

I must have talked too much when I was a kid because I can't count how many times my Dad said to me, "It is better to remain silent and be considered a fool than to open your mouth and remove all doubt." Hopefully I've learned my lesson. Today is the third part of our month long series on "Wisdom for the New Year." Today we ask the question "Where is Wisdom?" I don't plan to give you my personal wisdom. That wouldn't do you a lot of good. Wisdom is a gift from God. Wisdom is not a destination as much as it is God's word and Spirit guiding us through life.

So where do we find wisdom? Is wisdom found in financial success? Probably not. Have you ever heard that "A fool and his money are soon parted."? Sudden wealth does not make a person wise. Think about how many lottery winners end up losing everything. Jesus told the story of farmer who struck it rich after having a bumper crop. After building new barns to hold everything, the man said, "I'll sit back and say to myself, 'My friend, you have enough stored away for years to come. Now take it easy! Eat, drink, and be merry!'" "But God said to him, 'You fool! You will die this very night. Then who will get everything you worked for?'" (Luke 12:19-20 NLT) Money does not make us wise.

Can wisdom be found in a good education? We can certainly gain knowledge, but knowledge and wisdom are two different things. Jonah Lehrer in his article in the New York Times, "Why Smart People are Stupid" wrote, "When people face an uncertain situation, they don't carefully evaluate the information or look up relevant statistics. Instead, their decisions depend on a long list of mental shortcuts, which often lead them to make foolish decisions." Lehrer claims that smart people make foolish mistakes because they are blind to their own biases and think they are smarter than others.

Self Help books have been around for a long time. Can we find wisdom in self-help books? Maybe! But think about how many self-help books disagree with each other and give us conflicting advice. You can get conflicting advice on how to help you child become a successful athlete. Some "experts" tell us we should focus our kids on one sport from early on; that you can't start too soon. We could call this the Tiger Woods model. Others tell us that we should allow and encourage our kids to play a variety of sports, to explore a variety of different things before focusing on just one thing. This is the Roger Federer model. He played other sports before picking up a tennis racket and becoming the world's greatest tennis player. Which one is right?

A lot of people are searching for wisdom and insight on the internet. They will Google just about anything. But just because something is on the internet doesn't mean that it is true or right. We learn how to do a lot of different things on YouTube. But I wouldn't look for wisdom there because people have a lot of different ideas about wisdom.

There is a difference between the wisdom of the world and the wisdom that God gives. Think about the contrasting advice you can get from the world and from God's Word.

The World Tells Us

Look out for yourself
Fight for your rights
Say it like it is
Justice, Revenge, Hate
Image is everything
You can have it all
You only live once

God's Wisdom Says

Consider others ahead of yourself
Pray for your enemies
Speak the truth in love
Mercy, Forgiveness, Love
You are made in the image of God
Give to the poor
God has placed eternity in our hearts

So what is wisdom?

- Wisdom speaks the truth . This is not what is true for you may not be true for me. That doesn't make any sense. Wisdom is available to all who listen and says, **"I speak the truth and detest every kind of deception."** (vs. 7)
- Pride and arrogance can lead us down the wrong path. Wisdom won't do that. Wisdom keeps us from danger. **"All who fear the Lord will hate evil. Therefore, I hate pride and arrogance, corruption and perverse speech."** (vs. 13)
- Wisdom knows and trusts God the Creator. God's wisdom was present at creation. True Wisdom knows how God designed our lives and shows us how live the way God made us.
- God's gift of wisdom is more valuable than any of our earthly possessions. Proverbs tells us, **"Wisdom is far more valuable than rubies. Nothing you desire can compare with it."** (vs.11)

So where does wisdom come from?

- Wisdom begins with God. Proverbs 9:10 tells us, **"Fear of the Lord is the foundation of wisdom. Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment."** To fear the Lord means to give Him worship, honor and respect.
- Wisdom is revealed in God's word and by His Spirit.
- God can also use other means to give us wisdom. We can wisdom from trusted advisors who live out their Christian faith and life.
- We can gain wisdom from reading, studying and applying God's Word to our daily lives.
- We can gain wisdom by asking God to give it to us and then listening for His guidance and direction.

There are a lot of competing voices in our world today. One of them is God's gift of wisdom that calls out to us every day. Wisdom will guide us through life, help us recognize distractions that would pull us away from Him, and point us in the right direction. God gives us the wisdom we need at the time that we need it. He says, **"Call on me when you are in trouble, and I will rescue you, and you will give me glory."** (Psalm 50:15 NLT)

Ultimately Wisdom leads us to Jesus. Paul wrote, **"To those called by God to salvation, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God."** (1 Corinthians 1:24)
God doesn't give us wisdom to make us smarter or to give us inside information. God's wisdom shows us how to live as people of God, to live in peace and in a closer relationship with Him.