

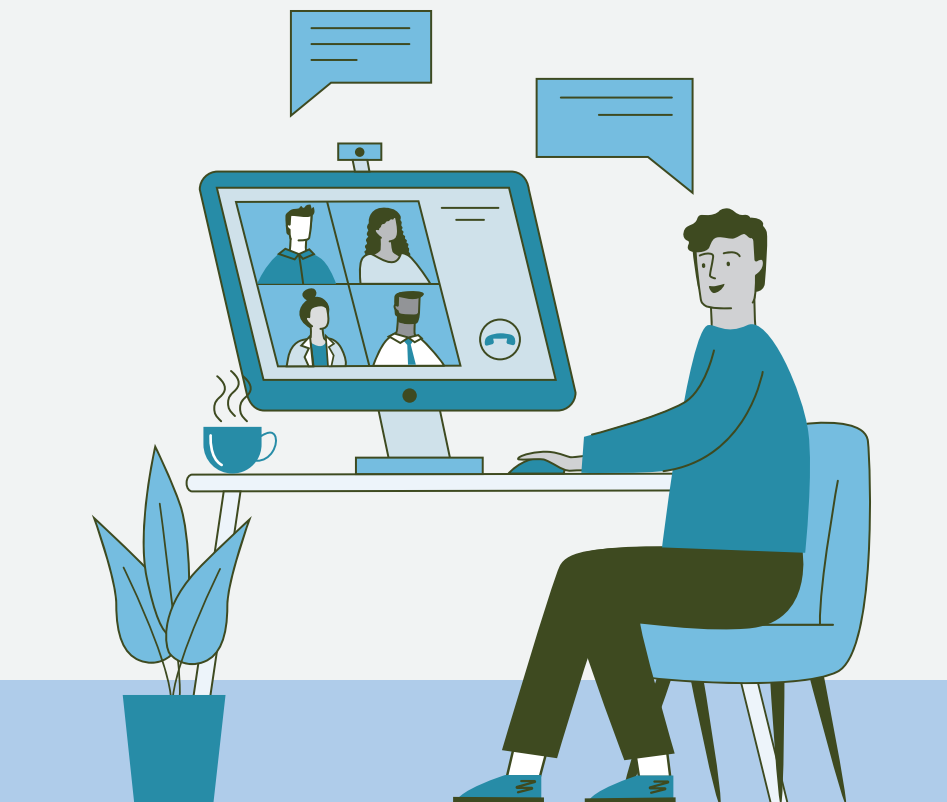


ONLINE GROUP PLAN

Summer 2020 // Proverbs; Song of Songs // Session 4: The Choice

Suggested Use Date: 06/28/2020

For use with Explore the Bible Leader Guide, Personal Study Guide, and Daily Discipleship Guide



PREPARATION

Best Practices for Leading an Online Group



PRAY for your group members and for God to grant you insight as you study and prepare your Bible study session. Do this throughout the week.



SCHEDULE your group's online Bible study using the online meeting tool you prefer. Invite group members and guests to participate using a meeting ID if required by your online meeting tool. [Click here](#) to view a Best Practices document for online groups.



SEND digital copies of the next session to group members who do not have a print copy. If using the *Personal Study Guide*, encourage group members to read the passage and comments for the next session. If you are using the *Daily Discipleship Guide*, encourage your group members to follow up your session by engaging with the five daily Bible readings.



CONNECT with your group via email or text messaging early in the week.

Create your own message:

- Briefly tell the group the title of your next Bible study, why it is important, and what they will learn.
- Challenge group members to study before the group session if your group uses a *Personal Study Guide*; remind group members to follow up your online study with their daily readings if your group uses the *Daily Discipleship Guide*.
- Remind group members when your group will meet online.

Or copy and paste this suggested wording into the email or text message to your group:

Life is filled with choices. Hearing the truth demands a response to either embrace or reject the truth. We'll discuss Solomon's plea in Proverbs 4 to hear, obey, and not turn away from the wisdom of God as we gather together this week. I hope you'll be part of the discussion.

As you read Proverbs 4:11-27 and the Session 4 comments in the *Personal Study Guide* or *Daily Discipleship Guide*, look for the contrasts between the two choices offered. How does Solomon describe the different results of the choices?

We will meet at (add time) using (name of online tool). Here is the link to our meeting: (add meeting ID if your online tool doesn't do that automatically)

WEEKLY MESSAGE



PREPARE to lead your group's Bible study.

- **Study** Proverbs 4:11-27, listing the directives given. Note how each directive relates to the two choices.
- **Listen** to the Explore the Bible Adult Leader Podcast. Go to goExploreTheBible.com/Adults-Training for an overview of the main points and key ideas from each session.
- **Visit** the Explore the Bible blog for additional leader helps at goExploreTheBible.com/Leader-Helps
- **Create** your teaching plan for guiding your group's online Bible study experience. Use the Online Group Plan on the next pages as a starting point, modifying it for your group as needed. Consult the *Adult Commentary*, *QuickSource*, and *Leader Pack* for additional ideas and resources.



REMIND your group members to study and prepare via another email or text message closer to the day your group meets.

- Include a quote from the *Personal Study Guide*, a question, or an insight you plan to discuss with the group when you meet online.



HELPFUL LINKS

- Explore the Bible main landing page: goExploreTheBible.com
- Digital version of Explore the Bible: curriculum.lifeway.com
- Explore the Bible leader helps: goExploreTheBible.com/Leader-Helps
- Explore the Bible Podcast: goExploreTheBible.com/Adults-Training
- Free Coronavirus links and leader helps: lifeway.com/coronavirus



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NOTES

GREET *people as they join and invite them to share a time when they were overwhelmed by the number of choices when shopping. Ask: **Have you gotten confused over a choice because you had so many options? How did you make the choice?** (PSG, p. 37; DDG, p. 37). Option: Use the Extra! idea. See goExploreTheBible.com/LeaderExtras*

TRANSITION: All people have a choice to make: follow God or reject Him. Solomon related that there is only one choice that puts the believer on the route to righteousness, while the other route ends in destruction.

STATE: In Proverbs 4, Solomon once again personified wisdom as a woman. He put himself in the position of father or sage. He delineated two different paths of life—that of following wisdom or abandoning wisdom. While the Old Testament understanding of wisdom was fulfilled through the law, the New Testament fulfillment is found in a relationship with Jesus Christ.

DIRECT: *Lead the group to fold a note-taking sheet in half and then to write Destruction on one side and Life on the other side.*

READ Proverbs 4:11-13. *Characterize Solomon's description of wisdom. Emphasize that knowing doesn't always lead to obedience. Reference 2 Timothy 3:7, and say: There is a difference in head knowledge and heart knowledge.*

WRITE: *Lead the group to circle in their PSGs or DDGs the three admonitions in verse 13 (PSG, p. 39; DDG, p. 41).*

ASK: **How does following God's wisdom lead to life? What happens to our ability to choose the way of wisdom when we do not take seriously the consequences of choosing the opposite of wisdom?** (PSG, p. 40; DDG, p. 39)



READ: Lead the group to read silently **Proverbs 4:14-15** to discover Solomon's directions for staying on the right path, recording a summary in the margin of their PSGs or DDGs. Share your summary. Explain that Solomon then presented the consequences of taking the path of the wicked.

READ Proverbs 4:16-17, explaining each phrase based on your study.

ASK: How does wickedness lead to more wicked acts? What examples reinforce Solomon's teaching? (PSG, p. 41; DDG, p. 39)

READ: Direct the group to individually read **Proverbs 4:18-19** to see how Solomon contrasts the two paths.

CONNECT: Read aloud 2 Corinthians 4:4 and John 14:6 to highlight how the same paths are described in the New Testament. Remind the group that seeking wisdom is a continuous process that requires integrating knowledge and lifestyle.

READ Proverbs 4:20-27, emphasizing how to stay on the path of wisdom.

ASK: If the path of wisdom is so clear and beneficial, why do so many not choose it? (PSG, p. 42; DDG, p. 39) **What is so enticing about wickedness that it causes us to lose our focus on what is right and good?** (PSG, p. 44; DDG, p. 39) If using the DDG, explain that the group will have an opportunity to reflect on these questions more deeply when completing the Day 3 and Day 5 Daily Exploration activities.

TRANSITION: Staying on the path of wisdom by keeping our eyes focused on Christ is a constant challenge.

AFFIRM: Wisdom is progressive; it's the small, daily decisions that reveal our path. Proverbs 4 reveals two paths: the wise path and the foolish path. Changing our behavior without changing the heart doesn't lead to lifestyle change.

EVALUATE: Guide the group to complete the Bible Skill activity (PSG, p. 44; DDG, p. 39). Encourage them to share how the picture of life as a journey teaches us about following the Lord or rejecting Him. Call attention to the second question set on page 45 of the PSG or page 40 of the DDG. Guide the group to reflect on their own lives by examining everyday decisions where one step toward wickedness has led to another step off the path. Direct the group to record their response to the second question (What actions can get you back on the right track?) promising that they will not be asked to share what they record.

RELATE: Lead the group to share how regularly reading the Bible helps them stay on the right path. Allow them to share one thing God has taught them recently that has helped them grow in their spiritual walks. Thank God for His Word and for the spiritual growth taking place in the lives of the group.

NEXT STEPS



- As the group leader, reflect on Proverbs 4:11-27 to evaluate if you're staying on the path of righteousness in all areas of your life.
- Send digital copies of the next session to those in the group who do not have a print copy. If using the Personal Study Guide, encourage the group to read the passage and comments for the next session.
- Repeat the process outlined in the Preparation section of this document.