

THE POWER OF WISDOM (Part 2) (James 1:5-6)

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~"I will walk into the EXPECTED END of God—by the power of Wisdom."

~We have been talking about GROWING toward maturity.

~"Maturity is necessary for Destiny."

~If we want to walk in our purpose we must be willing to go through the **process** of maturity.

~Discipleship is the process of maturity—if we are to mature, it will be because we become submitted to the Discipleship process and become willing learners.

~WISDOM is what enables us to take knowledge to the market place—it's what empowers us to make Godly decisions where we live, work, and play.

~Knowledge is Power—and Power brings about CHANGE in our lives!

~The "change" involves living our lives COMPLETELY governed by the WISDOM of God...leading us to a life that gives Him Glory.

A. I believe all men have this in common: that they want to be happy.

~They do not all agree on what brings the greatest happiness, but they do all long to have it.

~This longing is not bad. It is good. Evil consists in trying to find Joy and happiness in ways that displease and dishonor God.

~Goodness consists in finding happiness in ways that please and honor God.

~We can hardly conceive of a world in which we might be called upon to do right at the expense of our ultimate happiness.

~**God has established this world in such a way that doing good through faith in Christ always leads to greater happiness!**

~We do not live in a world where we must choose between our eternal happiness and God's glory!

~God has created this world and its moral laws in such a way that the more we choose to glorify God, the more JOY FILLED we will be.

B. This does not mean that there is no discipline, no self-denial.

(Mark 8:34-35) “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.”

~It is clear from Jesus' words that self-denial is a means to saving our lives.

~This means simply that we must stop seeking our happiness in one way and start seeking it in another.

~Therefore what sets Christians off from the world is not that we have given up on the universal quest for happiness, but that we now seek our happiness from a different SOURCE and in different ways.

C. The Joy we seek may require that we choose to suffer for Christ's sake.

(Heb. 12:2) “For the joy set before him endured the cross.”

~He CHOSE the cross!

~Only the WISDOM of God could have informed His choice.

~What He CHOSE would determine His outcome...choices are powerful!

~Although what He chose would lead to great suffering...IT WAS WHAT WAS BEST FOR HIM.

~He ENDURED the course of His decision to the end.

~If we fail to endure through our choices—we fail to gain the full reward of our decisions.

(Gal. 6:9) “Let us be not weary in well doing: for in DUE SEASON we shall reap, if we faint not.”

~We are always MOST MISERABLE just before giving birth—but that pain is necessary to give birth to the LIFE that God has called each of us to.

D. We must never become self-pitying.

(Rom. 8:18) “The sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”

~When we wallow in self-pity we forfeit the GLORY that is destined to be revealed as we move through the trials of life.

~If we are going to go through it—we want to SHINE while we do.

~We must view the Bible as God's guidebook to joy, and as a divine prescription for how to be cured of all unhappiness.

~The medicine it prescribes is not always sweet, but the cure it brings is infinite and eternal joy at God's right hand.

(Ps. 16:11) “You will show me the path of life: and in your presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”

1. WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF GETTING WISDOM?

~The reason that getting wisdom is important is that it is the practical knowledge by which we gain this true and lasting Joy.

(Proverbs 3:13) “Happy is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gets understanding.”

(Proverbs 24:13–14) “My son, eat honey, for it is good, and the drippings of the honeycomb are sweet to your taste. Know that wisdom is such to your soul; if you find it, there will be a future, and your hope will not be cut off.”

~By means of wisdom you can make your way into a hope-filled future.

A. Wisdom is the key to lasting Joy.

(Proverbs 19:8) “He who gets wisdom loves himself.”

~In other words, do yourself a favor: Get wisdom!

(Proverbs 8:32–36) Here wisdom herself is speaking and she says, “And now, my sons, listen to me: happy are those who keep my ways . . . Happy is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my doors. For he who finds me finds life and obtains favor from the Lord; but he who misses me injures himself; all who hate me love death.”

~If we do not make it our aim to “get wisdom,” we will suffer injury and finally death.

~Therefore, the command, “Get wisdom; get insight,” is very important.

(Proverbs 16:16) “To get wisdom is better than gold; to get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.”

~It is a matter of life and death!

~The ultimate, eternal Joy that all people long for will only be found by those who first “get wisdom.”

B. Not all happiness comes from true wisdom.

(Proverbs 15:21) “Folly is a joy to him who has no sense.”

~Our thirst for happiness is insatiable in this world, and if we do not have the wisdom to seek it in God, then we will find whatever substitutes we can in the world.

~Terrorists may find joy in shooting presidents and popes. Executives may find it in climbing the corporate ladder. Athletes in breaking world records. Scholars in publishing books. Gamblers may find it in Reno. Musicians in selling a million records.

~The sources where people seek happiness apart from God are countless: drink,

drugs, sex, suntans, television, tubing, eating, talking, walking, etc., etc.

~But the happiness that these things bring is not true and lasting. It is not ultimate and eternal.

~It is not the joy for which we were made...And, therefore, it leaves us unsatisfied, frustrated, incomplete, knowing that there must be something more.

~That ultimate and eternal happiness that we crave is only found by wisdom.

2. WHAT IS WISDOM?

~What is it? What are the characteristics of the person who has it?

~The first characteristic you all know: **(Proverbs 9:10)** “The FEAR of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.”

A. The wisdom that leads to life and ultimate joy begins with knowing and fearing God.

~Fearing the Lord means fearing to run away from him.

~It means fearing to seek refuge, and joy, and hope anywhere other than in God.

~It means keeping before our eyes what a fearful prospect it is to stop trusting and depending on God to meet our needs.

~The fear of the Lord is, therefore, the beginning of wisdom not only in the sense that it is the first step in a wise way to live, but also in the sense that all the later characteristics of wisdom flow from the fear of the Lord like a river flows from a spring.

Let's look at some examples.

(Proverbs 11:2) “When pride comes, then comes disgrace; but with the humble is wisdom.”

~The wise person is characterized by HUMILITY.

~The person who lives in PRIDE does not fear the Lord, who hates a haughty spirit, and therefore can't get to first base in wisdom.

~The person who fears the Lord is humble, because he depends on God for everything and fears to take credit himself for what God does.

~Humility, in turn, is foundational for the other aspects of godly wisdom because humility is teachable and open to change and growth.

~The proud person does not like to admit his errors and his need for growth. But the humble person is open to counsel and reason, and ready to be corrected and follow truth.

~Humility, unlike pride, does not recoil when commanded to do something. And this is essential for the advancement of wisdom, because Moses taught us that wisdom consists in knowing and doing the commandments of God.

(Deuteronomy 4:5–6) “Behold I have taught you statutes and ordinances, as the Lord my God commanded me that you should do them . . . Keep them and do them; for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples.”

(Matt. 7:24) Jesus said “Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon a rock.”

~A good definition of godly wisdom, therefore, would be: hearing and doing God's Word.

~God's Word is a divine prescription for how to be finally cured of all unhappiness.

~Wisdom is the practical knowledge of how to attain that Joy and happiness.

~Wisdom is hearing and doing the Word of God...But the only people who will do this are the people who are humbly relying on God for help and who fear to seek happiness anywhere but in him.

B. Wisdom must go beyond knowing and doing the Word of God. Wisdom must include a sensitive, mature judgment or discernment of how the fear of the Lord should work itself out in all the circumstances not specifically dealt with in the Bible.

(1 Kings 3:16–28) One day two prostitutes came to King Solomon. One of them said, “My lord, this woman and I live in the same house, and we each gave birth to a son last week. And one night while she was asleep, she rolled over on her son and smothered it. So she got up at midnight and took my living son from me while I slept and left me with her dead son. When I woke in the morning and looked closely, I could tell it was not my son.”

~But the other woman said, “No, the living child is mine, and the dead child is yours.” And so they argued before the king. Then the king said, “You both say the living child is yours. I will settle the matter; bring me a sword.” So a sword was brought and the king said, “Divide the living child in two and give half to the one woman and half to the other.” But the woman whose son was alive yearned for her son and said, “No, my lord, give her the child and by no means slay it.” And the other said: “It shall be neither mine nor yours, divide it.” Then the king said, “Give the living child to the first woman. She is its mother.”

~The story concludes with this observation: “And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had rendered; and they stood in awe of the king, because they perceived that the wisdom of God was in him, to render justice.”

~There was no biblical command to tell Solomon what to do when two harlots claim the same baby.

~When the Bible is not CLEAR concerning a specific situation of our lives—the WISDOM of God will lead us in a clear and concise manner.

~There has to be what Paul calls in **(Romans 12:2)** a “renewing of the mind” which is then able to examine and approve the will of God.

~He calls this a “spiritual wisdom” in **(Colossians 1:9)**, “We have not ceased to pray for you, that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.”

~Of course the wisdom which follows God's Word and the wisdom which discerns the way to act when there is no clear word from God are not separate.

~It is precisely by saturating our minds and hearts with God's Word that we gain the spiritual wisdom to guide us in all situations.

~When the Bible says, “Get wisdom,” it is referring to that practical knowledge of how to attain true and lasting Joy and happiness.

~It begins with the fear of the Lord and consists in humbly hearing and doing God's will perceived both in Scripture and in the unique circumstances of the moment.

~Such wisdom is essential because the person who has it finds life and joy, but the person who doesn't finds death and misery.

3. HOW CAN WE GET WISDOM?

1. First, desire wisdom with all your might.

(Proverbs 4:8) “Prize her highly and she will exalt you; she will honor you for your embrace.”

~These are not cheap words. To prize something and to embrace someone are signs of intense desire and love.

~Wisdom must be valuable to us.

~We must be willing to sell all in order to buy it

(Proverbs 2:4) “Seek it like silver, and search for it as for hidden treasure.”

2. Second, since Wisdom is found in the Word of God, we must apply ourselves in study and meditation to KNOW the Word and DO it.

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

~If you read about 250 words a minute and you resolve to devote just 15 minutes a day to serious reading to deepen your grasp of biblical truth. In one year (365 days) you would read for 5,475 minutes. Multiply that times 250 words per minute and you get 1,368,750 words per year. Now most books have between 300 and 400 words per page. So if we take 350 words per page and divide that into 1,368,750 words per year, we get 3,910 pages per year. This means that at 250 words a minute, 15 minutes a day, you could read about 20 average sized books a year!

3. The third thing we should do to get wisdom is pray.

~**Solomon** was not born a wise man. He prayed for wisdom and God said, **(1 Kings 3:11)** “Because you have asked this and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, behold now I do according to your word.”

~**Daniel** admitted that in himself he had no wisdom **(Daniel 2:30)**, but he said, “To thee, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for thou hast given me wisdom and strength, and hast made known to me what we asked of thee.”

~**Paul** prayed that the churches might be given “spiritual wisdom” **(Colossians 1:9)** and that they might have “a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of God.” **(Ephesians 1:17)**.

~**James** puts it as clearly as we could wish: **(James 1:5)** “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God.”

~The wisdom that leads to true and lasting happiness is not natural or inborn. It is supernatural. It is a gift of God. Therefore, if we would “get wisdom,” we must pray.

4. The fourth biblical instruction for how to get wisdom is to think frequently of your death...or of the shortness of this life and the infinite length of the next.

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

~There is scarcely any thought that will purge our priorities of vain and worldly

perceptions like the thought of ETERNITY.

~How cleansing it is to ponder the kind of life we would like to look back on when we come to die.

~There is great wisdom in meditating often about how fleeting life is—and how important it is to live each moment in light of eternity.

5. Finally, there is one last, absolutely essential thing to do if you would “get wisdom”: you must come to Jesus.

~He said to the people of his day, **(Matt. 12:42)** “The queen of the south will arise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold something greater than Solomon is here.”

~What an understatement...He is one Greater than Solomon!

~Jesus is the wisdom of God **(1 Corinthians 1:24, 30)**.

~Others had spoken truth; He is the Truth.

~Others had pointed the way to life; He is the way and the life. **(John 14:6)**

~Others had given promises, but “all the promises of God find their yes in him.” **(2 Corinthians 1:20)**

~Others had offered God's forgiveness; Jesus bought it by his death.

~Therefore, in him are “hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” **(Colossians 2:3)**

~To know and love and follow this Jesus is to own the treasure of ultimate and eternal Joy and happiness...but we must COME TO HIM!

