

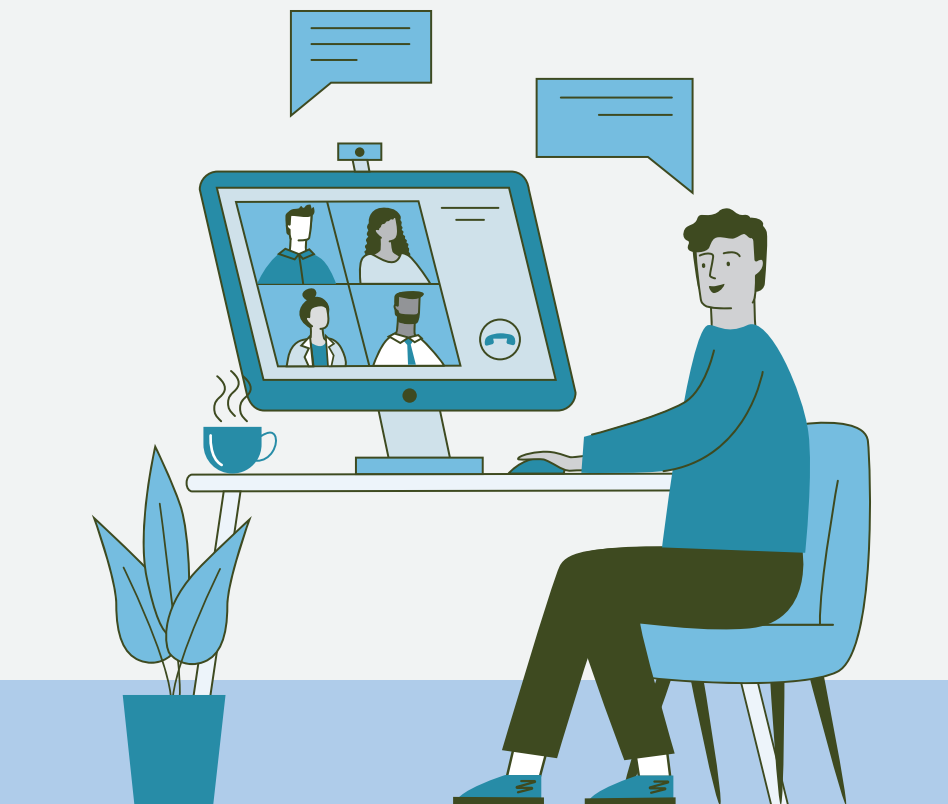


## ONLINE GROUP PLAN

**Summer 2020 // Proverbs; Song of Songs // Session 9: Staying Sober**

Suggested Use Date: 08/02/2020

*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:

Alcoholism and drug abuse have become a prominent feature of our cultural landscape. Lives have been destroyed, marriages ruined, families wounded, and communities disrupted because of its destructive influence. In this week's study, we'll discuss how God expects believers to be good stewards of the bodies He has given them.

Read Proverbs 23:17-21, 29-35, looking for the descriptors used by Solomon. Review the comments for Session 9 in the *Personal Study Guide* or *Daily Discipleship Guide* to get a deeper understanding of these descriptors. How do these descriptors characterize abuse?

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** Read Proverbs 22:17–24:22, giving particular attention to 23:17-21,29-35. Develop a list of descriptors used by Solomon that characterize the use or abuse of strong drink.
- **Listen** to the Explore the Bible Adult Leader Podcast. Go to [goExploreTheBible.com/Adults-Training](https://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](https://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.



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## HELPFUL LINKS

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



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Explore the Bible // Summer 2020 // Proverbs; Song of Songs // Session 9: Staying Sober

NOTES

**GREET** *Welcome people as they join the online group and invite them to name a comfort food or beverage they have enjoyed a lot during the recent months of “stay-at-home” requirements. As an option, they can identify a TV or movie series they have “binge-watched.” After all have had opportunity to respond, ask:*  
**How would you distinguish between enjoying something a lot and feeling addicted to it?** *Encourage several responses.*

**TRANSITION:** *Explain:* Throughout Proverbs and in the previous sessions, we’ve seen an emphasis on the foundation of wise living as “the fear of the Lord”—that is, having an ongoing reverence for, openness to, and obedience of God. In short, it means that we consistently welcome and submit to the Lord’s control in our lives. In this session’s Bible passages—part of the “thirty wise sayings of Solomon”—we will focus on a specific life challenge for many, if not most, of us. The text zeroes in on the use and abuse of alcohol or strong drink, but the wisdom offered here in God’s Word can apply to all types of addictive substances and behaviors. *Option: Use the Extra! idea. See [goExploreTheBible.com/LeaderExtras](http://goExploreTheBible.com/LeaderExtras)*

**ASK: What factors contribute most to alcohol and drug abuse in our culture?**  
*(PSG, p. 82; DDG, p. 77)*

**READ Proverbs 23:17-18,** *encouraging the group to listen for the source of hope found in these verses.*

**EXPLAIN:** *Point out that Proverbs 1:7 introduced the concept of “the fear of the LORD,” describing it as “the beginning of knowledge.” The admonition is repeated similarly in Proverbs 9:10, and here in Proverbs 23:17, God’s people are again instructed to always fear the Lord. Ask: **How does fearing the Lord provide hope?***

**DISCUSS:** Call attention to the bolded questions on page 84 of the PSG (DDG, p. 79). Ask group participants to share some of their answers to these questions.

**TRANSITION:** In previous sessions, we confirmed that wisdom comes through a relationship with Jesus Christ. In Christ, we find the promise of a secure future. Enlist two volunteers to read aloud *Colossians 1:27* and *Hebrews 10:23* to the group. Invite responses to the following statement: **Describe a time when you found yourself reassured in the hope Christ gives believers.**

**READ Proverbs 23:19-21**, directing the group to listen for a warning provided by Solomon in this passage.

**GUIDE:** Lead the group to identify key words in the verses, naming both positive and negative words.

**ASK: What are the similarities between alcohol abuse and gluttony? In what ways are alcoholism and gluttony two approaches for trying to deal with the same issues?**

**EXPLAIN:** Solomon wanted God's people to know that the abuse of alcohol and food often leads to a loss of relationships and financial resources as well as spiritual distress.

**READ:** Lead the group to read silently **Proverbs 23:29-32**, noting especially the characteristics of a person misusing or abusing alcohol. After a few moments, call for the group to name what they noted in the verses.

**ASK: What actions might a person need to take to avoid finding himself or herself in the picture painted by addiction? (PSG, p. 88; DDG, p. 82).**

**READ Proverbs 23:33-35**, while the group listens for the consequences of abusive drinking.

**DISCUSS:** Call attention to the statement: “Only one thing matters for the person suffering from addiction.” (PSG, p. 89; DDG, p. 83). Identify that “one thing” as having the next “fix” of the addictive substance or behavior. Ask: **How is Solomon’s portrait of addiction seen in real life? Which image in the description makes the greatest impact on you? Explain.**

**SUMMARIZE:** Lead the group to reflect on the truths of this session by reading aloud the four bulleted statements on page 90 of the PSG (DDG, p. 80).

**CHALLENGE:** Invite participants to reflect silently on one way they could begin today to become better stewards of the bodies God has given them. Close the session in prayer, thanking God for providing clear direction for godly living. Pray that all may keep their minds focused on Him and lean on His Word for strength when tempted by the allure of addictive substances and behaviors.

## NEXT STEPS



- Contact the group during the week to encourage them. Pray specifically for any needs they are willing to share with you.
- 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.