

DEEPLY DEFINED

Opening Engagement

MAIN IDEA:

Wisdom, the opposite of foolishness, helps us understand what it means to fear the Lord, and live a life of humility, joy, and peace.

PRE-READING:

Members should read chapters 21-25 before group time.

OPENING ENGAGEMENT:

What is the definition of wisdom?

Compare the definition of wisdom with the definition of foolishness.

The definition of wisdom is learned, cultivated, skilled, clever; judging correctly and following best course of action. The definition of foolish is to be senseless, treat with contempt; the wear away, crumble, wither, fall, or fade. They are exact opposites. One is learned, the other senseless. One is cultivated, the other withers. One follows the best course of action, the other treats things or people with contempt.

The etymology of the Hebrew word foolish means to wear out. Ask, "How can living foolishly wear us out?"

Discuss

Have the class look up Proverbs 10:8-9, Proverbs 10:23, and Proverbs 29:11. Compare and contrast things that are foolish and things that are wise. How we live our lives should reflect wisdom. Read James 3:17-18, and list on a white board each aspect of wisdom in these verses. Discuss why you think each attribute is mentioned.

Proverbs 2:1-5 meshes wisdom with a positive fear of the Lord. Contrast positive and negative fear, then read Proverbs 2:1-5. Identify the things we must do to understand the fear of the Lord. Point out that this is an "if/then" statement. If we do these things, then we will learn to fear the Lord. Ask, Why is it important we understand what fearing the Lord means (Prov. 2:9 helps answer this question)?

It is wise to fear the Lord and walk in his ways. Another way we can see wisdom lived out is in an attitude of humility. Ask the class to give some biblical examples of humility and how this attitude shows Godly wisdom (or, conversely when pride led before a fall!). We can see humility when we live out the greatest commandment, found in Matthew 22:37-39. Read it, and point out that humility is seen in loving God and others only when we live out the love we feel. Love not lived out is pointless, and service without love is empty.

Have everyone open to Micah 6:8. Point out the word "require" and discuss what that means pertaining to this passage. Ask, How do the three things - justice, mercy, and humility, show a life of wisdom?



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Next, break down the meaning of justice, mercy, and humility and discuss why God would require those who want to be Christlike to live with these attitudes, and how they all come back to wisdom.

Have someone read Phil. 2:1-4, then apply these verbs to our lives and discuss, How can we encourage others as a group? How can we comfort others as a group? How can we fellowship with the spirit as a group? How can we show tenderness and compassion as a group? Also focus on how we should do this individually. Remind your group, Life isn't about you. It's about God IN you.

Another way we see wisdom lived out is through joy. John chapter 15 shows us the importance of "remaining" in Christ, and that the outcome of remaining is so that His joy can be in us, and our joy may be made complete. Discuss how remaining in Christ brings joy. What does it look like to remain in Christ?

Point out that the Greek words for joy and grace have the same root. In English we don't have this link, so we don't naturally put these two words together the way they would have seen them linked in biblical times. Discuss the statement, "If you refuse to live in grace, you will never live in joy." Why is this true?

The last partner with wisdom we read about this week was peace. What is the definition of peace? How could this alone show wisdom? Read both Philippians 4:6-7 and Isaiah 55:7. Focus on how peace passes all understanding in Philippians, and compare that with how God's ways are higher than our ways in Isaiah. Discuss why it brings peace when we know God's wisdom is higher than our own, and eases worry and anxiety.

Wraps It Up

To end the lesson, write fear of the Lord, humility, joy, and peace on one side, and then an arrow from each of those to the word wisdom. Discuss how as we gain wisdom of who God is, we can make the arrows go both ways. Wisdom lived out helps us grow in our fear of the Lord, humility, joy, and peace. Ask the class to discuss what they can do to grow in Godly wisdom this week. That can be rhetorical or used as discussion depending on your group.

Closing Prayer

Thank the Lord for wisdom, for joy and peace. Ask him to help each person in your group grow in wisdom, humility, and fear of the Lord.

*Session 5
Wisdom*

