



WISDOM

LLOYD OGILVIE

(1 Kings 3:5-14)



Wisdom is the special gift of the Lord in our quest to know His will for our lives. Wisdom goes beyond mere intellect and knowledge and encompasses a God-given ability to perceive people and situations with spiritual clarity. Wisdom is the vertical thrust of the mind of God into our minds, making discernment possible on the horizontal level of human relationships. With God's wisdom, we can know His plans and purposes.

Life is an endless succession of choices and decisions. We are called on to evaluate, analyze, and decide about what is right and best for our lives. The possibility of error is enormous. Therefore, we need God's wisdom in order to understand and do His will.

When young King Solomon succeeded his father as the king of Israel, he felt acutely the need for divine wisdom in order to administer the kingdom of Israel. In a dream, the Lord appeared to Solomon and promised to give him anything he asked for. Solomon asked for wisdom. God was pleased with the request, saying, "I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you" (1 Kin. 3:12). The Bible records that "Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the men of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men" (1 Kin. 4:30, 31). Solomon's reign over Israel expressed his wisdom—as did his writings, sayings, and proverbs.

However, Solomon's great wisdom did not always affect his own lifestyle. Even as he received great wisdom to rule the nation, he also foolishly intermarried with many foreign women. Eventually, those women proved to be his downfall. "But King Solomon loved many foreign women. . . . Solomon clung to these in love . . . and

his wives turned away his heart. For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God" (1 Kin. 11:1-4). Clearly, wisdom must be applied to one's own personal life as well.

Despite Solomon's later mistakes, we must not diminish our appreciation of his God-given gift of wisdom. Solomon is distinguished not just for his judgments or his brilliant leadership, but for the wisdom God gave him.

GIFT OF WISDOM

The same capacity of wisdom is offered to us as well, so that we can know and do the will of God. The Bible promises: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him" (James 1:5). God usually follows a gift with the opportunity for us to use it. That way, we will know that the power we have been given is from Him. All God's gifts are for ministry, not just for our own private enjoyment. God allowed Solomon to use his wisdom to make wise judgments, as well as to write books in our Bible—such as Proverbs—to which we still turn for guidance.

We do not need to wander aimlessly through life, uncertain and confused. Our purpose is to know and do God's will. Whatever we discover of the nature of the universe can guide us only as we grow in

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Christ. Wisdom grows in us as we grow in Christ.

Jesus referred to Himself as "greater than Solomon." Christ was Wisdom Incarnate. And yet, people resisted the splendor of Wisdom's radiance. No wonder Jesus said, "The queen of the South [the Queen of Sheba] will rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here" (Luke 11:31). Solomon had gone as far as any human being in experiencing the precious gift of wisdom. Christ said to the people of His day that what had made King Solomon great, and what was sought after by the leaders of His own time, was present with them. All that Jesus taught about God and His ultimate purpose for our lives came out of the limitless storehouse of wisdom He had with God before the foundation of the world.

GROWING IN WISDOM

For us today, in the confusing complications of our lives, the promise of wisdom means that in Christ we can receive, experience, and communicate the depth perception of true wisdom. Christ was, and now is, the power of God utilized to accomplish His ultimate purpose to create a people whom He loves and who will love Him. When we receive Christ, we receive wisdom.

Wisdom indwelling us integrates knowledge and guides our decisions. The ultimate choice of making Christ Lord of our lives is followed by a million choices in daily life which are guided by what will further our ultimate purpose: to live in fellowship with Him forever.

We do not need to wander aimlessly through life, uncertain and confused. We know whose we are and for what we were

created. Our purpose is to know and do Wisdom's will. Whatever we discover of the nature of the universe can now be guided by our ultimate destiny. Wisdom grows in us as we grow in Christ.

FURTHER MEDITATION:

Other passages to study about the issue of wisdom include:

- > Deuteronomy 17:18-20
- > Joshua 1:8
- > Proverbs 2:1-9; 5:1-6; 16:6
- > Matthew 7:24-27; 13:18-23
- > 2 Timothy 3:14-17

To Learn More: Turn to the key passage note on wisdom at James 1:5 on page 1642. See also the personality profile of Solomon on page 435.

on his throne, as *it is* this day. ⁷Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I *am* a little child; I do not know *how* to go out or come in. ⁸And Your servant *is* in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted. ⁹Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?"

¹⁰The speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing. ¹¹Then God said to him: "Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for your-

self understanding to discern justice, ¹²behold, I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you. ¹³And I have also given you what you have not asked: both riches and honor, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days. ¹⁴So if you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days."

¹⁵Then Solomon awoke; and indeed it had been a dream. And he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, offered up burnt offerings, offered peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.

PERSONALITY PROFILE



SOLOMON: HAVING WISDOM VS. USING WISDOM

(1 KINGS 3)

Solomon had it all. There is no doubt that he ruled over the golden age of Israel. He had riches beyond compare, fame beyond imagination, and wisdom greater than anyone who ever lived. All of this, of course, came from God.

Solomon was one of several sons of David and Bathsheba (1 Chr. 3:5). David had promised the kingdom to Solomon (1 Kin. 1:17), whom God had chosen to succeed him (1 Chr. 28:5). God wanted to bless Israel through Solomon's reign. One night, therefore, God told Solomon to ask for anything and He would give it to him. Solomon knew what he needed most—wisdom to rule the nation.

When God answers a prayer, He doesn't go halfway. Solomon wasn't given just a little wisdom; he became the wisest man who ever lived! His wisdom became known internationally, and people came from all over the world just to meet him (1 Kin. 4:29–34). Solomon built the magnificent temple in Jerusalem as well as many other buildings. He wrote books, including the biblical books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.

Solomon struggled, however, at putting his wisdom into practice at home. He "loved many foreign women" from the surrounding nations (1 Kin. 11:1), with whom the Lord had commanded Israel not to intermarry. God said, "Surely they will turn away your hearts after other gods" (1 Kin. 11:2), but Solomon did not listen. He married not one or two, but 700 women, and, as if that weren't enough, he had 300 concubines. What God predicted came true, of course: "His wives turned his heart after others gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God" (1 Kin. 11:4).

Like Solomon, someone may be wise in many areas, but not in managing their own life. Solomon did much for his nation with his wisdom, but his unwise lack of restraint caused him to lose his kingdom (1 Kin. 11:11). A truly wise person knows how to apply God-given wisdom in life.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about wisdom on pages 436, 437. See also the key passage note at James 1:5 on page 1642.

SOLOMON'S WISE JUDGMENT

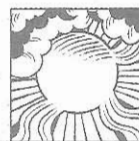
¹⁶Now two women *who were* harlots came to the king, and stood before him. ¹⁷And one woman said, "O my lord, this woman and I dwell in the same house; and I gave birth while she *was* in the house. ¹⁸Then it happened, the third day after I had given birth, that this woman also gave birth. And we *were* together; no one *was* with us in the house, except the two of us in the house. ¹⁹And this woman's son died in the night, because she lay on him. ²⁰So she arose in the middle of the night and took my son from my side, while your maidservant slept, and laid him in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom. ²¹And when I rose in the morning to nurse my son, there he was, dead. But when I had examined him in the morning, indeed, he was not my son whom I had borne." ²²Then the other woman said, "No! But the living one *is* my son, and the dead one *is* your son." ²³And the king said, "The one says, 'This *is* my son, who lives, and your son *is* the dead one.' Thus they spoke before the king. ²⁴And the king said, "No! But the dead one *is* your son, and the living one *is* my son." ²⁵And when I had examined him in the morning, indeed, he was not my son whom I had borne." ²⁶Then the other woman said, "No! But the living one *is* my son, and the dead one *is* your son." ²⁷Then the king said, "Divide the living child in two, and give half to one, and half to the other." ²⁸Then the woman whose son *was* living spoke to the king, for she yearned with compassion for her son; and she said, "O my lord, give her the living child, and by no means kill him!" ²⁹But the other said, "Let him be neither mine nor yours, but divide him." ³⁰So the king answered and said, "Give the first woman the living child, and by no means kill him; she *is* his mother." ³¹And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had rendered; and they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God *was* in him to administer justice.

SOLOMON'S ADMINISTRATION

¹So King Solomon *was* king over all Israel. ²And these *were* his officials: Azariah the son of Zadok, the priest; ³Eliphoreph and Ahijah, the sons of Shisha, scribes; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder; ⁴Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, over the army; Zadok and

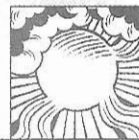
SOUL NOTE

Just Ask (3:5-14) Solomon could have asked for anything, but he knew what he needed most: "an understanding heart to . . . discern between good and evil." Solomon's position as king would require him to make decisions that would affect all of God's people. He wanted to rule those people well. God says that anyone can ask for wisdom: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him" (James 1:5). Regardless of position in life, every believer should seek God's wisdom. **Topic: Wisdom**



SOUL NOTE

Mother's Love (3:16-27) This story illustrates Solomon's wisdom. Two women had borne children; one child had died and both women claimed the living child. Solomon's proposed solution was to divide the child in half with a sword. Immediately the real mother cried out, telling the king to give the living child to the other woman rather than kill him. Solomon knew that the woman who responded was the real mother, for she was willing to give up her child to someone else to save his life. Such is the depth of a mother's love—giving of herself for the best of her child. **Topic: Motherhood**



LOVING GOD UNDER TRIALS

¹²Blessed is the man who endures temptation: for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. ¹³Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. ¹⁴But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. ¹⁵Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. ¹⁶Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. ¹⁷Every good gift and every perfect gift is from



Joy-Full (1:2-4) James, the leader of the church in Jerusalem, advised believers to be joyful during trials and troubles. Everyone faces trials in one form or another. We cannot control what we will encounter, but we can control the stress level that situations cause. Instead of being stressed, we can try being joyful. This is not a natural reaction, but one that the Holy Spirit can provide. It means choosing an attitude that looks expectantly to the lessons God will teach and the wisdom He will provide. There's no better prescription for dealing with stress! **Topic: Stress**

SOUL NOTE

KEY PASSAGE

ASKING FOR IT

(1:5)

People admire wisdom in others. Wise people have the proper perspective and can make sensible and sensitive decisions. Such people seem to be few and far between. Among believers, however, the percentage of wise people should be high, for James writes, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God . . . and it will be given to him." Wisdom begins with God, who is its source. The first step to being wise is to have proper awe and reverence for God, and then to trust Him with one's life. We become wiser as we become more and more like Christ. God's wisdom is "pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17). As we study and apply God's Word, yielding our lives daily to Christ, we need only ask God to give us His wisdom, and He promises He will.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about wisdom on pages 436, 437. See also the personality profile of Solomon on page 435.

SOUL NOTE

Make Up Your Mind (1:5) Life is full of choices: The "right" choice is not always clear, and the enemy of the better is often the good. Sometimes we must choose between two good options. Whatever the choice, we need God's wisdom to see life from His perspective and make good decisions in difficult circumstances. Fortunately, wisdom is fairly easy to obtain: James says to ask God and He will freely give it. God will generously supply all the wisdom we need for every decision we face. But when we ask, we need to be willing to do what He says! **Topic: Decision Making**



be against you. ¹⁴After whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom do you pursue? A dead dog? A flea? ¹⁵Therefore let the LORD be judge, and judge between you and me, and see and plead my case, and deliver me out of your hand."

¹⁶So it was, when David had finished speaking these words to Saul, that Saul said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. ¹⁷Then he said to David: "You *are* more righteous than I; for you have rewarded me with good, whereas I have rewarded you with evil. ¹⁸And you have shown this day how you have dealt well with me; for when the LORD delivered me into your hand, you did not kill me. ¹⁹For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him get away safely? Therefore may the LORD reward you with good for what you have done to me this day. ²⁰And now I know indeed that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. ²¹Therefore swear now to me by the LORD that you will not cut off my descendants after me, and that you will not destroy my name from my father's house."

²²So David swore to Saul. And Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

DEATH OF SAMUEL

25 Then Samuel died; and the Israelites gathered together and lamented for him, and buried him at his home in Ramah. And David arose and went down to the Wilderness of Paran.^a

DAVID AND THE WIFE OF NABAL

²Now *there was* a man in Maon whose business *was* in Carmel, and the man *was* very rich. He had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. And he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. ³The name of the man *was* Nabal, and

the name of his wife Abigail. And *she was* a woman of good understanding and beautiful appearance; but the man *was* harsh and evil in *his* doings. He *was of the house of* Caleb.

⁴When David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep, ⁵David sent ten young men; and David said to the young men, "Go up to Carmel, go to Nabal, and greet him in my name. ⁶And thus you shall say to him who lives *in prosperity*: 'Peace *be* to you, peace to your house, and peace to all that you have! ⁷Now I have heard that you have shearers. Your shepherds were with us, and we did not hurt them, nor was there anything missing from them all the while they were in Carmel. ⁸Ask your young men, and they will tell you. Therefore let *my* young men find favor in your eyes, for we come on a feast day. Please give whatever comes to your hand to your servants and to your son David.' "

⁹So when David's young men came, they spoke to Nabal according to all these words in the name of David, and waited.

¹⁰Then Nabal answered David's servants, and said, "Who *is* David, and who *is* the son of Jesse? There are many servants nowadays who break away each one from his master. ¹¹Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers, and give *it* to men when I do not know where they *are* from?"

¹²So David's young men turned on their heels and went back; and they came and told him all these words. ¹³Then David said to his men, "Every man gird on his sword." So every man girded on his sword, and David also girded on his sword. And about four hundred men went with David, and two hundred stayed with the supplies.

25:1 ^aFollowing Masoretic Text, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *Maon*.

SOUL NOTE



In the Middle (25:14–17) Abigail used great courage and wisdom. Her husband, Nabal, had insulted David and his men—not a wise move. David got angry and was ready to attack—also not a wise move. In between these two stepped Abigail. She honestly explained her husband's behavior and appealed to David with wise words and the provisions that he and his men had originally requested (25:8). Abigail's wisdom saved both her household from destruction and David from shedding innocent blood. Wisdom has great power to resolve great problems. **Topic: Wisdom**

Cabul,⁴ as they are to this day. ¹⁴Then Hiram sent the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold.

SOLOMON'S ADDITIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

¹⁵And this is the reason for the labor force which King Solomon raised: to build the house of the LORD, his own house, the Millo,⁴ the wall of Jerusalem, Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer. ¹⁶(Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up and taken Gezer and burned it with fire, had killed the Canaanites who dwell in the city, and had given it as a dowry to his daughter, Solomon's wife.) ¹⁷And Solomon built Gezer, Lower Beth Horon, ¹⁸Baalath, and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land of Judah, ¹⁹all the storage cities that Solomon had, cities for his chariots and cities for his cavalry, and whatever Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion. ²⁰All the people who were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, who were not of the children of Israel—²¹that is, their descendants who were left in the land after them, whom the children of Israel had not been able to destroy completely—from these Solomon raised forced labor, as it is to this day. ²²But of the children of Israel Solomon made no forced laborers, because they were men of war and his servants: his officers, his captains, commanders of his chariots, and his cavalry. ²³Others were chiefs of the officials who were over Solomon's work: five hundred and fifty, who ruled over the people who did the work.

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA'S PRAISE OF SOLOMON

10 Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to test him with hard questions. ²She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels that bore spices, very much gold, and precious stones; and when she came to Solomon, she spoke with him about all that was in her heart. ³So Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing so difficult for the king that he could not explain it to her. ⁴And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, the food on his table, the seating of his servants, the service of his waiters and their apparel, his cupbearers, and his entryway by which he went up to the house of the LORD, there was no more spirit in her. ⁶Then she said to the king: "It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom." ⁷However I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half was not told me. Your wisdom

²⁴But Pharaoh's daughter came up from the City of David to her house which Solomon² had built for her. Then he built the Millo. ²⁵Now three times a year Solomon offered burnt offerings and peace offerings on the altar which he had built for the LORD, and he

9:13 ^aLiterally Good for Nothing 9:15 ^aLiterally The Landfill 9:24 ^aLiterally he (compare 2 Chronicles 8:11) 9:26 ^aHebrew Cloth (compare 2 Kings 14:22)

SOUL NOTE

Wise Words, Wise Acts (10:1-13) Solomon's wisdom was divinely given and internationally acclaimed (4:29-34; 10:23, 24). The queen of Sheba traveled a long distance "to test him with hard questions" (10:1), only to discover that Solomon could answer every one. The queen was overwhelmed and could only praise the God of Israel for giving His people such a leader. Wisdom attracts others and points them to God. The wise actions and wise words that sprinkle our everyday lives will reflect to others our great God. **Topic: Wisdom**



SOLOMON REQUESTS WISDOM

1 Now Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom, and the LORD his God *was* with him and exalted him exceedingly.

²And Solomon spoke to all Israel, to the captains of thousands and of hundreds, to the judges, and to every leader in all Israel, the heads of the fathers' houses. ³Then Solomon, and all the assembly with him, went to the high place that *was* at Gibeon; for the tabernacle of meeting with God was there, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness. ⁴But David had brought up the ark of God from Kirjath Jearim to the place David had prepared for it, for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem. ⁵Now the bronze altar that Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made, he put^a before the tabernacle of the LORD; Solomon and the assembly sought Him there. ⁶And Solomon went up there to the bronze altar before the LORD, which *was* at the tabernacle of meeting, and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it.

⁷On that night God appeared to Solomon, and said to him, "Ask! What shall I give you?"

⁸And Solomon said to God: "You have shown great mercy to David my father, and have made me king in his place. ⁹Now, O LORD God, let Your promise to David my father be established, for You have made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. ¹⁰Now give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of Yours?"

¹¹Then God said to Solomon: "Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked riches or wealth or honor or the life of your enemies, nor have you asked long life—but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself, that you may judge My people over

whom I have made you king—¹²wisdom and knowledge *are* granted to you; and I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings have had who *were* before you, nor shall any after you have the like."

SOLOMON'S MILITARY AND ECONOMIC POWER

¹³So Solomon came to Jerusalem from the high place that *was* at Gibeon, from before the tabernacle of meeting, and reigned over Israel. ¹⁴And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen; he had one thousand four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem. ¹⁵Also the king made silver and gold as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedars as abundant as the sycamores which *are* in the lowland. ¹⁶And Solomon had horses imported from Egypt and Keveh; the king's merchants bought them in Keveh at the *current* price. ¹⁷They also acquired and imported from Egypt a chariot for six hundred *shekels* of silver, and a horse for one hundred and fifty; thus, through their agents,^a they exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria.

SOLOMON PREPARES TO BUILD THE TEMPLE

2 Then Solomon determined to build a temple for the name of the LORD, and a royal house for himself. ²Solomon selected seventy thousand men to bear burdens, eighty thousand to quarry *stone* in the mountains, and three thousand six hundred to oversee them.

³Then Solomon sent to Hiram^a king of Tyre, saying:

1:5 ^aSome authorities read *it was there*.

1:17 ^aLiterally *by their hands* 2:3 ^aHebrew *Huram* (compare 1 Kings 5:1)

SOUL NOTE



Choose Wisely (1:11, 12) When God asked Solomon what he wanted, Solomon chose wisdom in order to rule the nation. God was pleased that Solomon had asked for wisdom and not riches; then He gave him riches as well.

Solomon could have asked for anything he wanted, but he wisely asked for the one thing every human being needs most—divine wisdom. Solomon's actions remind us of the importance of making wise choices in our lives. Wise choices may not always lead to wealth, but they will please God. Selfish choices, however, will only lead to disappointment.

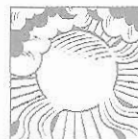
Topic: Wisdom

THE BEGINNING OF KNOWLEDGE
 1 The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel:
 But fools despise wisdom and instruction.

2 To know wisdom and instruction,
 3 To perceive the words of understanding,
 4 To receive the instruction of wisdom,
 5 Justice, judgment, and equity;
 6 To give prudence to the simple,
 7 To the young man knowledge and discretion—
 8 A wise man will hear and increase learning,
 9 And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel,
 10 To understand a proverb and an enigma,
 11 The words of the wise and their riddles.
 12 Let us lurk secretly for the innocent without cause;
 13 Let us lie in wait to shed blood;
 14 If they say, "Come with us, Do not consent.
 15 My son, if sinners entice you, And chains about your neck,
 16 For they will be a graceful ornament on your head,
 17 And do not forsake the law of your father,
 18 My son, hear the instruction of your SHUN EVIL COUNSEL
 19 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge,
 20 But fools despise wisdom and instruction.

SOUL NOTE

Find the Way (1:4) King Solomon compiled these proverbs to "give prudence to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion." Solomon wanted to help his readers to navigate the challenges and difficulties of life with greater wisdom, and ultimately with success. Through these ancient words of life experience collected by Solomon, God speaks to His people as a wise and loving Father guiding them through life's difficulties, temptations, and dilemmas. When we listen to His voice and seek His wisdom, He will show us the right way to go in every situation.



KEY PASSAGE

AWESOME

(1:7)

The Book of Proverbs emphasizes that "the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge." Fear of God means reverential awe of the Supreme Being, the Creator, the final Judge. While knowledge is possible without knowing God, it misses the point, since God is the Source of everything. It's ridiculous for humans to claim great knowledge and wisdom without having any respect for God. All human knowledge is a tiny portion of all that there is to be known, a speck of all that God has created.

Human beings then, as they seek wisdom and knowledge, should do so in the context of a proper fear of God. Then they will be able to use that wisdom and knowledge for whatever purposes God desires in order to build His kingdom. When God's people fear Him, they understand His power over their lives and willingly allow His hand to guide them.



To Learn More: Turn to the article about fear/fear of God on pages 800, 801. See also the personality profile of Gideon on page 308.

- Love her, and she will keep you.
 7 Wisdom *is* the principal thing;
Therefore get wisdom.
 And in all your getting, get
 understanding.
 8 Exalt her, and she will promote you;
 She will bring you honor, when you
 embrace her.
 9 She will place on your head an
 ornament of grace;
 A crown of glory she will deliver to
 you.”
 10 Hear, my son, and receive my sayings,
 And the years of your life will be many.
 11 I have taught you in the way of wisdom;
 I have led you in right paths.
 12 When you walk, your steps will not be
 hindered,
 And when you run, you will not
 stumble.
 13 Take firm hold of instruction, do not let
 go;
 Keep her, for she *is* your life.
 14 Do not enter the path of the wicked,
 And do not walk in the way of evil.
 15 Avoid it, do not travel on it;
 Turn away from it and pass on.
 16 For they do not sleep unless they have
 done evil;
 And their sleep is taken away unless
 they make *someone* fall.
 17 For they eat the bread of wickedness,
 And drink the wine of violence.
 18 But the path of the just *is* like the
 shining sun,^a
 That shines ever brighter unto the
 perfect day.
 19 The way of the wicked *is* like darkness;

They do not know what makes them
 stumble.

- 20 My son, give attention to my words;
 Incline your ear to my sayings.
 21 Do not let them depart from your eyes;
 Keep them in the midst of your heart;
 22 For they *are* life to those who find them,
 And health to all their flesh.
 23 Keep your heart with all diligence,
 For out of it *spring* the issues of life.
 24 Put away from you a deceitful mouth,
 And put perverse lips far from you.
 25 Let your eyes look straight ahead,
 And your eyelids look right before you.
 26 Ponder the path of your feet,
 And let all your ways be established.
 27 Do not turn to the right or the left;
 Remove your foot from evil.

THE PERIL OF ADULTERY

- 5 My son, pay attention to my wisdom;
 Lend your ear to my understanding,
 2 That you may preserve discretion,
 And your lips may keep knowledge.
 3 For the lips of an immoral woman drip
 honey,
 And her mouth *is* smoother than oil;
 4 But in the end she is bitter as wormwood,
 Sharp as a two-edged sword.
 5 Her feet go down to death,
 Her steps lay hold of hell.^a
 6 Lest you ponder *her* path of life—
 Her ways are unstable;
 You do not know *them*.
 7 Therefore hear me now, *my* children,
 And do not depart from the words of my
 mouth.

4:18 ^aLiterally *light* 5:5 ^aOr *Sheol*

SOUL NOTE



Beautiful Wisdom (4:1–13) Wisdom is “the principal thing,” (4:7), and is called “good doctrine” (4:2). Wisdom refers to the core truths about life that are passed on from godly parents to their children, from generation to generation. Solomon challenges people to seek out and obtain wisdom, to never forget it or forsake it (4:5, 6). Wisdom is pictured as a woman, a beauty that a good son will pursue and court as he would a wife: Love her, exalt her, embrace her, “keep her, for she is your life” (4:13). Wisdom is of permanent importance. It should be sought ardently and treasured dearly.

Topic: Wisdom

3 She has sent out her maidens,
the city,
4 "Whoever is simple, let him turn in
here!"
As for him who lacks understanding, she
says to him,
5 "Come, eat of my bread
and drink of the wine I have mixed.
6 Forsake foolishness and live,
And go in the way of understanding.
7 "He who corrects a scoffer gets shame for
himself,
And he who rebukes a wicked man only
harms himself.
8 Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you;
Rebuke a wise man, and he will love
you.
9 Give instruction to a wise man, and he
will be still wiser;
Teach a just man, and he will increase in
learning.

10 "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of
wisdom,
And the knowledge of the Holy One is
understanding.
11 For by me your days will be multiplied,
And years of life will be added to you.
12 If you are wise, you are wise for yourself,
And if you scoff, you will bear it alone."
THE WAY OF FOLLY
13 A foolish woman is clamorous;
She is simple, and knows nothing.
14 For she sits at the door of her house,
On a seat by the highest places of the
city,
15 To call to those who pass by,
Who go straight on their way:
16 "Whoever is simple, let him turn in here";
9:18 *a Or Sheol*

SOUL NOTE



Wisdom's House (9:1-18) This chapter describes wisdom and foolishness as two women. The first invites people to a feast where they can learn "the fear of the LORD" (9:6, 10). The other has not prepared a feast; what she has is only stolen water and bread. Those who accept wisdom's invitation will gain God's blessings; those who pick folly will face a life of self-indulgence leading to the depths of hell. There is a choice: We can prefer the path of wisdom or the path of foolishness. That will affect every other choice we ever make. **Topic: Wisdom**

That which has been is what will be,

That which has been is what will be,
That which is done is what will be
done,
And there is nothing new under the sun.

Is there anything of which it may be said,

It has already been in ancient times

There is no remembrance of former

things,
Nor will there be any remembrance of

By those who will come after.

GRIEF OF WISDOM

And I set my heart to seek and

under heaven; this burdensome task

may be exercised.¹⁴ I have seen all the

...all its vanity and grasping for the wind.

Or Absurdity, Frustration, Futility, Nonsense.

so throughout this book

	TE
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...all is vanity." The words of Solomon

...but realizes that there is still a feeling "vapor" and pictures how quickly life

...lives are meaningless, too. But in the
...dilemma: "Fear God and keep His

d's people should accept every day as a Him. That is the secret to a successful

TE

...is much to be desired, yet it can lead

much grief, and he who increases people know, the more they feel

more they realize the extent of their
that Solomon would live wisely. Wisdom

... something is missing. Without God,

Topic: Wisdom

and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise *men* of Babylon. ¹⁹Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. ²⁰Daniel answered and said:

"Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, For wisdom and might are His. And He changes

the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise And knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, And light dwells with Him.

²³ "I thank You and praise You, O God of my fathers;

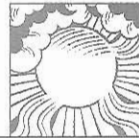
You have given me wisdom and might, And have now made known to me what we asked of You, For You have made known to us the king's demand."

DANIEL EXPLAINS THE DREAM

²⁴Therefore Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise *men* of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: "Do not destroy the wise *men* of Babylon; take me before the king, and I will tell the king the interpretation." ²⁵Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king, and said thus to him, "I have found a man of the captives" of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation.

2:25 ^aLiterally of the sons of the captivity **2:32** ^aOr sides **2:33** ^aOr baked clay, and so in verses 34, 35, and 42

SOUL NOTE



Wise Move (2:20-22) When a car makes a noise, we call a mechanic. When a sink backs up, we call a plumber. Why is it, then, that when we experience problems in our personal lives, we insist on taking care of the situation ourselves? Daniel knew just where to go when he needed wisdom: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His." God is the source of all wisdom. If we believe His ways are higher than ours, we can give up control to Him, resting in the assurance that He will give us perfect guidance. **Topic: Wisdom**