

What Does the Bible Say About Wisdom?

Wisdom is not the same as knowledge, and it is not the same as cleverness. A person can know a great many facts and still ruin his life, and a man can be quick-witted and still be a fool in the things that matter. Wisdom is skill in living rightly, the ability to take what is true and apply it well, in the fear of God. The Bible has much to say about it, where it comes from, and how to get it. Let us see.

The Fear of the Lord Is the Beginning

Wisdom does not start with intelligence. It starts with God. *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding"* ([Proverbs 9:10](#)). The same book opens by saying, *"the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction"* ([Proverbs 1:7](#)). A person who leaves God out of his thinking has cut himself off from the very root of wisdom, no matter how educated he is. To be truly wise, you must first reckon with the God who made you.

Ask God for It

Wisdom is also a gift, and God gives it freely to those who ask. *"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him"* ([James 1:5](#)). God does not scold us for needing wisdom or make us feel small for asking. He gives generously. So the wise course, when we face a decision beyond us, is not first to lean on our own understanding but to go to God and ask Him for the wisdom we lack.

Christ Is the Wisdom of God

The deepest wisdom is not a thing but a person. Paul called Christ *"the power of God, and the wisdom of God"* ([1 Corinthians 1:24](#)), and said He *"is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption"* ([1 Corinthians 1:30](#)). The cross looked like foolishness to the wise of this world, and yet it was the wisest act in all of history, the plan by which God saved sinners while remaining just. To know Christ and His cross is to have found wisdom at its very source.

God's Wisdom and the World's

What the world calls wise, God often calls foolish, and what the world scorns, God often counts wise. *"hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"* Paul asked, and answered that *"the foolishness of God is wiser than men"* ([1 Corinthians 1:20-25](#)). Plainly he wrote, *"the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God"* ([1 Corinthians 3:19](#)). We must not be impressed by every clever voice the age applauds. Much of what passes for wisdom now will be shown to be folly in the end, and the simple word of God will stand.

Wisdom From Above

There is a counterfeit wisdom, and the Bible tells us how to know the real from the false, by its character. *"the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy"* ([James 3:17](#)). The false kind, by contrast, is *"earthly, sensual, devilish"* ([James 3:15](#)), full of envy and strife. So when you meet a teaching or a counsel, look at the fruit it bears and the spirit it carries. Heavenly wisdom is pure and peaceable. Wisdom that breeds pride and division did not come down from God.

Get Wisdom, and Live It

Because wisdom is so valuable, Solomon urged us to pursue it above all else. *"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding"* ([Proverbs 4:7](#)). And true wisdom always shows up in how a person lives, for James said, *"let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom"* ([James 3:13](#)). Jesus said the man who hears His words and does them is like one who built his house upon a rock, which the storm could not bring down ([Matthew 7:24-25](#)). So fear God, ask Him for wisdom, fill your mind with His word, and prove your wisdom not by clever talk but by a life built on the rock.

Every Scripture reference in this study links to the King James Version. Open it and read for yourself.