Becoming a Woman of excellence

CHAPTER TEN

excellence

PROCLAIMED BY WISDOM

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

James 3:17 (KJV)

James gives us a beautiful description of wisdom in James 3:17. His definition could be a good summation of our study of excellence. Wisdom, as we will be studying, “depends on right conduct in obedience to the will of God rather than theoretical insight.” The word “wise” in Greek comes from sophos, which describes “one with moral insight and skill in the practical issues of life.” Larry Crabb defines wisdom as “belief that accepting God’s way, no matter how painful, leads ultimately to joy.” He defines foolishness as refusing to believe that “going our way, even though it genuinely relieves distress and feels good, leads ultimately to despair.” The dictionary tells us that wisdom is “the power of judging rightly and following the soundest course of action based on knowledge, experience, and understanding.” Certainly wisdom in our lives will be the proclamation of excellence.

Essentials of Wisdom

1. According to the following passages, what is the foundational requirement for acquiring wisdom?

   Proverbs 9:10
   Proverbs 15:33
   Job 28:28

   Fearing the Lord means having a deep reverence and respect for God and His Word, a respect and reverence that result in obedience.

   Bill Hammer

2. a. Who is wisdom? (Consult the following verses.)

   1 Corinthians 1:30
   Colossians 2:2-3

   b. What would be a necessary conclusion from these verses for our becoming wise?


   a. In the appropriate columns, note the various aspects of the wisdom of the world and the wisdom from above. (You might find it helpful to read several translations.)
b. How is wisdom to be shown in our lives (verse 13)?

Lord,
Open my ears!
So much of what I read in your Word speaks
Of the importance of hearing.
Wisdom demands it;
Righteousness requires it;
Understanding necessitates it.
I see so much of selective hearing.
Am I a selective listener?
Do I only hear what I want to?
Oh, Father!
You know I long to be
wise,
understanding,
discerning.
Teach me to hear from people,
experiences,
expressions,
tones from life . . .
With an openness of mind,
a totality of heart,
and an abandonment of my own preconceived ideas.
Help me to learn.
Teach me to open my ears and really hear.

*Carole Mayhall*
4. What can you do to begin to grow in wisdom?

Proverbs 2:1-10

Proverbs 3:5-6

Proverbs 13:20
Proverbs 22:17
Matthew 7:24-25

Colossians 3:16
James 1:5-6

With the goodness of God to desire our highest welfare, the wisdom of God to plan it, what do we lack? Surely we are the most favored of all creatures. A. W. Tozer

5. As you consider your answers to question 4, what are your strengths in acquiring wisdom?

Your weaknesses?

What can you do to improve your growth in wisdom?

Characteristics of Wisdom

6. James 3:13 states, “Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.” Use the following chart to help you understand how your behavior can reflect God’s wisdom. In the first column, briefly write out what the verse says. Then, summarize in the second column what the general principle is by stating in your own words what your need is in this area. Finally, fill in the third column with a possible application you might feel God wants you to take in order to grow in the kind of behavior that shows wisdom and understanding.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse(s)</th>
<th>Behavioral Characteristics</th>
<th>My Need</th>
<th>Possible Application</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proverbs 29:11</td>
<td>Keeps himself under control</td>
<td>Not to let my emotions control my behavior</td>
<td>Ask God to help me respond in a godly way to pressure, without emotional outbursts</td>
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<td>Psalm 90:12</td>
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<td>- Memorize Proverbs 29:11</td>
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<td>Ephesians 5:15-17</td>
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<td>Proverbs 12:18</td>
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<td>10:31</td>
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<td>Proverbs 11:30</td>
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**AUTHOR’S REFLECTION** - In Proverbs 2 we are told that if we seek and search for wisdom then we will discover the knowledge of God, for the Lord gives wisdom to the upright. Seeking, searching, and asking for wisdom are keys to our becoming wise. Oswald Chambers observes, “We will never receive if we ask with an end in view; if we ask, not out of our poverty but out of our lust.” Our desire to be wise must spring from a heart whose sole purpose is to know our awesome God and to please Him, not self. For I believe that as we truly seek this wisdom from above, then all the characteristics of wisdom will begin to be manifested in our lives. The emphasis must be on our diligent search, our commitment to all that wisdom is, and our realization that growing in wisdom is a lifelong process.

To break with all worldly customs; to live utterly separate from the spirit of the world, so that we shall not say, “What is the harm of this and that?” but simply shall have lost all relish for what is not of the Father; to live as those who truly lay all on the altar – time, strength, possessions, literally everything we are and have; to live, not nominally but truly, in unity; this will cost us something. Are we ready for what it will cost?  *Amy Carmichael*
When looking back on the lives of men and women of God the tendency is to say -
What wonderfully astute wisdom they had! How perfectly they understood all God
wanted! The astute mind behind is the Mind of God, not human wisdom at all. We
give credit to human wisdom when we should give credit to the Divine guidance of
God through childlike people who were foolish enough to trust God’s wisdom and
the supernatural equipment of God.
Oswald Chambers

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE MEMORY: James 3:17