

"1 The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:  
2 For attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight;  
3 For acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair;  
4 For giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young—  
5 Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance—  
6 For understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise.  
7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline."  
(Proverbs 1:1-7, NIV (UK)).

"Ministry, the missing link"

All church leaders will know that it's a great struggle to run a church these days. It's not an easy thing to do. It's great when young people want to become missionaries or preachers, but they also need to be careful. To be a preacher is the greatest calling in this world, but if you're not called of God it can crush you.

I've been in the ministry and have seen many struggle. There's one daily struggle more than the others. We who have the responsibility of leadership, need to consider the way we live. We have to be humble before the Lord. And if possible we need some theological education.

But for many leaders in churches today the greatest needs are not these. It is wisdom. God has given us several books in the Bible about wisdom. So we can have a very moral man and very humble who still fails for he doesn't know what to do day by day.

When the Bible speaks about wisdom it's very specific. It means to be able to deal with life daily. It's a skill from God to deal with life. Many things we encounter day by day has no specific Bible verse for it. The Bible doesn't specify under all circumstances how to run the church. The Bible does cover some specific cases but not all.

So in these seven verses we have a description of what it means to be wise.

We know how Solomon received his wisdom from God. When God told him to ask what he desires he didn't ask for a beautiful palace, many horses etc. but for wisdom day by day. God granted Solomon that request as well as wealth and riches.

All the blessings of God come through a desire to be right with God and do the right thing.

You might also remember what happened after that dream, how he judged in wisdom between the two women quarrelling over a baby. He understood a mother's love for her child.

When we gain wisdom, we get an understanding of human nature, and what drives human nature.

In verse two we see the word *discipline*. It refers to thinking in an orderly manner. Life is orderly and rational. The trouble comes when we think in a disorderly manner.

In verse two we also see the word *insight*. It refers to the ability to understand what is not obvious. Through the Gospel we get the ability to understand people in a new way. We know that people do not always tell the truth or the whole truth. But the man or woman of wisdom has a sensitivity to see what is not obvious.

In verse three we see the word *prudent*. It means to be right and just and fair. So true Godly wisdom is always right, just and fair in all of its dealings.

In the next verse we see the word *prudence*, which is not the same as prudent. It means to be clever, shrewd, to be able to see the outcome of your actions.

Also in verse four there is the word *simple*. It does not mean to be mentally retarded. It means to be naïve, without experience. As a preacher and pastor of a church, you don't want your young people to get involved in the wrong things while they cannot distinguish between right and wrong.

In verse four we also see the word *discretion*. To make the right decisions. But you cannot teach anyone to make the right decisions if you don't make the right decisions.

We also see in verses 5 and 6 that there's always more to learn. Wisdom never thinks it knows it all. The fool thinks he knows all. But the man with truth says I need to know more truth.

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction." (Proverbs 1:7).

Why do we need wisdom today? What happened to the wisdom we had. This verse is the key verse in understanding the Book of Proverbs, because all the skill, discretion, wisdom etc. we need starts with the fear of the Lord.

Let's go back to the garden of Eden.

God created this wonderful universe and our beautiful planet with a beautiful garden, and he put Adam and Eve in that garden.

Not one morning did Adam wake up and say what am I doing here, what is the meaning of life, where did I come from, etc. He never wondered what to do each day. He knew that he was living under the King of the universe. The whole world made sense to him. When God gave him the task of running the garden and naming the animals he knew what to do. God created the whole universe in wisdom and placed that wisdom into Adam and Eve.

But when they sinned against God they forfeited everything.

They were sent from the garden. They lost their ability to make sense of the universe. Now we try to make sense of it with evolution. Now people wake up and ask what are we doing here, where do we come from and where are we going and what must we do? They are without wisdom.

But God didn't leave us in this condition. He revealed His new wisdom for us in the Lord Jesus Christ. He was crucified for our sin, bore our sins and died and was buried. He arose from the dead and ascended to heaven and sent His Holy Spirit to live in our hearts. He gives us a new nature, and connects us to God and God gives us back our wisdom which we lost.

When you are fallen from God there is no sin too great to commit, but when you're connected to God there's no sin too great to forgive. We need to fear the Lord.

Therefore when I do my work I do so as a representative of Almighty God because I fear Him. I will study His Word with awe and preach His Word faithfully. I will rebuke the wicked and help the weak and comfort the distressed. I will bring light to those who are confused and guard my own

heart, for I fear God. I will ask God to give me the gift of wisdom daily to do my ministry right.