

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. ***Enjoy discovering more about Him!***

"WHAT IS WISDOM, REALLY?" | PROVERBS | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

- When was a time you made a decision that wasn't sinful, just unwise?

"Why Wisdom Matters and What It Is and Isn't" Proverbs 1: 1-7, Proverbs 9:10

Wisdom is more than information; it's having discretion or prudence to make good decisions for both young and old.

- How have you heard wisdom explained? How is that similar or different to "having the skill to live well" (Pastor Brian)

"The Starting Point of Wisdom and Two Response" Proverbs 1:7

Proverbs teaches fear or respect of the Lord is beginning of wisdom, and wise people receive instruction while fools despise it.

- Why does respecting God lead to listening to Him? What are ways people are fools and not listen to Him?

"Christ Connection to Wisdom: and Going from Informed to Transformed" 1 Cor 1: 24

Jesus is the Wisdom of God in flesh and blood, so following Him transforms people from being informed to transformed.

- Where in your life are you informed but not transformed?
- Where in your life have you experienced transformation because you followed Jesus' ways?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Proverbs gives God's instructions in all kinds of ways to be wise with our lives. Jesus was the ultimate example of this, being wisdom in the flesh and giving His people the ability to live transformed lives.

- Where in your life do you sense the need for wisdom right now?
- What are ways you can let Jesus guide you in those areas?
- Pray this week that you would grow closer to Jesus and His wisdom.

1 - What Is Wisdom, Really?

I. Announce:

- A. Welcome to those watching online 2nd.
- B. Slide1-4 A.L. - UFG Class. Men's. CG's. Missions (Invite up Noah & Jeff).
- C. Slide5a/b Noah
- D. Slide6-14 Jeff
- E. Slide15 Great to be back with/you. 2 weeks in Thailand was *awesome family time*.
- F. *The church office is closed on Monday in observance of MLK Jr. Day.
- G. *Read JM Sheet!
- H. *I invite you to our @Risk Mtg today 3-5pm. Esp If you would like to be **involved** that Sunday, eg. assisting in our Workshops, or with 1 of our 27 Exhibitors.
> We'll be wrapping up **Planning** & have **Prayer** for our JM Sunday.
- I. **Prayer:** Lord, we are reminded that **Learning** is not the same as **Living**. We can be ever-learning & never come to the knowledge of truth. Like Sol, it's **Yur wisdom** we seek.

II. Slide16 Intro: What Is Wisdom, Really? [1st of 10, lead us rt up to Easter]

- A. We are starting the Book of Proverbs 2026! (last taught in 1990)
 - 1. Title: *Wisdom for the Way*. 10 Week Thematic Series.
 - 2. Series Big Idea: Proverbs shows us *how life works best* when ... **God** is rightly feared, **Wisdom** is practiced, and **Character** is formed.
- B. Proverbs is written by *Core Life Themes*:
 - 1. So Proverbs lends itself really well to **thematic teaching**. Verse-by-verse can feel choppy with Proverbs because it's "wisdom sayings", not a linear argument like Romans, or a narrative like Mark.
 - 2. Teaching Proverbs by theme is not a *compromise*, it's actually the most faithful way to teach it. Proverbs is a **toolbox**, not a *timeline*.

C. Instead of chapters, we will gather verses from across Proverbs around **one life issue** at a time.

1. **People live in themes, not verse numbers.** Proverbs meets us right where we are.
2. **Each week we will ask:** Who is this person & where do I see them in me?

D. **Proverbs isn't neutral** - it's **forming** us, **not just informing** us.

1. It's Wisdom that is **gold** for a *multi-generational church*.

E. **Christ Centered:** Proverbs is **not** "*be good and life works out.*" - It's wisdom for those who **fear the Lord**.

1. Prov. 8 → **Wisdom personified**, & 1 Cor. 1:24 → **Christ, the wisdom of God**
2. **So Christ-centered and practical** - without turning into *moralism*.

F. Proverbs **doesn't save** us - **but** it shows us - **how the saved live**.

1. **Life is full of choices.** **Wisdom** helps us make better ones.
2. **Quick question:** Have you ever made a decision that wasn't **sinful** ... just **unwise**? That's where Proverbs meets us.
3. **It's not about being perfect** - it's about **living well**. **And** in a noisy, complicated world, we could all use a little more of that.

G. This series is for adults, families, youth; those in their career or for students, honestly anyone **trying to figure out their next step**. **This is Wisdom For The Way**. Let's learn together how life works best when **God** is at the center!

III. Slide 17 **1 WHY WISDOM MATTERS**

A. **Read both** Proverbs 1:1-7; & 9:10.

B. **Big Idea: Wisdom isn't Intelligence:** it's **skillful living** rooted in reverence for **God**.

1. **Read** 1 Kings 4:29-34.

C. **Life** is filled with a number of **proverbial sayings**. Pithy, witty sayings that have some point. **Like**, **Never trust a skinny cook**. Whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger. If at first, you don't succeed you are about average. Don't throw the baby

out with a bathwater. Look before you leap. Don't make a mountain out of a molehill. My favorite, "Life is not like a box of chocolates - it's more like a jar of jalapeños. What you do today might burn your behind tomorrow." Wisdom!

1. But what makes those axioms, or adages, **different** than these in the book of proverbs? It's called **inspiration**. This isn't just good advice. This is **God's** advice.

D. Most of the biggest regrets in life **didn't** come from bad intentions... they came from **unwise decisions**. Not sinful - just **foolish**.

E. This series **isn't** about knowing more bible verses, **it's about learning how life works**.

1. Proverbs speaks to everyday moments: words, reactions, choices, money, relationships.

F. **So** before we talk about **wise living**, we have to ask a foundational question - *What does the Bible actually mean by wisdom?*

IV. Slide 18a **2 WHAT WISDOM IS AND ISN'T**

A. **Wisdom ≠ Information** - Proverbs 1:1-4

1. We live in the most informed generation in history.
 - a) **We are drowning in:** Information, Content, Opinions, and Noise.
But not necessarily growing in: Understanding, Discernment, and Wisdom.
 - b) Which honestly makes Proverbs feel **more relevant** than ever.
So, We don't have an information shortage. We have a wisdom gap.
 - c) **Information** is multiplying faster than ever, **but wisdom** has never been something you can download.
 - (1) We've never had more access to information - and never been more desperate for **wisdom**.
2. With all this information, I don't think mankind has gotten necessarily **smarter** - or **better** - nor **wiser**.
 - a) Yet anxiety, broken relationships, and bad decisions are everywhere.
3. Information tells you what is true, Wisdom teaches you how to live it out.

4. “You can know the **right thing** and still live the **wrong way**.”

B. Slide18b **Wisdom ≠ Age** - Proverbs 1:4-5

1. Proverbs is written for the young and the experienced.
2. Yes, age gives experience - but not automatically wisdom.
 - a) Wisdom **isn't** an age thing. You meet some young people that are very wise, and you meet some older people, *not so much*.
3. Wisdom requires teachability. “Gray hair doesn’t guarantee wisdom - humility does.”

C. Slide18c **Wisdom Is Skillful Living** (Hebrew idea behind Proverbs)

1. Wisdom is not **abstract** theology. It’s the ability to live well in God’s world, like craftsmanship - learning how things **fit together**.

D. Have you noticed Smart people never think that they have arrived? A mark of a wise person is that *they’re never finished learning*. Have you ever heard somebody said oh I’ve read the Bible before, as if there finished with it now. Why do we keep reading it? Why do we keep coming to Bible studies?

1. Slide18d **Wisdom** - at its Hebrew root means **to be skilled at something** (an expert in something). The meaning here then is to **have the skill to live well**. Or **to be an expert in godly living**. [125x’s wise/wisdom shows up in this book]

E. **Illustration**: You can own great tools and still not know how to use them. Proverbs teaches us how to handle life.

V. Slide19a **3 THE STARTING POINT OF WISDOM** So where do we **begin**?

A. Wisdom Begins with **Posture**, Not Knowledge. Proverbs 1:7; 9:10

B. **Beginning** = *the most important part/aspect*. The beginning point of knowledge - The beginning point of wisdom ... is *to fear the Lord!* [18 x’s in this book]

C. Slide19b The fear of the Lord is the beginning of **knowledge**. (and **wisdom** 9:10)

1. **Note**: fear ≠ terror [fear = awe, reverence, surrender, proper alignment]
2. **Fear** - not to shake, but to **respect**. Same word used in Lev.19:3 **Every one of you** (children) **shall revere his mother and his father**.

3. Slide19c A good working definition is: *A reverential awe that produces humble submission to a loving God*. It's based on **relationship**, *not* repercussion.

D. Wisdom doesn't start with *answers* - it starts with **humility**.

1. **Culture** says: *Trust* yourself. **Proverbs** says: *Submit* yourself.

2. This is the fork in the road for the entire book.

E. **Illust**: A mechanical or electronic **governor** on an engine - is there to keep things from going too fast, whether it's a car, a go-kart, or an e-bike. In the same way, if your life needs a governor/guardian *the fear of the Lord* is that governor. *It keeps us from **running beyond wisdom** and into damage.*

[*God doesn't give us boundaries just to restrict us, **but** to protect us!]

VI. Slide20 4 THE TWO RESPONSES TO WISDOM

A. Proverbs 1:7 - **The Wise** → receive instruction. **The Fool** → despise correction.

1. **The fool** in Proverbs isn't *unintelligent* - they're unteachable.

B. **Wisdom** asks: Will I listen? Will I slow down? Will I submit my way to God's way?

VII. Slide21 5 THE CHRIST CONNECTION TO WISDOM *very important*

A. **Jesus** doesn't just grow in wisdom, have wisdom, and teach wisdom - **He IS the wisdom of God**. Paul said, *Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God*. 1 Cor.1:24

1. So wisdom isn't just *principles*. Wisdom is **a Person**.

2. **Proverbs** shows us how wise life works. **Jesus** shows us wisdom in flesh and blood.

3. **We don't follow wisdom** - we follow **Christ**. **And** as we follow **Him**, we *learn how to live wisely*.

VIII. SlideX 6 FROM INFORMED TO TRANSFORMED

A. The **Wisdom Books** in the OT are these 5: **Job** (Why do righteous people suffer?). **Psalms** (How do we talk to God?). **Proverbs** (How should we live?). **Ecclesiastes** (What really matters?). **Song of Songs** (How do *love and desire* fit God's design?).

- B. If **Psalms** tells us *how to get along with God*, then **Proverbs** tells us *how to get along with our fellow man*. **Psalms** how to get on her knees before God. **Proverbs** how to stand on our feet & **walk on the pathways, walkways, hills & valleys of life**.
- C. Ask yourself this morning, *Where am I informed - but not transformed?*
1. Eg. Knowing to forgive but holding grudges. Knowing to slow down but staying hurried. Knowing God's Word but resisting correction.
- D. Wisdom grows when we **admit** where it hasn't yet taken root.
- E. Next Week we'll talk about the foundation of all wisdom - *The Fear of the Lord!*
1. Because until that's right, nothing else is.
- F. **Prayer:** Lord, give us teachable hearts. Help us not just know what's right - but **live it**. Teach us how life works when **You** are at **the center**.
- G. *Add Proverbs to your Bible reading. The day of the month. [18:6 *A fool's lips walk into a fight, and his mouth invites a beating*. Practical!]
- H. * **Israel Mtg**/for those signed up to meet the team. Extra Info. In Agape rm 1:30pm.
- I. * **@Risk Mtg** in Agape room 3pm.
- J. Keywords: Wisdom, skillful living.