

LOOKING FOR WISDOM IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES?**By Robert J. Tamasy**

We are living in a time of virtually unlimited information. We can access it through TV, radio, social media, books, periodicals, and it is literally at our fingertips on the Internet. Because of all this information we can acquire great amounts of knowledge. However, masses of information and knowledge do not always translate into wisdom.

What is wisdom, anyway? One definition says it is, “the ability to make sound judgments and decisions based on deep understanding of situations and experiences, often involving knowledge, good judgment and the ability to discern what is right or true.” This sounds good, right? But how do we gain this ability?

A young businessman, aspiring to achieve significant corporate success, approached his mentor – a man he regarded as wise – and asked, “How do you acquire wisdom?” “Through experience,” the wise man replied. “Then how do you gain experience?” “Through making good decisions.” “Well, how do you learn to make good decisions?” The wise man quickly replied, “By making bad decisions.”

This is funny – and true. But is making mistakes the ideal way for gaining wisdom? One place where we can look for wisdom – which I believe to be the best place – is the Bible. In fact, several Old Testament books are called ‘books of wisdom,’ including Job, Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. The most quoted of all is Proverbs, which makes this declaration about wisdom: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, but fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Proverbs 1:7).

Even a casual glance at our world seems to confirm this. Politicians, business leaders, entertainers and other prominent people, operating without a biblical worldview, fit how the Old Testament describes the ancient Israelites: “Everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 17:6 and 21:25). This was not wisdom, it was foolishness. And it remains the same today as well.

Most of Proverbs is attributed to Israel’s King Solomon, who was termed the wisest man who ever lived. He explained the proverbs were “for attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight; for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, for doing what is right and just and fair” (Proverbs 1:2-3).

If this is true, do you think it might be a good idea to read Proverbs and discover what it teaches? Many people have resolved to read one chapter of Proverbs every day. This way, since the book contains 31 chapters, the entirety of Proverbs can be read in a single month; 12 times over the course of a year.

Proverbs offer wisdom on many topics, such as restraining anger; being an effective leader; accepting correction and discipline; receiving wise counsel and guidance; having discernment and exercising prudence; dealing with envy and jealousy; avoiding sexual temptation; cultivating

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generosity; working diligently; pitfalls of pride and benefits of humility; striving for integrity and honesty, and many others.

Ultimately, they all are anchored in “the fear of the Lord.” This does not mean approaching God with dread. It means recognizing His perfection, power, love, and goodness. Proverbs says fearing the Lord is wise, just as fear widely keeps a person from venturing too close to the edge of a high cliff. More than that, the fear of the Lord offers the assurance of experiencing a fulfilling, fruitful life:

“The fear of the Lord leads to life; then one rests content, untouched by trouble” (Proverbs 19:23).

“Humility and the fear of the Lord bring wealth and honor and life” (Proverbs 22:4).

© 2025. Robert J. Tamasy has written *Marketplace Ambassadors: CBMC's Continuing Legacy of Evangelism and Discipleship*; *Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today's Workplace*; *Pursuing Life With a Shepherd's Heart*, coauthored with Ken Johnson; and *The Heart of Mentoring*, coauthored with David A. Stoddard. Bob's biweekly blog is: www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. How would you differentiate information and knowledge, which we have in great abundance – perhaps more than ever in the history of humankind – with wisdom, which often seems lacking?
2. Who would you identify as a person who demonstrates great wisdom? Why do you consider that individual to be wise? In what ways have you seen him or her exhibit wisdom in how they work and live?
3. Early in the first chapter of Proverbs we read the statement, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” What do you think this means? Do you agree with it?
4. In what ways would you contrast worldly wisdom – which is presented to us every day through various sources – and biblical wisdom?

Challenge for This Week

If you were to decide today, ‘I want to start acquiring wisdom. I want to be wise in how I work and live,’ how would you go about doing that?

In your life to this point, what are some of the wisest things you have learned? Take time this week and discuss this important topic of wisdom with a close friend, mentor or small group of trusted advisors. What are some ways you need to have and learn how to exercise more wisdom? Who is someone you consider to be wise that might be helpful to you?

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages: Proverbs 2:6, 3:13-15, 10:14-15, 12:8, 14:6,8, 15:7,33, 16:16,21, 17:24, 19:8

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