. Some times it is difficult to make friends. If you could make friends with kings you could probably make friends with anybody. According to Proverbs 22:11 what two things are most likely in helping you to gain a friendship with a king?

These short answers are intended to get the children to dissect the text and break it down into the smaller parts.

 - a. Love purity of heart.
 - b. Have grace on your lips.
3. List two Bible characters who became friends with a king. (Hint: See Genesis 41:37 & Daniel 1:6.)

- a. Joseph became friends with Pharaoh king of Egypt.
- b. Daniel became friends with Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon (also see Dan. 1:19; 2:46-49).

4. Match the words in the left column with their definition in the right column. Put the letter of the definition in the blank in front of the appropriate word.

This exercise is designed to define the key words in Proverbs 22:11. Make sure that they have the right answers and understand what each word means. For instance, you might ask, "In your own words what does 'love' mean?" Even though the terms are familiar they may not fully grasp them. By talking about them you challenge the children's minds to think them through more thoroughly.

- | | | |
|-------------|--------|---|
| <u> </u> b | Loves | a. to show goodness, favor and kindness to others; to be courteous to others; |
| <u> </u> e | Purity | b. to delight in; to take pleasure in; to appreciate deeply; to be devoted to someone or something; |
| <u> </u> d | Heart | c. the pieces of skin around the opening of your mouth which help you to pronounce your words; |
| <u> </u> a | Grace | d. your inward being; (If you were an apple, this would be your core. Also, it is the organ inside your chest which pumps blood and sustains life.) |
| <u> </u> c | Lips | e. clean; unstained from sin; clean thoughts; clean words; clean actions; innocent before the law |



Let's Meditate on the Bible!

1. Read Matthew 12:33-37

- a. Will eating dirt make your heart dirty? NO

The purpose of this question is to get to the point that it is not what goes into a person that makes him unclean. Instead, it's what comes out of a person that makes him unclean – at least spiritually speaking. In this figure of speech the physical is the opposite of the spiritual. Bad germs in the mouth make the body sick. It's the other way around for the spiritual. Spiritually, a corrupt heart infects the mouth so that it's speech is morally unclean.

- b. What kind of things come out of a "dirty" heart? The general answer from Matt. 12:35 is "Evil things." At this point in your discussion simply gather information from the children. The information you gather here will be useful for your discussion when you get to #1 in the last section of this lesson. You might prompt them with a further question: "What kind of evil things?" If they can't think of anything re-phrase the question: "What evil things can you do (say) with your mouth?" You might expect answers like, "lying, naughty jokes, talking back to parents, arguing, whining, complaining, false accusations, insults," etc.

- c. What kind of things come out of a "pure" heart? The general answer from Matt. 12:35 is "good things." Again, at this point in your discussion simply gather information from the children. The information you gather here will be useful for your discussion when you get to #1 in the last section of this lesson. As in "b" above prompt them for greater detail. Ask, "What kind of good things?" Expect answers like, "kindness, expressions of politeness ("please," "thank you," "excuse me" etc.), genuine compliments, encouragement, gentle words of corrections, etc.

- d. **How does the condition of your heart affect your speech?** The answer is clear from v. 34b, “For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” The question in v.34a expects the answer, ‘You can’t! You, being evil, are unable/incapable of speaking good things.’ What we speak is only a symptom of what’s in our heart. Our speech is like a heart-monitor. It expresses the true condition of our heart. Emphasize again that the root of evil speech is not in the mouth, but in the heart.
2. **Reread Proverbs 22:11. Who might be “The king”?** (See Proverbs 1:1.) Very likely, Solomon is the king. He inherited the throne from his father, David.
3. **Imagine why a king would write Proverbs 22:11. Put a ✓ in front of the items that would be different in our nation if every citizen loved a pure heart and had grace on his/her lips.** The intent of this exercise is to help the children get a glimpse of the powerful impact of God’s life-changing Word upon our lives. As individual lives are changed the culture in which we live will be affected. You might like to challenge your class to think beyond the list that is given. Ask them, “What else would be different in our society if everyone loved a pure heart and had grace upon their lips?”
- No stores would ever get robbed.
 - No one would make a practice of telling lies.
 - It would be useless to read the Bible.
 - Boys/Girls would not like to tell dirty jokes.
 - Boys/Girls would not delight in poking fun of other girls or boys.
 - It would be no fun for brothers and sisters to fight with one another.
 - It would be unnecessary to go to church.

- h. Girls and boys would happily obey their parents and teachers.
- i. Few people would be interested in talking about Jesus.
- j. People would take better care of their sick neighbors.



Let's Live by the Bible!

1. Reread Proverbs 22:11. If you cannot buy "Grace" brand lipstick ("ChapStick" in boys' edition) then what does it mean to have grace on your lips? (See Ephesians 4:29.)
 - a. Negatively it means to let no corrupt communication proceed from out of your mouth. You may find it helpful to include in your discussion the answers from "1.b." in the previous section. The evil that is typically on our lips focuses on ourselves. We focus on ourselves directly when we use our words to boast or to speak about our own interests. We focus on ourselves indirectly when we use our words to tear others down by our insults, false accusations, gossip, slander, etc. To have grace on our lips is to restrain our mouths from speaking that which is destructive.
 - b. Positively it means to speak what is good for necessary edification (building up), that it may impart grace to the hearers. You may find it helpful to include in your discussion the answers from "1.c." in the previous section. To have grace on your lips is to aim at benefitting others with your words. This will also bring glory to God. Therefore, to have grace on your lips is to weigh your words and calculate their impact on those who hear you. Instead of thinking about ourselves we need to think about the well-being of others around us. Let us be quick to encourage them, to speak a

word of comfort to those who are hurting, to pay a compliment when something is well done, to speak a word of gentle correction when someone is going astray.

It might also be useful to extend your discussion beyond the speaking of words. How does this idea of having grace on our lips guide us in the music we sing or even the music we choose to entertain us? The words we think (i.e. meditate) upon eventually sink into our souls and become a part of us – often without us even realizing it.

2. Think of a time (recently) when you did not have grace on your lips. How did this hurt your relationship with your friend or your brother or sister, or your dad or mom? (They are to be your friends, too.) _____
- _____
- _____

The answer to this question may be too personal for the children to share with others in class. Be prepared to share from your own life. It might be most helpful if you can think of an instance from your own childhood. This becomes a wonderful opportunity to highlight the gospel in a very natural way. Be sure to tell how it was resolved by confession and forgiveness. If it was never resolved in a biblical way express your regrets for not resolving it God's way. If it's too late to go back and make things right explain how you would do things differently if you could go back in time and do it over. Tell of God's grace through Jesus Christ by which sins are forgiven.

3. Reread Proverbs 22:11. You can have friends with other kids without having a pure heart, but you must have a pure heart to be friends with The King. Who is that King? (See Matthew 5:8.) The King is God – most particularly in the person of Jesus Christ.

4. Where does a clean heart come from so that a young person like you can be friends with The King? (See Hebrews 9:11-14, especially v.14.) The simple answer is that a clean heart comes from God alone. The Bible reveals that there are two sad consequences from our sinful nature. First, we are guilty and second, we are corrupt. To have a clean heart we must have the guilt of our sin removed by the blood of Jesus Christ. We call this the forgiveness of sins or justification. Second, we must have the corruption of our heart removed by the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit. We call this ongoing process sanctification. Those whom God washes in the blood of Jesus He also cleanses by His Holy Spirit. To be friends with God we must be innocent by having the righteousness of Jesus Christ "imputed" to us or charged to our account. And to have a living relationship with God we must continually have sin cleansed from our hearts by the purifying work of the Holy Spirit.

5. Psalm 119:1 describes the lifestyle of those who are friends with the King. Fill in the blanks and memorize it.

"Blessed are the undefiled/blameless in the way,
who walk in the law of the Lord!

Blessed are those who keep His testimonies,
who seek Him with a whole heart!"

Discuss this verse in connection with the notes under #4 above. Explain this lifestyle as that which comes as a result of the Holy Spirit dwelling in a person's life. Encourage them to pray for the work of the Spirit in their life (Luke 11:13). Challenge them to expect holy changes in their lives.

Lesson 9

Pay NOW... Not LATER.

Let's Study from the Bible!

Put your bookmark in Proverbs 3 and read vv. 27-28.

1. Circle the synonyms of "withhold."

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| a. *hold back | e. dog |
| b. give away | f. *keep from |
| c. *reserve | g. release |
| d. *retain | h. *keep |

In this first section we are taking a look at the individual pieces (words and phrases) of the text. This multiple choice exercise is designed to sharpen the child's definition of "withhold" by finding the synonyms and distinguishing the opposites.

2. According to v.27 what should be given away? (Answer with one word.) g o o d

The answer to this question identifies the specific thing being withheld. When we think about giving things away we usually think about things that are tangible – things we can actually touch with our

hands and hold in our arms. Dealing with an intangible element will make the application of this Proverb a bit more challenging. It's interesting that when we give away tangible things like toys or clothes we end up with less than what we started with. But when we give away intangible things like goodness or love we grow in goodness and love. Such intangible things do not become less!

3. What words come to your mind when you hear the word "due"? (Circle the right ones.)

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| a. *something owed | f. *fitting |
| b. *unpaid debt (or bill) | g. *deserve |
| c. *return library books | h. *right |
| d. privilege | i. *reward |
| e. *owner | j. *payment |

Literally v.27a says, "Withhold not good from its owners . . .". In other words, that which is "due" legitimately *belongs* to someone else. Library books have a "due date" because that's when the owner of the books (i.e. the library) wants to have them returned. Since the library is the owner of the books they are "due" to the library. The library has a legal right to have them back on the shelf.

It might be helpful to think of additional examples correlating to some of the other words in the list above. It is important for the children to understand the term "due" in connection with ownership. As they make this connection they will be more compelled to follow through with the application. It's obvious that I have to pay the clerk at the grocery store for a box of cereal, but it's usually not as obvious when I have to pay with the "coins" of goodness.

4. Read the two explanations of "the power of your hand:"

- 1) It refers to your physical strength (that is, the power of your muscles).
- 2) It refers to opportunities that are

available to you. Which explanation fits best with Proverbs 3:27-28? 2 (Put the best number in the blank.)

None of the actual words for “power” are used in v.27 of the original Hebrew Bible. Young’s Literal Translation puts v.27b this way: “When thy hand [is] toward God to do [it].” My rough translation goes like this: “. . . when it comes to pass according to God, your hand to act.” That’s not very good English, but it is good Hebrew poetry. From the literal translation we see that “power” is not my ability to act, but it is God who sets the opportunity before me. And when that happens I am under obligation to act – to do what God would have me to do at that time or under those circumstances.

It is not necessary for you to explain all of this to the children. These comments are intended to give you insight into the text so that you might understand the logic behind my interpretation, but also that you might explain the text accurately. The literal translation draws greater attention to the sovereignty of God by which He arranges the circumstances of our lives and opens doors of opportunity to us. This point should be emphasized to the children under your instruction.

5. How would you label the person described in Pr.3:27-28?
(Circle the best answer.)
- a. God-centered (worshipful)
 - b. neighbor-centered (caring)
 - c. *self-centered (selfish)

Answers “a” and “b” are not opposed to each other. We love and serve God by caring for our neighbor. In light of the explanation in #4 above the one who obeys the instruction of v.27 serves God by caring for his neighbor.

The negative (i.e. what not to do) illustration in v.28 presents the behavior of a self-centered (i.e. selfish) person.



Let's Meditate on the Bible!

1. How does verse 28 describe the sin against the ninth commandment? ("You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.")

This question assumes that the one withholding "good" is somehow hiding whatever it is that he owes. That may or may not be the case. Very likely there will be times when the one who is supposed to pay tells a blatant lie or at least gives the impression that he cannot pay today because he doesn't have the "goods" with him.

2. How do verses 27-28 describe the sin against the eighth commandment? ("You shall not steal.") If you are stuck get a hint from Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 111.

111. Q. But what does God require of you in [the 8th] commandment?

A. That I

further my neighbor's profit wherever I can or may,
deal with Him as I would have others deal with me,
and labor faithfully

that I may be able to relieve the needy.

(Heidelberg Catechism)

Proverbs 3:27-28 is more of an application of the eighth commandment than of the ninth. By *withholding* what is *due* (i.e. what belongs to the owner) the person is keeping in his possession that which rightly belongs to the other person. That's stealing!

3. Who are "those to whom good is due"? (Use the following Bible passages to answer this question.)

Keep in mind the connection between "due" and "ownership" as explained in #3 of the previous section.

- a. **Proverbs 25:21** outlines what we owe to our *enemies*! They have a right to be fed by us when they are hungry. We owe them a

drink when they are thirsty because God owns all sources of food and drink. We are only stewards. He has assigned us the noble position of managing that which He has created and continues to maintain by His providential care.

- b. **Matthew 5:44,46** require us to love our enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.

- c. **Gal. 6:10** gives first priority to fellow Christians. But as we have opportunity we are to do good to all. Think about the phrase “as you have opportunity” in light of the explanation given in #4 of the previous section.

- d. **Ephesians 4:28** puts a refreshing perspective on work. We tend to think that whatever money we earn belongs to us. Here the Holy Spirit reminds us that some of our wages belong to those who are in need. In a sense it is their “due.” According to God’s command part of our wages belong to them.

This is not to be understood in the communistic way of thinking. The communist mind set believes it is the state’s responsibility to tax the “Have’s” in order that they might give to the “Have-not’s.” God has apportioned some of our wages to the needs of the poor, but we are to give that portion willingly – not by the force of taxation. In some cases we might give directly to the poor. At other times we will give to the needy through the collections scheduled by the deacons of our local church.

4. Titus 3:1-3,8 lists several ways in which we give good to others. Put a ☺ in front of the ways we "withhold good" and a ☹ in front of the ways we do not "withhold good."
- | | |
|--|--|
| a. <u>☹</u> don't speak evil
about others | g. <u>☹</u> love pleasure |
| b. <u>☺</u> be peaceable | h. <u>☹</u> be envious |
| c. <u>☺</u> be gentle | i. <u>☹</u> be hateful |
| d. <u>☺</u> be humble | j. <u>☹</u> hate each other |
| e. <u>☹</u> be foolish | k. <u>☺</u> look out for the
well-being of others |
| f. <u>☹</u> be disobedient | |

This list helps us to lay hold of those intangible things (i.e. things that cannot be touched with our hands or held in our arms) mentioned back in #2 of the previous section. These answers will be useful for applying the text – especially when we get to #2.b in the next section. Therefore, make sure the children's answers are accurate.

Re-emphasize the fact that when we give away tangible things like toys or clothes we end up with less than what we started with. But when we give away intangible things like goodness or love we grow in goodness and love. Such intangible things do not become less, but more! This is not only true for intangible things that are virtuous, but also for the intangible things that are dishonorable.



Let's Live by the Bible!

1. Let's do good in the strength of God and by imitating Him. What excites you to open your hand instead of "withholding good"? (Check the following passages.)

- a. **Titus 3:4-7 (especially vv. 4-5)** Use this passage to emphasize that our ability to distribute “goodness” depends on God having enriched us by His grace. Jesus Christ must make us alive to God by His Spirit. Otherwise we cannot even begin to do as Proverbs 3:27-28 commands. This is the *good news* of the Gospel!
- b. **James 1:17** The gift of God’s grace in us is what transforms us into someone who is willing to feed his enemies and to bless those who curse him. This is the *power* of the Gospel!
- c. **Psalm 34:10 or 84:11** Since God is the source of all our spiritual gifts and treasures then we ought to be earnestly seeking Him (Psalm 34:10) so that we might be strengthened to overcome the temptation to hold back from distributing “good”. The more we realize that God is the One who infinitely and eternally fills our lives with His grace and glory we will all the more want to walk closely with Him (Psalm 84:11). This is the *glory* of the gospel.

2. Let's not withhold good from our neighbor.

In your discussion of doing good do not limit yourselves to those who have done good to you (see Matt. 5:46). Challenge the children to think about what they “owe” to the bully on the playground or to the younger sibling who broke their favorite toy, etc.

- a. **List three neighbors from whom you think you might have been “withholding good.” (Don't forget that dads and moms, brothers and sisters are also neighbors!)**

- _____
- _____
- _____

Encourage the children to list them by name. This answer leads the children to confess their sins. Since we have Jesus as our Mediator it is not necessary for the children to share these answers with the class if they choose not to. However, you, as the leader, can be helpful by sharing an application from your own life.

- b. How will you show goodness to these three neighbors? (Go back to question #4 of the previous section to get some ideas. Remember that good things involve your attitude just as much as your actions.) For each neighbor write down one way you will give good things instead of withholding them.

The purpose of this question is to lead the children in the path of repentance. It is not enough to confess our sins. True conversion means that we daily turn from sin on the one hand, and turn to obedience and righteousness on the other. The more specific the answer the more helpful it will be.

Again, the children should not be expected to share their answers unless they are willing to do. If they do share be sure to handle their answers with sensitivity and care. In a real sense you are handling their eternal souls.

To show children how to be specific give them an illustration from your own life as you have answered this question. For example, when I was a boy there was a bully in the park where we often played. He threatened to beat me up. According to Matthew 5:44 and the command of Proverbs 3:27 I should have been praying for this boy.

- Neighbor #1: _____

- Neighbor #2: _____

- Neighbor #3: _____

A Note To Parents & Teachers

This series of lessons is entitled *Wise Friendships* for two obvious reasons. First, almost every lesson is devoted to a study within the book of Proverbs. Second, the series focuses on issues related to friendships--being a friend, choosing friends, etc. This booklet comes in two different editions--one for boys and another for girls. Both contain identical content. The differences consist of gender-appropriate pronouns (he, his, him for the boys and she, hers, her for the girls). Only one of the questions has been changed in order to make it more appropriate to the respective gender (see "Let's Meditate" section of lesson 3, #1.e). And for that same reason we changed some of the titles of the lessons as you can see from the list below (e.g. lessons 4 and 8). It gives a brief overview of the lesson themes and Scripture passages.

- Lesson 1: Are You Wise? (Proverbs 1:7, 3:7, 8:13)
- Lesson 2: Why Are You Friendly? (Prov. 14:20-21; 19:4,6-7)
- Lesson 3: A "Loyal" Friend is a "Loving" Friend (Prov. 17:17; 18:24).
- Lesson 4: Fiery Lips & Burnt Friends (Prov. 16:27)
Hot Lipstick Separates Friends (Girls' Edition)
- Lesson 5: "Deceit" Kills Friendships (Prov. 26:18-19).
- Lesson 6: Friends Wear Christ-like Clothes (Eph. 4:31-32).
- Lesson 7: Choosing Friends. . . HOW!?! (Prov. 12:26; Psalm 1)
- Lesson 8: ChapStick For a Royal Friendship (Prov. 22:11; Matt. 12:33-37) (Girls' edition replaces *Lipstick* for *ChapStick*.)
- Lesson 9: Pay NOW . . . Not LATER (Prov. 3:27-28)

One way to teach children the content of Scripture is to teach them *how* to study the Bible. The lessons of this booklet are intended to be *inductive* Bible studies. By asking legitimate questions of each Bible passage the children will learn how to discover the meaning which God intended. Therefore, each lesson is divided into three parts.

The first section *Let's Study from the Bible!* answers the question, “What does the text say?” It gets the children to grasp the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases. In some cases they will have to examine cross-references in order to understand the passage under study. This will help them to see the Proverb in the context of the whole Bible.

The second section *Let's Meditate on the Bible!* answers the question, “What does the text mean?” This section builds on the first by getting the children to think about how the words and phrases of each verse relate to each other in order to communicate a complete thought.

The third section *Let's Live by the Bible!* answers the question “How does the text apply?” In this section the children will be challenged to think about how the Bible truth of the lesson intersects with their lives. When Jesus preached He commanded His hearers to *repent and believe* (Mark 1:15). The apostles understood that the written Word of God would emphasize the same message (2Timothy 3:16-17). Therefore, the application section gets the children to think about the changes (i.e. repentance) that need to be made in their own lives and to think about their need to trust (i.e. believe) in Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

Be sure to pray for the Lord’s blessing and direction as you prepare for each lesson. Begin each session with prayer. Impress upon the children the need to be taught God’s Word by the Holy Spirit (Psalm 119:5,9,105; Hebrews 8:10). Also, make it a priority to hide these truths in their hearts through the exercise of memory (Psalm 119:11). Remember that one of the keys to memorization is repetition.

Since this study consists primarily of questions based on Scripture we believe that it could be used for a broad range of ages. Originally it was intended for elementary children from grades 4 thru 6 (ages 8-11). However, with some adaptation it could profitably be used for ages 7-13. For use in a group setting it would be recommended for the children to do the study on their own or at least with a parent. Then in the group discussion you can expect the first section of each lesson to generate the least amount of discussion, whereas the last section of each lesson will be

most likely to generate the greatest amount of discussion. Sections one and two of each lesson are necessary stepping stones to get to the third. For younger children each lesson could be spread out over more than one class session.

One final note: We prepared this study for use with the New King James Version of the Bible. If you use a different version this should not be a major obstacle. Simply work through the lesson yourself before assigning it to the children. Alert them to any minor changes due to differences in versions.

May the Lord use these studies to cultivate strong bonds of truly *Wise Friendships*.

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Permission is granted to copy individual lessons from the student workbook to accommodate occasional visitors to your class. Otherwise we request that you order the complete booklet from the address above.

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