

CITYWEST CHURCH

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WISDOM PART 1 - LEARNING TO SEE LIFE GOD'S WAY.

These are the proverbs of Solomon, David's son, king of Israel.

² Their purpose is to teach people wisdom and discipline,
to help them understand the insights of the wise.

³ Their purpose is to teach people to live disciplined and successful lives,
to help them do what is right, just, and fair.

⁴ These proverbs will give insight to the simple,
knowledge and discernment to the young.

⁵ Let the wise listen to these proverbs and become even wiser.
Let those with understanding receive guidance

⁶ by exploring the meaning in these proverbs and parables,
the words of the wise and their riddles.

⁷ Fear of the LORD is the foundation of true knowledge,
but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

Proverbs 1:1-7 (NLT)

Wisdom is the ability to see something from God's viewpoint. **Wisdom** is "God's character in the many practical affairs of life."

In **Proverbs**, **chokmah** is much more than possessing information. It is **the God-given ability to live rightly and skillfully in the real world.**

WE HAVE NEVER HAD MORE INFORMATION

We live in one of the most informed generations in human history. If you want to know something, you can find it almost instantly.

You can Google it. You can YouTube it. You can ask ChatGPT.

You can read an article. You can listen to a podcast. You can watch a documentary. We have access to more information than any generation before us.

But here's the interesting thing:

More information hasn't necessarily made us wiser.

In fact, sometimes it seems like the more information we have, the more confused we become.

Because information gives everybody a voice. And when everybody has a voice, everybody has an opinion.

And when everybody has an opinion, we can end up with multiple versions of the truth.

One person says, "This is what you should do." Another says, "No, that's completely wrong."

One person says, "This is healthy." Another says, "That's unhealthy."

One person says, "This is the right way to raise children." Another says, "No, that's the wrong way."

One person says, "This is what the Bible means." Another says, "No, that's not what the Bible means."

And somewhere in the middle of all of it, we're asking:

"Who am I supposed to listen to?"

That's why we need wisdom.

*Because **information tells us what is happening.***

Knowledge helps us understand why it is happening.

But wisdom asks: What should I do? How should I respond?

1. WISDOM IS KNOWLEDGE APPLIED.

The Bible has a much bigger understanding of wisdom than simply being clever.

The Hebrew word commonly translated as wisdom in Proverbs is:

Chokma — חִכְמָה

It carries the idea of skill, insight, understanding, and good judgment.

It's not merely knowing something.

It's knowing what to do with what you know.

In the Old Testament, wisdom is often the idea of having skill for living according to God's design.

Think about a tradesperson. You can read a thousand books about carpentry.

You can watch hundreds of videos about building. You can memorise every measurement. But eventually you have to pick up the tools and build something.

That's wisdom.

Wisdom takes truth and puts it into practice.

That's why Proverbs isn't simply a book of information.

It's a book about formation. It's teaching us how to live.

Information tells me what. Knowledge tells me why.

But: Wisdom asks, "What should I do?"

And that question is incredibly important.

Because life is full of moments where knowing isn't enough. You know you should forgive. But will you forgive?

You know you should be generous. But will you give?

You know you should pray. But will you pray?

You know you shouldn't gossip. But what will you do when the conversation starts?

You know you should love your enemy. But what happens when someone actually hurts you?

Wisdom takes what God has said and asks:

"How do I live this here, now, in this situation?"

"Fools think their own way is right, but the wise listen to others."

Proverbs 12:15 (NLT)

Notice the difference.

The fool says: "I know what I'm doing. "

The wise person says, "Maybe there's something I don't know. "

That's wisdom. Wisdom is humble. Wisdom is teachable.

Wisdom doesn't assume that because I have an opinion, I have understanding.

2. WISDOM BEGINS WITH GOD.

This is where Proverbs begins.

"Fear of the LORD is the foundation of true knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline."

Proverbs 1:7 (NLT)

This is one of the most important verses in the entire book of Proverbs.

Because Solomon doesn't begin by saying: "Get more information."

He doesn't say: "Read more books."

He doesn't say: "Become more intelligent."

He says: "Fear of the LORD is the foundation of true knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline."

Wisdom begins with God. Before wisdom is about what I know, it's about who I trust. The starting point of wisdom is recognising:

God is God, and I am not.

There is something incredibly freeing about that. I don't have to know everything.

I don't have to understand everything. I don't have to have an opinion about everything. I don't have to pretend that I have all the answers.

Because I know the One who does.

The fear of the Lord isn't terror.

It's reverence.

It's recognizing God's authority.

It's saying: "God, You see what I can't see."

"God, You know what I don't know."

"God, Your ways are higher than my ways." "God, teach me to see life Your way." "That is the beginning of wisdom."

And this is where our culture gets wisdom wrong.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding.

⁶ Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NLT)

Our culture says: "Follow your heart."

The Bible says: "Trust the Lord."

Our culture says: "You decide what's true for you."

The Bible says: "God is the source of truth."

Our culture says: "Believe in yourself."

The Bible says: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not depend on your own understanding."

Wisdom begins when God becomes the reference point for our lives.

Not my feelings. Not social media. Not the latest trend. Not the loudest opinion. Not even my own experience.

God.

3. WISDOM KNOWS THE TIMES AND CHOOSES THE RIGHT RESPONSE.

One of my favourite pictures of biblical wisdom is found in 1 Chronicles.

Israel is gathering around David. And among the people coming to David are the men of Issachar.

"From the tribe of Issachar, there were 200 leaders of the tribe with their relatives. All these men understood the signs of the times and knew the best course for Israel to take."

1 Chronicles 12:32 — NLT

I love that. They didn't simply understand what was happening.

They knew what to do about it. They understood the signs of the times and knew the best course to take.

That's wisdom.

Because you can accurately read the moment and still respond badly.

You can know what's happening in your family and still respond wrongly.

You can know what's happening in your workplace and still respond wrongly.

You can know what's happening in culture and still respond wrongly.

You can know what's happening in your church and still respond wrongly.

Wisdom says: "Given what is happening, what is the God-honouring response?"

INFORMATION: "Here's what's happening."

KNOWLEDGE: "Here's why it's happening."

WISDOM: "Here's how we should respond."

And as followers of Jesus, there is another question: "What would faithfulness to Jesus look like here?"

That's wisdom.

SO HOW DO WE BECOME WISE?

James makes it incredibly practical.

"If you need wisdom—if you want to know what God wants you to do—ask him, and he will gladly give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking."

James 1:5 (NLT)

I love the simplicity of that. "If you need wisdom... ask."

Some of us are asking God for things when what we really need is wisdom.

"God, change my circumstances."

Maybe the first prayer is: "God, give me wisdom in my circumstances."

"God, change my husband."

Maybe: "God, give me wisdom in how I love my husband."

"God, change my children."

Maybe: "God, give me wisdom in how I parent them."

"God, change my workplace."

Maybe: "God, give me wisdom in how I represent Jesus there."

"God, fix this situation."

Maybe: "God, show me what faithfulness looks like in this situation."

James says:

Ask God for wisdom. And here's the beautiful thing:

God doesn't shame us for asking.

He doesn't say: "You should know this already."

He doesn't say: "How could you possibly not understand?"

He says: Ask.

Conclusion:

We are living in a world drowning in information.

And the answer isn't to become people who know more and more about everything.

*The church needs people who know **how to live faithfully in the middle of everything.***

People who understand the times. People who can discern truth from noise.

*People who know when to speak and when to listen. People who know when to move and when to wait. People who know what Scripture says **and know how to live it.** People who don't simply have information about Jesus.*

*But who **look like Jesus.***

*Because: **Information tells us what is happening.***

Knowledge tells us why. Wisdom asks, "What should I do?"

And biblical wisdom begins with one simple posture:

"God, teach me to see life Your way."

Connect Group Questions:

- 1. Where in your life are you currently relying more on your own understanding, opinions, or the noise around you than on God's wisdom?**
- 2. Think about a situation you are facing right now. What is the difference between knowing what is happening and knowing how God wants you to respond?**
- 3. What might a wise, God-honouring response look like?**