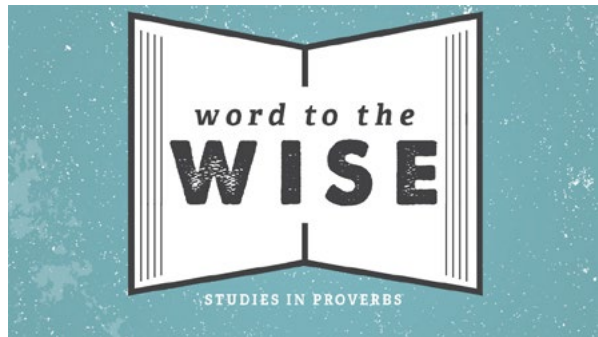


beyond^{the}Weekend

For the sermon on September 6-7, 2014
"How to Stop a Fight"



Welcome to *Beyond the Weekend!* Invite God into your day with daily scripture and actions. The experiences below are designed to connect with the weekend message. Take 20-30 minutes each day and enjoy your pursuit of God! *Beyond the Weekend* is also available via daily e-mails. To sign up, go to adabile.org/btw.

Day 1 James 3.13-18 | Heavenly Wisdom

As we look at Bob King's message, "How to Stop a Fight," we see two motives at the heart of almost every conflict: "envy and selfish ambition" (James 3.14). Someone is either engaged in self-promotion or is trying to get something someone else has. Conflict and tension stem from a heart out of alignment—a heart bent on getting more or getting even.

To help us grasp the bigger picture, James points out there are two different types of wisdom: heavenly and demonic. The term "demonic" sounds scary, but it's James' way of saying there's wisdom, or a way of living, contrary to the way God thinks. Heavenly wisdom, on the other hand, has at its core *selflessness* and *contentment*. Most conflicts would dissipate immediately if both parties were bent on serving the other and being truly satisfied with how God has already blessed them.

As you invite God into your day, take a few minutes to consider a relationship where tension regularly exists. Ask God to show you if your heart is out of alignment—characterized by selfishness and envy—which can easily convince us we're not the source of the problem. Because real peace and transformation come when we acknowledge our impure motives before God, ask him for forgiveness and to replace those traits with selflessness and contentment. By doing so we come to embrace and live by heavenly wisdom.

Day 2 Proverbs 17.14 | Breach

There's that moment when you feel your temperature rising and you sense an argument is about to ensue. The next words out of your mouth are the most crucial; they'll either fuel the conflict or help settle the matter. Proverbs 17.14 says if they fuel the conflict, it's like the breaching of a dam—it starts with a small crack, but ends up unleashing the entire river.

A broken dam has devastating effects on a community: a reservoir is drained, dangerous flooding occurs, and years of labor building the dam are gone in an instant. This is true for relationships as well. When we enter into a quarrel, be it with family, friends, co-workers, or even some guy who cuts you off on your way to work, we risk dangerous consequences that sometimes wreak unrepairable damage. Worst of all, when we let dangerous words go, we can never get them back.

The wisdom from Proverbs is this: ". . . drop the matter before a dispute breaks out" (Proverbs 17.14b). Simply put, drop it and walk away. Today, recall a time you let words fly you couldn't get back and the damage you caused. Use this as a learning environment the next time you feel your temperature rising as you drop it and walk away.

Day 3 Proverbs 22.10 | Jerk

Proverbs seems to suggest *situations* aren't the cause of conflict, *people* are. Unpaid bills, family dynamics, and a messy house can certainly increase the opportunity for tension, but they're not to blame for the strife that exists between people. The writer of Proverbs 22.10 says, "Drive out the mocker and out goes strife." Another term for mocker could simply be "jerk." While it's easy to identify someone else as being a jerk, the truth is we all have moments when we're the source of the problem.

This week with your small group, discuss those situations when the "jerk" comes out in you. Rehearse with one another what it looks like to live and act as Jesus would in these difficult situations. Remember, if you've placed your faith and trust in Jesus, the Bible says you're a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5.17). We don't have to be a "jerk" because that's not who we are anymore.

Day 4 Proverbs 15.18 | Volcano

While there are moments when it's appropriate to show intense anger, these moments are usually few and far between. The problem is, many of us *live angry*. We may not show it all the time, but we're always bubbling, ready to blow like a volcano with pressure always building. It only takes the slightest poke to release the full vent of our anger. This can be very dangerous for the people who live with and around us.

Patience is the ability to graciously slow down and meet someone at their pace. When you feel your temperature rising because of the challenges surrounding you, allow yourself the time and space to slow down. Today, take a few minutes to memorize Proverbs 15.18 and call it to mind when you sense your volcano starting to boil.

Day 5 Galatians 5.16-26 | Life

This week as we've explored "How to Stop a Fight," we've contrasted right and wrong ways to deal with the tensions we all encounter. While James 3.13-18 identifies two types of wisdom, heavenly and demonic, the Apostle Paul identifies two sources of desire that direct our life: the flesh (me) or the Holy Spirit (God). In Galatians 5.22-26, Paul gives a list of the beautiful results of a life controlled by God through the Holy Spirit.

On our own we're separated from God by our selfish desires. But God, in his mercy, wants to save us and give us a God-full life (John 10.10). To rescue us, God sent his only Son Jesus to die on the cross for our sins and offers us his life in return. When we turn to God and accept his forgiveness through Jesus, we're given the Holy Spirit to guide us into God's plan for our lives. By placing our faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, we can daily yield our hearts to the Holy Spirit. As you begin your day, take a few minutes to pray and ask God to lead you as you desire to follow him alone.

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