



Wisdom that Changes Lives

Who Is the Wisest Person You Know?

As I have mentioned before, we recently moved. The owner of the house we rented decided to sell it so we had to find a new place to live. We did not know where to go and none of the options seemed to be very good. We looked at homes nearly an hour drive away from the church and although we loved many of them, it seemed too far from the people of the church. What we needed was wisdom. These are the twilight years of our children living with us so it was important to be somewhere that would be best for them. Also we wanted to be in a neighborhood where we could make friends easily and build relationships so we could share the Gospel. Mary Jo and I prayed over and over for God to guide us to where He wanted us to live. We believe He did show us but it will take time, maybe our entire lives to discover the wisdom of where He led us. I am sure, that each of us would like to have wisdom, the sort that makes our lives better.

Solomon, the third king of Israel, was nearly universally acclaimed for his wisdom. **Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the men of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt.** (1 Kings 4: 30 NIV) Nobody can dispute the fact that Solomon wasn't extremely smart. He was an expert on everything from biology and botany to human psychology and architecture. He wrote hundreds of Proverbs that show the depth of his insight. But can someone who led his country away from God and into paganism, who married hundreds of wives just for the thrill of it, who was never really satisfied and let greed get the best of him, who could not make the right choice for the successor to his throne, be really seen as wise? James the brother of Jesus has an interesting take on wisdom, one you may not yet have considered.

Here is what he has to say. **But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.** (James 3: 17 NIV) The list of characteristics of how wisdom looks that comes from heaven is rather large. Notice that this is not something you can develop on your own. It is what comes directly from God. It is the working in your personality of Christ in you. This is not the development of your intellectual prowess because you don't have to be super smart to build your life the way James describes. You do need the working of God in you to make this possible. We cannot be reminded enough of Paul's statement of what it means to be Christian. **To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.** (Colossians 1:27 NIV) It is astounding the realization that Christ Himself lives in you when you are born again. And when you add to that the fact that you have the mind of Christ, there is no limit to the goodness that is possible when you walk with God. **"For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.** (1 Corinthians 2: 16 NIV) You have the capacity to think the thoughts of God as Christ opens his mind to yours. Supernatural wisdom is available. Pause and let that sink into you.

Let us consider just three of the characteristics of God's wisdom as it becomes tangible, observable. We mustn't see wisdom that comes from God as just thinking; it is living. It is being a certain way. When you possess God's wisdom you will be full of mercy. The story is told of a couple who let the husband's father live with them. The father was quite elderly and he had grown feeble. He could barely bring the spoon to his mouth; he could hardly see and was hard of hearing. The family being poor often had soup for supper but

when the man's father would try to sip it, he often spilled the broth on the tablecloth, or it would just dribble down out of his mouth. The man's son and his wife were pretty repulsed by this, so they made him sit in a corner behind the stove by himself. The old man would wipe the tears from his eyes as he looked longingly at the table where the rest of his family sat and ate. One time as his hands trembled while trying to pick up the bowl it slipped from his grip and crashed to the floor shattering into pieces. The young wife scolded her father-in-law but he just sighed and remained silent. She brought him an old wooden bowl to use instead. Later that day the couple's young son started gathering pieces of wood off the ground. "What are you doing?" asked the dad. "I am making a trough" the child replied, "for you to eat out of when I am big". The mom and dad looked at each other and started crying. They went and brought the elderly grandfather back to the table and even if he spilled quite a bit of his food, they never complained or even said a word from that point forward.

A second characteristic of God wisdom is good fruit. I am reminded of Dorcas, the great Christian woman described by the physician Luke in his book of the Bible Acts. Dorcas was known for how often she did kind deeds for the poor. **In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which, when translated, is Dorcas), who was always doing good and helping the poor.** (Acts 9: 36 NIV) When she died of an illness, friends of hers went to Peter the Apostle who was staying nearby and begged him to come to the house where Dorcas's body was resting. When Peter got there he was brought upstairs, and the deceased Dorcas was surrounded by widows who were weeping. They showed Peter all the beautiful clothing Dorcas had made for them. Peter, moved by the Lord and the great grief of these poor women who loved Dorcas prayed for her to come back to life and she miraculously did. I am not sure which is most spectacular; the miraculous raising of Dorcas from the dead or how beloved she was for the kindness she showed. The Bible tells us that the type of fruit we bear will last with us. It is stated over and over in various ways that God will reward us generously for the good fruit we bear, for our kindness and generosity. The older I get, the more cognizant I am of how crucial it is to live a life of good deeds and to do as much as possible that will please God and make those in our lives glad that we are there for them. The wisdom of God pushes you to never let a day go by that you don't do something to bless others.

The third characteristic of those who have God's wisdom we will consider today is sincerity. This is a translation of the Greek word "anupokritos" which means "unfeigned, real, sincere". I recently was at my son's baseball game and there were three little kids under the age of five playing in front of me in the stands. All three of them wrapped their fingers through the chain link fence that served as the backstop. In a flash, my dad instincts kicked in and I could picture a foul ball come screaming off the bat of a hitter, crushing the fingers of one of those children. I quickly reached over and pulled each of their hands off the backstop. I think they were shocked by what I did but I explained that I did not want them to get hurt by a baseball. I wasn't sure if I scared them because I was so big and old, but they just kept on playing. At the end of the game, the little three year old girl came up to me with her grandmother at her side. She tapped me on the leg, and I knelt down to hear what she had to say. Inside her little hand was a smooth, glassy rock and she handed it to me. I took it and looked at it and smiled and told her it was a beautiful stone. I started to hand it back to her, but she shook her head and made it clear she was giving me her precious treasure. Grandma beamed down at me with a great smile and together they walked away. This precious child didn't want anything from me. She wasn't pretending to be loving or generous. She just was and people like that, who are genuinely full of goodness and generosity are pleasing to God and crucial to making the world a better place to live.

I recently saw a video of a young woman who said she wasn't going to attend churches again because so many married men who go to church "hit on her". There are plenty of Christians who don't look much like what the Bible describes how those who truly follow Jesus will be. The world desperately needs Christians who walk with God and bring the power of the Holy Spirit with them. Just a few sold out, passionate about faith in Christ believers can change the world. Why not be that sort of Christian. Make it your mission to be one of the ones who God will eventually commend with the words, "Well done good and faithful servant." Why not join that group of believers?