

God's Indescribable Gift

1. Did Nicodemus ask Jesus how he could be saved?

2. Do you think Nicodemus realized his need for a Savior?
 - a. What do you think this indicates about people?
 - b. Did Jesus talk about sin at all?
 - c. Do you think Nicodemus realized his own sinful condition by the end of the conversation?
 - d. What lessons can we learn from this account?

3. What evangelism method did Jesus use?
 - a. What smooth transition did Jesus use to turn the conversation to spiritual matters?
 - b. Do you think this method would work with everyone?

4. In verse 5, did Jesus mean that Christian baptism is a requirement for salvation?
 - a. How do you know?
 - b. What did Jesus mean by "born of water"?

5. Read verse 10.
 - a. What more information did Nicodemus need before he could be saved?
 - b. If he did not need any more information, what was his main problem?
 - c. Is there anything keeping you from accepting Jesus Christ as your personal Savior?

6. Jesus was telling Nicodemus about "salvation."
 - a. How does Jesus refer to salvation in verses 15 and 16?
 - b. How long is eternity?
 - c. If you "perish" (go to hell), did you ever have "eternal life"?
 - d. If Jesus Christ is your Savior, what do you never have to fear (v. 15,16,18)

7. In verse 17 Jesus said He did not come into the world to condemn the world but to save it.
 - a. Did Jesus need to condemn the world?
 - b. What did John the Baptist say about the "natural" state of man apart from Christ (Jn. 3:36)?

8. Jesus said the clear choice before every person is to believe in Him as Savior and you will be with Him forever (eternal life), or stay as you are now (under condemnation) and all you have to look forward to is Hell.
 - a. Be sure you are right with God before you leave church today.
 - b. If you are not 100% certain you are saved, talk to Pastor Troy or your ENCORE leader.

Read: Proverbs 3

Monday

v. 1-10 — Most of the Proverbs must be understood as proverbs (sayings) and should not be seen as the promises of God. Don't think of today's verses as a magical formula but more like a "cause and effect." These Proverbs teach about a general way of life that *is* "wisdom." Notice the odd and even verses go together, e.g., verse 1, "if you keep God's law," verse 2, "you will find long life and peace"; verse 5, "if you trust in the Lord," verse 6, "He will direct your paths." That brings us to a question: Do you want God to direct your paths (life)? God's way (wisdom) is what is right for you, God made you and He alone knows what is best for you. He also never makes any mistakes. God desires us to seek His wisdom and His will but He very often gives us free choice; what you do with that choice will determine the direction and outcome of your life. True wisdom is to *choose* to trust in the Lord.

Tuesday

v. 9,10 — Verses like these have been used by unscrupulous people to bilk many well-meaning people out of their life savings, that is the danger of treating proverbs like a magical formula. However, a careful reading of these verses clearly shows that the real purpose in giving is not to receive physical or financial blessing but to "honor the Lord" (v. 9). As Americans our barns are already filled with plenty and our vats already overflow; the question becomes, How can I best honor the Lord with the first fruits of all my increase? Take some time this week to consider how much you give to the work of the Lord. The biblical model of 10% (tithe) should be a good starting place for any American Christian. As you seek obedience in the area of financial stewardship remember, "God loves a cheerful giver" (II Cor. 9:7), and the amazing truth of God is that as you seek to honor Him you will indeed be blessed—"It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

Wednesday

v. 11,12 — How do you respond to trials? It is clear that some trials are a "chastening of the Lord"; it is also clear that all other trials (as well as everything else) are under God's sovereign control. The writer of proverbs tells us not to "despise" chastening. The word "despise" means to "throw off, spurn or disdain." Don't think of the chastening of the Lord as a bad thing; He does it because He loves you! He chastens you because He delights in you. He chastens you because He only wants what is best for you (Rom. 8:28,29). In light of these verses, how should you respond to trials?

Thursday

v. 13-18 — Happy is the man who finds wisdom. The word "happy" (v. 13) is very forceful in the Hebrew; it could be translated, "How happy!" Some translations say, "Blessed is the man who finds wisdom." Notice the personification of wisdom as a female. Notice also that Solomon was writing to his sons (v. 1, 11, 13). Make a list of the "benefits" or value of wisdom as found in this passage. Now contrast the female personification of wisdom with the female personification of folly from Proverbs 5. Why is it that so many choose the way of folly (rejecting God) over wisdom?

Friday

v. 19,20 — By wisdom the Lord created everything. Solomon is placing before us the value of pursuing wisdom. How foolish would you be if you rejected the free gift of God's own wisdom? God Almighty Who created everything including this wonderful world we live in has freely given you His wisdom. Look around you at this complex world; we haven't even begun to discover everything about it. How could any person think their wisdom is greater than God's? Further, God is your creator; Who better to learn from than your Maker?

Saturday

v. 21-26 — More benefits of wisdom: Notice that in verses 14-18 the benefits were mostly "wants"—gold, rubies, precious things, pleasures, honor, peace and happiness. In verses 21-26, however, the benefits of wisdom become things which are more needful or urgent: "Life to your soul," "grace to your neck," safety, protection; living by wisdom grants you relief from every fear. At this point you may be asking, How is that true? How does wisdom take away fear? First, there is the general truth that living by God's law and in His will spares you from many of the effects of living in this fallen world, but what Solomon has in mind is much greater than this: A person that is living by God's word can be assured that "the Lord will be your confidence, and will keep your foot from being caught." This takes us back to Proverbs 3:5, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart." If you are struggling with fear today, ask yourself this question: Who or what am I trusting in?
