

## Words to the Wise

### Proverbs 1:1-7

### Message Outline

Wisdom = the successful application of knowledge

When it comes to wisdom.....

The wise embrace.

The foolish reject.

When it comes to God.....

The wise fear.

The foolish ignore.

The Fear of the Lord = the wholesome dread of displeasing God

*Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight. Prize her highly, and she will exalt you; she will honor you if you embrace her." Proverbs 4:7-8*

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## Looking Back

We all need wisdom for life. Every day in multiple areas of our lives, we are faced with difficult decisions, challenging circumstances, and complicated relationships. How do we manage it all well? That's what the book of Proverbs explores. The sobering truth of Proverbs is that all of us are susceptible to thinking or acting foolishly. And when we do, we hurt ourselves, hurt others, and keep ourselves from the life that God wants for us. So, how can "foolproof" our lives? In this first week, we look at the differences between the wise and the fool in Proverbs and in so doing get a glimpse "under the hood" of our own lives and whether wisdom matters to us.

## Thinking It Through

agree|disagree, consider|contemplate

*"Wisdom is the right use of knowledge. To know is not to be wise. Many men know a great deal, and are all the greater fools for it. There is no fool so great a fool as a knowing fool. But to know how to use knowledge is to have wisdom." – Spurgeon*

*"Instead of reading the Bible to assure ourselves we are right, read it to discover where we are not listening." – Scazzero*

*"One properly fears Yahweh because he is the most powerful being in the universe. Only fools would not be afraid of a being who has the power of life and death over them. Such persons do not understand their place in the cosmos and thus do not know how to act in the world. All other wisdom builds on this point, and there is no wisdom without it." – Longman*

## Working It Out

1. When you think of a wise person, what do you think about?

When you think of a foolish person, what do you think about?

2. Read Proverbs 1:1-7. What words are repeated? What words stand out to you? How would you describe the author's tone or mood?
3. Matt described wisdom in Proverbs as the successful application of knowledge. How is Biblical wisdom different than the way we think of wisdom in our world today?
4. Proverbs makes it clear that those who are wise pursue wisdom. Who is someone you know that pursues and embraces wisdom?

5. Why is it important to know that none of are "foolproof"?
  6. Matt described the fear of the Lord as the wholesome dread of displeasing God. Do you agree or disagree? What about that definition stands out to you?
  7. What is an area of your life that you are more aware of trying to not displease God? And what is an area of your life that it's easy to forget about that?
  8. Is there a time in your life when you were "right in your own eyes"? Talk about that season and what caused a change in you?
  9. Read through Matt's "Wisdom-Foolishness Inventory" and, if you feel comfortable, share your reflections with the group. Perhaps what is one question that convicted you or if you decided to answer and add up the numbers, what is your "score?"
    1. *On a scale of 1-5, how open am I to the possibility that there are foolish patterns in my life I am unaware of that need to be addressed by God? (1-not open at all; 5-very open)*
    2. *On a scale of 1-5, how important is the acquiring and application of God's wisdom in my daily life? (1-not important at all; 5-very important)*
    3. *On a scale of 1-5, how strongly do I actually believe that when it comes to my relationships, finances, work, sexuality, and daily decision-making, God is wiser than me? (1-not strongly at all; 5-very strongly)*
    4. *On a scale of 1-5, how tangibly does my life demonstrate a conscious desire to not displease God in areas like relationships, finances, work, sexuality, and decision-making? (1-not tangibly at all; 5-very tangibly)*
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