



Week Two

Opening Prayer God, thank you for your words of wisdom. Help us today as we take a closer look at how to apply them to our everyday life. Thank you for a safe community to help us process wisdom and its role in our life. Amen.

Talk It Over

This week we continued our series called *40 Days of Wisdom*. During this series, the hope is that we learn to lean into wisdom — specifically the wisdom offered through the book of Proverbs. Proverbs will serve as our primary resource for this series on wisdom because this book was written with the hope and goal of helping people live wisely.

- What is your relationship with wisdom? How has this week of reading proverbs gone for you? If you have not done any of the readings, that's okay, but if you feel led, talk about why with your group.

*note to group leaders: Make sure you review the description of proverbs each week for anyone new.

To help us engage with the book of Proverbs, let's review this simple overview of the Bible:

Part of engaging with the Bible means understanding that the Bible is not one book, it is the collection of 66 different books, written by 40 authors, and spanning over 1,500 years. While the Bible tells a unified story of God's love for all and his plan to redeem all things, it's important to understand there are various genres represented in the Bible. For example, in the Bible, we find historical narrative, laws, wisdom, psalms, prophecies, gospels, epistles, and three different kinds of statements in Scripture. Those three different statements fall under the category of law (commands to follow), promises (guarantees of what God will do or what will happen), or proverbs (a catchy description about the way things generally are).

- What are some of the proverbs you've heard? Think short little expressions and sayings meant to communicate some larger truth or wisdom. If you did this last week, have you thought of any more this week? Did you make up any of your own?

Read Proverbs 18:21; Proverbs 29:20 (NIV)

One way we can embody wisdom is to go slow. When we speak quickly we tend to not mean every word we express. Wise people slow down when they approach sensitive subjects. They don't just express quick ideas, but they are reading more of the situation and prayerfully contemplating what should be said in that moment.

- Are you quick to speak?
- What would adding a pause to your conversations feel like to you?
- Do you know someone who is slow and thoughtful when conversing?

Read James 1:5; Nehemiah 2:4 (NIV)

Humility is something we have to practice and is connected to our first way of embodying wisdom - going slow. It requires the ability to be aware of our responses and to explore them before we respond.

- Do you know someone who tends to be humble when they respond?
- What is it like to choose humility?
- Do you spend time silently praying during difficult conversations?

Read Proverbs 17:28 (NKJV) ; Proverbs 26:17 (NIV); Proverbs 11:12

Being quiet can be so hard! We all have opinions and thoughts and those matter, but what we are learning here is there is wisdom in not always letting them out into the world. There are a series of questions we can ask ourselves before we decide to speak: *Am I being invited to speak into this? Am I trying to fix or solve someone else's conflict by speaking? What will be the fruit or outcome if I do speak into this?*

- How do those questions land with you?
- Can you pause and reflect on past conversations to see if those questions would have been helpful?
- What might it be like for you to be quiet where you have not been before?

Read Proverbs 27:6; Proverbs 26:28; Proverbs 18:8

- Do you tell your friends what they want to hear or do you try and give them wisdom? What has been your journey with working out how to be truthful and still be loving?
- Talk a little bit about the role gossip has played in your life? Where has it caused division?

Read Matthew 12:34; Proverbs 15:4 (NIV); Proverbs 15:1 (RSV)

We have all experienced words that heal and words that cause harm. Spend a few minutes considering what words have brought healing to you and what words have brought harm? If you feel comfortable share some of those stories with the group before we close.

- If you could offer one word of healing into the group space right now what would that word be? Take turns saying your words of healing out loud.

Closing Prayer

God what a gift words are! Thank you for leading us to ways that we can be wise with them and bring healing to those who need it. Watch over our words this week and help us to see ways to practice what we have learned and to add more pauses where we might have responded quickly before.

How To Use this Discussion Guide

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create space to grow in friendship and faith. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group.

With that in mind, consider reviewing the guide before your group to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressure to read all the content or to hit all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help foster friendship and faith in your specific group.

In addition, spend some time praying for your group each week, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you lead.