

Who is better off?

Recap: Proverbs is here to help us understand the world by training us to think

1. Wisdom's trustworthy words—listen! (v1–11)

Group discussion:

- How are wisdom's words described in 8:4–11?
- How does lady wisdom in chapter 8 compare to the woman in chapter 9? Consider:
 - Where they are (7:10–12/8:1–3)
 - What they offer (7:13–20/8:5, 8:10–11)
 - Their trustworthiness (7:10–13, 21–23/8:5–11)
 - Who they're helping (7:7/8:4–5)

Whose words are more trustworthy? Why? Why does this matter?

2. Wisdom's usefulness (v12–16)

Group discussion:

Choose a quality of wisdom from the left hand column. In which situations (right column) might wisdom's qualities be helpful? Do this for 2 or 3 of wisdom's qualities. Don't feel limited by the list of situations, this is just a starter. You could think over events in the last week of your life to have more situations to discuss.

Wisdom's qualities

- Prudence—making sound judgements, being shrewd
- Discretion—making plans, having a purpose
- Hatred of evil—opposition to pride and arrogance
- Oppose perverted speech—exaggeration, boasting, telling half truths, telling one side of the story, being deceptive
- Counsel—giving good advice to help achieve an aim
- Insight—seeing below the surface to determine a course of action
- Strength—able to keep walking a wise path
- Just governance—making fair decisions, deciding controversies, leading for the benefit of others

Life situations

- Life planning (changing job, where to live etc)
- Using money
- Use of free time
- Leading a team at work
- Family planning and leadership
- Helping others in relationships—friendships, church family
- Deciding disputes (work, family)
- Reacting to what others say
- Use of social media
- Leading at church
- Challenging work relationships

If you have more time or get stuck, these questions could help you:

- What is desirable about the qualities of wisdom?
- When have you praised someone for a quality of wisdom they have? Why?
- Think of a time you made a bad decision or struggled to make a decision. How might these qualities of wisdom have helped?
- Before today, where would you rate on a scale of 1 (don't want)–10 (must have) being wise and having enough material possessions. Has considering 8:12–16 changed your answer?

3. Wisdom's reward (v17–21)

4. Wisdom explains how our world works—choose her! (v22–31)

Group discussion:

- How is wisdom described in these verses?
- How does this add to our understanding of why wisdom is precious?
- Do we think of our world like this? Why/why not?

5. Valuing wisdom and valuing Jesus's wisdom

Group discussion:

- How has this chapter helped you see wisdom is precious? When might you need to remember this?
 - Do you view wisdom like v10–11, v19–21? Why/why not?
 - Do you want what wisdom offers (v12–21)? Why/why not?
- How does Proverbs 8 help you to appreciate Jesus, our wise King?

Prayer: spend time praying in groups.

- Pray for an attitude to wisdom as described in v10–11, v19–21. Pray we'd prize the qualities of wisdom.
- Pray for God's help to live wisely.
- Praise Jesus that he is our King with the qualities we see in Proverbs 8.