



WHAT IS WISDOM?

This year we are going to center our study on the key word of the book of Proverbs—“wisdom.” Your years in middle school are a very important time in your life. No longer are you a child, but neither are you an adult. You are entering a time of life when you must learn what it means to be a mature, responsible young man or woman. You will have many important choices to make, and your parents will have to trust that you can make wise choices as you journey through the next few years. In some situations, learning to be wise will mean the difference between success and failure. Learn to be wise, and you will have success.

According to Proverbs 3:13-15, what four things cannot compare to the value or importance of wisdom?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Many people would value these things above anything else. But why is wisdom more valuable than any of these things?

WHAT WISDOM IS NOT

God’s Word is very specific about what wisdom is and what it is not. In the next few lessons we will study exactly what wisdom *is*. But first, let’s make sure we understand what it is *not*.

According to 1 Corinthians 2:4-8, there are two types of wisdom. What are the two types?

1. _____

2. _____

How is the wisdom that comes from God described in these verses?

Read Proverbs 21:30. Explain in your own words exactly where wisdom *is* found and where it is *not* found.

MAN'S WAYS VS. THE WAYS OF GOD

Anything that denies or belittles God is not wisdom. Without God, there can be no true wisdom. What does Isaiah 55:8 teach us about God's thoughts and actions?

Therefore, atheism or godlessness in any form is not wisdom. One system of thought that teaches ideas opposed to God in today's society is humanism. Humanists say:

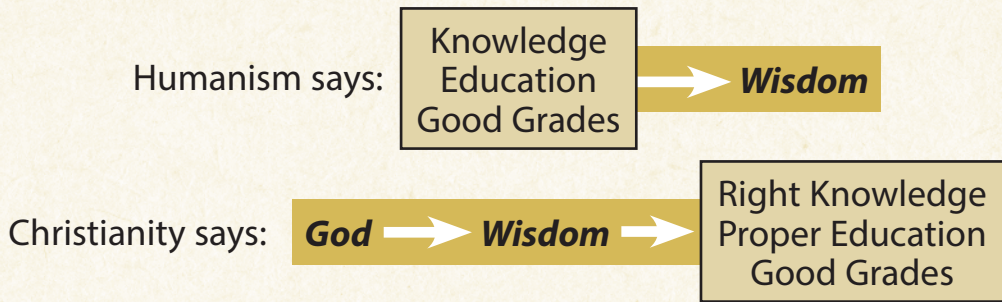
God is not the center of all things. In fact, there is no God, and there is no Creator. Instead, the world came into existence by itself. There is no God to tell us right from wrong. Man is the center of all things and in control of everything that happens. "Right" is anything that pleases man and adds to his pleasure. "Wrong" is anything that man dislikes. It is good and right for us to "do our own thing" or whatever will bring us pleasure and contentment.

Humanists say that *education* is the source of wisdom. Many people in the world have learned much of the knowledge of the world, but that does not mean they are wise.

Humanists say that good grades are the measure of wisdom. However, you may be the most intelligent person in your school and make all the honor rolls, but this does not necessarily mean that you are wise.

Make sure you understand the difference. Education and good grades do not make us wise. God alone makes us wise. A truly wise person will study hard and get the best grades possible because a wise person knows that God has given us the opportunity to understand the world He has created.

Knowledge is the accumulation of facts and ideas. Wisdom is knowing how to apply facts and ideas so that important choices can be made rightly.



Read 1 Corinthians 1:19-21 and 3:19-20 and answer the following questions.

- What will God destroy? (1:19)

- What is the world unable to use in order to know God? (1:21)

- What did it please God to use in saving those who believe? (1:21)

- What is the world's wisdom in God's sight? (3:19)

- In God's sight, what are the thoughts of those who are "wise" in the worldly sense? (3:20)

THE FUTURE OF ALL HUMANISTIC THOUGHT

Go back to God's wisdom book, Proverbs, and see what God promises will happen to all those who do not listen to Him and follow Him. Read Proverbs 1:20-33 and describe what will happen to those who reject God and His wisdom.

WISDOM IS A PERSON

Read Proverbs 8:22-31. Compare what is said there with what is said in the New Testament in John 1:1-3, 10-12.

- Both passages are describing Whom?

- Read Colossians 2:3. According to this verse, what is in Christ?

The Christ of Creation is the very wisdom and knowledge of God. If you know Jesus, you know God. And if you know and fear the Lord God, you will have wisdom.

HOW WISDOM ACTS

We now understand that true wisdom comes only from God and only through knowing His Son, Jesus Christ. What then does wisdom have to do with salvation?

When we know Jesus Christ, we have the capability to act wisely. He can instruct us in wisdom and enable us to be wise. If you are trusting and obeying Christ as the Savior and Lord of your life, then He will change you to help you be more and more like Him (including in His wisdom) in all aspects of life! As we continue through our study of Proverbs this year, we will learn how wisdom applies to every aspect of our lives. Match the following verses to see just a few of the ways that having wisdom will affect your life:

	1. Wisdom prepares for the future.	A. Prov. 22:3
	2. Wisdom seeks salvation from hell.	B. Prov. 11:30
	3. Wisdom is obedient.	C. James 3:17
	4. Wisdom wins souls.	D. Prov. 30:24-26
	5. Wisdom plans for the future.	E. Prov. 28:7
	6. Wisdom fears the Lord.	F. Prov. 15:33
	7. Wisdom is peaceable.	G. Prov. 15:24

HOW THE UNWISE ACT

Using the seven examples above that show how wisdom acts, describe how the *unwise* act. In your explanation, do not just write the exact opposite of what the verse says. Use different wording to explain your ideas. For example, for the first one, do not simply say that the unwise do not prepare for the future. Instead, you might say that the unwise are concerned only about what is happening right now. The unwise...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

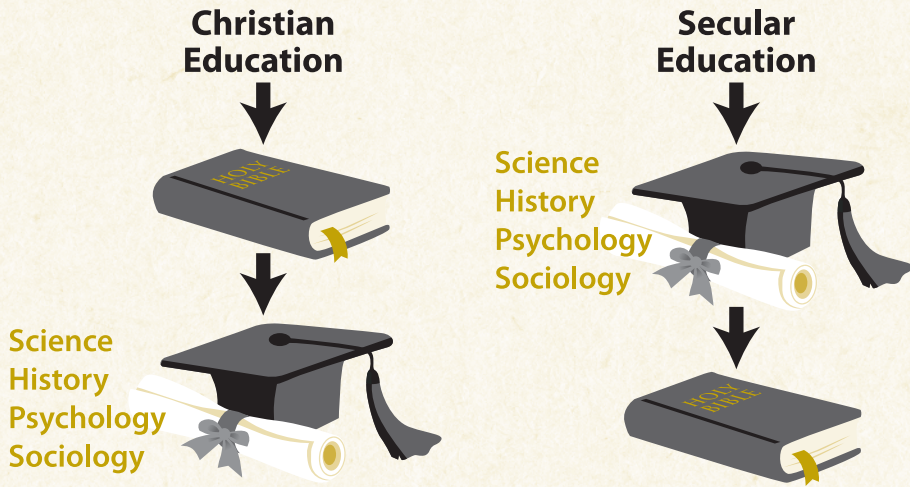
This year, as we study how wisdom works in our lives, we will be studying about our homes, our relationships with others, how we make decisions, what the future will be like, and many, many other ideas. To begin, look at the lists under “How Wisdom Acts” and “How the Unwise Act” and think through how wise you are in these seven areas. List

each idea in one of the boxes below. For example, take item #1. Do you prepare well for the future? If so, write this statement in the first row under the first column: "I prepare for the future." If this is not true of you, write this statement in the first row under the second column: "I am concerned only about now." From this, you will begin to see those areas in which you need to grow in wisdom, and you will be able to plan how to respond wisely in particular situations.

	Wise	Unwise
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		

TEACHER'S LESSON

Humanism is man's attempt to _____
independently of _____.





WISDOM AND FOOLISHNESS

Proverbs contains many comparisons between a wise man and a fool. Being a wise person often has nothing to do with age. Usually an older person does have knowledge and wisdom because of all the experiences of life. One basic reason we need to listen to older people is that they have already dealt with many of the same problems we are facing. But just because a person is old does not mean that he or she is truly wise because true wisdom comes only from God. Sometimes older people still act very foolishly, while young people have great wisdom because they know and follow God.

WISE AND FOOLISH REACTIONS

Read the following verses in Proverbs, and record how a wise man and a fool react to the following types of situations. Be ready to use your notes to discuss each section.

1. Reaction to Rebuke, Reproof, or Correction	
Wise Man's Reaction	Fool's Reaction
(9:8) _____ _____	(9:8) _____ _____
(15:31) _____ _____	(13:1) _____ _____
(17:10) _____ _____	(15:12) _____ _____
	(17:10) _____ _____

2. Reaction to Rules, Regulations, and Authority

Wise Man's Reaction	Fool's Reaction
(10:8) _____ _____	(10:8) _____ _____
	(10:23) _____ _____
	(17:11) _____ _____

3. Reaction to Advice, Instruction, Teaching, and Preaching

Wise Man's Reaction	Fool's Reaction
(12:1) _____ _____	(1:7) _____ _____
(12:15) _____ _____	(1:22) _____ _____
(15:14) _____ _____	(12:15) _____ _____
(18:15) _____ _____	(15:5) _____ _____
	(17:16) _____ _____
	(23:9) _____ _____

4. Reaction to Arguing, Fighting, and Disagreements

Wise Man's Reaction	Fool's Reaction
(11:12) _____ _____	(18:6) _____ _____
	(29:11) _____ _____

5. Reaction to Sin and Wrongdoing	
Wise Man's Reaction	Fool's Reaction
(14:16) _____ _____	(14:9) _____ _____
(22:3) _____ _____	(14:16) _____ _____

THE KEY TO WISDOM AND MATURITY

As you have seen from the last exercise, the major concern of the Scriptures is not whether people are rich or poor, athletic or musical, smart or slow to learn, well dressed or poorly dressed, outgoing or shy or friendly or lonely. In fact, foolish people judge others by some of these external standards, but maturity teaches us to view others as God views them. God judges us by whether we are wise or foolish. A fool rejects the one true God and does not recognize that the world was created and is held together by Him. A fool does not consider Who it is that provides everything we have. He does not even recognize Who gives him life. He is indeed a fool.

Read Psalm 14:1-3 and explain in your own words how King David described the fool.

According to Proverbs 15:33, what keeps a person from being a fool?

When the Bible talks about fearing the Lord (as in Prov. 15:33), it does not mean being afraid of God in the way that we fear danger or pain. In this verse and many others, fear means to have a deep respect for God and to give Him great honor. Compare the above verses and explain what you think really is the key to growing up into maturity.

MORE ABOUT THE FOOL AND THE WISE MAN

Each of the following areas are very important aspects of our lives. Look up each verse in Proverbs and think about what the Bible says about the fool. Then, in your own words, write the *opposite* attitude or action that a *wise* person would have or show. If there are words in the verses that you do not understand, use a dictionary to look them up.

1. Attitudes	
12:15	
14:3	

2. Home Life	
10:1	
15:5	
15:20	

3. What We Say	
15:2	
15:7	
29:11	

4. Attitude Toward Sin	
13:19	
14:9	
14:16	

5. Getting Angry	
10:19	
12:16	
14:17	

6. Setting Goals and Completing Tasks	
10:14	
15:14	
21:20	

Look over the verses in Proverbs that we have studied in this lesson. List some of the characteristics (both of the foolish man and the wise man) that you see existing in your life right now. A wise person evaluates himself and knows himself. As you evaluate yourself, God can help you weed out those foolish reactions and strengthen the areas in which you are showing wisdom in your life.

Foolish Characteristics in My Life

Wise Characteristics in My Life

TEACHER'S LESSON

Definition of a Proverb

A short _____ expressing in a _____ a
_____ truth

The Main Purposes for Studying Proverbs:

- To know _____
- To know the Word _____
- To know _____
- To learn how to _____ God's wisdom
- To give _____ to life

How to Understand Proverbs:

- Recognize you have a _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



THE EXAMPLE OF WISE MEN

We are going to spend most of this lesson seeing how two men pursued God's wisdom. God had greatly blessed both of these men, King Solomon and Daniel. They both became famous and were able to influence the lives of many people with whom they came in contact. Not only were they wise, but they also enjoyed fame, fortune, and great success during their lifetimes. Look carefully at how and why God blessed them and think about how you could glorify God if He would bless you with wisdom and help you make right choices throughout your life.

KING SOLOMON

One great reason to study the life of Solomon is that he is the primary author of our main “textbook” for this class this year—the book of Proverbs. God can use the life of this great king to teach us the difference between the wisdom of God and the perceived wisdom of the world.

King Solomon was the son of the great King David. He was fortunate to have had a father like David who loved the Lord God all the days of his life. David taught Solomon the value of trusting in God and having the wisdom of God above all else. If you read Solomon's story, you will see once again the value of having the fear of God as your first priority. Our “priorities” are what we value as important in our lives. Read part of the story of Solomon (1 Kings 3:3-15), and answer each question below:

What did Solomon learn from his father? (vss. 3 and 6)

How did Solomon view himself? (vss. 7 and 8)

For what did Solomon ask? (vs. 9)

For what did Solomon *not* ask? (vs. 11)

List what God gave Solomon (in the order of their priorities). (vss. 12 and 13)

What did God require of Solomon? (vs. 14)

What reward did He promise him? (vs. 14)

Solomon was the king of Israel. He was rich and famous, and—humanly speaking—he had no need of anyone or anything. Yet Solomon saw the need to seek God and the wisdom of God first. What conclusion can you reach about priorities for your own life? Make a list of things that are important to you. You might include friends, school, music, sports, family, church, or anything else that is important to you.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Of the things you have listed, which three do you think ought to have the highest priority in your life?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

DANIEL

During the reign of Jehoiakim, Daniel and three of his companions were taken captive to Babylon. Their superiors recognized them to be excellent young men. Because of their special qualifications, they were selected to be trained for the king's service.

Daniel 1:4 explains specifically what the Babylonians saw in Daniel and his friends that impressed them. List these things below:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

All of these are qualities that people might admire in you, also. Good looks and a noble heritage are nice to have, but notice the emphasis on the wisdom of these young men and on their aptitude to learn and to teach.

Daniel and his friends got their wisdom from God! Their wise responses helped them through three conflicts with the Babylonians.

Read Daniel 1:8-16. What was the first conflict?

How did the wisdom of God help Daniel resolve the conflict?

Read Daniel 2 to find out about the conflict between pagan magic and the wisdom of God. What was the conflict?

How did the wisdom of God help Daniel resolve the conflict?

Read Daniel 3 to find out about the conflict between heathen idolatry and loyalty to the true God. What was the conflict?

How did the wisdom of God help Daniel's friends resolve the conflict?

You will learn that you will have conflicts of many kinds in your life. Friends will try to tempt you to do wrong. Situations will arise in which you will have to make important decisions for yourself. As in Daniel's situation, your parents may not be able to help you make a decision. You will be responsible to make wise choices on your own.

Share a situation in which you had a conflict to resolve. What was the conflict?

How did the wisdom of God relate to the situation?

What choice did you make in the situation? Was it a wise choice?

BLESSINGS FOR APPLYING THE WISDOM OF GOD

God blesses our lives in many different ways as we trust in His wisdom—just as Solomon and Daniel received great blessings. Read the verses from Proverbs listed on the next page and write out each blessing God promises for using the wisdom that comes from Him.

After seeing some of the rewards and results of true wisdom, it is obvious why God says that those who reject Him are truly foolish.

- 1:33 _____

- 3:2 _____

- 3:13 _____

- 3:17 _____

- 3:24 _____

- 4:12 _____

- 4:22 _____

- 8:35 _____

- 24:5 _____

- 24:14 _____

TEACHER'S LESSON

Proverbs 30:24-28

