



BETTER

Ways of Wisdom

#npbetter

Week 7

7 of 12

July 19, 2020

Bottom Line: Wisdom is the God-given ability to see life with rare objectivity and to handle life with rare stability.

Icebreaker: What is a wise statement /principle you learned by the time you left high school that you still live by? Who taught it to you?

Key Verse: *Pay attention to these instructions, for anyone who fears God will avoid extremes.* Ecclesiastes 7:18

Up to now, we have been hearing mostly Solomon's angst and cynicism as he had lived much of life with wisdom taking a backseat. But as wisdom began to return to Solomon, he began to view life above the sun instead of under the sun. Above-the-sun wisdom allows us to operate in the sphere of the wisdom of God, and we begin to see as God sees and do as God does. There is a remarkable absence of fear because His wisdom provides the necessary objectivity and stability. It gives the ability to live above the opinions of people and horizontal perspectives.

From that above-the-sun perspective, Solomon now tells us: **Be a person of character** (v. 1). **Live every day for one day** (vv. 1b-2). **Learn to grieve** (v. 3). **Develop an eternal perspective** (v. 4). **Be teachable** (vv. 5-6). **Don't lose your moral authority** (v. 7). **Practice patience** (v. 8). **Deal with your anger** (v. 9). **Make wisdom a priority** (vv. 11-12). **Hold things loosely** (vv. 13-14). **Avoid extremes** (v. 18). **Realize people are broken** (vv. 15-25). **Sexual sin is deadly** (v. 26).

Each of us could illustrate Solomon's wisdom with our personal experiences. If a person has a modicum of maturity, all of these principles ring true to us, even if acknowledging them is uncomfortable. But there is often a great gap between the availability of wisdom and the acceptance and application of it. The good news is that now, through our own intimate relationship with Jesus, we have a reliable channel through which wisdom can come. The closer we are to Jesus, the more readily we sense and apply wisdom. The world is not out of control. God still has the whole world in His hands. The question is not ever, "Will God's wisdom work?" The question is always, "Are we putting it to work?" Solomon would tell you to take that question very seriously. That is the way of the wise.

THINK IT OVER >>>

What impacted you most from the message?

Wisdom is the ability to live above the opinions of people and horizontal perspective. What does that mean to you? How are you experiencing that?

What are the things that typically vie with character for emphasis in our lives?

Live every day for **one** day. Develop an eternal perspective. How would you advise someone to do these things?

Every change we experience in life includes loss, because you give up something old to get something new. Sometimes the only appropriate, logical response to life is grief. God wants you to be intentional in your grief. Grief is a choice. Not everything that is helpful and healthy feels good. You have to let yourself mourn losses so you can receive God's blessing. Reflect and discuss.

LOOK IT OVER <<<

You need someone who loves you enough to tell you the truth. Why do you think we try to avoid this as a truth-teller? As a truth-receiver?

What does it mean to lose your moral authority? What are the consequences?

The end result of misplaced anger is alienation. Reflect and discuss.

What does it mean to "hold things loosely"? To "avoid extremes"? What are the challenges?

Is it threatening to you to realize that people, including you, are broken? What do you currently do to deal with your own brokenness?

We cannot make ourselves wise. You cannot will yourself to be wise. If that is true, what is our responsibility for wisdom?

NEXT STEPS

1. Look over Solomon's principles. Where do you most need to increase your wisdom?
2. Develop a commitment and plan to work with God on that area.
3. Pray for yourself and your group members to grow in God's wisdom, the wisdom above the sun.

EVALUATION/ACTION

Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ

Bottom Line: Wisdom is the God-given ability to see life with rare objectivity and to handle life with rare stability.

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at newpointe.org/daily:

Monday: John 13:14-15

Tuesday: 2 Corinthians 1:3-5

Wednesday: Matthew 12:20

Thursday: Pr. 15:12; Pr. 15:32; Pr. 13:10

Friday: 1 Corinthians 15:33

Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.

(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting)