

Old Testament Segment 3: The Wisdom and Prophetic Books

The books in these sections of the Old Testament share a common purpose: instruction regarding how life is to be lived both in the midst of daily human experiences and in preparation of what might come.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Explore one of these readings before moving on to the next video segment.

→ **Psalms.** About half of these songs and hymns are attributed to David. Some are laments, which are cries of despair followed by expression of faith in God. Some are statements of insights, wisdom, and spiritual discoveries. The Psalms are often referred to as a school of prayer, giving us models to follow and helping us craft prayers of our own.

Read some of these psalms: 1, 15, 23, 27, 32, 46, 71.

- Which one(s) can you relate to most?
- If you were writing your own psalm, how would it start?

→ **Proverbs.** This collection of sayings emphasizes that the pursuit of wisdom should be a fundamental way of life. While they often seem addressed from a father to a son, they are universally seen as advice from God to us.

- Read Proverbs 3. What insight do you find about trust, wisdom, and relationships?
- Chapters 10–29 of Proverbs appear to be a random assortment of clever couplets. Open at random and read ten verses. What lines and phrases stick with you?

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

→ **A Time for Everything.** Together, read Ecclesiastes 3:1–8.

- What season are you in these days? How would you describe this time in your life right now? A time to tear down or a time to build, or what?

WHEN YOU HAVE MORE TIME ...

→ **The trials of Job.** Dig into the book of Job, all 42 chapters. Here you can read of the sufferings of a good person, lectures by friends who try to explain God's will, Job's laments, and God's response. Your own similar experiences will come to mind—times you have experienced hardship, offered answers to suffering friends, or received such answers.

→ **Wisdom Is a Woman.** Page through Proverbs 8 and 14, Sirach 24, Wisdom 7–9, and Baruch 3:9—4:4 and see how Wisdom is referred to.

- What thoughts do you have after reading these passages?

→ **Song of Songs.** These love lyrics, long attributed to Solomon, can make you blush. While the poetry speaks of human attraction, romance, and sexuality, it is also interpreted allegorically, as a description of God's intimate relationship with his people. Many Catholic mystics have written of their spiritual relationship with God in this way.

- What light does this poetry shine on your own romantic relationship? How does it describe your relationship with God?