

The Wisdom of God

Read Proverbs 2:1-15; Colossians 2:1-5

There are five books of the Bible called “wisdom literature” – Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon. In one way or another, those books teach God’s people how to think and how to live. “Wisdom” has been defined as “choosing the best end and the best means for reaching that end.” (Herman Bavinck, *The Doctrine of God*) Wisdom is “applied knowledge” or “the art of proper living.” Obviously, then, the wise person will be a blessed person.

How then do we obtain this wisdom? Wisdom comes from God. He communicates it to us through general revelation (creation and conscience) and through special revelation (His Word and Spirit). The Scriptures teach us that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”; that is, if we would live wisely, we must know the Lord, from Whom all wisdom comes.

God displays His infinite, eternal, and unchangeable wisdom in three great works. First of all, in creation God displays His wisdom. The psalmist says, “O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.” (Psalm 104:24). Our creativity is a display of our wisdom – which, of course, comes from God. In Exodus 31, God gives craftsmen the knowledge and wisdom to create.

Secondly, God displays His wisdom in His providence. He wisely rules over all things to accomplish His gracious purposes. The prophet Isaiah reminds Israel of God’s all-wise providence in Isaiah 40:21-31. Israel is encouraged to trust the Sovereign Lord who wisely brings all of history to its grand conclusion.

Thirdly, and most gloriously of all, God displays His wisdom in the redemption of His people. In Christ “are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” (Colossians 2:3) What seemed foolish to both the Jews and Greeks, is in fact the wisdom of God and the power of God. (1 Corinthians 1:18-25) After Paul’s explanation of God’s plan of salvation in Romans 1-11, he concludes his presentation with a burst of praise to the wisdom of God:

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!
“For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?”
“Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?”
For from him and through him and to him are all things,
To him be glory forever. Amen.

What does this mean for us? In order to be wise people, we must seek the Lord. We must study His creation and study His Word. We must bow down in worship and humble our minds and wills before Him. We must seek the infilling of His wise Spirit. We must learn from wise people. And we must believe the glorious wise gospel of Jesus Christ.

Discussion Questions

- 1) What are 3 ways God displays His wisdom?
- 2) Look at James 3:13-18. What are the differences between earthly wisdom and heavenly wisdom? What are the motives behind each type of wisdom?
- 3) How do we plug into the wisdom of God?
- 4) Why does the world look at Christian wisdom as weak and foolish? (1 Cor. 1:18-31)

Related Reading

How to Read Proverbs
by Tremper Longman

The Wisdom of Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes
by Derek Kidner

Westminster Confession, Chapter V

Westminster Shorter Catechism, #8-11

Digging Deeper

What types of situations do you face in which you feel that you do not have sufficient wisdom to make decisions? How can you grow in your ability to make good decisions in these areas of your life?

Make a schedule to read through Proverbs (1 chapter per day completes the reading in one month) and note specific expressions of wise living as you read.