



CORNERSTONE
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CERTIFICATE COURSE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WISDOM LITERATURE

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

THE OLD TESTAMENT WISDOM LITERATURE:

Welcome to this course of study of the Old Testament books of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs! These books, commonly called the “Wisdom Literature” of the Bible, contain some of the most profound and thought-provoking material in the Old Testament and richly repay closer study.

COURSE APPROACH AND GOALS:

The material in this course is presented for the most part from a Protestant perspective, but the approach is non-denominational and non-dogmatic. This means that where Christians of different backgrounds view sections of Scripture differently, the major viewpoints are summarized, and an attempt is made to give a fair evaluation of the different views. This approach provides vital background for those wishing to pursue teaching of the Word of God as well as for our ability as individual Christians to communicate properly with other believers. A major thrust of this course – and of all Cornerstone courses – is to teach the importance of the underlying *message* of the Biblical accounts over and above individual or sectarian viewpoints about their details.

The specific goals of this course are for the student to gain a deeper familiarity with the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament, to learn to analyze its works effectively, and to learn additional background information that will help to better understand the message of these books at a much deeper level than reading the text alone can provide. This is not to minimize in any way the value of simply reading the Bible – but to stress that the more relevant knowledge we can bring to our study of the Bible, the more understanding we will gain from it.

STUDENT APPROACH AND GOALS:

You may take this course at any pace you wish. There are no deadlines, but we recommend that you set a goal to cover at least one lesson unit each week. It is also a good idea to try to set aside a specific time each day to work on the course if you can, in order to establish a pattern of study as a habit.

More important than our *scheduling* for effective study and learning is our *attitude* toward the material in this course. Study of the Bible involves much more than simply learning facts. The simple meaning of the words in the Bible can be understood by anyone – whatever their attitude and approach may be. But

the significance and fullness of the meaning of those words are only attainable by those who are humble enough to let the Bible truly speak to them (Matthew 11:25), and who approach its message prayerfully (Psalm 119:18). Be sure to pray for the understanding that only God can give (Luke 24:45) whenever you approach the Word of God. Your study will be incomparably more worthwhile with that approach.

Whether you are taking this course because you cannot attend formal Bible school or seminary classes, or to supplement them, or to enrich your own personal study and understanding of the Bible, we hope that you find the course challenging and helpful.

COURSE TEXTBOOKS:

1) ***The Bible***. You may use any translation of the Bible for the readings assigned in this course, though for detailed study we recommend a more literal (word-for-word) translation such as the ESV (English Standard Version), rather than a paraphrased (idea-for-idea) version such as the Living Bible. The NIV (New International Version) is a good balance and is quoted in this course unless otherwise noted. If you do not have a Bible, you can select one from those available for free download from our website www.FreeChristianEBooks.org. Of the Bibles offered on that site, we recommend the BSB (Berean Study Bible) for use with this course, as it is quite literal yet very clear.

2) ***Spotlight on the Psalms: A Closer Look at One of the Bible's Best Loved Books*** by R. Herbert (a free download from the Cornerstone website or from www.FreeChristianEBooks.org).

3) ***Spotlight on the Proverbs: Timeless Wisdom for Today's World*** by R. Herbert (a free download from the Cornerstone website or from www.FreeChristianEBooks.org).

Be sure to download these textbooks as they will be a major part of the course readings for Psalms and Proverbs – the two major books of the Wisdom Literature.

You will also need a notebook or blank sheets of paper to complete the course assignments.

EXAMINATION AND CERTIFICATION

For those who wish to receive certification for completing the course, a basic test can be completed on the course website at CornerstoneCourses.org. Students passing the test can request a certificate of completion which will be delivered online in PDF format that can be printed or viewed on any computer.

COURSE OUTLINE:

<i>Unit Topic</i>	
01. Introduction to the Course	07. Proverbs: Part 1
02. Understanding the Wisdom Literature	08. Proverbs: Part 2
03. Job: Part 1	09. Ecclesiastes: Part 1
04. Job: Part 2	10. Ecclesiastes: Part 2
05. Psalms: Part 1	11. Song of Songs: Part 1
06. Psalms: Part 2	12. Song of Songs: Part 2
	13. Course Completion Unit

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