

BOLD Course: Making Wise Decisions // Class 6: Finding Wisdom

1. Introduction: The Biblical admonition to seek and preserve wisdom:

Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. (Psalm 51:6)

So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom. (Psalm 90:12)

Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding (Proverbs 3:13)

Get wisdom; get insight; do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth. (Prov 4:5)

for wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her. (Prov 8:11)

How much better to get wisdom than gold! To get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver. (Proverbs 16:16)

Buy truth, and do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding. (Proverbs 23:23)

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. (James 1:5)

2. A biblical definition of wisdom:

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. (Prov 9:10)

Human wisdom

“The greatest human wisdom is the factual knowledge and the situational insight and the necessary resolve that together have the greatest likelihood of success in achieving the intended, righteous goal.”

~ John Piper

Divine wisdom

“Divine wisdom is the perfect factual knowledge and the perfect situational insight and the omnipotent resolve that together will succeed in achieving his intended, righteous goals.” ~ John Piper

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! (Romans 11:33)

Worldly Wisdom vs Godly Wisdom

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.” Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.” (1 Cor 1:18-31)

3. Where wisdom is found

a. Knowing God’s word

For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding (Proverbs 2:6)

The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. (Ps 19:7)

b. Understanding sound doctrine

... and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:15-17)

c. The example of others

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of

ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-13)

d. Godly counsel

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice. (Proverbs 12:15)

Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed. (Proverbs 15:22)

The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks justice. (Psalm 37:30)

On the lips of him who has understanding, wisdom is found (Prov 10:13)

Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future. (Proverbs 19:20)

Then King Rehoboam took counsel with the old men, who had stood before Solomon his father while he was yet alive, saying, "How do you advise me to answer this people?" And they said to him, "If you will be a servant to this people today and serve them, and speak good words to them when you answer them, then they will be your servants forever." But he abandoned the counsel that the old men gave him and took counsel with the young men who had grown up with him and stood before him. (1 Kings 12:6-8)

e. Godly leaders

Obeys your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. (Hebrews 13:17)

4. How to attain wisdom

a. Study

Waltke: "You must develop a heart for God personally, not merely relying on someone else having a righteous heart."

b. Listen

"But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? Man does not know its worth, and it is not found in the land of the living. The deep says, 'It is not in me,' and the sea says, 'It is not with me.' It cannot be bought for gold, and silver cannot be weighed as its price. It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir, in precious onyx or sapphire. Gold and glass cannot equal it, nor can it be exchanged for jewels of fine gold. No mention shall be made of coral or of crystal; the price of wisdom is above pearls. The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it, nor can it be valued in pure gold. "From where, then, does wisdom come? And where is the place of understanding? It is hidden from the eyes of all living and concealed from the birds of the air. Abaddon and Death say, 'We have heard a rumor of it with our ears.' "God understands the way to it, and he knows its place. For he looks to the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens. When he gave to the wind its weight and apportioned the waters by measure, when he made a decree for the rain and a way for the lightning of the thunder, then he saw it and declared it; he established it, and searched it out. And he said to man, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding.'" (Job 28:12-28)

Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. (Proverbs 6:6)

Wisdom cries aloud in the streets (Proverbs 1:20)

c. Learn

By insolence comes nothing but strife, but with those who take advice is wisdom. (Proverbs 13:10)

A scoffer seeks wisdom in vain, but knowledge is easy for a man of understanding. (Proverbs 14:6)

We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. (1 Corinthians 10:9-10)

d. Obey

"The more godly choices you make, the more godly choices will come naturally to you."

e. Ask

Solomon: Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?" (1 Kings 3:9)

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. (Ja 1:5)

5. Applying wisdom to decisions

The details laid out in these classes ought to flow from a robust understanding of who you are already in Christ and supplement a life that is already eager to grow in the likeness of Christ.

Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Colossians 2:2b-3)