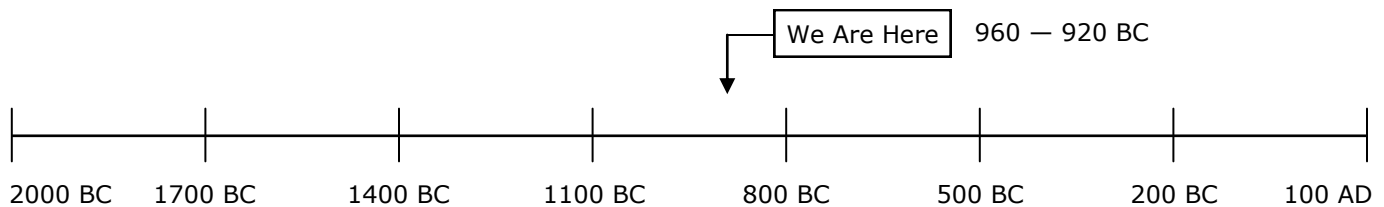


A Word to the Wise

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Week 22: May 28—June 3 — *Various Proverbs*

42% Complete — 211 Days to Go



Helpful Resources

Overview of Bible History (p.37)

Making Sense of It All

- The Big Picture

“The wisest man who ever lived, Solomon, left us a legacy of written wisdom in three volumes — *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes*, and *Song of Solomon*. In these books he gives practical insights and guidelines for life. In the first volume, Solomon passed on his advice in the form of proverbs, which are short, concise sentences that convey moral truths. The main theme of these proverbs is the nature of true wisdom. There is a vast difference between having knowledge (facts) and having wisdom (applying those facts to life). Solomon gives us simple ways to apply our knowledge to every day life. Although the proverbs are not meant to teach doctrine, a person who follows their advice will walk closely to God” (Life Application Bible). Let us consider the nature and source of true wisdom.

Wisdom Defined (*Webster’s 1828 Dictionary*)

¹ *The right use or exercise of knowledge; the choice of laudable ends, and of the best means to accomplish them. This is wisdom in act, effect, or practice. If wisdom is to be considered as a faculty of the mind, it is the faculty of discerning or judging what is most just, proper, and useful... Wisdom in this sense, or practical wisdom, is nearly synonymous with discretion. It differs somewhat from prudence, in this respect; prudence is the exercise of sound judgment in avoiding evils; wisdom is the exercise of sound judgment either in avoiding evils or attempting good. Prudence then is a species, of which wisdom is the genus. See Proverbs 8:12.*

² *In Scripture, human learning; erudition; knowledge of arts and sciences. For example, Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians (Acts 7).*

³ *Quickness of intellect; readiness of apprehension; dexterity in execution (Bezaleel, Ex. 31).*

⁴ *Natural instinct and sagacity (see Job 39).*

⁵ *In theology, wisdom is true religion; godliness; piety; the knowledge and fear of God, and sincere and uniform obedience to his commands; the wisdom from above (Psalm 90; Job 28).*

⁶ *Profitable words [like Proverbs] or doctrine (Psalm 37).*

To summarize Webster’s definition, wisdom can be either worldly (human or natural) or godly (divine). Wisdom that is divine originates with the knowledge and fear of God and a genuine obedience to His statutes. Let’s look at this truth a little more closely.

- The Source of True Wisdom

We Should Desire True Wisdom (*Prov. 3:13-15, 17, 18, 21-23; 4:7-9; 8:10, 11, 35; Ps. 119:72*)
Pursuing true wisdom is a worthy lifelong endeavor; wisdom is more valuable than any worldly possession, and its reward is more honorable than any earthly achievement.

God Is the Source of True Wisdom (*Prov. 2:3-6, 9, 10; Ps. 119:66, 97-100; James 1:5*)
All good things originate with God. He, then, is the source of truth and wisdom; He is also the supply. Any truth or wisdom that we obtain is simply a gracious loan from God.

The First Step to True Wisdom Is to Know God (*Ps. 1:1-3; 119:24, 130; Jer. 9:23, 24*)
Since we have identified the source of wisdom (God), we must seek that source to acquire wisdom. Thus, we must seek to know God's heart and mind.

The Way to Know God Is to Read His Words. To seek the wisdom of God, we must study the words of God. One who professes to be wise and ignores the source of true wisdom is nothing but a fool. We must be in the Bible!

Once We Know Him More Intimately, We Will Develop a Healthy Fear of God
(*Prov. 1:7; 2:5; 3:7; 8:13; 9:10; 11:2; 14:26, 27; 15:9*) What does it mean to have a fear of the Lord?

Fear Defined (*Webster's 1828*): ⁶ "In the Scriptures, the fear of God is a holy awe or reverence of Him, which springs from a just view and real love of the divine character, leading His subjects to shun everything that can offend Him"; it would be to hold Him in highest esteem, to strive to please Him in all respects, and to cast away all that would dishonor Him. **To fear the Lord is to love what He loves and hate what He hates.** Another expression of fear is to understand the God who sees; it is sobering to know that there is no hiding place where one can be overlooked by God. God knows our deeds; He also hears each idle word and He knows our hearts and minds (*1 Chronicles 28:9*). Do you fear God? Here is a practical way to do that: Live in such a way as you realize that God sees all that you do (*Prov. 5:21; 15:3, 11*), hears all that you say (*Eccles. 10:20*), and knows all that you think (*Psalms 19:14; 139:23, 24; Prov. 16:2*).

To Practice True Wisdom, Obey God's Instructions (*Prov. 3:5-7; 12:1, 15; 13:13; 19:23*)
A wise son will obey his parents; a wise child of God will obey his heavenly Father. We demonstrate wisdom when we recognize and act on the righteousness of God's instructions.

True Wisdom Is to Abandon Our Understanding and to Trust in God (*Prov. 3:5-7*)
As finite and fallen beings, God's wisdom will many times fly in the face of conventional human counsel (*Isaiah 55:8*). We must trust Him and forsake what our limited minds advise.

God Blesses Those who Practice True Wisdom (*Joshua 1:8; Ps. 1:1-3; Prov. 3:33*)

The Bottom Line

God gives *wisdom* to men, and from His *Word* come knowledge and understanding.

Questions to Consider

1. Where are you in the process of obtaining true wisdom? What's your chief struggle?
2. Do you have a healthy fear of God? How do you practice that fear in daily living?