

Dear Bible Study Leader,

Thank you for joining us in this study of the five Poetic books of the Bible. God is very concerned about the hearts of His people and poetry speaks to our hearts. In these books God speaks to the hearts of His people when they are suffering (Job), worshiping (Psalms), needing wisdom for the difficult decisions of daily life (Proverbs), doubting (Ecclesiastes), and expressing the intimacies of marriage (Song of Solomon).

If this is your first Bible study course to lead, welcome and I want to give you some words of encouragement that the Apostle Paul told Timothy, his son in the faith: “You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 2:1-3).

I want to encourage you to nurture believers and help the church grow. Remember, as we move through the study, ask yourself and your group the following questions:

- What does the Word of God say?
- What does this passage mean? And then most importantly;
- What does this passage mean to me? How can I apply God’s eternal principles to my life today?

Pray and ask God to speak to your heart and if you have these three questions in mind and search for their answers, then this course will be truly fruitful and profitable in your life and in the lives of those you will be leading through this study. I trust and pray that as we study these books of God’s poetry and wisdom, and then as you lead others, you will grow in the knowledge of God and in your relationship with His Son, Christ Jesus.

The thoughts and ideas given in this introduction are to help you be more effective in your study and leading. It is my prayer that the experience of this study will continue to help you in your journey and nurture you in your faith as you continue to grow in your spiritual life and lead others in their spiritual journey.

Praying for our Lord’s richest blessing upon you and your ministry,

Dick Woodward

Pastor and author of the Mini Bible College

Leading the Bible Study Group

The Mini Bible College has prepared this devotionally practical survey of the foundational books of the Bible. Your role as teacher is to guide your group through the study sessions and exercises, helping them to understand the concepts, discover the eternal principles and, most importantly, apply them to their lives. This is a survey study that will take almost four months and is designed to be more than just a course. This study is part of a strategic plan to provide you with the tools to nurture and grow personally and help your church grow both spiritually and numerically.

To help you we have provided the following tools:

- This Leader's Guide
- A Leader's Manual
- Report forms
- Audio of Job through the Song of Solomon
- A study booklet on Job through the Song of Solomon
- A set of 10 workbooks for the students

GETTING STARTED

Before class

- Personally start inviting people to come to this spiritual banquet. “Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.’ So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests” (Matthew 22:9-10).
- Prepare yourself in prayer for those who will attend. If possible, pray for them by name. Only God can change the hearts of people, and prayer is the most powerful tool. “Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.” (Luke 18:1).
- Ask for help. Do not try to do everything yourself. Invite one or two people to help with music, singing, greeting, and keeping records for the class.
- Review the lesson and understand the lesson objective.
- Become familiar with the material; listen, read and study each lesson and memorize the Bible verse before class time.
- Be sure all materials are ready for each class.
- Make sure the meeting area is adequate and comfortable for the class.

During class

(Remember to try to keep the class time to one hour and a half.)

- Greet everyone as they arrive. Remember how nice it is when you are welcomed? Extend God's welcome to all. Have someone serve as the greeter and introduce people to one another if they are not already acquainted.
- Open with a time of worship and prayer, asking God to help you and each one understand and apply the God's Word to your lives.
- Recite the memory verse.
- Listen to the audio lesson.
- Work through the workbook, inviting discussion with a focus on application. We trust the questions will raise interesting discussion and understanding that will lead to application. If the group is large (more than 10), consider dividing it into smaller groups of three or four people to encourage discussion. Be sure to monitor the time and be careful that the conversation does not detract from the focus of the lesson and the study of God's Word.
- Thank all for coming and encourage attendance to the next class.
- Challenge the students to invite others to join the Bible study.
- Encourage the students to memorize the biblical passages of the lessons each week.

After each class

- Gather up all materials.
- Restore the meeting room to the proper order.
Leave things more orderly than you found them.
- Fill out and file report forms.
- If you are meeting in someone's home, be sure to thank them for their hospitality.

Special Instructions for Teaching Auditory Learners

It is important to remember that those who cannot read and write learn and retain information differently than those of us who are literate. The auditory learners learn from listening and telling what they have heard. Illiteracy was not an obstacle in Jesus' day. It is good to remember and even tell those in your class that most of the disciples and the majority of the people who first shared and spread the Gospel could not read or write.

In many ways, auditory learners have a greater capacity to learn what they hear than we who must write something down to remember it. Take the time, therefore, to allow your students to hear the Scripture and the lessons, pausing the message and even going back to listen again to a portion if it was not understood, and then allow them to respond to questions. When auditory learners can "story back"—tell in their own words what they have heard and learned—it indicates that they have properly grasped the principle. Therefore, use the study questions to guide the study time as it will help in the learning process. Ask the questions out loud and encourage all to participate and this will lead them into a deeper understanding of God's Word and a stronger relationship with His Son, Jesus the Christ.

The Outward Man and the Inward Man

Chapter 1

Audio Lesson: Old Testament # 46



Objective: To understand the purpose of the Bible's five poetry books and how they fit with the rest of Scripture.



May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

—Psalm 19:14

God's Word includes five poetry books, also known as "wisdom books" or "the writings": Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. In these books, God speaks to the hearts of His people when they are suffering (Job), worshiping (Psalms), coping with the decisions of daily life in marriage, parenting, friendships, money, and business (Proverbs), doubting (Ecclesiastes), and expressing the intimacies of marriage (Song of Solomon). As we read these five books, we should feel the finger of God pressing on our heart. His desire is for us to be changed from the inside out, and biblical poetry deals with the heart perhaps more than any other part of Scripture.



1. **True** or false? The poetry books are also called “wisdom” books.
2. **True** or false? Poetry is the language of the heart.
3. True or **false**? Most people do not enjoy reading the poetry books of the Bible because they are not very interesting.
4. True or **false**? The people who wrote the poetry books never wrestled with doubt.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. The messages contained in the poetry books address people _____.
(choose all that apply)

- a. When they have no problems.
- b. Who have all the answers they need.
- c. When they are doubting.**
- d. When they are suffering.**
- e. Who want to conquer kingdoms.
- f. When they are worshipping.**
- g. When they are being intimate in marriage.**

6. How long has suffering been experienced by God’s people?

- a. Never
- b. Only since the time of Jesus
- c. Occasionally during times of our disobedience
- d. Always**

7. Which of the following are books of poetry? (choose all that apply)

- a. Psalms**
- b. Numbers
- c. Job**
- d. Joshua
- e. Esther
- f. Song of Songs**
- g. Ecclesiastes**
- h. Ruth
- i. Proverbs**

8. Which of the following was used as a hymn book for Israel’s worship?

- a. Song of Songs
- b. Leviticus
- c. Psalms**
- d. Ezra

9. Who wrote most of the Proverbs?
- a. David
 - b. Moses
 - c. Saul
 - d. Solomon**
10. How is the book of Ecclesiastes best described?
- a. As a warning to us from experience**
 - b. As a collection of songs
 - c. As rulebook for leaders
 - d. As a history of kings
11. When the Bible speaks of our heart, what does it mean?
- a. The organ that pumps blood
 - b. The physical center of our being
 - c. The inward, spiritual person**
 - d. The outward, physical person
12. Which part of us is made in the image of God?
- a. Our body
 - b. Our heart, or, in other words, our spirit**
 - c. Our face
 - d. Nothing
13. What is the role of the outward person, or body?
- a. To show people what God looks like
 - b. To teach us through the pain we suffer
 - c. To control our spirit
 - d. To express our inner spirit**
14. How can our heart change?
- a. Only God can change our heart.**
 - b. We can change if we have a strong will and try hard enough.
 - c. If we develop new habits, our heart will change.
 - d. It does not matter because it does not need to change.
15. How does God use the poetry books to help change us?
- a. They give us practical steps on how to change.
 - b. If we memorize them, our minds will change.
 - c. They are devotional in nature and address the needs of the heart.**
 - d. They have all the rules we need to know.



Have you ever experienced God changing your heart? In what ways? What deep needs of your heart do you want Him to help you with? What change do you want God to make in your heart? _____



Thank God that He cares about not only your behavior, but also about the deepest needs of your inner person. Ask God to speak to your heart during this study of the poetry Books of the Bible. Ask Him to change your heart however He wants to.



Going Deeper

1. Since the poetry books are the language of the hearts of God's people, what do these five books, and the fact that God mentions the heart 1,000 times in the Bible, tell us about the way God values the heart? (Consider 1 Samuel 16:7) _____

2. Specifically, what part of a human being is being addressed when the Bible refers to the heart?

3. How does the book of Job tell us our hearts should respond to suffering? (Consider Job 35: 1-7) _____

4. Consider Jeremiah 17:9, 10. In light of these verses, how do the great prayers of David in Psalms 139: 23, 24 and 51:10 show us what to do about our hearts? _____

5. According to the book of Ecclesiastes, in what three ways did Solomon look for the meaning of life, and why did he decide that the meaning of life could not be found in those three places?

6. Explain three ways the Song of Solomon allegorically pictures our relationship to the risen, living Christ. _____

7. How could Solomon have so much amazing wisdom, as demonstrated in the book of Proverbs, and still be one of the greatest failures who ever lived? _____
