

Tips and Tricks:

The sermon notes are designed to be used as a guide for discussion. Don't feel like you have to use every question. Some questions will take a while to work through and others will be over in a few seconds.

1. Don't teach the lesson. The sermon was just preached. Just ask the questions and let everyone else talk.
2. Let other people ask questions. It's OK to go "off topic" for a while. Sometimes those conversations are more interesting anyway!
3. Have fun. Don't forget to laugh and crack up. Relationships, not curriculum, are the heartbeat of our ministry. Remember: We have to build a relational bridge strong enough to hold the truth!

Agenda for Group Time

1. Ice Breaker - Lighthearted ice breaker question (10 minutes)
2. Discussion - Bible study, sharing and application. (25 Minutes)
3. Prayer - Pray together (5 minutes)
4. Planning - Remember to talk about what's coming up.

Icebreaker: What is your favorite gas station snack?

Question: Imagine someone who has no background with Christianity asking you what the Bible means when it talks about "the fear of the Lord." What would you say?

1. How Solomon Can Say that He Wrote a Really Delightful Book

The Preacher sought to find words of delight, and uprightly he wrote words of truth. [11] The words of the wise are like goads,

Question: There's 3 words used in the verses above to describe the words of the Preacher. What are they?

Discussion: We don't typically like thinking about death, failing health, discomfort, or inconvenience. What are some of the coping strategies that we develop to get us away from these things?

Discussion: Can you think of a "delightful" memory that has really impacted your life in such a way that it has made you a wiser/better person because of it? Can you think of a sad or painful memory that has really impacted your life in such a way that it has made you a wiser/better person because of it?

Discussion: Many of us have had experiences like my friend who recounted "*I wish it didn't happen and I wouldn't wish to go through it again, but I am grateful for it.*" How can we be grateful for even the things that wound us so deeply? Have you ever experienced this?

Question: What is a goad? Could you give any modern day equivalents?

Question: How is wisdom like a goad? Can you think of any proverbs/pieces of wisdom that have “goaded” you particularly?

2. Fear God and Keep His Commandments

The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. 14 For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil. (13-14)

There’s a Few Threats to Not Believing This

Threat #1: We Forget That We Are Sheep

Question: What are some ways in which the Bible will refer to us as sheep? Any passages come to mind (it's ok if you can't remember the reference)?

Sheep have a strong instinct to follow the sheep in front of them. When one sheep decides to go somewhere, the rest of the flock usually follows, even if it is not a good "decision." For example, if one sheep jumps over a cliff, the others are likely to follow

Discussion: What are some of the ways in which you might have seen some sheep-like tendencies in yourself?

Threat #2: We forget that He is our Shepherd

The threat is that we stop looking to Him to call the shots in our life — and therefore, we stop expecting Him to change us. Trusting God as our Shepherd is evidenced by fearing God and keeping His commandments

Discussion: Can you think of a time that you did something that the Bible says to do — even whenever it freaked you out or made you uncomfortable?

'We fear men so much because we fear God so little,' — William Gurnall

Discussion: How is it that there's a promise attached to this command to “fear God and keep His commandments”? (Look back at v11)

Discussion: We read that the Lord goads us, but that He is also a God of judgement (v14). How does we bring the gospel to bear on passages like this?

Discussion: What are some of the ways that you've experienced your Shepherd “going out after you” or “running off the cliff for you?”

Work It Out!

One thing I'll do differently because of this sermon:
