

Human knowledge is expanding at a phenomenal rate.

Several years ago it was estimated that the world's body of information doubled every ten years, but that figure is probably no longer accurate; the computer - information age has accelerated man's ability to process & distribute information.

The accumulation of so much information has caused many to believe that 21st century man is the wisest creature to have ever lived.

This belief has fostered arrogance & pride among educators & the educated in the world; it has caused man to believe he no longer needs God.

Therefore, man serves the created world rather than the Creator, & thus man finds himself no better off – no wiser – no more important or advanced than the human race described in Scripture (**Rom 1:21-22**).

Knowledge is the accumulation of facts.

Wisdom is the ability to use those facts responsibly.

Today, our problem is that man's knowledge has surpassed his wisdom.

Our world needs the true wisdom that comes from God, & whoever wills may come to Him, through Jesus Christ, & freely receive Heavenly Divine Wisdom.

Not everyone has the opportunity to achieve great success in science, in education or in the professional world, **BUT** everyone can have the wisdom of God described by James.

Psalms 111:10 – The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
A good understanding have all those who do His commandments.
His praise endures forever.

1. Can you outline the book of Proverbs?

“Proverb” – *Much wisdom in a small space.*

“Wisdom” – *Moral insight & skill in handling the affairs of daily life.*

Hebrew: *a comparison*

Latin: “Pro” – *instead of*, “verba” - *words*

The Purpose of Wisdom (read **1:1-7**)

The Benefits of Wisdom (**2:1 – 3:24**; read **2:1-9**)

The Call & The Value of Wisdom (**8:1 – 9:6**; read **8:4-11**)

The Dangers of Rejecting Wisdom (**1:20-33**; **9:13-18**; read **1:24-33**)

Chapters 1-9 prepare us for the statements of wisdom & practical knowledge that follows in the Book.

a. What is the opposite of “wisdom” in the book of Proverbs?

“Foolishness” or **“Folly”** (read **26:3-12**; **9:7-9**; **12:15**; **17:10**)

2. From our text in James there are two types of wisdom, describe each.

a. “Wisdom...from above”

This type of wisdom emanates from the mind of God & man could have no understanding of it apart from Divine revelation (1 Cor 2:9-11).

Moral insight & skill in handling the affairs of daily life

Shown by a “good conduct” done in a spirit of “meekness”.

Verse 17 defines the general manner of one with this wisdom.

James 3:17 – BUT THE WISDOM THAT IS FROM ABOVE IS FIRST pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy & good fruits, without partiality & without hypocrisy.

b. “Wisdom...earthly, sensual, demonic”

This type of wisdom originates in the mind of man; it does not come from God but from human experience.

Man’s three spiritual foes feed on this type of wisdom:

- 1) **World**: “Earthly” – its origin is on the earth, therefore it is from a human source.
- 2) **Flesh**: “Sensual” – describes one who rejects the knowledge & understanding of spiritual matters & lives only to gratify his flesh (1 Cor 2:14).
- 3) **Devil**: “Demonic” – demon-like, shrewd & cunning like an evil spirit creating a spirit of envy & self-seeking, which results in confusion & every possible evil thought or action.

What can happen when a person’s earthly wisdom increases? **He** may begin to resent wisdom & authority in other sources than himself, having elevated himself in his own mind to the position of sole authority over his life (e.g. educated children over less educated parents; professional Christians over elders).

3. Discuss the meaning of the words & phrases describing Heavenly Wisdom in verses 17-18.

a. "Pure"

This characteristic of Heavenly Wisdom shows that it is not enough to give up a few vices & hold on to a few secret sins.

This wisdom does not seek its own advantage or have ulterior motives.

(1 Jn 3:3; Matt 5:8; Matt 23:25-26)

b. "Peaceable"

Heavenly Wisdom brings about a proper relationship with one's fellow human beings.

Worldly wisdom creates strife, but **Divine Wisdom** generates peace.

It is to have a disposition that contributes to harmonious relationships, not an attitude that starts arguments & engages in needless controversy.

c. "Gentle"

Heavenly Wisdom is forbearing, patient under provocation, respectful of the feeling of others, considerate, moderate – SWEET REASONABLENESS

It does not insist on its own rights, but it will listen to reason & leans toward forgiveness.

It seeks to avoid inflicting pain; it is fair & always mindful of others.

d. "Willing to yield"

This is a feature of Heavenly Wisdom makes the one who possesses it easily entreated, approachable, conciliatory & not stubborn or dogmatic; one who can be persuaded, not rigid, not beyond appeal, but able to listen.

e. "Full of mercy"

Heavenly Wisdom is compassionate to those who are in trouble

As Christ who turned an inner feeling of compassion into action, whether the one in trouble is suffering unjustly or from their own poor judgement.

f. "Full of good fruits"

Heavenly Wisdom leaves a trail of pleasant results behind as it applies itself to the affairs of life (Lk 10:37).

g. "Without partiality" or "Without variance"

Heavenly Wisdom is stable in nature, showing itself to be consistent in belief & action.

h. "Without hypocrisy"

Heavenly Wisdom is honest; it does not pretend; it does not put on disguises in order to conceal unworthy aims or motives.

i. "The fruit of righteousness"

Righteousness is the fruit borne by those who have Heavenly Wisdom

j. "Sown in peace"

Righteousness is like sowing a healthy seed.

Sowing the seed of righteousness IN PEACE will bear the fruit of righteousness & reap an eternal reward.

Pro 11:18 – The wicked man does deceptive work, but **he who sows righteousness will have a sure reward.**

Hos 10:12a – **Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy**

Gal 6:8 – For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but **he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.**

k. "Those who make peace"

Those who sow the healthy seed of righteousness IN PEACE are of the nature to bring about or make more peace (**Matt 5:9**).

Not only will one with Heavenly Wisdom work to make peace between himself & others, but also he will seek to help others make peace with God.

*The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life,
And he who wins souls is wise
(Prov 11:30)*