

Wisdom

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Scripture:

Proverbs 1:2-7

² To know wisdom and instruction, To discern the sayings of understanding,

³ To receive instruction in wise behavior, Righteousness, justice and equity;

⁴ To give prudence to the naive, To the youth knowledge and discretion,

⁵ A wise man will hear and increase in learning, And a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel,

⁶ To understand a proverb and a figure, The words of the wise and their riddles.

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

Songs by William Cowper

26 – God Moves in a Mysterious Way

374 – There is a Fountain

Song : The Wise Man built his House upon the Rock

Who do you know who is wise?

We sign about the Wise Man because today we will explore Wisdom.

Who is the wisest person who ever lived? (Solomon, Jesus) – wait for answers

Who is the wisest person you personally know?

For me, wisdom is a composite, no single person:

My Grandparents – the importance of being devoted to each other

Dad – don't harp, do what you know needs to be done without having to be told to do it

Mom – make every stroke count, never quit trying

My Parents together – to be a worker, self-sufficient, devoted to God

My Wife – that kindness is more effective than forcefulness, be happy

My Children – I'm not as smart as I once thought I was

Wisdom Words:

Wisdom – defined

1. The quality of being wise; knowledge, and the capacity to make due use of it; knowledge of the best ends and the best means.

2. The results of wise judgments.

The words Wisdom & Wise are found hundreds of times throughout the scriptures.

In the Hebrew Scriptures the most common words translated 'wisdom' is chokmah^{H2451}, or 'chakam^{H2449 or H2450} or 'sakal^{H7919}

In the Greek Scriptures the most common words translated 'wisdom' are sophia^{G4678} or sophos^{G4680}

Related words are :

Discernment, Understanding, Knowledge, Craftmanship, Shrewdness, Prudent, Discrete, Counsel, Listen, Learn

The antonyms of Wisdom & Wise are Folly and Foolishness

Related words are :

Fool, Simple, Naïve, Speak, Madness

Philosophy – defined

Literally translated from the Greek " phileo sophia" "love of wisdom"

- 1.The study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence, esp. when considered as an academic discipline
- 2.A set of views and theories of a particular philosopher concerning such study or an aspect of it
- 3.The study of the theoretical basis of a particular branch of knowledge or experience- the philosophy of science
- 4.A theory or attitude held by a person or organization that acts as a guiding principle for behavior

The word 'Philosophers' appears once in scripture Acts 17:18 where the Philosophers of Athens engage Paul who uses the opportunity to deliver his famous sermon in the Areopagus on Mars Hill.

The word 'philosophy' appears once in Col 2:8 – I'll come back to that passage later.

There is also a word that does not occur in the Bible – but the concept is there. Most of you have been this at one time in your life. Sophomore – it also comes from two Greek words, Sophia meaning Wise and Moros – the word from which we get the English word Moron. To be Sophomoric is to strive to appear Wise with the result of being Foolish. (if your in the second year of High School or College, I'm sorry, but that is what the word means.)

The Wisdom of Solomon

1 Kings 3:7-14

⁷"Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king in place of my father David, yet I am but a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸"Your servant is in the midst of Your

people which You have chosen, a great people who are too many to be numbered or counted.
⁹“So give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?”

¹⁰It was pleasing in the sight of the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing.

¹¹God said to him, “Because you have asked this thing and have not asked for yourself long life, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have you asked for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself discernment to understand justice, ¹²behold, I have done according to your words. Behold, I have given you a wise and discerning heart, so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you.

¹³“I have also given you what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that there will not be any among the kings like you all your days. ¹⁴“If you walk in My ways, keeping My statutes and commandments, as your father David walked, then I will prolong your days.”

1 Kings 4:29,34

²⁹Now God gave Solomon wisdom and very great discernment and breadth of mind, like the sand that is on the seashore. ³⁴Men came from all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom.

Wisdom is a virtue, something to be desired

First mention of Wisdom

Genesis 3:6

⁶When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate

Proverbs 14:1

¹ The wise woman builds her house, But the foolish tears it down with her own hands.

Ecclesiastes 7:12

¹² For wisdom is protection *just as* money is protection, But the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the lives of its possessors.

Acts 6:3

³“Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.

All Wisdom comes from God

Daniel 2:20-21

²⁰Daniel said,

“Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever,

For wisdom and power belong to Him.

²¹ "It is He who changes the times and the epochs;

He removes kings and establishes kings;

He gives wisdom to wise men

And knowledge to men of understanding.

God's people are encouraged to ask God for Wisdom, act Wisely

Colossians 1:9

⁹For this reason also, since the day we heard *of it*, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

Colossians 3:16

¹⁶Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Colossians 4:5-6

⁵Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. ⁶Let your speech always be with grace, *as though* seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.

James 1:5

⁵But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

Wisdom is listening not speaking

Some think a wise person is found saying wise things all the time. But this is opposite the truth. Wisdom is all about listening, not speaking.

Proverbs 3:5-6

⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding.

⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.

Proverbs 12:15

¹⁵ The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel.

Proverbs 17:27-28

²⁷ He who restrains his words has knowledge, And he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding.

²⁸ Even a fool, when he keeps silent, is considered wise; When he closes his lips, he is *considered* prudent.

Proverbs 19:20

²⁰ Listen to counsel and accept discipline, That you may be wise the rest of your days.

James 1:19

¹⁹ *This* you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak *and* slow to anger;

Being Wise in one's own eyes

Wisdom is not something you commend to yourself

Proverbs 26:12

¹² Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

Isaiah 5:21

²¹ Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight!

Jeremiah 9:23-24

²³ Thus says the LORD, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; ²⁴ but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the LORD.

(The concept is repeated in Phil 3:7-11)

Romans 12:16

¹⁶ Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.

Wisdom is humility, not being self important.

Consider this poem from the man who wrote our invitation song (it echos some of Rudy's sermon on Rote Learning):

Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,
Have ofttimes no connection.
Knowledge dwells in heads replete with thoughts of other men;
Wisdom, in minds attentive to their own.
Knowledge, a rude, unprofitable mass,
The mere materials with which wisdom builds,
Till smoothed, and squared, and fitted to its place,
Does but encumber whom it seems to enrich.
Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much;
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.

William Cowper.

Godly Wisdom contrasted to Worldly Wisdom

James 3:13-18

¹³Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.

¹⁴But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.

¹⁵This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.

¹⁶For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.

¹⁷But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. ¹⁸And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Romans 1:28-32 -- speaking of those who trust in their own wisdom

²⁸And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, ²⁹being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; *they are* gossips, ³⁰slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, ³¹without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;

The Wisdom of Solomon

Solomon struggled with the futility of wisdom – listen in his own words:.

Ecclesiastes 1:16-18

¹⁶I said to myself, "Behold, I have magnified and increased wisdom more than all who were over Jerusalem before me; and my mind has observed a wealth of wisdom and knowledge." ¹⁷And I set my mind to know wisdom and to know madness and folly; I realized that this also is striving after wind. ¹⁸Because in much wisdom there is much grief, and increasing knowledge *results in* increasing pain.

Ecclesiastes 2:12-17

¹²So I turned to consider wisdom, madness and folly; for what *will* the man *do* who will come after the king *except* what has already been done? ¹³And I saw that wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness.

¹⁴The wise man's eyes are in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. And yet I know that one fate befalls them both.

¹⁵Then I said to myself, "As is the fate of the fool, it will also befall me. Why then have I been extremely wise?" So I said to myself, "This too is vanity."

¹⁶For there is no lasting remembrance of the wise man *as with* the fool, inasmuch as *in* the coming days all will be forgotten. And how the wise man and the fool alike die!

¹⁷So I hated life, for the work which had been done under the sun was grievous to me; because everything is futility and striving after wind.

Solomon – fell away from God in his old age.

1 Kings 11:1-8

¹Now King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, ²from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the sons of Israel, “You shall not associate with them, nor shall they associate with you, *for* they will surely turn your heart away after their gods.” Solomon held fast to these in love.

³He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned his heart away. ⁴For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father *had been*.

⁵For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the detestable idol of the Ammonites. ⁶Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not follow the LORD fully, as David his father *had done*. ⁷Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon.

⁸Thus also he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

Worldly Wisdom does not save

Solomon's Wisdom made a tragic point. If the Wisdom of the wisest man who ever lived did not save him, how will Wisdom now save you? Wisdom may be a good thing, but Philosophy – the Love of Wisdom will not save you. Only the Love of God can do that.

“If I don't use Worldly Wisdom when I share the gospel with someone to whom Wisdom is important, how can I convince them to become a Christian?”

Some receive the message gladly. Others want to be convinced by Worldly Wisdom. Most often this happens when the person is already under the influence of Wisdom of some religion or spiritual leader.

Well might you ask “What if someone's accepting the message depends on my being able to refute an errant religious leader?”

Colossians 2:8

⁸See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

If the person is basing what he chooses to believe (religion) on which person he judges to have greater Worldly Wisdom, then he is basing his belief on Worldly Wisdom. If Worldly Wisdom is more important

to the person than the simple message of the gospel, a message that confounds Worldly Wisdom, then he will not be able to receive the simple message of the Gospel. Even if you succeed in converting him from the Wisdom of someone else to your Wisdom, he has only switched Wisemen.

If you convert a person to your wisdom – you are converting him to you, not God.

What does this mean? It means that the power of the Gospel does not depend on your Wisdom and Skill. Isn't it comforting to know that you can share the Gospel without having to know everything this is to know first !

A little Foolishness – the man with a maid example

I asked for examples of things husbands did, that might embarrass them now, when they were courting. There is something about people who are courting. Solomon said:

Proverbs 30:18-19

¹⁸ There are three things which are too wonderful for me,
Four which I do not understand:

¹⁹ The way of an eagle in the sky,
The way of a serpent on a rock,
The way of a ship in the middle of the sea,
And the way of a man with a maid.

I didn't get many juicy stories like I hoped. Husbands seemed in a rush to leave after services. I guess they were afraid I'd name names and make you all point and giggle at them in church. I'll leave out the names and you can all have fun trying to guess who these suitors are:

One wife told me her husband came to help her babysit a child who needed a bath at bedtime. She left him alone for a minute and came back to find him laughing and splashing with the baby.

A couple of wives told me the same thing I would have expected Sharon to say about us. She said "We just fit." She didn't need for me to do anything foolish to impress her. She could tell I was a fool for her without doing anything to prove it. I did the foolish things as a bonus.

Another wife told me her husband played the guitar and sang for her and then did something dangerous with electricity for her.

Several told me about things he did that were handy (Red Green "if she doesn't find you handsome, at least she should find you handy") One showed up for a date and wound up repairing her Grandmother's much needed washing machine that had stopped working.

Another must have really wanted to make an impression that he was handy. He took her on a date that lead to the garage – he let her help him pull the engine out of his Dad's car ! His wife said she got to wear the Dad's well broken in and greased coveralls and everything.

But the one who really makes my point sent me a note about the day her future husband came to see her, brought some recorded Christian music and began acting out the story in a hand show. At first she thought he was acting very foolish, but then she realized what was happening:

“What started out to be a man making a fool of himself, ended up to be a very spiritual experience for me. I soon realized he was being a fool for Jesus and for me.”

My point is this. Some things seem foolish, but they are really wise because of the result they produce. A woman courted wants to know that she is more important to her suitor than he is to himself. Being foolish to win the heart of your beloved is a wise thing to do !

The Foolishness of the Gospel

Paul’s letters to the Romans, Corinthians, and Colossians each refute the teachers who were promoting their own Worldly Wisdom to get the Christians in those places to follow them instead of Christ.

Paul used this concept of wise foolishness when he directly attacked their Wisdom by calling the message of the Gospel “Foolishness” and showing that God’s Foolishness was superior to the Worldly Wisdom they were being taught by these false teachers.

The Gospel is foolish when measured by Worldly Wisdom.

1 Corinthians 1:18-30

¹⁸For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And the cleverness of the clever I will set aside.”

²⁰Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come to* know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

²²For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom ²³but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, ²⁴but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

²⁵Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

²⁶For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; ²⁷but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, ²⁸and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, ²⁹so that no man may boast before God.

³⁰But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, ³¹so that, just as it is written, “Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

He reminded them that he did not use Worldly Wisdom when he taught them the Gospel

1 Corinthians 2:1-13

¹And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. ²For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. ³I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, ⁴and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

And he told them that like your wife – God expects himself to be more important to you than you are to yourself – you must become a fool in the eyes of this World to be wise toward God

1 Corinthians 3:18-21

¹⁸Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, he must become foolish, so that he may become wise. ¹⁹For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, "*He is the one who catches the wise in their craftiness*"; ²⁰and again, "The Lord knows the reasonings of the wise, that they are useless."
²¹So then let no one boast in men. For all things belong to you,

Wisdom is known by its result – what will be its result in you?

Jesus said (also in Matt 11:19)

Luke 7:35

³⁵"Yet wisdom is vindicated by all her children."

He meant that wisdom is judged by its result. It is not about how good the argument sounds, it is all about what happens when one follows a path indicated by the 'wisdom'. Remember, that was the second definition from the dictionary. "The results of wise judgments"

In the English speaking world we would say "The proof is in the pudding!"

Romans 1:18ff tells us that following Worldly Wisdom does not lead mankind to him. It leads them away. :

Romans 1:22-27

²²Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

²⁴Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. ²⁵For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. ²⁶For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, ²⁷and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural

function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error

Glen spoke recently of the push of the Gay Community and the Government to force churches to accept homosexuality.

This is not something for us to fear. When others cave to this pressure, all that will happen is that their members who are really seeking after God will also be seeking a new place to worship him. Our task is to be found faithful and obedient to God when they come here. The most any of these groups can do to us for standing up to them is take away Worldly things from us. If you and I are willing to let the Wordly things go, we won't lose, we will gain.

Jesus gave everything that he had or could have had in this world.

Jesus did things, allowed things to happen to him, that did not fit Worldly Wisdom at all. The King should not offer himself as a sacrifice. At the time it made no sense at all. Jesus did not act wisely as measured by Worldly Wisdom.

But the result of his actions was the salvation of all mankind.

This was the result that was worth living as a man, suffering, & dying in the flesh.

Matthew 7:24

²⁴"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock.

Matthew 16:24-26

²⁴Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. ²⁵"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

²⁶"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

Wisdom will not save you or anyone else. Solomon proved that for us. Wisdom is vindicated by her children, what will be the result for you?

If we can help you in any way the church, foolish though our message may be, stand ready to help you.