

CLAYTON & SHARIE KING

GROUNDNDED

WISDOM FROM PROVERBS AND JAMES

For real life



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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



CLAYTON KING serves as a Teaching Pastor at NewSpring Church in Anderson, South Carolina. In addition to his leadership role there, he spends his time traveling, preaching, and speaking in churches, conferences, and leadership events, as well as running Crossroads/Clayton King Ministries, which is the non-profit organization he founded in 1995. His ministry offers summer camps, student conferences, and leadership and coaching networks. He is married to Sharie, and they enjoy working, writing, and speaking together. He loves good books, black coffee, four-wheelers and anything that gets him outside and in the woods.

SHARIE KING married Clayton in 1999. She's the co-founder of Crossroads Summer Camps and Clayton King Ministries. Sharie felt a call into ministry at age 12 and has traveled to over 20 countries serving the nations and sharing the gospel. She blogs regularly at sharieking.com and hosts a podcast called *Overcoming Monday*. She loves to paint, snow ski, and spend time with her family. She and Clayton are parents to two teenage sons, Jacob and Joseph.

INTRODUCTION

In 1 Kings 3, God asked King Solomon what He could give Solomon as he stepped into this newly appointed position of king over Israel. Wow, what an offer! God, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, asked Solomon how He could help with his new job as leader of God's people. Solomon could have asked for all sorts of things, but he chose to request wisdom. He could have asked God for an army that would never be defeated or for his own longevity as king, but again—he didn't. Solomon knew enough about being king to realize he desperately needed God's help if he wanted to be a faithful king like his father, David. Instead of offering up a self-serving prayer that would only benefit him, Solomon asked for wisdom to lead God's people well. Sure, wisdom would help him, but he also saw it as a way to help the people he was leading.

Solomon's situation isn't too different from our own. No, we may not be leaders to masses of people like Solomon, but we desperately need God's help to know how to live on a daily basis. Because of that, our prayer should be that God would grant us His wisdom.

HOW TO USE

This book contains eight weekly group studies. Each group study is designed to be one hour, with about 10-15 minutes of video teaching and 45 minutes of group interaction/discussion.

Each session consists of an overview, a watch page, a group discussion guide, and four days of personal study. There is also a leader guide at the back of this study with helpful tips to use during group time. As you finish each group session, encourage students to complete the personal studies and devotions on their own.

START

This page includes a brief summary of the lesson to introduce the video segment.

WATCH

This page includes key points from the video teaching, along with space for taking notes as participants watch the video.

DISCUSS

These two pages include questions and statements that guide the group into further study of the topic through additional Bible passages and questions.

PERSONAL STUDY

Each session contains four days of personal study that follows every session. Be sure to work through these in the days leading to the next session. Allow for some time at the beginning of each session to discuss what was learned during these personal study days.

DEVOTIONS

In addition to Personal Study days, 30 days of devotions are included in the back of the book so students can continue their study of Proverbs and James on their own after completing the group sessions.



WISDOM

SESSION ONE



START

What is wisdom? Some people point to knowledge and information. Others may think of wisdom as life experience. Still, a few might recall one-liners similar to what you might find in fortune cookies. In this session, we see that God has given us His Word to teach us how to walk in wisdom. As we dig into the Book of Proverbs, we learn that wisdom is rooted in the fear of the Lord, how it leads us to trust in God, and how it offers us practical guidance for everyday life. Ultimately, wisdom isn't *something* but *someone*—Jesus. In Jesus we have the very wisdom and Word of God, which means if we want to become wise, we need to first have a relationship with Him.

WATCH

Fill in the blanks to follow along as you watch the Session 1 video.

1. If wisdom is a priceless buried treasure, then the fear of the Lord is the _____ and the _____ that takes you there.
2. There is a reverence for the _____ of God that should always follow a revelation of the _____ of God.
3. The best thing you can do for yourself is to _____ the Lord.
4. Wisdom is about _____ the right things. When you fear God, you don't have to be _____ anything else.

Discuss

1. Who in your life displays biblical wisdom consistently in their actions? What are some characteristics you admire about those people? How do they display a healthy fear and reverence of God?
2. How has this session challenged you when it comes to thinking about wisdom and how wisdom is attained in someone's life?

Answers: 1) map, road; 2) power, character; 3) fear 4) fearing, afraid of

GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Proverbs 1:1-7.

The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel: For learning wisdom and discipline; for understanding insightful sayings; for receiving prudent instruction in righteousness, justice, and integrity; for teaching shrewdness to the inexperienced, knowledge and discretion to a young man—let a wise person listen and increase learning, and let a discerning person obtain guidance—for understanding a proverb or a parable, the words of the wise, and their riddles. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and discipline.

—Proverbs 1:1-7

What’s the difference between worldly “wisdom” and biblical wisdom?

How do these verses describe wisdom?

Do you think being wise is more than knowing lots of information? Why or why not?

Notice how these verses relate being wise to receiving information. Wisdom involves understanding insightful sayings, instruction, learning, and knowledge. But wisdom is more than information, though it is certainly not less. Although wisdom involves information, it would be wrong to assume someone is wise just because he or she has a lot of information. Solomon said wisdom is rooted in the fear of the Lord (v. 7), which means we need to start with God if we want to possess true wisdom and knowledge.

Where do you think most people turn for instruction and advice today?

How might those voices of influence and authority be different for Christians?

Wisdom starts with a relationship with God. He is the source of all wisdom, insight, and knowledge. Think about that: God knows all things! He never has a new thought. He is never surprised by new information. He knows all information perfectly. When we're looking for advice or instruction, He isn't just one option among many—He is our only option.

The Book of Proverbs describes a foolish person as one who doesn't fear the Lord. Since they don't fear the Lord—the source of wisdom—they naturally despise wisdom.

Read Proverbs 3:1-8.

My son, don't forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commands; for they will bring you many days, a full life, and well-being. Never let loyalty and faithfulness leave you. Tie them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will find favor and high regard with God and people. Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know him, and he will make your paths straight. Don't be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and turn away from evil. This will be healing for your body and strengthening for your bones. —Proverbs 3:1-8

According to these verses, what does wisdom lead to?

Solomon said wisdom is rooted in the fear of the Lord, and our fear of the Lord must translate into a rock solid faith in God. In other words, wisdom leads to a life that demonstrates faith in God.

What are some characteristics of a life lived by faith?

Look at the connection Solomon made here. If wisdom leads to a life of faith in God, then that faith will demonstrate dependence upon God in all things. This kind of faith leads us to look to God and trust in Him, rather than looking inward and being self-reliant. It will lead us to rely on the clarity, direction, and understanding only God can give instead of trusting our own smarts or giftedness.

In what areas of life are you tempted to rely on yourself instead of God? Why do you think we are tempted to be self-reliant and independent from God?

Where do you need God's wisdom in your own life (relationships or otherwise)?

Wisdom is about truth in action. God not only wants us to *know* the truth, but He wants us to *live* the truth. This is why the book of Proverbs is an extremely practical book. Sure, it teaches us to know certain things, but it also teaches us to do certain things. God, through the wisdom he gave to Solomon, intended for his hearers to live out the truths contained in these proverbs.

Read Proverbs 22:1-10.

A good name is to be chosen over great wealth; favor is better than silver and gold. Rich and poor have this in common: the LORD makes them all. A sensible person sees danger and takes cover, but the inexperienced keep going and are punished. Humility, the fear of the LORD, results in wealth, honor, and life. There are thorns and snares on the way of the crooked; the one who guards himself stays far from them. Start a youth out on his way; even when he grows old he will not depart from it. The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is a slave to the lender. The one who sows injustice will reap disaster, and the rod of his fury will be destroyed. A generous person will be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor. Drive out a mocker, and conflict goes too; then quarreling and dishonor will cease. –Proverbs 22:1-10

In space below, summarize in your own words what Solomon challenged us to do in each verse:

v. 1:

v. 2:

v. 3:

v. 4:

v. 5:

v. 6:

v. 7:

v. 8:

v. 9:

v. 10:

Consider the areas mentioned in just these few verses and how important wisdom is to each one. The danger here is that we would only read and hear these, maybe study them more in-depth, but never actually apply them to our daily lives. Wisdom is about transformation, not just information. Wisdom is meant to do more than take up space in our minds; it's meant to be lived out as a result of a transformed heart that is completely and totally dependent upon God. It begins on a personal level with an internal fear and love for God, which expresses itself externally in the way it shapes a person's actions each day.

How has this session challenged you when it comes to pursuing biblical wisdom in your own life?

How can you seek to grow in wisdom this week?

PERSONAL STUDY



DAY 1

Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God—who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly—and it will be given to him. —James 1:5

How do you usually get something you really want? You ask, and then you go for it.

When I was 15 years old, I wanted a car, but I really wanted a Camaro. Since I knew my parents wouldn't buy it for me, I decided to buy it myself. That would mean making money, which would mean hard work. I would have to take on an extra job. I would have to save up everything I made. I couldn't spend all my cash going out with my friends. Buying my own car would require a lot from me.


In other words, when I decided I wanted a Camaro, I had to choose to pursue it. I went after it! I made phone calls and got extra jobs. I cut grass, hauled trash, and even spread black tar on driveways in 100 degree heat. My pursuit paid off when I paid for my 1979 black Camaro with cash! To get what I wanted, I had to decide to pursue it. Wisdom works the same way—if you want to be grounded in it, you have to go after it. The first step is to ask God to help you. He will give you the wisdom you need, because He's the only source of real wisdom in the entire universe.

What are you pursuing right now?

What do you spend most of your free time doing?

When have you made up your mind to pursue something and it worked out?

Have you ever failed when you pursued something? How did that feel? How did you respond?



What would your spiritual life look like if you got serious about pursuing wisdom?

How much time do you spend (on average) reading Scripture every day?

How would your life change if you doubled or tripled the amount of time you spend reading and studying the Bible?

DAY 2

What would you be willing to give up in order to get something you really want?

Proverbs says even if it costs us everything, we must gain wisdom. That's a rather strong statement to make. It assumes wisdom is more valuable than pretty much anything we have. So, what would you be willing to give up to get wisdom?

When Clayton's dad died, he left us a small sum of money with the instruction to buy some four wheelers for our family. My kids were really into ATVs (all-terrain vehicles) at the time, and we lived on a big farm in North Carolina where we had plenty of room to ride them. We had hours of fun and got muddy from head to toe. Then we moved to South Carolina. We no longer had a big farm with lots of trails. My boys were more into sports and church. So we decided we would sell the ATVs and use the money for something even more fun; a family trip to Hawaii.

We gave up something we had for something we wanted. The trip was amazing. We swam with sharks. We went snorkeling. We hiked dormant volcanoes. And we gained memories that we will never, ever forget (and some really cool pictures).

Wisdom is more valuable than anything you currently have in your life; without wisdom, you can't make the good choices that allow you to enjoy the rest

of the life God has given you. So it makes sense to prioritize wisdom over everything else.

Think about the thing you want most right now (a trip to the beach over spring break, a Ferrari, the newest smart phone, etc.). How much do you think that would cost?

What do you think is the average cost of tuition at your dream college? Now take a minute to look it up, and write down that answer.

What are some things in life that you love or enjoy that are free (clean air, exercise, being outside, etc.)?

What do you think it costs to gain wisdom?

Is there a dollar amount you have to pay to become wise? Why or why not?

DAY 3

Proverbs 1:7 says fools despise correction and instruction. That's a bold statement. Can you imagine calling someone a fool to their face? Or can you imagine being called a fool by someone, especially someone you respect or look up to? In our politically correct culture, it's rare to hear such a strong word used to describe someone. So why does the Bible use it?

The Book of Proverbs uses the word fool more than once, actually. Wisdom and foolishness are compared over and over again, as are wise people and fools. God uses such a strong word in Proverbs for effect. Wisdom is so important to God

that He chooses to use a word that is sure to get your attention. He's not being mean; He's being loving and honest. But don't get sidetracked by the force of the word *fool*. Instead, decide not to walk the path of foolishness, not to ignore the wisdom of God and His Word.

Proverbs 17:28 says, "Even a fool is considered wise when he keeps silent—discerning, when he seals his lips." The meaning here is simple—when you spend all your time talking, you can't hear anything anyone is saying to you. That's what fools do. So, the first step to ending your foolish ways is to stop talking and be quiet so you can actually hear what God is trying to teach you. Even fools can become wise they will close their mouths and open their ears.

How would you react if someone called you a fool?

Are you acting in foolish ways right now that you will later regret?

Do you show signs of wisdom or foolishness by the way you react to older people when they give you advice about your decisions?

What barriers in your life right now are holding you back from pursuing God's wisdom?

DAY 4

One who listens to life-giving rebukes will be at home among the wise. Anyone who ignores discipline despises himself, but whoever listens to correction acquires good sense. —Proverbs 15:31-32

Growing up, I played all three major sports (football, basketball, and baseball). At a young age, I became accustomed to what it was like to be under the authority of an older man. I got used to having a coach. It was his job to instruct us, to correct

us, and to train our team to execute the rules of whatever sport we were playing. I loved some of my coaches and others weren't exactly my favorite. But they all had one thing in common, from little league all the way through my final high school football season: They knew more than I did.

Why would I possibly resist the wisdom and knowledge of a coach who sees what I don't see and understands what I don't understand? That would be the definition of foolish. That is exactly what Proverbs warns against repeatedly. God has complete knowledge of all things. He's been around longer than anyone, so His experience is unparalleled. Therefore, He is the Person you need to go to first when you're confused or struggling in any area of your life. Whether it's temptation or conflict with your parents, or feelings of insecurity, or an addiction—there is no One better equipped to coach you through it than God Himself.

**Have you ever acted in a foolish way and regretted it later?
What happened?**

What is your first internal reaction when someone corrects you? Do you get upset?

Why do you think it's so easy to reject the instruction and correction of those who are older and wiser than you?



WHO AMONG YOU IS WISE AND UNDERSTANDING? JAMES 3:13

We live in an age of information. At the touch of a button we can access a world of information on nearly any given topic. While there are certainly advantages to this, the fact remains that having lots of information isn't the same as having wisdom. Sure, we may be able to write a research paper for school more easily and even self-diagnose a health issue, but that doesn't mean we know how to live wisely.

Ultimately, wisdom isn't about knowing something, but knowing someone—Jesus—and how He transforms our hearts and helps us to live and act wisely before others.

Building on themes in Proverbs such as wise counsel, the heart, relationships, actions and attitudes, work, money, and the power of words, each session is supported through practical application found in the Book of James. Throughout the study, authors Clayton and Sharie King uncover not only what the Bible has to say, but practical advice on how to live wisely in each of these areas.

ALSO INCLUDED: Thirty days of devotional material are included in the back of the book so that you can remain engaged in the content after completing the group Bible study.

CLAYTON & SHARIE KING

CLAYTON KING serves as a Teaching Pastor at NewSpring Church in Anderson, SC. In addition to his leadership role there, he spends his time traveling, preaching and speaking in churches, conferences and leadership events, as well as running Crossroads/Clayton King Ministries. He is married to Sharie, and they enjoy working, writing, and speaking together.

SHARIE KING married Clayton in 1999. She's the co-founder of Crossroads Summer Camps and Clayton King Ministries. Sharie blogs regularly at sharieking.com and hosts a podcast called Overcoming Monday. She and Clayton have two sons, Jacob and Joseph.

