

Get Over Your Selfie
Wisdom Over Foolishness
LEADER NOTES
Sunday, November 24th, 2019

“Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God — truly righteous and holy.” Ephesians 4:21-24 NLT

Hi LifeGroup leaders! This is the final session of our series, #GetOverYourSelfie. The goal of our series has been to get over ourselves and experience God’s best for our lives. To start off your group time, have someone read Ephesians 4:21-24 out loud, then review the three steps of this series – to focus on Jesus’ teachings and truth (Eph. 4:21) to get rid of the old, what I need to “get over” (Eph. 4:22) and to put on the new (Eph. 4:23-24). For today’s study, we’ll be talking about choosing to live wisely. To get ready for that topic, have fun with the icebreaker, “I Choose”!

Series question: How do I get over myself and experience God’s best?

Three steps: Focus on Jesus, get rid of the old, put on the new (God’s righteousness).

ICEBREAKER: I CHOOSE The following fun game is a way for your group members to get to know each other more and have some laughs along the way. Have someone in your group read both choices for each category then repeat each choice and ask group members to put up their hand to indicate their preference.

I CHOOSE ...

Coffee	or	Tea
Tim Hortons	or	Starbucks
The Leafs	or	The Raptors
An SUV	or	A convertible
Dog	or	Cat
The beach	or	The ski hill
Disney Plus	or	Netflix
Star Wars	or	Lord of the Rings

VIDEO: Watch this week's video – Wisdom Over Foolishness
<https://www.lifegroupleaders.ca/studies/>

STUDY:

Have someone in your group read the study introduction below and then ask the group the question – “As you look back over the five themes of our series, why would we say one way is wise each week and one way is foolish?” Essentially, each week we have been drawing a contrast between a wise way to live and a foolish way. For example, in week one we explored how it is wise to live in light of God's truth and the teachings of Jesus. It is foolish to believe and live in lies Satan tells us or we tell ourselves.

#GetOverYourSelfie has been all about choices. It has been about choosing one thing over another, choosing to experience God's best over choosing to serve myself. Each week we have explored a theme that has reflected two ways to live.

1. Truth Over Lies
2. Contentment Over Greed
3. Generosity Over Selfishness
4. Humility Over Arrogance
5. Eternity Over Temporary

In each of these themes there is a wise way to live and a foolish way to live. As you look back over these themes, why would we say that one way is wise and the other foolish?

DEFINING FOOLISHNESS:

No one intentionally sets out to live foolishly. We don't want to think of ourselves as foolish, but God tells us our sinful nature means we have the propensity to live foolishly. It is our natural inclination.

“Foolishness is the result of a person misusing the intelligence God has given him. A fool uses his reasoning skills to make wrong decisions.” Source: J.I. Packer [Knowing God](#)

- What do you think of Packer's definition of foolishness?

It may help to have the group think of one or two practical examples of wrong decisions that end up being foolish. For example, rather than believing the truth of who God says I am (wise) I believe lies about my identity.

READ: Psalm 14:1-3

“Only fools say in their hearts, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, and their actions are evil: not one of them does good! The LORD looks down from heaven on the entire human race: he looks to see if anyone is truly wise, if anyone seeks God. But no, all have turned away; all have become corrupt. No one does good. Not a single one!” NLT

- One way we are foolish is by denying God exists. We may say we believe God exists, but then live as if He doesn't. What are some insights you get from Psalm 14:1-2 about what it means to be foolish?

Paul uses phrases from the Greek translation of this passage in his description of the depravity of all people. (Rom. 3:10-12). “Fools”, also known as “wicked” people, rely on their own insights rather than God's revealed truth. Paul and David both highlight the fact that none of us seek God on our own. We all have the propensity to be foolish by denying God's existence.

READ the following verses about foolishness. What do each of these passages teach us about what it looks like to live foolishly?

Proverbs 14:16-17

To live foolishly is to believe everything we're told, to charge ahead without asking, “Is this a wise, God honouring choice?”

Proverbs 15:5

It is foolish to ignore or despise godly correction in our lives, particularly when we are young and receiving correction from our parents.

Proverbs 19:1

Wealth gained by dishonest means is short lived. It is foolish to short-circuit God's provision by gaining wealth in an illegitimate way.

Proverbs 19:3

It is foolish to deny or downplay my wrong choices and actions and blame God for the mess I'm in.

Proverbs 22:15

Children have a propensity to foolishness thinking and behaviour. Parents have the responsibility to help their children overcome foolishness. Wisdom is learned, not inherited or innate. It takes discipline to change foolishness into wisdom.

Proverbs 24:9

To live foolishness is to think up ways to shirk responsibility and dodge being under authority. A mocker despises being told what to do.

In Mark 7:20-23, Jesus says, ***“It is what comes from inside that defiles you. For from within, out of a person’s heart, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you.”*** NLT

- How does Jesus’ perspective on foolishness help you understand it?

Jesus lists foolishness among a list of 13 things that defile us. The source of foolishness, Jesus says, is our heart. The fact that foolishness is listed with sins like murder and theft should tell us how serious of a sin it is.

- In our culture many of us have a narrative about ourselves, “I’m basically a good person. Yeah I mess up sometimes but I’m going in the right direction.” How does this narrative contrast with what Jesus teaches in Mark 7?

Jesus teaches that I am not “basically a good person”. I am basically a foolish person, a sinner in need of a Saviour.

- Why is it important for us to realize our propensity to be foolish?

When I accept my propensity to be foolish, I bring my sinful nature into the light. This humbles me and keeps me dependant on God’s grace and forgiveness to live in a way that pleases Him.

GETTING OVER FOOLISHNESS BY CHOOSING WISDOM

To get over ourselves, we must realize our propensity to be foolish and we must intentionally choose wisdom over foolishness. This battle takes place in our thoughts, desires and actions. Let’s explore what God teaches us about wisdom.

The dictionary defines *wisdom* as “the ability to discern or judge what is true, right, or lasting.”

- Do you think every person has this ability? Why or why not?

Everyone has the potential to make wise choices. We cultivate this ability by depending on God’s power to live in this way. It is good to ask, “Is this a wise, God-honouring choice to make?”

READ James 1:5

“If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking.” NLT

- Wisdom is a gift from God. Is it not something we develop on our own. How does this insight help you understand wisdom?

Wisdom does not come naturally to us. God, the Source of wisdom, is willing to generously pour His wisdom into our lives when we ask Him.

READ Proverbs 9:10 out loud as a group:

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” NIV

- What do you think it means that the “fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom”? How does the second half of this Proverb help us understand what it means to be wise?

Fearing God is the foundation or starting point of wisdom. To fear God is to put Him in his proper place in our lives. Part of this process is getting to know Him through reading the Bible, prayer and community with other believers. This is the pathway to wisdom.

UNDERSTANDING AND LIVING IN THE FEAR OF THE LORD:

God tells us that fearing him is the first step toward being a wise person. This honour, respect, elevation of God over everything will help us order our lives in a way that will be wise in every dimension of how we live. Let’s explore together what it looks like to fear God and the blessings that come when we choose to live in this wise way.

DEFINING THE FEAR OF THE LORD:

READ: Isaiah 6:5 – this verse is the prophet Isaiah’s response when he is overwhelmed by being in God’s throneroom.

“Then I said, ‘It’s all over! I am doomed, for I am a sinful man. I have filthy lips, and I live among a people with filthy lips. Yet I have seen the King, the LORD of Heaven’s Armies.’” NLT

- What key words or phrases in this verse might help us understand what it means to fear the LORD?

The more we get to know the holiness and power of God, the more we should fear Him by recognizing our sin and unworthiness in comparison to Him. “It’s all over!” – Isaiah is feeling judgment for falling short of God’s glory. In God’s presence, Isaiah sees with crystal clarity his own shortcomings – “I am a sinful man.” “I have filthy lips ...”. “ ... I live among a people with filthy lips.” Isaiah is wondering how he can see God and live. Imagine being overwhelmed as Isaiah was in God’s presence. This is part of what it means to fear the LORD!

In the Bible, the word translated “fear” can mean several things. It can refer to the terror one feels in a frightening situation ([Deuteronomy 2:25](#)). It can mean “respect” in the way a servant fears his master and serves him faithfully ([Joshua 24:14](#)). *Fear* can also denote the reverence or awe a person feels in the presence of greatness ([Isaiah 6:5](#)). The fear of the Lord is a combination of all of these. Source: Got Questions

- What do you think of the Got Questions overview of fear?
- In our culture, the word “fear” typically is associated with the negative. Fear is something I want to get out of my life. What might an unhealthy fear of God look like?

An unhealthy fear is Adam and Eve hiding from God as He walked through the garden of Eden (see Genesis 3:8-10). An unhealthy fear is negating God’s grace and love and seeing God merely as a vengeful judge.

READ 1 John 4:16-18

“We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world. Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love.” NLT

- Based on these verses, how would you define the kind of fear God wants to help us get over? How would you contrast this fear with the fear He wants us to cultivate?

God wants us to have confidence on the day of judgment. This confidence is based on what Jesus has done for us and our experience of God’s love. The fear God wants to help us get over is a lack of confidence that stems from doubt. It is saying things like, “I’m not sure God will forgive me.” “I don’t know if he’ll let me into heaven.” These doubts cause us to fear God’s judgement and to forget His grace.

READ 2 Corinthians 5:10-11

“For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in this earthly body. Because we understand our fearful responsibility to the Lord, we work hard to persuade others. God knows we are sincere, and I hope you know this too.” NLT

- How do these verses help you understand the importance of living in the fear of God?

Although we are saved by grace, these verses remind us that we will give an account before God of the way we've lived. In light of this, Paul says we have a "fearful responsibility to the Lord ..." to live in light of our accountability to Him.

THE BLESSING OF FEARING THE LORD

READ Jeremiah 32:39 out loud together as a group:

"I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me for their own good and for the good of their children after them." NIV

- There are blessings we receive from fearing the LORD. What are the blessings we see in Jeremiah 32:39?

There is good that comes from fearing the Lord, for us and for future generations. These blessings may include seeing God's provision, being thankful for His presence and love, loving family relationships.

- "I will give them singleness of heart and action ...". We can live singly for God or we can try to live in a divided ways. As a group, contrast these two ways of living. What does it look like to live with singleness of heart and action? What does it look like to live in a divided way?

Singleness of heart and action is a choice to live for the glory of God. It is a commitment to follow Jesus, love God and love people. To be divided is to pay lip service to God but to live for myself. Being divided is trying to serve two Masters. Jesus says we must choose. Will we serve Him, or someone else? (see Joshua 24:15)

- How have you experienced the truth of this verse?

"Those who fear the LORD have a continual awareness of Him, a deep reverence for Him and a sincere commitment to obey Him." Source: God Questions

- What might it look like for you to cultivate a healthy fear of the LORD this week?

PRAYER: For your prayer time this week, ask God to help you to choose wisdom over foolishness. Ask Him to empower you to cultivate a healthy fear of Him.

VIDEO SCRIPT

Hey Creekside LifeGroups! Welcome back to our study, #GetOverYourSelfie. It's hard to believe we're already in our final week of this series. As we get ready to wrap our fall study I want to remind you of the goal of our time together. The big question we've been asking is – How do I get over myself and experience God's best for my life? Each week we've been looking at an area that can keep us down, that stifles our relationship with God. We've been facing those areas head on and talking about how to get over them. Then we've been looking at what I love to call the Great Exchange – exchanging that challenge that keeps us down for God's best.

In week 1 we talked about Truth over Lies. We identified Satan as the source of lies. We looked at how to get over the lies and how to embrace God's truth. Ephesians 4:21 says, *you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him.* A big takeaway for me from week 1 is to exchange lies for the truths of Jesus.

In week 2 we focused on Contentment over Greed. Greed invades our lives. It keeps us in a place where we are perpetually dissatisfied with what we have. Contentment is the state of being mentally and emotionally satisfied with the way things are. In 1 Timothy 6, Paul writes, "But godliness with contentment is great gain ..." To experience God's best I say no to greed and yes to being satisfied with what God has given me.

For week 3 we looked at how to experience Generosity over Selfishness. We saw that being selfish is about being consumed with my own needs and desires above the needs of others. In this study we saw the many ways we can be generous by putting others first. Jesus described himself as One who came to this earth to serve. Following Jesus means being generous with my time, talents and treasure for the good of others.

Week 4's study focused in on Humility over Arrogance. We discovered that humility is the second most frequently taught trait in the New Testament, second only to love. The two traits,

humility and love, are the foundational stones of our character as followers of Jesus. 1 Peter 5:5-6 says ... all of you, dress yourselves in humility as you relate to one another, for 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.' So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honour. To be humble I need to get over my pride and choose to put on the character trait of humility.

Last week we looked at Eternity over Temporary. In John 17:3, Jesus said, "Now this is eternal life, that they may know you, the one true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." In this study we discovered that eternal life isn't something that begins after I die. God's best for you and me is that we would experience eternal life now, in a moment-by-moment, rich relationship with Him.

This brings us to our final great exchange. Our topic for today is Wisdom over Foolishness. Over each of the weeks of this series, we've been looking at making a choice. Will I choose my way or God's way? Will I choose to live foolishly, or will I choose to live wisely? To get over myself is to reject the foolish choice and embrace the wise choice. The book of Proverbs is probably the greatest book in the Bible on wisdom. In Proverbs 9:10 we have a verse that tells us what true wisdom is. You'll see the words of this verse there on the screen. Let's read this out loud together. "Fear of the LORD is the foundation of wisdom. Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment." NLT If a house is going to stand and endure the test of time it needs a solid foundation. God is telling us to build our foundation on His wisdom. How do we do that? By learning what it means to fear the LORD.

In your study, you're going to spend some time looking at the antithesis of wisdom – foolishness. In your group you'll define what foolishness looks like, then you'll read some Proverbs that contrast wisdom and foolishness. For the second part of your study, your group will explore what it looks like to get over foolishness and embrace God's wisdom. Then your group will dig into what it means to fear the LORD. For many of us, the idea of fearing God presents a challenge, because we see fear as a negative thing we should avoid. Together as a group, you'll unpack what a healthy fear of God looks like and the steps you can take to cultivate the fear of God in your life.

Well, this brings us to the end of the video portion of our study. I am so thankful for each one of you, that you have chosen to be part of a LifeGroup this series. My hope for you is that by God's power and with the help of your group, you've taken steps to get over your self and to experience God's best each week. Remember this – the journey is just beginning! As you continue meeting together as a group, to read the Bible, focus on your relationship with Jesus and pray together, God will work in your life to help you experience His very best for you. May God bless you as you continue in your group time together. I'm looking forward to seeing you for our next LifeGroup study in the new year. See you then!

What does it mean to fear the LORD?

Why would you bother fearing God?

Prov. 1:7, Psalm 67:8-9

God is greatly feared

Icebreaker idea - Kyle Idelman game – would you rather ... comparatives. Sometimes it matters what you choose! What we choose can make a huge difference!

Question: "What is wisdom? What is the difference between wisdom and knowledge?"

Answer: Wisdom and knowledge, both recurring themes in the Bible, are related but not synonymous. The dictionary defines *wisdom* as “the ability to discern or judge what is true, right, or lasting.” *Knowledge*, on the other hand, is “information gained through experience, reasoning, or acquaintance.” Knowledge can exist without wisdom, but not the other way around. One can be knowledgeable without being wise. Knowledge is knowing how to use a gun; wisdom is knowing when to use it and when to keep it holstered.

God wants us to have knowledge of Him and what He expects of us. In order to obey Him, we have to have knowledge of the commands. But as equally important as having knowledge is having wisdom. Knowing facts about God and the Bible is not all there is to wisdom. Wisdom is a gift from God. [James 1:5](#) states, “If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.” God blesses us with wisdom in order for us to glorify Him and use the knowledge we have of Him.

The [book of Proverbs](#) is perhaps the best place in the Bible to learn of biblical wisdom. [Proverbs 1:7](#) speaks of both biblical knowledge and wisdom: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, / but fools despise wisdom and instruction.” To [fear the Lord](#) is to start on the path to knowledge, and God can then begin to provide us with wisdom through Christ, who the Bible says is wisdom itself: “It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption” ([1 Corinthians 1:30](#)).

Knowledge is what is gathered over time through study of the Scriptures. It can be said that wisdom, in turn, acts properly upon that knowledge. Wisdom is the fitting application of knowledge. Knowledge understands the light has turned red; wisdom applies the brakes. Knowledge sees the quicksand; wisdom walks around it.

Knowledge memorizes the Ten Commandments; wisdom obeys them. Knowledge learns of God; wisdom loves Him.

Question: "How is the fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom?"

Answer: [Proverbs 9:10](#) says, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." Basically, this verse teaches that the fear of God is foundational to true wisdom; all other types of learning are worthless unless built upon a knowledge of the Lord Himself. Many other passages talk about the fear of the Lord (e.g., [Psalm 111:10](#); [Proverbs 1:7](#); [14:27](#); [15:33](#)). Before we can understand how the fear of the Lord leads to wisdom, we need to define what the Bible means by "fear" in this context.

In the Bible, the word translated "fear" can mean several things. It can refer to the terror one feels in a frightening situation ([Deuteronomy 2:25](#)). It can mean "respect" in the way a servant fears his master and serves him faithfully ([Joshua 24:14](#)). *Fear* can also denote the reverence or awe a person feels in the presence of greatness ([Isaiah 6:5](#)). The fear of the Lord is a combination of all of these.

Fear of the Lord can be defined as "the continual awareness that our loving heavenly Father is watching and evaluating everything we think, say, and do" ([Matthew 12:36](#); [Psalm 139:2](#); [Jeremiah 12:3](#)). As Jesus told each of the seven churches in [Revelation 1–2](#), "I know your works." Nothing escapes His attention.

In order to develop the fear of the Lord, we must recognize God for who He is. We must glimpse with our spirits the power, might, beauty, and brilliance of the Lord God Almighty ([Revelation 11:17](#); [Hosea 12:5](#); [Isaiah 6:1-5](#)). Those who fear the Lord have a continual awareness of Him, a deep reverence for Him, and sincere commitment to obey Him.

[Proverbs 1:7](#) says, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction." This verse gives us some added insight with its antithetical parallelism—there is a sharp contrast between the wise life and the foolish life. A wise person fears/reverences/obeys the Lord; a fool despises God's instruction and cannot be told what to do. The wise person is wise because he has started at the starting place; the fool has no foundation on which to build wisdom.

[Romans 1:21-22](#) speaks of those who "neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools." This is a description of people who try to obtain wisdom while ignoring God—it cannot be done for the simple reason that God is the source of wisdom.

The link between the fear of God and wisdom means we cannot possess wisdom if we recreate God in our own image. Too many people want to "tame" God into a non-

threatening nobody. But, if we redefine the Lord as a god that makes us feel comfortable, a permissive “buddy” who exists simply to bless us and give us what we want, we will not fear Him in the way He deserves to be feared. The Lord God Almighty is far greater than that, and the fear of the Lord begins when we see Him in His majesty and power ([Revelation 4:11](#); [Job 42:1-2](#)) The Lord shows Job (and us) a glimpse of His power in [Job 38–41](#) when He describes His absolute sovereignty over everything.

When the reality of God’s true nature has caused us to fall down in worship, we are then in the right position to gain wisdom. Wisdom is merely seeing life from God’s perspective and responding accordingly. Wisdom is a priority, and we are told to seek it above all else ([Proverbs 3:13](#); [16:16](#)). Proverbs is known as the wisdom book, and the entire second chapter gives a detailed explanation of the value of gaining wisdom.

Until our hearts are in a right relationship with God, we are unable to have the “wisdom that comes from heaven” ([James 3:17](#)). Without the fear of the Lord, we may gain knowledge of earthly things and make some practical choices for *this* life, but we are missing the one ingredient that defines a wise person ([Psalm 14:1](#); [Exodus 20:3](#); [34:14](#); [Jeremiah 25:6](#); [Matthew 22:37](#)). In the [parable of the rich farmer](#), the rich man had a “wise” and practical plan for his profits, but God said to him, “You fool!” because the farmer’s plans were made with no thought of God and eternity ([Luke 12:16-21](#)).

Without the fear of the Lord, we make final decisions based on our faulty human understanding ([Proverbs 3:5-6](#)). When we incorporate the fear of the Lord into every moment of our lives, we make decisions based upon His approval. We live with the knowledge that the Creator of the universe is intimately involved in our every move. He sees, knows, and evaluates all our choices, and we will answer to Him ([Psalm 139:1-4](#)).

Our respect for God’s majesty causes us to honor Him ([Psalm 29:2](#)). Our gratitude for His mercy causes us to serve Him well ([Psalm 2:11](#); [107:15](#)). And the understanding that our God of love is also a God of wrath inspires enough fear to help us stay away from evil ([Romans 1:18](#); [Proverbs 8:13](#)). Sin is foolish; righteousness is wise. When we live righteously, we are on the path to wisdom, and everyone in our lives benefits ([Proverbs 13:20](#); [19:8](#)).

Recommended Resource: [Knowing God by J.I. Packer](#)

Question: "What does the Bible say about foolishness?"

Answer: Foolishness is the result of a person misusing the intelligence God has given him. A fool uses his reasoning skills to make wrong decisions. The most basic type of foolishness is denying God’s existence or saying “no” to God ([Psalm 14:1](#)). The Bible associates folly with a quick temper ([Proverbs 14:16-17](#)), perverse speech ([Proverbs 19:1](#)), and disobedience to parents ([Proverbs 15:5](#)). We are born with an innate foolishness, but discipline will help train us in wisdom ([Proverbs 22:15](#)).

[Proverbs 19:3](#) says that foolishness is counterproductive: “A person's own folly leads to their ruin.” Jesus in [Mark 7:22](#) uses a word which means “senselessness” and is translated “folly.” In that context Jesus describes what comes out of the heart of man and defiles him. Foolishness is one of the evidences that man has a defiled, sinful nature. [Proverbs 24:9](#) says, “The schemes of folly are sin.” Foolishness, then, is really the breaking of God’s law, for sin is lawlessness ([1 John 3:4](#)).

To the fool, God’s way is foolishness. “The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing.” ([1 Corinthians 1:18](#); cf. verse 23). The [gospel](#) seems to be foolishness to the unsaved because it doesn’t make sense to them. The fool is completely out of phase with God’s wisdom. The gospel goes against the unbeliever’s native intelligence and reason, yet “God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe” ([1 Corinthians 1:21](#)).

The believer in Christ receives the very nature of God ([2 Peter 1:4](#)), which includes the mind of Christ ([1 Corinthians 2:16](#)). By relying on the Holy Spirit’s indwelling power, the believer can reject foolishness. His thoughts can please the Lord, and he can make decisions that glorify God as he enriches his life and the lives of those around him ([Philippians 4:8-9](#); [Ephesians 5:18–6:4](#)).

When it comes to our eternal destiny, one is either a fool, meaning he rejects the gospel of Christ, or one is wise, meaning he believes in Christ and commits his life to Him (see [Matthew 7:24-27](#)). The believer discovers that the gospel—what he thought was foolishness—is in reality the wisdom of God providing him eternal salvation.

ICEBREAKER: I sure thought I was something! When I was a teen one of dare devil activities my friends and I tried out was swimming in the local gravel pit. I remember the afternoon my buddy and I were about halfway across the reservoir when he commented, “I bet we’re in about 75’ of water right now.” For some reason this struck me as funny and we both started laughing. My laughing made me lose strength to keep swimming. I made it to the other side, but I did not swim back. I walked! This experience taught me to see myself in a more realistic light. Maybe I wasn’t as “something” as I thought! The experience humbled me, in a good way. When you were a kid or a teen did you have an experience that taught you to be humble? Share it with the group.

VIDEO: Watch this week's video – Humility Over Pride
<https://www.lifegroupleaders.ca/studies/>

STUDY:

Pride defined:

As a group, give a go at creating your best definition of pride (the kind of pride God hates)

Write down your definition here

Pride is ... _____

THE PRIDE TEST – source – Allen Parr – 15 subtle signs of pride in your life.

Have each group member do a quick assessment of themselves. Read through the 15 signs of pride as a group. Which one or two of the following would you identify most strongly as a pride area in your life?

1. Assuming I already know something when someone is teaching. For example, when I hear the topic of a sermon or hear a Bible passage being read, I think, "I already know about this" and I close off to God's work to teach me something new.
2. Seeing myself as too good to perform certain tasks. (example – stacking chairs at church, cleaning toilets at home) I may think, "I'm not doing that lowly task. Find someone else."
3. Being too proud to ask for help. May happen because I don't want to be seen as having a need or a weakness.
4. Feeling the need to consistently teach people things. Viewing myself as an authority and letting others know this on many of the topics that come up in conversation.
5. Talking about myself a lot. Referring often to my education, sports abilities, work or other accomplishments. Neglecting to be more interested in others.
6. Thinking I am better than others who are different or less fortunate. May be an internal perception or manifested in what I say or how I treat others.

7. When I disregard the advice of others. Thinking I have more insight than others. Believing I can be successful without input from others.
 8. When I am consistently critical. This may be putting others down in order to elevate myself or failure to see my own shortcomings because I only critique others.
 9. Consistent need for attention or affirmation. Drawing the spotlight to my accomplishments, personality, intelligence, popularity.
 10. Unable to receive constructive criticism. When I'm closed to how the feedback of others might help me become a better person.
 11. Overly obsessed with physical appearance. When I'm focused on how my looks are impressing others over how my character is pleasing to God.
 12. Unwilling to submit to authority. When I'm unwilling to submit to authority at work, church, home or any relationship because I don't like having someone "over" me.
 13. Ignoring people's attempt to communicate with me. When I consistently ignore certain people who email or text me because I feel I'm too important or busy.
 14. Justifying my sin instead of admitting it. When I cover up, minimize, deflect or deny my sin. When I won't own up because I don't want to look bad to others.
 15. Name dropping. When I make a habit of mentioning popular, successful people I know in order to emphasize that I also am popular and successful.
- Why are we prone to pride?
 - Talk about a time when your pride hurt you or others.

READ Proverbs 8:13

"All who fear the LORD will hate evil. Therefore, I hate pride and arrogance, corruption and perverse speech." NLT

- Why do you think the author would say, "I hate pride"?
- Did you associate pride with the other things listed in this proverb? Would you have put pride in the same category?

READ Proverbs 10:4

“The wicked are too proud to seek God. They seem to think that God is dead.” NLT

- One of the reasons God hates pride is that it can keep people from seeking Him. What might this look like? (example – a person who believes they don’t need a Saviour)
- Where do you see this happening in our culture today?
- “Pride is giving ourselves credit for something God has accomplished.” [Got Questions](#)
How does this quote relate to this proverb?

READ Proverbs 16:18-19

“Pride goes before destruction, and haughtiness before a fall. Better to live humbly with the poor than to share plunder with the proud.” NLT

- “Pride goes before destruction” – why would pride lead to destruction?
- “Haughtiness before a fall” – when have you seen this happen?
- What are the dangers of pride? See if your group can come up with 5 examples.

READ Isaiah 14:12-15 – this passage can be interpreted as an account of Satan being thrown out of heaven.

- How do we see the dangers of pride in these verses?
- In what ways can we exhibit these same expressions of pride?

EMBRACING HUMILITY

The character trait of humility is the second-most frequently taught trait in the New Testament, second only to love. I regard these two traits as the foundational stones of Christian character. All other traits, in one way or another, are built upon love and humility.

Jerry Bridges [The Blessing of Humility](#)

Create as a group a definition of humility. Write your definition here:

When Ken talked about God being humble how did that strike you? Did that help in any way to shape your thinking on what humility actually is?

READ Matthew 5:3

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” NIV

- God is looking for people who are poor in spirit, those who admit they are absolutely bankrupt in their ability to earn favour with God. Why is this kind of humility such an important posture to have in our relationship with God?

READ 1 Peter 5:5-6

“ ... all of you, dress yourselves in humility as you relate to one another, for ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’ So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honour.” NLT

- Not only are we to be humble in our relationship with God, we are also to be humble in our relationships with one another. What does it look like to “dress yourselves in humility”?
- What does it mean that “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble”?

READ Ephesians 4:1-2

“As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.” NIV

- In these verses, Paul tells us how we are to live, or walk, in light of our calling based on who Jesus is and what He has done for us. Part of this lifestyle is that we are to “be completely humble” with one another. Why are our relationships with others such an important indicator of our walk with God?
- Using these verses, how might you advise a highschool student to live out their faith? How about someone in business? How about someone who is a senior or retired?

READ Matthew 20:25-27

- What lessons can we learn from these verses about the value of humility?

“Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it’s thinking of yourself less.” C.S. Lewis

- How has this study encouraged you to get over pride and embrace humility?

PRAYER

As you pray, ask God to help you see areas of pride in your life. As He does this for you, confess to Him and ask Him to help you get over pride. Ask God to help you grow in humility, to experience God’s blessing that comes from being humble like Jesus.