

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

GOAL

The goal of this lesson is twofold:

1. *To help students understand God's story and connect it to their own lives so that they'll live differently through Bible study, hard questions, activities, and specific life application.*
2. *To make it easy for you to facilitate and teach students. That is why the Facilitator Guide is packed with easy-to-use instructions, timeframes, and questions that promote thinking and draw out real responses.*

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- A copy of the Facilitator Guide for you and any other facilitators
- A copy of the Student Guide for each participant
- Be sure to check out the Live It Out section ahead of time to prepare. You'll need:
 - *no supplies needed*

BACKGROUND

This lesson is found in the WISE set of *Intersections*

1. God's X-Ray Wisdom (1 Samuel 16:1–13)
2. Request Granted (James 1:5–8, 3:13–18)
3. True Value (Luke 18:18–30)
4. Don't Be Fooled! (Proverbs 9:1–18)

ROOT SUGGESTION

This lesson correlates well with other lessons in the **Kingdom Root** of *Deep Discipleship*. Look for other *Deep Discipleship* products with a Kingdom-focus. Here's an overview of the Kingdom Root, which helps students understand how to live in the Kingdom of God every day:

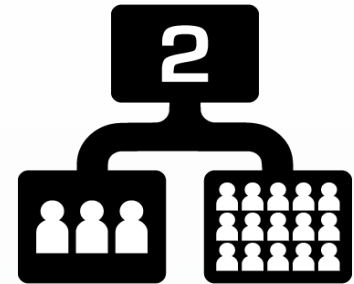
When students embrace the Kingdom life, they begin to look at the small things differently. They realize the weight that their decisions carry, and they can start to live by God's value system instead of the world's tainted values.

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TWO TRACKS: Small Group or Large Group

Each lesson provides you with TWO TRACKS—a Small Group Lesson or a Large Group Talk—and includes these key elements: a Bible study, modern-day examples, discussion questions, an experiential activity, a focus on clear life application, a memory verse (in sharable format), and additional illustrations or object lessons.

The Facilitator Guide contains everything in the Student Guide, plus some additional material. This table outlines the elements of each lesson and provides an approximate timeframe, which you can adapt to meet the needs of your group.



- ☐ For a **SMALL GROUP** context, use the white boxes below.
- ☐ For a **LARGE GROUP** talk, refer to the grey boxes on the right

		FOR A SMALL GROUP SETTING		FOR A LARGE GROUP TALK
		FACILITATOR'S GUIDE	IN STUDENT GUIDE	<i>*include personal illustrations to make this a powerful talk</i>
LESSON ELEMENTS	OVERVIEW	Read before facilitating	✗	Read before facilitating
	OPENING QUESTIONS	Get students thinking and begin conversation (2–3 minutes)	✓	Use these questions as an ice breaker
	WHAT THE BIBLE HAS TO SAY ABOUT IT	A Bible Study with discussion questions (15–20 minutes)	✓	Main Scripture and teaching
	A SECOND LOOK	Another take on this study with discussion questions (10–15 minutes)	✓	Bring the topic to life with this illustration
	LIVE IT OUT	An experiential activity to help students reinforce and internalize the lesson (10–15 minutes)	✗	Consider using this as an object lesson
	APPLY IT	A practical application for students to do this week (2–3 minutes)	✓	Use this as a springboard to present students with practical next steps
	THINK ABOUT IT	Challenging quote to consider	✓	Challenging quote to consider
	ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	Additional illustrations/object lessons	✗	Additional illustrations/object lessons
	MEMORY VERSE	Verse to meditate on <i>*text/post the graphic included in your download</i>	✓	Verse to meditate on <i>*text/post the graphic included in your download</i>

Request Granted

WISE

OVERVIEW

WISE: How heaven changes our perspective.

What is wisdom and how do we get it? This lesson will help students see that earthly wisdom looks nothing like heavenly wisdom and that God offers his wisdom to anyone who asks. From studying James' words, students will learn that earthly wisdom produces different fruit than heavenly wisdom. They'll see how seeking and following God's wisdom led one family to experience peace and joy. Lastly, after a game that clarifies the difference between having knowledge and having wisdom, they'll walk away with a challenge to ask God for more wisdom.

OPENING QUESTIONS

- What are the best "words of wisdom" you've ever heard and why?
- How would you define wisdom?

WHAT THE BIBLE HAS TO SAY ABOUT IT

What does the word "wisdom" actually mean? We use phrases like "conventional wisdom says..." to mean something that everyone agrees is true and "let's hear some words of wisdom from so-and-so..." to mean that so-and-so knows more than your average person. In movies, elderly people are often portrayed as founts of wisdom, like Peter Parker's Uncle Ben in the Spider-Man movies or Professor Dumbledore in the Harry Potter series. Sometimes it seems like the main criteria for being considered wise is living past a certain age! This all makes it seem like wisdom is the same as agreeing with others, knowing more than others, or being more experienced than others.

The book of James has a different idea of what counts as wisdom. James, brother to Jesus, wrote this book as a really practical guide to living a life of faith. He wrote it to a group of people who were learning what it meant to live as Christians. They had no "conventional wisdom" or "words of wisdom" to follow because Christianity was brand new! James has some very specific things to say about heavenly wisdom that make it clear that God doesn't think age or popular opinion are the main ways to achieve it.

This is good news because it means that no matter how young you are, all you have to do is ask to receive wisdom from God! However, James makes it clear that heavenly wisdom has to be asked for and received without ulterior motives of jealousy or greed. It's not like our earthly concept of wisdom, which comes from our broken, human understanding of the world. Luckily, James gives us a list of ways we can know the difference between the wisdom of the world and heavenly wisdom.

Read James 1:5–8, 3:13–18

Discuss:

- Think of the wisest person you know. Why would you say he or she is wise?
- Describe a time when you needed wisdom.
- Have you ever thought about asking God for wisdom before?
- James explains that doubt, jealousy, and selfish ambition conflict with heavenly wisdom. Do you struggle with any of these three things?

FACILITATOR'S NOTE: When James says we must “ask in faith, with no doubting,” it might seem like he’s saying we can never have doubts. The doubt James mentions in this passage is about whether we trust God—do we believe God will answer when we ask for guidance, and do we trust his answers. After all, if we ask the God of the universe for guidance but don’t wait for him to respond or ignore his advice, that’s pretty foolish.

A SECOND LOOK¹

TV stars Chip and Joanna Gaines have achieved a lot throughout their marriage. After years of barely making ends meet, they made it big through their TV show, *Fixer Upper*, where they helped families buy and renovate homes. Chip and Joanna’s positive relationship was a big reason for their success. As the success of the show grew, they were able to start a booming retail store in their hometown of Waco, TX, launch wallpaper and furniture lines, and even create a product line for Target.

In countless interviews, Chip and Joanna have been clear that their Christian faith motivates the way they live their lives. Before they made it big, Joanna was running a successful home furnishing store, but she and Chip sensed the Lord telling them to close it down in order to focus on their children. Though it felt like Joanna’s dream was dying, they experienced great peace as they obeyed the Lord.² It was through that obedience that Joanna began taking part in Chip’s home renovation business, and the rest is history.

This willingness to lean into God’s wisdom continues to be true of the Gaineses. They recently announced that they are ending their hit show in order to focus more on their family. This is complete earthly foolishness, as their show is the source of their success and a guarantee that their other endeavors will stay in the limelight. But instead of pursuing selfish ambition, the Gaineses are choosing to pursue a wisdom that will result in good fruits within their own family life.

Discuss:

- How have Chip and Joanna’s actions reflected heavenly wisdom rather than earthly wisdom by our definition from James?
- The Gaineses’ experience supports what James says about God’s wisdom and peace:
 - How often do you experience God’s peace about your decisions?
 - Brainstorm some ways you can seek God’s wisdom in your everyday life to experience more of his peace.
- Is there any place in your life where you think that God is inviting you to live by his heavenly wisdom instead of earthly wisdom?

LIVE IT OUT: Are You Smarter Than Your Youth Leader?

What you'll need: no supplies needed.

Say Something Like:

Have you ever heard of the TV game show Are You Smarter Than A 5th Grader? On the show, adult contestants were asked questions based on elementary school textbooks. They could win up to a million dollars. Today you're all going to be contestants in our version of the game, "Are You Smarter Than Your Youth Leader?" Here are the rules:

Rules:

(You can read these verbatim or adapt them.)

- Each student gets to ask me one question.
- The goal is to see which of you can defeat me by stumping me.
- You can choose from these categories: sports, geography, science & nature, pop culture, and the Bible. (LEADER'S NOTE: you can pick categories that work best for you and your group).
- You have to ask a general trivia question that can be answered by anyone. For example, you can't ask "What is my favorite color?" or "Where did I go on my summer vacation?"
- I am the Game Master. I will determine if your question works for the game or if you should come up with a different question.
- First contestant is the person whose birthday comes earliest in the calendar year (starting January 1). We'll continue in calendar order.
- Let's see which of you can claim that you are *smarter* than your youth leader!

FACILITATOR'S NOTE: For large groups, you may need to split up and recruit an adult leader for each smaller group to "stump." Alternatively, if you're short on time, have students write their names and questions on pieces of paper, put them all in a hat, then draw only 5–10 of them to answer.

Discuss:

- Were *you* stumped by any of your fellow students' questions?
- Do you believe the students who won the title "smarter than your youth leader" are also *wiser* than your youth leader?
- What is the difference between being smart and being wise?
- How are you leaning on earthly wisdom (agreeing with, knowing more than, or having more experience than others) to appear wise?

APPLY IT

God makes an amazing promise to give wisdom to anyone who asks! What can you do today to seek more of God's wisdom? (NOTE: you could use some of the ideas the group brainstormed in the "A Second Look" discussion above.)

Be specific:

- What are you going to do?
- When are you going to do it?
- Is there someone who can keep you accountable?

THINK ABOUT IT

"Some people go their entire lives without realizing that they are elevating their own wisdom and abilities above the Lord's." – John Stange, *Overcoming Anxiety*³

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Illustration: Share this quote from British humor writer Miles Kington: "Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit; wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad."⁴ Then lead the students in a discussion about how knowledge alone doesn't always bring us peace. With the Internet available at the touch of a button, we have more access to information than at any time in history, but it seems like we experience less peace. God, who is all-knowing, gives us more than knowledge—he also gives us the wisdom to know what to do with that knowledge. Seeking and acting on heavenly wisdom is what produces lasting peace in our lives.

MEMORY VERSE

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him."

James 1:5 (ESV)



Disciples of Christ find peace in seeking God's wisdom.

*Any reference within this piece to Internet addresses of websites not under the administration of LeaderTrek is not to be taken as an endorsement of these websites by LeaderTrek; neither does LeaderTrek vouch for their content.

¹ Emily Strohm, "Chip And Joanna Gaines: The Real Reason Behind Their Shocking Decision To End Hit Show," *PEOPLE.com*, October 11, 2017, accessed January 23, 2018, <http://people.com/home/chip-and-joanna-gaines-our-family-comes-first/>.

² Joy Allmond, "How God Used Billy Graham To Influence 'Fixer Upper' Family," *Billy Graham Evangelistic Association*, December 2, 2016, accessed January 23, 2018, <https://billygraham.org/story/how-billy-graham-brought-the-gospel-home-to-chip-and-joanna-gaines/>.

³ John Stange, *Overcoming Anxiety: 12 Powerful Truths from Scripture for Defeating Worry and Fear*, (Langhorne, PA: CreateSpace, 2014), 40.

⁴ Miles Kington, "Definitions," in *Oxford Dictionary of Humorous Quotations*, edited by Gyles Brandreth, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 84).