



Church on the Rock Homer  
Tuesday Training



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# Wisdom

*Wisdom and Decision Making*  
*(Once you understand wisdom, you'll understand decision making)*



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# Wisdom

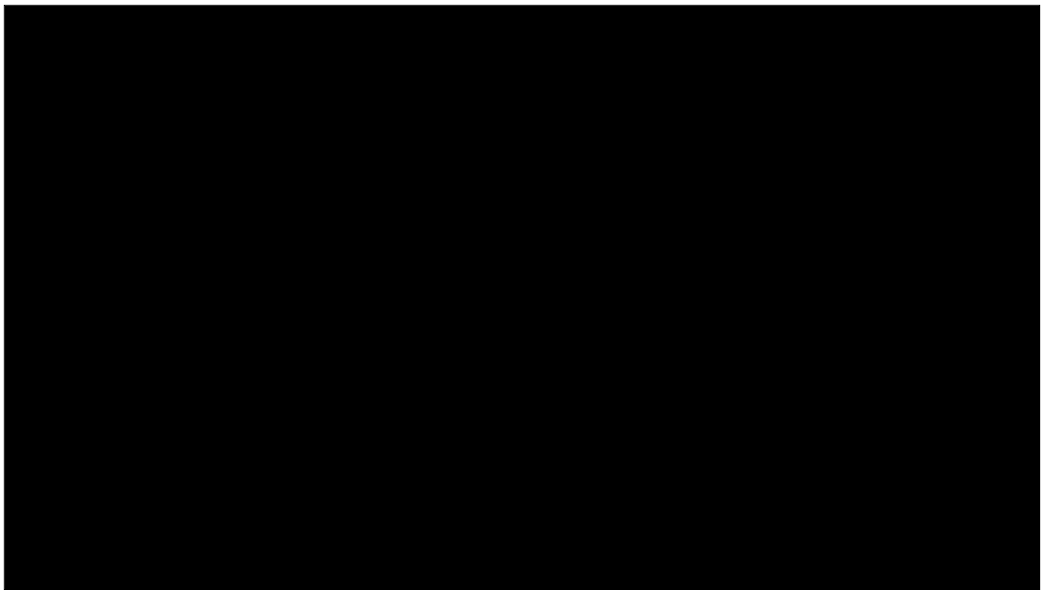
## **Training Outline**

- Jan. 10 - Wisdom: understanding the word
- Jan. 17 - Wisdom's vocabulary: prudence, discernment, etc.
- Jan. 24 - Wisdom, faith, and worldview
- Jan. 31 - Teaching wisdom and living with it

# Wisdom

## Today's Goals

1. To “de-mystify” the word *Wisdom*
2. To understand a simple concept in the meaning of the word *Wisdom*





# Wisdom

(Not just the province of the aged)

## The Words of Wisdom in Proverbs

- Collocated terms
  - Instruction (1:2)
  - Understanding (1:2)
  - Knowledge (1:4)
  - Prudence (1:4)
  - Discretion (1:4)
  - Riddles (1:6)
  - Enigma (1:6)
  - Discernment (2:3)
- Contrasting terms - the wise are contrasted with
  - The naïve/simple (1:4)
  - The young (1:4)
  - The fool (1:7)

These words have different meanings but do overlap. They are very useful for showing the developmental process involved in growing from knowledge to wisdom, but we won't be looking at them as "technical terms" with sharp distinctions between them.

# Wisdom

## The Cycle of Wisdom in Proverbs

- The cycle described (1:2-3)
  - Wisdom —> Instruction —> Understanding —> Instruction —> Wisdom, etc.
  - Know, perceive, receive
- Proverbs give prudence, knowledge, discretion (1:4)
- The cycle described again (1:5-6)
  - The wise increase learning
  - The understanding man attains wise counsel
  - Hear, increase, attain
- The foundation: the fear of the Lord (1:7)

These descriptions show us that there is a process, a positive progression from knowledge to understanding and that this progression is repetitive. The foundation is critical. You can learn and attain wisdom without the fear of the Lord, but it is not the kind of wisdom the Bible makes available.



# Wisdom

## The Sources of Wisdom in Proverbs

- Observation and experience
  - Prov 6:6-8; 7:6ff
- Instruction
  - Prov 4:1-4; 22:17-21
- Learning from mistakes
  - Prov 10:17; 12:1; 15:33
- God Himself
  - Prov 1:7; 2:6-8; 19:21

# Wisdom

## **The Beginning of Wisdom in Proverbs**

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge,  
But fools despise wisdom and instruction. (1:7)

"The fear of the LORD [is] the beginning of wisdom, And  
the knowledge of the Holy One [is] understanding. (9:10)

The fear of the LORD [is] the beginning of wisdom; A  
good understanding have all those who do [His  
commandments]. His praise endures forever. Psa 111:10

Knowledge; wisdom - the goal; instruction - one of the primary means of getting there

Understanding: knowledge applied within a context; seeing the organizing principle of all the facts so that they work as intended

# Wisdom

## The Fear of the Lord: Two Possibilities

- Awe, fear, reverence
- Godly, biblical wisdom - walking in the fear of the Lord
- Earthly, non-scriptural wisdom - ignoring the fear of the Lord

20 Where [is] the wise? Where [is] the scribe? Where [is] the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

[1Co 1:20-25 NKJV]

Vs 21 - “did not know God” - the first steps can’t be attained by figuring things out if God is ignored; “saved those” shows that the goal of wisdom is not wisdom itself but a personal relationship with God.

# Wisdom

## The Fear of the Lord: Two Possibilities

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“Wisdom is not simply a matter of learning certain principles of life and applying them mechanistically. Wisdom begins with a relationship with God. That this relationship is described as characterized by fear means that the sages understand their place in the universe. While fear is not to be equated with terror, it is probably more than mere respect (see 1: 7). After all, people are totally dependent on Yahweh, who created and sustains them. The sages understood this and therefore trembled in the presence of God.”

— *Proverbs* (Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms) by Tremper Longman III

# Wisdom

## **The Fear of the Lord: Two Possibilities**

- Awe, fear, reverence
- Godly, biblical wisdom - walking in the fear of the Lord
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The way of God's wisdom is going to clash with the world, no matter what the world thinks is valid and worthy. Applying biblical wisdom uses a different criteria from the world's values, estimation, and appreciation.

# Wisdom

## What is it?

- It can be known (1:2)
- Wisdom itself gives instruction (1:3)
- There is a cycle of learning, understanding, and growing in wisdom (1:5)
- It can be despised and rejected (1:7)
- It can be taught and learned from youth (1:8 ff)

# Wisdom

## First Instructions - a Model for Wisdom

- 1:8,9 - source and promise
  - The experienced and wise (1:8)
  - An endowment (1:9)
- 1:10 - what to avoid: situation and response
  - “If sinners entice you” - who and what
  - “do not consent” - response
- 1:11-14 - examination of the sinners and their enticement
- 1:15-19 - reason for the response: the outcome
- 1:20-30 - Wisdom's desire and opportunity: ample evidence is easily found
- 1:31-33 - Return to outcomes: the inevitability of consequences

If you don't learn from these examples, you'll become one.

“My son” - direct attention to external source of temptation. By this point the child is or should be aware of internal temptations to evil (1:16). There is an assumption of understanding what evil is (see James 1 - we are drawn away by our own desires; internal). There is an assumption of previous instruction about what's good and evil. Now it's time to talk about external temptations.

# Wisdom

## First Instructions - a Model for Wisdom

- Emphasis on the outcomes
- Summary of the lesson (1:19): “So *are* the ways of everyone who is greedy for gain; it takes away the life of its owners”
  - “the ways” - their path; their M.O.; the typical pattern
  - “everyone who is greedy for gain” - their nature; their character
  - “it takes away the life of its owners” - their destiny
- The summary states the lesson in terms of a principle - think broadly about how this applies in other, similar situations

Lesson summary: make the lesson a principle larger than the example; make it applicable in broad terms



# Wisdom

## First Instructions - a Model for Wisdom

- Emphasis on the outcomes
- Wisdom uses the outcomes as lessons for us to learn (1:20-23)
- Wisdom uses the failures of those who reject her as lessons for those still able to heed her call (1:24-30)
- Wisdom draws the line when consequences fall (1:31-33)
- Wisdom's overall principle is based on the "two ways" model
  - Prov 14:12; 16:25
  - Deut 30:15, 19

# Wisdom

## A Working Definition of Wisdom

**Wisdom:** being able to anticipate the outcome, the consequences of actions and decisions based on the character of people involved or the characteristics of situations encountered.

Wisdom is **foresight** informed by a godly worldview and a perspective of faith. It is believing what God says about what is good and healthy, beneficial, moral, and believing what he says about the cost involved in selecting which path to take. It is foresight based on a scriptural worldview.



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