

# VALUE ALL

Jesus values all people.

## PROVERBS 24:10-12; MARK 10:46-49

MEMORY VERSE: PROVERBS 24:10

### PREPARE TO LEAD THE GROUP TIME

- **READ** Proverbs 24 and Mark 10, First Thoughts (p. 74), and Understand the Context (pp. 74-75). Commit to memory this week's focal verse: Proverbs 24:10.
- **STUDY** Proverbs 24:10-12 and Mark 10:46-49, using Explore the Text (pp. 75-79). As you study, look for the ways Solomon and Jesus showed they valued people.
- **PLAN** the group time using the ideas under Lead Group Bible Study (pp. 80-81) and More Ideas (p. 82), in *QuickSource*, and online at [Blog.LifeWay.com/ExploreTheBible](http://Blog.LifeWay.com/ExploreTheBible). Recruit a volunteer from the group, possibly a potential apprentice leader, to review the ideas with you and offer suggestions.
- **GROW** from expert insights on weekly studies through the Ministry Grid ([MinistryGrid.com/Web/ExploreTheBible](http://MinistryGrid.com/Web/ExploreTheBible)).
- **GATHER** the following items: ☐ Personal Study Guides; ☐ Posterboard and markers; ☐ Newspapers or news magazines with headlines or stories that give evidence that people are not valued (for More Ideas on p. 82); ☐ Copies of **PACK ITEM 5** (*Bookmark: Memory Verses*) as needed.



# FIRST THOUGHTS

## KEY DOCTRINE

### *Social Justice*

We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick.

During the war-torn days of World War II, Winston Churchill cited a quote allegedly coming from the Irish statesman Edmund Burke. Churchill, following Burke, said, “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” Though Burke had died in 1797, this quote seemed to express a powerful maxim particularly suitable for the situation of embattled Europe in the early years of Nazi aggression. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. expressed a similar sentiment. When speaking of the near silence of the noble people in America during the often dangerous struggles of the civil rights movement, King indicated the greatest tragedy of that time would be “the appalling silence of the good people.”

These references have in common the basic observation that evil people triumph through the silence or inactivity of good people in not opposing them. This silence and inactivity in turn begs the questions: Why do good people not intervene in wrongful situations in order to establish what is right? Why is evil allowed to proceed and to intensify due to the silence and lack of opposition from good people?

(In PSG, p. 72) **What factors could contribute to good people remaining silent, indifferent, and inactive in the face of social, military, or political upheaval?**

## BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATOR

For additional context, read “Jesus and the Crowd,” available digitally in *Biblical Illustrator for Explore the Bible* at [LifeWay.com/BiblicalIllustrator](http://LifeWay.com/BiblicalIllustrator).

In our world, we have many people or groups of people who face great challenges. Many live in homelessness, while others face extreme poverty. Some people arrive at retirement only to find they have little money or health to enjoy in their so-called “golden years.” Abortion on demand in the United States has claimed the lives of 58 million unborn children. God values all these people.

Today’s session challenges us to be advocates on behalf of others who face great challenges. Believers must promote social justice, knowing that all people reflect God’s image and that God values every person regardless of any physical limitation. As you study this session, prayerfully consider how you, your Bible study group, or church might take action in one of these vital areas.

# UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

## PROVERBS 24; MARK 10

Proverbs 24 addresses various topics related to life. The text warns its readers not to envy evil men, whose plans are only for violence and trouble (Prov. 24:1-2). The chapter also extols wisdom for various aspects

of life (vv. 3-7). A good house is built by wisdom (v. 3), and a wise warrior or counselor is to be desired (vv. 5-6). On the other hand, fools and evildoers lack wisdom (vv. 7-9). Verses 10-12 challenge people to speak up to rescue people wrongly condemned to death. God will hold us responsible for our lack of response when we have it within our power to help (v. 12).

Wisdom is the secret to life, for it can guide us into the future (v. 14). The wicked will never ultimately prevail over the righteous (vv. 15-16), but the righteous should not gloat over their enemies' defeat (vv. 17-18). God will judge evildoers when He chooses (vv. 19-20). People also should not show partiality in judgment (vv. 23-25); rather, they should reflect honesty in all their dealings (v. 26). Bearing false witness should have no place in our lives (vv. 28-29). The chapter closes with an account about a slacker, whose field came to ruin because of his idleness (vv. 30-34). He chose to live a life of laziness; in the end, he reaped what he sowed.

Mark 10 records that Jesus traveled to Judea, where crowds came to hear Him (Mark 10:1). The Pharisees tried to trap Jesus with a question about divorce, but Jesus affirmed God's design for lifelong marriage (vv. 2-12). Jesus also affirmed the value of children by taking them in His arms and blessing them (vv. 13-16). He challenged a rich young ruler to give all he had to the poor and to come follow Him—a price the young man was unwilling to pay (vv. 17-22). Jesus warned it would be hard for rich people to inherit the kingdom of God (vv. 23-27). He assured His disciples God would bless their faithfulness (vv. 28-31), and He again predicted His death (vv. 32-34). James and John asked Jesus if they might sit at His right and left hand in His coming kingdom (vv. 35-41). Jesus responded by clarifying the true nature of leadership (vv. 42-45). True leaders serve those they lead.

As Jesus and His disciples journeyed through Jericho, He met Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, who implored Jesus to have mercy on him (vv. 46-48). The crowd rebuked him, but Jesus called to him and gave him sight (vv. 49-52).

## BIBLE SKILL

*Use other Scripture to help understand a Bible passage.*

Review and compare these stories with Mark 10:46-49; Matthew 9:10-13; Mark 5:24-34; Luke 19:1-10; John 8:3-11. Look for similarities and differences. Seek to create a summary statement that synthesizes the similarities found in these passages. What abiding principles can be seen in all five events?

## EXPLORE THE TEXT

### A CALL TO PROTECT LIFE (PROV. 24:11)

#### VERSE 11

This verse warns against taking no action when it is within our power to do so. Solomon issued a stern command to protect life. The command **rescue** also can mean “deliver.” The expression **those being taken off to death** describes people in danger of death; the context suggests it includes those wrongly condemned. Oppression of the weak often occurred in ancient Israel during times of bad leadership (see Amos 2:6-8). The powerful were able to oppress those who were weaker. Corrupt leaders took away the rights of those who were innocent (see Isa. 5:23). Orphans and widows often suffered because no one advocated for them (see Isa. 1:17,23).

## PROVERBS 24:11

<sup>11</sup> Rescue those being taken off to death, and save those stumbling toward slaughter.

Since January 1973, abortion on demand has been legal in the United States. Over 58 million unborn children have lost their lives. When one considers that most of these would have married and had their own children, the true impact becomes staggering. The National Right to Life Committee ([www.nrlc.org](http://www.nrlc.org)) is one organization that has worked to curtail abortion on demand. Perhaps your church will want to consider how it may advocate for the unborn as well.

The word translated **stumbling** can denote either a literal or figurative stumbling. God will never allow us to stumble spiritually when we are following Him, but when we stray from the path He outlines in His Word, we often will. The word **slaughter** is a strong word that often denotes the taking of human life (Isa. 30:25; Ezek. 26:15). Here, the verse seems to describe circumstances where people do not realize they are heading for ruin and it is within our power to rescue them. Naturally, the concept can apply anytime we see someone in mortal danger and take steps to intervene. However, Solomon may also be describing those whose lives are leading to spiritual ruin if they do not change their course. Believers should note the important application here. People without Jesus face an eternity of punishment; when we share the gospel with them, we provide them a means of escape. Believers may also need to take loving, corrective action to help other believers who are caught in sin (Gal. 6:1). We need the support of other followers of Christ as we live our lives.

(In PSG, p. 75) **How would you summarize Solomon's command? How does keeping this command strengthen a society?**

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## A WARNING AGAINST INACTION (PROV. 24:10,12)

### VERSE 10

The Hebrew word translated **do nothing** occurs only two other times in the Old Testament. In Proverbs 18:9 it describes a lazy person. The other occurrence of the term is in Joshua 18:3. There, Joshua asked the Israelites how long they planned to “delay going out to take possession of the land” God had given them. Israel had achieved effective control of the promised land, but many pockets of people remained. God’s people had not yet driven them out. They had become slack in their duties, and the Book of Judges describes the resulting spiritual decline God’s people experienced. In the present context, the Hebrew word describes someone who chooses to do little or nothing in a difficult time.

The word translated **difficult** refers to a pressing in or narrowness. It is used figuratively here of times or circumstances that press in on someone. Apart from this context, the expression *difficult time* could refer to any particular circumstance of distress. The prophet Obadiah used it to describe God’s people’s suffering when Jerusalem fell to invaders (Obad. 12, “day of distress”). However, it is clear from the context that Solomon was considering an action that led to injustice or even death for others.

### PROVERBS 24:10

<sup>10</sup> If you do nothing in a difficult time, your strength is limited.



In the second part of the verse, Solomon described the result of inaction—***your strength is limited***. The word translated *limited* is related to the word *difficult* in the first part of the verse. Strength here likely does not denote merely physical strength, but rather the strength and courage to make difficult decisions and to stand for the right thing even when doing so is unpopular. Indeed, we might paraphrase verse 10 as follows: “If you fail to take action on behalf of others when circumstances are pressing in on them, you show yourself truly weak.”

God expects us to be advocates on behalf of others who face difficult challenges. Taking action for social justice is a natural product of following Jesus, since people are made in God’s image (Gen. 1:26; Jas. 3:9). Jesus challenged us to provide assistance to our neighbors, whomever they are (Luke 10:29-37). We need to ask God to help us take a stand for what is right when we face difficult circumstances.

#### VERSE 12

Solomon issued a warning in verse 10 against failing to act in difficult times. In verse 12, he addressed the excuses of ignorance and pious avoidance.

Solomon said some in society might object, saying ***we didn’t know about this***. Those who offered such an excuse had better be sure they truly acted from ignorance, since the God ***who weighs hearts*** would ***consider*** and judge the true situation. They shouldn’t dare falsely claim ignorance, since God knew their hearts. The word translated *consider* comes from a word related to the word “between.” God is able to discern between matters of right and wrong, justice and injustice. He knows our thoughts and can discern our true motives. The verse then asked another question—***won’t He who protects your life know?*** The question again sounds a sober warning. God would discern every failure to render help to those in need.

The Lord watches and guards our lives. We count on His protection and His provision daily. We ask Him to intervene for us when we face difficult times, and we pray for deliverance from our enemies. Many times God uses human instruments to accomplish His purposes. Perhaps He wants to use us to intervene in the lives of others whose lives are threatened. Indeed, if our own lives are valuable enough that we ask God’s protection over them, why would we not ask God’s protection over the lives of others? Further, why would we not take action to defend the lives of others when we are able to do so?

Someone has said that “the Lord values life from the womb to the tomb.” The Lord, speaking through the prophet Isaiah, affirmed this truth when He said, “Listen to Me, house of Jacob ... who have been sustained from the womb ... I will be the same until your old age, and I will bear you up when you turn gray” (Isa. 46:3-4). The prophet was stressing that all lives matter to God. Human life is precious, whether it is the life of an unborn child, the life of someone with physical limitations, or the lives of the elderly. Valuing the sanctity of life naturally means working to protect the unborn, but it also means committing ourselves to protecting people at every stage of life. Every life matters to God.

#### PROVERBS 24:12

<sup>12</sup> If you say, “But we didn’t know about this,” won’t He who weighs hearts consider it? Won’t He who protects your life know? Won’t He repay a person according to his work?

Verse 12 also asserts that God will **repay a person according to his work**. The verse is not speaking against God's grace, because believers know that God lavishes His grace upon us and gives us more than we ever deserve (1 John 3:1). However, the Bible also asserts that God is a God of justice who will render to people their due (Rom. 2:5-6). The prophets often announced God's displeasure at Israel's mistreatment of orphans and widows (Isa. 1:23). Every society has people who have no one to advocate for them. God calls us to do so. James, the half-brother of Jesus, challenged his readers to take action on behalf of others when it lay within their power to do so. If they did not, their faith was worthless (Jas. 2:15-17).

**How can inaction be as serious as taking the wrong action? How can God use His people today as His instruments for justice in society?**

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### AN EXAMPLE SET (MARK 10:46-49)

The Gospel writers often highlighted how Jesus spent time with members of society that others had forgotten or who were considered less important. Jesus affirmed the value of children (Matt. 18:1-6), as well as people whom others labeled "sinners" (Matt. 9:11-13). He would now provide His disciples and onlookers another such example as He continued His journey toward Jerusalem.

#### VERSE 46

Jesus and His disciples arrived at Jericho, a city approximately 17 miles northeast of Jerusalem. Jericho was a town in the Jordan Valley near where travelers began their ascent to Jerusalem. It likely was on the same visit to Jericho that Jesus encountered Zacchaeus, a tax collector. Jesus' kindness to him led to his salvation (Luke 19:1-10).

Mark provided no details as to Jesus' visit but focused on what was happening as Jesus **was leaving Jericho with His disciples and a large crowd**. The Lord was on His way to Jerusalem. A large number of people accompanied Him, wanting to hear His teaching and see what He would do. A man called **Bartimaeus** encountered Jesus. The name literally means **son of Timaeus**, so "Bartimaeus" might have been a name designation for this unknown person. Bartimaeus was **a blind beggar**. In Jesus' day, many people incorrectly viewed infirmities as judgments from God (see John 9:1-2). Perhaps many thought Bartimaeus had sinned, and that was why he was forced to be sitting by the road begging for food or money from people who passed by.

#### VERSE 47

Bartimaeus **heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene** who was coming and who was the reason for the commotion. Bartimaeus then added to the

### MARK 10:46

<sup>46</sup> They came to Jericho. And as He was leaving Jericho with His disciples and a large crowd, Bartimaeus (the son of Timaeus), a blind beggar, was sitting by the road.

### MARK 10:47

<sup>47</sup> When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out, "Son of David, Jesus, have mercy on me!"

noise when **he began to cry out** to get Jesus' attention. He first addressed the Lord as **Son of David**, a title others also had used of Jesus (Matt. 15:22; 21:9). Bartimaeus's request was impassioned and to the point: **have mercy on me!** By this time in Jesus' ministry, news of His healing power had spread throughout the country, so Bartimaeus called out for mercy and healing.

#### VERSE 48

Many people admonished Bartimaeus to **keep quiet**. Perhaps they believed he was blind because of his sin and did not deserve any kindness Jesus might bring. They viewed him more as an interruption than as a person of value. Bartimaeus, however, responded by **crying out all the more**. The more the crowd tried to discourage him, the more vocal he became, and he reiterated his words: **Have mercy on me, Son of David!** Bartimaeus recognized that Jesus represented his only hope to see, so he did all he could to get Jesus' attention.

#### VERSE 49

**Jesus stopped** when He heard Bartimaeus calling out. Above all the noise the large crowd made that day, Jesus heard the voice of one who needed Him. He was always ready to help a person in need, and His actions provide an example for believers today. Jesus heard Bartimaeus and commanded those in the crowd to **"Call him."**

The people in the crowd now called to the blind man. They told him to **have courage** and to **get up** because Jesus was calling him to come. Jesus directed the people to summon Bartimaeus, then He gave the blind man His full attention. He treated him as a valuable human being, not as a problem. Verses 50-52 highlight how Bartimaeus received his sight and became a follower of Jesus.

Do you know someone who needs a friend or an advocate? Does your circle of influence include people society has forgotten? How can you make a difference? While as believers our highest priority should be to know Christ deeply and to make Him known (Phil. 3:10; Matt. 28:18-20), God's standards call us to make this world a better place as well.

**What do you think people in the crowd thought when Jesus stopped to give Bartimaeus His undivided attention? What are some other ways Jesus modeled His care for other people?**

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#### MARK 10:48

<sup>48</sup> Many people told him to keep quiet, but he was crying out all the more, "Have mercy on me, Son of David!"

#### MARK 10:49

<sup>49</sup> Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." So they called the blind man and said to him, "Have courage! Get up; He's calling for you."

# LEAD GROUP BIBLE STUDY

## FOCUS ATTENTION (FIRST THOUGHTS)

**GUIDE:** Write the two quotes found in First Thoughts (PSG, p. 72) on posterboard: “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing” and “The appalling silence of the good people.” Direct the group to the two paragraphs under First Thoughts to find the speakers and context for these quotes.

**DISCUSS:** *What factors could contribute to good people remaining silent, indifferent, and inactive in the face of social, military, or political upheaval?* (PSG, p. 72)

**INTRODUCE:** Summarize the information in Understand the Context (pp. 74-75; PSG, pp. 73-74) to help the group know how we find evidence throughout both the Old and New Testaments of the value placed on all human life.

**TRANSITION:** *As we set aside this week to reflect on the value of human life, we’ll examine passages in the Old and New Testament. First, let’s go to Proverbs 24:11, where we’ll explore Solomon’s challenge to his people.*

## EXPLORE THE TEXT

**READ:** Invite a volunteer to read aloud Proverbs 24:11. Encourage the group to listen for King Solomon’s challenge to his readers.

**SUMMARIZE:** Briefly summarize the information under Verse 11 (PSG, pp. 74-75), stressing that Solomon was giving a call to action—a command—to protect people who were in danger of being put to death. Note that Solomon’s instruction referred to innocent people being taken away to death; it was not a call to rescue the guilty.

**DIRECT:** Instruct the group to silently read the last paragraph under Verse 11 (PSG, pp. 75). Point out that the story of the good Samaritan is an excellent example of Solomon’s command in verse 11 put into practical action.

**DISCUSS:** Ask: *How would you summarize Solomon’s command? How does keeping this command strengthen a society?* (PSG, p. 75). Be sure to mention those in our society who are most vulnerable and in need of our protection, including unborn children and the elderly.

**TRANSITION:** *Solomon’s challenge calls us to speak and act on behalf of all people who might be facing wrongful death. Now let’s look at verses 10 and 12, where Solomon warns against inaction.*

**READ:** Read aloud Proverbs 24:10,12, encouraging the group to listen for King Solomon’s warning to his readers.

**DIRECT:** Point the group to the information under Verses 10,12 (PSG, pp. 76-77) and call for three volunteers to read the first three paragraphs to help the group better understand how Solomon viewed the people’s inaction.

**DISCUSS:** *What excuses might a person use to justify ignoring people in dire need or in peril?* (PSG, p. 77)



**EMPHASIZE:** Note that Proverbs 24:10 is today's memory verse. Distribute copies of **Pack Item 5** (*Bookmark: Memory Verses*) to those who need one. Lead the group to discuss how Proverbs 24:10 relates to the session's Key Doctrine (Social Justice) on page 77 of the PSG. Ask: *What is social justice? Why should social justice matter to believers?*

**TRANSITION:** *Solomon stressed that inaction was not an option when the people were being harmed or killed. Now let's go to the New Testament to look at the example Jesus set for us when He was faced with human suffering.*

**READ:** Invite a volunteer to read aloud Mark 10:46-49. Encourage the group to listen for why Jesus stopped as He was leaving Jericho.

**STUDY:** Create three teams. Assign one team verse 46, one team verses 47-48, and one team verse 49. Direct each team to search the information on their verse(s) in the PSG (pp. 77-79). Call on each team to name any details they found, and then focus on Jesus' response to Bartimaeus.

**DISCUSS:** *Why do you think the people told the blind man to keep quiet? What are ways we can give attention to those in need around us today?* Note that while the crowd tried to divert attention away from Bartimaeus, Jesus was drawn to him.

**DISCUSS:** *Why is it important for Christians to set the example in regard to the valuing of human beings?* (PSG, p. 79)

**SHARE:** *While the crowd saw Bartimaeus as a noisy nuisance, Jesus saw him as a person with a need that He could meet. We need to be watchful and ready to see people in the same way that Jesus sees them.*

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## SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE (IN MY CONTEXT)

**DISCUSS:** *In what ways can believers be better champions or advocates for all life—from the womb to the tomb?*

**DIRECT:** Lead the group to discuss their responses to the second question set under In My Context (PSG, p. 80): *List excuses you have used in the past for ignoring the needs of others, noting how each excuse falls short. Confess your past excuses to God, committing to take action in the future.* Challenge them to reflect on any excuses they might have used in the past and to commit to leaving those behind and move toward action.

**DO:** As time allows, direct attention to the first question set under In My Context (PSG, p. 80): *Reflect on how Christians are readily equipped to advocate for those facing unjust death. What actions are you taking to rescue and protect innocent people facing death?* Encourage them to think of steps they can take to protect the innocent starting today.

**PRAY:** Thank God for reminding the group that human life is to be valued. Ask God to give the group a heart like Jesus' heart—valuing all people and speaking up for all those who need our care and protection.



## PRACTICE

- Follow up with answers to any questions the group had during this week's study.
- Send an email or text message encouraging the group to be present when you begin the study of the Book of Judges next week.
- Consider your own heart and life: are there ways you could be more involved as a champion for those who need rescuing?

## MORE IDEAS

### FOCUS ATTENTION (FIRST THOUGHTS)

To supplement the introduction, provide copies of newspapers or news magazines (or encourage anyone who has a smartphone to search their favorite news site). Instruct the group to search for headlines or stories that give evidence that some people are not valued in today's society.

### EXPLORE THE TEXT

- To supplement Proverbs 24:11, review the Scriptures listed under Verse 11 (PSG, p. 75): Deuteronomy 24:17; 24:21; Psalm 82:3; Proverbs 31:8-9; Isaiah 1:17. Identify people in your community who have these needs and work together to identify ways you can meet those needs. Emphasize the Key Doctrine (Social Justice) on page 77 of the PSG.
- To supplement Proverbs 24:10,12, note that the New Testament also provides instruction on how to take action when we see a need. Call for a volunteer to read James 2:14-17; 4:17. Ask: *What excuses do we give for not getting involved? In light of James's words, how valid are the excuses we might offer?*
- To supplement Mark 10:46-49, lead the group to complete the Bible Skill activity (PSG, p. 79): *Review and compare these stories with Mark 10:46-49: Matthew 9:10-13; Mark 5:24-34; Luke 19:1-10; John 8:3-11. Look for similarities and differences. Seek to create a summary statement that synthesizes the similarities found in these passages. What abiding principles can be seen in all five events?*

### SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE (IN MY CONTEXT)

Direct attention to the third question set (PSG, p. 80): *Discuss as a group what you can do to protect the innocent. Identify individuals or groups who need your group to stand with and for them. What will your group do in the next week to address these needs?* (In advance, contact the church office to see if the church is already active in supporting ministries or non-profits that advocate to protect the innocent. Provide this information to the group.)

### SUGGESTED MUSIC IDEA

Review the words to "We Are Called to Be God's People," by Thomas A. Jackson, encouraging the group to consider how they can live out their calling to be God's people, as we prepare for today's study. Sing the hymn as a group.