

Monday:

If you were asked to define the characteristics of a wise person, what would you say? Why?

READ John 3:16-21

Verse 20 says, *“Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed.”* More than wisdom being merely an intellectual pursuit, wisdom is the pursuit of Jesus. His light exposes the darkness. To be wise, we want to be people who receive instruction, bringing our struggles into the light so that we learn and grow. We want to take steps to know and become like Jesus. This is what it means to become a wise person. How might this be different from the definition you wrote above?

On the other hand, a fool despises instruction. **READ Proverbs 1:7.** How does the definition of a fool differ from what you may have previously thought?

If we bring our struggles, difficulties, and areas of growth into the light, God will work to change us from the inside out. We move toward wisdom because we are moving forward in our relationship with Jesus. We are taking steps. In this process, God’s guidance, direction, discipline and instruction makes us wise because we are dependent upon Him and the Holy Spirit. We ask God to come into our lives and change us from the inside out. We can’t do this without Him. On the other hand, if we refuse to ask Him and the Holy Spirit to work to change us, we will remain immature and foolish.

Hebrews 5:14

¹⁴“*But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.*”

As we begin this new series, spend time in prayer. Ask God to help you understand the difference between a wise and foolish person. Ask the Holy Spirit to prepare your heart for the rest of the week’s devotion as we seek to understand what defines an evil person. Ask Jesus to help you take next steps as you rely on Him and the Holy Spirit at work in you and in your life.

Thursday:

Slowly **READ Psalm 1** as well as **Proverbs 1:8-19.**

What stands out as you reflect on your own life? For example, are you receiving counsel from someone who is not following God or whose advice and influence would be in opposition to God’s ways?

READ 1 Corinthians 15:33 and 1 Peter 5:8

In **Psalm 1** we see the progression of evil. It starts by walking in the counsel of the wicked. Then it moves to a person standing immersed in the way of sin. Next the person is seated, comfortable in the ways of the ungodly. Read James 4:7.

Instead of receiving counsel from someone whose path is contrary to God, as seen in **Proverbs 1:8-19**, go to God’s Word and prayer. Call out to God in repentance and ask the Holy Spirit to begin His work in your life to know and become like Jesus. Ask for help from those you know are consistently seeking God, surrounding yourself with people who regularly ask the Holy Spirit to work in their lives to change them from the inside out.

Realize, too, that evil will try to call itself good. Evil wears many disguises and can often sound so good to us as it calls out to us and seeks to influence us away from God. This is why our personal commitment to be in God’s Word and in prayer—seeking wisdom and instruction from those we know are strong in their faith—is so important.

Isaiah 5:20

*“Woe to those who call evil good
and good evil,
who put darkness for light
and light for darkness,
who put bitter for sweet
and sweet for bitter!”*

As you end your time today, pray about what God is showing you. Ask God to help you follow His instructions as you rely on the Holy Spirit. Pray for the Holy Spirit to work in your life, helping you to know and become like Jesus. Ask Jesus to show you your next step towards Him.

Friday:

(Today's devotion will work well for you as an individual, or for you to complete as an exercise with your small group.)

Hopefully you have received an official invitation giving you FREE access to Right Now Media. As a part of Jacob's Well, you have access to this extensive video library for you, your kids, or your small group to enjoy. From the latest authors and speakers to fun Bible-based children's shows, Right Now Media is the *"Netflix of Video Bible Studies"* and it's totally FREE to use!

If you have not yet logged on to Right Now Media you may do so at this link:

<https://www.righnow.org/Account/Invite/jacobswell>

For today's devotion, we have a teaching on Safe People by Henry Cloud you can access here:

<https://www.righnowmedia.org/Content/Series/1344>

The video is 59 minutes, so you may need to watch some of it today and finish the video tomorrow.

After viewing the video, please answer the following questions:

In the video, Henry Cloud refers to Psalm 101. Read this Psalm, and list what David did to keep evil out of his life:

As Christians we want to love one another. It is what Christ asks us to do. It becomes confusing, though, when we encounter foolish and/or evil people in our lives. The truth is, we are not to tolerate evil. Read Micah 6:8. Justice is an active term and it requires responsibility on our part. If evil is present we stand against it by God's power at work in us. We walk humbly with Him, realizing that humility does not mean cowering to evil.

What did God show you through this teaching?



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Tuesday:

If you were asked to define the characteristics of an evil person, what would you say? Why?

The Bible tells us that some clear characteristics of an evil person are: mocking God, scheming against others, running to evil, and delighting in doing wrong and enticing others to do the same.

READ Proverbs 24:8.

We tend to think of evil people as separate from us and from our lives. However, what may be necessary is to honestly ask ourselves these two questions:

Do I have evil in my life?

Am I surrounding myself with people who have evil in their lives?

For today, let's focus on questions #1. Do you have evil in your life?

In **Mark 7:20-22** Jesus says,

"What comes out of a person is what defiles him. ²¹ For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²² coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness."

Take time and reflect on what is coming from within you. How is the condition of your heart revealing itself in your thoughts and behavior? Do you see evil growing in your life?

Take time to journal here:

As you end your time of reflection, **PRAY 1 Peter 3:8-12** in your own words, asking God to help you turn from any evil He is revealing in your life.

⁸ Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. ⁹ Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. ¹⁰ For "Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; ¹¹ let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. ¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

Wednesday:

For today, let's focus on questions #2 from yesterday's devotion.

Am I surrounding myself with people who have evil in their lives?

Take a minute to think about the people in your life. It is important that the people you surround yourself with can help you take steps to know and become like Jesus. If they hinder your relationship with God, you may need to step away from the relationship or set some clear boundaries. There is a difference between 1) still loving people who are far from God now and 2) allowing those people to have an unhealthy influence over you. As we take steps to know and become like Jesus, we do need people around us who are helping us grow. If our friends continue to make choices that influence us to move away from God then the best step for us may be to distance ourselves from the relationship, at least for a season. We are not mean, judgmental or rude. We are not cutting people off or severing relationship. We are loving in our approach, letting our friend/friends know that our motivation is to grow deeper in our relationship with God and that we desire for our relationships to be healthy. And maybe don't just end things...offer hope and invitation to your friend, as well!

3 John 11

"Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God."

We do not want to imitate evil, but we want to imitate good. We know that good is from God and He is who we seek. Maybe the courage you have in speaking the loving truth to your friend/friends will give them awareness for their own lives. Even though you may distance yourself from their direct influence, continue to pray that they will turn from the evil in their lives and begin to seek a relationship with God.

Every person has the potential to be changed in Christ as we call out to God in repentance and allow the Holy Spirit to begin His work to transform us. There are people, though, who are bent on division and hostility and destruction. Paul tells us in Romans to watch out for these types of people.

Romans 16:17-19

¹⁷ I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. ¹⁸ For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive. ¹⁹ For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil.

The best thing for us to do when we encounter evil people is to turn away. We want to take a strong stand against toxic people, possibly even separating from them at all costs because we know they will walk us into evil.

Remember, God does not tolerate or condone abuse or abusive systems. In every way, He wants us to protect and defend us and our families. All darkness needs to be brought into the light for healing to take place. As long as things are hidden, they will not be healed.

What is God showing you today? Do you have a friend or a group of friends who consistently invite evil into their lives rather than surrendering to God and letting Him lead? If so, ask God to help you take an appropriate stand and distance yourself if needed. Evil will only get worse if left unaddressed, so ask God to help you quickly move to action. Pray for God to work in your friends' lives, bringing awareness so that they too can take steps toward Him.