

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**.

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

ACTIVITY | Split, Keep, Or Share

- Welcome to our new series, *Good Call*, where we'll be talking about how to make wise decisions that benefit us and help others. Sometimes, the decisions we need to make feel complex, and what we should do seems complicated. So, let's kick things off by seeing if you can make a good call.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you'll need a prize you can split between multiple people, such as ten dollars (all in ones), a piece of paper or dry-erase board, and a marker for each teenager playing the game. Place a ten-dollar bill on a table in front. To play, ask for five volunteers and give them each a dry-erase board and a marker. Tell them they can all split the money evenly, depending on how they play the game. They can each write a dollar sign (\$) or an equal sign (=). How the money gets split depends on how the group answers.*
 - *If everyone writes an "=" they all split the money evenly.*
 - *If at least one person takes the money (\$), but at least one person doesn't (=), everyone who doesn't take the money gets nothing, and everyone who takes the money splits it.*
 - *If everyone takes the money (\$), no one gets anything.*
 - *Give them fifteen seconds to talk about it. Have them write down their answer without showing everyone. When they are done marking their sign, have them show their answers. Split the money accordingly.*
- We may feel super confident making a decision and, at other times, nervous as we think about making the right choice. Trying to make the wisest choices is complicated, and we don't always get it right. I am sure we can think back to a decision we wish we would have made differently if we had known how everything would play out and how our choices would impact others.
- But the good news is that we aren't alone as we face decisions. In all the decisions that come our way, God wants to give us wisdom. So, what would it look like to actively seek God's wisdom and consider it when making decisions? What does it look like to remember that being wise isn't just about accumulating knowledge about God but listening to what God says and applying it to our daily lives?

QUESTION | "What makes a great coach?"

- Sometimes, having a coach to help us make a good decision when things get complex would be nice. Someone who could look at what we are going through, help us create a strategy, and help us make the best choice.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Ask the following questions and allow a few teenagers to respond.
 - **Have any of you had a great coach in your life?**
 - **What makes a great coach?**
- God isn't exactly like a coach. We don't always hear precise, step-by-step directions from God, but God does equip us with what we need when facing complex decision-making scenarios.
- When the stakes are high and the outcomes are uncertain, what does it look like to rely on God to navigate the challenges and dilemmas we encounter? What does it look like to listen to God's words and trust God's wisdom to help us navigate all the complicated decisions we make daily?

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion and save it for small groups. If you conduct this discussion, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.
 - ★ **How would you define "wisdom"? Who is someone you know personally or know of that you would consider wise?**
 - **What would you say is the difference between being "smart" and being "wise"?**

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

SCRIPTURE | 2 Chronicles 1:7–13

- One of the wisest people to ever live was a man named Solomon. Solomon was the son of King David, a king who battled a giant named Goliath. David had significant shortcomings, but he was considered the best king in the history of God's people.
- David's son Solomon became king after his father and had some big shoes to fill. Leading God's people was a huge task, and Solomon knew he needed God's help. So, right after Solomon became king, he invited other leaders to join him in praying to God and asking for guidance.
- In the book of 2 Chronicles, Solomon goes to God for guidance, and shortly after he does, the Bible tells us that God comes to Solomon in a vision. Check it out.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read 2 Chronicles 1:7–13.
- The book of Chronicles was written years after Solomon's reign. People reading this would be very familiar with other places in Scripture that told them about his life. They knew Solomon started as a good and wise king, but he was soon led astray.
 - He built a temple for God in Jerusalem ... but then he made his palace bigger.
 - He entered into relationships with people who pressured him to worship false gods.
 - Solomon's decision contributed to division between those who lived under his rule. Because of this, the temple that Solomon built was destroyed, and as a result, Solomon's people were vulnerable to attack by other nations.
- The book of Chronicles was written after all this devastation, brokenness, and trauma. So why is the Bible retelling this story of Solomon's early desire for wisdom when it all seemed to go down the drain?
- Scripture wants to remind God's people to seek God for wisdom above all else. Solomon did this initially, and then he started to get swayed by the shaky wisdom of people—a wisdom based on popularity, power, and wealth.

- The Bible wants us to see that just because Solomon made some pretty bad calls—that ended up hurting him and those around him—there was a fresh invitation from God to seek true wisdom again. I think of it like this ...
 - Have you ever played in a game in which your team was just getting trampled in the first half? By halftime, you're tired, beaten down, and feeling defeated.
 - But then, your coach reminds you of who you are and what is essential. It is like an opportunity to start the game over, and you realize you have the whole second half to change the game's outcome.
- The game has more time left. We can focus on God's words instead of the crowd's advice and look at every decision with God's words in mind. Although popularity, power, appearance, success, and wealth seem desirable, they won't lead us to the full life God hopes for us.

QUESTION | "What would you ask for?"

- **If God told you to ask for whatever you wanted, what would you ask for?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Ask the previous question and have teenagers turn to someone close to them and talk about their answers. Allow a few teenagers to respond.
- You can be honest. Would you want a Nintendo Switch? iPhone? A date to your next school dance? A phone call from a family member you miss? Peace for your anxiety? We all have a lot of needs and wants. I'm sure Solomon had a lot on his mind, too. Solomon was likely between the ages of twenty and twenty-two when he became the king. That is super young.
 - As a young king, I imagine he felt stressed about making big decisions for so many people. And with all the pressures swirling in his mind, he asked for wisdom.
 - He knew he needed God's advice and wisdom to make important decisions. and isn't that what we need, too? We need God's wisdom to make a good call and the healthiest decisions for us and those around us.
- When it comes to school, friendships, family, dating, money, and jobs ... we could tackle every critical decision we faced with more confidence if we knew we were looking at them with God's wisdom, not just our own.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion and save it for small groups. If you conduct this discussion, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.
 - ★ **What keeps you from doing the wise thing, even when you know it's what's best for you?**
 - **What does it look like to connect having wisdom to actually acting wisely?**

SCRIPTURE | James 1:22–25

- A passage from the book of James in the New Testament builds on this idea we see in the early life of Solomon and shows us how God's wisdom helps us make "good calls" in our lives
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read James 1:22–25.
- James tells us we shouldn't just *hear* what the Bible says or *know* what the Bible says. We should *do* what God's Spirit speaks to us through Scripture.
 - Can you imagine being on a sports team, hearing your coach's instructions, reading the playbook, and then purposefully deciding not to attend the games? You'd have all the information, but you wouldn't be doing anything with what you've learned.
 - Even if we don't get it right the first time, and things may feel clunky, God says, "Take the field! I am with you, helping you every step of the way."
- And did you catch something else that passage said? When we follow God's wisdom and do what God

invites us to do, we experience freedom and gifts from God. When we follow God's guidance, we can look back confidently, knowing we are listening to God's wisdom.

- God's direction is better than our direction. We can trust that when we ask for help, God knows what's best for us. Wisdom is not simply knowing the right thing to do. It's doing the right thing—the healthy and honoring thing, not just for yourself, but for God and others.
- Making wise choices goes hand in hand with intentionally listening to God's guidance. And this isn't just a one-time thing. Listening to God is a regular practice we cultivate in our lives. As we do, we see that God lives alongside and through us to bring us deep peace, lasting joy, everlasting hope, and unconditional love because **wise people practice what God has said.**

NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

VIDEO | A Clip of Training for Olympic Swimmers

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** As a teaching tool, play a short clip from a video [like this one](#) (0:57–2:30) describing the training regimen for Olympic swimmers. We always suggest viewing the clip beforehand to make sure you think it's a video that will be a good fit for your context. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
- Katie Ledecky and other Olympic swimmers don't just show up to the pool, hop in, and hope for the best. They listen to their coaching staff, strengthen their muscles, and practice the same motions in the water over and over again.
- Olympic swimmers don't flip a switch and become gold medalists overnight. They gain strength, agility, and speed over time.
- The same is true when it comes to being wise. Over time, we will grow to make wise decisions. Here are a few things you could do this week to develop and grow.
 - **ASK GOD FOR HELP:** Just like Katie Ledecky knew she needed a strength trainer to help her specifically grow as an athlete, we need God to help us grow in wisdom. God knows our strengths, weaknesses, regrets, and hopes and will help us when we ask. Ask for help in prayer, or read the book of Proverbs and see what it looks like for people to live with wisdom.
 - **LISTEN TO GOD'S GUIDANCE:** It is easy to ask God for help, but it takes intentionality to absorb it. In our fast-paced, busy lives, what would it look like for us to make space to listen to God's words? Instead of picking up your phone first thing in the morning, you could sit in silence talking to God for two minutes, starting your day off prioritizing listening to God. Being still and listening takes practice and can be customized for you.
 - **PRACTICE FOLLOWING THROUGH IN SMALL THINGS:** When you hear God's voice and sense God is leading you to act in a way that looks like something Jesus would do, trust God's voice and do it. This may look like saying hello to someone at school that you typically wouldn't or doing something extra around the house, even if it isn't noticed. Practicing making good calls in small things helps us grow our muscle memory so that when a big decision comes, we are familiar with what it feels like to trust God to make a good call.
- We won't become wise on our own and won't be able to make flawless, good calls overnight. But as we practice God's words, we will become wiser with time.

DISCUSSION

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- **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?
- 🔄 **How is saying "wise people practice what God has said" different from wise people doing what God has said?**

OBJECT LESSON | WWJD Bracelet

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this object lesson, you'll need WWJD bracelets. Before your program, [order some here](#) or shop around for your deal. When you're teaching, say ...
- On your chairs, you all have a bracelet. WWJD stands for "what would Jesus do." Jesus loves you and wants what's best for you. Jesus' life is the model for how we should live, and he gave us teachings to guide us in the right direction for life. The goal of wisdom is to know God better. Through knowing God better, you grow in wisdom and can make a good call beyond your strength and experience.
- These bracelets are a throwback! They have been around for a long time, and they help remind us that we can make decisions based on the wisdom of God shown in the life of Jesus. When you need wisdom, ask yourself, "What would Jesus do?" this will help you remember to ask Jesus for his wisdom to guide your next steps. When you wear this bracelet this week, remember that **wise people practice what God has said.**

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion and save it for small groups. If you conduct this discussion, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.
 - 🔄 **What steps could you take before the actual action that would help set you up to do what's wise?**
 - **What is one thing you can start doing this week to "practice" doing what God says?**

RESPONSE | Playbook: Remember God's Words

- **Wise people practice what God has said.** One of the keywords is *practice*. Every athlete needs help to train, keep tabs on their health, and practice their sport. To help them do this, athletes and coaches will use a playbook to help them grow.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Every week of this series, there's a handout with different ways teenagers can listen to and apply God's wisdom in their lives. At the end of the series, you have the option to bind them all together. For this response, [print the handout included in this week's series folder](#) and put one underneath every chair. Invite teenagers to connect with God all week using this "play." Tell them that this week's "play" is to memorize Scripture. Encourage them to use this to help them memorize Scripture this week.
- God's words and wisdom help us make healthy, honoring decisions and empower us to discern what's happening in and around us to make a good call.

ACTIVITY | Small Group Party Kits

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you are doing the Small Group party kits as your fall discipleship activity and haven't done them yet, this would be an awesome place to remind people about the activity. God encourages us to connect with each other, so this is a great opportunity for teenagers to put that into practice. All of the information for that event can be found in the [discipleship section](#) of your Grow dashboard.
- This week, don't just hear what God said but put it into practice because **wise people practice what God has said.**