



DISCERNMENT

CONVERSATION #2: GODLY INFLUENCES

ICEBREAKER: IDENTIFY YOUR FIVE

Before we begin, it's important to recognize a simple truth: **we are always being shaped by the people we spend the most time with - often without realizing it.** There's a well-known saying that you become like the five people you're closest to. While it's not a perfect formula, Scripture makes it clear that influence is powerful and directional.

Take a moment to write down the five people you spend the most time with. Next to each name, note one way you're becoming more like them - a habit, attitude, way of thinking, or priority you've picked up.

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

STUDY: THE POWER OF INFLUENCE

We don't usually choose our influences - we just pick them up. The people we spend time with naturally shape how we think, what we value, and how we live, often without us realizing it. That's normal, especially early in spiritual growth. But deeper growth begins when we start paying attention to who is shaping us.

Most of us naturally ask questions like, *Do I like these people? Do I feel accepted around them? Do they support me?* Those are good and understandable questions - but they're not the whole picture. As faith matures, we begin to ask a deeper one: Are these people helping me grow in wisdom and walk closer with God?

Today, our main passage is Proverbs 13:20, and to help us remember it, let's look it up and then fill in the blanks below:

_____ with the _____ and become _____,

for a _____ of _____ suffers _____.

This proverb is short, but it carries a clear and practical warning. Notice that wisdom isn't described as something you simply *learn* - it's something you **walk into**. It's a way of living. The image is relational and directional. Who you spend time with, who you move through life alongside, quietly shapes who you become.

The verse also shows us that **influence is not neutral**. Walking with the wise doesn't just expose you to wisdom - it produces it in you. In the same way, keeping close company with fools significantly influences you – it doesn't leave you unchanged; it leads to harm, even if that harm isn't immediate or obvious. Over time, direction always reveals destination.

For a spiritual child, this is an important wake-up call. **You don't drift into wisdom.** Wisdom requires intention, proximity, and choice. But foolishness doesn't require effort - you drift there simply by being careless about influence. Growth begins when you stop assuming you'll "turn out fine" and start choosing who you're walking with on purpose.

- Who are the people you're "walking with" most right now, and how are they shaping you?
- Why do you think wisdom is something you *become* rather than something you just know?
- In what ways have you been influenced by others without realizing it at the time?
- What makes it tempting to believe you can stay neutral - unchanged by the people around you?
- Based on this truth, are there any changes you need to make in how you spend your time **or** who you spend your time with?

STUDY: THE CHURCH FAMILY PORTRAIT

Scripture describes the church as a body, a family, and a living community - not just a gathering of individuals. In this activity, you'll explore what the Bible says the body of Christ is *meant* to look like and how that kind of community is meant to influence us. Together, read the passages below that describe the body of Christ. As you read, note the words and phrases that show how believers are meant to relate to one another. Then list the attitudes, actions, or qualities Scripture says should define a healthy church family and its influence - not what you wish it were, but what the Bible calls it to be.

Romans 12:4–5	1 Corinthians 12:12–27	Ephesians 4:15–16,	Colossians 3:12–15
---------------	------------------------	--------------------	--------------------

CHALLENGE: WALK WITH THE WISE

This week, identify someone you admire spiritually and invite them to coffee or a meal. Ask about their faith journey - what has shaped them and what they've learned - and share where you're growing or struggling as well. Wisdom doesn't grow in isolation. Choosing time with someone who walks closely with God is a step toward taking responsibility for your own growth and learning to walk with the wise.