

MIDWEEK EVENT

This week's main point is: Wisdom means listening to God through His Word and the advice of godly people.

SCRIPTURE | 1 Kings 12:20-24; Job 22:21-25; Ephesians 5:15-21; James 4:6-7

THEOLOGY CONNECTION | DISCIPLESHIP

Discipleship is a process that takes place both formally and informally to affect spiritual maturity as people follow Jesus. Informal discipleship, as passages like Deuteronomy 6:4-9 suggest, happens everywhere, in every arena of life. Growing in our faith and deepening our walk with Christ is something that requires our whole life, not just the mind. Formal discipleship refers to periods of instruction. We make disciples through our words and actions, providing verbal instruction from God's Word and non-verbal examples through our lives (Acts 20:17-24).

CHRIST CONNECTION

While God's people became divided because of selfishness and sin, Christ came to restore God's kingdom. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus united people from every tribe and nation into one family.

1 1 KINGS 12:20-24; JOB 22:21-25

WISDOM IS LISTENING TO GOD EVEN AFTER WE'VE DISOBEYED.

As we've studied the Old Testament, we've seen many examples of God's people wanting to act and God saying no: God told Moses he couldn't enter the promised land. When Elijah asked God to take his life, God said "Get up and eat" (1 Kings 19:5). David wanted to build God a permanent home, a temple, but God said, "You've shed too much blood; your son will build it" (author paraphrase). Just before His arrest, Jesus asked God for another way, but God's answer was the same. And when Paul asked God to remove the thorn from His flesh, God said, "My grace is enough" (2 Cor. 12:9, author paraphrase). When God said no, these people obeyed. Interestingly, every person mentioned here also disobeyed at times—except Jesus. Wisdom doesn't mean we never do anything wrong. Wisdom means we listen to God's voice even after we've disobeyed. Wisdom is coming back to God and doing the right thing, even if we don't do that perfectly all the time. Rehoboam disobeyed God in the passages we studied in our main session, but this time he listened. Though constant conflict would arise on the border between the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, for this moment, God spoke, His people listened, and they experienced peace.

- › **WHEN HAVE YOU DISOBEYED A CLEAR INSTRUCTION IN GOD'S WORD?**
- › **WHAT HAPPENED AND HOW DID YOU FEEL AFTER?**
- › **WHEN YOU'VE DISOBEYED GOD, WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO TURN BACK TO HIM AND LISTEN?**
- › **HOW DOES IT HELP YOU TO KNOW GOD TOLD A LOT OF PEOPLE IN THE BIBLE "NO," EVEN WHEN THEY ASKED FOR GOOD THINGS?**
- › **WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO OBEY, NO MATTER WHETHER GOD'S ANSWER ALIGNS WITH WHAT WE WANT OR WERE PREPARED FOR?**

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2 EPHESIANS 5:15-21; JAMES 4:6-7

WISDOM IS SUBMITTING TO GOD'S WORD AND GODLY ADVICE.

Earlier in this week's main session, we saw what happened when God's people didn't listen to His advice, and in 1 Kings 12:20-24, we saw what happened when King Rehoboam broke that pattern and actually listened to "the word of God" from "the man of God" (v. 22). He was on the path of war but turned around because God said so. Interestingly, in Proverbs—a book full of God's wisdom and godly advice—we see that "you should wage war with sound guidance" (24:6). So, it fits that based on a word from God through a man of God, Rehoboam backed down. This time, he submitted to God.

Honestly, when we hear the word submit today, we kind of cringe, right? We've gotten the idea that submitting means being a doormat and never speaking up if something's wrong, but that's not an accurate picture of this biblical word. Submission is willingly putting yourself under another's authority, leadership, and care. However, the purpose of submission isn't a power play or power struggle; it's more about creating harmony and balance in a relationship. Think about it this way: If you constantly try to dispute what your teacher says, you probably won't have a great relationship with that teacher. If you talk over your team captain and try to call all the plays—or complain about the calls he or she made later—you probably won't have a great relationship with him or her either. Or, if you're the teacher, captain, or tutor, you won't get anywhere if you're putting down the people you're supposed to lead and care for.

So, when James says, "submit to God," he's telling us to humbly recognize who God is—that He is in control and we are not. Then, we bring ourselves under God's care, trusting He knows what's best. But God gave us another avenue for seeking His wisdom too: through other godly people. Paul explains this, saying we are to "[submit] to one another in the fear of Christ" (Eph. 5:21). In other words, Jesus unites us, and as He does, we humbly allow other godly people to help us learn to live God's way (Prov. 1:5).

- › **WHAT'S YOUR INSTANT REACTION WHEN YOU HEAR THE WORD *SUBMIT*?**
- › **CAN YOU THINK OF ANYONE YOU KNOW WHO REALLY WANTED TO DO SOMETHING AND BACKED DOWN BECAUSE GOD SAID NO? EXPLAIN.**
- › **WHAT DO YOU THINK IT MEANS TO SUBMIT TO GOD'S WORD?**
- › **HOW CAN YOU SEE THAT SUBMITTING TO GODLY PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE BRINGS WISDOM? WHAT ARE SOME SPECIFIC WAYS YOU CAN SUBMIT TO THOSE PEOPLE AND LEARN FROM THEM?**
- › **WHEN CAN SUBMITTING BE DANGEROUS? WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO KNOW THE CHARACTER OF PEOPLE WE SUBMIT TO?**

WRAP UP

Invite students to share godly wisdom they've received from other believers in their lives and how it helped them. Then discuss times when they've received harmful advice. Dig deep by talking about what's considered wise counsel using these qualifiers: (1) Godly advice will never contradict God's Word; (2) Godly advice will not encourage physical or emotional harm to you or anyone else; (3) Godly advice can be affirmed by a wise and godly third-party or two.