

Audio Transcription:

40 Days, Week 1

HS= Hannah Schindler

KS= Kendra Schwarz

WB= Wendy Blight

Music

HS: Hi, and welcome friends. Today, if you are studying with us live, then you know First 5 and Online Bible Studies are doing this study together. And if you are doing this at a later date, whether it's in an archived OBS study or in the First 5 app, we're so excited you are here. Each weekend, we have an audio teaching to connect the chapters we studied the past week. This is where we will be able to dig deeper into the Scripture and content we studied together. So we just finished week one of our study, *The Answers to Your Deepest Longings: 40 Days Through the Bible*. My name is Hannah Schindler, and I get to serve on the First 5 Team here at Proverbs 31 Ministries. Today we have joining us not one, but two special guests. I have with us Online Bible Studies' manager Kendra Schwarz, who is my co-host for today.

KS: Oh, Hannah, I am just so excited to be with you.

HS: Ah, me too. I'm so happy you're here.

KS: I know! I know! And then I have the opportunity to introduce our second guest today, which is Wendy Blight. A lot of you all may know her because she has done First 5 teachings before. She actually helped write the *40 Days Study Guide* that you may have, and she serves on the Online Bible Studies team as our biblical content specialist. And something I absolutely love about Wendy is she helps me fall more in love with God's Word. For example, one time, Wendy was teaching about the Tabernacle and, to be honest, I was not very excited about the Tabernacle teaching.

[all laughing]

KS: After she got done teaching about it I had tears in my eyes because she connected it so beautifully to show Jesus — how Jesus is author of the Tabernacle and just everything about it. So, Wendy, you sure have a gift, and I'm excited for ladies and men just to hear from you today.

WB: Thank you so much, Kendra! And that means a lot 'cause I think a lot of people think that when I say I'm gonna teach on the Tabernacle. [all laughing] But I'm excited to

be here with you and Kendra, and I'm really excited to be reunited with all my First 5 friends.

HS: Yes. I know! It's so exciting to have you here, Wendy. And, Kendra — if you don't know her, guys, you need to go follow her on Instagram because she is just a joy — and not someone who Wendy and I call coworkers — but she is also a very dear and wonderful friend.

WB: Mm-hmm.

HS: And so, ladies, thank you both for being here today. Kendra, let me just ask you, what are you most excited about as we begin this journey through the *40 Days* study of the Bible?

KS: Great question Hannah! There's a lot that I'm excited about, but when I was thinking through this question, it goes right back to what I said about Wendy, which was the connections that she helped me see in the Tabernacle. So I'm excited to see more connections and just to see how the thread of Jesus is all throughout each [week] of study.

HS: Yeah, no. That's so good! I know it's been ... This has been one of my favorite things that we've ever done at Proverbs, and, yes, I'm biased because I got to be a part of this. It's still ... It's so amazing. Let me read our major moments, you guys, and then we'll have Wendy jump in.

- Genesis 1 and 2: God in his grace created a good world.
- Genesis 3: Adam and Eve had longings that they tried to fulfill outside of God's design.
- Genesis 6: God flooded the world, but Noah and his family found favor with God.
- Genesis 11: Mankind tried to glorify themselves with a tower, but God dispersed them throughout the earth.
- Genesis 15: God promised Abraham would father many nations. He believed and obeyed.

HS: Okay. Wendy, go ahead and start your teaching, ma'am.

WB: Thank you, Hannah. You can ... you know ... We are so blessed to be here together and spend the next 40 days just studying God's Word. I want us to anticipate the new thing God wants to do in our lives over the next eight weeks. Will you join us today in inviting God to be at work in our hearts so that this is not just going to be another season of Bible study? We prayed you here and are deeply thankful for each one of you. We know there are many places you could choose to study God's Word, and you chose to join us.

WB: Now before we begin, I want to open with a question. At the end of your life, how do you want to be remembered? What words would you like people to use to describe you? Quite often in Scripture, God chose very specific words to describe His children. And today, we're going to spend time with Noah and begin with the three words God used to describe him — three complimentary, encouraging, but also very life-changing words. And we find them in Genesis 6:9 where God says "... *Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God.*" So the words are righteous, blameless and walked with God. These words mean so much more when we read Genesis [6:5-8], realizing the culture in which Noah lived. Kendra, would you mind reading that for us.

KS: Yes, of course. It says, "*The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the Lord said, 'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.'* But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord" (Genesis 6:5-8).

WB: Thanks, Kendra. This passage is telling. It contrasts the way Noah lived to the way those around him were living. So with this context in mind, let's study each of the words God chose to describe Noah.

WB: The first word is "righteous." Some translations will say "just." What was God telling us about Noah? He's not telling us Noah was without sin; he was telling us Noah was different. The word "righteous," as used here, means just in character and conduct before God. Noah lived as a faithful follower of God — a righteous life relative to his generation. In the New Testament, Peter called Noah "*a preacher of righteousness*" in 2 Peter 2:5, implying that Noah had set himself apart among the people of his day. He followed the laws of God and was probably a man of his word.

WB: The next word God used to describe Noah is "blameless." Another translation from the New King James uses the word "perfect." This is also the word God used to describe Job in Job 1. The Hebrew word "blameless," as used here, is translated "sound, innocent, having integrity." Now, we know Noah wasn't absolutely perfect. First, only God is, but secondly he had issues, like we all do, and they come to light in a few chapters. So blameless does not imply Noah was perfect. It's telling us Noah stood out as a man of integrity and character among his generation. He was an unusually humble and dependable person who did as God instructed despite what was going on around him and the pressures that might have been at him.

WB: Finally, God described Noah as one who "walked" with God. What does that mean that Noah walked with God? To get a bit of insight, let's go back to Genesis 5:6-32 for

just a minute. Here we find the account of Adam's line to the time of Noah. It's the genealogy between the two. Let's listen carefully to the words the author used to define each man's life:

- Adam lived and died.
- Seth lived and died.
- Enosh lived and died.
- Kenan lived and died.
- Mahalalel lived and died.
- Jared lived and died.
- Enoch (Noah's great-grandfather) lived, walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

WB: Did you hear the difference? God didn't just say Enoch lived and died. Noah's great grandfather walked with God. Let's go on.

- Methuselah (Hannah's favorite name in the Bible) —

HS: [laughing]

WB: — (Noah's grandfather) lived and died.

- Lamech (Noah's father) lived and died.

WB: And now we know from what we just read when we started, Noah, like Enoch his great-grandfather, walked with God. So we can see from the genealogy here that this description of walking with God was rare. God distinguished the way Enoch and Noah lived their lives, and when we see a distinction like this, we really have to pay attention. God saw something different in the way those men lived their lives. In Noah's, He saw a different heart, a different conduct and the paths he chose to take aligned with God's heart and God's ways. What made Noah's life so different is he didn't just live it; he walked it out with God.

WB: Think about when you walk with a friend. What does that look like? When I walk with my friend, Lisa, we use that time to really talk. We share what's on our hearts. She truly listens. She asks questions. She invites deeper conversation. We share what burdens our hearts and what brings us joy. It's the most precious one-on-one time because there aren't interruptions — no family, no cell phones, no distractions. It's just the best quality time.

WB: And so this passage invites me to ask, "What does my walk with God look like?" When I walk with Him, does it feel like I'm walking with a friend? Or does it feel like I'm walking with a judge who's waiting to bring the gavel down on me? Or does it feel like I'm walking with someone who has much more important things to worry about than my

little problems, so I just remain quiet? For much of my childhood, walking with God didn't even seem like a thing. God was in heaven, very far away from me. He was almost like a judge who really didn't have time for me unless I messed up, and then He was gonna notice me. Hannah and Kendra, what was your view of God when you were young?

KS: That is such a good question, Wendy! I picture God very similar to Zeus from Greek mythology, just sitting on his throne [all laughing] and looking down with a very stern face. Very similar to you that He is distant unless I do something wrong, and then He's gonna intervene. That is how I pictured God as a child.

[all laughing]

WB: You know, that's funny, because Monty said he always pictured Him on the throne with this big, heavy, white beard.

KS: Yes! [laughing] Yes.

HS: That is funny. I love Zeus. You gave us a great picture, Kendra. But it's also very ironic, Kendra, you said, "with a stern face." That is how — I loved being the good girl as a kid —

WB: Mm-hmm.

HS: — and even through my teenage years. I never wanted to rebel or do the wrong thing, but I thought that's because God was stern. I never envisioned God with a smile on His face until someone challenged me in my adult years of "How do I envision God?" So very similar to the both of you of how I saw and envisioned His face.

WB: Mmm. You know, aren't y'all thankful that studying God's Word for ourselves as young adults just changed our view of who God is so we could truly know the heart of God?

KS: Yes.

HS: Mm-hmm.

WB: I think all of us want more than the "she lived and died" epitaph on our headstone. We want the words that God used to describe Noah to describe us — to reflect that we had a deep and abiding relationship with God. We want an intimate walk with God that changes the way we live and love on this earth. And that really could change our little corner of the world, or depending on our calling, might even change a corner on another side of the world.

WB: But living a righteous, blameless, walking-with-God life can be really hard, even lonely, because sometimes it means we stand alone in our convictions. We speak the truth when no one wants to hear it. Or we turn down the invitation to a party, a fun party, because we know we won't feel comfortable with what goes on there. And sometimes we feel left out of a conversation about the latest Netflix binge because it makes us uncomfortable to watch it. Noah took a lonely stand against the evil and wickedness of his day. He paid the price. People probably thought he was out of his mind. I'm quite sure he didn't fit in.

WB: But Noah's life emphasizes the power of what it looks like to be *the one* - the one man or woman who willingly stands firm for God in the midst of a godless world. Just think, if Noah had not stood against the wickedness of his day, God's flood would have destroyed the entire human race. It was only by God's grace and favor, married with Noah's extraordinary faith, that God saved the human race. We're gonna take a little shift here just for a moment. Hollywood created a great movie called *Evan Almighty*. It's a modern-day story of Noah. I don't know if y'all have seen it...

KS: Yes.

WB: In *Evan Almighty*, we meet Evan Baxter, who's married to Joan Baxter. He left New York to become a great politician. In the movie, we meet him just after he's been elected to Congress for a first term. But God had a greater calling on Evan's life; it was a calling Evan didn't even have a clue about.

WB: Evan had built his entire political campaign on one promise, and that was to change the world. A conversation with his wife prompted him to pray and ask God to help him keep that promise. He prayed that — even though he was uncomfortable and unfamiliar with prayer. He had the courage to ask God to help him to accomplish this great goal of changing the world. God took Evan Baxter's prayer, that tiny bit of faith, and began an incredible transforming work in his life and in the life of his family.

WB: Faith is the key word here. The author of Hebrews tells us, "*For without faith, it is impossible to please him*" (Hebrews 11:6). "Him" is God. So that leads us to a great question. Will we have the faith and courage to stand up and do what we hear God calling us to do, even when it doesn't look at all like what we prayed or what we think it should? Maybe we need to ask God to change our hearts — remove anger, bitterness, fear, or anxiety. Or maybe we need to ignite our prayer life — believe God will work a miracle in a relationship, bring healing to our body, break chains of bitterness and unforgiveness. Or maybe we need to commit to study God's Word — read it more consistently, join a Bible study, memorize it faithfully. Or, hmm, this is for me; I'm speaking to myself here. Maybe we need to tame our tongue [laughs] — speak kinder to our husband, encourage our children, stop gossiping with friends, or think the best of

our coworkers. Maybe we need to step out and serve — move outside our comfort zone, share our testimony, lead a group, teach a Sunday school class or mentor another. Or maybe it's even bigger. Maybe He's calling us to take a stand to change our little corner of the world like He did Noah. Hannah or Kendra, does this trigger something in your mind? Where do you need greater faith or the courage to stand and do something for the Lord?

KS: Well first, Wendy, I love all the examples that you gave. It helped me think about this question. And I would say I just need faith to continue to put one foot in front of the other in doing what I know to do.

WB: Mmm.

HS: Mm-hmm.

KS: That is being faithful to God by reading His Word or just by — honestly — just by doing the next thing I know to do. So, yeah, one step in front of the other is how I need to be faithful and display similar faith like Noah.

HS: Mmm. That's good.

WB: Okay. I love that, right? It's walking with God one foot in front of the other.

HS: Mm-hmm.

WB: That's so cool! Okay. Hannah?

HS: I would say, for me, it would be to have the faith and courage to be a light in our neighborhood. My husband and I moved into our neighborhood and bought our first home about a year ago. There're definitely some neighbors that we know have relationships with the Lord and say that they're praying for us. There's this older couple that's so incredibly sweet. We have other neighbors that we don't know, and we haven't really taken that leap of faith or courage to ask them or to build upon that relationship. So I think that's a place I can definitely do what God has called me to do right here in my own neighborhood.

WB: Mm-hmm. See, in your own little corner of the world. I just love that! Thanks for sharing, both of you. You know, we have a choice. We can be content to continue to live right where we are, doing only for ourselves and staying in our comfort zone or we can choose to walk with God. And sometimes that means stepping outside our comfort zone. We can listen and watch for God's work around us. We can pray a big prayer inviting God to direct our steps to do His Kingdom work and then, when He opens a door, invite Him in. Invite Him to do a new thing, because when He does, we will watch the floodgates of heaven pour forth in our lives as they did for Noah.

WB: Noah walked with God and listened to God, and the walking and listening led to preaching and working. So it's up to us, sweet friends! But it wasn't all roses for Noah. Listen to his assignment. *"And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch"* (Genesis 6:13-14). I cannot imagine, y'all, how preposterous this must have sounded to Noah.

WB: Yet Noah did as God asked. Though he'd never seen rain or a flood, Noah followed God's every instruction (because they say it had never — some theologians believe — it had never rained on earth before this time), even the nonsensical-sounding instructions like "take with you seven of every clean animal and two of every unclean animal." This is all I would have thought about — Okay, how are they gonna come to me? Where would they all fit? How can I feed them all? And then there's the whole bathroom problem on the ark, Lord. All these questions — I would have been throwing them at God, I'm sure.

[all laughing]

WB: Then God told Noah He's gonna send rain on the earth for 40 days and 40 nights to wipe away from the face of the earth every living creature God had made (Genesis 7:2-4). Despite how crazy this all sounded, we see unquestioning, unhesitating obedience. Four times, we're told Noah did all that the Lord commanded. He walked with God. We can imagine how the people must have ridiculed and mocked him; maybe even his own family did. We don't know (it's not told), but we just think of our world today and somebody doing something like that.

HS: Right.

WB: Noah spent decades building an ark for a flood that God said was coming. Yet remember: It had never rained one drop. It took great faith for Noah to say yes and then to persevere through so much to achieve it. Sometimes how God answers our prayers doesn't always look so great in the midst of the work, but God always has a plan. It's a good plan because He's a good Father. Always!

WB: Let's return again to our movie *Evan Almighty* — 'cause I didn't wanna leave y'all hanging — to see God's good plan for Evan. We've got to pay attention to the rest of this story. God had now revealed to Evan His plan for Evan to build this ark. Unlike Noah, Evan initially fought God, but he finally surrendered. He even began to look, dress and act like Noah. He built this ginormous ark in the middle of his neighborhood and proclaimed a great flood was coming, just as God commanded him. He obeyed God even though every person in his life mocked him and thought he was delusional. Every act of obedience in building the ark brought controversy, disrespect and rejection.

WB: Evan, like Noah, persisted no matter those consequences, even when it appeared he was losing everything. Evan's choices caused him to lose his job and resulted in his wife, Joan, taking their three boys and leaving him. It was such a dark time, but not just for [Evan]. It was for his wife, too. What I didn't tell you is that Joan had also prayed her own prayer while Evan prayed his. Her prayer was for her family to spend time together and grow closer. With the decisions Evan had made, it surely didn't seem God was answering her prayer, at least not in the way she had imagined.

HS: Mmm.

WB: But sometimes we don't see God's purposes worked out until the end of the story. As with Noah, the flood waters came to Evan Almighty's neighborhood. Evan saved his community and exposed the fraudulent politicians in Washington. So God did answer Evan's big and bold prayer to change the world, but it didn't look at all like he thought it would. God rewarded Evan's faithfulness to obey what God asked of him, even after there was a little bit of pushback and doubt. His family did grow closer together as Joan had prayed, his values changed dramatically, and lives around him were changed by watching his walk with God.

WB: God issues a similar invitation for us today, and we're gonna do what we always do now. We're gonna go from the Old Testament looking forward to the New Testament. Just as God did in Noah's day, God has told us judgment is coming! Because of the fall in the Garden of Eden, physical death and eternal separation from God is coming for all of us. But God has made another way for us; He's extended us an invitation. And thankfully, it's not an invitation to build or enter into an ark.

WB: Remember, in Noah's day, that ark was God's vessel for salvation. It was the only means by which man could escape God's judgment and be saved. In the New Testament, we too have this invitation to escape God's judgment, but the vessel through which we're saved looks a bit different. It's not an ark; it's a person. Salvation comes through God's most precious Son, Jesus. Jesus says, *"If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink,"* in **John 7:[37]**. This is an invitation to receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior — to come to him, put our faith in Him, abide in Him, and walk with Him for now and all eternity.

WB: Then, when we receive Jesus and we put our trust in Him, Jesus promises this. It says, *"Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified*" (John 7:38-39). So here we have Jesus not only saving us, but giving us this promise that once we're saved, *"rivers of living water"* will flow through and from us. So in Jesus we've got salvation and eternal life, but also this gift, he tells us, the rivers of living water. That's His Holy Spirit.

WB: This means that when we come to Jesus to drink, we don't get one drink. Jesus' Spirit is an ever-flowing fountain of Himself. He is Living Water. I read where one writer said we literally have a "River Maker" living within us. His Spirit forever fills us, fully satisfying and sustaining our souls. We never have to search for another source to satisfy our deepest needs and longings. Jesus is not only enough, He is more than we will ever need. Every fruit of His Spirit will live and flow through us. From Galatians, it's love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control (Galatians 6:22-23). And not only is it living in us, it says it will increase in abundance more and more the closer our walk with God is. The rivers of living water flow more freely the more we spend time with Jesus.

WB: We have the power within us to be the one like Noah, to be the one man or woman who stands firm for God in the midst of a godless world. The one who has the faith and courage to stand up and do what we hear God calling us to do, even when it doesn't look like all that we've prayed or what we think it should? Just reading this story and even sitting here with you now, I just want those rivers of Living Water flowing in, through and from me.

WB: So as we continue our 40 days together, let's together accept God's invitation to come, drink deeply, listen intently, receive freely and walk intimately with Him all the days of our lives. I promise when we walk with God this way, with rivers of living water flowing in and through us, we too will be vessels of love to quench the hunger and thirst of the world around us! We too can change the world — one prayer, one step of obedience, one person at a time.

KS: That's so good, Wendy. Your ending right there when you said one prayer, one step of obedience, one person at a time reminds me of how I answered your original question.

WB: That's crazy.

HS: Mm-hmm.

KS: It's so wild. I love it! And then, really quickly, something that stuck out to me, Wendy, was — I got my Bible out because Noah is in the Hall of Faith in Hebrews 11.

HS: Mmm.

WB: Yes.

KS: So when I looked at Hebrews 11:7, it says, "*By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.*" And that's from the ESV. It just shows that his one

step in doing what God told him to do ultimately put him in the Hall of Faith. It's just an awesome example that we get to watch and also imitate. Really, thank you, Wendy.

WB: Yeah, you're welcome.

HS: Mmm. I love that! Wendy, I love at the very beginning of your teaching, you asked the question, "What's the new thing God's wanting to do in our lives?" Friends, I want to leave you with that question. What's the one new thing that God's wanting to do in your life? Is it to make an impact right here in your neighborhood or in your family? Or deciding to turn the other cheek and to not engage in gossip? There are so many things that God is wanting to do, but, like Kendra, putting one foot in front of the other one step of obedience ... Look for that one new thing that God's wanting to do in your life. Wendy, Kendra, thank you all for joining this teaching today. I love that we're kicking off the 40-day study with both of you. It's just been such a great, fun time. Wendy, thank you for your teaching and connecting *Evan Almighty* to Noah.

[all laughing]

WB: Aww. You're welcome. May I just add, I totally forgot to tell you all the verse that I talked about the rivers of living water. It's John 7:38, because I know sometimes people really like to know the address of the verse we talk about.

HS: Yeah, that's awesome. So John 7:38, for the rivers of living water... That's awesome. Thank you! Again thank you both so much! We're so excited. God is doing something so amazing here at Proverbs through this study that we're getting to do together with First 5 and Online Bible Studies. So we hope that you will join us for the weeks to come. We know that great things are ahead. Let me go ahead and close us in prayer.

HS: Father God, we just thank You for all that You share in your Word with us that we're not walking around this world alone or confused of clarity. But God, You gave us such great clarity in Your Word. You gave us an example through Jesus of how we should live our lives. Then You gave us your Holy Spirit that lives inside of us. Lord, we just thank You. We thank You for all that You're doing in this study. God, we thank You for the story of Noah, the life of Noah – his example. How he served You, and he listened to You, and he was obedient. God, we pray that this week, we would do those same things: that we would be obedient, and that we would put one foot in front of the other. Like Wendy said at the end, we too can help change the world with one prayer, one step of obedience and one person at a time. Lord, we love You, we thank You for all that You have done in our lives, all that You are doing, and all that You will do. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

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