



## 40 Days of Wisdom

### Opening Prayer

God, thank you for this time. Help us open ourselves up to what you have to teach us here today. Amen.

### Talk It Over

This week we kicked off a new 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.

- Who in your life would you describe as a wise person and why?

### 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.

### Read Proverbs 1:1-7 (NLT), Proverbs 4:7 (NLT), and Proverbs 16:16 (NCV)

Throughout this series, we will define biblical wisdom as the ability to make right decisions. According to the Bible, wisdom is not mainly about I.Q. levels or the amount of information we know. Biblical wisdom is very practical. As we have talked about, wisdom is the ability to discern what is the God-honoring, right step to take in everyday life.

- Tell us about a time in your life you were desperate for more wisdom.
- Have you ever made a bad choice due to a lack of wisdom?
- In what area of life do you want wisdom this season?

### Read Proverbs 26:4-5 (NLT)

While this is one example, it's important to remember that proverbs are designed to make us think. There is no question that at first glance proverbs can confuse us because they often come in two parts and seem to contradict. Discretion and discernment are welcomed tools when reading through proverbs.

- Navigating through life choices often requires us to engage in conversation with others and to open ourselves up to honest feedback. Consider who you process life with and who has permission to speak into your life. Do you currently feel you have wise, credible people to process with on a regular basis?
  - If so, tell us who these people are and what they bring to the table.
  - If not, tell us what the gap is right now. Is it that you lack wise, credible friends? That you don't open up? You are too busy to talk? That you value your independence? Whatever it may be, tell us what keeps you from processing life with wise, credible people on a regular basis.

### **Read James 1:5 (NIV)**

Part of growing in wisdom means wanting wisdom, watching wisdom, working for wisdom, and waiting for wisdom. Let's briefly look at what it means to want, watch, work for, and wait for wisdom:

**Wanting wisdom:** To want wisdom means to be willing to put the effort into finding it.

**Watching for wisdom:** This means being on the lookout for wisdom. Lessons on wisdom come in all sorts of shapes and sizes. God is going to use all of life to help transform us and he is actively moving to lead us.

**Working for wisdom:** While wisdom is a gift from God, we have to do the work of grabbing hold of it, engaging with it, practicing it, and say 'yes' to it.

**Waiting for wisdom:** Despite our want, wisdom takes time to develop. It's not developed instantly. Gaining wisdom is a humble quest, journey, and life-long pursuit of allowing God's best to mark out how we interact with our lives.

- Between wanting wisdom, watching for wisdom, working for wisdom, or waiting for wisdom, which best describes your relationship with wisdom this season? *Why is this the case? If none of these simple descriptions describe your relationship with wisdom this season, how would you describe your current relationship with wisdom and why?*
- Between wanting wisdom, watching for wisdom, working for wisdom, or waiting for wisdom, which feels like the area you may want to lean into the most for growth this summer? *Why?*

### **Group Challenge**

This summer EastLake Church is offering a 40 day Proverbs Reading Plan (available on the bookmark distributed this weekend, the EastLake Network app, or the EastLake e-devotional). As a group, let's all consider committing to the plan and taking a few minutes to talk about the experience each week. If someone isn't interested in engaging, please note this is a safe place to say 'no'.

- Who is engaging in the Proverbs Reading Plan this summer? What made you say 'yes' to the commitment?

### **Closing Prayer**

God, thank you for giving us the gift of wisdom. Help us to grow in our capacity to live wisely this summer. Help us to grow our desire for wisdom, our capacity to look for wisdom in our everyday life, to work towards wisdom, and to wait for wisdom. Help us to be people who live well for our sake, the sake of others, and in a way that honors our love for you. Amen.

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**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.