



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

WISDOM

SCRIPTURES

PROVERBS 13:20 · JAMES 1:5 · JAMES 3:13 · GENESIS 2:18 · 1 CORINTHIANS 15:33

THE MESSAGE

God wants to give you wisdom, and James says to ask Him for it, but the answer to that prayer is usually not a lightning bolt. It is a person. The whole message came out of one verse, walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm, and the point was that Solomon did not say walk near the wise or read about the wise. Wisdom does not get downloaded, it gets absorbed, and it happens over time by walking with somebody. Gene said the seasons he has been closest to God are the seasons he had the right people around him, and the seasons he drifted and struggled are the ones where he did not. He told the church that a six year succession process went well because he refused to make the biggest decision of his life alone. The big idea was that your life moves in the direction of the voices you trust, and the declaration was a refusal to do life apart from godly community.

BEFORE YOU START

This was a message about *your* group, delivered to the whole church, by the senior pastor!. He described what a small group is, told people where to sign up, and said his hope long after he is gone from Eastside is that every single person is in a circle like that or leading one.

Handle the invite piece carefully.

At The Movies starts next weekend and it is the easiest series of the year to bring somebody to. That makes this the right week to ask who is missing, but there is a difference between a group that invites because it has something worth joining and a group that recruits because it was told to. Question 4 asks the harder version first, whether your group is actually a place where wisdom is being absorbed, and only then asks who should be in it.

You are not going to get through all eight questions, and you are not supposed to. You choose which ones fit your group, and you choose the order you take them in. Spend your time where the conversation is actually alive rather than trying to cover everything.

ICEBREAKER

Gene showed off a lake trout and a walleye and then admitted he is only an okay fisherman, he just fishes with the right guys, so he is really a great follower of great fishermen. *What are you better at than you have any right to be, purely because of who taught you or who you did it alongside?*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Five here, and three more in Go Deeper. Take whichever ones fit your group, in whatever order you want. Nobody is grading you on covering all of them.

1

PROVERBS 13:20

Solomon did not say walk near the wise, or know a wise person, or read a wise person's book. He said walk with them, which in Scripture means a pattern of shared movement over time rather than a single event. *Wisdom is not downloaded, it is absorbed. Where in your life have you been consulting wisdom from a distance when what you actually need is to walk with somebody?*

A lot of people will name a podcast, an author, or a counselor they saw twice. Let them get there and then press gently on the difference.

2

JAMES 3:13

Five kinds of wise people were named: someone older who has walked with God longer and already paid for mistakes you have not made yet, someone who will tell you the truth even when it costs them something, someone who has been where you are going, someone who asks good questions instead of handing you easy answers, and someone who prays for you and with you regularly. *Which of the five do you actually have in your life right now, and which one is missing?*

Push for names rather than categories. Whoever cannot fill a slot has just found their assignment for this fall.

3

GENESIS 2:18

We work, shop, go to school, and buy groceries without speaking to anyone, and the time we spend alone has climbed steadily for over a decade. Gene said he is not anti online, he is anti isolation, because Google can tell you how to fix a faucet and AI can tell you why your car is making that noise, but neither one can take you by the shoulder and say learn from my mistakes, I have been down this road you think you want to travel. *Where has isolation quietly crept into your life, and what did you tell yourself about why it made sense?*

4

Gene said the wisest people do not just follow Jesus, they follow Jesus together, and then he told the whole church that a small group is where most people at Eastside actually do it. So take an honest look at this group. Is this a place where wisdom is genuinely being absorbed, where somebody would say the truth even if it cost them something, or have we settled for a group that is mostly enjoyable? He was blunt that having fun is a byproduct of friendship and not the goal. Second half of the question, and answer it out loud. *Who do you know that has no circle like this, and what would it take to get them here?* At The Movies starts next weekend and is the easiest series of the year to bring somebody to.

These two halves belong together. A group that is honest about the first question earns the right to ask the second, and a group that invites people into something shallow is just adding chairs. Get actual names on the table before you move on.

5

1 CORINTHIANS 15:33

A fool in Proverbs is not somebody unintelligent, it is somebody who gives no thought to God or His plans, which means you can have a doctorate and still qualify. Paul says bad company corrupts good character. The big idea was that your life moves in the direction of the voices you trust, so audit them. *Whose voice is loudest in your week right now, counting the feeds you scroll and the shows you play and the friends you text most, and where is that voice actually taking you?*

GO DEEPER

Three more, for groups that move quickly or want to push further. The first one is built for the people at your table who love to dig into the text itself.

GD1

PROVERBS 1:20-33 · 1 KINGS 11:1-11

Proverbs opens with wisdom personified as a woman shouting in the street, calling out in the busiest part of town, which means wisdom is not hiding from anybody, it is loud and available and mostly ignored. Then read what happened to the man who wrote these proverbs. Solomon asked God for wisdom and got more of it than anyone alive, and he still finished his life with his heart turned away, largely because of who he surrounded himself with. *What does it do to Proverbs 13:20 when you realize the wisest man who ever lived wrote it and then failed to live it?*

This is the honest tension in the whole message and it is worth naming rather than avoiding. Wisdom is not a possession you acquire once, and having it in your head is no protection at all.

GD2

JAMES 1:5-8 · JAMES 3:13-18

James says to ask God for wisdom and that He gives generously, and then a couple of chapters later he describes two entirely different kinds of wisdom, one that is earthly and produces envy and selfish ambition and disorder, and one from above that is pure, peace loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy, impartial, and sincere. Read that second list slowly as a test rather than as poetry. Run the voices you are currently trusting through it. *Which ones pass?*

GD3

Gene talked about a man named Bob in an early small group who never sat him down and taught a seminar on marriage, he just consistently opened the car door for his wife and was gentle with her, and by walking with him Gene became a better husband without noticing it happening. Somebody younger or newer is doing that with you right now, watching without announcing it. *Who is it, and what are they currently learning from you? What would need to change if you took that seriously this fall?*

CLOSE YOUR GROUP IN PRAYER

Every campus stood and declared this together: “I declare, with God’s help and the power of the Holy Spirit, I will seek wisdom. My independence, isolation, or even wrong friends are the enemies of my growth. I refuse to do life apart from godly community.”

Pray for the specific decisions people named tonight, the ones where they still do not know which direction to go. Pray by name for the people your group said they were going to invite. And pray for whoever in the room realized they do not have a single one of those five wise voices yet, that God brings them somebody this fall.