

CITYWEST CHURCH

23.08.2026 - 10 AM

WISDOM PART 2 - WISDOM IN THE NOISE.

My child,^[a] listen to what I say,
and treasure my commands.

² Tune your ears to wisdom,
and concentrate on understanding.

³ Cry out for insight,
and ask for understanding.

⁴ Search for them as you would for silver;
seek them like hidden treasures.

⁵ Then you will understand what it means to fear the LORD,
and you will gain knowledge of God.

⁶ For the LORD grants wisdom!
From his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

⁷ He grants a treasure of common sense to the honest.
He is a shield to those who walk with integrity.

⁸ He guards the paths of the just
and protects those who are faithful to him.

⁹ Then you will understand what is right, just, and fair,
and you will find the right way to go.

¹⁰ For wisdom will enter your heart,
and knowledge will fill you with joy.

¹¹ Wise choices will watch over you.
Understanding will keep you safe.

Proverbs 2:1-11 (NLT)

¹³ If you are wise and understand God's ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don't cover up the truth with boasting and lying. ¹⁵ For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. ¹⁶ For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind.

¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. ¹⁸ And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.

James 3:13-18 (NLT)

We started last week looking at the age of information we find ourselves in.

We are more informed but none the wiser, unfortunately. Today, we are going to navigate how to discern the wisdom of God in the middle of the noise.

Everybody has a comment section.

And the loudest voice isn't necessarily the wisest voice. The most confident person isn't necessarily the most truthful person.

The person with the most followers isn't necessarily the person with the most wisdom.

And the person who can win an argument isn't necessarily the person who knows how to live. We are surrounded by noise.

And one of the great challenges for followers of Jesus isn't simply learning how to hear God's voice.

It's learning how to recognise what isn't God's voice.

That's discernment.

1. WISDOM LEARNS TO HEAR GOD IN THE NOISE.

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Proverbs 2:1-6 (NLT)

Listen. - willing to hear what God says

Treasure. - God's word is the highest authority

Tune your ears.- *Become intentional about what you allow to shape you.*

Not every voice deserves access to your mind. Turn down the noise so you can hear God clearly.

Concentrate. - *Give God your focused attention.*

Wisdom doesn't grow through distracted, occasional listening. Slow down. Pay attention. Reflect on what God is saying.

Cry out. - *Ask God for wisdom.*

Don't assume you know what to do. James 1:5 says, "If you need wisdom—ask our generous God."

Search. - *Pursue wisdom deliberately.*

Wisdom isn't something we stumble across. Go looking for it in Scripture, prayer, godly counsel and experience.

Seek. - *Make wisdom a lifelong pursuit.*

Don't just seek wisdom when you're facing a crisis. Build a life that continually asks, "God, how do You want me to live?"

This isn't passive. Wisdom requires intentionality. You don't accidentally become wise. You don't drift into wisdom.

You have to pursue it.

And I think that's particularly important for us because we live in a world where we're constantly being disciplined by something.

Every day something is telling you:

"This is what matters."

"This is what success looks like."

"This is what you should be afraid of."

"This is what you should want."

"This is what you should buy."

"This is what you should believe."

"This is who you should be angry with."

"This is what you should think about yourself."

*The question isn't: **"Am I being influenced?"***

*The question is: **"Who is influencing me?"***

WHAT WE GIVE OUR ATTENTION TO SHAPES US

Attention is the beginning of devotion. - Eugene Peterson.

Our attention is one of the most valuable things we possess.

Because what captures your attention eventually shapes your imagination.

And what shapes your imagination eventually shapes your decisions.

And your decisions eventually shape your life.

That's why Proverbs says: "Tune your ears to wisdom."

*In other words: **Choose what you listen to.***

Not every voice deserves equal weight.

Not every opinion deserves equal attention.

Not every headline deserves your anxiety.

Not every argument deserves your response.

Not every trend deserves your participation.

Not every thought deserves your agreement.

Wisdom begins asking:

"Where is this coming from?" "Is this true?"

"Is this biblical?" "Is this producing life?"

"Is this making me more like Jesus?"

2. DISCERNMENT IS LEARNING TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE.

This is where James gives us something practical.

If you are wise and understand God's ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom.

James 3:13 (NLT)

James doesn't say: "If you are wise, prove it by winning arguments."

He doesn't say: "Prove it by having the strongest opinion."

*He says: **"Prove it by the way you live."***

This is so important.

Because there is a kind of wisdom that looks impressive but doesn't come from God.

James continues:

But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don't cover up the truth with boasting and lying. ¹⁵For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. ¹⁶For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind.

James 3:14-16 (NLT)

*James is saying: **Not everything that looks like wisdom is wisdom.***

*There is: **Heavenly wisdom.***

*And there is: **Earthly wisdom.***

And sometimes they sound remarkably similar.

Discernment

Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong.

Hebrews 5:14 (NLT)

*Notice that discernment is a **skill that develops through training.***

You don't become discerning by becoming cynical.

*You become discerning by becoming **grounded.***

The more familiar you become with God's character and God's Word, the more easily you recognise what doesn't belong.

Think about a bank teller learning to identify counterfeit money. They don't spend all day studying counterfeits. They become so familiar with the genuine article that the counterfeit becomes easier to spot.

Discernment works the same way.

We don't need to obsess over every false voice.

We need to become deeply familiar with the voice of truth.

EARTHLY WISDOM

*Earthly wisdom says: "**Look after yourself.**"*

*Heavenly wisdom says: "**Love your neighbour.**"*

*Earthly wisdom says: "**Get even.**"*

*Heavenly wisdom says: "**Forgive.**"*

*Earthly wisdom says: "**Make yourself look important.**"*

*Heavenly wisdom says: "**Humble yourself.**"*

*Earthly wisdom says: "**Win.**"*

*Heavenly wisdom says: "**Serve.**"*

*Earthly wisdom says: "**Protect your reputation.**"*

*Heavenly wisdom says: "**Walk in integrity.**"*

*Earthly wisdom asks: "**What's best for me?**"*

*Heavenly wisdom asks: "**What honours God and brings life to others?**"*

3. WISDOM PRODUCES FRUIT

This is one of the simplest ways to discern wisdom.

Look at the fruit.

Jesus taught us this principle.

A tree is known by its fruit.

And James does the same thing.

He tells us what heavenly wisdom produces.

But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds

James 3:17 (NLT)

"Willing to yield to others."

That's almost the opposite of the culture we live in.

Our culture teaches: "Make your point." "Defend your position."

"Don't let anyone silence you." "Win the argument."

But biblical wisdom says: "Be willing to listen." "Be willing to learn."

"Be willing to yield."

That doesn't mean we compromise truth.

It means we don't have to prove ourselves in every conversation.

Wisdom knows that being right isn't always the same as being righteous.

WISDOM ASKS A BETTER QUESTION

I think sometimes we ask the wrong question.

We ask: "Am I right?"

But wisdom asks: "What is right?"

We ask: "Can I do this?"

Wisdom asks: "Should I do this?"

We ask: "What's wrong with it?"

Wisdom asks: "Will this bring life?"

We ask: "What do I have the right to do?"

Wisdom asks: "What would love do?"

And ultimately, for us as followers of Jesus, the greatest wisdom question is:

"What would faithfulness to Jesus look like here?"

That's the question that changes everything.

Because wisdom isn't simply about making good decisions.

Wisdom is learning to make Jesus-shaped decisions.

THE WISDOM TEST

So when you're surrounded by noise this week, before you listen, believe, share, post, buy, respond or decide, pause and ask:

Is it true? Is it biblical? Is it wise? Is it loving? Will it bring life?

Will this make me more like Jesus?

Because not every voice deserves your attention.

Not every opinion deserves your agreement.

Not every opportunity deserves your yes. And not every battle deserves your participation. Wisdom is knowing what to do with what you know.

And sometimes the wisest thing you can do is:

wait.

Sometimes it's: listen.

Sometimes it's: speak.

Sometimes it's: walk away.

Sometimes it's: forgive.

Sometimes it's: say yes.

Sometimes it's: say no.

And sometimes it's simply:

"God, I don't know what to do. So I'm going to ask You."

That's not weakness.

That's wisdom.

CONNECT GROUP QUESTIONS

1. "Who or what has the greatest influence on the way you think, make decisions, and see the world—and how do you know whether that influence is actually leading you toward Jesus?"
2. James says wisdom is demonstrated by the way we live, not by how strongly we argue. Where do you find it hardest to choose humility, peace, forgiveness, or serving over being right, winning, or protecting yourself?
3. Think about a decision, conversation, relationship, or situation you're facing right now. What would it look like to ask, "What would faithfulness to Jesus look like here?" rather than simply, "What do I want?"