

Practical Christian Living

Lesson 3: The Best Choice

Key Verse: *"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him."* James 1:5

Dear Friend,

If you could have any one of the following, which would you choose?

Friends	Wisdom	Riches	Power	Good looks
Knowledge	Happiness	Popularity	Security	Fame

The Bible tells about a young man who was actually given such a choice by God Himself. The young man's name was Solomon. He had just become king of Israel. One day God appeared to Solomon in a dream and said to him, *"Ask what I shall give you."*

Solomon could have asked for riches, or for power, or for pleasure, but he asked God to give him wisdom. Solomon said,

"I am but a little child: I do not know how to go out or come in...Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people..." (1 Kings 3:7, 9)

Solomon's choice of wisdom pleased God very much. God said that Solomon would be the wisest man who ever lived. God not only gave him wisdom, but He also gave him wealth, honor and power such as no other man ever had. We see from this what a high value God places on wisdom. The Bible says, *"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom."* Proverbs 4:7

What is Wisdom?

Wisdom is ***thinking right thoughts*** and ***making right choices***. Wisdom comes from seeing things as God sees them.

Seeing things as God sees them enables us to understand the root causes of our problems and to know what to do about them. It enables us to discover God's principles for a happy and successful life.

We must Think Correctly

If we are to see things as God sees them and make the right choices, then we must think correctly. The Bible says, *"As he thinks in his heart, so is he."* (Proverbs 23:7)

Wrong Thoughts ► Wrong Actions ► Wrong Feelings

Our thoughts are very important. What we think determines what we do and what we feel. If we accept wrong thoughts, it will result in wrong actions and wrong feelings.

When Satan came to deceive Adam and Eve, he began by telling Eve a lie. God had said that, if they ate of the tree of knowledge, they would surely die. But Satan said,

"You will not surely die: for God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:4-5

Eve accepted Satan's lie. She was deceived into thinking that by eating the forbidden fruit, they would be as gods. This wrong thought led to a wrong action—she took the fruit and ate it. This was an act of disobedience. Adam also disobeyed God. These wrong actions led to feelings of fear and shame. When God came down that evening to walk and talk with Adam and Eve, they were afraid and they tried to hide from God.

Where do Wrong Thoughts come from?

Wrong thoughts come from Satan and from his ungodly world system. The Bible tells us that Satan is the real ruler of this world system. He is called *"the god of this world."*

Satan's world-system is based on pride, lust, greed, and selfishness. The world-system is directly opposed to God and His wisdom. The Bible says, *"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." 1 John 2:16*

Don't accept "the Wisdom of the World"

Since we live in the world, we are constantly being exposed to the thoughts, ideas, opinions, and values of the world. These are wrong thoughts because they come from Satan's world-system.

Wrong Thoughts ► Wrong Actions ► Wrong Feelings = WISDOM OF THE WORLD

Accepting *"the wisdom of the world"* leads to wrong thoughts, wrong actions and wrong feelings.

FOR EXAMPLE:

The world says, *"Live for today. You only go through life once, so grab all the pleasure you can."*

God says that there is another life after this life—an eternal life. What we do in this life affects our eternal destiny.

The world says, *"If it feels good, do it."*

God says, *"If you live after the flesh, you will die."* (Romans 8:13)

The world says, *"Have a good time while you can. You can settle down later."*

God says, *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap."*

The **"wisdom of the world"** overlooks the fact that there is a terrible price to pay for sin, both in this life and in the life to come. We are accountable to God for what we do in this life. One day we must stand before God to be judged for what we did in this life. The Bible says, *"It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."* Hebrews 9:27

There is also the matter of "reaping" what we sow. The world says, "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." One thing wrong with this is that we don't usually die tomorrow. Instead, we live to reap the bitter fruits of our wrong actions. As an example of this, a 42-year-old woman lamented,

"When I was young, I fell into sins that have marred my life. My secret sins were committed in my teenage years. I have cried and cried in remorse...If only God would give me peace and take away the awful guilt out of my life."

God wants us to be Wise

God does not want His children to walk in darkness as do the people of this world. We are children of light and God tells us to "walk as children of light." The Bible says,

"See then that you walk circumspectly [carefully, wisely], not as fools, but as wise." Ephesians 5:15

WISDOM OF GOD = Right Thoughts ► Right Actions ► Right Feelings

Let us consider some things we can do to make us wise.

1 - Recognize God's presence

We dare not live our lives as though God did not exist. The Bible says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." (Proverbs 9:10)

What is "the fear of the Lord"? It is the continual awareness that we live in God's presence at all times. We remember who God is and we honor Him as God. We do not want to displease or grieve Him.

As you learn to live in the continual awareness of God's presence, you will be less and less concerned about what others may think of you or what they may say. And you will be more and more concerned to please the Lord. Paul said, "Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him." 2 Corinthians 5:9

2 - Look to God for wisdom

Our God is all-wise. All true wisdom comes from Him. God delights to give His wisdom to those who come to Him and ask for it. The Bible says, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him." James 1:5

One of our greatest dangers as Christians is to trust in our own wisdom instead of asking God for His wisdom. The Bible says,

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." Proverbs 3:5-6

3 - Renew your mind

We are constantly being exposed to the thoughts, ideas, and values of the world. Before we were saved, we accepted the ways of the world. Consequently, our minds were filled with many wrong thoughts and ideas.

How can we get rid of wrong thoughts and ideas? We get rid of them by renewing our mind. The Bible says, *"Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."* Romans 12:2

"Renewing" means to change something by cleaning it up and completely redoing it. God wants our minds to be renewed. Our minds are renewed as we replace wrong thoughts and ideas with God's truth. The Lord Jesus said,

"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32

When God's truth replaces the wrong ideas and wrong thoughts of the world, we will be transformed to be more like the Lord Jesus. This is the way to a happy and successful life.

4 - Make right choices

Being wise is not just knowing what God wants us to do. It is choosing it and doing it. There is great reward in choosing God's way. Jesus said, *If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them." John 13:17*

A young girl chose God's will and God's way in her life. To her friends it seemed as though Julijanna was missing out on so many of life's pleasures. But she had her reward. Later, a friend wrote about her,

"Julijanna did not follow the ways of sin in her youth. She chose to remain alone rather than to accompany the rest of us to the dances and parties where there was wickedness and immorality.

"Look at Julijanna. She has a wonderful life and a beautiful man who loves her deeply. She is happy down to her soul. Now Julijanna is eating the fruit of her obedient life."

(from "Of Whom the World Was Not Worthy" © Bethany Fellowship; used by permission)

A great man of God once said, *"A life of happiness depends on yielding your life to God to do His will in all things, at all times, because we have, once for all, settled that it is the best thing for us."*

Discovered Gem – Right (wise) thinking produces right actions; right actions produce right feelings.

Questions

1. What is wisdom?
2. Where does Wisdom comes from?
3. How do wrong thoughts lead to wrong actions which lead to wrong feelings.

4. Where do wrong thoughts come from?
5. Would you agree that it's good to be guided by our feelings? Why or why not?
6. Explain the idea of sowing and reaping.
7. What does it mean to fear the Lord?
8. How do we get rid of wrong thoughts and ideas?
9. Being wise means we must not only know what God wants us to do. What else is necessary?
10. What does accepting the wisdom of God leads to?