

# Jesus Is The Way

## Lesson 7: Jesus Is The Way To A Better Life



Discovering God's Word

Bible Study Series

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Learn some physical consequences of sin and how Jesus leads you to true wisdom and a better life

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### Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

**Study Number:** DGW201

Written by Eric Krieg

**About the author:** My name is Eric Krieg. I am a disciple of Jesus, a Bible student, a truth seeker, and an evangelist. My interest is in using the Bible as my only guide in my faith. My desire is to help others understand the message of the Bible and pursue true, New Testament Christianity.

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**My plea:** It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God's word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God's word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God's instructions.

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# Lesson 7: Jesus Is The Way To A Better Life

Jesus is the way to everything that is important and worthwhile. As we have already seen, Jesus is the way to truth, the way to victory over sin and death, the way to God, and the way to Heaven. Now, we need to recognize that Jesus is the way to a better life. In John 14:6, Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

Everyone wants to live the “good life.” Although their definitions of what this looks like are all different, typically, this means that people look to earthly things to be satisfied. They may find pleasure through earthly possessions or experiences. They may have a certain standard of living in mind. And, many of these people put their focus on these things above serving God.

Now, make no mistake about it. There are physical pleasures commonly associated with living in sin and rejecting God. Listen to the statement made about Moses in Hebrews 11:24-26. “By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter and chose to suffer with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasure of sin. For he considered reproach for the sake of Christ to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, since he was looking ahead to the reward.”

Although Moses chose to serve God, notice that there were pleasures and treasures he gave up in

Egypt. Many would think that Moses acted foolishly to give up the pleasures and treasures in Egypt he could have experienced as the adopted grandson of Egypt’s king in order to suffer with God’s people. Yet, notice that the pleasure of sin is “fleeting” and can only be enjoyed momentarily. The same is true for all the treasures on this earth.

You see, following Jesus Christ (even when it means you must suffer in serving Him) leads to a better life than if you would choose not to serve Christ. There are two ways this is true. First, it will be a better life because you will spend eternity in Heaven (as we discussed in the previous lesson). And, in addition, it will be a better life because of what Jesus will help you avoid and what He will cause you to experience if you are faithful to Him (though not everything will be pleasurable from a physical perspective).

In this seventh lesson, we want to consider the fact that Jesus is the way to a better life. We will consider that sin has physical consequences. We will consider that Jesus gives perfect wisdom. And, we will consider how living for Jesus will cause you to experience the better life. So, no matter where you are right now, you must recognize that Jesus is the way to a better life!

## Some Physical Consequences Of Sin

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As we have seen, rebelling against God and putting your own physical desires first often results in physical pleasures and treasures. Because of this, many people put their focus on such things. However, many people never stop to consider the great cost involved in these physical pleasures and treasures. You see, sinful pleasures and treasures are *never* free. Although Satan may try to convince you that there are no consequences for your sin, this simply is not true! In fact, when you really stop to consider the cost of sinful pleasures and treasures, you will find that sin is a hard master. And, you will find that sin takes you farther than you wanted to go, keeps you longer than you wanted to stay, and costs

you more than you were willing to pay! Therefore, take a few moments to consider some of the physical consequences of sin. For, when you consider these, you should realize that living for physical treasures and pleasures really does often fail to lead you to the good life (even just from a physical perspective).

### ***Shame and regret***

Living for sin often results in shame and regret. While this will certainly be true when your earthly life ends, it is also often true on a physical level. For, even though sin may begin in a form that seems harmless, it has a way of getting out of control quickly!

Proverbs 1:10-33 describes the need to listen to wisdom and not go along with sinful and foolish ways. In the text, evil people are pictured as trying to talk you into doing wicked things with them. They promise that you'll have fun. They promise that you'll get money. All the while, wisdom is calling out so that you will listen to her. She promises blessings if you listen to her. But, listen to what she promises if you do not (in Proverbs 1:24-33).

“Since I called out and you refused, extended my hand and no one paid attention, since you neglected all my counsel and did not accept my correction, I, in turn, will laugh at your calamity. I will mock when terror strikes you, when terror strikes you like a storm and your calamity comes like a whirlwind, when trouble and stress overcome you. Then they will call me, but I won't answer; they will search for me, but won't find me.

“Because they hated knowledge, didn't choose to fear the Lord, were not interested in my counsel, and rejected all my correction, they will eat the fruit of their way and be glutted with their own schemes. For the apostasy of the inexperienced will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them. But whoever listens to me will live securely and be undisturbed by the dread of danger.”

Perhaps you can think back to a foolish and sinful decision you have made that has resulted in this kind of shame and regret. Although it may have seemed like an insignificant thing in the moment, perhaps it is something that you now feel you can never escape. So, you continue to eat the fruit of your

bad and sinful decisions every single day – and it has a terrible aftertaste! But, while you wish you could change what you have done so as to remove the consequences and never have to eat this fruit of your decisions again, what is done is done – and you will live with the shame and regret of your decision for your entire life!

### ***Broken relationships***

Living for sin often results in broken relationships. Now, again, Satan does not advertise sin in this way. Instead, sin is often viewed as something that will help you gain relationships by helping people like you and causing you to fit in. Yet, one enduring consequence of sin is that it often breaks the relationships that mean the most to you.

Start by thinking about how sin often destroys homes. Think about the sin of adultery. Now, Satan would like you to get caught up in a moment, get lost in your feelings and desires, and think that “just one time” won't hurt anybody. Yet, when your sin is discovered, it may well cost you your marriage – and more! Not only may you be separated from your spouse, but you will forever change the lives of your children and may not be able to spend time every day with them.

Or, consider how other sins destroy homes. Being foolish with your money can cause your entire family to hurt. Lying and deceit will break the trust that is crucial to the success of a home. Selfishness can cause every member of your home to recognize that you look out for yourself rather than them.

Then, consider how your sin can do damage beyond the relationships in the home. For example, Proverbs 16:28 says, “A contrary person spreads conflict, and a gossip separates close friends.” And, Proverbs 17:9 says, “Whoever conceals an offense promotes love, but whoever gossips about it separates friends.”

Whether by gossip or by some other means, your sinful choices can separate you from friends and family members. Just think about it. How many times are families torn apart because someone chooses to be selfish? How many times are friends lost because of gossip? Maybe you have even experienced the loss of a relationship because you have committed sin.

## **Fear**

Living for sin often results in fear. You see, there are many consequences to sin. So, whenever you choose to live for yourself and act contrary to God's laws, those consequences are always lurking around every corner. For, not only are there eternal consequences for sinning, but there are often legal consequences, consequences for your relationships, and such things.

Many people who live for the physical treasures and pleasures of sin, then, live with the fear of getting caught and experiencing those consequences. "What will happen if my wife/husband finds out about my affair?" "What will happen if I get caught with these drugs?" "What if my employer finds out about the money I stole?"

Proverbs 28:1 says, "The wicked flee when no one is pursuing them, but the righteous are as bold as a lion." Sin puts people in situations where they must watch around every corner and listen for every slight sound. For, they do not want their wickedness to be exposed and face the consequences! Because of sin, they are a prisoner to their fears! And, because of this, they often try to cover up their sins so they are not exposed. So, they can never have a moment's rest where it does not feel that the sin will be exposed and the consequences will be experienced.

And, this is even true when the sin is not the kind of moral issues we have been discussing. Instead, even when it is a matter of having the wrong priorities in life, you must live in constant fear. For example, someone who gets into debt because of covetousness may fear, "What if I can't repay everything I've burrowed?" Proverbs 22:7 says, "The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is a slave to the lender." Or, someone who has put his/her focus on gaining earthly wealth may be afraid, "What if the stock market crashes and I lose everything?"

You see, sin does not provide comfort. Although Satan wants you to think that it does in the moment he tempts you, you must recognize that sin leads you into fear. Ultimately, you must fear God who is able to cast your soul into the eternal fires of Hell when your earthly life is over (Matthew 10:28)!

## **Self-imposed harm and conflict**

Living for sin often results in self-imposed harm and conflict. The foolish decisions made by sinning against God result in people "shooting themselves in the foot." That is, they bring suffering to themselves because they make decisions contrary to the will of God.

By refusing to listen to God's wisdom, you can hinder yourself in many ways. For instance, Proverbs 1 (as we considered earlier) says that people who live in foolish ways, "set an ambush to kill themselves; they attack their own lives" (verse 18). So, sometimes, you can cause your own life to feel like an "uphill battle" and that you can never "get ahead."

Think about the money trouble many people experience. Even in prosperous societies, many people have money troubles. But, many of them are self-inflicted. For, many people lack contentment, so they burrow money and become deeply indebted to have stuff before they can actually afford it. Then, they live in fear that they cannot repay it. They fear when they get laid off from work or lose their jobs. They fight with their spouse about money and money trouble often leads to divorces and broken families. They work longer hours and drift from their families in order to pay the bills for all these things. 1 Timothy 6:9-10 says, "But those who want to be rich fall into temptation, a trap, and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and by craving it, some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."

Think about the fights and conflicts many people engage in. Many of them are not conflicts over right and wrong. Instead, many of them are focused on selfish things. James 4:1-2 says, "What is the source of wars and fights among you? Don't they come from your passions that wage war within you? You desire and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and wage war. You do not have because you do not ask."

You see, sin has many consequences. While Satan only wants you to think that sin is pleasurable,

sin is actually much more trouble than it's worth! And, more than anything else, sin always causes the self-imposed harm of spiritual death (separation from God). Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." So, your decision to sin against God always causes you to forfeit the opportunity to have eternal life in Heaven and works to condemn your soul to an eternity of suffering in Hell (Revelation 21:8)!

## Jesus Gives Perfect Wisdom

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Whenever you choose to sin against God in any way, you are making a foolish decision. For, you are deciding that the sinful thing will result in greater experiences or outcomes than obeying God. However, this is never the case. Even when sin is the way to experience something more pleasurable in a particular moment, it is never the way to the best life you can live that also has the hope of eternal pleasures in Heaven! Thankfully, Jesus is the way to gaining the kind of perfect wisdom you need to always make the right decisions in life.

### ***There is a difference between worldly wisdom and Heavenly wisdom***

Before we talk about how Jesus is the way to Heavenly wisdom, you need to recognize that there are different kinds of wisdom: Heavenly wisdom and worldly wisdom. James identifies these two different sources of wisdom in James 3:13-18: "Who among you is wise and understanding? By his good conduct he should show that his works are done in the gentleness that comes from wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your heart, don't boast and deny the truth. Such wisdom does not come down from above but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there is disorder and every evil practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peace-loving, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without pretense. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who cultivate peace."

There is a type of "wisdom" that is earthly in origin (that does not come from above), one that is focused on your own physical desires, and one that has been exhibited by demons (who rebelled against God). This kind of "wisdom" teaches you to seek your own pleasures and desires. It teaches you to fight for what is yours. It teaches you to do whatever you need to do to get what you want. It teaches you to have things your own way. It teaches you to maintain your own independence and value all the things that the world values. And, even though it is possible to be religious while possessing worldly "wisdom," this religion will not please God because such a person is focused on self and the things of the world that are contrary to the ways of God.

In contrast, there is a type of true wisdom that originates with God and predates this universe. This kind of wisdom is focused on spiritual things rather than physical things. It recognizes the need to prepare for eternity – and acts accordingly. It pursues that which God says is pure. It teaches you to live peaceably with all people – even those who may try to harm you. It teaches you the path of self-denial and humility. It teaches you to submit yourself to God rather than pursue your own fleshly desires.

There is a very real conflict between the "wisdom" of this world and the wisdom that comes from God. You see, the ways of this world are contrary to the ways of God (1 John 2:15-17). So, each individual will have to make a determination as to what kind of wisdom he/she will pursue.

### ***Perfect wisdom is revealed through Jesus in the New Testament***

The true kind of wisdom that comes from God has been revealed through Jesus in the pages of the New Testament. Although there is additional wisdom from God to be found in the Old Testament (which has been given for our learning, such as in the book of Proverbs), it is through the new covenant revealed through Christ that God communicates with us today. Hebrews 1:1-2 says, "Long ago God spoke to the fathers by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son. God has appointed him heir of all things and made the universe through him."

God has spoken through Jesus. Jesus spoke while He lived on this earth. And, Jesus continued to speak by sending the Holy Spirit to the apostles and prophets, who wrote the words that we now have in the New Testament (see John 14:26; John 16:12-15; Ephesians 3:3-5). Now, when we read the words of the New Testament, we read the perfect words of God that instruct us in all the right ways we should be living to please God (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3).

Listen to 1 Corinthians 1:18-25. “For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but it is the power of God to us who are being saved. For it is written, ‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and I will set aside the intelligence of the intelligent.’ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the debater of this age? Hasn’t God made the world’s wisdom foolish? For since, in God’s wisdom, the world did not know God through wisdom, God was pleased to save those who believe through the foolishness of what is preached. For the Jews ask for signs and the Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. Yet to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God, because God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength.”

Many people would look at the words of wisdom God has revealed through Jesus in the New Testament and conclude that they are foolish. Many believe that living in the way the Bible describes is old-fashioned and outdated. Many believe that such a life of self-denial and selflessness can’t be any fun. Many believe living for themselves according to the world’s wisdom will result in a good life. Yet, in rejecting God’s wisdom, they live in foolishness, experience many earthly consequences of their sinful rejection of God, and will spend eternity in the fires of Hell – all the while rejecting the better life Jesus offered them and destroying their hope of eternal life in Heaven!

### ***Jesus can save you from foolishness***

Although you have rejected the wisdom that comes from God through Jesus Christ in the past (as

we have all sinned, Romans 3:23), Jesus Christ can save you from such foolishness! Now, this is *not* to say that Jesus will rescue you from all the physical consequences you have brought on yourself by your foolish decisions in the past. He certainly will *not* do this. In fact, you may continue to eat the fruit of your past foolishness from a physical perspective the rest of your life – even after you begin following Jesus Christ.

However, Jesus Christ can still save you from foolishness. Titus 3:3-7 says, “For we too were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved by various passions and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, detesting one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and his love for mankind appeared, he saved us – not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy – through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit. He poured out his Spirit on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior so that, having been justified by his grace, we may become heirs with the hope of eternal life.”

As we have seen in previous lessons, there is forgiveness of your past foolishness for rejecting God through Jesus Christ. So, you can be right with God and be given a fresh start from a spiritual perspective. The result of this will be eternal life with God in Heaven!

Then, Jesus Christ can save you from foolishness on a physical level because obeying Him from this day forward will keep you from any more foolish decisions that result in suffering, regret, broken relationships, and fear! For, although living for Jesus will not always be easy and you will suffer for the cause of Christ (i.e. persecution), you will not be the cause of your own pain. And, rather than fear, you will be filled with hope.

You see, you must recognize that living according to the perfect wisdom of God as revealed through Jesus in the pages of the New Testament will never lead you wrong! 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, “All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” God’s word will always only lead you in the way that He

says is right. And, you can boldly go wherever God's word leads you, knowing that He leads you to the better life – and to eternal life in Heaven!

## How Jesus Will Cause You To Live The Better Life

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As you follow the Heavenly wisdom God has revealed through Jesus Christ, you will live a better life than if you reject that wisdom. For, rather than experiencing the kinds of things we discussed earlier in this lesson, you can experience true peace in knowing that God is pleased with how you live and you will not be causing any harm for yourself (physically or spiritually). And, even though others may mistreat you and you will experience suffering that goes with living in this world, you will have the comfort of a home in Heaven waiting for you! So, consider how living for Jesus will cause you to live the better life in each of the following ways.

### ***Better thoughts***

Living for Jesus will cause you to have better thoughts. Jesus taught that what is in the heart (mind) works to defile a person. In Matthew 15:18-19, Jesus said, "But what comes out of the mouth comes from the heart, and this defiles a person. For from the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, sexual immoralities, thefts, false testimonies, slander." So, thinking on things that do not please Jesus results in sin – and the kinds of harmful things we discussed earlier. Yet, many people fill their minds with things that will result in harmful words, actions, and decisions.

In contrast, living for Jesus will cause you to think on things that are good and right. Philippians 4:8 says, "Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable – if there is any moral excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy – dwell on these things." Surely, these kinds of thoughts lead to actions that please God and that do not bring any self-inflicted harm, fear, regret, broken relationships, and

such things! Instead, they will lead you to take the kinds of actions, say the kinds of words, have the kinds of relationships, and make the kinds of decisions that agree with God's wisdom and you can be at peace with!

### ***Better words***

Living for Jesus will cause you to speak better words. Have you ever noticed how many people hurt themselves and others by the words they say? Many people seem to always be trying to dig themselves out of trouble because of their careless words. And, the Bible warns that the words you speak are capable of great destruction! For example, James 3:5 speaks of the tongue as being like a "small fire" that "sets ablaze a large forest." Well, when people reject God's wisdom concerning the words they say so that they gossip, slander, lie, deceive, curse, flatter, swear, and such things, they effectively set fires all around them. Not only does this damage those around them, but they must devote great time and energy to putting those fires out – if the fires even can be put out!

In contrast, living for Jesus will cause you to speak better words that are pleasing to God and will not produce anything but what is good (although people will not always accept your words as being good). For example, by following God's wisdom, you will watch every word that you say, knowing that God will judge you for every word you speak one Day. In Matthew 12:36, Jesus said, "I tell you that on the day of judgment people will have to account for every careless word they speak." Not only will you be committed to *not* speaking words that are evil, you will also be committed to speaking words that are good. Ephesians 4:29 says, "No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace to those who hear." Ephesians 4:31 continues, "Let all bitterness, anger and wrath, shouting and slander be removed from you, along with all malice." So, your words will help you live in a way that pleases God rather than being sparks that ignite fires all around you!

## **Better deeds**

Living for Jesus will cause you to do better deeds. Some people cannot seem to get out of their own way. While they think they do things that will help them live “the good life,” they actually do things that harm themselves. So, they steal. They fornicate. They consume alcohol. They skip attending the assemblies of a church. They do drugs. They smoke. They overeat. They are lazy and do nothing that is good. They don’t help people. They are unwilling to give of themselves. They act in anger. They are greedy. They put other things ahead of serving God (i.e. sports, family, education, work, etc.). They do so many different things that go against the will of God. Yet, they do not realize that every one of these actions, even though they may promise something that is good, can result in harmful physical consequences!

In contrast, living for Jesus will cause you to do better deeds in your life that will please God. For example, rather than engaging in the works of the flesh that go against God’s law and results in consequences (see Galatians 5:19-21), living for Jesus will cause your life to produce the “fruit of the Spirit” that is identified in Galatians 5:22-23. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. The law is not against such things.” Notice that the law “is not against such things.” Doing these things that do not break God’s law leads you to much better places than doing the things that do break God’s law. For, you will be kind, helpful to others, selfless, and obedient to God!

## **Better relationships**

Living for Jesus will cause you to have better relationships. Now, this is *not* to say that living for Jesus will not cost you relationships. For, Jesus spoke about how following Him will even divide families, since not all your family members will want to follow Christ (see Matthew 10:34-39). But, you will not be the one at fault! So, my point is that following Jesus will not cause *you* to destroy your own relationships. For, many people hurt their own relationships by cheating on their spouses, harming

the people they love, doing things that cause people not to trust them, etc.

In contrast, living for Jesus will cause you to have better relationships according to God’s instructions. Husbands and wives will fulfill their God-given roles and responsibilities. Fathers and mothers will do right by their children by bringing them up God’s way. Children will respect and honor their parents. People will treat each other with respect. You will follow Romans 12:17-18. “Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Give careful thought to do what is honorable in everyone’s eyes. If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.” Ultimately, by following God’s wisdom in all areas of your life, you will not be doing anything that will make you responsible for anything bad that happens in your relationships.

## **Better decisions**

Living for Jesus will cause you to make better decisions. Since life is full of consequential decisions, many people work to destroy their lives by not allowing God to control their choices through the wisdom He has revealed through Jesus Christ in the New Testament. For example, by making the decision of who to marry without using God’s wisdom, many people have committed to others who will not be good for them physically and/or spiritually – and who will harm their children in the same ways. By making the decision of what job to take without using God’s wisdom, many people have made it difficult for themselves to live for God and put their priorities in the right order. By making decisions about money without using God’s wisdom, many people have put themselves in terrible financial conditions that are difficult (if not impossible) to get out of. By making decisions about their health without using God’s wisdom, many people have done things (i.e. smoking, drinking, drugs, overeating, etc.) that have caused them to become enslaved to things that are not helpful for the body and/or ruined their health and mind in irreversible ways. By making decisions about their time without using God’s wisdom, many people have wasted much of their lives.

In contrast, living for Jesus will cause you to make decisions that are in keeping with God’s

wisdom. For instance, Colossians 3:17 says, “And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” So, you will be careful to make sure that everything you do in your life has God’s full approval – before you do it. And, you will seek wisdom from God through prayer, Bible study, and seeking wise guidance before you make any big decision. For example, James 1:5 says, “Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God – who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly – and it will be given to him.” In seeking God’s wisdom in every decision you make, you will help yourself avoid many unnecessary heartaches and troubles in the future! For, Proverbs 1:33 said that those who listen to God’s wisdom “will live securely and be undisturbed by the dread of danger.”

## Conclusion

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Jesus is the way to a better life! No, following Jesus does *not* mean that you will never suffer on this earth. In fact, some sufferings will be directly related to following Jesus. However, your life will be better by serving Jesus Christ because you can truly live a life of no regrets when you follow Jesus, avoid many self-imposed causes of suffering, know that God is pleased with you, and know that Heaven will be your eternal home!

## Study Questions

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How do many people suppose they will find “the good life” through earthly things? Why will that actually fail?

### 1. Some Physical Consequences Of Sin

How does sin often lead to shame and regret?

How does sin often lead to broken relationships?

How does sin often lead to fear?

How does sin often lead to self-imposed harm and conflict?

### 2. Jesus Gives Perfect Wisdom

What is the difference between worldly wisdom and Heavenly wisdom?

How is perfect wisdom revealed through Jesus in the New Testament?

How can Jesus save you from foolishness?

### 3. How Jesus Will Cause You To Live The Better Life

How will Jesus cause you to have better thoughts?

How will Jesus cause you to speak better words?

How will Jesus cause you to do better deeds?

How will Jesus cause you to have better relationships?

How will Jesus cause you to make better decisions?