

June 1
Adults and Next Gen
Lesson 21

2025
CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLE

**HOW DOES GOD'S
WISDOM IMPACT
MY LIFE?
Proverbs 1:1–7**

HOW DOES GOD'S WISDOM IMPACT MY LIFE? Proverbs 1:1–7

MAIN IDEA

When I obey God's wisdom in the Proverbs, I become more like Him.

OUTLINE

Weekly Reading Recap

Era Overview

Introduction

1. The Purpose of the Proverbs (Proverbs 1:1–3, p. 498)

- What is a proverb?
- Proverbs illuminate wisdom.
- Proverbs influence actions.

2. The People of the Proverbs (Proverbs 1:4–6, p. 498)

- The Simple
- The Young
- The Wise

3. The Principle of the Proverbs (Proverbs 1:7, p. 498)

- True wisdom comes from fearing the Lord.
- God has all power.
- God is in all places.
- God is all-loving.

Redemption Thread

Call to Action (Recognize and turn from your simple-minded ways.)

Conclusion

Special Note

This Life Group series draws from the work of Iva May and her team at Chronological Bible Teaching Ministries Inc. Foundational concepts, such as dividing the Bible into 14 Eras, the Redemption Thread, and understanding how God speaks, acts, and reveals Himself in each era, come directly from her work. We are thankful for her willingness to allow us to utilize her

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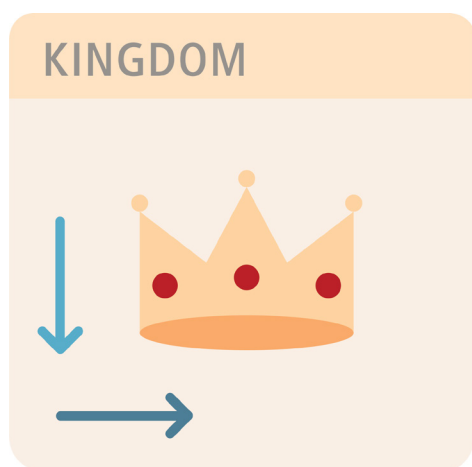


WEEKLY READING RECAP

This week's reading revolved around Solomon, his reign, and his wisdom. We learned how he organized his government and how the people of Israel prospered under his leadership. Solomon's wisdom surpassed that of all the wise men of other cultures, and he spoke knowledgeably about a multitude of topics. This week we also read two Psalms attributed to Solomon and began reading Proverbs, which reveals Solomon's wisdom on multiple subjects.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is your favorite Proverb?
Why does it speak to you?



ERA OVERVIEW

Leader, our lesson today takes place during the Kingdom Era. Utilizing page A16 in your Chronological Bible, briefly review the Kingdom Era and how it fits within God's whole story.

INTRODUCTION

Leader, conduct a brief review of last week's lesson. Ask, "What three directions do we need to look to become wise?" (Answer: backward to discover God's faithfulness, inward to discover your inadequacy, and upward to discover true wisdom)

Leader, share how you looked backward, inward, or upward this past week.

Today we continue discussing the importance of true wisdom as we ask, "How does God's wisdom impact my life?" Does godly wisdom make a difference, or is it impotent before the onslaught of our secular culture? Let's dive into the first several verses of Proverbs to find out.

THE PURPOSE OF THE PROVERBS

(Proverbs 1:1-3, p. 498)

Though multiple authors contributed to the book of Proverbs, Solomon is the primary author. Solomon's

wisdom is on full display in these first chapters as he speaks directly to multiple issues of life, faith, and folly.

What is a proverb?

To fully understand the significance of this book, we must understand what a proverb is—and what isn't. A basic definition of "proverb" is "a short saying that expresses a general truth for practical, godly living."¹

Pastor R.C. Sproul made an important distinction when he discussed Proverbs by saying, "We must be very careful in how we approach and implement these wise sayings. Simply because they are inspired does not mean that the biblical proverbs are like laws, imposing a universal obligation. ... Rather, they reflect insights that are generally true."²

Now that we understand what proverbs are, let's examine their purpose.

Ask someone to read Proverbs 1:1-3 (p. 498).

In these verses we discover two purposes for Proverbs.

WE NEED THE PROVERBS TO ILLUMINATE GOD'S WISDOM SO WE CAN NAVIGATE OUR LIVES IN WAYS THAT GLORIFY HIM.

Proverbs illuminate wisdom. (Proverbs 1:2, p. 498)

People are in desperate need of wisdom. Every day we face situations, circumstances, and people we don't know how to respond to. The book of Proverbs exists to point us to ancient truths that will help us live wisely and with discipline. Many cultures throughout history have revered ancient truth, but our culture is not one of them. We quickly discount old wisdom and instead seek the newest expert, most exciting speaker, or viral video to figure out what we should do.

Solomon promises that in the pages of Proverbs, we will discover and understand the wisdom of the wise men and women who came before us. Like attempting to find a beautiful emerald in a pitch-black cave, we cannot find wisdom on our own. We need the Proverbs to illuminate God's wisdom so we can navigate our lives in ways that glorify Him.

Proverbs influence actions. (Proverbs 1:3, p. 498)

Knowledge does not become wisdom until it is applied to everyday life. While everyone has access to godly knowledge through the Bible and the internet, knowing what to do with that knowledge is what makes someone wise. Godly wisdom calls you to put away your immature ways and become disciplined in pursuing God and the life He has graciously given you.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:11 (p. 1,163, Missions Era)—“When I was a child, I spoke and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do Christians often turn to the latest expert instead of the timeless truth of God’s Word?
2. What is the difference between having knowledge and applying wisdom in your daily life?
3. Why is it so difficult to put away childish things in our lives?

THE PEOPLE OF THE PROVERBS (Proverbs 1:4–6, p. 498)
Ask someone to read Proverbs 1:4–6 (p. 498).

The Proverbs are for three different types of people. Let’s define and examine each audience.

The Simple

The Proverbs exist for the simple. In Proverbs, “the simple” refers to those who are naive or lack wisdom. These people are called “simpletons,” “fools,” and “simpleminded” throughout the book. There is no age limit or requirement for someone to be considered simple, as anyone can lack insight whether they are 20, 50, or 99.

Ask someone to read Proverbs 1:32 (p. 498)—“For simpletons turn away from me—to death. Fools are destroyed by their own complacency.”

- The simple turn away from wisdom and do not live proactively. Eventually they are destroyed by their complacency.

THE SIMPLE DO NOT HAVE TO STAY SIMPLE AND FOOLISH. IF THEY INGEST AND APPLY THE PROVERBS, THEY CAN GAIN INSIGHT AND BECOME WISE.

Ask someone to read Proverbs 15:21 (p. 511)—“Foolishness brings joy to those with no sense; a sensible person stays on the right path.”

- The simple find joy partaking in actions that actively hurt themselves or the people around them.

Ask someone to read Proverbs 18:2 (p. 514)—“Fools have no interest in understanding; they only want to air their own opinions.”

- The simple do not want to grow in understanding of themselves or the world. All they care about is ensuring everyone knows their uninformed opinions.

But the simple do not have to stay simple and foolish. If they ingest and apply the Proverbs, they can gain insight and become wise.

The Young

Each new generation believes the generations before them messed up the world, and they plan to solve the problems their elders created. However, younger generations lack the knowledge and discernment that only come with experience.

Ask someone to read Proverbs 7:6–8, 21 (p. 503).

- The young believe they will not be overcome by temptations that have ensnared everyone before them, so they take unnecessary risks, which leads to pain and heartbreak.

Ask someone to read Proverbs 20:29 (p. 517).

- The glory of the young is their strength, not their wisdom. Wisdom comes with experience and age.

But how do the young gain knowledge and discernment beyond their age? By listening and applying the truths of the Proverbs!

The Wise

There is one more audience of the Proverbs—the people who are already wise. These people have already set aside their childish ways and experienced enough of life to understand the realities of the world. They still need the Proverbs, though, because God’s Word is a never-ending well of truth, and they can become even wiser by examining these deep truths.

Ask someone to read Proverbs 10:8 (p. 505)—

“The wise are glad to be instructed, but babbling fools fall flat on their faces.”

- The wise understand they don’t have complete knowledge and are happy to receive instruction that will help them succeed.

THE PURSUIT OF WISDOM NEVER ENDS, AND THE WISE KNOW THERE’S ALWAYS ANOTHER LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING TO ACHIEVE.

Ask someone to read Proverbs 14:16 (p. 510)—“The wise are cautious and avoid danger; fools plunge ahead with reckless confidence.”

- The wise learn to examine a situation before jumping into something that could be harmful or dangerous.

Ask someone to read Proverbs 29:8 (p. 643)—“Mockers can get a whole town agitated, but the wise will calm anger.”

- The wise control their emotions so they can bring peace to others.

These are just a few examples of how the wise lead their lives. The wise are filled with understanding, continually learn, and are able

to control themselves. The pursuit of wisdom never ends, and the wise know there's always another level of understanding to achieve.

Which person are you? Some people are fully simple or completely wise, but most of us have areas in our lives where we're simple-minded and other areas where we're filled with wisdom. In order to grow in wisdom, you must first be honest with yourself about your relationship to God's wisdom. This is why one of our values at Bellevue is biblical truth—no matter if you are simple, young, or wise, the only way to become more like God is by knowing and applying His Word.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What's one area of your life you used to be simple-minded in but learned to become wise? What led to that transformation? (*Leader, be prepared to share an example from your own life.*)
2. The wise are willing to learn. What does it look like to have a teachable spirit?

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE PROVERBS (Proverbs 1:7, p. 498)

True wisdom comes from fearing the Lord.

Ask someone to read Proverbs 1:7 (p. 498).

The foundational principle of Proverbs is that true wisdom comes from fearing the Lord. Last week we learned that to fear the Lord means to respect or revere Him. But who is God that we should fear Him?

God has all power.

God has unlimited power and can accomplish anything. Nothing is outside His capabilities or imagination.

Read Jeremiah 32:17 (p. 849, Divided Kingdom Era)—“O Sovereign LORD! You made the heavens and earth by your strong hand and powerful arm. Nothing is too hard for you!”

God is in all places.

There's nowhere you can go to escape God's presence. His presence is in the deepest ocean, the highest mountain, and the farthest galaxy. He doesn't rotate between different places but is everywhere at once. He's able to help you while ensuring the entire Milky Way galaxy functions properly—and He doesn't miss a beat.

WE WILL ONLY FIND TIMELESS WISDOM IN GOD BECAUSE NO ONE ELSE ALWAYS DIRECTS AND PROVIDES FOR US LIKE HE DOES.

Read Psalm 139:7–10 (p. 460).

God is all-loving.

Human history has been filled with atrocities committed by men who achieved power over others.

God has ultimate power, but His motivation toward His creation is love. He desires what's best for His people because He wishes to see us flourish. He wants what's best for us in every circumstance and at every moment.

Ask someone to read 1 John 4:9–10 (p. 1,261, Missions Era).

Proverbs can help us know God, who has all power, who is in all places, and who is all-loving. We will only find timeless wisdom in Him because no one else always directs and provides for us like He does. He's the only one worthy of being listened to every time because He will never lead us astray.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do we seek wisdom from other places when God offers to guide us?
2. How does knowing God's character change your approach to finding wisdom and direction?

REDEMPTION THREAD

Hundreds of years after Proverbs was written, God Himself came to live on Earth. During His ministry, Jesus lived according to the wisdom of the Proverbs and showed us what it looks like to live out God's wisdom. Proverbs 1:7 (p. 498) calls people to fear the Lord, and Jesus said He did nothing on His own but only what He saw the Father doing (John 5:19, p. 1,001, Gospel Era). Proverbs 14:16 (p. 510) states that people should shun evil, and Jesus rebuffed Satan's temptations in the wilderness by referencing Scripture (Matthew 4:1–11, p. 989, Gospel Era). Proverbs 27:17 (p. 641) says that relationships help us stay strong and sharp. During Jesus' ministry, He sharpened the disciples for three years so they were ready to carry on His work after His ascension. Jesus' life reveals the impact God's wisdom should have on our lives. Jesus lived God's wisdom every moment, day, and year of His life on Earth.

CALL TO ACTION

Give a note card to each person in your Life Group. Ask everyone to identify one area of their life where they are simple-minded and write it on their card. Then instruct them to write down a Bible verse that applies to that area. Tell them to keep this card with them throughout the week to remind them to seek God's wisdom when they're tempted to be simple-minded.

CONCLUSION

If you were to ask someone you trust to describe your approach to life in one word, what term would they use? Simple, teachable, foolish, thoughtful, immature, or wise? If you are immature or unwise today, you don't have to stay that way. Today's main idea is “When I obey God's wisdom in the Proverbs, I become more like Him.”

There's only one way to become more like the Lord. You must spend time with Him each day and apply the truths you learn from His Word. Over time you'll begin to reflect God's character instead of your own, and people will recognize that you fear the Lord because of the wisdom you display in every situation you encounter.

NEXT GEN

HOW DOES GOD'S WISDOM IMPACT MY LIFE? Proverbs 1:1-7

OPENING

Blind Obstacle Course

Supplies: A blindfold and chairs

Ask for three volunteers, one of whom will be blindfolded. After you blindfold the student, set up a simple obstacle course using chairs in your classroom. Choose one of the other volunteers to give correct directions to the blindfolded student and direct the other volunteer to give incorrect directions (don't let the blindfolded student know who is giving them the proper directions). Explain to the blindfolded student that they are to complete the obstacle course by listening to the directions given to them. Allow time for several volunteers to complete the course.

Afterward tell the students that they will not always know how to navigate circumstances in their lives, so they need guidance. That's why they must learn how to find wise advice and listen to it. Explain how knowing God's wisdom in the Proverbs can help them throughout the upcoming week.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you think wisdom is something you're born with or something you develop? Why?
2. Have you ever faced a situation where you didn't know what to do? Where did you turn for guidance?
3. Who or what have the biggest influences on your life? How do you determine if something or someone is a good influence on you?

APPLICATION

Ask for a few volunteers to write a lyric from a popular song on the whiteboard that gives advice on how to live. After each volunteer writes a lyric, instruct the class to discuss whether the advice is wise or foolish. If it's foolish, encourage the class to change the lyrics to make it wise.

Citations

1. "What Is a Proverb in the Bible?" *GotQuestions.org*, 11 June 2013, www.gotquestions.org/proverb-Bible.html.
2. Firm Foundation PV. "How to Read and Apply the Book of Proverbs – Firm Foundation Bible Church." *Firm Foundation Bible Church – Preaching God's Word in Prescott Valley, AZ*, 11 May 2023, firmfoundationpv.org/how-to-read-and-apply-the-book-of-proverbs/. Accessed 21 Feb. 2025.

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Additional Resources

"What Is a Proverb in the Bible?"

gotquestions.org/proverb-Bible.html

Overview of Proverbs

bibleproject.com/explore/video/wisdom-proverbs

*All thoughts and ideas listed under Additional Resources may not be completely in agreement with Bellevue's theology, and their listing should not be considered as an endorsement.

CONGRATULATIONS— YOU FINISHED LESSON 21!



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June 8
Adults and Next Gen
Lesson 22

2025
CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLE

**HOW CAN I ENSURE THAT I
FINISH WELL?**

**1 Kings 9:1–9, 11:1–11;
2 Chronicles 8:1–6, 11–13;
Ecclesiastes 2:10, 12:13–14**

HOW CAN I ENSURE THAT I FINISH WELL?

1 Kings 9:1–9, 11:1–11; 2 Chronicles 8:1–6, 11–13; Ecclesiastes 2:10, 12:13–14

MAIN IDEA

I can avoid Solomon's shame by pursuing holiness and placing boundaries in my life.

OUTLINE

Weekly Reading Recap

Era Overview

Introduction

- 1. The Success of Solomon (1 Kings 9:1–9, p. 490; 2 Chronicles 8:1–6, 12–13, p. 492)**
 - List of Solomon's Successes
- 2. The Sin of Solomon (2 Chronicles 8:11, p. 492)**
 - Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter.
 - The law of the harvest always comes true.
- 3. The Shame of Solomon (1 Kings 11:1–8, p. 527)**
 - Solomon's sin divided his heart.
- 4. How To Avoid Solomon's Shame (Ecclesiastes 12:13–14, p. 541)**
 - Pursue holiness first.
 - Place boundaries firmly.

Redemption Thread

Call to Action (Discuss areas in your life where you need to pursue holiness and place barriers.)

Conclusion

Special Note

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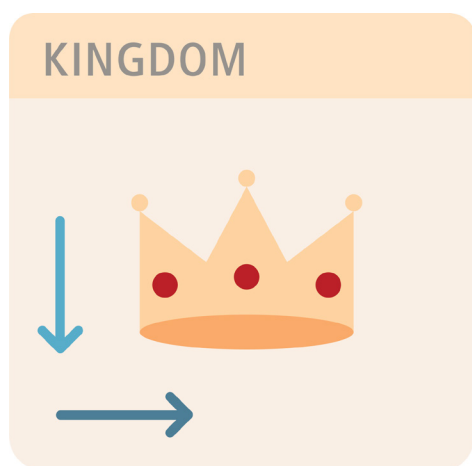


WEEKLY READING RECAP

Our reading this week covered multiple topics and books of the Bible. We learned wisdom from multiple Proverbs, with themes including honesty, discipline, and trust in God's wisdom. We read the entire book of Song of Solomon, which celebrated love, marriage, and intimacy between a bride and groom. We examined the end of Solomon's reign as king and saw the reason for his downfall. We also read Solomon's thoughts in Ecclesiastes as he reflected on the meaning of life and discovered nothing worthwhile apart from God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How did Solomon change throughout his life? What can we learn from his example?



ERA OVERVIEW

Leader, our lesson today takes place during the Kingdom Era. Utilizing page A16 in your Chronological Bible, briefly review the Kingdom Era and how it fits within God's whole story.

INTRODUCTION

Read 1 Kings 11:9–11 (p. 527).

For the past two weeks we've studied Solomon's wisdom and praised him. But the events of his life that we're talking about today are catastrophic. Solomon turned away from God, and God tore Solomon's kingdom away from him. Something went horribly wrong. How did the man who asked for wisdom when God offered him anything stray so far away from the Lord? At some point Solomon's heart became divided, and he no longer pursued the Lord wholeheartedly. But when?

LIKE A FATHER WHO KNOWS THAT HIS TEENAGER IS CONSTANTLY TEMPTED TO DISOBEY, GOD CONTINUALLY REMINDED HIS PEOPLE THAT HIS BLESSINGS DEPEND UPON THEIR OBEDIENCE.

Like a TV show that dramatically begins with a catastrophic event and then travels back 12 hours to explain it, we must travel back in Solomon's life to trace the events that led to his demise.

THE SUCCESS OF SOLOMON (1 Kings 9:1–9, p. 490; 2 Chronicles 8:1–6, 12–13 p. 492)

The scene shifts from Solomon's downfall, and we find him basking in the glory of the finished temple. It took him seven years, but he finally completed the task his father, David, had given him. It was a glorious achievement! God personally met with Solomon and promised to establish his kingdom forever. However, there was one important condition to God's promise.

Ask someone to read 1 Kings 9:6–9 (p. 490).

Like a father who knows that his teenager is constantly tempted to disobey, God continually reminded His people that His blessings depend upon their obedience. He reminded them in the wilderness and when they conquered Canaan. And even though they lived through the consequences of their disobedience in the Judges Era, God knows the human heart desires to follow its own path. So He once again reminded Solomon of His requirement.

But at that point there wasn't much to worry about because Solomon went on a tear, applying his wisdom to every challenge he faced.

List of Solomon's Successes

2 Chronicles 8:1–6, 12–13 give us a small glimpse of Solomon's successes:

- He built the temple and his palace.
- He rebuilt towns that an allied king gifted him.
- He fought against an enemy and won.
- He rebuilt more villages and turned them into supply centers.
- He subjugated the people his ancestors did not defeat during the Conquest Era.

Solomon overcame every challenge he faced. Under his leadership, Israel flourished like never before. And in the midst of his success, he continued to follow God publicly.

Ask someone to read 2 Chronicles 8:12–13 (p. 492).

All seemed to be going well. Solomon achieved great success, and God was publicly glorified.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. Why do people need to be continually reminded to obey God?

THE SIN OF SOLOMON (2 Chronicles 8:11, p. 492)

As we continue following Solomon's journey, our TV show music changes from triumphant to mysterious. In the middle of all Solomon's successes, one verse spells trouble for Solomon.

Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter.

Ask someone to read 2 Chronicles 8:11 (p. 492).

Why couldn't Solomon's wife be in his palace if everyone else could be there? The Israelites had been commanded not to intermarry with foreign cultures because that would lead them away from worshiping God (Deuteronomy 7:3-4, p. 243, Exodus Era).

Solomon's actions revealed that he knew God would not be happy with his choice. Instead of dealing with his sin, he attempted to hide it. And he didn't just move her to a different building in Jerusalem—he moved her entirely out of the city, as if her physical distance would lessen his transgression against the Lord.

SIN IS NEVER CONTENT TO ONLY OCCUPY A SMALL PORTION OF YOUR CHARACTER. SMALL COMPROMISES ALWAYS LEAD TO BIG CONSEQUENCES.

Solomon's decision to marry Pharaoh's daughter (which was probably done to form an alliance with Egypt) revealed a hole in his character that eventually prompted him to turn his heart away from the Lord.

Like Solomon, we can believe our sin isn't a big deal when everything is going well. When work is sailing along, your family is running smoothly, and you're succeeding in everything you attempt, it's tempting to believe that your "small" sin isn't going to affect you.

However, without repentance, sin always grows. Sin is never content to only occupy a small portion of your character. Like an insidious virus, once it's inside your character, it will seek to infect more of your thoughts, desires, and actions—and it will eventually succeed. Small compromises always lead to big consequences.

WHEN YOU PLANT GODLY ACTIONS IN YOUR LIFE, YOU WILL REAP ETERNAL BLESSINGS. WHEN YOU PLANT SINFUL ACTIONS, YOU WILL ALWAYS REAP DESTRUCTION.

The law of the harvest always comes true.

Ask someone to read Galatians 6:7-8 (p. 1,139, Missions Era).

The law of the harvest always comes true. When a farmer plants tomato seeds, he always gets tomatoes. When you plant godly actions in your life, you will reap eternal blessings. When you plant sinful actions, you will always reap destruction. Pastor

Charles Stanley once said, "You reap what you sow, more than you sow, and later than you sow."¹

When God sets up a boundary by calling something a sin, He essentially says, "You will flourish inside of this boundary, and you will experience hurt if you go beyond it. Stay inside so you can experience joy and peace!"

In the children's book *Because I Love You* by Max Lucado, Shaddai is a kind and loving man who cares for many children. To protect them from danger, he builds a wall around their town. One child, Paladin, finds a small hole in the wall and wonders what's beyond. Even though Shaddai warns Paladin to stay inside the wall so he'll be safe, Paladin is drawn to what's forbidden. Once he goes beyond the wall, he discovers Shaddai was telling the truth. However, it's too late, and he cannot return to the village.

In the moment, sin entices us, promising adventure and excitement. However, as we're about to see with Solomon, it only brings destruction and pain, just as he himself said it would in Proverbs 14:12 (p. 510)—"There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do we deceive ourselves into believing our small compromises won't lead to big consequences?
2. How can memorizing Galatians 6:7-8 help you the next time you're tempted to sin?

THE SHAME OF SOLOMON (1 Kings 11:1-8, p. 527)

Now, our story of Solomon transitions to a montage of his slow spiral of sin. His original decision was like a pebble at the top of a mountain that builds speed as it tumbles down, causing many other rocks to join it and creating an avalanche.

Solomon's sin divided his heart.

Ask someone to read 1 Kings 11:1-3 (p. 527).

With each woman Solomon married, it became easier for him to continue down the path he began with the daughter of Pharaoh. Each shrine he built for their gods moved him closer to worshiping other gods himself. With each step he moved further away from God. And who he became was probably unrecognizable to his younger self.

THE HUMAN HEART IS FILLED WITH WICKEDNESS, AND IT WILL ALWAYS TURN TO DISOBEDIENCE WITHOUT AN INTENTIONAL DECISION TO SUBMIT TO GOD.

God knew that if the Israelite men married women who worshiped other gods, it would turn their hearts away

from Him—and He was right. Solomon, who had been granted supernatural wisdom by the Lord of heaven, began to worship statues because of one decision he made years before. Solomon, who had experienced the Lord's presence, now bent his knee before idols.

The young king who humbly asked for wisdom later turned his back on the one who had given everything to him. Over time Solomon stopped using his wisdom to pursue God and instead used it to gain what he wanted.

Read Ecclesiastes 2:10a (p. 529)—“Anything I wanted, I would take. I denied myself no pleasure.”

This is why, in Deuteronomy, God called His people to love Him with all their heart, soul, and strength. He knew they would commit shameful actions like Solomon's if they didn't. The human heart is filled with wickedness (Jeremiah 17:9, p. 795, Divided Kingdom Era), and it will always turn to disobedience without an intentional decision to submit to God.

At this point we fully understand the first scene of today's lesson, where God ripped Solomon's kingdom from him. Solomon was given every opportunity to set Israel up for centuries of blessing and greatness, but instead his legacy became one of brokenness and shame.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How have I used God's blessings for my own purposes instead of His?
2. How is Solomon's life a warning to us today?

HOW TO AVOID SOLOMON'S SHAME

(Ecclesiastes 12:13–14, p. 541)

One last scene of Solomon's life appears after the credits roll. He's writing Ecclesiastes and finishes with two last verses.

**WE MUST PROACTIVELY HONOR GOD
AND OBEY HIS COMMANDS. HE IS HOLY,
SO WE MUST PURSUE HOLINESS.**

Ask someone to read Ecclesiastes 12:13–14 (p. 541).

These are believed to be Solomon's last recorded words. It seems he learned the most important lesson that we all need to learn: Everyone should fear and obey God. However, Solomon's declaration of this truth is not joyful, as he looks back with regret. How can we avoid Solomon's shame?

Pursue holiness first.

We must proactively honor God and obey His commands. He is holy, so we must pursue holiness.

Instead of asking, “What can I get away with?” we must change our mindset and ask, “How can I please God?” This shift will immediately put you on the path of obedience and holiness, as you will no longer skirt the moral edge but instead walk toward God wholeheartedly. Part of Bellevue's pathway is to “Grow in Christlikeness through spiritual disciplines.” If you want to actively become more like Christ, then seek to worship, pray, and read your Bible daily.

Place boundaries firmly.

Solomon reminds us that we will be judged for every decision we make, good or bad. Even as you pursue holiness, you are a sinful person filled with wrong desires. This requires you to examine your life, determine your weak areas, and establish appropriate boundaries.

- If you struggle with comparing yourself to others, delete your social media accounts from your phone or set a maximum time to be on each app for the day.
- If you struggle with looking at pornography, set filters on all your devices, or even get rid of your smartphone and get a dumbphone.
- If you struggle with gossiping, limit your time with the people you often gossip with.

Making these decisions may lead to criticism from others. But which is worse—being judged by others for running away from sin or being judged by God for choosing to live in sin?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is it easier to ask, “What can I get away with?” than to ask, “How can I be more like God today?”
2. What are common sins people struggle with? What are some boundaries people can place to help them stay away from these sins?

REDEMPTION THREAD

Solomon is often considered one of the wisest people who has ever lived. Yet he fell woefully short of God's perfect standard. When the Bible states in Romans 3:23 that “all fall short,” that includes Solomon. He was given all the wealth, power, and wisdom that a man could achieve, and he still walked away from God. However, Jesus gave up His unlimited power and wealth so He could become the perfect embodiment of God's wisdom. Solomon chose selfishness while Jesus chose selflessness. With every breath, step, decision, and thought, Jesus chose to follow God's ways, ultimately providing a path of redemption for all humanity through His death and resurrection.

CALL TO ACTION

Direct your Life Group to get into groups of three or four people. (If you have a class of both men and women, instruct them to form groups with those of the same gender.) Tell them to discuss areas in their lives where they need to place boundaries and pursue holiness. Then encourage them to pray for each other.

CONCLUSION

Imagine you're at the end of your life and you're looking back at everything you've ever done. What emotions would you experience? Regret or joy? You have the opportunity today to put yourself on the path to finish well, but it's a decision you must make every day. Just because you're following God today doesn't guarantee you will tomorrow. Be sure to put into practice today's main idea: "I can avoid Solomon's shame by pursuing holiness and placing boundaries in my life."

NEXT GEN

HOW CAN I ENSURE THAT I FINISH WELL?
1 Kings 9:1–9, 11:1–11; 2 Chronicles 8:1–6, 11–13;
Ecclesiastes 2:10, 12:13–14

OPENING

Discussion Questions

1. Why do people justify small moral compromises in their lives?
2. What's an example of a time in your life when you did the right thing and it led to a good result? What's an example of a time when you did the wrong thing and it led to a negative result?
3. What steps can you take today to help you keep following God tomorrow?

APPLICATION

Pull out a set of dominoes and explain that each domino represents one of Solomon's decisions. Stand up the first domino on its short end and explain that the domino represents Solomon becoming king. Place another domino a short distance away from the first and explain that it represents Solomon losing his kingdom. Ask the students to list Solomon's actions that led to him losing his kingdom. As the students name each action, place a domino between the two original dominoes. Once a line is created, knock the dominoes over to illustrate the chain reaction of Solomon's actions—how each small decision he made eventually led to his destruction. Encourage your students to examine their decisions to determine if their actions are leading them toward or away from God.

Citations

1. "30 Life Principles." Charles F. Stanley, www.charlesstanley.com/life-and-ministry/30-life-principles.

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Additional Resources

"Why Didn't Solomon Follow His Own Advice on Women?"
gotquestions.org/Solomon-advice.html

"Solomon: Love Him or Hate Him?"
bibleproject.com/articles/solomon-love-hate

*All thoughts and ideas listed under Additional Resources may not be completely in agreement with Bellevue's theology, and their listing should not be considered as an endorsement.

CONGRATULATIONS— YOU FINISHED LESSON 22!



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June 15
Adults and Next Gen
Lesson 23

2025
CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLE

**IS MY LEADER
FOLLOWING GOD?
1 Kings 12:25–33;
2 Chronicles 11:13–17**

IS MY LEADER FOLLOWING GOD? 1 Kings 12:25–33; 2 Chronicles 11:13–17

MAIN IDEA

I should examine my leaders' motivations, counselors, and impact to determine if they are following God.

OUTLINE

Weekly Reading Recap

Era Overview

Introduction

1. Examine Their Motivations (1 Kings 12:25–27, p. 542)

- Jeroboam's motivation was fear.
- Motivations of Godly Leaders
 - Desire To Serve
 - Willing To Sacrifice
 - Love the Truth

2. Examine Their Counselors (1 Kings 12:28, p. 542)

- Advice Given by Jeroboam's Counselors
- Worldly Wisdom vs. Godly Guidance
 - Serving Yourself vs. Serving Others
 - Battling Enemies vs. Loving Enemies
 - Fulfilling Every Desire vs. Denying Yourself

3. Examine Their Impact (1 Kings 12:29–33, pp. 542–543; 2 Chronicles 11:13–17, p. 543)

- Jeroboam's Impact on Israel
- How To Examine Our Leaders' Effects
 - Do they promote a godly structure?
 - Do godly people gather or scatter?

Redemption Thread

Call to Action (Examine the leaders in your life.)

Conclusion

Special Note

This Life Group series draws from the work of Iva May and her team at Chronological Bible Teaching Ministries Inc. Foundational concepts, such as dividing the Bible into 14 Eras, the Redemption Thread, and understanding how God speaks, acts, and reveals Himself in each era, come directly from her work. We are thankful for her willingness to allow us to utilize her

14 Era framework and concepts to create these lessons. Our aim with this series is to encourage participants to read the Bible chronologically, but it is not intended to replace or replicate the comprehensive work of Iva and her team. For more resources on reading the Bible chronologically, we highly recommend visiting chronologicalbibleteaching.com.

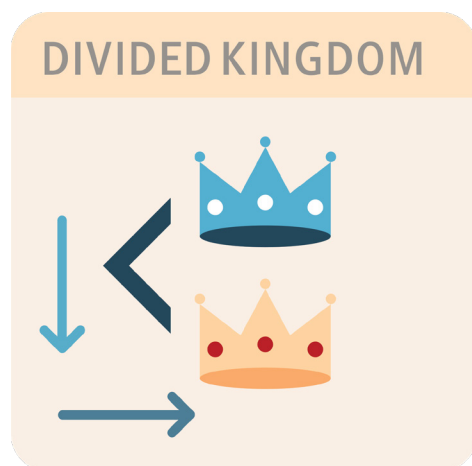


WEEKLY READING RECAP

This week's reading took us into the Divided Kingdom Era as Israel fractured in two after Solomon's death. The southern kingdom, Judah, followed Rehoboam, Solomon's son, while the northern kingdom, Israel, followed Jeroboam. Jeroboam immediately led Israel into idolatry, and Rehoboam eventually turned away from God as well. Various kings ruled both kingdoms, most notably Asa in Judah and Ahab in Israel. The prophet Elijah entered the scene and confronted Ahab concerning his wickedness. Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel but then ran from Jezebel's threats. Eventually Ahab died in Israel, and Jehoshaphat became king in Judah.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. What differences did you notice between the two kingdoms?



ERA OVERVIEW

Leader, our lesson today takes place during the Divided Kingdom Era. Utilizing page A17 in your Chronological Bible, briefly review the Divided Kingdom Era and how it fits in God's whole story.

INTRODUCTION

Last week we saw that God promised to rip the kingdom away from Solomon's family because of his divided heart and subsequent idolatry. During our reading this past week, we discovered how God honored His promise and caused the people to rebel against Solomon's son, Rehoboam. Ten tribes formed the northern kingdom, Israel, while the southern kingdom, which consisted of Judah and Benjamin, became known as Judah. God placed Jeroboam, one of Solomon's enemies, as king of Israel.

Read 1 Kings 11:37–40 (p. 528, Kingdom Era).

God made the same promise He gave to Jeroboam's predecessors: "Follow Me, and I will create a dynasty

for you." Even though the nation rejected Him and chose to be ruled by kings, and even though His predictions of how a king would treat the people came true, God still desired for His people to flourish under a king who submitted to Him.

In our lesson today we'll examine Jeroboam's poor decisions and how we can use his example to examine our spiritual or secular leaders and determine whether they are following God. Too often we examine our leaders based on emotions or affection—today we'll develop a framework to help us examine them objectively.

EXAMINE THEIR MOTIVATIONS

(1 Kings 12:25–27, p. 542)

Jeroboam's motivation was fear.

Ask someone to read 1 Kings 12:25–27 (p. 542).

Like Solomon before him, Jeroboam was a builder—he began his reign by building up the city of Shechem and the town of Peniel. Eventually Jeroboam grew paranoid that he would lose the hearts of the people because they were traveling to Jerusalem to worship God at the temple. Even though God had explicitly promised to turn Jeroboam's kingdom into a dynasty if he followed God's ways, Jeroboam gave no thought to asking God what he should do. Every decision he made afterward was motivated by his fear of losing power.

GODLY LEADERS DO NOT ATTEMPT TO LORD THEIR LEADERSHIP OVER OTHERS BUT SEEK TO SERVE THE PEOPLE THEY LEAD.

Today we must examine all types of leaders—Bible teachers on YouTube, musicians we listen to, politicians, and even church ministers. It isn't easy to truly know our leaders' motivations because they often don't communicate them to us. But we must do our best to examine their actions and compare them to the teachings and life of Jesus.

Motivations of Godly Leaders

Desire To Serve

Ask someone to read Matthew 20:25–28 (p. 1,063, Gospel Era).

Godly leaders do not attempt to lord their leadership over others but seek to serve the people they lead. Jesus lived out this desire when He washed the feet of the disciples during the Last Supper.

Willing To Sacrifice

Read John 10:11 (p. 1,051, Gospel Era)—“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep.”

Godly leaders do not expect their followers to make sacrifices they are unwilling to make. Instead they proactively give themselves for the sake of their followers. Jesus lived out this teaching when He allowed His life to be taken so we could have eternal life.

IF YOUR LEADER'S MOTIVATION IS FEAR, PRIDE, OR GREED INSTEAD OF CONFORMING TO THE MOTIVATIONS OF JESUS, THEN BE WARY OF FOLLOWING THEM WHOLEHEARTEDLY.

Love the Truth

Ask someone to read John 18:37b (p. 1,097, Gospel Era)—“I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true.”

Godly leaders love and are committed to the truth. They do not lead from ambiguity or seek to grow their influence through falsehoods. Jesus lived out this principle by speaking the truth in every situation. He spoke the truth harshly to the Pharisees when they sought to mislead others, and He said the truth in love to the woman caught in adultery. But He always spoke the truth.

We choose some leaders, and we have no control over others. In either case, if your leader's motivation is fear, pride, or greed instead of conforming to the motivations of Jesus, then be wary of following them wholeheartedly.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What factors contributed to Jeroboam not trusting God and instead allowing fear to control his actions?
2. Think of a godly leader you admire. How do they reveal motivations similar to those of Jesus?

EXAMINE THEIR COUNSELORS (1 Kings 12:28, p. 542)

Advice Given by Jeroboam's Counselors

Read 1 Kings 12:28 (p. 542).

Not only must we examine our leaders' motivations, but also we must look at their counselors. The people whom leaders surround themselves with determine the direction they will go. Jeroboam didn't surround himself with godly counselors. Instead his counselors advised him to erect two golden calves and proclaim that those were the gods who delivered the people from Egypt. Does this sound familiar?

Read Exodus 32:4 (p. 141, Exodus Era)—“Then Aaron took the gold, melted it down, and molded it into the shape of a calf. When the people saw it, they exclaimed, ‘O Israel, these are the gods who brought you out of the land of Egypt!’”

Jeroboam's counselors didn't give him godly guidance but old worldly wisdom that only led to pain and suffering.

Who is influencing your leaders? As you answer that question, be sure to examine who has direct access to your leader, the character of the people who surround him, and who he often quotes in his teaching.

Worldly Wisdom vs. Godly Guidance

Serving Yourself vs. Serving Others

Jesus said in Mark 10:43b–44 that “Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else” (p. 1,063, Gospel Era).

IF YOUR LEADER IS SURROUNDED BY COUNSELORS SPEWING WORLDLY WISDOM INSTEAD OF GODLY GUIDANCE, BE SURE TO KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN CONCERNING ANYTHING THEY SAY OR TEACH.

Battling Enemies vs. Loving Enemies

Jesus boldly declared in Matthew 5:44, “Love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!” (p. 1,006, Gospel Era).

Fulfilling Every Desire vs. Denying Yourself

Jesus said in Luke 9:23, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me” (p. 1,035, Gospel Era).

If your leader is surrounded by counselors spewing worldly wisdom instead of godly guidance, be sure to keep your eyes open concerning anything they say or teach. You may have to do a little work to figure out who is influencing your leader, but that work will pay dividends over the long term.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is it important to examine who leaders surround themselves with rather than just what they say and do?
2. How can we identify whether a leader is receiving worldly wisdom or godly guidance? What are some warning signs?

EXAMINE THEIR IMPACT (1 Kings 12:29–33, pp. 542–543; 2 Chronicles 11:13–17, p. 543)

After Jeroboam became consumed with fear and his counselors filled his head with worldly wisdom, the nation quickly began to feel the impact.

Jeroboam's Impact on Israel

Ask someone to read 1 Kings 12:29–32 (pp. 542–543).

Ask someone to read 2 Chronicles 11:13–14, 16 (p. 543).

Under Jeroboam's leadership the people quickly turned to idolatry and prostrated themselves before the golden calves. Plus they began to celebrate a new religious festival, which was an imitation of the Festival of Shelters. Why did Jeroboam choose to mimic this festival? The Festival of Shelters was an annual celebration where the Israelites lived in tents to remind them of their travels through the wilderness with God. Jeroboam strategically aligned his new religion with familiar terminology so the people would be more willing to accept it. And it worked! The people quickly adopted these new practices.

However, many Levites and others who “sincerely wanted to worship the LORD” (2 Chronicles 11:16, p. 543) abandoned the northern kingdom and headed south to Jerusalem in Judah. In a short time Jeroboam dismantled the godly structure and dispersed the godly people.

WHEN LEADERS ARE COMMITTED TO DOING WHAT'S RIGHT, SHOWING MERCY TO OTHERS, AND BEING HUMBLE IN SPIRIT, ORGANIZATIONS AND CHURCHES THRIVE.

When we examine our leaders today, we also want to examine the effects of their leadership because these threats still exist.

How To Examine Our Leaders' Effects

Do they promote a godly structure?

Read Micah 6:8 (p. 700)—“The LORD has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.”

A GODLY LEADER WILL ATTRACT PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT GODLY MATTERS, WHILE AN UNGODLY LEADER WILL PUSH GOD'S PEOPLE AWAY.

When leaders, spiritual or secular, are committed to doing what's right, showing mercy to others, and being humble in spirit, organizations or churches thrive.

Do godly people gather or scatter?

Read Proverbs 29:2 (p. 643)—“When the godly

are in authority, the people rejoice. But when the wicked are in power, they groan.”

Are godly people gathering close to a leader and growing under his leadership? Or are God's people groaning and fleeing because of the effects of his leadership? A godly leader will attract people who care about godly matters, while an ungodly leader will push God's people away.

When it comes to Bible teachers, we must be especially careful to ensure they aren't mixing biblical truth with worldly philosophies, which is called syncretism. Any time a teacher mixes the two, a new belief system is created and people are led away from Jesus. We must run from any teacher who attempts to make the Bible more palatable by watering down its truth.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Jeroboam imitated a familiar festival in order to draw people into idolatry. How can we be aware of similar tactics from ungodly leaders today?
2. How can we discern whether a leader is truly godly and not simply using religious language to gain influence?

REDEMPTION THREAD

Throughout Scripture God continually looked for leaders who would trust Him and obey His directions. To Abraham, God proved that when He made a promise, He was faithful to keep it. With Moses, He proved that He always provides for what He requires. To David, He revealed that He is a refuge in times of trouble. With Peter, Jesus showed Himself as the Forgiver of Sins.

Each of those men fell short and sinned against God through fear, unbelief, anger, or disobedience. But God restored each person because He always restores a repentant heart. Our leaders will always fail; that's why we can celebrate Jesus and the work He did on Earth. He never failed, He always chose others over Himself, and He promoted justice and mercy through His sacrifice on the cross.

CALL TO ACTION

Give each Life Group member an index card and ensure everyone has access to a pen. Direct everyone to write down all the leaders (or influencers) they have in their lives. Then instruct them to write “Green,” “Yellow,” or “Red” next to each name based on the following key:

- “Green” indicates a leader whom you can trust in all matters.
- “Yellow” indicates a leader with whom you must be cautious.
- “Red” indicates a leader whom you should not allow to impact you morally.

CONCLUSION

Today's main idea is “I should examine my leaders' motivations, counselors, and impact to determine if they are following God.”

Bellevue has been blessed with the wise leadership of Bro. Steve for the past 20 years. He has had pure motives, surrounded himself with wise counsel, and left a godly impact. He has consistently led us to live out our mission to love God, love people, share Jesus, and make disciples. As you see him in the coming weeks, be sure to encourage and thank him for staying faithful to the Lord as he's led our church.

When we examine our leaders, it's not about whether you like them or they like you. Be sure to use the framework we've talked about today to help you determine whether you should allow them to influence you. The people you allow to lead and influence you will impact your relationship with God, so please choose wisely this week.

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Additional Resources

"Who Was King Jeroboam in the Bible?"
gotquestions.org/Jeroboam-in-the-Bible.html

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NEXT GEN

IS MY LEADER FOLLOWING GOD? 1 Kings 12:25–33; 2 Chronicles 11:13–17

OPENING

Leadership Dilemmas

Supplies: None needed

Direct the students to stand in the middle of the room. Explain that you're going to present a series of "leadership dilemmas" and everyone should move toward the right or left wall to show their answers (yes = move right; no = move left).

Say:

- "A leader is kind and honest but makes a lot of mistakes. Should they be in charge?"
- "A leader is successful but lacks integrity. Should you follow them?"
- "A leader is talented but treats people unfairly. Should they be in charge?"
- "A leader listens to advice from many people, including those who make bad choices. Is that wise?"
- "A leader is being forced to compromise their values in order to achieve a result that positively impacts many people. Should they do it?"

Explain to the students that there are all sorts of leaders—some who are good, and many who will lead them astray. Explain that in today's lesson they'll learn how to discern whom they should allow to influence them.

Discussion Questions

1. What qualities make a great leader?
2. Why do some people follow leaders blindly, even when the leader makes poor decisions?
3. Who is a godly leader in your life? How do you know they authentically follow God?

APPLICATION

Ask a volunteer to write on the whiteboard. Ask the class, "Who do you follow online?" and have the volunteer write down everyone's answers. After all the answers are on the board, ask the class whether these leaders or influencers are leading them toward God or away from Him. Instruct the volunteer to write "toward" or "away" next to each person. Then lead a discussion about how these leaders and influencers are impacting the students. Finish the discussion by asking the students what they should do concerning each leader.

CONGRATULATIONS— YOU FINISHED LESSON 23!



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June 22
Adults and Next Gen
Lesson 24

2025
CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLE

**AM I WILLING TO
GO WHEREVER
GOD LEADS?
Book of Jonah**

AM I WILLING TO GO WHEREVER GOD LEADS? Book of Jonah

MAIN IDEA

God spreads His truth through people who are willing to go wherever He leads.

OUTLINE

Weekly Reading Recap

Era Overview

Introduction

1. **God Calls His People to Foreign Places (Jonah 1:1–2, p. 588)**
 - Background on Nineveh
 - Global Statistics Concerning the Gospel
2. **People Respond Imperfectly to God's Call (Jonah 1:3–3:3, pp. 588–589)**
 - Events of Jonah's Attempted Escape
 - Reasons People Respond With Disobedience
 - We are scared of the unknown.
 - We are stuck in our own ways.
 - We are biased against people who are different from us.
3. **God Uses Obedience To Accomplish Great Things (Jonah 3:4–4:11, pp. 589–590)**
 - God worked mightily through Jonah's obedience.

Redemption Thread

Call to Action (Ask God, "Do You want me to go?")

Conclusion

Special Note

This Life Group series draws from the work of Iva May and her team at Chronological Bible Teaching Ministries Inc. Foundational concepts, such as dividing the Bible into 14 Eras, the Redemption Thread, and understanding how God speaks, acts, and reveals Himself in each era, come directly from her work. We are thankful for her willingness to allow us to utilize her

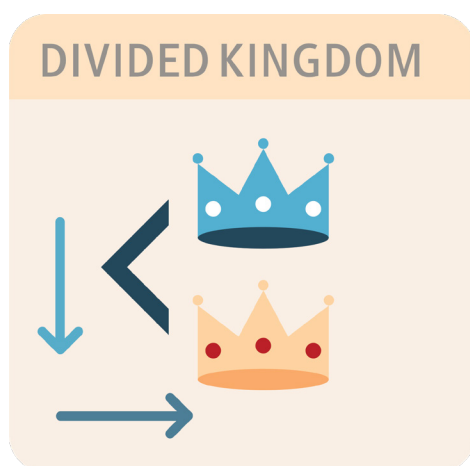
14 Era framework and concepts to create these lessons. Our aim with this series is to encourage participants to read the Bible chronologically, but it is not intended to replace or replicate the comprehensive work of Iva and her team. For more resources on reading the Bible chronologically, we highly recommend visiting chronologicalbibleteaching.com.

WEEKLY READING RECAP

This week's reading focused on the ministry of Elisha and the political turmoil in Israel and Judah. Elisha performed several miracles, such as healing Naaman from leprosy and making an ax head float in water. Multiple kings (and even one queen) rose to power and then were removed from their thrones, mainly because of their sin against God. King Joash was a bright spot among the kings, but even he finished his rule in disappointment. King Jeroboam II rose to power and regained territory for Israel but did evil in the Lord's sight. God called Jonah to Nineveh to exhort the Ninevites to repent, and Jonah only obeyed after taking a swim with a big fish. God called Amos, a farmer, to pronounce judgment upon Judah, Israel, and their neighbors.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is it so difficult for leaders to stay submitted to God?
2. What can we learn from the rulers we read about this week?



ERA OVERVIEW

Leader, our lesson today takes place during the Divided Kingdom Era. Utilizing page A17 in your Chronological Bible, briefly review the Divided Kingdom Era and how it fits in God's whole story.

INTRODUCTION

Part of our mission at Bellevue is to share Jesus, and a woman named Grace has taken that call to the ends of the Earth. From a young age, Grace was aware of the reality of Acts 1:8 as she encountered people who didn't know Jesus in her neighborhood and on her basketball teams. As she grew up, she continued to be confronted with the reality of how many people don't know Christ. She attended Bellevue's Send Out Training to prepare to take the Gospel to other nations, and while serving at a missionary conference, God used Acts 20:24 to show her that He had a new assignment for her.

Read Acts 20:24 (p. 1,198, Church Era)—“But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God.”

Within months, God opened multiple doors for Grace to begin serving long-term in Africa, (even though this process typically takes years to navigate). But more than calling Grace to a destination, God called her to a life of saying yes to Him no matter where He leads her.

Grace was sent out by Bellevue last year, and since then she has served in Africa by teaching and coaching young women in sports. She continually works to create relationships with schools so they can share about Jesus in a predominantly Muslim area. (*Leader, Grace's story will be continued later in the lesson.*)

In today's lesson we'll examine Jonah, one of God's first missionaries, and the work God can do through people who obey His directions no matter where He leads.

GOD'S TRUTH KNOWS NO BOUNDS. THERE'S NO CULTURE TO WHICH IT DOESN'T APPLY.

GOD CALLS HIS PEOPLE TO FOREIGN

PLACES (Jonah 1:1-2, p. 588)

Ask someone to read Jonah 1:1-2 (p. 588).

Background on Nineveh

Jonah was a prophet during the reign of Jeroboam II, the king of Israel from 793 to 753 BC. At that time Nineveh was an emerging world power, but it did not use its power for respectable purposes. The prophet Nahum gives us more insight into the character of this mighty nation. Its people concocted evil plots against the Lord (Nahum 1:9, p. 758), exploited the helpless (Nahum 2:12, p. 759), and enticed people into idolatry. Because of their sin, God called Jonah to pronounce His judgment upon their nation.

Since Nineveh was located in modern-day Iraq, this would have been a 500–600-mile trip for Jonah. And because of the great distance between Israel and Nineveh, Jonah wouldn't have known Nineveh's culture, language, or customs. He would have been stepping into a completely foreign environment.

God's truth knows no bounds. There's no culture to which it doesn't apply. Even though Nineveh's culture was incredibly different from Jonah's, that didn't mean God's truth did not apply to Nineveh.

The people of Nineveh needed to know they faced judgment because they were disobeying God's instructions for living. God could have communicated the Ninevites' judgment in any manner He chose, but He sent a person to convey His message.

GOD DESIRES FOR ALL PEOPLE IN EVERY CULTURE TO HEAR HIS TRUTH. AND JUST LIKE IN JONAH'S TIME, HE WANTS TO USE PEOPLE TO SPREAD HIS GOSPEL.

Global Statistics Concerning the Gospel

Today, it's not just Nineveh that doesn't know the Lord; it's people all over the world. The current global population has surpassed 8 billion. According to the International Mission Board, there are more than 12,263 people groups throughout the world, and more than 7,324 of those groups are unreached, which means their population is less than two percent evangelical Christian.¹

While almost 210,000 people are born every day, an estimated 166,338 die apart from Christ daily¹, which is equal to the combined populations of Germantown, Collierville, Bartlett, Arlington, and Lakeland²—that many people are dying without Jesus every single day.

No culture is too foreign or different that God's truth does not apply to them. God desires for all people in every culture to hear His truth. And just like in Jonah's time, He wants to use people to spread His Gospel.

Ask someone to read Acts 1:8 (p. 1112, Church Era)—“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think God wants to use people to spread the truth about Jesus?
2. How are you impacted by hearing the number of unreached people in the world?
3. Taking the Gospel to the nations starts locally. Who is in your daily routine that needs to hear the Gospel?

PEOPLE RESPOND IMPERFECTLY TO GOD'S

CALL (Jonah 1:3–3:3, pp. 588–589)

As we've seen in each era, when God calls someone to follow His instructions, they have a decision to make. Will they obey or disobey God's directions?

Remember, obedience brings God's blessing, so let's see how Jonah responded.

Events of Jonah's Attempted Escape

Ask someone to read Jonah 1:3 (p. 588).

Jonah didn't like God's command, so he went in the opposite direction of where God had told him to go. Nineveh was about 500 miles east of Israel, so Jonah got on a ship to sail as far west as he could. The exact location of Tarshish is unknown, but some people believe it could have been in Spain, which is about 2,000 miles away from Israel. *Surely*, Jonah may have thought, *God can't reach me if I'm 2,500 miles from Nineveh.*

As quickly as Jonah tried to run, God confronted him in his rebellion:

- God sent a storm that threatened to capsize his boat (Jonah 1:4, p. 588).
- The crew threw Jonah overboard so God would stop the storm (Jonah 1:12–15, pp. 588–589).
- God sent a fish to save Jonah and keep him from drowning (Jonah 1:17, p. 589).
- Jonah prayed, and God directed the fish to spit Jonah onto dry land (Jonah 2:1–10, p. 589).

Why did Jonah run? Because he knew that God was merciful and compassionate, and he didn't want the Ninevites to receive God's mercy.

It's easy to judge Jonah negatively for his attitude, but many people respond imperfectly to God's call to spread His Gospel. What are common reasons we don't immediately respond in obedience when God calls us to tell others about Jesus?

GOD HAS GIVEN US HIS HOLY SPIRIT, WHO WILL HELP US PUSH PAST OUR FEAR AND MOVE FORWARD IN LOVE.

Reasons People Respond With Disobedience

We are scared of the unknown.

A common reason many people run away from God's direction is fear. They don't know what it will take to serve God in another country. They have no clue how to speak another language. They're uncomfortable sharing the Gospel with their neighbor, much less with someone in another country. Should we allow fear to keep us from obeying God? No! God has given us His Holy Spirit, who will help us push past our fear and move forward in love.

Read 2 Timothy 1:7 (p. 1,235, Missions Era)—“For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.”

We are stuck in our own ways.

If many people were honest, they would admit that they ignore God's commands because obedience would force them to change their schedules, friend groups, desires, and futures. People like their routines and being in command of their lives. But is

ignoring God's command because you don't want your life to change a decision He is pleased with?

Ask someone to read Zechariah 7:11-12 (p. 926, Return Era).

We are biased against people who are different from us.

As difficult as it is to admit, many people hold biases against people who are different. They don't like that others may speak a foreign language or dress differently. Some people even think less of others because their skin tone is a different shade. Like Jonah, some just *do not want* certain people to find forgiveness through Christ. Does God share your beliefs? The Apostle Peter faced that question because he believed the Gentiles were unclean. What did he learn?

Ask someone to read Acts 10:34-35 (p. 1,127, Missions Era)—“Then Peter replied, ‘I see very clearly that God shows no favoritism. In every nation he accepts those who fear him and do what is right.’”

These excuses—and many others—do not hold weight with God. If the Lord is calling you to serve Him through long-term missions but you're delaying, then you're like Jonah, running to Tarshish instead of Nineveh. (You just haven't found your boat yet.)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some common fears that keep people from obeying God concerning missions?
2. How can we encourage each other to take steps of obedience in this area?

GOD USES OBEDIENCE TO ACCOMPLISH GREAT

THINGS (Jonah 3:4-4:11, pp. 589-590)

Ask someone to read Jonah 3:1-6 (p. 589).

“The Reluctant Missionary” would be an excellent nickname for Jonah. God, in His grace, gave Jonah a second opportunity to obey. And this time Jonah trudged off toward Nineveh, probably permanently scarred from being thrown up on the beach by a large fish.

ONLY AFTER TAKING A STEP OF OBEDIENCE DO WE REALIZE OUR FEARS AND HANG-UPS ARE INSIGNIFICANT COMPARED TO GOD'S GREATNESS.

Whether God's message was truly only one sentence long or Jonah gave it his minimal effort, he communicated God's impending judgment: “Forty days from now Nineveh will be destroyed!” (Jonah 3:4, p. 589). *(Leader, here's a possible activity: Ask several volunteers to picture how Jonah might have proclaimed this message and say it out loud.)*

God worked mightily through Jonah's obedience.

God used Jonah's obedience to produce an incredible result. Everyone in the city, from the least to the greatest, repented and turned from their evil ways. Jonah did not produce this result—only the Lord can bring about such a change.

Jonah didn't have much of a plan; he just walked the streets and yelled God's message to the crowds. He didn't have the right attitude, as he still didn't want the Ninevites to be spared. And he didn't have a network of people to work with; it was just him and God.

Only after taking a step of obedience do we realize that our fears and hang-ups, which we discussed in our last point, are insignificant and silly compared to God's greatness. He doesn't need our talents—He's already provided for our needs, and He's ready to prove that our fears are unfounded in His presence.

Grace, our missionary from the beginning of the lesson, has discovered these truths firsthand while serving in Africa. She has experienced:

- The Holy Spirit's leading each day as He's guided her to many people whom He's prepared to hear the Gospel in an area dominated by Islam.
- The power of Jesus' name to cast out demons who are possessing people. (Yes, this still happens today. It's not just something that occurred in the Bible.)
- God's protection as He's kept terrorist attacks outside of her city so Gospel work can continue.
- God's transformative power as He's raised up Africans to go out as missionaries to other nations.

Grace has only been in Africa a short time, but God is already doing powerful things through her and her team. However, she would have never experienced any of this if she had not said yes when God called her to go.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. God gave Jonah a second chance. What does that tell us about God?
2. Have you ever asked God if He wants you to go? Are you willing to ask Him that question? Why or why not?

REDEMPTION THREAD

After God pulled His punishment back from Nineveh, Jonah made a declaration about God's character as he complained.

Ask someone to read Jonah 4:2 (p. 589).

Obviously Jonah isn't a good example of how to be a missionary, but in the middle of his complaining, he accurately declared God's character! How did Jonah know this was God's character? First, he experienced it himself after he'd disobeyed. But he also knew the stories from previous eras of how God showed compassion and love to people when they sinned, as

He did with Adam and Eve, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the people in the wilderness, and David, just to name a few. God repeatedly spared people after they sinned when they repented and turned back to him. God is merciful, compassionate, and slow to anger, and He continually seeks to restore His people.

CALL TO ACTION

Instruct your Life Group to get into several small groups. Encourage them to pray for Grace as she serves in Africa, and challenge them to also ask God, “Do you want me to go?” For anyone who feels led to take a next step, encourage them to go to bellevue.org/send for more information or to register for Send Out Training.

CONCLUSION

Today’s main idea today is “God spreads His truth through people who are willing to go wherever He leads.” Jesus said in Matthew 9:37 (p. 1,023, Gospel Era), “The harvest is great, but the workers are few.” Is the Lord calling you to join the work of telling the world about Him?

NEXT GEN

AM I WILLING TO GO WHEREVER GOD LEADS? Book of Jonah

OPENING

What Scares Me?

Supplies: Index cards, pens, and a large cup

Give each student an index card and a pen. Ask, “If God called you to go to another country to share the Gospel, what would scare you the most?” Instruct the students to write down their answers and place them in your large cup. Then read the answers out loud and discuss the fears that are listed. Prompt the students to give biblical references or examples that show God is bigger than our fears when He calls us to tell others about Jesus.

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever felt God leading you to do something outside your comfort zone? How did you respond?
2. Why do you think God primarily uses people rather than angels or miracles to spread the Gospel?
3. What are some common reasons people run away from obeying God’s directions?

APPLICATION

Give each student an index card and a pen. Instruct them to write one sentence summarizing Jonah’s journey and how God used him. Allow the students to share what they wrote. Remind students that they don’t have to be the smartest, wealthiest, or best-looking to be used by God; they only have to obey His directions.

Citations

1. Helmer, C. “Annual Statistical Report.” *International Mission Board*, www.imb.org/research/annual-statistical-report/.
2. US Census Bureau. “Census.gov.” *Census.gov*, 2024, www.census.gov.

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Additional Resources

“Was Jonah Truly Swallowed by a Whale?”
gotquestions.org/Jonah-whale.html

The International Mission Board’s
Annual Statistical Report
imb.org/research/annual-statistical-report

*All thoughts and ideas listed under Additional Resources may not be completely in agreement with Bellevue’s theology, and their listing should not be considered as an endorsement.

CONGRATULATIONS— YOU FINISHED LESSON 24!



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June 29
Adults and Next Gen
Lesson 25

2025
CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLE

**HOW DOES GOD
RESPOND TO
FAITHLESSNESS?
Book of Hosea**

HOW DOES GOD RESPOND TO FAITHLESSNESS? Book of Hosea

MAIN IDEA

God is faithful when people are faithless.

OUTLINE

Weekly Reading Recap

Era Overview

Introduction

- 1. God's Character vs. Man's Character (Hosea 11:1–4, p. 619)**
 - God's character is faithful.
 - Man's character is faithless.
 - Gomer was unfaithful to Hosea.
- 2. God Responds to Faithlessness as an Impartial Judge (Hosea 11:5–7, p. 619)**
 - The Role of a Judge
- 3. God Responds to Faithlessness as a Loving Father and Husband (Hosea 11:8–11, p. 619; Hosea 3:1–2, p. 613)**
 - God is motivated by love.
 - Hosea restored Gomer.

Redemption Thread

Call to Action (Determine if you truly know God or only know about Him.)

Conclusion

Special Note

This Life Group series draws from the work of Iva May and her team at Chronological Bible Teaching Ministries Inc. Foundational concepts, such as dividing the Bible into 14 Eras, the Redemption Thread, and understanding how God speaks, acts, and reveals Himself in each era, come directly from her work. We are thankful for her willingness to allow us to utilize her

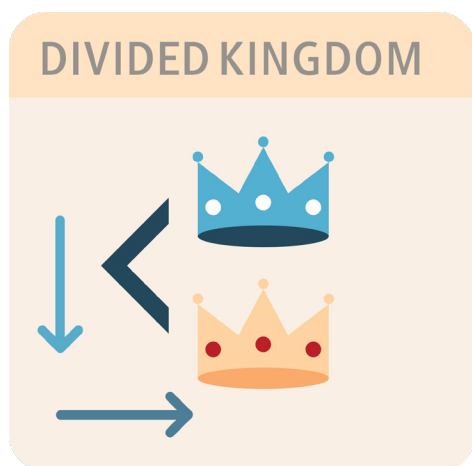
14 Era framework and concepts to create these lessons. Our aim with this series is to encourage participants to read the Bible chronologically, but it is not intended to replace or replicate the comprehensive work of Iva and her team. For more resources on reading the Bible chronologically, we highly recommend visiting chronologicalbibleteaching.com.

WEEKLY READING RECAP

This week's reading focused on several kings in both Judah and Israel and connected them with their corresponding prophets, such as Isaiah, Micah, and Hosea. The prophets continued to call the people back to God and warned them of God's impending judgment if they did not. Isaiah gave a messianic prophecy, promising that God Himself would live among the people and His name would be Immanuel. Finally, under the reign of King Hoshea, Israel fell to Assyria, and the people were exiled from their homes. God's judgment for the people's continual sin had finally arrived.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. What's something you learned about the relationship between God and people during this week's reading?



ERA OVERVIEW

Leader, our lesson today takes place during the Divided Kingdom Era. Utilizing page A17 in your Chronological Bible, briefly review the Divided Kingdom Era and how it fits in God's whole story.

INTRODUCTION

Hosea was a prophet during Jeroboam II's reign. Jeroboam's leadership brought prosperity to Israel, but his character brought sin and rebellion. Because of the people's sin, Hosea prophesied that they would be conquered, but he also promised them hope of eternal restoration with God.

Leader, share a story from your childhood about a time when you chose to disobey your parents, received a consequence, and were forgiven afterward.

God often uses human relationships to explain His relationship with us and our propensity to wander away from Him and His ways. In our lesson today, God communicated through the prophet Hosea, explaining how He responds to faithlessness by using two

different relationships as His examples: the husband-wife relationship and the father-son relationship.

GOD'S CHARACTER VS. MAN'S

CHARACTER (Hosea 11:1-4, p. 619)

Ask someone to read Hosea 11:1-4 (p. 619).

God's character is faithful.

In these beginning verses of Hosea 11, God's faithful character is spelled out through the example of a father and son. When Israel "was a child," God declared that He:

- Loved Israel
- Saved Israel from slavery in Egypt
- Guided Israel in how they should live
- Joined Israel and provided for them

As we've read the Bible chronologically this year, we've seen how God did each of those things for Israel. God heard the cries of His people (Exodus 3:7-8, p. 107, Exodus Era), liberated them from Egypt through the plagues (Exodus 7-12, pp. 111-117, Exodus Era), taught them how to live in His presence (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), and provided for them in the wilderness (Numbers).

Why did God do all these things? Because He made a promise.

Ask someone to read Genesis 12:1-3 (p. 22, Patriarch Era).

God promised to turn Abraham's descendants into a great nation and bless the whole world through him. When God makes a promise, He is faithful to keep it. Like a father, God has been with Israel the entire time, guiding them, helping them, and pointing them in the right direction.

INSTEAD OF WORSHIPING THE LORD WHO HAD RESCUED THEM, THEY TURNED TO WORSHIP STATUES. WHILE GOD IS ETERNALLY FAITHFUL, PEOPLE ARE CONSISTENTLY FAITHLESS.

While God's character is faithful, the first few verses of Hosea 11 also show man's character in response to God's faithfulness.

Man's character is faithless.

The people did not respond to God's faithfulness with gratitude or obedience. Instead they revealed that their inherent character is one of faithlessness.

When God called the people to come closer, they moved further away. Even though God stooped

down to their level and held them by the hand, they refused even to recognize His contributions and power. Instead of worshiping the Lord who had rescued them, they turned to worship statues. While God is eternally faithful, people are consistently faithless.

Ask someone to read Psalm 78:40–42 (p. 471, Kingdom Era).

IMAGINE HOSEA'S PAIN KNOWING THAT HIS WIFE WAS REPEATEDLY UNFAITHFUL TO HIM—THAT'S THE PAIN GOD FEELS WHEN PEOPLE TURN AWAY FROM HIM.

Besides directly telling the people about their sin, God also wanted them to witness their faithlessness through a human example—Hosea's relationship with his wife, Gomer. Listen to the instructions He gave Hosea at the beginning of this book.

Gomer was unfaithful to Hosea.

Ask someone to read Hosea 1:2 (p. 611).

God instructed Hosea to marry a woman who would be unfaithful to him. Scripture says Gomer gave Hosea their first child (Hosea 1:3, p. 611), but the wording used for their following two children implies that they were not Hosea's children. Imagine Hosea's pain knowing that his wife was repeatedly unfaithful to him—that's the pain God feels when people turn away from Him.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are examples from Scripture that show that God is always faithful?
2. Why does God use human relationships to help us understand our relationship with Him?

GOD RESPONDS TO FAITHLESSNESS AS AN IMPARTIAL JUDGE (Hosea 11:5–7, p. 619)

Ask someone to read Hosea 11:5–7 (p. 619).

The Role of a Judge

An honest judge does three things when faced with a complex case:

- Examines the facts
- Reviews the law
- Exacts judgment

God determined that the people kept turning away from Him and repeatedly breaking His law. He had continually warned them that if they did those things, they would be driven from the land He had given them.

Ask someone to read Deuteronomy 28:15, 49–52 (pp. 262–263, Exodus Era).

Throughout the Conquest, Judges, Kingdom, and Divided Kingdom Eras, God repeatedly called His people to return to Him, but His

patience finally ran out. It was time for the Judge to render His verdict, which was “guilty as charged.” Sin always requires judgment.

God was going to use the Assyrians to exact His judgment. Through them, He would send His people into captivity in a foreign land. And horrifyingly, Hosea would live to see his prophecy come true.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How was God's judgment against Israel fair?
2. Why is it important to remember that God is faithful in His promises of judgment?

MOTIVATED BY LOVE, THE FATHER OF ISRAEL REFUSED TO GIVE UP ON HIS PEOPLE.

GOD RESPONDS TO FAITHLESSNESS AS A LOVING FATHER AND HUSBAND (Hosea 11:8–11, p. 619; Hosea 3:1–2, p. 613)

Ask someone to read Hosea 11:8–11 (p. 619).

God is motivated by love.

Though God had to bring the hammer down because He's just, He refused to lock the door and throw away the key because He is loving.

Motivated by love, the Father of Israel refused to give up on His people. He declared, “My heart is torn within me, and my compassion overflows” (Hosea 11:8, p. 619). Even though His people didn't want to know Him closely, He still desired a relationship with them. And at the close of the chapter He made a promise: “I will bring them home again” (Hosea 11:11, p. 619). (We'll see God honor this promise in the Return Era.)

Remember how Hosea's life was to be a picture of God's relationship with His people? Just as Gomer was unfaithful to Hosea in chapter 1, God's charge against Israel in chapter 2 was that they were an unfaithful wife to Him. However, in chapter 3, God gave Hosea a new command.

Hosea restored Gomer.

Ask someone to read Hosea 3:1–2 (p. 613).

IN HOSEA, THE WORDS “KNOW” OR “KNOWLEDGE” REFER TO HAVING A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, NOT JUST HAVING AN INTELLECTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF WHO HE IS. GOD DESIRED FOR ISRAEL TO KNOW HIM BY EXPERIENCING HIS LOVE.

At some point during Gomer's unfaithfulness, she lost her freedom, possibly because she had sold herself into slavery. Although Hosea had good reason to divorce her, he instead paid the price for her freedom and restored her as his wife. Why did God give him this direction? Because it illustrated that the Lord still loved Israel even though they had repeatedly turned away from Him.

Throughout the book of Hosea, God accused the people of not knowing Him, and He even lamented their ignorance. The words "know" or "knowledge" in this book refer to having a relationship with God, not just having an intellectual understanding of who He is. God desired for Israel to know Him by experiencing His love so He could be close to them.

Leader, acknowledge that some people have trouble seeing God as a loving Father or Husband because their human examples have repeatedly hurt them. Be sure to point back to God's character in the first point and encourage people to respond to God in faith so He can prove His goodness and faithfulness in their lives.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Think about God's statement, "My heart is torn within me, and my compassion overflows" (Hosea 11:8, p. 619). How does this verse impact your view of God?
2. What's the difference between knowing about God and knowing God through experience? On a scale of 1 to 10—with 1 being "I know about God" and 10 being "I know God through experience"—what would you rate your relationship with Him?

REDEMPTION THREAD

God's statement in Hosea 11:8b–9a (p. 619), "My heart is torn within me, and my compassion overflows. No, I will not unleash my fierce anger. I will not completely destroy Israel," might remind you of John 3:16–17 (p. 992, Gospel Era).

Ask someone to read John 3:16–17 (p. 992, Gospel Era).

God doesn't want people to perish but to be saved. That's why He has actively pursued humanity since the Fall in Genesis 3. After people severed their relationship with Him through sin, God came close to them through the building of the tabernacle (His temporary dwelling place among the people in the Exodus Era). Later, in the Kingdom Era, God's temporary dwelling place became more lasting through the building of Solomon's temple. Then, in the Gospel Era, God Himself (Jesus) came to live among people by taking our form, and through His sacrifice, the Holy Spirit can now live inside us. God has never stopped pursuing people, and He will continue to do so for all time.

CALL TO ACTION

Encourage your Life Group members to consider whether they know about God or know Him through experience. Direct them to pray silently and ask God to help them draw closer to Him so they can have an intimate relationship with Him.

CONCLUSION

Hosea ends his book with this statement in Hosea 14:9 (p. 621)—"Let those who are wise understand these things. Let those with discernment listen carefully. The paths of the LORD are true and right, and righteous people live by walking in them. But in those paths sinners stumble and fall."

How will you respond to Hosea today? Our main idea this week is that God is faithful when people are faithless. Hosea calls us into a close and experiential relationship with God. Are you tired of only knowing about God and want to truly know Him? At Bellevue, one of our values is intimacy with Jesus because we want to pursue a passionate relationship with Jesus above all. May today be the day where you throw your idols and other pursuits to the side and discover God's complete and unfailing love for you.

NEXT GEN

HOW DOES GOD RESPOND TO FAITHLESSNESS? Book of Hosea

OPENING

Discussion Questions

1. When was a time you disobeyed someone in authority? What happened?
2. Why do people constantly turn away from God even though He's faithful to them?
3. Why is it important that God not only loves people but also judges sin?

APPLICATION

Draw a horizontal timeline across your whiteboard. On the left end of the line write "Creation." On the right end of the line write "Hosea." Ask for volunteers to write events on the timeline that show God's faithfulness to His people even when they were faithless to Him. Afterward tell the students that God proved His patience and faithfulness to His people throughout the Old Testament. Remind them that He shows the same faithfulness to us when we disobey His Word. Encourage your students to quickly repent when they sin and turn back to God!

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Additional Resources

"The Book of Hosea"

bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-hosea

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CONGRATULATIONS— YOU FINISHED LESSON 25!



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