

Wise As – Week 4
“Straight Paths” – Ben Foote
May 2, 2021

Group Creed

We come together as a Group with the goal of Spiritual Formation; encouraging one another to become the same kind of person that Jesus is, so that we can live out every part of our lives inside of His Kingdom.

// Bible References

Proverbs 3: 5-6; Proverbs 5:15; Proverbs 7: 6-27; Jeremiah 6:16

// Message Summary

This week Ben brings us the fourth week of our series “Wise As” with his talk *Straight Paths*. The main question Ben is trying to answer this week is: How do we avoid drifting apart from the people we love the most? Ben uses the “Butterfly Effect” as an illustration to show that even the smallest action can, over time, result in devastation. He looks at several verses, primarily from Proverbs 7 to help us determine steps we can take to avoid drifting apart from those we love the most. Those steps are: 1. Pause at the crossroads 2. Stop flirting with disaster 3. Choose home.

// Biblical Context

In Proverbs 7, King Solomon writes about one of the most enticing yet destructive sins. A sin that draws you in, chews you up, and spits you out. Sexual sin, specifically adultery, is an ungodly sexual union outside the confines of marriage. A man/woman when driven by the flesh (our natural impulses) and devoid of wisdom, can be easily lured into this dangerous trap. Our sexuality and the physical expression of that sexuality are divinely created and intended only for the covenant of marriage (a union before God). Unity with someone who is not meant for us, or even worse, someone who does not belong to us, can destroy the direction of our lives or even worse, our life itself. Proverbs 7 is comprised of 3 sections: 1. An emphasis on the benefits of wisdom (Proverbs 7:1 - 4), 2. An example of one who has fallen into the trap of adultery (Proverbs 7:5 - 23), 3. A final admonishment to one seeking wisdom (Proverbs 7:24 - 27). Solomon is extremely descriptive in this chapter so the reader can see how an adulterer may attempt to lure him/her. The intention of Proverbs 7 is to share knowledge to avoid the pitfalls of adultery or other destructive decisions.

// Community Questions

1. What is the best relationship/friendship advice you have ever received from someone?
2. What is your best “Butterfly Effect” statement? (Ben’s examples: “I went to a corn maze...now I have 3 kids!” or “I ate salad...then I experienced zero gravity.”)

// Discussion Questions

1. Read Proverbs 3:5 as a group. What’s the hardest part for you about applying this verse to your life? The “trusting the Lord” part? Or the part about “not leaning on” or relying on your own judgement, feelings and emotions?
2. Where in your life has “leaning on your own understanding,” even when your intentions were good, led to negative outcomes or consequences for you or others around you? (ex. Ben eating the salad out of respect and honor for the people who sacrificed so much to provide him a meal)
3. Where are you rationalizing decisions and actions that you know have the potential to cause discord in your life?
4. Read Proverbs 3:6. Share a time where you intentionally paused and acknowledged God when making a decision and you experienced “the straight path” that He promises?
5. Share some areas in your life where you are successfully putting wisdom into practice? (i.e., putting proper boundaries in place, choosing home/spouse/kids over your own desires or needs).

// Challenge

Ben said, “wisdom always wants to get ahead of the game.” Through Proverbs, Ben teaches that the best way to *avoid* blowing up the most important relationships/areas in our lives is to use the following language to help us stop and reassess our situation; ***“intentionally focus on...and course correct...in these moments.”***

Our challenge is straight from Ben’s message this weekend:

1. **Pause at the crossroads.** Take a hard and honest look at where you are dangerously close to getting off the straight path that Jesus has for you and straying onto the path that you are warned about in Proverbs. Remember, it’s the seemingly insignificant, slight changes that have the biggest impact down the road.
2. **Stop flirting with disaster.** Once you have identified the things that you are doing or not doing that could lead to disaster, **cut it out of your life.** Whether that’s social media, certain websites, specific people who are not pushing you towards good, that gym, that cubicle, etc.
3. **Choose Home.** What is one way that you can intentionally choose home/family/relationships this week? Does it mean putting down your phone at night? Getting more involved in your kids’ lives and activities? Or pursuing your spouse more intentionally? Commit to making **one** change this week that could lead to a massive change in the health of your family.