

## Participant Guide

### Week 3: Wisdom & Discernment

Discussion for week of January 31, 2021

### Prayer (Ephesians 4:2-3)

*"Holy Spirit, help us to be completely humble and gentle, be patient, bearing with one another in love. Help us to make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."*

### The Big Idea

Everyone has opinions about different matters. And everyone think they are right about them (including ourselves). This makes the public square, especially social media, a messy and emotionally-charged space. How can we navigate in these troubled waters? We want to enter into these messy spaces asking the Lord: "Jesus, give us wisdom, your wisdom!" Jesus' wisdom is described well in James 3:17-18, reminding us that speaking on what we think is "true" should never come at the expense of godly decency and respect. If the way we handle a discussion creates bad fruit, then perhaps we need to reevaluate our standard of wisdom. Today we will learn more about the characteristics of Jesus' wisdom.

**Watch Pastor Matthew's Synopsis** (posted on the [Life Group Studies webpage](#)): After watching, take a minute in silence to think about and note anything further that came to mind that you'd like to ponder or discuss.

- Reflect on the 9 characteristics of wisdom. What is the most difficult for you?
- Is there a characteristic that you've been working on? What difference do you see that making?
- Reflect on a recent experience (e.g. a conversation or encounter) this topic reminds you of. What do your emotional reactions tell you?

### Scripture & Discussion

**Read James 1:1-5, 3:13-18.** Then discuss together:

- Why has God determined that we must seek wisdom in order to receive the gift?
- How do a person's deeds reveal how wise (or unwise) he or she is?
- Have you ever felt tempted to "harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition" in your heart during an argument? What have you found useful to resist this kind of temptation?
- James 3:18 uses a farming metaphor to explain how peace and righteousness are connected. How does this speak to you?

**Read I Corinthians 1:18-24.** Then discuss together:

- What is the connection between "human wisdom" and the current state of affairs in the public square?
- In one sentence, what is the main difference between the wisdom of this world and the wisdom of God?
- In a polarized world, why is the message of the cross more powerful than strong arguments from opposing parties or sides? What does this mean in practice?
- Each week, we're going to brainstorm together how the Scripture can be applied to our relationships as a Life Group. **As a group, what guiding principle can we agree to uphold with each other through the rest of this series (and beyond)?**

# SHALOM

following Jesus in an angry,  
anxious, and polarized world

## **Practice: Practicing Wisdom**

Love and truth are bound together in truly wise responses. We must learn to speak with peace-making in mind, in order to bring about unity in the Spirit with all Christians. Consider arguments you have had recently and use James 3:17-18 as a lens for your participation in the discussion. What would you do different? How can we come to be embodied peacemakers just like our heavenly Father who seeks the ultimate peace and redemption of all things?

- *Is there a situation in your life that has brought a lot of frustration and anger as fruit? What is one step you could take to enter into that with wisdom?*
- *How could you approach that person involved with wisdom in order to seek reconciliation?*

Pray and ask God to reveal a person or situation He wants you to approach as you deal with your lack of wisdom in the past. Consider praying the words of Ephesians 4:15-16:

*Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

## **Caring for One Another**

- *What help do you need to overcome anticipated challenges in doing this practice?*
- *Do you or your family have a need that the Life Group can help meet?*

Based on what you've shared together, spend time listening to God and praying for one another.