

SESSION 5

GOD IS WISE



What's the wisest advice you've ever embraced or ignored?

QUESTION #1

#BSFLwise

THE POINT

God will give me wisdom when I humbly seek it.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

“Google it.”

Want to learn different methods for outdoor grilling? Google it. Want to locate a good doctor in your area? Google it. Want to know fun things to do when you visit Topeka? Google it.

Search engines are great for finding information, but where do you go for wisdom? Google? I tried, and now I have access to 143 million websites about wisdom. But I don’t want information *about* wisdom; I want wisdom itself.

It’s easy to seek advice from other people. But true wisdom—the insight we need for effective living—only comes from God. He offers the timeless wisdom on which we can build our lives. Paul wrote in Romans 11:33 that God’s wisdom is unsearchable; thankfully, He will give it to us if we ask (see Jas. 1:5).

As we’ll see in this session, the Book of Proverbs points us to the beauty of God’s wisdom.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Proverbs 2:1-6; 3:5-7 (HCSB)

- 2:1** My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you,
- 2** listening closely to wisdom and directing your heart to understanding;
- 3** furthermore, if you call out to insight and lift your voice to understanding,
- 4** if you seek it like silver and search for it like hidden treasure,
- 5** then you will understand the fear of the LORD and discover the knowledge of God.
- 6** For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.

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- 3:5** Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding;
- 6** think about Him in all your ways, and He will guide you on the right paths.
- 7** Don't consider yourself to be wise; fear the LORD and turn away from evil.

Key Words

Fear of the LORD (2:5)—Reverential awe of God because of His power and His love for us that compelled Him to provide redemption and escape from His wrath against sin.

Trust (3:5)—The Hebrew means “to be confident” or “cause to be confident.” It refers to depending upon someone for safety and security. It often includes the concept of hope.



Proverbs 2:1-6

Knowledge and wisdom are not the same thing. One is information, while the other is the divinely enabled application of truth to our lives (see Col. 1:9-10). Wisdom comes only from God because God alone possesses all truth. He is the ultimate source of wisdom and knowledge (see Col. 2:3).

The truth we discover in Proverbs 2 is that God wants to impart His wisdom to us, which is why verse 4 calls us to seek His wisdom. So, how do we do that?

- ▶ **Ask the right Person (Prov. 2:6).** James said if we ask God for wisdom and believe He will give it, then God will grant us wisdom (see Jas. 1:5).
- ▶ **Have the right attitude (Prov. 2:2).** Catch the emphasis in verse 2: we are to direct our hearts toward wisdom and understanding. God gives wisdom to those whose hearts are right and receptive toward Him. In other words, God expects us to do what He says.
- ▶ **Use the right tools (Prov. 2:3-4).** Get into God's Word. Wisdom must be actively pursued. It requires effort, like the hard labor of extracting silver from rock. God's Spirit will often speak to us through prayer, circumstances, and other people—but the wisdom and direction imparted by the Holy Spirit will always be consistent with Scripture.

God is true to His Word. If we obey His principles for seeking wisdom, He will give it to us abundantly. As God teaches us, we come to realize that: "He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals the deep and hidden things" (Dan. 2:21-22).



Where in our culture do people look for wisdom?

QUESTION #2

How do we recognize wisdom?

QUESTION #3

Proverbs 3:5-6

Wisdom is the product of a real and intimate relationship with God, which means growing in wisdom is a process. Like any relationship, the more you walk with God and grow in your relationship with Him, the more you will discover His wisdom. So, the promise of God's guidance in verse 6 should not be understood as a passive trust in God; it's the by-product of thinking about Him "in all your ways."

The way to wisdom is in trusting the Lord to give the guidance needed. So, what does "trusting the Lord" look like?

- ▶ **Wait on God and His perfect timing.** Trusting God means walking in step with the Holy Spirit and patiently living on His timetable. God knows everything and is in complete control, so you can surrender the details of every situation to Him.
- ▶ **Rely on God's wisdom rather than human understanding.** Relying on God shouldn't be a passive activity. Take the time to deliberately study and meditate on God's Word in order to gain His perspective on your life.

Trust and obedience to God will result in receiving divine wisdom. The promise that God will direct your paths (v. 6) is based on the premise that you trust Him with all your heart (v. 5). Your trust is reflected in your obedience.

"Trust" (verse 5) carries the idea of prostrating yourself. It's an inward motivation to subject yourself to God and be vulnerable before Him. This is pictured in the physical act of not only kneeling in submission, but even lying face down. When you submit yourself to God in that way, you are in a position to fully hear His wisdom and receive His loving guidance.

"Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives to all generously and without criticizing, and it will be given to him!"

—JAMES 1:5

How do you navigate the tension between trusting God's wisdom and trusting your own competence?

QUESTION #4

Proverbs 3:7

Many people live with an overly optimistic view of their own wisdom, which is why this verse cautions us to be wary of what we think we know. It's easy to trust our own common sense. We may even believe our motives are implicitly trustworthy and our judgments are free of bias—but we would do well to avoid such naiveté.

Wisdom is not mere common sense. It's not simply being reasonable or rational. It's not intuition, instinct, or sanctified guessing.

Wisdom is a supernatural product of divine discernment given by God through His Spirit. Considering that God Himself is the source, it's wise to trust His wisdom instead of our own.

Trusting in the Lord is not being anti-intellectual. Rational thinking has its place. After all, God created us as rational, reasoning human beings. God can—and does—use our minds. Let's never forget, though, that God's ways are above our ways, and His thoughts are above our thoughts (see Isa. 55:8-9). That's why the wise Christian fears God with holy reverence and trusts His wisdom first.

God knows everything, which is why we need His wisdom.

As we seek the Lord, He is prepared at all times to give us His divine leading when we need it. But the treasure trove of wisdom that comes from Him is only for the humble, not for those who consider themselves wise by their own standards.

By disavowing our own wisdom, we resist the temptation to overestimate our insight. Conversely, when we fail to humble ourselves in this way, our sinful humanity quickly exalts itself. This creates a self-sufficiency which can lead us to elevate ourselves and reject God's authority in other areas of our lives. Ultimately, this leads to sin. Humble trust is the posture of the truly wise. Any other posture will keep us from God's wisdom—and God's best.

How can a person intentionally cultivate humility?

QUESTION #5



GOOD ADVICE?

We've all heard lots of "wisdom sayings" over the years. Think of the main sayings you've encountered and record them in the following categories.

WORLDLY WISDOM

"Cleanliness is next to godliness."

GOOD ADVICE

"The early bird gets the worm."

BIBLICAL WISDOM

"Love your neighbor as yourself."

How do we discern between good and bad advice in today's culture?

LIVE IT OUT

How will you respond to God’s wisdom?

- ▶ **Memorize.** Commit James 1:5 to memory as a reminder that God grants us wisdom when we seek Him and ask for it.
- ▶ **Seek advice.** God often speaks to us through the wisdom and counsel of others. Make a connection with someone who can offer prayer and biblical counsel when you need it.
- ▶ **Immerse yourself in God’s Word.** Seek wisdom by developing a long-term strategy for studying the Bible. Plan out which portions of the Bible you will study in the next 6-12 months, and identify commentaries or other additional resources that would enhance your experience.



Search, and you will find information. Seek and ask humbly, and you will find wisdom—God’s wisdom. He is prepared at all times to give you what you need.

Accept His Plan

Something seemed amiss ... I had been faithfully serving as a full-time music minister for 32 years. I loved my work. I was good at it. Though I had my share of struggles in church life, I had always imagined retiring as a full-time music minister. That was not to be. Arriving at a church in North Louisiana, I soon realized after eight months that the church was not happy with me, nor was I with them.



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My group's prayer requests

A series of 15 horizontal dotted lines for writing.

My thoughts