

Discipleship Group Weekly Resources

Week 1 Passage: Proverbs 1:1-7

Big Thought:

Proverbs chapters 1-9 are the introduction to the book. Proverbs 1:1-7 is the preamble. Solomon is the main author of Proverbs, though other writers appear. Solomon was the wisest man in Israel's history because he was granted a wish for wisdom (read 1 Kings 4:30-34). In this preamble, Solomon illustrates what wisdom is.

- Wisdom is regal (1:1). These are the proverbs of Solomon, "son of David, king of Israel." Wisdom is regal because it's how kings rule their people. In 1 Kings 3:9 (read) Solomon asks God for wisdom, which for him was the ability to rule Israel well. Wisdom says in Proverbs 8:15-16, "By me kings reign and rulers issue decrees that are just; by me princes govern, and nobles—all who rule on earth." As illustrated through the history of Israel, if the king is wise, the people will be wise; if the king is unwise, the people will be foolish.

Proverbs 1:1 also connects wisdom with the kingship of Jesus. "Son of David" is a messianic title. He is the fulfillment of all wisdom (Isaiah 11:1-3). Our subjection to his loving and wise rule, is our only path to wisdom.

- Wisdom is correction and understanding (1:2). Wisdom is the kind of understanding that helps you ascertain what is going on around you. This requires humility to recognize we don't know everything and the ability to receive counsel from others. The word discipline entails a discipleship relationship where you can be warned about going in the wrong direction, receive instruction and rebuke, change course or think differently, and get punished for not listening. Who's in your life that can ask you, "What do you think you are doing?"
- Wisdom is the knowledge of right and wrong (1:3). Wisdom is not intelligence or education; it's being able to discern the difference between right and wrong in any circumstance. Foolishness lacks the ability to discern right and wrong. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve sought wisdom apart from God and His word. The fruit appeared "desirable for gaining wisdom" and seemed right to them, but it was foolishness. According to Genesis and Proverbs, foolishness always ends in death. The Lord reveals wisdom in His word.
- Wisdom is discernment (1:4). Wisdom is shrewdness and discretion. It's the ability to read a situation and make the right decision. Solomon wants to ensure this discernment is learned by the inexperienced and the youth. Inexperience and youthfulness are often

conjoined, and both need the ability to perceive what is going on, make the right choices, and avoid the bad ones.

- Wisdom is getting guidance (1:5-6). Wisdom is an ongoing learning process. You never stop growing and getting direction. The wise person will have humility to understand they still need to listen to wise counsel instead of arrogantly thinking they have arrived. The wisdom of Proverbs is for all our lives. It's not a goal to attain, but a lifelong pursuit.
- How do you get wisdom? By trusting The Lord (1:7). The only way to be wise is to trust The Lord and be in relationship with Him. Wisdom comes from God (2:6), so we are told in scripture to ask for it (James 1). This wisdom may be filtered through receiving instruction from wise counselors. Good questions to ask are: Am I one who is open to the instruction of The Lord? Am I a know-it-all? Am I always right?

Solomon ultimately fails to live out the wisdom of Proverbs. So does his son Rehoboam, who often shows foolishness (read 1 Kings 12). But Isaiah 11 promises that The Messiah will be the embodiment of the book of Proverbs.

The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him,
The spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The spirit of counsel and strength,
The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

³And He will delight in the fear of the Lord,
And He will not judge by what His eyes see,
Nor make decisions by what His ears hear; Isaiah 11:2-3 (NASB)

Wisdom isn't just a concept or precepts to learn. Proverbs teaches that wisdom isn't just an Israelite Dear Abby advice column or life hacks. Wisdom is a person—Jesus. He will produce in you the wisdom He lives out—the wisdom of Proverbs.

4 Questions:

1. What are people so drawn to resources that promise “quick and easy steps to success”?
2. How is wisdom more than just intelligence?
3. Who are the men in your life who can warn you about a wrong direction/decision? Who rebukes and corrects you?
4. How does Proverbs push back against the “follow your heart” advice that is prevalent today?