

35. Defining Wisdom and Wise Counsel (Proverbs 1–4, 15–16, 22, 31; Ecclesiastes 1–3, 11–12)

From the life of King Solomon, we learn that wisdom is a gift of God to those who desire it and petition for it. Like other virtues and divine attributes, however, there also exists its opposite—foolishness. Contrasting the two sets in relief the two ways humanity may choose in this world, one for good, the other for evil. In contrast to a worldly wise person who might be more attuned to the cunning of the devil, a person endowed with God’s wisdom can become a great benefit to his fellow human beings. Like Solomon, his ability to offer good counsel to all within his sphere of influence may lift the entire society around him spiritually and emotionally.

Wisdom

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Proverbs 1:7).

“When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee: To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things” (Proverbs 2:10–12).

“Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a Tree of Life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her” (Proverbs 3:13–18).

“The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just. Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly. The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools” (Proverbs 4:5–9).

“A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger. The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness” (Proverbs 15:1–2).

“He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding. The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility” (Proverbs 15:22–23).

“He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city” (Proverbs 16:31–32).

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6).

“Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life” (Proverbs 31:10–12).

“The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there anything whereof it may be said, See, this is new? It hath been already of old time, which was before us” (Ecclesiastes 1:9–1).

Wise Counsel

“My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck. My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not” (Proverbs 1:8–10).

“My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding” (Proverbs 2:1–2).

“That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous. For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it. But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it” (Proverbs 2:20–22).

“My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man” (Proverbs 3:1–4).

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones” (Proverbs 3:5–8).

“My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth” (Proverbs 3:11–12).

“Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh. For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken. Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it” (Proverbs 3:25–27).

“Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge. For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee; they shall withal be fitted in thy lips” (Proverbs 22:17–18).

“Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days. Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth” (Ecclesiastes 11:1–2).

“Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecclesiastes 12:13).