

Three Keys of Wisdom

Harmony M.B.C., January 24, 2010, Sept. 12, 2020

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Prov. 1:2 To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;

Prov. 1:3 To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;

Prov. 1:4 To give subtlety to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.

Prov. 1:5 A wise *man* will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:

It is human nature to be incapable of discovering true wisdom. A natural human might as well look for an ocean in the middle of the Mojave desert in July as to try to find true wisdom. It takes a soul who has been renovated...made new by the power of God to even be able to get into a condition to begin to get a grasp on what wisdom truly is. Solomon knew this when he wrote our text verses. The Lord says it best as he speaks to Moses in **Exodus 28:3**, "And thou shalt speak unto all *that are* wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom..." Job contemplated this and made a statement about it: **Job 28:12** "But where shall wisdom be found? and where *is* the place of understanding?" He then answers the question: **Job 28:23** "God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof." So, at the outset today, I want to state that Jesus Christ the sum of all wisdom is the source of all that is true wisdom. All other things among mankind that are called wisdom are foolishness with God (**1Cor. 3:19**). With that said, you will be forced to realize that when I talk about handling wisdom, I must be talking to born again people. Some of this message will have meaning to lost people, but this is a message meant to speak to saved people. I think that the spiritual growth of the Lord's people is dependent on them taking a hard look at how they handle wisdom, and acting on what they discover within themselves. May the Lord help us to do that today.

I. v.2 - The Capacity to Recognize Wisdom and Instruction

- ❖ Are we "able" to recognize wisdom and instruction; able to perceive words of understanding?
- ❖ What are the earmarks of this ability (capacity)
 - Scripture tells us (**Prov. 14:33**) " Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding...."
 - Having understanding, we become able to recognize wisdom among the

- many words spoken and written in this world
- So, it follows that we have the opportunity to advance our storehouse of wisdom by **being able to pay attention, listen and hear**
 - The first key to being able to listen and hear is to examine how we handle what other people say;
 - First, when we are listening to someone talk, is our mindset such that we spend time in conversation waiting for someone else to finish speaking so that we can say something?
 - Proverb (Native American - Blackfoot) - “Listen or your tongue will keep you deaf.”
 - So, being able to listen and hear is to **“focus with a reference point.”**
 - Here is the reference point we should use: “I am not looking for a segue into something I want to say, I am looking for the message in the words I am listening to.”
 - ◆ Plutarch (1st & 2nd century historian) once said, “Know how to listen, and you will profit even from those who talk badly.”
 - The anecdote about the speech challenged brother who sang with the pastor at the fellowship at Olmstead church
 - The second key to recognizing wisdom is having a disposition that helps you recognize and perceive
 - John Keble (clergyman, Anglican Church, 19th century): “Give us grace to listen well.”
 - Max Ehrmann, (early 20th C. lawyer/writer from Indiana) “. . . listen to others, even the dull and ignorant; they too have their story.”
 - Don’t start with a predetermined rejection of what is being said. There is something valuable in everybody’s story:
 - Nowadays with all the foolishness being spoken around, the value may be that what is being said helps us recognize what wisdom IS NOT. But, on the other hand, the value may be that it actually has some wisdom in it.
 - Don’t presume you already have the answers
 - Job told his friends something that could be a description of some people’s disposition in regard to hearing: **Job 12:2** “No doubt but ye *are* the people, and wisdom shall die with you.”
- ❖ Summary: **Prov. 22:17** “**Bow down thine ear**, and hear the words of the wise....” and:
- **James 1:19** Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be **swift** (prompt or ready) **to hear....”**

❖ Can you identify wisdom and instruction? (Recognition)

- Comment: In this world of information, we have more than enough input from all kinds of people
- What are the earmarks of wisdom and instruction (born of wisdom)?
 - In the introduction, I said that wisdom comes from the Lord - so, if you can trace what you have identified as wisdom back to God, then you are identifying true wisdom:
 - **Prov, 2:6** For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth *cometh* knowledge and understanding
 - **Psalms 111:10** and Proverbs 9:10 say “The **fear of the Lord is the beginning** of wisdom.”
 - ◆ There is evidence of **fear of the Lord** in truly “wise advice” and wise words
 - ◆ Wisdom and its instruction agree with the principles of God and point to them
 - If it’s true wisdom, you will notice that it goes hand in hand with making **wise decisions** (discretion-as in V. 4 of our text-definition: The ability or power to discern what is responsible or socially appropriate).
 - This is where the axiom of Christ about wisdom comes in, where He said: (**Luke 7:35**), “... **wisdom is justified of all her children.**”
 - **Prov. 8:12** “I wisdom **dwell with prudence (discretion), and find out knowledge of witty inventions.**”
 - In other words, there is a living relationship between true wisdom and discretion-we need to be able to use the truth to help us know when we see acts of wisdom and when we hear words of wisdom.
 - Wisdom also has the capacity to perceive deceptive and underhanded dealing (“find out knowledge of witty inventions.”)

II. v.2 - To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; **The Capacity and Willingness to Receive Good Instruction**

- ❖ Comment: This goes beyond the capacity to recognize wisdom and good instruction; it is about receiving it.
- ❖ Receiving wisdom and instruction involves two aspects: accepting and

practicing

- Accepting: Failing to accept wisdom and instruction is probably the most common place in human lives where there is a breakdown in the process by which God grows people spiritually.
 - Skepticism or rebellion block acceptance of wisdom
- Accepting: Believers have the CAPACITY to accept wisdom and instruction; the failure comes in not being WILLING to accept it.
 - **Prov. 15:32** He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.
 - **Prov. 19:20** Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.
 - Practicing: “Knowledge becomes wisdom only after it has been put to practical use.” - Anonymous
 - **Psalms 1:1-2** Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. 2 But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

III. vv.4-5 The Outcome of This Experience with Wisdom

- ❖ **Prov. 1:4** To give subtlety to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.
- ❖ **Prov 1:5** A wise *man* will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:
 - Those who live a simple life; naive people gain subtlety (in the good sense)
 - Young people gain knowledge and ability to make smart decisions through insightfulness and proper evaluation
 - Remember, discretion here means the ability or power to discern what is responsible or socially appropriate
 - The wise person has recognized wisdom, so he “hears” in the sense of this usage of the word
 - Through the “hearing” he increases learning
 - Through this learning, the understanding grows; as a result he becomes a user, and a library and provider of wise counsels