SMALL GROUP

GUIDE



TO



Real Hope
CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY

Schedule:

- Week 1 (Job): September 21 September 27
- Week 2 (Psalms): September 28 October 4
- Week 3 (Proverbs): October 5 October 11
- Week 4 (Ecclesiastes): October 12 Oct 18
- Week 5 (Song of Songs): October 19 October 25
- Week 6 (Isaiah 1-39): October 26 November 1
- Week 7 (Isaiah 40-66): November 2 November 8

This is a rough schedule for groups to adjust dates as needed.

Small Group Bible Project Companion Guide¹

Note: Suggested Reading Guides attempt to provide you with an overall 'highlight real'. The readings should not take more than 20 minutes each day. Before you start, invite God to speak into your life through His word as you read. You are always free to read more and are not required to read the suggested reading to take part in group discussion. The video clips each week will give a good overview of the book to help everyone understand its part in God's story. To watch the videos at any point, go to YouTube and search Bible Project Judges (or whichever book you are on that week).

Week 1 – Job

Suggested Reading Guide:

Day 1 – Job 1-2 Day 2 – Job 7-8 Day 3 – Job 11-12

Day 4 – Job 32-33 Day 5 – Job 36-37 Day 6 – Job 38-39

Day 7 - Job 40-42

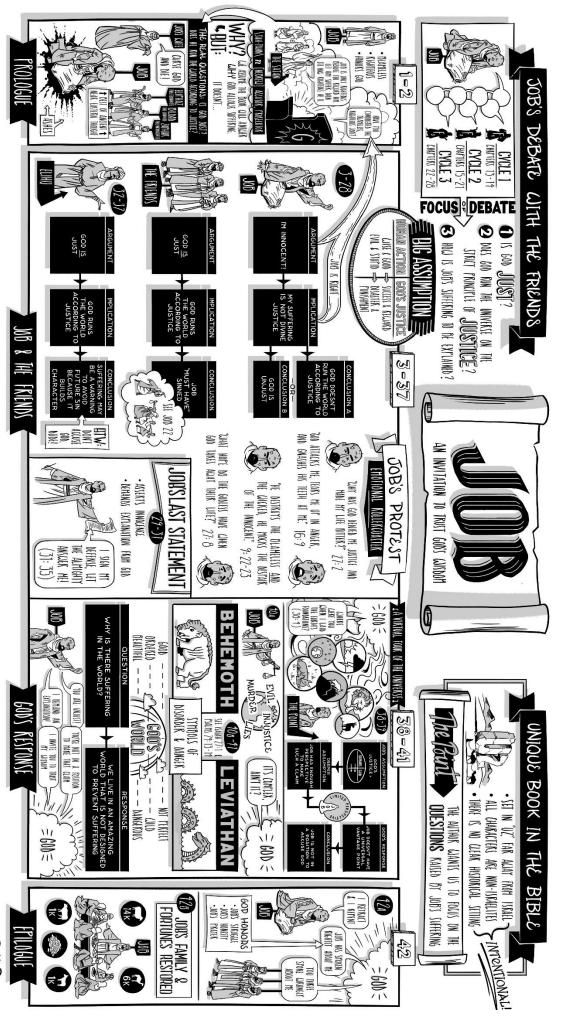
1. Did anything stick out to you, confuse you, or leave you with any question?

- 2. Read Job 1:6-12
 - a. What do you make of this conversation and God's response?
 - b. Are you disappointed that the ultimate reason for God allowing Job to suffer aren't revealed? Why or why not?
- 3. Read Job 2:11-13
 - a. What do you make of the reaction of Job's friends? What would you want them to do if you were in Job's position?
- 4. Read Job's response in 7:17-21
 - a. Have you ever felt this way? How did you find solace?
- 5. Read Job 8:1-7
 - a. What do you make of Bildad's answer to Job? How might be right, yet also wrong in his answer?
- 6. Read Job 11:5-6
 - a. Zophar's words are almost like a prayer which God ultimately answers... but not quite as he might have expected. God would do just as Zophar asks but then rebukes Zophar and his other friends (see Job 42:7-9). Have there been times when God has answered your prayer in a similar way?
- 7. Read Job 40:9-14
 - a. Try putting yourself in God's position how would you bring about your version of justice?
- 8. Read Job 42:1-6
 - a. How can we seek to respond like Job in hard times (knowing there is no guarantee of being blessed as Job was in this life)?

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9. What parallels and differences do you notice about Job's life and Jesus' life?

¹ *All summary artwork and some questions have been adapted and expended from Bible Project's resources.



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Week 2 - Psalms

Suggested Reading Guide:

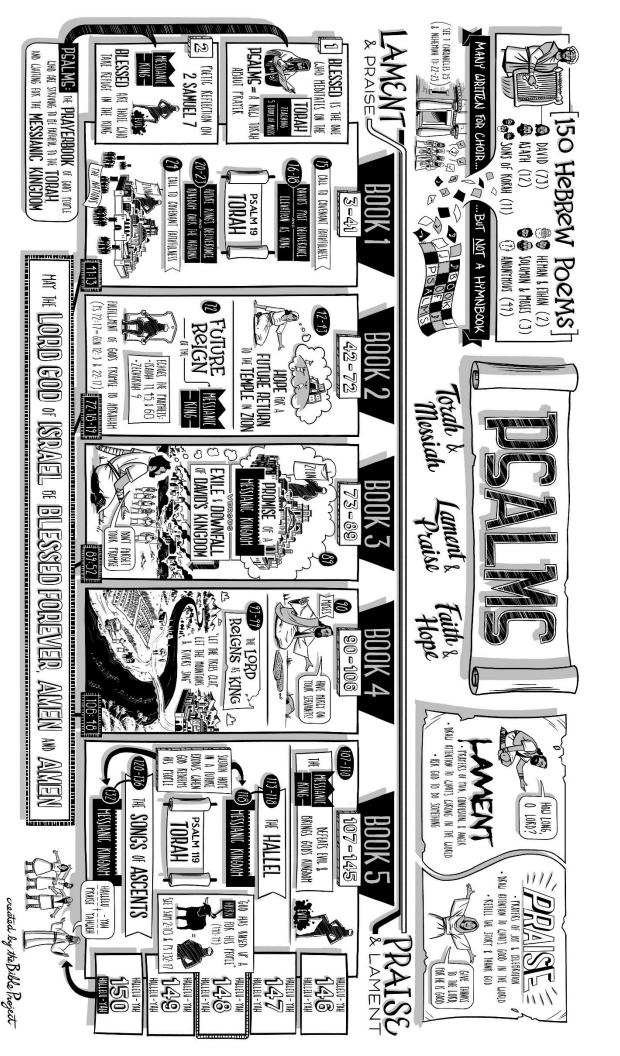
Day 1 – Psalm 1-2 Day 2 – Psalm 15 & 19 Day 3 – Psalm 23-24

Day 4 - Psalm 42 & 72 Day 5 - Psalm 89 & 90 Day 6 - Psalm 96, 121, 139

Day 7 - Psalm 148-150

1. Did anything stick out to you, confuse you, or leave you with any question?

- 2. The Bible Project video describes Psalms as being "The Prayerbook of God's people who are striving to be faithful to the Torah (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy) and waiting for the Messianic Kingdom". How might this understanding help us find value in the Psalms today?
- 3. Read Psalm 1:1-4 and Romans 8:3-4
 - a. Jesus brings deeper meaning and relevance to our reading of the Psalms. When we consider these verses together, what insight do they offer into living a healthy life?
- 4. Read Psalm 19
 - a. Pick out a verse that resonates with you and share why it does so.
- 5. Read Psalm 23
 - a. This is one of, if not the, most well-known Psalms. Why do you think it is so meaningful to so many people?
 - b. What is required for any of the comforting and encouraging statements to apply? (Hint, it is in the very first verse).
- 6. Read Psalm 89:46-52
 - a. A central theme to Psalms, as pointed out by the video, is the hope for and nature of Jesus' Kingdom. Ever since humanity first rejected God's rule, there has been a deep longing for it is return (as expressed in this Psalm). When was a time that these verses were all too real for you?
- 7. Read Psalm 148
 - a. Think of the many times where people became excited over something and who was
 excited. In those cases, think about how limited that group was (who was not exited or
 didn't/wouldn't really care?). IT's harder to grasp such a celebration called for by this Psalm
 what do you think might be the reason for it and what would invite you to join in?
- 8. Read Psalm 150
 - a. After a collection of Psalms that detail triumphs and failures, Joy and grief, God's goodness and feelings of neglect; how is this a fitting way to end the book of Psalms? How might the overall contents of Psalms (and how it ends) mirror creation and its end?



Week 3 - Proverbs

Suggested Reading Guide:

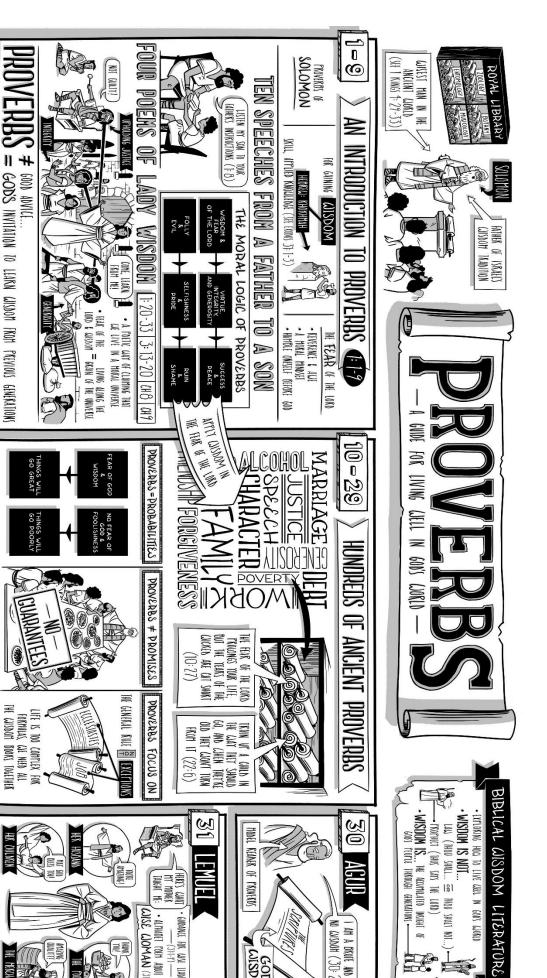
Day 1 – Proverbs 1-2 Day 2 – Proverbs 3-4 Day 3 – Proverbs 11-12

Day 4 - Proverbs 13 & 15 Day 5 - Proverbs 16 & 20 Day 6 - Proverbs 22 & 25

Day 7 - Proverbs 30 & 31

1. Did anything stick out to you, confuse you, or leave you with any question?

- 2. At the outset of the video, the narrator distinguishes Wisdom from knowledge based on the Hebrew word that is used. How will the understanding that 'Wisdom' is like 'skill' or 'applied knowledge' help in knowing what to do with it?
- 3. Read Proverbs 1:9
 - a. What does this verse tell us about where to start? How should we go about this starting point and what does that look like in your daily life?
- 4. Read Proverbs 3:13-20
 - a. Do you see these verses more headed or neglected by those around you? How so? Would you say that live by them?
- 5. Read Proverbs 9:7-9
 - a. What do these verses tell us about how we should behave if we want to be (and be seen as) wise?
- 6. The video notes that the proverbs in this book are better seen as probabilities and not always promises. This is true when the focus is on what happens in our lives here and now. How does that help us with how we live out these Proverbs and what to expect (especially from Proverbs 10:27 and 22:6).
- 7. Read Proverbs 30:1-4
 - a. This 'model reader of proverbs' as the video states, seems to come to terms with his inability to know and master even human wisdom. And yet in this sense of defeat, there seems to be an ongoing desire to know the One who created the world (and along with it, wisdom). What do these verses tell you about the true pursuit of wisdom?
- 8. In what area of life do you feel you are in need most of wisdom? Can you find any verses from Proverbs on that area? If so, discuss how that would look like if applied (especially when 'filtered' through Jesus' teachings)? If not, where are some healthy areas you can seek that wisdom?



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Week 4 - Ecclesiastes

Suggested Reading Guide:

Day 1 – Ecclesiastes 1-2 Day 2 – Ecclesiastes 3-4 Day 3 – Ecclesiastes 5-6

Day 4 – Ecclesiastes 7 Day 5 – Ecclesiastes 8 Day 6 – Ecclesiastes 9-10

Day 7 - Ecclesiastes 11-12

1. Did anything stick out to you, confuse you, or leave you with any question?

- 2. Read Ecclesiastes 1:2-4 & 12-14
 - a. What do you make of these verses (considering that 'meaningless' might be better read as 'vapor')? When have you (if ever) felt what these verses seem to express?
- 3. Read Ecclesiastes 2:13-16
 - a. Though last week the focus was on wisdom (Proverbs), these verses challenge the value of wisdom. How do you make sense of these verses and what then is the true value of wisdom?
- 4. Read Ecclesiastes 3:9-14
 - a. After writing about how there is a "time for everything" (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8) and starting off with the fleeting character of it all, why do you think the teacher labels it all beautiful and speaks of eternity? How does eternity contrast yet bring meaning to the 'vapors' of life?
- 5. Read Ecclesiastes 6:1-2
 - a. Is the teacher (or is the scripture) calling God or His actions evil? What does this tell us about the importance of not isolating verses apart from the bigger picture?
- 6. Read Ecclesiastes 12:9-12
 - a. How does this shape your perspective of this book and its many reminders of life's stark realities?
- 7. While wisdom itself is seen as but a vapour, what is the underlying wisdom of Ecclesiastes? In what way will you let it inform how you use and see the 'vapors' before you?



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Week 5 – Song of Songs

Suggested Reading Guide:

Day 1 – Song of Songs 1 Day 2 – Song of Songs 2 Day 3 – Song of Songs 3

Day 4 – Song of Songs 4 Day 5 – Song of Songs 5 Day 6 – Song of Songs 6

Day 7 - Song of Songs 7-8

1. Did anything stick out to you, confuse you, or leave you with any questions?

- 2. Read Song of Songs 1:1-4
 - a. What does the inclusion of these verses (and Song of Songs in general) tell you about passion and romance as part of God's creation?
- 3. Read Song of Songs 2:1-2
 - a. One of the themes of Song of Songs is the "Joy of Physical Attraction". Interestingly, calling oneself "a rose of Sharon" is like saying "I'm just a common wildflower (among many others)". These verses points to the idea, not that 'love is blind', but that someone who loves sees the beloved with a different perspective. Where might this be true of our relationship with God and His love for us?
- 4. Read Song of Songs 2:3-7
 - a. What wisdom can be gleaned from verse 7 (repeated in Song o Songs 3:5)? What might be the cost not heeding this wisdom?
- 5. Read Song of Songs 3:1-3
 - a. One of the themes mentioned in the video is the search for the other. How does this experience of love point us to a greater arc of God's desire and actions for His creation?
- 6. Read Song of Songs 8:6-7
 - a. How do these verses shape your understanding of the power of love?
 - b. Of note is that verse 6 mentions her being a seal over his heart and on his arm (from inside out). This would indicate her 'ownership' of him which challenged ancient ideas (that still prevail to this day) that she belonged to him. What are the implications of both parties being equally owned by the other in marriage? How would you expect that to be lived out?
- 7. Share any thoughts you may have about the videos ending comments on how this collection of love poetry gives us hope through our human love (however imperfect it may be), that "God's love will one day permeate and transform His beloved world".



Week 6 – Isaiah 1-39

Suggested Reading Guide:

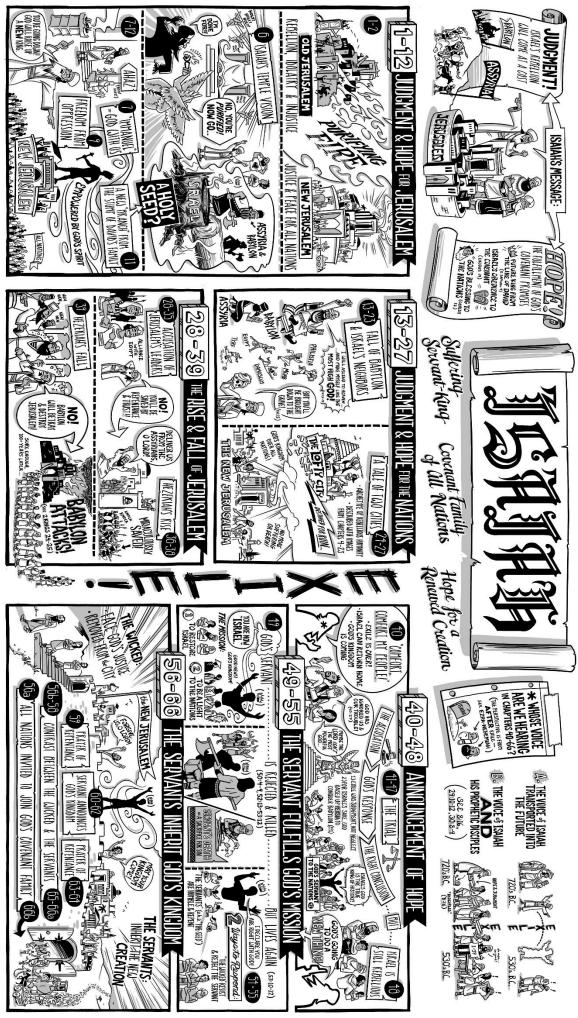
Day 1 – Isaiah 1-2 Day 2 – Isaiah 5-6 Day 3 – Isaiah 7 & 9

Day 4 – Isaiah 11 & 13 Day 5 – Isaiah 14 & 25 Day 6 – Isaiah 28 & 30

Day 7 - Isaiah 36-37

1. Did anything stick out to you, confuse you, or leave you with any questions?

- 2. Read Isaiah 1:10-17
 - a. What do these verses tell you about the people of Jerusalem in that day?
 - b. What do these verses tell you about God?
- 3. Read Isaiah 8:12-19
 - a. Today, one doesn't need to go far to hear or read of a conspiracy theory concerning politics, medical ideas or even specific connections between the scripture and our world today. What do these verses tell the people in Isaiah's day, and now us, about our response to what's going on around us?
- 4. Read Isaiah 9:1-7
 - a. What characteristic of this new kingdom do you most long for?
- 5. Read Isaiah 25:4-8
 - a. What characteristic of this new kingdom do you most long for to be realized today?
- 6. Read Isaiah 27:7-12
 - a. What does this tell you about the way God treats the people He called to be a blessing to the nations? What does it tell us about God's underlying desires for His creation?
- 7. After imminent destruction and capture is threatened to happen to King Hezekiah and Jerusalem, Hezekiah prays to God, and the Lord spares the city.
 - a. Read Isaiah 37:14-20 and discuss how Hezekiah's prayer might inform how you pray.
- 8. Read Isaiah 39:3-8
 - a. How does Hezekiah's attitude now become a warning to us and how we live?



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Week 7 - Isaiah 40-66

Suggested Reading Guide:

Day 1 – Isaiah 40-41 Day 2 – Isaiah 42 & 44 Day 3 – Isaiah 45 & 48

Day 4 – Isaiah 49-50 Day 5 – Isaiah 52-53 Day 6 – Isaiah 55 & 60

Day 7 - Isaiah 65-66

1. Did anything stick out to you, confuse you, or leave you with any questions?

- 2. Put yourself in the position of an exile. You have been living far away from home, longing to return.
 - a. Read Isaiah 40:1-5 and discuss how hearing these words might have made you feel, understanding that they are a call home and to also be with the One who made you.
- 3. Read Isaiah 43:16-21
 - a. A reoccurring instruction for the descendants of Abraham was/is "remember... (what God has done". Why do you think God changes His instruction in verse 18?
- 4. Read Isaiah 49:1-7
 - a. How do you see Jesus as a revelation of these verses?
- 5. Read Isaiah 52:13-53:12
 - a. Verse 13 says this servant will be "lifted up and highly exalted", yet the following verses would be more suited to describe a beaten slave than a beloved king. How does this (with special mention of Isaiah 53:11) go to show us what true exaltation (which means to be raised up typically viewed as putting something wonderful on display) is all about.
- 6. Read Isaiah 55:1-7
 - a. In this passage, God invites people to come to Him for free, abundant life instead of spending themselves on what doesn't satisfy. In your own life, what are some 'things that don't satisfy' that can distract you from accepting His invitation, and what helps you turn back toward Him?
- 7. Read Isaiah 60:8-11
 - a. Who might this be good news for and for whom would this be terrible news?
- 8. Take a moment to reflect on how the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9–13, taught by Jesus to His disciples, captures the themes and desires found in this section of Isaiah. Pray it out loud together.

9... 'Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
10 your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
11 Give us today our daily bread.
12 And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'

Matthew 6:9-13 NIV