



40 Days of Wisdom

Opening Prayer

God, thank you for meeting us here and helping us to grow. Use this time to make us more aware of your loving leadership that looks to transform us. Amen.

Talk It Over

During this series, we have aimed to lean into wisdom — specifically the wisdom offered through the book of Proverbs. Proverbs has served as our primary resource for this series because it's a book written with the hope and goal of helping people live wisely. This week we specifically looked at what the book of Proverbs has to teach us about making decisions.

- What sorts of choices are the hardest for you to make?
- While there are other factors at play, life is largely made up of choices. To capture this idea, we looked at this quote by Frank Boreham that said, "We make our decisions and then our decisions make us." What are some general ways your choices have made your life?
- All decisions bring a level of risk. Think back to a time you had a choice to make while being conscious of some of the risks.
- What are some of the big decisions you are facing this season? Tell us about the options and risks you are weighing.

This weekend we looked at eight principles from Proverbs that aim to help us make successful decisions. Review the eight principles below as a group.

As you review the list, share which principle is the easiest for you, which is hardest for you, and which jumps out to you the most this season.

Principle One — Pray for guidance.

Read Proverbs 28:26 (TLB) and Proverbs 2:6 (GNT)

- Tell us about a time prayer proved to be helpful. What was that process like?
- While prayer is important, sometimes prayer doesn't solve things the way we want. If you have a story about being frustrated with prayer in a moment of needing guidance, this is a safe place to share that story too.

Principle Two — Get the facts.

Read Proverbs 13:16 (TLB), Proverbs 18:13 (TLB), and Proverbs 23:23 (TLB)

- Have you ever been a victim of your own uneducated enthusiasm? Tell us how knowing some facts would have changed things for you.
- Tell us about a time you were able to seek and honor facts in the midst of a decision making process.

Principle Three — Ask for advice.

Read Proverbs 24:6 (GNT), Proverbs 20:18 (GNT) and Proverbs 18:15 (TLB)

- How hard or easy is it for you to seek advice? Explain your answer.
- Think of someone you know who is good at seeking advice. What are some of the habits they practice that enable them to seek advice?
- Who are the people in your life this season you can seek advice from?

Principle Four — Set your goal.

Read Proverbs 17:24 (GNT)

- Seeing goals is about narrowing your scope and ensuring you have a good sense of direction. Explain a time you were able to set some goals that equipped and empowered you to focus on the right things.
- Part of seeing goals means knowing what you won't be about. None of us can get everything done. What are some of the things on your plate this season that aren't getting you to your goals?
- Goals also enable us to stay focused when things get hard. Considering your goals, what are some of the real-life challenges that come with your goal? For example, saving for a house may mean living with a tighter budget or going to school may mean long hours of homework.

Principle Five — Count the cost

Read Proverbs 20:25

- Have you ever regretfully made a decision without counting the cost? Looking back, how could you have better counted the cost on the front end?
- Counting the cost means considering our commitments carefully. This is called a calculated risk. To help us count the cost we looked at some questions: Is there any other way I can reach my goal without having to make this decision? What will it cost? Is it worth it? Is the risk worth it? Will the outcome be greater than the risk involved?

Considering a decision in your life, what do these questions make you think?

Principle Six — Plan for problems.

Proverbs 20:18 (GNT) and Proverbs 22:3 (TLB)

- Even the best of choices come with problems. By nature, how emotionally difficult are unexpected problems for you?
- Tell us about a time you made a choice and you did not plan for problems.

Principle Seven — Face your fears

Read Proverbs 29:25 (TLB) and Proverbs 14:26 (GNT)

- What were your earliest messages about fear? In other words, growing up, were your fears welcomed, shamed, denied, minimized, or honored?
- This week we heard that fear is a sign of being human. As an adult, how do you normally face your fears?
- What would handling your fear well look like?
- Tell us about a time you invited God into your fear and experienced God's grace, love, or goodness in the midst of your fear.

Principle Eight — Go for it.

Read Proverbs 16:3 (GNT)

- When was the last time you decided to “go for it”? How did things work out?
- Have you ever held back from going for it and later regretted it? What held you back? What did you learn from this experience?

Read Matthew 6:33 (NLT)

Regardless of the details and choices at hand, God invites us to seek him and his Kingdom first and foremost. In the Message bible translation Matthew 6:33 reads, “Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions...”. What we hear Jesus tell us in various ways is that a life focused and attuned to God is positioned well.

- Looking at any decision you may be currently facing this season:
 - In what ways do you feel you are honoring and seeking God and his Kingdom?
 - In what ways can you get better at honoring and seeking God and his Kingdom?
- How can we be praying for you in light of any choices you might have at hand?

Closing Prayer

God, you know our life. You know the decisions we must make today and in the future, you know our hearts, and you know what’s best.. Please help us to seek you and honor you in all that we do. Empower and equip us to make decisions well for our sake, the sake of others, and the sake of helping your Kingdom come to life here on earth. Amen.

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.