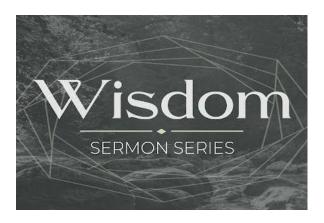
## WISDOM: LIVING WELL

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## **Proverbs 1:1-7**

The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:

2 For learning about wisdom and instruction.

for understanding words of insight, 3 for gaining instruction in wise dealing, righteousness, justice, and equity; 4to teach shrewdness to the simple, knowledge and prudence to the young— 5 let the wise also hear and gain in learning,

and the discerning acquire skill, 6 to understand a proverb and a figure, the words of the wise and their riddles.

7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

## **REFLECT & DISCUSS**

- Read the passage slowly. Then take a deep breath and read it again.
   What word, phrase, or image stands out to you?
- 2. Proverbs is part of the Bible's "Wisdom Literature." What does wisdom mean to you? How might wisdom be different from knowledge?
- 3. The "fear of the Lord" mentioned in verse 7 is not fear of punishment but something more like "awe" or "wonder." It is a recognition of God's grandeur, immensity, and power beyond anyone's control. In other words, it is an awareness that God is God and we are not. Do you have a memory of this kind of spiritual "awe" or "wonder"?
- 4. The Proverbs contain little nuggets of practical advice for living well-ie, the good life-that have been passed on from generations, like: "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but harsh words cause quarrels" (Proverbs 15:1). What do you think of this wisdom?
- 5. Reflect on the following proverbs. What do you make of them? Are there limits to these "rules of thumb"?

**Proverbs 22:1** If you must choose, take a good name rather than great riches; for to be held in loving

esteem is better than silver and gold.

**Proverbs 14:17** A short-tempered man is a fool. He hates the man who is patient.

**Proverbs 20:13** If you love sleep, you will end in poverty. Stay awake, work hard, and there will be plenty to eat!

**Proverbs 17:27-28** The man of few words and settled mind is wise; therefore, even a fool is thought to be wise when he is silent. It pays him to keep his mouth shut.

**Proverbs 13:11** Wealth from gambling quickly disappears; wealth from hard work grows.

**Proverbs 11:13** A gossip goes around spreading rumors, while a trustworthy man tries to quiet them.

- 6. Do you have any "rules of thumb" or "guiding principles" that others have tried to teach you, or that you've come to find valuable for living well?
- 7. Proverbs 8 personifies divine wisdom as a woman and exhorts the wise person to listen to her.
  What does such female imagery have to teach us about God and our faith?
- 8. Proverbs focuses on the probability that a good life will emerge from wisely practicing virtues like patience, honesty, hard-work, self-control, and fear of the Lord. Why might a good life be probable, but not guaranteed?