

What Is Wisdom?

Scripture Reading: I Corinthians 2:1-16

Who wants to be thought of as dumb? No one, of course. We all want to be thought of as wise. We all want to be considered smart, wise, “street-wise.” We may not be a Harvard professor, but we all think we are wise in our own way. But what is the true source of wisdom? Of course every Christian could answer that it comes from God and the Bible. But the reason this issue is so important is I wonder if we really believe it? What standard of wisdom do we use in our day-to-day lives? What kind of wisdom do we spend most of our time pursuing—the world’s wisdom or God’s wisdom?

- I. What is our real basis of wisdom? On what basis do we consider ourselves to be wise?
We tend to compartmentalize “real life” and our religious life—as if they were separate. When we seek answers, where do we look? Think through some examples:
 - a. In our family? Christian bookstore shelves are full of “solutions” to our family problems. Do they offer wisdom? How do we find what is true (wise)?
 - b. In our job? The Bible is fine for church—and especially Sunday school where the right answer always is “God,” “Jesus,” or “the Bible.” But at work, no one there cares about the Bible. How does knowing that Jesus Christ died for my sins help when the boss is upset with me? A little Jeremiah doesn’t really cut it at the business meeting. What is my basis for wisdom at work?
 - c. Our entertainment? What do we consider worth entertaining ourselves with? Does the issue of wisdom apply to entertainment?
 - d. What do we fill our minds with? Those really are the things that are important to us—what we consider wisdom. Otherwise, we wouldn’t spend time with them. Who spends time purposely doing foolish things?

Important note: These things are not accusations. This message is not about exposing sin in your life. These are challenges to all of us—myself included—about how we think about being (and getting) wise.
- II. What does God say about wisdom?
 - a. Source of Wisdom? God is the source of ALL wisdom (Genesis 1:1, Colossians 1:16-17—He created all things and keeps everything together. Colossians 2:3, I Kings 4:29, Psalm 147:5, Proverbs 2:6-7—He is the source of all wisdom).
 - b. Wisdom without God? Can you have wisdom apart from God and His Word? (Proverbs 1:7, (same as: 9:10, Psalm 111:10, Job 28:28)). If we are going to have wisdom, we must start with God. The way we know about God is from the Bible (God=the Bible). Does that mean an atheist doesn’t know anything? No, to the extent that what they know fits with God’s

Word, they have (limited) wisdom—even though they may reject God himself. But God characterizes that kind of person as foolish; we certainly would not expect them to be a significant source of wisdom.

- III. What does God say is foolishness? (wisdom=truth)
- a. Not believing in God and His Word (Psalm 14:1).
 - b. Anything not based on God's Word (Colossians 2:8 and see also 2:3,4)
 - c. False teaching about God (not based on a right understanding of the Bible) (Galatians 3:1-3, Ephesians 4:13-15, I Timothy 6:3-5, II Timothy 2:15, 4:3-4)
 - d. Anything that does not honor God (Romans 1:21-23, Titus 3:3). There are many things in my life that have not honored God.
 - e. "Wisdom" of this world. This is really the same as (a) (I Corinthians 1:19-21, 3:19-20). Who is the god of this world? Satan. What is the issue between God and Satan?—Wisdom. What does God say about Satan's wisdom? (II Corinthians 11:3 "corrupted" wisdom. Compare to Ezekiel 28:17). Compare to I Corinthians 2:6-8. In other words, if it is not from God, it is from Satan.
- IV. How do we get wisdom? How do we get smart?
- a. We have already been given all wisdom (I Corinthians 2:16 (we have the mind of Christ), Colossians 2:10 (we are complete in Him; we don't need anything else). As unsaved, we were foolish. As saved, we have a new identity in Christ; that is, we have wisdom for God is the source of wisdom.
 - b. Knowing God's Word. To access this wisdom, we must know God's Word. (Psalm 119:97-104, Colossians 1:9, 3:16, Ephesians 5:17-18, II Timothy 2:15, 3:16).
 - c. Believing God's Word. I think this area is our biggest downfall. We do believe God's Word, but we don't quite believe that it applies in every aspect of our lives. God's Word is the answer to everything!
 - d. Acting on God's Word. This is really the difference between knowing it and believing it (Deuteronomy 4:5-6, Romans 16:19, Galatians 5:16 (flesh=foolishness; Spirit=wisdom)).
 - e. To clarify, am I saying we should not read any secular books, go to school or college, that we cannot accept anything a non-Christian tells us? No. But all these things must be interpreted and discerned by God's Word.
- V. A final thought: What do we fill our minds with? How do we entertain ourselves? (Ephesians 5:18-20, Philippians 4:8, Colossians 3:16). I am not talking about what kind of movies we should watch or what ratings are OK. But when I start looking at specifics, there are a whole lot of things in my life that don't comport with God's Word. That means they are foolishness.

VI. Conclusion

- a. God's Word is our sole basis for wisdom
- b. We need to know it, believe it, and act on it. It really does apply in every area of our lives.
- c. How can we say that we're people who know their stuff, have got it together, etc.?—because we know and believe God's Word.