

# Wisdom - Chokmah



But his delight is in the law of the LORD,  
And in His law he meditates day and night.  
He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water,  
Which yields its fruit in its season  
And its leaf does not wither;  
And in whatever he does, he prospers.  
- [Psalm 1:2-3+](#)

Someone once quipped that "Wisdom is the quality that keeps you from getting into situations where you need it."

**J. I. Packer** said that "Wisdom is the power to see and the inclination to choose the best and highest goal, together with the surest means of attaining it."

**John Calvin** wrote that "True wisdom consists principally of two parts: the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of ourselves!"

**Vance Havner** said "If you lack knowledge, go to school. If you lack wisdom, get on your knees! Knowledge is not wisdom. Wisdom is proper use of knowledge."

**Adrian Rogers** said "Wisdom is the ability to see life from God's point of view."

"Wise people know how to learn; they never seek knowledge for their own sake. They know how to talk; they speak the truth in love. They know how to act; they pursue justice and evade evil. Perceptive people balance their words and actions. They say and do the right things at the right time for the right reasons. The discerning person soon realizes that biblical wisdom is more about practice than philosophy. Wise people live skillfully. They apply heavenly counsel to earthly conduct." (Today in the Word)

**Wisdom** ([02451](#))(**chokmah** from the verb **chakam** - to be wise) is the ability to judge correctly and to follow the best course of action, based on knowledge and understanding. **Wisdom** is the ability to see something from God's viewpoint. **Wisdom** is "God's character in the many practical affairs of life."

**We can get INFORMATION "on LINE" (from Google)  
but WISDOM is from "on HIGH" (from God)!**

**Chokmah** is the knowledge and the ability to make the right choices at the opportune time. The consistency of making the right choice is an indication of one's spiritual maturity. The prerequisite for this "**wisdom**" is the fear of the Lord (Pr 1:7-note). "**Wisdom**" is personified as crying out for disciples who will do everything to pursue her (Pr 1:20). The person who seeks **chokmah** diligently will receive understanding: (Pr 2:6) and will benefit in life by walking with God (Pr 2:20, cf Gal 5:16).

**Chokmah** is used most often in Proverbs, so that the reader of the "wise sayings" might **know wisdom** and allow the Truth of God to govern his or her life. It follows that it behooves every child of God to **meditate** frequently and deeply on the Words of Wisdom in the book of Proverbs (see all uses below which would be a wonderful study, making a list of what you learn about wisdom and then praying accordingly). **Do I make Proverbs a frequent and vital part of my daily intake so that my heart and mind and soul and spirit might be nourished with God's wisdom, the wisdom from on high, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy?** (James 3:17, cp Mt 4:4, Lk 4:4)? This **wisdom** is not based on upon "theoretical knowledge but shows itself in a proper discernment between good and evil or right and wrong. **Wisdom** is the divinely created system of rules that governs the "moral fiber" of the universe. To master **wisdom** is to achieve true and lasting success in life. The first step toward **wisdom**, and its controlling principle, is faith in Yahweh" (Criswell), specifically Yeshua, Jesus, "in Whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col 2:3- note), for Christ is "the power of God and the wisdom of God." (1Cor 1:24) and by God's doing every believer is "in Christ Jesus, Who became wisdom from God." (1Cor 1:30).

**Wisdom is the right use of knowledge:**

## All true spiritual wisdom is found only in Christ.

There is a "counter-wisdom" called "folly," the practice of which leads just as surely to destruction. God is the starting point for the education that leads to **wisdom**. **Wisdom** in the biblical sense, is something more than a collection of factual information. It includes knowing how to conduct oneself in the practical affairs of everyday life, to make wise choices, to do the right thing in relation to others, and to have insight into the true nature of things. Wisdom of this kind can only grow out of an awareness of God and His purpose in the world. Fools may acquire encyclopedic information, but they cannot attain wisdom because they fail to take God into account. Wisdom is not acquired by a mechanical formula but through a right relationship with God.

**NET Note** - The noun "wisdom" (חֵכֶמָה, *khokhmah*) could be nuanced "**moral skill**." It refers to "skill" that produces something of value. It is used in reference to the skill of seamen (Ps 107:27), abilities of weavers (Ex 35:26), capabilities of administrators (1Kgs 3:28), or skill of craftsmen (Ex 31:6). In the realm of moral living, it refers to skill in living - one lives life with moral skill so that something of lasting value is produced from one's life.

**Thayer** makes an excellent point that **wisdom** is "used of the knowledge of very diverse matters, so that the shade of meaning in which the word is taken must be discovered from the context in every particular case."

**Ortlund** - **Wisdom** is skill, expertise, competence that understands how life really works, how to achieve successful and even beautiful results. We see a picture of wisdom in Exodus 35:31, where the word translated "**wisdom**" in Proverbs 1:2 is used for the skill of an artist adorning the tabernacle. We see wisdom in Jeremiah 10:9 where the expertise of goldsmiths is called "the work of **skilled** (Ed: Hebrew = adjective *chakam* derived from noun *chokmah*) men," or wise men. We see **wisdom** in Psalm 107:27 for the know-how of sailors, who use the winds and tides to make their way through the sea to their destination. Whether craftsmanship working with the materials of life or seamanship steering through the currents of life, so to speak, **wisdom** understands how real life can work well. **Wisdom** knows better than to walk onto the football field and hope the game will go well somehow; **wisdom** draws up a game plan that will score more touchdowns than the opponents because that plan takes into account not only the rules of the game but also psychology and timing and strategy and everything it takes to win. **That is wisdom**. (Preaching the Word: Proverbs—Wisdom that Works)

**Spiritual wisdom** is godly **wisdom** (contrasted with worldly wisdom - study and make a list of the contrasts in Jas 3:13-18 and 1Cor 1:19 through 1Cor 2:13) and involves living life in the light of the revelation of God's Will in His Word and applying this knowledge to specific situations. Biblical **wisdom** is definable as skill for living. God's plan to redeem us destroyed the **wisdom** of the worldly wise men (1Cor 1:19). In fact, human wisdom can never comprehend God's plan for salvation (1Cor 1:21). Paul was not bound by the limits of human wisdom because the Holy Spirit conveyed **spiritual wisdom** through him (1Cor 2:13) and we possess the same indwelling Spirit beloved!

**Wisdom** is the insight into the true nature of things. Knowledge is the mental possession of powers of perceiving objects, wisdom is the power of right reasoning concerning them and forming right decisions accordingly.

**Wisdom** is the ability to judge correctly and to follow the best course of action, based on knowledge and understanding.

**Wisdom** is the art of being successful, of forming the correct plan to gain the desired results. Its seat is the heart, the centre of moral and intellectual decision

**Wisdom** emphasizes understanding of ultimate things—such as life and death, God and man, righteousness and sin, heaven and hell, eternity and time.

**Wisdom** is mental excellence in its highest and fullest sense (Vincent).

**Spurgeon** - Wisdom is the right use of knowledge. To know is not to be wise. Many men know a great deal, and are all the greater fools for it. There is no fool so great a fool as a knowing fool. But to know how to use knowledge is to have wisdom.

**Chokmah** can refer to technical skills or special abilities in fashioning something. The artisan was considered to be endowed with special abilities given to him by God Ex 35:31. **Wisdom** is seen in the skill of technical work in making garments for the high priest (Ex 28:3), craftsmanship in metal work (Ex 31:3, 6), as well as the execution of battle tactics (Isa 10:13). **Wisdom** is required from government leaders and heads of state for administration (Dt 34:9; 2Sa14:20), including pagan leaders as well as Israelites (Ezek 28:5). The Messiah demonstrates wisdom and discernment in his function as leader of His people (Isa 11:2). To act wisely means to carry out right principles. A wise workman works according to the right principles of his craft, producing a quality product. Morally, a wise person (enabled by the Holy Spirit, not by a fleshly driven legalism!) lives out the revealed principles of right and wrong, which reflect the character of God.

**Vance Havner** - If you lack knowledge, go to school. If you lack wisdom, get on your knees! Knowledge is not wisdom. Wisdom is the proper use of knowledge.

**James Draper** - Wisdom is the skill to live in a way that is pleasing to God. It is not simply information in our heads. It is information that we put to use—where we live, where we work, and where we play. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, of wisdom. That is the starting point. Fools despise wisdom and instruction. We must choose either to live in the power of God, under the discipline of his Word, or to live foolishly. The world offers no hope, no solution, no encouragement. God says, "I want you to have wisdom, the skill to experience life as it ought to be experienced." The choice is up to us.

**Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary** - The biblical concept of wisdom is quite different from the classical view of wisdom, which sought through philosophy and human rational thought to determine the mysteries of existence and the universe. The first principle of biblical wisdom is that people should humble themselves before God in reverence and worship, obedient to His commands. This idea is found especially in the Wisdom Literature: the books of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. In the Old Testament, the best example of a "wise man" is King Solomon (1Ki 10:4,6, 7, 8). And yet the same book that heaps such lavish, warm, and glowing praise upon Solomon for his reputed wisdom (1Ki 4:29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34) also points out how Solomon's heart turned away from the Lord (1Ki 11:1-13)." (Youngblood, R. F., Bruce, F. F., Harrison, R. K., & Thomas Nelson Publishers. Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

From Solomon's life example, clearly "**spiritual wisdom**" is no guarantee that one will walk worthy, but needs to be affect our heart decisions in order to be practical. **How are you doing in this area? Are you like "wise" King Solomon, filled with "spiritual wisdom" and yet choosing to walk in a manner counter to God's clearly revealed will? Bible study won't do you much good unless it transforms your thinking and your walk. True spiritual wisdom must affect our daily life. Wisdom and practical intelligence must go together.**

**NAS Usage:** skill (5), skill\* (1), wisdom (143), wisely (3), wits' (1).

**Chokmah** - 145v and **41x in Proverbs!** - Ex. 28:3; 31:3, 6; 35:26, 31, 35; 36:1-2; Deut. 4:6; 34:9; 2 Sam. 14:20; 20:22; 1Ki. 2:6; 3:28; 4:29-30, 34; 5:12; 7:14; 10:4, 6-8, 23-24; 11:41; 1Chr. 28:21; 2Chr. 1:10-12; 9:3, 5-7, 22-23; Job 4:21; 11:6; Job 12:2, 12-13; 13:5; 15:8; 26:3; 28:12, 18, 20, 28; 32:7, 13; 33:33; 38:36-37; Job 39:17; Ps. 37:30; 49:3; 51:6; 90:12; 104:24; 107:27; 111:10; Pr. 1:2, 7, Pr 1:20; 2:2, 6, 10; 3:13, 19; 4:5, 7, 11; 5:1; 7:4; 8:1, 11, 12; 9:1, 10; 10:13, Pr 10:23, 31; 11:2; 13:10; 14:6, 8, 33; 15:33; 16:16; 17:16, 24; 18:4; 21:30; Pr 23:23; 24:3, 7, 14; 28:26; 29:3, 15; 30:3; 31:26; Eccl. 1:13, 16-18; 2:3, Eccl 2:9, 12-13, 21, 26; 7:10-12, 19, 23, 25; 8:1, 16; 9:10, 13, 15-16, 18; 10:1, 10; Isa. 10:13; 11:2; 29:14; 33:6; 47:10; Jer. 8:9; 9:23; 10:12; 49:7; 51:15; Ezek. 28:4-5, 7, 12, 17; Da 1:4, 17, 20

**Below are all the uses of chokmah in Proverbs. A fruitful exercise would be to observe (especially to interrogate the passages using the "5W's and H" questions ) each use of wisdom in Proverbs and make a note about what is associated with wisdom. In this way you could compile your own, personal "working definition" of wisdom. I think it might be an investment that could yield fruit all the remainder of your days!**

Pr 1:2 To know **wisdom** and instruction, To discern the sayings of understanding,

Pr 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise **wisdom** and instruction.

Pr 1:20 **Wisdom** shouts in the street, She lifts her voice in the square;

Pr 2:2 Make your ear attentive to **wisdom**, Incline your heart to understanding;

Pr 2:6 For the LORD gives **wisdom**; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding.

Pr 2:10 For **wisdom** will enter your heart And knowledge will be pleasant to your soul;

Pr 3:13 How blessed is the man who finds **wisdom** And the man who gains understanding.

Pr 3:19 The LORD by **wisdom** founded the earth, By understanding He established the heavens.

Pr 4:5 Acquire **wisdom**! Acquire understanding! Do not forget nor turn away from the words of my mouth.

Pr 4:7 "The beginning of **wisdom** is: Acquire wisdom; And with all your acquiring, get understanding.

Pr 4:11 I have directed you in the way of **wisdom**; I have led you in upright paths.

Pr 5:1 My son, give attention to my **wisdom**, Incline your ear to my understanding;

Pr 7:4 Say to **wisdom**, "You are my sister," And call understanding your intimate friend;

Pr 8:1 Does not **wisdom** call, And understanding lift up her voice?

Pr 8:11 "For **wisdom** is better than jewels; And all desirable things cannot compare with her.

Pr 8:12 "I, **wisdom**, dwell with prudence, And I find knowledge and discretion.

Pr 9:1 **Wisdom** has built her house, She has hewn out her seven pillars;

Pr 9:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of **wisdom**, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

Pr 10:13 On the lips of the discerning, **wisdom** is found, But a rod is for the back of him who lacks understanding.

Pr 10:23 Doing wickedness is like sport to a fool, And so is **wisdom** to a man of understanding.

Pr 10:31 The mouth of the righteous flows with **wisdom**, But the perverted tongue will be cut out.

Pr 11:2 When pride comes, then comes dishonor, But with the humble is **wisdom**.

Pr 13:10 Through insolence comes nothing but strife, But **wisdom** is with those who receive counsel.

Pr 14:6 A scoffer seeks **wisdom** and finds none, But knowledge is easy to one who has understanding.

Pr 14:8 The **wisdom** of the sensible is to understand his way, But the foolishness of fools is deceit.

Pr 14:33 **Wisdom** rests in the heart of one who has understanding, But in the hearts of fools it is made known.

Pr 15:33 The fear of the LORD is the instruction for **wisdom**, And before honor comes humility.

Pr 16:16 How much better it is to get **wisdom** than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen above silver.

Pr 17:16 Why is there a price in the hand of a fool to buy **wisdom**, When he has no sense?

Pr 17:24 **Wisdom** is in the presence of the one who has understanding, But the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth.

Pr 18:4 The words of a man's mouth are deep waters; The fountain of **wisdom** is a bubbling brook.

Pr 21:30 There is no **wisdom** and no understanding And no counsel against the LORD.

Pr 23:23 Buy truth, and do not sell it, Get **wisdom** and instruction and understanding.

Pr 24:3 By **wisdom** a house is built, And by understanding it is established;

Pr 24:7 **Wisdom** is too exalted for a fool, He does not open his mouth in the gate.

Pr 24:14 Know that **wisdom** is thus for your soul; If you find it, then there will be a future, And your hope will not be cut off.

Pr 28:26 He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, But he who walks **wisely** will be delivered.

Pr 29:3 A man who loves **wisdom** makes his father glad, But he who keeps company with harlots wastes his wealth.

Pr 29:15 The rod and reproof give **wisdom**, But a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother.

Pr 30:3 Neither have I learned **wisdom**, Nor do I have the knowledge of the Holy One.

Pr 31:26 She opens her mouth in **wisdom**, And the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.

#### **Some quotes on wisdom** (from Complete Gathered Gold - John Blanchard - excellent resource)...

Knowledge leads us from the simple to the complex; wisdom leads us from the complex to the simple. - Anon.

True wisdom is a divine revelation. - George Barlow

Wisdom has never made a bigot, but learning has. - Josh Billings

Wisdom gives a balance to character. - John Blanchard

Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves. - John Calvin

This is our wisdom, to be learners to the end. - John Calvin

To search for wisdom apart from Christ means not simply foolhardiness but utter insanity. - John Calvin

True wisdom consists in being wise according to the law of God. - John Calvin

Wisdom is not the growth of human genius. It must be sought from above. - John Calvin

Wisdom and the will of God are intimately related... Nothing is more vital for practical knowledge of the purpose of God than wisdom. - Sinclair Ferguson

Heavenly wisdom is better than worldly wealth, and to be preferred before it. - Matthew Henry

It is better to get wisdom than gold. Gold is another's, wisdom is our own; gold is for the body and time, wisdom for the soul and eternity. - Matthew Henry

Modesty is the badge of wisdom. - Matthew Henry

Such is the degeneracy of human nature that there is no true wisdom to be found with any but those who are born again and who, through grace, partake of the divine nature. -Matthew Henry

He who has a constant longing for wisdom will persistently pray for it. - D. Edmond Hiebert

Surely the essence of wisdom is that before we begin to act at all, or attempt to please God, we should discover what it is that God has to say about the matter. - D. Martyn Lloyd Jones

Wisdom opens the eyes both to the glories of heaven and to the hollowness of earth. J. A. Motyer

Not until we have become humble and teachable, standing in awe of God's holiness and sovereignty... acknowledging our own littleness, distrusting our own thoughts, and willing to have our minds turned upside down, can divine wisdom become ours. - J. I. Packer

Wisdom is God-centred. - Michael Parsons

Wisdom in ruling is justice; wisdom in speech is discretion; wisdom in conduct is prudence; wisdom in evaluation is discernment. - George SeEVERS

To know God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent, is the highest principle and perfection of man. This attainment, infinitely above all others, constitutes true wisdom. -Charles Simeon

We can be certain that God wants us to be wise, just as we are sure that he wants us not to sin. - R. C. Sproul

Conviction of ignorance is the doorstep to the temple of wisdom. - C. H. Spurgeon

The sublimity of wisdom is to do those things living which are to be desired when dying. - Jeremy Taylor

The wisest person in the world is the person who knows the most about God. - A. W. Tozer

The true test of wisdom is works, not words. - Curtis Vaughan

If the Lord Jesus Christ is a stranger to you, the best you can hope for is to become a philosopher, like Socrates of old. But apart from Christ there is no wisdom. - Spiros Zodhiates

Wisdom, the wisdom of God, is not something that is acquired by man, but something that is bestowed by God upon his elect. It is a divine endowment and not a human acquisition. - Spiros Zodhiates

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### **Spiritual requirements for gaining wisdom:**

1. Reverence (Pr 9:10)
2. Humility (Pr 11:2, 15:33)
3. Teachableness (Pr 9:9, 15:31, 19:20)
4. Diligence (Pr 8:17, 2:4–5)
5. Uprightness (Pr 2:7)
6. Faith (James 1:5–8).

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**The Man Who Had Everything** - Christopher Winans, in his book, Malcolm Forbes: The Man Who Had Everything, tells of a motorcycle tour that Forbes took through Egypt in 1984 with his Capitalist Tool motorcycle team.

After viewing the staggering burial tomb of King Tut, Forbes seemed to be in a reflective mood. As they were returning to the hotel in a shuttle bus, Forbes turned to one of his associates and asked with all sincerity: "Do you think I'll be remembered after I die?"

Forbes is remembered. He is remembered as the man who coined the phrase, "He who dies with the most toys wins." That was the wisdom of Malcolm Forbes. In fact, that was his ambition. That's why he collected scores of motorcycles. That's why he would pay over a million dollars for a Faberge egg. That's why he owned castles, hot air balloons and countless other toys that he can no longer access.

The Lord Jesus Christ gave us words of superior wisdom when he said, "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?" (Matthew 16:26). It is a fatally deficient wisdom that declares "He who dies with the most toys wins." (Family Survival in the American Jungle, Steve Farrar, 1991, Multnomah Press, pp. 47-48)

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**Wisdom and Knowledge** To him that by wisdom made the heavens: for his mercy endureth for ever. Psalm 136:5

Wisdom makes the face to shine. Learning advances some very highly in esteem; such as know most, if their morals be suitable to their intellectuals, are most admired by those who understand what true worth is; especially if there be spiritual wisdom in conjunction with natural and acquired; if there be much grace in the heart, as well as much knowledge in the head, how worthy are such to be beloved? Daniel was a man of great learning and wisdom, skilled in all the learning of the Chaldeans which was not sinful and diabolical; and besides this, he was endowed with divine wisdom, by the teachings of the Holy Spirit; the angel told this Daniel more than once or twice, that he was "a man greatly beloved"; he was greatly beloved by the Lord of heaven, greatly beloved by his prince on earth, and greatly beloved by his people, and by all, except some few that envied his prosperity and favor. If Daniel's wisdom did render him so universally amiable, how then should Christ be beloved because of His wisdom and knowledge. The wisdom of Christ is far beyond the wisdom of Daniel, or the wisdom of Solomon, who was wiser than Daniel; these men had wisdom which made them famous and esteemed in their day, but Christ is wisdom, the wisdom of the father; they were children of wisdom, but Christ is the father and fountain of wisdom; they had some jewels of wisdom, but the treasures of wisdom are hid and laid up in Christ; they had learning and knowledge, but their knowledge was ignorance compared with the knowledge of Christ. (Puritan Daily Readings)

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### **THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM - Job 28:28**

The first step toward true wisdom is a reverent and respectful attitude toward God, which also involves a humble attitude toward ourselves. Personal pride is the greatest barrier to spiritual wisdom. "When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom" (Prov. 11:2).

The next step is to ask God for wisdom (James 1:5) and make diligent use of the means He gives us for securing His wisdom, especially knowing and doing the Word of God (Matt. 7:21-29). It is not enough merely to study; we must also obey what God tells us to do (John 7:17). As we walk by faith, we discover the wisdom of God in the everyday things of life. Spiritual wisdom is not abstract; it is very personal and very practical.

As we fellowship with other believers in the church and share with one another, we can learn wisdom. Reading the best books can also help us grow in wisdom and understanding. The important thing is that we focus on Christ, for He is our wisdom (1 Cor. 1:24) and in Him is hidden "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3). The better we know Christ and the more we become like Him, the more we will walk in wisdom and understand the will of the Lord. We must allow the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of our heart so we can see God in His Word and understand more of the riches we have in Christ (Eph. 1:15-23) (Pause for Power - Warren Wiersbe)

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### **J Oswald Sanders - Spiritual Wisdom Colossians 3:16**

When men were to be selected for a subordinate leadership position within the church, one of the two prerequisite qualities specified was wisdom—an essential element for good leadership. "Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom" (Acts 6:3).

True wisdom is more than knowledge, which is the basic accumulation of facts. It is more than mere intellectual ability. It is heavenly insight. Spiritual wisdom involves the knowledge of God and the intricacies of the human heart. It involves the right application of knowledge in moral and spiritual matters and in handling perplexing situations and complex human relationships. Wisdom is a quality that restrains leaders from rash or eccentric action, imparting a necessary balance in their approach.

The high place Paul gave to spiritual wisdom is seen in the way he constantly contrasted it with the ostentatious wisdom of the world. "Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a 'fool' so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight" (1 Corinthians 3:18-19).

The need for wisdom was a frequent petition Paul raised in prayer for his converts and churches. "We have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding" (Colossians 1:9).

Wisdom characterized the intentional method of Paul's preaching. "We proclaim [Christ], admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ" (Colossians 1:28). Wisdom inevitably characterizes the ministry of the Spirit-filled leader. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom" (Colossians 3:16).

To Paul we owe the revelation that "Christ Jesus . . . has become for us wisdom from God" (1 Corinthians 1:30). (PL)

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**James Smith - WISDOM.** James 1:5; 3:13,15,17. - **Wisdom** was a great word amongst the Jews. It is required for every walk of life. The presence of wisdom here in association with temptations is suggestive. It is especially difficult to behave wisely in times of

testing, when wronged and insulted. But the wisdom from above will enable us so to do. Let us put together the teaching on wisdom found in this short Epistle.

I. Lack of Wisdom. It is possible to lack wisdom. This is suggested by the sentence: "If any of you lack wisdom." What a sad lack. What a mess such a lack can lead us into.

II. Uniqueness of Wisdom. Does James say, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him sit down and think, or take a course of study?" No. Then the wisdom he has in mind is absolutely unique.

III. Origin of Wisdom. This wisdom is "from above" (3:17), from God (1:5). We get from the sky, and not from the earth, all those gracious influences without which our world would be only a gigantic, lifeless cinder, rolling through space. Light and heat, sunshine and rain, come from above. Our spiritual life as well as our earthly life is dependent upon what comes from above.

IV. Condition of Wisdom. Its possession follows "asking of God" (1:5). Prayer leads to the possession of this wisdom.

V. Counterfeit of Wisdom. This is the point suggested by 3:15. How sad to be deceived—to imagine oneself to be wise. Yet the wisdom which comes not from God is at the best but "earthly," and possibly "sensual," yea even "devilish."

VI. Proof of Wisdom. "Which of you is a wise and well instructed man? Let him prove it by a right life with conduct guided by a wise and teachable spirit," is W. most excellent translation of 3:13. The crowning proof of wisdom is in our "conversation" (3:13). It is here in tongue, when under trial, we so often fail. Wisdom from above will influence our tongue.

VII. Manifestation of Wisdom. The true wisdom is manifested by the possession and practice of the following most excellent qualities recorded in 3:17:

1. Purity.
2. Peaceableness.
3. Gentleness—"Courteous" is W.
4. Easy to be Entreated—"Not self-willed" is W.
5. "Full of Mercy"—"compassion" is W.
6. "Without Partiality"—"free from favouritism" is W.
7. "Without Hypocrisy"—"free from all insincerity" (W.).

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## Wisdom

Ere God had built the mountains,  
Or raised the fruitful hills;  
Before He fill'd the fountains  
That feed the running rills;  
In me, from everlasting,  
The wonderful I AM,  
Found pleasures never wasting,  
And WISDOM is my name.  
When, like a tent to dwell in,  
He spread the skies abroad,  
And swathed about the swelling  
Of Ocean's mighty flood;  
He wrought by weight and measure,  
And I was with Him then:  
Myself the Father's pleasure,  
And mine, the sons of men.  
Thus Wisdom's words discover  
Thy glory and Thy grace,  
Thou everlasting lover  
Of our unworthy race!  
Thy gracious eye survey'd us  
Ere stars were seen above;  
In wisdom Thou hast made us,

And died for us in love.

And couldst Thou be delighted  
With creatures such as we,  
Who, when we saw Thee, slighted,  
And nail'd Thee to a tree?  
Unfathomable wonder,  
And mystery divine!  
The voice that speaks in thunder,  
Says, "Sinner, I am thine!"  
Olney Hymns, William Cowper,

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## **KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM**

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God.... James 1:5.

If you lack knowledge, go to school. If you lack wisdom, get on your knees! Knowledge is not wisdom. Wisdom is the proper use of knowledge. One may have loads of learned lumber in his head and not know what or how to build with it. Wisdom is the gift of God. He is not stingy. But we must ask in faith, not wavering, for then we are like tossing waves of the sea, unstable in all our ways. What we ask for we must believe we receive and we shall have, not hoping but believing (see Mark 11:24; Matthew 21:22). (Vance Havner)

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## **BUDGETING OUR TIME**

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Psalms 90:12.

This does not mean that we should count our days because we do not know how many we have. But time is priceless and when it is running out we must be all the more careful how we spend what is left. We should budget our time and put it to good use for one day we must report on how we spent it. The Psalmist is asking God for instruction on how to use the time He has entrusted to us. This does not mean that we must live in nervous tension keeping books on every minute. God is not a tyrant or a taskmaster. He is the Father of all who believe. To study, work, and play as His children, we must give proper place to each and buy up all life's opportunities, "redeeming the time." (Vance Havner)

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## **WISDOM FROM ABOVE**

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore, get wisdom; get understanding. Proverbs 4:7

A series of cartoons in a New York newspaper depicted a young woman, garbed in cap and gown, holding a diploma with much pride. With her head held high she is looking down her nose at "Mr. World," while that cold, cruel cynic is saying, "Well, who do we have here?" Next, with shoulders thrown back, the young lady replies, "Certainly you know who I am. I'm Cecelia Shakespeare Doaks, a graduate of Prestige College. I have my A.B." "My dear child," Mr. World says in reply, "come with me, and I'll teach you the rest of the alphabet!"

Now, we certainly would not discourage the quest for learning, nor the desire to pursue an education to meet the demands and opportunities of life — we would encourage it! But it's important to remember that there is more involved in a well-rounded education than the completion of some college courses. Four years of classroom instruction, even under the most competent teachers, doesn't make one all-wise. The "school of hard knocks" often makes a far greater impact than the "university of hard facts." Even with the best education and down-to-earth, practical experience, however, a man or woman really "knows" nothing apart from God. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. 9:10). Knowledge is the acquisition of facts. Wisdom is the ability to use this knowledge rightly. A person may acquire much knowledge, but without wisdom his acquired storehouse of facts will do him little good; in fact, it may even be spiritually harmful to him. Get an education? Yes, but also seek for that wisdom which is from above. James tells us, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God . . . and it shall be given him" (James 1:5). "Who is a wise man and endowed with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good life [behavior] his works with meekness of wisdom" (James 3:13). ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

A man may store his mind with facts,  
Till knowledge from it overflows,  
But lacking wisdom from Above,  
He's still a "fool" till Christ he knows.  
—Bosch

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## ENTERING PROMISED LAND

Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and depart from evil (Proverbs 3:7).

A cartoon in a New York newspaper depicted a young woman garbed in cap and gown, holding a diploma. With her head held high, she looks down her nose at Mr. World. "Well, what do we have here?" Mr. World asks in his cold, cruel, cynical way. "Certainly you know who I am. Cecelia Shakespeare Doaks, a graduate of Prestige College. I have my A.B." "How sad," replies Mr. World. "Come with me and I'll teach you the rest of the alphabet."

We wouldn't disparage the graduate for learning, nor downplay the desire to pursue an education. But four years of classroom instruction, even under the most competent teachers, doesn't make a student wise. The "school of hard knocks" often contributes more to wisdom than the "university of hard facts."

Get an education? Yes! But more importantly, seek the wisdom that is from above. The Scriptures tell us, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. 9:10). Knowledge is the acquisition of facts; wisdom is the right use of those facts. Even with the best education and the broadest practical experience, a man or a woman knows nothing apart from God. The Bible says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally, . . . and it will be given to him" (James 1:5). This kind of wisdom never leads to arrogance. —R.W.D. ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The heart of education is education of the heart.

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### Wisdom From Above

Read: 1 Samuel 24:1-10

The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable. — James 3:17

If Kiera Wilmot had performed her experiment during her high school science class, it might have earned her an A. But instead she was charged with causing an explosion. Although she had planned to have her teacher approve the experiment, her classmates persuaded her to perform it outside the classroom. When she mixed chemicals inside a plastic bottle, it exploded and she unintentionally unsettled some fellow students.

The Old Testament tells the story of another case of peer pressure. David and his men were hiding from Saul in a cave when Saul entered (1 Sam. 24). David's companions suggested that God had delivered Saul to them, and they urged David to kill him (vv.4,10). If David killed Saul, they thought they could stop hiding and David could become king. But David refused to harm Saul because he was "the Lord's anointed" (v.6).

People in our lives may sometimes suggest we do what seems most gratifying or practical in the moment. But there is a difference between worldly and spiritual wisdom (1 Cor. 2:6-7). Wisdom from above "is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy" (James 3:17). When others are urging us to take a certain course of action, we can invite God to influence our response. — Jennifer Benson Schuldt ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!  
Hold o'er my being absolute sway!  
Fill with Thy Spirit till all shall see  
Christ only, always, living in me.  
— Pollard

One is truly wise who gains his wisdom from above.

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### Job 28:12, 28 Where Is Wisdom?

Woodrow Kroll

A young man got into financial difficulty by loaning a friend in another town \$500. He neglected to ask his friend to sign a written note. He didn't even ask for a receipt indicating the amount loaned. When the young man needed his money back, he realized he had nothing with which to document his claim. In desperation he turned to his father for advice. After a moment of consideration, the father said, "Write him and say you need the \$1,000 you loaned him." The young man said, "You mean \$500." "No," said the father, "you say \$1,000, and he will immediately write back that he owes you only \$500. Then you will have it in writing." The son followed his father's wisdom and the problem was solved.

Job, too, was perplexed by his situation. He had been a righteous man, yet now it seemed as though his world was falling apart. He felt the need for wisdom. "But where," he asked, "do I find it?" His Heavenly Father gave him the answer: It is in the fear of (respect for) the Lord. Only to the degree that those who seek wisdom are willing to respect God will they be motivated to apply the truths that He shares with them.

If earthly fathers can give wise counsel, how much more so can our Heavenly Father? But to gain true benefit from that counsel we must have reverence toward the One who gives it. Unless we respect the source, we'll never value the product. We not only need to hear, but we also must heed.

If you are looking for wisdom today, the best source you'll ever find is as close to you as your Bible. God speaks clearly through His Word to give you the guidance you need for your daily life. If you fear Him, obey what He says and take note of the benefit of heeding His Word.

If you respect the Lord, you'll benefit from His wisdom

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## Gold Rush

Where can wisdom be found? --Job 28:12

In the late 1970s, thousands of men and women rushed to the American West. In the tradition of the diehard prospectors of 1849, they dredged river bottoms and reopened gold fields long since abandoned. The activity, however, was not sparked by new finds. The same old metal had been there all the time. But because the value of gold had skyrocketed, the dust and flecks were now worth mining.

Suppose you knew that 100 pounds of pure gold could be found somewhere in the walls of your house? What you wouldn't do to find it!

Now let's change the stakes. What would we do if we knew that a large amount of wisdom was in our house? Well, it is! God tells us that nothing compares in value with the spiritual treasures contained in the Bible--not even gold at the highest prices (Job 28:12-17).

We would probably search everywhere in our house to find 100 pounds of gold. Yet, do we seek with as great a diligence the mind and will of God? As His followers, we should long to understand the fear of the Lord and to develop a hatred of evil--which the Bible says is true wisdom (v.28). And its value has never been higher. We need a new rush--not for gold, but for God! - Mart De Haan

More valuable than diamonds rare  
Is priceless wisdom from above;  
With purest gold it can't compare  
Because it's filled with truth and love.  
--DJD

Wisdom is understanding what's really important.

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"Now give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people" (2 Chronicles 1:10).

A Persian philosopher, when asked how he had acquired so much knowledge, answered, "By not being too proud to ask questions when I was ignorant."

Even though Solomon was Israel's mighty king, he too was willing to admit his ignorance. But he wanted more than mere knowledge. When the Lord said to him, "Ask! What shall I give you?" (2 Chronicles 1:7), Solomon made only one request. He asked for the insight and ability to judge God's people righteously. God gave him this, and He added wealth and honor as a bonus.

Solomon had his priorities right. He kept the people's welfare, not his own, in mind. Too often we want wisdom in order to achieve wealth and honor, but God doesn't work that way. He gives it to those who will honor Him whatever may happen.

Teenagers stand on the threshold of becoming adults and agonize over the question, "What should I do with my life?" Adults face job changes, family responsibilities, and many other far-reaching decisions. In times like these we need to search our hearts and ask, "Why do I want wisdom?" When we get our priorities straight, we can claim the promise of James 1:5, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally . . . and it will be given to him." It's always appropriate to ask God for wisdom when our heart's desire is to honor Him and do what's right. —D. J. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

They are wise who take God for a teacher.

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**BEYOND INFORMATION** ("We wired and tired!") - An investment company's full-page ad in the Wall Street Journal began with these words: "**Information** is everywhere. **Insight** is all too rare. For **insight** goes beyond **information** to discern underlying truths." Today, we are long on information and short on insight. Television offers scores of channels. Encyclopedias and world atlases are on compact disks (CDs) (**Ed**: Devotional written in 1996, but today information is [too] readily available on Internet = Wikipedia). Online databases give us the temperature in Hong Kong and the baseball score in Birmingham. **We're wired and tired** from trying to grasp the meaning of all we know.

Years ago, a friend encouraged me to read a chapter from Proverbs each day. One chapter each day takes me through this marvelous book of God's wisdom every month. "You can get knowledge in college," my friend said, "but wisdom comes from God." Here's what Almighty God promises when we seek His wisdom: "If you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding...then you will...find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding" (Pr. 2:3-6). One chapter of Proverbs every day. Try it this month and see how God's Word will give you the wisdom to transform information into insight. -- David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

(**ED: THOUGHT** - While the "One Chapter a Day" is commendable, I prefer one verse or one group of verses of Proverbs a day. That way your focus is not how much of the Word you get through but how much of the Word gets through you! You are much more likely to remember the smaller "bits and bytes" than an entire chapter. And Proverbs is one of those books that is like a gold mine shaft that needs to be worked to get the deep riches therein!)

#### THINKING IT THROUGH

- Why would someone not want to be wise? (Pr. 1:7-**note**).
- What happens to those who live foolishly? (Pr 1:31-32).
- What are some benefits of wisdom? (Pr 1:33; 2:6-11).