

Island Group Discussion Guide

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Week of September 21, 2025

THRIVING IN BABYLON • WEEK 8

WISDOM • PROVERBS 9:10



OPENING PRAYER TIME

Begin your meeting with 10-15 minutes of prayer using these prompts:

- Thank God for His presence with us today and His desire to give us wisdom
- Ask the Holy Spirit to guide our discussion and open our hearts to His truth
- Pray for discernment to know the difference between God's commands and our personal preferences
- Invite Jesus to help us engage our culture with both wisdom and grace
- Ask for courage to stand firm on biblical truth while showing love to those who disagree
- Pray for opportunities this week to demonstrate Christ-like wisdom in our relationships

DISCUSSION

- **Ice breaker:** Have you ever had to pick your battles wisely - choosing not to argue about something you disagreed with? How did that work out?
- **Read Proverbs 9:10.** We learned that Daniel's wisdom was rooted in fear of the Lord, not training, preparation, or experience. What does "fear of the Lord" mean to you, and how do both fear and respect contribute to wisdom?
- Daniel understood that "*only a fool takes God's commands lightly*" but also that "*not everything was worth dying for.*" The teaching highlighted that "*we often get upset and start fights over things that offend us*" and "*we confuse what we don't like with what God forbids.*" Can you think of examples where this happens today?
- **Read Daniel 1:7.** The Babylonians changed their God-honoring Hebrew names to names honoring pagan gods. Daniel (God is my judge) became Belteshazzar (Bel's prince), yet they "*did absolutely nothing about these name changes*" because "*there was no direct biblical command that they be called by some God-honoring name.*" What strikes you about their response to this humiliation?
- **Application question:** What are some areas in your life where you might be more upset about personal preferences than actual biblical issues?
- Daniel was also forced to study astrology and the occult but "*took the class*" and "*aced it*" rather than refusing. This "*gave him a platform and credibility*" to later "*introduce the true God*" to Nebuchadnezzar. How was this approach wise rather than compromising?
- **Read Daniel 2:27-30 and 2:46-49.** How did Daniel's willingness to engage the culture rather than withdraw from it lead to his opportunity to witness to the king? What was the result?



- Pastor Charlie said that *"Daniel had the wisdom to understand that godless people live godless lives. He never forced his righteous lifestyle on others."* Charlie stated that boycotts and pulling away from culture *"does nothing to draw them to Jesus"* but *"simply confirms their negative stereotypes"* about Christians. What's your reaction to this perspective?
- **Read 1 Corinthians 5:9-13.** Paul teaches that we *"should judge the actions of those inside the body"* but *"we shouldn't judge those outside the church."* He says we *"shouldn't be surprised or shocked when somebody immoral does things that are immoral because they're far from God."* How does this challenge common Christian approaches to cultural issues?
- The sermon stressed: *"Our job is to try to introduce them to the one who does clean them up. And his name is Jesus."* How does this change our approach to people whose lifestyle we disagree with?
- **Read Matthew 10:16.** Jesus instructed us to be *"wise as serpents and innocent as doves"* as vulnerable sheep among wolves. What does it mean to be wise as serpents (clever, prudent, not naive, not inflammatory) while being innocent as doves (free from sin, holy, vulnerable, sacrificial)?
- Pastor Charlie stated: *"I don't have to win. We don't have to win. My number one issue shouldn't be my own security or getting my way. My number one issue should be obedience to Jesus."*
Application question: What areas of your life are driven more by wanting to win or be right than by obedience to Jesus?
- **Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23.** Paul became *"all things to all people"* that he *"might save some."* The message concluded: *"We can't have influence if we're withdrawing from them"* because *"that gives us zero influence to speak to those people."* How can we engage with godly wisdom while maintaining our convictions?
- **Application question:** The challenge was given to *"find one person in your world who's outside the church, maybe even far from God, and engage them with grace."* This could be *"as simple as a kind word"* or *"a listening ear"* or *"an act of service."* Who is one person you can reach out to this week to *"show them what it means to be wise as a serpent and innocent as a dove"*?

CLOSING PRAYER TIME

Share prayer requests and concerns with the group. Be sure to write these down and send them to all group members so everyone can pray throughout the week, including those who were absent today.