THE WAY OF THE WISE
SUNDAY SCHOOL SERIES

LESSON 1

WISDOM IS BETTER THAN STRENGTH

Wisdom builds what strength alone cannot.



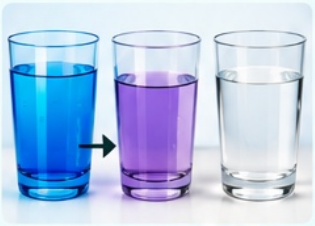
TEXT
Ecclesiastes 9:11–18

CROSS-REFERENCE
Matthew 7:24–27

BIG IDEA
Even in hard times, it is best to follow God's wisdom.

YOUTH TAKEAWAY
You don't have to be the strongest person in the room to make the wisest choice.

1. OPENING ACTIVITY: "CAN YOU TURN IT BACK?" (5 MIN)



Add a few drops of food coloring to water. Ask: **Can I take the color back out just as easily as I put it in?** (It's not.)

Food coloring spreads quickly. Removing it takes a process (like activated carbon).

This is why wisdom matters BEFORE we make the choice.

2. WHO, WHAT & WHEN?

WHO?
The Preacher (Qoheleth), traditionally associated with King Solomon, son of David, king of Israel, and associated with wisdom.

WHAT?
Comparisons, not one long story. Instead, we see short statements showing:

- Wisdom vs. foolishness
- Truth vs. lies
- Work vs. laziness
- Humility vs. pride
- God's way vs. our own way

WHEN?
Ancient Israel, 10th century BC. Though the book was collected over time.

The world has changed. The choices haven't.

Google. TikTok. AI. School. Sports. Jobs. Social media. But we're still deciding: Truth or lie? Work or shortcut? Listen or rebel? God's way or my way?

3. SCRIPTURE HUNT: "FIND THE TWO WAYS" (10 MIN)

Divide the verses among students and have them look for two things being compared. You'll find:

- Wise / Foolish
- Upright / Perverse
- Truthful witness / False witness
- Hard work / Empty talk
- Wisdom / Foolishness
- Good / Evil

Why do you think God keeps showing us BOTH?

Because recognizing wisdom becomes easier when we also recognize what foolishness looks like.

4. THE STUDENT TEST

1. You didn't study.

- Friend texts: "I got the answers."
- What does the foolish path offer? (A good grade.)
- What might it cost? (Integrity, learning, trust, discipline.)

2. You don't understand algebra.

- **Pride**: "I'm not asking. Everyone will think I'm dumb."
- **Wisdom**: "I don't understand this yet. Can you help me?"

Which student is actually learning?

The one humble enough to admit what they don't know.

5. BRING IN JESUS: MATTHEW 7:24-27

Jesus also teaches using TWO WAYS. Read the passage.



What was the SAME?

- Both built houses.
- Both experienced storms.
- Both heard Jesus' words.

What was different?

- One DID what Jesus said.
- The other heard but didn't do it.

Wisdom isn't just knowing God's Word. Wisdom is BUILDING on God's Word.

6. ACTIVITY: "BUILD YOUR PATH"

Use index cards to create a path to "WISDOM." Every stepping stone needs a wise action.

WISE STEPPING STONES

- Study
- Ask for help
- Tell the truth
- Practice
- Accept correction
- Do my own work
- Pray
- Listen
- Try again
- Admit when I don't know
- Choose good friends
- Obey God's Word

FOOLISH SHORTCUTS

- Cheat
- Lie
- Copy
- Blame someone else
- Quit
- Pretend
- Follow the crowd
- "Nobody will know"

The shortest road isn't always the right road.

7. TAKE-HOME CHALLENGE: "WHAT WOULD WISDOM DO?"

Notice one difficult situation. Ask yourself:

1. What am I feeling?
2. What do I want to do?
3. What would wisdom tell me to do?
4. What does God's Word say?
5. What choice did I actually make?

8. CLOSING CHALLENGE

Put two paths in front of them:

MY WAY → **GOD'S WAY**

- You'll encounter these roads over and over again.
- At school. With friends. Online. At home.
- When nobody is watching.

Sometimes the foolish road looks easier. Everything that looks right isn't right.

So, what are you building your choices on?



"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom." — Ecclesiastes 9:10