

Week 3: Walking in Wisdom

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Living in the Last Days Life Group

Description: Jesus calls us to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. How do we walk in wisdom while we have one foot in the world as inhabitants and Jesus calls us to a much greater purpose and destiny than the world?

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Teaching (45 minutes)

Biblical Wisdom

When I say the word “wisdom,” What comes to your mind? Is it a person from the East in a meditative position mumbling paradoxical “nothing’s” to himself?

Matthew 10:16 ESV

“Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.

We need to be innocent in the ways of the world and sin. But there are times when we are among wolves and must be very wise. There are times we need to be peaceable and times we need to stand up for the truth and for Jesus. Wisdom is knowing when each situation merits each response from us.

Perhaps we could see it as not letting the world walk all over us just because we are called to be nice. We also represent God’s righteousness in the world and there are times we must be forward and just instead of loving and kind. Wisdom is knowing which one to exhibit in which situations.

“Paradoxical” and “nothings” are the furthest thing from biblical wisdom. It is always concern with the most practical way to make a decision, move forward on your decision, and experience godly success with what you do.

Words related to wisdom in the Bible are skill, understanding (gained by experience), instruction, knowledge, prudence.

We need to define biblical wisdom in greater ways as we look at the components of what makes biblical wisdom the most accessible and practical.

Practical – Biblical wisdom is not paradoxes. It gives you actionable understanding on how to move forward or make a decision. It gives you the kind of understanding that gives you clarity in these areas of your life. You can “hit the road” with biblical wisdom and trust it to bring the result that glorifies God and brings you godly success.

Godly success – Godly successes not worldly success. Biblical wisdom does not seek to put money in the bank or make you famous. It doesn’t always bring you favor with everyone you interact with. What it does is give you success with God. It gives you the righteous, or godly, approach to your problem with a solution that will make God happy with you.

Situational – Some wisdom literature is situational. You can read on proverb that says one thing and another proverb that seems to contradict it. These are situational proverbs. They apply to specific situations and you must have the discernment to know which applies best to your situation. You can ask God in prayer. You can gain that discernment through asking advisors and people who have godly wisdom.

- Example: [Proverbs 16:31](#)

Proverbs 16:31 *ESV*

Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life.

Eternal – Eternal wisdom are the Proverbs that are always true all the time. These Proverbs will be true no matter what situation you find yourself in.

- Example: [Proverbs 3:5-8](#)

Proverbs 3:5-8 *ESV*

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.

Wisdom and Folly (Heavenly and Earthly)

James talks about heavenly wisdom ([James 4:13-17](#)). This is where you see the contrast between heavenly and earthly wisdom most clearly.

The Bible presents two types of wisdom. The first is godly, or heavenly, wisdom. This is wisdom that comes from God and helps you to live a righteous, godly lifestyle. It helps you to realize and implement into your life the decisions and actions that please God.

All types of wisdom get you somewhere. The difference is that heavenly wisdom glorifies God. Earthly wisdom is just that, the wisdom you gain from being on the earth and interacting with people on the earth.

God's way of doing things is righteous, not a shortcut chaser, and makes the God who sees everything about and within you pleased with your decisions and actions. Pleasing God is the goal of heavenly, godly wisdom.

Righteousness is doing the right thing for every person involved.

In the book of Proverbs, godly wisdom is depicted as a woman sometimes named Lady Wisdom. In the same way, worldly wisdom is depicted as a woman named Lady Folly. She often tries to entice people to decide and act in worldly ways. Much of the Proverbs are written for a young son who must choose to seek out Lady Wisdom instead of Lady Folly.

The second type of wisdom in the Bible is folly, or earthly, wisdom. This is worldly wisdom. Well the wisdom teaches you the ways of the world that are contrary to godly wisdom. You may "get ahead" in the short run, but in the long run, it will not pay off.

Folly, worldly, and earthly wisdom present ways to cheat the system (at least in the short haul), a way to live that is selfish and does not care about God, and even the wisdom that says something like, "If nobody saw you do it, or if nobody confronts you about it, it's okay."

Worldly wisdom fulfills the desires we have in ways that don't please God and may hurt others. It does not care if other people are abused in the process.

Wisdom Literature – Where to Find Wisdom in the

Bible

Job – This is the oldest book in the Bible as far as the time it depicts. Most people believe Moses had access to the book of Job, but it was incorporated with the wisdom literature of Israel. Job deals with the age-old question of “How could a good God allow bad things to happen.” It opens with Job’s situation, a lengthy discussion between Job and his four “friends,” and God’s response at the end of the book with Job’s changed situation.

Proverbs – This is a group of many Proverbs, or sayings of the wise. Each proverb has (usually) two lines of text. The first line sets a precedent and the second line is either antithetical, synonymous, or parallel in another way. The vast majority of Proverbs were written by Solomon, but there are other Proverbs written by other kings and wise people.

Ecclesiastes – This book is proposed to have been written by Solomon, the wisest person in the Bible. He is not considered wise because he made all the right decisions in life. He is considered wise because he had access to wisdom from God and other sources. Ecclesiastes asks the question, “What is the meaning of life and what kind of life produces the most satisfactory results?”

Song of Solomon – Although I do not include this in my view of wisdom literature, it is technically categorized under wisdom literature. It is about the wisdom of love and the marital relationship. I would categorize it under the songs of the Bible and put it under the same heading as Psalms and Lamentations.

James – Found in the New Testament, it is the most “wisdom literature” oriented book there. James considers the trials of life and how we deal with them. Everything in the book is about some type of trial.

Other Places – You could say the whole Bible is wisdom literature. Every part of it is designed to make us more wise to the things of God. There are places in the New Testament, for example, where Jesus’s teachings should be considered wisdom. There is also wisdom in the epistles and other parts of the Old Testament.

Personal Views Versus the Weaker Brother

Paul presents a way of applying wisdom to our Christian relationships. Every Christian relationship you have, you are either:

- A mentor or more mature Christian to the other.
- A younger, or less mature Christian to the other.
- Roughly the same level of Christian maturity.

While it is not guaranteed that you will grow spiritually as you grow physically, mentally, emotionally, and relationally, there are things you can do to grow spiritually.

Wisdom in your Christian relationships begins with realizing the maturity level of the person you are interacting with. Paul talks about how to deal with the “weaker brother or sister.” This is the person who is not as spiritually mature as you ([Romans 14:1-8](#); [1 Corinthians 8-10](#)).

We must not presume that our actions and decisions do not go unnoticed by other Christians. Especially if you are mentoring another Christian, you must be careful about what you do.

It is better to see if something you do or think will bother the other Christian. For example, I do not drink alcohol whatsoever. But I do not look down on those Christians who do. I was at a restaurant with a couple from my church and the husband asked me if it would bother me if he had a beer. I thanked him and told him it would not bother me.

Checking to see if a person has a strong stance on something you may want to do should not be a problem. When you ask a person if something you are about to do is okay, and they say no, you should be able to not do it. If you cannot stop yourself from doing something you have asked your Christian friend about, it may be a better problem than you think for yourself.

We need to be wise in the way we deal with one another. The world is watching to see what unconditional love looks like. They are watching you and me to see if we will do what our faith dictates.

We need to be good, wise representatives for Christ whether we are among other Christians or unbelievers.

Seeking the Counsel of Others

One approach of wisdom is to read wisdom literature and seek God for understanding on how to live out the wisdom of the Bible.

Another approach to wisdom is to seek the counsel of more mature in Christ. Seeking a plurality of counsel can lead to greater understanding and avoid the pitfalls you would not see if you are on your own.

Other people can offer other perspectives we did not consider in our decision-making or actions. They can help us see blind spots in our that process, something we may have overlooked, or our behavior.

You must be responsible for the caliber of the people you choose to ask for their counsel on something. It is never better than God's or the Bible's counsel. You should always seek God's counsel first.

I prefer the word "counsel" as opposed to advice because you can get advice from anywhere. It takes seeking out a godly person to receive counsel that should be in line with God's Word. Always seek the counsel of a wiser, more mature Christian.

Applying Wisdom to Your Life

The best way to apply wisdom to your life is to read the wisdom literature of the Bible, and the Bible in general. We call the Bible God's Word because it is the word of God for us. It is what God says to us if He were standing beside us.

Pray for wisdom and ask God to give you wisdom for the decisions in your life and the actions you will take ([James 1:5-8](#)).

Wisdom applies directly to your decision-making process, your thinking, and your actions. You can make very wise decisions and do very wise things. At same time, you can make really foolish decisions or do foolish things. The difference is in consulting God, His Word, and more mature Christians than yourself.

Seek the counsel of wise Christians who have your best at heart. Seek those who love you in Christ and want to see you succeed the godly way.

Wisdom is gained through experience, but when you approach wisdom with the above steps, you can have wisdom beyond your years. Always seek wisdom because it is greater than riches. It is better than having a good reputation. It will give you all those things and more when you follow it.

It Won't Always Immediately Reward You

We must make one caveat about godly wisdom that you must keep in mind. Wisdom seeks to honor God and all we think, decide, and do. We also live in a wicked world with wicked people.

There will be times where you will do the godly thing and be very wise in God's eyes but not see an immediate return of goodness from the world.

Paul said "The foolishness of God is wiser than men" ([1 Corinthians 1:25](#)). Godly wisdom is not about getting ahead in the short run. It is about the long-term benefits of knowing the creator of the universe, the designer of life, and doing life His way.

You will not avoid persecution or the world seeing you as foolish. They will not understand many of the decisions and actions you make because they do not understand God's wisdom.

Do not let that deter you. It is better to be a friend of God and to live in such a way that pleases Him than it is to please people who may not make it to heaven to begin with.

Wisdom requires that we do not bow to the wisdom of the world. If someone tries to get you to do something sinful or unlawful, godly wisdom calls you to a much higher purpose. If you do what people want you to do, you will eventually be found out.

In the same way, when you choose to live above reproach and to please God above all else, He will lift you up and exalt you in front of them in His time and His ways. In the meantime, we must live with godly wisdom and be patient for the final verdict.

Applying Wisdom to Current Issues

Let's look at some current issues we will need to ask God for wisdom to navigate.

Here are some ground rules before we discuss these issues:

1. Treat one another with a kind and gentle heart. There are no enemies among us here. We can have a difference of opinion.
2. Allow others to speak on each issue and respond to questions. This is a discussion.
3. Discuss these issues with the goal of providing wise counsel and judgment on how we can approach these issues as Christians in an unbelieving world.
4. If this gets too heated or one of these categories takes too long, I will decide whether to continue, to end discussion, to move on to the next topic, or to stop discussion of the topics.

- **Politics and Being a Christian.** This is not about how we should vote or political debates. Christians live as the citizens of heaven ([Philippians 1:27](#); [3:20](#)) and citizens of a country on earth. How much should we be involved in the government and politics as Christians? We do not place our trust in the political system to change this world for the better. But as citizens, we have certain rights.
- **Economic Issues.** Anyone living on earth needs money to live. We need it to provide for our families. There's a line in Scripture between hoarding and being generous, and what we do with the money we are given. Jesus talks about money more than any other topic. How worried we get during economic downturns and excited we get when the money flows freely may be barometers of our spiritual condition.
- **Gender Issues and Alternate Lifestyles.** Gender issues have become bigger it seems than ever before. We're facing new questions about transgender and gender confusion. Only now has medical science caught up to the desire of some to change their physical sex to match their preferred gender. Children are being placed at risk along these lines as well. Alternate lifestyles have been "in the news" and culture for some time now. The Bible is very clear about where we should stand as Christians. But how do we address people

with the love of Jesus and truth at the same time? How do we have personal relationships and bring the light and love of Jesus?

- **Racial Issues.** It seems as time goes on in our country and around the world racism is running rampant. Sometimes we may be surprised to realize we may also be exposed to racism and perhaps might have racial issues of our own to work out. The Bible talks about the Church as a place without racial labels ([Galatians 3:27-29](#)). How do we bring racial unity in a world divided by racial lines?
- **Immigration Issues.** Our nation is in the throes of an immigration explosion. This crosses with political concerns, but it has become more about public health and safety. Should we welcome immigrants? Should we make a difference between statuses like illegal and legal? In what ways can Christians enter this issue and maintain the love of Christ for all people with the truth of laws?
- **Homelessness and Poverty.** Jesus told us we would always have the poor with us ([Matthew 26:11](#); [Mark 14:7](#); [John 12:8](#)). The individual Christian probably has a hard time giving to the poor generously. We all have a cap on the amount of money we have to work with. Our kind and caring hearts may not match our checkbook. Aside from that, we must also consider the Church's place in homeless and poverty issues. The government is also involved in helping the homeless and the poor. What can we do in these situations?
- **Education Issues.** Our education system especially in the inner cities has had many issues for a long time. It seems the children of our nation are not getting a good education. There are political possibilities for education, but sometimes those did not help when people are resistant to offering options. What can we do as Christians in this educational environment? Indoctrination is not a desirable option but that is happening in many educational settings. Don't just think elementary-high school. It's happening in our colleges as well. We're not talking about liberalism as much as the basic standard of education not being met.
- **Environmental Issues.** Some people go to the extreme of wanting to protect the earth at the cost of human lives. They think getting rid of humans will save the planet. At the same time, people on the other end of the spectrum

don't mind abusing the earth and its resources. Even Christians might say that since the earth will be made new in the end we don't have to worry about it. Scripture teaches us to be good stewards of what God has given us, including the earth. How do we do that well?

- **Technology and AI.** We have always had technology with us. Even the wheel was a piece of technology we still use today. Technology can make our lives easier and better. But it can also present concerns and issues we would have never foreseen. Now, with the rise of AI and some of the ethical issues, as well as spiritual ones, it raises, how do we treat technology as Christians? Can we use some technology for good? What safeguards can we put in place for unethical use and expansion of technology?

Discussion (30 minutes)

Application (10 minutes)