

BELONG

Starter Questions: What's something you wish you could be really good at without having to practice? Ask your students if they would like to share their highs and lows from the week.

Become Challenge Check-In: Ask students how they allowed God to use them in their circle of impact this week. Celebrate any wins. How did they demonstrate their heart for Jesus to those around them?

BELIEVE

Scripture: Proverbs 19:2–3, 20–21; 21:2–3; 22:3; 23:17–19

Main Idea: Wisdom looks beyond right now.

Focus Question: Where are my choices taking me?

Context:

Proverbs is part of the Bible's wisdom literature. Much of Proverbs is attributed to Solomon, whom God gave great wisdom. Proverbs teaches God's people how to live wisely in everyday life, addressing things like relationships, work, money, words, choices, and instruction. Many proverbs are short statements that communicate general truths rather than promises that a certain result will happen every time. They teach us to recognize wisdom and foolishness and to live with **the fear of the LORD**, which Proverbs calls the beginning of knowledge and wisdom (Proverbs 1:7; 9:10).

Proverbs 19–23 contains many individual sayings rather than one continuous argument. As you read selected verses, notice what they teach about wisdom, choices, and the direction of a person's life.

Summary:

We often make decisions based on what we want or what feels right now. Proverbs teaches us to look farther. Our desires can lead us in the wrong direction (Proverbs 19:2–3), and what seems right to us may not be wise (Proverbs 21:2–3).

Wisdom listens to instruction and considers where a choice may lead (Proverbs 19:20–21; 22:3). Instead of simply continuing down a path, we are called to fear the LORD, be wise, and keep our minds on the right course (Proverbs 23:17–19). We cannot see everything ahead, but we can trust God's wisdom today. **Wisdom looks beyond right now.**

Read Proverbs 19:2–3 • What do I want right now?

→ **Bible Study Tip:** Look for cause and effect. Ask what action happens first and what happens as a result.

- What connections do you see between desire, rushing, and going down the wrong path in these verses? (*Desire or enthusiasm is not necessarily wrong, but rushing ahead without knowledge can lead us into sin. Verse 3 also shows that we may blame God for consequences that resulted from our own foolish choices.*)
- What choices are you making now that could have consequences you might not see until much later? (*Students might think about friendships, dating, school, money, online choices, habits, or how they spend their time. Silence is OK. Some answers may be too personal to share. If needed, invite the group to name common examples, but leave room for students to reflect privately.*)

Proverbs 21:2–3 • Check Your Perspective

→ Bible Study Tip: Pay attention to contrasts. What does the person see, and what does the Lord see?

- What are some ways we make a choice seem right to ourselves when it really isn't? *(We may focus on reasons that support our choice, minimize what is wrong with it, compare ourselves to others, or ignore our real motives.)*

Consider this situation as you continue: You are at a party with friends, and things begin happening that you know aren't wise. What might you tell yourself to make staying seem OK in the moment?

Read Proverbs 19:20–21 • Listen

- Why might you avoid asking for advice when you probably need it most? *(Sometimes we already know what we want and don't want anyone to challenge it. We may also be embarrassed, afraid of what someone will say, or confident that we can handle the situation ourselves.)*

Read Proverbs 22:3 • Look Ahead

→ Bible Study Tip: Compare the two people in this verse. What does each person do after recognizing danger?

- Imagine you realize the party is headed in a bad direction. What might make leaving difficult, and what does this verse suggest wisdom would do? *(Leaving could cost approval, require an uncomfortable call home, or mean admitting you made a poor choice. The sensible person responds to danger rather than continuing simply because changing direction is difficult.)*

Read Proverbs 23:17–19 • Choose Your Course

- Why can someone else's choices look appealing now even if you wouldn't want where those choices could eventually lead? *(We often see what someone is enjoying or gaining right now without seeing where those choices may lead. These verses point us beyond what looks appealing now and toward fearing the LORD, having hope for the future, and staying on a wise course.)*
- Look at the patterns in your choices right now. Where are they taking you? *(Give students time to consider this privately. Encourage them to think beyond one decision to repeated choices, habits, relationships, and priorities.)*

BECOME

Circle of Impact Challenge:

Wisdom means being willing to listen when someone helps you see what you may be missing. This week, think about the people in your circle. Who can you trust to tell you the truth, even when it isn't what you want to hear? Ask that person to hold you accountable in an area where you need wisdom. Then look for an opportunity to be that kind of friend to someone else by speaking truth, asking a good question, or encouraging them to think about where a choice could lead.