

Peopling: Wise
Glen Elliott - August 13, 2017

Series Big Idea: The Bible is clear that there are different kinds of people and we need to respond to each kind of person in a different way. There is no “one size fits all” way to engage with people. There are some people who outright reject the truth and are intent on hurting us. There are some people who refuse to deal with truth and reality. Then there are the wise who listen to the truth and allow God’s wisdom to transform how they live. In this series we’ll look at each kind of person and figure out how to do “peopling” well with different people types. The Bible and especially the book of Proverbs gives us wisdom on how to learn to people well.

Message Big Idea: The Bible over and over communicates God’s desire that we pursue wisdom. Wisdom gives life to the wise and thus they will experience the blessing of God. It is the wise who are able to live in the light and truth of God and apply God’s wisdom into their lives and experience godly transformation. Wise people listen to feedback and will take responsibility for their actions. We need to be wise and we need wise people in our lives to help us be wise.

Main Idea: The wise thrive because they love, listen and act on truth.

Main Texts: Proverbs 3:7, 8, 13, 23-26; 15:31; 12:15-16; 11:2; 13:20; 9:9

Reflection/Discussion Questions:

1. Who do you know that is really wise? Why do they strike you as wise? How do they act or live that shows they are wise? What about them is attractive to you?
2. Glen suggests that the wise are able to thrive. Why is that so? What does the Bible say about the benefits of being wise? Specifically, how does wisdom help a person live well and thrive?
3. What does the Bible say that characterizes a wise person? What do they do? What is crucial in their character that allows them to listen to, receive and act on the truth to become wise and wiser? What attitudes do they carry? How do they respond to the truth and wisdom?
4. Wise people seek and invite good feedback. How do you best hear feedback? What can others do or not do to help you listen well? Who do you have that you’ve invited to give good feedback or who might you ask?

Peopling: Wise
Glen Elliott - August 13, 2017

Main Idea: The wise thrive because they love, listen and act on truth.

Screen Information:

- Slide1: The wise thrive because they love, listen and act on truth
- Slide2: How a person reacts to truth determines how you respond
- Slide3: Evil people - reject the truth and want to hurt the messenger
- Slide4: Foolish people- refuse to listen and adjust the truth to fit them
- Slide5: Wise people - listen to the truth and let the truth transform them
- Slide6: The wise thrive because they love, listen and act on truth
- Slide7: Proverbs 3 (pg. 297) - The Wise Thrive OPTIONAL!
- Slide8: Proverbs 15:31 (pg. 303)
- Slide9: Proverbs 12:15-16 (pg 301)
- Slide10: Proverbs 11:2 (pg. 300)
- Slide11: Proverbs 13:20 (pg. 301)
- Slide12: The wise thrive because they love, listen and act on truth
- Slide13: How a person reacts to truth determines how you respond
- Slide14: Proverbs 9:9 (pg. 299)
- Slide15: The wise thrive because they love, listen and act on truth

Message:

I had been married about three years when my mentor and friend, his name is Dick, took me out to lunch at a Chinese restaurant. After we ordered Dick looked me straight in the eye and said he wanted to talk to me about something important. Dick is a strong introvert, so I had learned to read his emotions in his eyes. I could see his deep love and concern as he started to speak. His next words were: "You love your work more than you love your wife." He might have said more, but that is all I heard at that moment. What I remember most about that lunch was how surprised I was that I wasn't defensive. I knew that he loved me and my wife and he was right. I had found my significance in my work and was neglecting my wife in the process. I thanked him and told him how grateful I was for him saying that. I told him I agreed with him. Then I told him I wasn't sure how to "fix" it. I told him I know that this wasn't a simple fix like "stop working so much and go home at 5pm." I knew there was something deeper driving me. I began the journey to understand and change. Now, 37 years later, our marriage thrives. But what if a wise friend had not taken a risk to tell me the truth? And what if I had not listened?

We all need wise people in our lives who love us enough to tell us the truth! But that is not enough. **The wise thrive because they love, listen and act on truth.** That's the point of my message today. If you and I want to grow, become better, thrive and consistently live in God's goodness and blessing, we have to love God's wisdom, listen to it and act on it. Today, our focus is going to be on the wise. They love the truth. They listen to the truth. They act on the truth.

Peopling: Wise
Glen Elliott - August 13, 2017

We are in our second week of a series called *Peopling*. Peopling is all about learning to be wise and to love wisely in how we respond to people. Last week we looked at three main categories of people described in the book of Proverbs - evil people, foolish people and wise people. Each requires a different approach and response. If you missed it, please watch it online.

This isn't about just labeling, pigeonholing or judging people. Rather, we learned the foundational principle of peopling last week. Here it is: **How a person reacts to truth determines how you respond.** That's the basis of good peopling. Let's start with ourselves. How do you generally respond when truth and reality is presented to you?

Here's how the three main types respond. **Evil people - reject the truth and want to hurt the messenger.** We wish they didn't exist but they do. They are classified as evil because they have already rejected truth and bought into some kind of lie. Out of that way of life, they want to hurt truth-tellers. We want to help, but we can't help them because they've already rejected our help. Our best response is to not engage with them and protect ourselves and pray for them like crazy.

Then there are fools. Remember, that all of us can and are foolish at different times. **Foolish people - refuse to listen and adjust the truth to fit them.** They won't listen to the truth because they believe their version of reality is right. With fools we stop talking and trying to fix them and set limits and let them face the consequences of their choice.

Then there is the kind of person that we'll focus on today: **Wise people - listen to the truth and let the truth transform them.** The wise want loving feedback. They want to know the truth because they know that the truth will free them from whatever is hurting them or others. They want wisdom to help them transform into a better and wiser person. And that brings us back to my main point: **The wise thrive because they love, listen and act on truth.**

God wants us to thrive! The Bible over and over urges us to be wise and walk in the way of wisdom because that is the only path to being able to thrive. His ways are good. His truth protects. The whole third chapter of Proverbs tells about the benefits of wisdom. Let me highlight just a few. Turn to **Proverbs 3 (pg. 297 - NIV) - The Wise Thrive** and we'll start in verse 7. Remember that wisdom is often referred to as a she -

- ⁷Do not be wise in your own eyes;
fear the LORD and shun evil.***
- ⁸This will bring health to your body
and nourishment to your bones.***
- ¹⁸She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her;
those who hold her fast will be blessed.***
- ²³Then you will go on your way in safety,
and your foot will not stumble.***
- ²⁴When you lie down, you will not be afraid;
when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.***

Peopling: Wise
Glen Elliott - August 13, 2017

**²⁵ Have no fear of sudden disaster
or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked,
²⁶ for the LORD will be at your side
and will keep your foot from being snared.**

Wise people thrive! Wise choices are our best bet to bring health to the body and soul. Wisdom protects us spiritually, emotionally and relationally. Wisdom helps give us energy, rest and strength to live well. The wise thrive!

That's the benefit of being wise. Now, who is a wise person? Let me say first that being wise has nothing to do with your position or power you have in life. It doesn't matter whether you are rich or poor, or a boss or an employee. Being wise has nothing to do with your intelligence or schooling. The wisest people ever had almost no formal schooling. The wise are so not because of their talent or ability or lack thereof. Wisdom is not just tied to how old or experienced you are. There are 70 years olds with 70 years of foolish experience!

Here's one of the best descriptions of what makes a person wise according to God found in **Proverbs 15:31 (pg. 303 - NIV)** -

***Whoever heeds life-giving correction
will be at home among the wise.***

What did you hear there? The wise heed the truth. That means the wise both listen to and act on life-giving feedback! And also **Proverbs 12:15-16 (pg 301 - NIV)** -

**¹⁵ The way of fools seems right to them,
but the wise listen to advice.**

**¹⁶ Fools show their annoyance at once,
but the prudent overlook an insult.**

The wise listen and heed the truth and good advice. And heeding correction and listening to advice doesn't stop at the hearing alone. Heeding and real listening means the wise person takes responsibility for their actions and they own their responsibility for improvement and growth. They act on the wisdom given them. A wise person is never the victim. They accept, acknowledge and admit their problems and issues and refuse to blame others or make excuses when they mess up and make mistakes. They love the truth because it will help them thrive in life.

So a wise person loves the truth and wants to face reality. A wise person listens to feedback, even if the words are hard to hear. A wise person knows that when corrected in love, it is for our good. So a wise person quickly moves past being defensive to hear the truth in hard and crucial conversations. And catch verse 16. This blows me away. A wise person is even able to hear the truth in poorly given feedback. The wise are wise not because the feedback was perfectly given! They are wise because they wanted to hear the truth, even in poorly delivered feedback. People sometimes know that something isn't right and they try to tell us, but they do so with words that are either not totally accurate or even hurtful. A wise person is able to sort through the insult to find the kernel of truth!

Peopling: Wise
Glen Elliott - August 13, 2017

And here's what else distinguishes wise people. Wise people refuse to let pride stop them from listening, growing and changing. Listen to **Proverbs 11:2 (pg. 300 - NIV) -**
When pride comes, then comes disgrace,
but with humility comes wisdom.

You cannot get wisdom without humility. Humility allows us to listen, accept responsibility for our own weaknesses, mistakes, limitations and then learn from them. Evil and foolish people are ruined by their pride. Wise people thrive because they are humble and can let the truth transform them. You see, a wise person, in humility knows they they are never as wise as they hoped or can be. My wise friend Dick spoke truth to me about my life and marriage. I could have let pride stop me from hearing. I could have demanded I was a good husband (and I was). Or I could drop my pride and choose humility. The wise strive to be humble to become wiser still.

Do you want to become wise or wiser! Then listen to the truth. Listen and obey the light of God's Word. See and welcome life-giving correction. Learn to love feedback, even if it isn't well given or well timed. Refuse to let pride keep you from listening.

And the wise know the source of truth and wisdom. They learn from their experiences and those of others. They are in fact perpetual learners. To be a perpetual learner, you have to be humble. So here's the question you have to ask if you want to be wise or wiser - who are the wise people you're listening to? Who are the wise people who can teach, confront or correct you? Who is in my life that I've given permission and even invited to help me become even wiser? Who gives me good helpful feedback? Listen to **Proverbs 13:20 (pg. 301 - NIV) -**

***Walk with the wise and become wise,
for a companion of fools suffers harm.***

We need wise people in our lives. So if you want to be wise you have to seek and listen to feedback. That takes humility. The wise take responsibility for their life! The best people who can help you change and thrive are wise people.

So where do you start to become wise or to grow in wisdom? It is simple. Get feedback. That's not natural. We don't generally want it or give it. The best feedback is the feedback you ask for. You create a relationship with a person or group where it is safe and healthy to give and get feedback. But outright ask for it. Even teach the person how you best hear feedback, as we are all different. For me, just assure me you are for me and then tell it to me straight and don't beat around the bush. Yes, do so kindly and don't be judgmental, but be descriptive.

Ask for feedback! Then don't be defensive when you get it or folks may be too cautious to give it to you again. You ask for it by telling yourself over and over that you want to get better, wiser, healthier and you want to become more and more like Jesus. You want to be wise to thrive. By the way, while you need to get feedback from your spouse or best friend, you also need someone who can be even more objective to give wise feedback in addition.

Peopling: Wise
Glen Elliott - August 13, 2017

We have a very healthy church leadership culture. But being a healthy church and staff doesn't just happen. We've been intentional to create that health. And one of the keys is that we treasure feedback. The wise love truth and want feedback. We have systems of feedback that our staff and our elders use to give and get feedback. For example, I created a teaching team. I've invited some really godly and wise people to review my message three times before I present it on Sunday and review it once after I teach. One of those times I present my message live to them to get feedback on content, the tone, illustrations, my attitude and even my delivery. Honestly, this experience is one of my most vulnerable times. I have nine people who challenge what I've said, how I said it and I ask them to evaluate if I've done a good job or not. If I'm defensive, they won't give me good feedback. I have to submit to their review.

And the result? I am a much better teacher because of their great feedback. I won't teach you without it. In fact, when I'm speaking like I am now, you are getting the product of a team of people who over weeks have helped me shape what I'm sharing. It's a group project. The wise walk with the wise - Proverbs 13:20!

So ask for feedback from wise people who can speak the truth in love. Ask for feedback from trusted people who want the best for you. Never ask for feedback from a fool or evil person as they only want to hurt and abuse you! And then as wise people give you feedback, shut your mouth and really listen. Only speak to ask for clarification or to understand more. Who are the wise people in your life? Are you listening and learning from them?

That's who a wise person is and how to become wise. **The wise thrive because they love, listen and act on truth.** And that helps us now know how to best respond to wise people. Our key principle in peopling guides us: **How a person reacts to truth determines how you respond.** How does a wise person respond to the truth? They love, listen and act on truth! They learn from their experiences and those of others. They are perpetual learners. To be a perpetual learner, you have to be humble. Now listen to **Proverbs 9:9 (pg. 299 - NIV)** -

***⁹ Instruct the wise and they will be wiser still;
teach the righteous and they will add to their learning.***

So we help the wise to become even wiser by teaching, talking, correcting, confronting, instructing, giving loving feedback and giving resources to help them. Wise people want to get better and wiser. Wise people want to learn and never stop learning. Wise people want to grow and thrive. Wise people listen to wise people. So in love and kindness, speak the truth to the wise!

As we finish today, let me lay down a challenge. Determine if you want to be wise or wiser. The life of following Jesus is a journey into wisdom. If you say "yes," here's what that means. Wise people love God's truth, listen to God's truth and act on God's truth. We submit to God's wisdom and refuse to be defensive. That's why we continually read God's Word. We study it. We listen and obey.

Peopling: Wise
Glen Elliott - August 13, 2017

Then if you want to be wise or wiser, you have to find a wise person or persons and ask them to give you feedback. Think about who that might be right now. It might be your small group! Look around you, who will you ask, invite and give permission to give honest good feedback to you? TV counselor Dr Phil is too distant. Our teachings on 1 hour on Sundays is not enough. The wise walk with the wise! Love the truth. Love feedback. Then they act on it.

And there is a way to combine both - God's Word and wisdom from wise people. We just hosted the Global Leadership summit and 400 of us here got GREAT wisdom from wise and experienced people. It was awesome. Don't miss it next August. And join a class or a small group. Our new classes start soon and you got this handout when you came in describing them. Go to Launching Point, room 3 off the courtyard, to find out how to join a class or group and walk with the wise. Everything we offer is on our website. Launching Point, #3, is like a website in a room. Take your next step toward wisdom so you can thrive. **The wise thrive because they love, listen and act on truth.**

Verbal Server cue:

Communion & Offering Intro:

Chandan interview during offering. Dismiss.