**Got Wisdom?**

**Small Group Discussion**

[**Proverbs 1:1-7**](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001rWXisgDkOy0nWTUO6VKpzgZHca6MhJjl07AhjuBesJKpERVHQCXlQcX7CC1DgZccnRZh9Pqc4Km6wgkaI2TEYFcaRxSL2M_PbUOIE0fzxKFAWpx6Yv8Is-5lyluUADpf64lPD1uvFCbi4gah1nD6l1WXMLQOFeUfoTa37P_MoKO5U0SHMk3dH5RsxqcZfepvi1n2vD8wLCsmOMJKSiAVZrYpRYiKq6VeRg4Dqb1BSGpK3wV7Pfhum8ia786Ffx8n&c=uUstu8icv0hdRrIyYSi1WYxCOIxHN6md4ZRcnIbWu4BHvIxZLVsRqw==&ch=Xv7ubMupQNEdpGTv_6YQakAb-sHrwBNufQm1Fw5CuUQhZgwwfAljXA==)**, 2:1-8**

**Opening question**:

* Who is one of the wisest people you’ve known personally? What made them so wise?

For the next six weeks, we will be studying wisdom as defined and explained in Scripture. We need God’s wisdom in order to navigate the realities of life. With this in mind, **TAKE TURNS READING** [**Proverbs 1:1-7**](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001rWXisgDkOy0nWTUO6VKpzgZHca6MhJjl07AhjuBesJKpERVHQCXlQcX7CC1DgZccnRZh9Pqc4Km6wgkaI2TEYFcaRxSL2M_PbUOIE0fzxKFAWpx6Yv8Is-5lyluUADpf64lPD1uvFCbi4gah1nD6l1WXMLQOFeUfoTa37P_MoKO5U0SHMk3dH5RsxqcZfepvi1n2vD8wLCsmOMJKSiAVZrYpRYiKq6VeRg4Dqb1BSGpK3wV7Pfhum8ia786Ffx8n&c=uUstu8icv0hdRrIyYSi1WYxCOIxHN6md4ZRcnIbWu4BHvIxZLVsRqw==&ch=Xv7ubMupQNEdpGTv_6YQakAb-sHrwBNufQm1Fw5CuUQhZgwwfAljXA==)**.**

1. Last Sunday, Pastor Josh addressed wisdom through three questions: 1) What is wisdom?   
   2) Why do you need it? And 3) How do you get it? To get at “What is wisdom?” review the above passage and list below all the synonyms for wisdom.

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1. Before looking at the Addendum, try defining each of these words or phrases. Then take turns reading each definition in the Addendum. How has this enlightened you to the meaning of Godly wisdom?
2. Try to recall the three ways that Josh defined wisdom. (Leaders: The ability to make good choices; competence with regard to the realities of life; knowing how to make decisions in the 80% of life choices where the moral rules don’t apply).
   1. How then does wisdom differ from knowledge? Morality?
3. Let’s get practical. Think of a time when a boss, colleague, or fellow student spoke to you in a harsh way. How did you handle it?
   1. Read Proverbs 26:4-5: “Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you yourself will be just like him. Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes.” In light of this teaching, should you have handled it differently?
4. Josh’s second main question was “Why do you need wisdom?” **Take turns reading Proverbs 2:1-9**
5. List all the reasons you can find in this passage for gaining wisdom.

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1. Josh gave three reasons for why we so badly need wisdom.
   1. Choices chart the course of life. What does this mean?
      1. How can we make choices that in a way that takes sin seriously, but doesn’t lead to hopelessness due to our past mistakes?
      2. Is there a positive past choice that has shaped your life or a negative past choice that still seems to be dragging you down?
   2. We’re all fools by nature. From Pastor Josh: “In its use of the terms ‘simple’ and ‘fool,’ Proverbs shows us that most of us probably gravitate, naturally, toward one of these extremes or the other—toward caring too much what other people think, or not caring enough about other people’s thoughts.”
      1. Which of these two extremes do you tend to gravitate toward?
      2. How can you be more balanced?
   3. Wisdom is the key that unlocks every type of success. **Take turns reading Provs 2:5-8:**

**5**then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

**6**For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

**7**He holds success in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless,

**8**for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones.

**From the passage above, why is wisdom the key that unlocks every type of success?**

1. Pastor Josh says that today’s Proverbs passages offer us four basic ways to pursue wisdom:
   1. *Make good choices in everyday life*.
      1. Do you include God in your daily choices or just in the big ones?
   2. *Live in community*.
      1. Who are the people who have permission to say hard things to you? If there are none, could this small group be that for you?
   3. *Embrace joyful fear*. Read Josh’s explanation in the addendum.
      1. Where would you place yourself on the scale below?   
         Terror ----------------------- Joyful fear of God ----------------------- No fear of God
      2. How do you arrive at the place of joyful fear of God? (Leaders: Josh said that you have to be sure—based on the Big Story of the Bible—that God is for you; that he’s not out to harm you. Read Romans 8:1 and 8:31-32).
   4. *Embrace pain as a catalyst for wisdom*. Read Proverbs 3:11-12.
      1. In Proverbs 3:11-12, what motivation is behind God’s discipline of his children? (Leaders: He delights in his children).
      2. Do you think you allow pain to be a catalyst, or get stuck in it?
      3. If stuck, have you heard anything today that could help you get unstuck?[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Of these four basic ways to pursue wisdom, which do you think God is calling you to address now?**

1. **Share and Pray:** Among our usual prayer requests, let’s pray that God will help us seek Biblical wisdom and use it to make God-honoring choices in our daily lives. (Also, feel free to share if you feel stuck in a past mistake or in an unhealthy fear of God.

**Addendum**

* insight: “a Hebrew word that means seeing fine distinctions that others don’t see. It’s imagining five or six options where others only imagine one.” (Josh’s sermon)
* instruction (implied in vv3-4): “The implication in the Hebrew for instruction is that you have depth of character. Your roots go down deep. You’re mature.” (Josh’s sermon)
* prudence: “the ability to be practical, or strategic. It’s knowing how to get things done—to make a goal into reality.” (Josh’s sermon)
* doing what is right and just and fair: choices and actions based on what is honorable, what is deserved, and what is equitable. (from dictionary.com)
* knowledge: acquaintance with facts, truths, or principles, as from study, investigation, or experience. (from dictionary.com)
* discretion: unlike our common definition, the Hebrew word refers to a good purpose, intent, plan, or motive. (Strongs Hebrew definition, Online Bible 4.30)
* listening: hearing that leads to obedience (derived from Strongs Hebrew definition, Online Bible 4.30)
* learning: from the root meaning “to take, take in the hand, to carry along” (Strongs Hebrew definition, Online Bible 4.30)
* discerning: “to observe, mark, give heed to, distinguish, consider.” (Strongs Hebrew definition, Online Bible 4.30) “Showing good judgment” (dictionary.com)
* getting guidance: “acquire wise counsel” (NAS).
* understanding: to observe, mark, give heed to, distinguish, consider. (Strongs Hebrew definition, Online Bible 4.30) “to understand the nature or meaning of; grasp with the mind; perceive.” (dictionary.com)
* the fear of the LORD: (From Josh’s sermon) “There are two ways of being afraid in someone’s presence. One form of fear is being afraid because you think someone is out to hurt you. If you think someone is going to harm you, it’s hard to trust them. That’s negative fear. The other way to feel fear in someone’s presence is with someone whom you deeply revere. Someone for whom you feel a powerful sense of awe. When you’re with that kind of person, you’re not afraid that they’re going to hurt you, but you’re afraid of doing something that would dishonor them, or disappointing them, because you revere them so much.”

**Encouragement in the face of being stuck, hopeless, or guilty:**

Romans 8:31-39 31 What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all— how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? 33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died— more than that, who was raised to life— is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1. If nothing comes to mind in Proverbs, look at the Romans passage at the end of the Addendum. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)