



A 4-WEEK SERIES FROM PROVERBS AND THE EPISTLES ON

LIVING WISELY

A WISDOM SERIES FROM GROW'S ANNUAL TEACHING STRATEGY

The main graphic features the words "GOOD CALL" in large, white, textured, 3D-style letters with an orange drop shadow. To the left is a blue and white basketball. To the right is a red circular whistle with the word "WISDOM" repeated around its perimeter. The background is a dark chalkboard with faint white chalk drawings of circles and arrows. At the bottom left, there are seven circular portraits of the creators. At the bottom right, the text "CREATED WITH..." is followed by the names of the creators in white capital letters.

GOOD CALL

CREATED WITH...
**ROBBY SMERNOFF, CARLY BARTLETT, GEOFFREY LAWSON,
GARRET SHELSTA, KENDALL SMITH & NIK WALBORN**

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ABOUT THIS SERIES

Coaches help their teams by guiding them towards good decisions. They create the strategy, put together a game plan, and send their players out to make it happen. Wouldn't it be nice for someone to do that for all of our decisions? Thankfully, God gives us wisdom whenever we feel like we could use a good coach. In this 4-week series from Proverbs and the Epistles, we'll learn more about the wisdom God offers us whenever we want to make godly decisions. We'll see that **wise people practice what God has said** and **share what God has given them**. We'll also look at how the Holy Spirit helps **wise people follow God's guidance** and how **wise people's words show God's love**.

WEEK 1

This week, we'll look at the start of Solomon's reign as king when he prepared to make decisions on behalf of the people he served.

- **BIG IDEA:** Wise people practice what God has said.
- **BIBLE:** 2 Chronicles 1:7–13; James 1:22–25; Proverbs 1:7

WEEK 2

This week, we'll look at one of John's letters as he coached his church to follow the example of Jesus.

- **BIG IDEA:** Wise people share what God has given them.
- **BIBLE:** 1 John 3:16–20; Proverbs 22:8–9; Matthew 25:35,36,40

WEEK 3

This week, we'll look at one of Paul's letters when he advised a church to listen to the Holy Spirit God gave to them.

- **BIG IDEA:** Wise people follow God's guidance.
- **BIBLE:** Ephesians 1:15–23; Proverbs 1:20–33; Luke 2:52

WEEK 4

This week, we'll hear from James as he helped inspire his church to think differently about the words they say to each other.

- **BIG IDEA:** Wise people's words show God's love.
- **BIBLE:** James 3:13–4:3; Ephesians 4:29–5:2; Matthew 12:34

MEMORY VERSE: "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."
— James 1:22 (NIV)

HACKS

Every ministry is different. Whether you're teaching middle schoolers, high schoolers, teenagers with disabilities, or all three, here's how to hack this series to fit your unique and diverse audience.

MIDDLE SCHOOL HACKS

REVISE

To make this series more accessible for middle schoolers, here's what to adjust . . .

In Week 1, help teenagers define wisdom. As you talk about 2 Chronicles 1:7–13, help middle schoolers differentiate between wisdom and knowledge. Encourage them to ask a few questions if they are still confused.

When discussing how wise people share what God gave them in Week 2, provide plenty of examples of things they can share. Middle schoolers may not feel like they have much to offer others, so give plenty of examples to show them that sharing can include more than monetary resources.

Consider having high school students share a story during "Good Call Community" (Week 2) and "God's Wisdom" (Week 3) story modules. It allows your older teenagers to share their stories. In addition, middle school students can be significantly impacted when they see people in a similar stage of life give an example of what following Jesus looks like.

In Week 3's Artificial Athletics image module, please don't assume your middle schooler knows about AI. Not every teenager has access to that technology, but they will someday, so you can still talk about it. Please make sure the examples you use will work for them.

Every week, spend extra time helping middle schoolers learn how to apply wisdom to their decision-making. Remind your volunteers that this is a new skill and will take time. Be patient as they learn new skills and help them find simple ways to feel like they are successful. If they sense they can successfully do something, they are more likely to continue replicating the habit.

REPLACE

And here are the Building Blocks you may want to swap for something else . . .

In the weekly "Playbook" responses, replace the daily habits with weekly experiences. Ease middle schoolers into new patterns by setting them up to succeed. Make their goals realistic and attainable. In addition, make these weekly Playbook responses very practical. These new habits can feel challenging to begin if middle schoolers don't see an easy way to start them in their lives. Give plenty of examples of ways they can sprinkle these into their weekly routines.

REMEMBER

Remember that middle school students will need plenty of time to talk about applying wisdom. Middle schoolers may developmentally struggle with talking to God about making decisions. In early adolescence, many act instinctively without much reflection or will become paralyzed by overthinking an action. Consider empowering your volunteers to follow up with their students during the week on how applying Godly wisdom in their lives is going.

WEEK 1

DISCUSSION GUIDE *for middle schoolers*



THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

Wise people practice what God has said.

BIBLE

2 Chronicles 1:7–13; James 1:22–25;
Proverbs 1:7

ABOUT THIS WEEK

We have to make so many daily decisions, and without someone to coach and guide us, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. This week, we'll look at the start of Solomon's reign as king when he prepared to make decisions on behalf of the people he served. He chose to learn from God and trust God to coach him as he led the nation, reminding us how **wise people practice what God has said**.

- **Have any of you had a great coach in your life? What makes a great coach?**
- **What would you say is the difference between being "smart" and being "wise"?**
- **If God told you to ask for whatever you wanted, what would you ask for?**
- **What keeps you from doing the wise thing, even when you know that it's the best thing to do?**
- **Read Proverbs 1:7. In this passage, "fear" is another way of saying "awe" or "respect." In other words, it is characteristic of someone who lives out Godly wisdom. What are some other characteristics you have seen in people who have wisdom and live it out? What would it look like for you to apply one of those to your life?**
- **What is one thing you can start doing this week to "practice" doing what God says?**

GOOD CALL PLAYBOOK: WEEK 1

WISE PEOPLE PRACTICE
WHAT GOD HAS SAID.

THE PLAY: REMEMBER SCRIPTURE

One of the ways you can practice what God has said is through reading and memorizing Scripture. Spend a few minutes each day repeating and remembering this Bible verse this week. Then, ask God to help you make good calls for a few minutes today.

"If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you." James 1:5

CHECKLIST

DAY 1

DAY 2

DAY 3

DAY 4

DAY 5

DAY 6

DAY 7

Write down any moment this week when you needed to make a good call and put into practice what God said. What was the result?

GOOD CALL PLAYBOOK: WEEK 1

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WHAT GOD HAS SAID.

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Write down any moment this week when you needed to make a good call and put into practice what God said. What was the result?

WEEK 2

DISCUSSION GUIDE *for middle schoolers*



THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

Wise people share what God has given them.

BIBLE

1 John 3:16–20; Proverbs 22:8,9;
Matthew 25:35,36,40

ABOUT THIS WEEK

Great coaches are full of insight on how to play our favorite games, and they don't keep it to themselves. This week, we'll look at one of John's letters as he coached his church to follow the example of Jesus. Like a great coach, John passed on the wisdom and gifts he had received and showed his church how **wise people share what God has given them.**

- **What's the best gift you've ever received? What's the best gift you've ever given?**
- **What has it felt like to be on the receiving end of someone else's generosity?**
- **What would it look like for you to live generously even when you don't feel like it?**
- **What are some of the ways you could be generous that don't just include money?**
- **How have you experienced generosity from someone that did not involve money? What about the generosity shown you made it so impactful?**
- **What is one way you could share what God has given to you this week with a stranger? Someone in your family? To a friend? What is stopping you from making a plan to follow through on that this week?**

THE PLAY: REFLECT ON SCRIPTURE

Each day this week, read this Scripture below and write a short reflection on how the scripture helps show you how to wisely share what you've been given.

DAY 1: 1 JOHN 3:16-18

This is how we know what _____ is: Jesus Christ laid down his _____ for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has _____ and _____ sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with _____ and in _____.

REFLECTION:

DAY 2: PROVERBS 22:8-9

Whoever sows _____ reaps calamity, and the rod they wield in fury will be broken. The _____ will themselves be blessed, for they share their _____ with the _____.

REFLECTION:

DAY 3: PROVERBS 19:17

Whoever is kind to the _____ lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have _____.

REFLECTION:

DAY 4: LUKE 6:38

_____ and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the _____ you use, it will be _____ to you."

REFLECTION:

DAY 5: HEBREWS 13:16

And do not forget to do _____ and to _____ with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

REFLECTION:

DAY 6: ROMANS 12:6-8

We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is _____, then give _____; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

REFLECTION:

DAY 7: 2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-8

Remember this: Whoever sows _____ will also reap _____ and whoever sows _____ will also reap _____. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful _____. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

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WEEK 3

DISCUSSION GUIDE *for middle schoolers*



THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

Wise people follow
God's guidance.

BIBLE

Ephesians 1:15–23; Proverbs 1:20–33;
Luke 2:52

ABOUT THIS WEEK

You can have the best coach in the world, but does it really matter if you don't follow their advice? This week, we'll look at one of Paul's letters when he advised a church to listen to the Holy Spirit God gave to them. His message about trusting God's leadership and learning to rely on the Holy Spirit helps us see that **wise people follow God's guidance.**

- **What's the worst advice you've ever gotten? What's the best advice you've ever gotten from the most unlikely place?**
- **Who are the people you can usually depend on to give you good advice? What about them makes you think you can trust them?**
- **What part of Ephesians 1:15–23 surprised you? Why?**
- **Can you think of a time when following God's wisdom seemed the opposite of what everyone else told you to do? What did you do? What was the result?**
- **Read Luke 2:52. How does knowing that Jesus grew in wisdom encourage you in your own growth in wisdom?**
- **Today, what is one step you will take toward following God's guidance?**

THE PLAY: PRAY SCRIPTURE

This week, you will hear messages that go against God's wisdom. When this happens, use this to help guide you through a challenging moment or difficult decision. Read the passage of scripture and pray those words as if they were your own. Then, ask the Holy Spirit for help, trusting you are empowered and equipped to make a good call.

WHEN YOU FEEL GOD'S WAY IS TOO DIFFICULT...

PRAY: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Phil. 4:13)

WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW IF FOLLOWING GOD'S IS WORTH IT...

PRAY: "Whoever listens to me will live safely and be at ease, without fear of harm." (Proverbs 1:33)

WHEN IT SEEMS LIKE NO ONE ELSE IS FOLLOWING GOD'S WAY...

PRAY: "Have nothing to do with fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them." (Ephesians 5:11)

WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE GOD DOESN'T CARE ABOUT WHAT YOU DO...

PRAY: God, I trust you mean it when you say "For I know the plans I have for you..." (Jeremiah 29:11).

WHEN YOU FEEL YOU ARE NOT BRAVE OR STRONG ENOUGH TO MAKE A GOOD CALL...

PRAY: "Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God..." (Isaiah 41:10).

WHEN YOU FEEL UNSUCCESSFUL OR FEEL LIKE YOU FAILED THIS WEEK...

PRAY: "What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived – the things God has prepared for those who love Him." (1 Cor. 2:9).

WHEN IT SEEMS LIKE YOU ARE ALONE TRYING TO NAVIGATE THROUGH CHALLENGES...

PRAY: "I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation ..." (Ephesians 1:17).

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WEEK 4

DISCUSSION GUIDE *for middle schoolers*



THIS WEEK

BIG IDEA

Wise people's words
show God's love.

BIBLE

James 3:13–4:3; Ephesians 4:29–5:2;
Matthew 12:34

ABOUT THIS WEEK

The right words from a coach can inspire us to finish the game strong and overcome any obstacle in our way. This week, we'll hear from James as he helped inspire his church to think differently about the words they say to each other. James wanted to make sure everyone knew the power of their words and how **wise people's words show God's love.**

- **What's your favorite sports drink?**
- **What makes kind words so impactful? What makes unkind words so hurtful?**
- **If you could think of one word to describe a wise person you know, what would it be? Thinking about the adjectives Paul uses in Ephesians, what are some common qualities the wise people in your life all have?**
- **Why do you think we tend to tear others down with our words when we feel down ourselves?**
- **Read Matthew 12:34. How have you seen it be true that words reflect what's already in someone's heart? What are some things you can do to make sure what's going on in your heart is worth coming out in your words?**
- **Today, what's one change you can make to be someone whose words show God's love?**

GOOD CALL PLAYBOOK: WEEK 4

WISE PEOPLE'S WORDS
SHOW GOD'S LOVE.

THE PLAY: LIVE OUT SCRIPTURE

Read James 3:17-18 from the Message version of the Bible, underline a word or phrase that you want to be your focus for the week, and then answer the questions below.

"Real wisdom, God's wisdom, begins with a holy life and is characterized by getting along with others. It is gentle and reasonable, overflowing with mercy and blessings, not hot one day and cold the next, not two-faced. You can develop a healthy, robust community that lives right with God and enjoy its results only if you do the hard work of getting along with each other, treating each other with dignity and honor."

James 3:17-18 (MSG)

WHAT ARE A FEW
WAYS THAT YOU COULD
SPECIFICALLY LIVE OUT
THE WORD OR PHRASE
YOU CIRCLED?

WHEN WOULD BE A
FEW TIMES YOU COULD
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DEVOTIONAL

for volunteers



Coaches help their teams by guiding them towards good decisions. They create the strategy, put together a game plan, and send their players out to make it happen. Wouldn't it be nice for someone to do that for all of our decisions? Thankfully, God gives us wisdom whenever we feel like we could use a good coach. In this 4-week series from Proverbs and the Epistles, we'll learn more about the wisdom God offers us whenever we want to make godly decisions. We'll see that **wise people practice what God has said** and **share what God has given them**. We'll also look at how the Holy Spirit helps **wise people follow God's guidance** and how **wise people's words show God's love**.

To get ready for this teaching series, spend a few minutes each week **studying** the passages of Scripture we'll be **teaching**, praying about what God wants to do in and through us in the next few weeks, and **growing** by putting God's words into practice in your own life.

WEEK 1 Wise people practice what God has said.

2 Chronicles 1:7–13; James 1:22–25; Proverbs 1:7

STUDY

Take a moment to read the passages we're covering this week.
What stands out to you in this passage and why?

PRAY

This week, ask God to help you grow in wisdom.

GROW

So what's your next step? Do you need to put God's words into action? Is there a situation where you need help? Can you memorize God's words for the times you need guidance? Whatever your next step is right now, take it.

WEEK 2 Wise people share what God has given them.

1 John 3:16–20; Proverbs 22:8,9; Matthew 25:35,36,40

STUDY

Take a moment to read the passages we're covering this week.
What stands out to you in this passage and why?

PRAY

This week, ask God for the chance to use your gifts to help someone.

GROW

So what's your next step? Do you need help identifying the gifts God has given to you? Is there someone you could help right now? Can you invite your friends to live generously with you? Whatever your next step is right now, take it.

WEEK 3 Wise people follow God's guidance.

Ephesians 1:15–23; Proverbs 1:20–33; Luke 2:52

STUDY

Take a moment to read the passages we're covering this week.
What stands out to you in this passage and why?

PRAY

This week, ask God for guidance in a difficult situation.

GROW

So what's your next step? Can you ask for help with discerning God's wisdom in your life? Do you need to talk to someone about a situation you're experiencing? Can you ask others to share wisdom with you? Whatever your next step is right now, take it.

WEEK 4 Wise people's words show God's love.

James 3:13–4:3; Ephesians 4:29–5:2; Matthew 12:34

STUDY

Take a moment to read the passages we're covering this week.
What stands out to you in this passage and why?

PRAY

This week, ask God to help you use your words to show love.

GROW

So what's your next step? Do you need to reconsider the words and tone you use with others? Is there someone you could encourage and lift up today? Do you need to ask someone about the messages they interpret from your language? Whatever your next step is right now, take it.