

Proverbs-Wisdom

The first two subjects in our topical survey of the book of Proverbs, the tongue and wealth, are widely covered throughout the book, but another subject also seems to be discussed at least as frequently and extensively-wisdom. Wisdom is the principle subject of the introduction of proverbs in chapter one, is covered virtually throughout the book, and is included in the description of the virtuous woman in the conclusion of chapter 31.

What exactly is wisdom? Is it something I can take a class on or discover in a good book. Can I get wisdom on Facebook or Youtube? Is wisdom something you're just born with or is it acquired? Let's answer that question right now.....

15 Foolishness *is* bound in the heart of a child; *but* the rod of correction shall drive it far from him. **P**rov 22:15 (KJV)

Is wisdom even all that important? Is it something I must have to be an effective, consistent follower of Christ? We'll try to answer at least some of these questions this morning.

What is wisdom? (anonymous quotes)

“Wisdom is the reward you get for a lifetime of listening when you would have preferred to talk.”

“A wise man learns from the mistakes of others. Nobody lives long enough to make them all himself.”

“A wise man learns by the experience of others. An ordinary man learns by his own experience. A fool learns by nobody's experience.”

The doorstep to the temple of wisdom is a knowledge of our own ignorance. **Charles Spurgeon**

I don't think much of a man who is not wiser today than he was yesterday. **Abraham Lincoln**

Knowledge is horizontal; wisdom is vertical and comes from above. **Billy Graham**

Wisdom (Webster)- Power of judging rightly and following the soundest course of action, based on knowledge, experience, understanding, etc.

Bruffa def- Godly wisdom- The best, most moral, and biblical application of knowledge, understanding and experience in light of God's truth, commands and purposes.

Let's be practical..... **What are the benefits?** (of wisdom)

1. Happiness, long life, prosperity, pleasantness, peace, honor

13 Happy is a man who finds wisdom and who acquires understanding, **14** for she is more profitable than silver, and her revenue is better than gold. **15** She is more precious than jewels; nothing you desire compares with her. **16** Long life is in her right hand; in her left, riches and honor. **17** Her ways are pleasant, and all her paths,

peaceful. ¹⁸ She is a tree of life to those who embrace her, and those who hold on to her are happy. Prov 3:13-18 (HCSB)

Wow! That is quite a list of benefits to gaining wisdom. Who wouldn't want all these things? But, we must seek, find and grow in wisdom. I would guess the two enemies to seeking and finding wisdom are: thinking we are already wise enough and laziness. Find wisdom. Look for it. Seek it. We'll talk more about how to get wisdom in a minute.

2. Avoid sin

¹ My son, pay attention to my wisdom; listen closely to my understanding² so that [you] may maintain discretion and your lips safeguard knowledge. ³ Though the lips of the forbidden woman drip honey and her words are smoother than oil, ⁴ in the end she's as bitter as wormwood and as sharp as a double-edged sword. ⁵ Her feet go down to death; her steps head straight for Sheol. ⁶ She doesn't consider the path of life; she doesn't know that her ways are unstable. Prov 5:1-6 (HCSB)

If we took a poll or gave completely honest testimonies this morning as to how many times each of us, even since becoming a born-again believer, have foolishly fallen into some sin that caused us, our families, our church, and the kingdom of God harm and destruction, we would all be astounded at the numbers and severity of the path of sin's destruction. Wisdom would have helped and will help us "maintain discretion."

3. Discernment

13 Wisdom is found on the lips of the discerning, but a rod is for the back of the one who lacks sense. **Prov 10:13** (HCSB)

Discernment is a consequence or partner of wisdom. It is the ability to walk into a room, enter a conversation, or intervene in a conflict and quickly know what is good and what is evil, what is right and what is wrong, whether something is of God or not. Discernment is also enhanced and sharpened by a regular diet of feasting on the Word of God.

4. Safety

26 The one who trusts in himself is a fool, but one who walks in wisdom will be safe. **Prov 28:26** (HCSB)

I can't remember all the foolish, crazy things I've done in my lifetime. I have a lot of aches and pains, physical and spiritual, that serve as constant reminders. It wasn't my wisdom that kept me safe. It was God's power, mercy and purposes for my life. God's plan and preference though is that we develop godly wisdom so that we don't have to have 24 hour angelic body guards protecting us from our own foolishness. He prefers that we grow in wisdom and learn to be safe on our own. He has better things to do than constantly rescuing us from our foolishness.

How can I get wisdom?

1. Be humble

² When pride comes, disgrace follows, but with humility comes wisdom. **Prov 11:2 (HCSB)**

Outside of genuine humility, you will see yourself as already wise rather than one who needs to get wisdom. That is pride, and of course we know the destructive outcome of pride. In this case, disgrace. So humility is a great and necessary place to start. Humility embraces the attitude that God is God and we are not. We need His wisdom.

¹² Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him. **Prov 26:12 (HCSB)**

2. Seek counsel/advice

¹⁰ Arrogance leads to nothing but strife, but wisdom is gained by those who take advice. **Prov 13:10 (HCSB)**

Wisdom is gained, we learn, we grow when we stop talking and start listening and observing. As soon as I start talking, I have ceased learning, growing and gaining wisdom. When I do speak, I may hopefully be imparting wisdom and knowledge to someone else, but I am not growing. That is why I must spend, we all must spend, ample time listening to, reading, and observing the wisdom of others.

3. Fear God

³³ The fear of the LORD is wisdom's instruction, and humility comes before honor. **Prov 15:33 (HCSB)**

The Lord is ultimately the source of all things good including wisdom. The level of fear, or respect, that I have for my Lord has a direct impact on the level of blessings, wealth, and wisdom that He entrusts to me. If I don't fear the Lord, I will be self-absorbed with my own false sense of power, pride and wisdom. If I let the god of self-sufficiency well up in me I man forsaking "wisdom's instruction."

4. Accept discipline

15 A rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a youth left to himself is a disgrace to his mother. **Prov 29:15** (HCSB)

Correction or discipline applied correctly to any person of any age has the potential of imparting wisdom. From the simple slap of the hand on a toddler to remind him not to put his hand on the stove, to a major rebuke of a fallen brother, or to the gentle but direct rebuke of a wayward sister, we must all be willing to not just give but to accept correction if we want to grow in wisdom.

The problem is, the older we get the more stubborn and resistant to rebuke that we are. Children don't like to be corrected, but that's nothing to how much most adults despise, hate, abhor being rebuked. We are very reluctant to admit we are wrong and thus often reject even gentle, appropriate, reasonable, godly correction.

Please understand that if this true about us, we are missing a tremendous opportunity to grow in wisdom. We have developed a self-righteous, "I've got everything under control" attitude, and we think "I don't need anyone else's wisdom." This, in essence, stifles our growth as a follower of Christ and keeps us

from gaining wisdom. We all need correction or rebuke from time to time.

8 Don't rebuke a mocker, or he will hate you; rebuke a wise man, and he will love you. **Prov 9:8 (HCSB)**

5. Listen, seek, ask

1 My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, **2** listening closely to wisdom and directing your heart to understanding; **3** furthermore, if you call out to insight and lift your voice to understanding, **4** if you seek it like silver and search for it like hidden treasure, **5** then you will understand the fear of the LORD and discover the knowledge of God. **6** For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding. **7** He stores up success for the upright; He is a shield for those who live with integrity **8** so that He may guard the paths of justice and protect the way of His loyal followers. **9** Then you will understand righteousness, justice, and integrity—every good path. **10** For wisdom will enter your mind, and knowledge will delight your heart. **11** Discretion will watch over you, and understanding will guard you, **12** rescuing you from the way of evil— from the one who says perverse things, **13** [from] those who abandon the right paths to walk in ways of darkness, **14** [from] those who enjoy doing evil and celebrate perversity, **15** whose paths are crooked, and whose ways are devious. **16** It will rescue you from a forbidden woman, from a stranger with her flattering talk, **17** who abandons

the companion of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God; ¹⁸ for her house sinks down to death and her ways to the land of the departed spirits. **Prov 2:1-18** (HCSB)

As I mentioned before and as we read here in Proverbs 2, wisdom ultimately comes from the Lord. We must seek, hunger for, and simply ask for wisdom in faith. We are not born with wisdom or children and teenagers would not need parents. Wisdom comes from the Lord as we seek it and Him, but it is not automatic...

5 Get wisdom, get understanding; don't forget or turn away from the words of my mouth. **6** Don't abandon wisdom, and she will watch over you; love her, and she will guard you. **7** Wisdom is supreme—so get wisdom. And whatever else you get, get understanding. **8** Cherish her, and she will exalt you; if you embrace her, she will honor you. **9** She will place a garland of grace on your head; she will give you a crown of beauty." **Prov 4:5-9** (HCSB)

Would you be wise? Choose Jesus. Follow Jesus. Walk as He walked. Listen, observe, emulate His character. Obey Him. Grow in wisdom by observing the mistakes of others, but even greater, grow in wisdom by studying the life of Christ and do your best to live as He lived..... And don't forget to ask for it!