Earthly Wisdom vs. Godly Wisdom

**Ecclesiastes 1:17** And I applied my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is but a striving after wind.

We all have a desire to be wise. We like to understand how things work, to be able to answer questions, to make decisions, and to share what we know. We seek and search out wisdom and knowledge of the things of this world, just as Solomon did. However, Solomon discovered that wisdom ‘under the sun’, apart from God, left him unfulfilled and discontented.

In 1 Kings 3, we learn that Solomon asked God for wisdom to rule His people. Instead of requesting material riches, comfort, or pleasure, Solomon desired to advance God’s kingdom through wise leadership. Because God was so pleased with Solomon’s request, He granted it and gave him much more. Solomon began his royal reign as the wisest man on Earth with great wealth and honor. At some point in his life, Solomon grew to love God’s blessings more than God Himself. His life began to revolve around his wealth, pleasure, and adoration. He elevated his earthly wisdom above godly wisdom. Solomon forgot that it is the wisdom of God that answers our every need and gives us true perspective on life’s deepest questions.

**James 3:17** But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

Earthly wisdom appeals to the senses and the emotions. In contrast, the wisdom that is from God reflects Him. While earthly wisdom says always follow your heart, godly wisdom tells us in Jeremiah 17:9 that the heart is deceitful above all things. While earthly wisdom says seeing is believing, godly wisdom tells us in John 20:29 that blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. While earthly wisdom says love your family and friends, godly wisdom tells us in Matthew 5:43-47 to also love your enemies and bless them. While earthly wisdom says there are many ways to God, godly wisdom tells us in Acts 4:12 there is only one way to God, Jesus Christ.

**James 1:5** If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

God desires to give His divine wisdom to His children. All other types of learning are valuable but limited unless built upon the knowledge of the Lord Himself. To gain God’s wisdom, we must pray for it, while studying and living out God’s Word. So many distractions in this world threaten to pull us away from God. We are constantly bombarded by viewpoints, images, and ideals that contradict those in the Bible. It is easy to find our hearts straying from God toward ideas and belief systems that sound impressive and appealing. Believers must remain diligent and steadfast in seeking God and keeping His wisdom forefront in our minds. We may have to stand against the wisdom of the world, the advice of our well-meaning family and friends, and battle our own self-seeking desires in order to be solely led by God.

God’s wisdom gives us focus and direction when we have to choose between what looks good, what feels good, and what is good.

Let’s talk: Does the wisdom that you share and live by reflect more of God or more of this world? In what areas of your life are you prone to wander and stray from God’s wisdom? How can we pray for you as you seek to apply God’s wisdom in your life?