

Wisdom

God's Word is called a lamp unto our feet in Psalms 119:105. It's for us to walk by first, and then by the grace of God, to communicate the things of God to others as we are moved by the Spirit. It's been observed that obtaining knowledge is our work; opening our hearts to understand, is the work of the Holy Spirit. I believe there is a little more to it than that. In James 1:6 we learn that if we "ask in faith nothing wavering," He will give it to us. Also there must be a "singlemindness" a singularly focused commitment, because anything less will not motivate the Spirit to hear us. I believe that this is simply another way of expressing our need for a full, uncompromised commitment to our Lord and Savior, because it is within Him that all treasures of wisdom and knowledge are found. Spiritual knowledge and wisdom don't come out of thin air, or from the world, or from the greatest philosophers, or from the most brilliant minds. God is the only source of true wisdom. He has given us the potential to receive the total of all the spiritual knowledge that we need to have, right in the Holy Bible. The power to extract it, and the wisdom to properly apply it, comes only through prayer, and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Since my first encounter with this message through James, every "knee prayer" I have ever uttered, and many more, have included a petition for wisdom and discernment as well as knowledge and understanding of His Word. To those who are His and are willing to petition for this blessing in accordance with the above criteria, will most assuredly be so blessed! However that wisdom does not pour into our minds and hearts by the bucket full, it comes slowly and exactly in proportion to what we, at any point in time, are able and willing to appreciate, assimilate, and properly use to His glory.

We must not give up when the lessons are long and difficult to understand. Scripture promises, "*Then we shall know, if we follow on to know the Lord.*" (Hosea 6:3). This compliments Psalms 111:10 which tells us that "*fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.*" That word "fear" is often an unfortunate translation of the word "yirah" which means fear in the sense of awe and reverence. Its meaning does not include such emotions as "fright, horror, dread, grievous fear, anxious quaking, etc" which are the meanings of over a dozen other Hebrew words that express fear. Surely reverence for,

and awe of God, and seeking to know Him through a close fellowship with Jesus, are essential if we are to fully appreciate Him as the source of wisdom. These, I believe are also the pre-requisites to His willingness to light the way to this wonderful blessing.

The mysteries of Christ and His Word are infinite, and very little if anything of the deeper mysteries can be learned from casual reading of His Word even by a redeemed soul. Only an intense “love affair” with the Book and its Author, and a daily commitment to dig deeply using the prayed for guidance of the Holy Spirit, can the most precious pearls of God’s wisdom be extracted. An old 17th century preacher named Nicolas Bernard is said to have “..compared the study of the Word, rather than a mere reading of it, to the difference between a very close friendship and a casual acquaintance.” He said that “if you want genuine knowledge, you have to do more than greet the Word politely on Sundays or nod reverently when you chance meet it on the street. You must walk with it and talk with it every day, inviting it into your private chamber and forgo other pleasures and worldly duties to spend time in its company. Simply reading it may yield a few drops of wisdom, but only through extensive meditation can much of it be extracted.”

How very true and what a nice way to express it! But again, that wisdom must be asked for by a single-minded dedicated soul and a committed heart. To me, another suitable analogy might be that every verse in Scripture is like a pearl-bearing oyster. However we often only see the opaque shell in our normal reading of a verse, and may not even know that there can be a pearl hidden there somewhere. The pearl can not be known to even exist much less extracted without the use of an appropriate tool. Here the Holy Spirit is the means of revealing and opening the shell. He is also the One who decides which, and how many shells to open, and when we may open them. Our part of the discovery process has to do with our faith, and our love of Him and His Word, as well as our commitment, single-mindedness and perseverance.

What is wisdom? Webster defines it as accumulated philosophic or scientific learning; knowledge; ability to discern inner qualities and relationships; insights; good sense; judgment; a wise attitude or course of action.

That is a good God-given working definition for the secular world to go by as long as it's limited to the more mundane of life's circumstances. It is when those who call themselves philosophers and wise men delve into higher levels of thought, and seek to express their wisdom in spiritual matters where dangerous misconceptions begin. In 1Corinthians 1:20, we read: *"Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? Yes, He has, for even in the seemingly greatness of their intelligence, their intellect and great utterances that the world fauns over, marvels at, and cherish as profound, are from God's perspective, nothing but foolishness.*

To compound the absurdity of man's wisdom, the text continues with God, through Paul, expressing what to natural man is the epitome of foolishness. *"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."* (1Corinthians 1:21) Then in verse 27 we read, *"but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty."* It is evident that God disdains human wisdom, because through that wisdom, no matter how great it may be in man's eyes, it is not a wisdom through which He can be known.

At the beginning of this commentary, it is noted that godly wisdom is received through the prayers of a single-minded soul sincerely seeking it. It grows from knowledge given by the Holy Spirit through which clear analysis and decision making can be applied to various problems. Wisdom implies the ability to defend what we understand. This comes from a knowledge that has the ability to grasp the full significance of the truth. It is what prepares the saved soul with what is needed to navigate safely through the dangerous waters of life, persevering in faith to the end. False teachers give only the appearance of such wisdom. Through their craftiness, they influence those not sufficiently prepared,

and cause them to drift onto the crushing rocks of legalism, rituals and other forms of apostasy. The existence of the Creator God is clearly evidenced all around us by the very existence of that creation. It takes an extremely so-called “challenged” mind not to see, or to refuse to see that evidence and the fact that it proves. However, understanding the plan of God, and the way to genuine salvation cannot be discerned through this evidence. Attempts by man to reconcile himself with his Creator God have gone on since Adam and Eve tried to cover themselves with fig leaves in an attempt to hide the loss of their cloaks of sinless purity. Throughout the millennia since then, man has fashioned innumerable means by which to affect some sort of reconciliation with God. We find this expressed in the various religions and cults that exist everywhere on earth. Because redemption is utterly impossible through man’s efforts, intellect or wisdom, God published His own Manual on how it could be achieved. But that Manual is of no value to the worldly mind. To those who recognize it for what it is, it is the key to Godly knowledge and wisdom, and thus to salvation.

As noted the world reveres the great philosophers. Yet their great “truths” are but foolishness in God’s eyes. However, there is one who had at least one thought that stands out in awesome contrast to all others in its closeness to Godly wisdom. It is in its understanding of a seemingly irreconcilable dilemma that only our God, the God whom he knew not, could and did solve. I’ve mentioned this before, but it warrants repeating here in the context of the subject. In a conversation with Plato, Socrates is recorded as having said “It may be that deity can forgive sin, but I do not see how.” In this conversation, Plato was yearning for a divine word that would come with authority and make everything plainly understood.

The divine “word” in the Greek was, Logos”, the very same Greek word that John used in John 1:1, when he described Jesus as the Word. By this one observation, Socrates had summarized the major essence of what our Holy Bible is all about. It was clear to him that if deity forgave sin, it would be compromising its own law against sin, and therefore it would be a faulty judge. Furthermore, as righteousness is one of the attributes of deity, it would have to compromise this as well. How unfortunate it was that the “logos” that

Plato sought, as well as the answer to Socrates questions was only about 750 miles away. Malachi had added the last ‘jot and tittle’ to the Old Testament in 441 BC when Socrates was only 27 years old. Since he lived to age 70, the answers to his questions had already been written down by our Creator even before Socrates had thought to ask them.

To be a born-again Christian and not seek with great vigor and tenacity all the Godly wisdom that the Holy Spirit is willing to provide, seems tragic. How can one born into God’s family not be eager to absorb all the knowledge and wisdom that the Father is so eager to dispense? Who, if they think about it, believe that they will be comfortable and not feel regretful and humiliated on that day when they come into His presence in heaven, ignorant and devoid of the fruits of this wonderful gift? Will their negligence and failure to avail themselves of what He so generously offered, and that could have been so greatly beneficial to their earthly, as well as their eternal service, be considered as a trivial matter? I think not! Time is short, and the spiritual rewards are there waiting for everyone if they will but seek them earnestly. Putting off until tomorrow the application of our good intentions, is extremely dangerous, because someday there will be no tomorrow, and not one of us knows when the last “someday” will have already past by.