

Christian Perspectives: Seeking Wisdom

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Do you consider yourself a smart person? Maybe your answer is yes because you might have a university degree, or went to college.

I Googled the average IQ for Canadians: It is somewhere between 85 to a 100. Really smart people (only 2% of people) have an IQ of a 135 or more. Truly genius individuals, think Einstein, have an IQ that is as high as 150 or more.

While we can think of several 'smart' people in our lives how many of us know 'wise' people?

The Merriam-Webster dictionary describes wise as: deep understanding, keen discernment, and a capacity for sound judgment. Obviously being wise is something different than being intellectually gifted. (Smart)

In 2nd Chronicles chapter one, we meet Salomon. He has just become king of all of Israel after his father David passed away. Salomon had been handpicked by David as his successor. As such, he would have been well educated, perhaps private tutors: the best and brightest scholars in the kingdom. Salomon was smart enough to realize that a good education and training was not enough for the task at hand.

God appeared to him and asked him to ask for anything he wanted: fabulous riches, a long and happy life, anything.

Salomon chose wisdom, wisdom to be a wise ruler, to better serve his God and lead his people. Because Salomon made a wise (smart) choice, God also gave him all the other things that many people desire: riches, a long and prosperous life without stress, prestige and fame.

God was pleased by Salomon's request for wisdom. We would do well to also ask for wisdom (rather than all the other 'worldly' things) to please God. Salomon wrote the book of Proverbs in the bible a collection of wise words that can help us make wise decisions in our lives. Here are 5 important topics on where and how to be wise:

- Be wise with words

Proverbs 12:18 reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

You all heard the saying: 'sticks and stones may break my bones but words can never hurt us.' That is a great big fat lie! Words can and do hurt us. I am sure that all of us here can remember a time were unkind, harsh words have hurt us deeply. Your words carry power: power to encourage, uplift or to bless. Or they carry the power to tear down, destroy and curse. Allow the love of Jesus to shape the words that you speak so that other will be blessed by what you say.

- Make wise choices in relationships:

Proverbs 17:17 A friend is always loyal, a brother (or sister) is born to help in time of need

God created us to be in community, we were not created to be alone. Getting along with other people is often difficult and challenging. There are many relationships that are unhealthy, reflecting our own brokenness. God treats us with kindness, love, forgiveness, patience, mercy and grace. We should treat everyone just like the way God treats us.

- Make wise choices about integrity

Proverbs 10:9 The man (or woman) of integrity walks securely, but (s)he who walks crooked paths will be found out.

Integrity is a fancy word that means honesty and truthful. Many of us have masks: Some pretend to like you and are pleasant and kind to your face. But behind your back they are unkind and say nasty things. To live a life of integrity means being reliable and making the choice to do what is right all the time. (Even when no one's looking)

- Making wise choices about work

Proverbs 31:17 She sets about her work vigorously, her arms strong for the task.

Right at the start, when God created the world, he gave mankind a task, a job to do. Then God declared it was all good. Work was not added later as a punishment. Too often laziness and greed are some of the main reasons we fail at work or do not enjoy our jobs. Doing our task to the best of our abilities and giving it our best effort brings together work and worship once again.

- Making wise choices about money

Proverbs 3:9a Honor the Lord with your wealth.

Handling money wisely is incredibly important. It starts by understanding that we are stewards or caretakers, not owners of the stuff that God allows us to have. Happiness or contentment simply is not found in how much money you have or how much stuff you have accumulated. True contentment comes from having a real living relationship with God and our aim in life should be to gain wisdom in order to serve God better.

Salomon also wrote in Proverbs 9 verse 10: 'Fear of the LORD is the foundation of wisdom. Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment' (NLT) This is good advice from the smartest and wisest person who ever lived. Not feeling very smart? Ask for wisdom and insight. God will be pleased by your request.