

Overview

“Wisdom” to most means academic ability, but the Bible views man as a unified whole, never separating academic learning from spiritual wisdom.

A Parable

Once upon a time there was a village far away in a remote location. The village had experienced a hard year of severe weather. A group of missionaries worried that the villagers’ crude huts would not be able to withstand the strong weather any longer. The missionaries wanted to help by taking supplies to the village, but there were no accessible roads for a car trip and there was no landing field for a plane.

The missionaries decided to have a small plane air-drop supplies over the area until they could get there themselves. They sent food and tools (shovels, saws, hammers, screws, screwdrivers, etc.). The missionaries hoped that the villagers would use the tools to build new homes sturdy enough to resist the rough weather.

It took several months to repair the necessary roads to get to the village. Once the missionaries arrived, they noticed that the villagers had rebuilt the same crude hand-made huts. They were surprised to see tools tied on the tops of stakes about eight feet tall in front of each new hut. The tools were badly rusted and had never been used. Instead of working with the tools to build new homes, the villagers worshiped them. The tools became a status symbol. The villager with the most tools hung over his hut with viewed with awe and admiration.

In this parable the tools represent education. Academic subjects studied in school and colleges are tools meant to help a person in life. A Christian should use the tools to better himself to become the person God wants him to become—a wise person. When one has an unbalanced view of education, the tools are viewed as the end result instead of an apparatus to reach the goal. A diploma on a wall or the ability to spout facts is not wisdom. The ability to speak several languages or read philosophical literature is not wisdom.

In this book, you will learn that true wisdom is understanding and knowing God. The moment we understand and know God, we begin to see His holiness. We see His purposes, His love for man; we know who God is, so there's never any hesitation to obey Him. Scripture often uses the words *knowledge*, *understanding*, and *wisdom* interchangeably, but occasionally they are spoken of as though they are separate and distinct. Thus, it may be useful to attempt to define the differences in their meanings: *Knowledge* is recognition of the facts, *understanding* is the ability to lift the meaning from the facts, and *wisdom* is knowing what to do next.

Those with knowledge are able to collect, remember, and access information. They “know” the Scriptures. God's word is literally “in them.” They are scholars. However, it is possible to have knowledge and lack understanding and wisdom; that is, you may have the facts but have no clue as to their meaning or what to do with them.

Those with understanding are able to extract the meaning from information. They “see through” the facts to the dynamics of what, how, and why. They are teachers.

Understanding is a lens that brings the facts into crisp focus. Understanding produces rules of thumb, or principles.

Those with wisdom know which principle to apply, and when. Understanding without wisdom can appear contradictory. For example, “He who hesitates is lost” is as valid a principle as “Haste makes waste.” We see the truth in both, but we wonder, which should we apply in our current situation? Those with wisdom know what to do next. They know which way to go. They do the right thing. In contrast, there are many who have great knowledge and understanding, but consistently do the wrong thing. Wisdom, in this sense, is the goal, and knowledge and understanding only have eternal value as they result in wisdom or help us to do right.

The cover of this book depicts two paths. In life's journey we have the choice to take either the wise or the unwise path. The results of walking wisely are joy, peace, contentment, confidence, and being in the presence of God. The results of walking unwisely are conflict, discouragement, disappointment, disillusionment, and discontentment. Jesus taught that there are two paths: *Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.* (Matthew 7:13-14)

God has called us to walk wisely. Situations arise in daily life for which the Bible does not supply a specific checklist of answers. In these situations we need to ask, “What is the wise thing for me to do?” Paul commanded the believers in Ephesus to live wisely. *See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.* (Ephesians 5:15-17)

We are to think things through, to look at things from every angle. Believers are to show concern in decision making, finances, relationships, business transactions, family issues; indeed, in everything. What is wise for one may not be wise for all. God guides the believer in the way of wisdom. To refuse to live wisely is to ignore His leading. According to Proverbs, the wise man has length of days, long life, peace, and prosperity. God desires that we walk wisely so we can become the persons He created us to be and accomplish the work He has called us to do.