

OBSERVATION -- As a group, talk through and summarize the passage. Think through *Who, What, Where, When, How, and Why* questions together.

INTERPRETATION -- Answer these questions together:

- 1) **What does this passage teach us about us? (Discuss each question below in the light of being both “an influence” and “influenced.”)**
 - a) Read Proverbs 13:20. Pst. Akin mentioned, “Show me friends, and I will show you your character and future.” How does this passage help us understand the power of influence in our journey toward wisdom and abstaining from folly?
 - b) Together, analyze Proverbs 9:1-18. How is the influence of those walking wisdom or folly displayed? What are the effects of companionship with those walking in wisdom or folly?
 - c) Although our companions can determine our life’s trajectory, Pst Akin identifies that our choice of companion reveals our heart or our desire (Pro 9:12). From experience, how have your companions revealed the idols and longings of your heart (i.e., Christ’s works and holiness, pleasure, comfort, recognition, power, control, acceptance, licentiousness, etc.)?
- 2) **What does this passage teach us about God? (Read Eph 2:1-5,10 and Prov 9:10)**
 - a) How do these passages demonstrate that God has the ultimate and perfect influence we all need? How has God influenced us on the path of wisdom? How does reverence for God’s riches in mercy and love influence the believer’s path toward wisdom?
 - b) Since God is our ultimate influence, how can the fear of man hinder our choice of pursuing wise companionship?
- 3) **What does this passage teach us about grace/salvation? How does it point to Christ? (READ Prov Pro 9:9; Eph 2:6-10; 2 Cor 3:12-18)**
 - a) In Christ, believers are not only called to be wise, but they are wise by grace through faith because they have died to sin in Christ’s death, made alive together in Christ’s resurrection, and by faith seated with Christ in the heavenly places awaiting the final hope of their Christ’s return. How should that knowledge impact the believer’s pursuit of wisdom? How should that knowledge influence the believer’s choice of earthly companionship?
 - b) Believers experience their wisdom in Christ by preserving together in “beholding the glory of the Lord.” How should that knowledge of Christ’s immense glory impact the things and people we choose to influence us? Also, how should this knowledge impact the way we influence others?

APPLICATION (Observe Gal 5:16-6:1-10):

- 1) Pst. Akin admonished that we need wise companions, and we need to be wise companions. Discuss some of these thoughtful processes in thinking through companionship.
 - i. **Examine Yourself:** What are my desires, idols, or godly desires? What godly wisdom do I want to cultivate?
 - ii. **Evaluate Companionship:** Do I have companions, friends, or influencers (remote or in-person) who motivate me towards godly desires or feed my ungodly desires and idols? Do I encourage others towards godly desires or feed their idols and ungodly desires?
 - iii. **Confess Aims:** Confess your idols and godly aims to your companion (*without blaming them*). Gently and specifically inform your friend/small group of how you desire the relationship to sow in the spirit in order to reap more spiritual fruits. Discuss specific action steps that can help the relationship pursue the pathway of wisdom.
 - iv. **Prayerfully Find Godly Companions:** After much self-evaluation and patience with your companion, if your friend/companion is unwilling to be “*spiritually influenced or a spiritual influence,*” prayerfully search for companions who are either spiritually more mature or longing for spiritual maturity (*Remember, you are not searching for perfect people*).

PRAYER

- Praise God for sharing his Wisdom with us.
- Confess how you have not been a godly companion that provides or receives godly influence.
- Thank God for the sacrifice of Christ that gives us hope of eternal wisdom.
- Ask God to give you the strength to find and/or cultivate godly companionship.