

## Value Wisdom

### *A Present-Day Illustration*

**B**rayonna, how are you doing?"  
 Brayonna turned and saw an old acquaintance.  
 "I enjoyed your presentation," said Kanesha. "I'm surprised you're still at Longville University."

Brayonna was attending a national marketing conference. She had just been part of a panel discussion on how to incorporate diversity and inclusion in all aspects of marketing. Ten years ago, Brayonna had considered joining a discrimination lawsuit against Longville. Her working conditions were not favorable. She was overworked, overlooked, and underpaid.

Brayonna's efforts to find new employment had been fruitless. Her former coworker, a woman from India, experienced even worse treatment in their department. This woman had filed a discrimination lawsuit and asked Brayonna to join her.

Brayonna prayed, asking God for wisdom. Several people counseled her to join the lawsuit, including Kanesha.

Brayonna listened to God's Spirit, however, and did not join the lawsuit. She also began aligning herself with influential people within the university, as well as creating new opportunities for herself outside of her department, which included being a voice for others who felt disregarded.

Brayonna was promoted to a newly created position of staff ombudsman for the university and worked with the Diversity and Inclusion Office on various initiatives.

"How did you do it, girl?" asked Kanesha.

"God gave me grace to stay," said Brayonna, "and wisdom on how to proceed."

- 1.** *How do you conduct a diligent search for something?*
- 2.** *What is something you searched for diligently and finally found?*
- 3.** *Why should we seek God's wisdom in a similar way?*

<b>LESSON FOCUS:</b> God grants wisdom to those who earnestly seek it.
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## Wisdom's Requirements

*Proverbs 2:1-4, KJV*

1 My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;  
 2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;  
 3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;  
 4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;

*Proverbs 2:1-4, NIV*

<sup>1</sup> My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you,  
<sup>2</sup> turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding—  
<sup>3</sup> indeed, if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding,  
<sup>4</sup> and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure.

Wisdom is to be found in “words” (vs. 1) and “commands” (NIV), that is, the revelation of God’s truth. To find wisdom, one must treasure and explore God’s teachings. The requirements of wisdom are stated in three “ifs” (Prov. 2:1, 3, 4). Each one is spelled out in simple words of action. They came from a father’s heart for the welfare of his son. This is the central picture of God’s saving activity in the world. His mission is always to save His people from the foolishness that leads to destruction in this life and in the life to come.

To “accept my words” (vs. 1) means to believe they are valuable and trustworthy, a reliable standard for all personal conduct. This is an act of faith and an acknowledgment that God’s ways are best. To “store up my commands” means to learn them and memorize them so that they shape one’s conduct and moral standards. When decisions must be faced—such as wisdom versus folly—the learner will have a storehouse of God’s directives upon which to draw.

“Turning your ear to” (vs. 2) is a beautiful metaphor for obedience to God’s Word. People are constantly bombarded by appeals about what to believe and do (1:20-21). The godly person filters out the foolish appeals of sinners and unbelievers.

“Applying your heart to” (2:2) focuses on our desires and

ambitions. The wise person's primary aim in life is to acquire spiritual understanding. This goal results from the diligent study and prayerful, conscientious application of Scripture to daily life.

According to verse 3, we are to cry out for "insight" and shout loudly for "understanding" as if we were sinking in moral quicksand. Traps and enticements to sin are all around us. Our only hope of resistance is to turn to God for help.

The "silver" and "hidden treasure" mentioned in verse 4 speak of what society values most. Countless lives have been ruined by the search for this world's treasures, whatever they may be. The point here is that prudent, virtuous believers pursue the Creator's wisdom with even greater intensity. If the diligence and eagerness of spiritual pursuit is not there, we will not discern the Lord's way, but will be left to wander in spiritual confusion and indecision.

**4. What attitude should God's children have regarding wisdom's instruction?**

**5. What expectation did Solomon articulate regarding wisdom?**

## Wisdom's Promises

*Proverbs 2:5-8, KJV*

5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

6 For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.

8 He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.

*Proverbs 2:5-8, NIV*

<sup>5</sup> Then you will understand the fear of the LORD

and find the knowledge of God.

<sup>6</sup> For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

<sup>7</sup> He holds success in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless,

<sup>8</sup> for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones.

If divine wisdom is pursued as one would seek a “hidden treasure” (Prov. 2:4), the result would be understanding the “fear of the Lord” (vs. 5). As noted in last week’s lesson, this phrase refers to a wholesome respect for God’s character and might—not the normal human alarm of danger, but the reverence of spiritual awe.

The promise to God’s children is that their search for wisdom would be rewarded by the “knowledge” of Him. Verse 5 implies more than a mere head knowledge. The heart is also engaged, resulting in upright behavior. Believers both trust in the Lord and obey His will. They follow His moral code by responding ethically and spiritually to His commands, as recorded in Scripture.

Verse 6 explains that believers should do so because God continually speaks “from his mouth” wisdom that is true and beneficial. Whatever society has to offer pales in comparison.

In verse 1, it was the responsibility of believers to “store up” wisdom. Now, in verse 7, we find God storing up wisdom for those who seek knowledge and understanding from Him. In what way do prudent, discerning believers experience “success” (Prov. 2:7)? Some incorrectly think the main emphasis is on earthly prosperity. Yet, because the backdrop is God’s provision of sound “wisdom” (KJV), the focus more likely is on ethical success as a result of making competent decisions. The Lord is blessing the upright with a treasure trove of good sense.

These are individuals who please God by their upright conduct. Their lives are “blameless” (NIV) in the sense that they live with integrity. It should come as no surprise that the Lord is like a “shield” for them. It’s as if the wisdom He gives protects them from danger. The “faithful ones” show loyal love toward God and His people. All they do meets with His approval, and He watches over them as they live for Him.

**6.** *What outcome awaits those who value divine wisdom?*

**7.** *How does God respond to those who act with integrity?*

**8.** *What priorities were to characterize Solomon’s attentive learners?*

## Wisdom's Blessings

*Proverbs 2:9-11, KJV*

9 Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.

10 When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul;

11 Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee.

*Proverbs 2:9-11, NIV*

<sup>9</sup> Then you will understand what is right and just and fair—every good path.

<sup>10</sup> For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.

<sup>11</sup> Discretion will protect you, and understanding will guard you.

The Hebrew verb rendered “understand” (vs. 9) means “to perceive” or “to discern.” Those who fear the Lord will recognize and take the right course of action. They walk along the “good path” of “what is right and just and fair.” The image of a “path” is that of a cart cutting a deep trail in a much-traveled dirt road. Similarly, the righteous develop habits and routines that are characterized by integrity.

Some people delight in not following the “good path”; they enjoy doing wrong and embracing the schemes of the wicked (Prov. 2:14). In contrast, the upright embrace God’s priorities. Because they “understand” (2:9) about what is “right” and what is not, wisdom enters their “heart” (vs. 10). A wise person finds the knowledge he or she is receiving to be “pleasant,” that is, filled with joy.

“Discretion” (vs. 11) means to perceive the best course of action for arriving at a godly outcome. The mind, emotions, and will of the righteous are so attuned to the Lord that they make proper choices. It’s almost as if divine “wisdom” (vs. 10) stands as a sentinel to guard the upright and keep them safe.

**9.** *What is the basis for understanding what is right, just, and fair?*

**10.** *What is the best way for believers to experience God’s abiding presence?*

## A Tale of Two Brothers

Two brothers each inherited a company from their father. The night before they were to begin work, God appeared to them in a dream. He asked them, "What one thing do you desire from Me as you begin your responsibilities as CEO?"

The first brother asked God to give him \$20 million dollars so that he could purchase all the things needed to make his company successful. The second brother asked God to give him wisdom so that he could know how to manage the company.

The first brother received his request of \$20 million dollars and started purchasing specialized equipment and hiring more employees. Within six months, the company grew and started to produce a profit. He was proud of his accomplishments. However, one day, he heard two supervisors arguing over a new system. The brother tried to settle the argument, but to no avail. In another department, he discovered the majority of the workers idle. Later, the chief accountant admitted to investing a large percentage of the profit in a stock that fell. This brother became discouraged and fled to sinful comforts.

God granted the second brother wisdom. The second brother went each day to work, evaluated what was needed for production, and proceeded to see the company grow. When he needed to hire a specialist in a certain department, he sought insight from other workers, and the right person was chosen. Within six months, the company was steadily making progress and profit was coming. Soon, he was overwhelmed with his employees' commitment. Everyone felt they were a part of a family and worked hard for the company's betterment. The second brother rejoiced over the blessings God had given him because of his request for wisdom.

**11.** *What role does wisdom play in making daily decisions?*

**12.** *How can wisdom help you in relationships with others?*

**13.** *What kind of price tag should we put on godly wisdom?*

## The Seeker

Seeking wisdom requires earnest pursuit of God and His ways. It becomes clear as we wholeheartedly believe and do what He says in His Word. Certainly we need God's wisdom every day in this world.

► *This week, earnestly seek God's wisdom every day. Make a list here of the ways you will do that.*

### KEY VERSE

For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. —Proverbs 2:6, KJV

For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. —Proverbs 2:6, NIV

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

Week of June 15 through June 21

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross* devotionals on these passages.)

- Mon.** 1 Corinthians 1:18-25—Christ, the Wisdom of God.
- Tues.** Job 1:1-5—God Abundantly Rewards Job's Faithfulness.
- Wed.** Job 42:10-17—God Restores Job's Family and Wealth.
- Thurs.** Proverbs 8:1-7—Wisdom Calls the People to Respond.
- Fri.** Proverbs 8:22-31—Wisdom Present and Active During Creation.
- Sat.** Proverbs 8:32-36—Choose Wisdom and Live.
- Sun.** Proverbs 8:8-14, 17-21—Wisdom Affects All of Life.