

How do I grow in wisdom?

INTRO: James says a fool looks at the Word and leaves unchanged. We've all done it. How do we stop doing it? How do we do it less?

PROVERBS 2

*[1] My son, if you receive my words
and treasure up my commandments with you,
[2] making your ear attentive to wisdom
and inclining your heart to understanding;
[3] yes, if you call out for insight
and raise your voice for understanding,
[4] if you seek it like silver
and search for it as for hidden treasures,
[5] then you will understand the fear of the LORD
and find the knowledge of God.*

- This paragraph contains a series of “IF” statements and ends with “THEN”
 - V5 is a significant THEN statement b/c Steve explained “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, but fools despise knowledge” (Proverbs 1:7)
 - So if we want to grow in the knowledge of God, if we want to not be a fool, if we want to have a fear of the Lord, what do we do?
- IF you receive my words...teachable, available, listening
- IF you treasure up my commandments with you... value, store, love, adore
 - How do I do that? MAKING your ear attentive... sit at feet, wait, humble, eager
 - INCLINING your heart to understanding... strain to love, to understand, to grasp
- IF you call out for insight...Pray for it (Jms1), Ask HS, Ask elders, other believers
- IF you raise your voice for understanding... Don't just run to a book. Cry out to God!
- IF you seek it like silver... What do you value most in life? Where do you place security?
- IF you search for it as hidden treasure... hidden in a field... seek it... pursue it... Indiana Jones but for the Bible.
- THEN (and only then, or maybe then, to the fullest potential) you will
 - UNDERSTAND the fear of the Lord
 - Some of you don't understand fear... The Word just told you why!
 - FIND the knowledge of God
- Convince me, Proverbs-man. Why is this the case?

*[6] For the LORD gives wisdom;
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;
[7] he stores up sound wisdom for the upright;
he is a shield to those who walk in integrity,
[8] guarding the paths of justice*

and watching over the way of his saints.

- Why is this the process for growing in wisdom? Because, well, who gives wisdom?
 - Whose mouth must we listen to? The Lord
 - Who can instruct us in understanding? The Lord
 - Who does he give wisdom to? Those who are upright
 - Who does he shield? Those who walk in integrity
- In other words, do the above and the Lord, who is the fountainhead of wisdom, will teach you knowledge of God, man, and life, and then he will teach you to apply it day to day (e.g. wisdom).
 - As you grow in the Lord, grow in understanding fear, you want to walk uprightly... you want to walk with integrity... you want to walk at all times as if you were in the light of day
 - Since you fear the Lord, you want to guard the paths of justice b/c you know he is the Justicebringer. You want to watch over the way of his saints b/c you know that you are a shepherd to his little ones as he is a shepherd to you.
- What is the end result of this? Wisdom, knowledge applied, skill for living the life God wants you to live. Put another way, you will know God's path.

*[9] Then you will understand righteousness and justice
and equity, every good path;*

*[10] for wisdom will come into your heart,
and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul;*

*[11] discretion will watch over you,
understanding will guard you,*

*[12] delivering you from the way of evil,
from men of perverted speech,*

*[13] who forsake the paths of uprightness
to walk in the ways of darkness,*

*[14] who rejoice in doing evil
and delight in the perverseness of evil,*

*[15] men whose paths are crooked,
and who are devious in their ways.*

- You will know every good path (Romans 12:1-2)
- Truth will make its way to the seat of your soul (heart)
- You will value the things of Christ (a heart after God's own heart)
- You will be led by wisdom
 - Conviction (discretion, understanding) will guard your way
 - You will know the right path that is good instead of the 'way of evil'
 - You will steer clear of fools
 - Perverted speech
 - Those who forsake integrity

- Those who walk in darkness
 - Those who do evil with delight
 - Those who are on the way that is broad yet leads to destruction
- The benefits of wisdom, of scripture and spirit alive within you (vv 16-19 as practical example, skipping for time)

[20] So you will walk in the way of the good
and keep to the paths of the righteous.

[21] For the upright will inhabit the land,
and those with integrity will remain in it,

[22] but the wicked will be cut off from the land,
and the treacherous will be rooted out of it.

- Ultimately, you will walk in the way that is good...
 - Keep to the path of the righteous...
 - Inhabit the land
 - Literally... Spiritually...
 - While those on the broad path will be cut off and rooted out
 - Literally... Spiritually...
- Why? Because you will find wisdom.
 - What is wisdom? Knowledge applied. Skill for living. But a more pressing question is... Who is wisdom?
 - Jesus, "The Wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:24)
 - The Greater Son of Solomon... One wiser than Solomon is here (Luke 11:31)
 - Broad is the way to destruction and many will find it. Narrow is the path to life and few find it. How do you find it?
 - If you seek God with all your heart, you will find him... (Deuteronomy 4:29; Proverbs 8:17; Jeremiah 29:13; Matthew 7:7; Luke 11:9; Acts 17:24-28)

CONCLUSION:

Proverbs 22:17–19

*[17] Incline your ear, and hear the words of the wise,
and apply your heart to my knowledge,*

*[18] for it will be pleasant if you keep them within you,
if all of them are ready on your lips.*

*[19] That your trust may be in the LORD,
I have made them known to you today, even to you.*

How do I grow in wisdom? How do I grow in Christ?

1. HEAR the Word.
 - a. Hard to hear it if you won't read it or listen to it.
 - b. Ask good questions. Begin with the basics:
 - i. What does this say? What does it mean?
 - ii. What does this teach about God?
 - iii. What does this teach about mankind?
 - iv. How would this change the way that I live?
 - c. Add more questions as you become more proficient:
 - i. What does that word mean?
 - ii. How does this word relate to that word?
 - iii. Why did the author put that word here?
 1. Ex: Why is he drawing a correlation between hearing and lips?
2. LOVE the Word (which leads to joy-filled obedience)
 - a. Apply your heart to the Word. E.G. Choose to slow down and learn to love it
 - b. When you see a baby, you can say, "Oh look, a baby," or you can marvel at the wonder that is birth, the complexity of life, the fingerprints of God on a soul, the entrusting of such a treasure to people like us, the pattern and shaping of a personality, the fact that the Lord knows the plans for this little one, the hair on their head, the number of their days...
 - c. And when we think of the Word like that (and not just information to be consumed), you learn to love the Word. And when you love the word, and treasure it, you want to obey it.
 - d. Why? It is your precious delight. It is pleasant to you. It flows from you.
 - i. The same way that nobody needs to tell you to protect your children from a child trafficker if you have a shred of a soul.
3. SHARE the Word
 - a. It is ready on your lips... to be shared, taught, proclaimed
 - b. To who? Those who are inclining their ear to hear the words of the wise
4. Result? GROWTH in the Lord
 - a. Trust... maturity... obedience... joy

So if you focus on hearing the Word... if you ask the Lord for wisdom, understanding, and insight... if you seek these things as the most precious treasure imaginable... you will find wisdom. More importantly, you will find Christ, and in so doing, he will make his home with you and instruct you in all of his ways.

Friends, there is no greater aim