

LOVE THE LORD



Lesson Forty - How can I practise godly wisdom?

August 2023

Summary of key points

- We can acquire vast amounts of knowledge but still make the wrong choices in life.
- It takes wisdom to discern what is true, right, and lasting.
- The Bible is full of reminders and lessons on choosing wisely.
- Godly wisdom gives us the ability to look at things from a much higher and more gracious perspective, one that is similar to God's perspective.
- Worldly wisdom, on the other hand, is selfish, prone to lying and boasting, unspiritual, and even demonic.
- As believers, we are to practise godly wisdom (with examples).
- True wisdom is not based on what we know but who we trust. God is the Source of all wisdom through the Holy Spirit.

Watch the lesson online

<https://youtu.be/OXnT5oGIXRk>

Transcript

Welcome to lesson 40 of Love the Lord where we look at God's wisdom compared to our own wisdom and the privilege we have to follow God's wisdom rather than our own. This is the final lesson in the Love the Lord discipleship course.

We will begin as usual, by inviting God to speak to us personally through this study. Please follow along as we pray together.

First, let's thank God for our lives and His perfect will for us.

Next, please tell Him about the things that have been stressful and ask for His help and guidance.

Let us confess the ways we have sinned against God and against others, and ask for His forgiveness.

Please confess the ways others have sinned against us and forgive them in Jesus' name.

Next, let us ask God to purify and open our hearts to receive His teaching.

Finally, please repeat these words, “In Jesus’ name, I silence all distractions and voices that are not from God. Amen.”

Let’s begin the lesson for today. How can I practise godly wisdom? We can acquire vast amounts of knowledge but still make the wrong choices in life. It takes wisdom to discern what is true, right, and lasting.

We also need wisdom to ensure that our choices work together so that we end up at the narrow gate of eternal life, and not at the wide gate to eternal destruction, for “the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it.”

Matthew 7:13-14 “You can enter God’s Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it. (NLT)”

Thankfully, as believers, we have the great privilege of going directly to the ultimate Source of all wisdom, all understanding, all counsel, and all knowledge, God Himself. Curiously, godly wisdom also entails the fear of the LORD.

Isaiah 11:2 And the Spirit of the LORD will rest on him— the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. (NLT)”

Jeremiah chapter 10 verses 6 to 7 says this, “Lord, there is no one like You! For You are great, and Your name is full of power. Who would not fear You, O King of nations? That title belongs to You alone! Among all the wise people of the earth and in all the kingdoms of the world, there is no one like You.”

Proverbs chapter 9 verse 10 says this, “Fear of the LORD is the foundation of wisdom. Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment.” (Proverbs 9:10 NLT)

What does this fear of God and knowledge of God look like?

Psalm chapter 14 verses 2 to 3 give us a clue. It tells us that “the Lord looks down from heaven on the entire human race; he looks to see if anyone is truly wise, if anyone seeks God. But no, all have turned away; all have become corrupt. No one does good, not a single one!” (Psalm 14:2-3 NLT)

The fear of the Lord means we will seek His will first, rather than rely on our own thoughts and plans. True wisdom comes from seeking God first for His will, as well as following His thoughts and His plans, because He is the only One who does good all the time.

The Bible tells us, “what sorrow for those who are wise in their own eyes and think themselves so clever,” and that “those who trust their own insight are foolish, but anyone who walks in wisdom is safe.”

Isaiah 5:21 What sorrow for those who are wise in their own eyes and think themselves so clever. (NLT)

Proverbs 28:26 Those who trust their own insight are foolish, but anyone who walks in wisdom is safe. (NLT)

Indeed, the Bible is full of reminders and lessons on choosing wisely. In James chapter 3, we see a contrast between godly wisdom and worldly wisdom.

1. Firstly, godly wisdom is pure in thought and motive.
2. It is peace-loving and gentle.
3. It is willing to yield, and
4. full of mercy.
5. It shows no favouritism.
6. It is sincere and
7. leads to righteousness.

James 3:17-18 But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere... and reap a harvest of righteousness. (NLT)

Let us take a quick pause here and reflect. Is this the kind of wisdom that you see in the world? Is this the kind of wisdom your family also practises?

Or does worldly wisdom you have witnessed tend to be fuelled by jealousy and self-centred ambition?

Let's read from James chapter 3, from verse 13 onwards, “*If you are wise and understand God's ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom. For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic... there you will find disorder and evil of every kind.*” (James 3:13,15-16 NLT)

Verse 14 says, “*But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don't cover up the truth with boasting and lying.*” (James 3:14 NLT)

Godly wisdom gives us the ability to look at things from a much higher and more gracious perspective, one that is similar to God's perspective. Worldly wisdom, on the other hand, is selfish, prone to lying and boasting, unspiritual, and even demonic.

This reminds us of when Jesus turned to apostle Peter and said, “Get away from me, Satan! You are a dangerous trap to me. You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God’s.”

Matthew 16:23 Jesus turned to Peter and said, “Get away from me, Satan! You are a dangerous trap to me. You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God’s.” (NLT)

Peter had known Jesus for years and was the first apostle to recognise and rightly proclaim that Jesus is the “Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Yet if Peter could be deceived by Satan into thinking he was wise in trying to stop Jesus from going to the cross, then we ought to be much more careful about what we think about what is really right or wrong, good or bad.

The bottom line is, true godly wisdom is a matter of who we trust, rather than how much we know. Will we trust God’s wisdom and sovereign will or will we trust our own reasoning and understanding?

As we read from Psalm chapter 32 verses 8 and 10, “*The LORD says, “I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you. Many sorrows come to the wicked, but unfailing love surrounds those who trust the LORD.”* (Psalm 32:8,10 NLT)

And this is what the Lord says in Jeremiah chapter 17 verse 5, “*Cursed are those who put their trust in mere humans, who rely on human strength and turn their hearts away from the Lord.*” (Jeremiah 17:5 NLT)

What about you? Have you ever had any regrets over the decisions you made in your life? How might it have been different if you had persevered in waiting on the Lord’s counsel and direction instead?

We all need to be mindful to seek God first in all things, so that we don’t grieve God or hear Him say to us one day, “why do you keep calling me ‘Lord, Lord!’ when you don’t do what I say?” God is good and He doesn’t condemn us. Neither does He ever isolate us, punish us, or forsake us. He desires to see all His children prosper and He is faithful even when we fall into error.

Luke 6:46 “So why do you keep calling me ‘Lord, Lord!’ when you don’t do what I say? (NLT)

In fact, our good and perfect Father in heaven promises to share His wisdom generously with all His children, with no exceptions, and He will never reject or rebuke anyone for asking for His wisdom. God is gracious, loving, and kind. He will help us thrive and rejoice as we seek to follow His will.

James 1:5-6 If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. (NLT)

But the Bible also gives us this reminder, that we should ensure that our faith is in God alone and not to waver between God's wisdom and our own wisdom. The world will also often question our faith or even ridicule us for following Jesus or choosing to follow God's will.

This is because the world does not understand God's ways nor can it discover everything God is doing under the sun. Not even the wisest people discover everything, no matter what they claim.

Ecclesiastes 8:16-17 In my search for wisdom and in my observation of people's burdens here on earth, I discovered that there is ceaseless activity, day and night. I realized that no one can discover everything God is doing under the sun. Not even the wisest people discover everything, no matter what they claim. (NLT)

For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are God's ways higher than our ways and His thoughts higher than our thoughts.

Isaiah 55:8-9 "My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the Lord. "And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts. (NLT)

Therefore, to be wise in God's eyes, we need to put aside everything we have understood to be true and allow the Holy Spirit to renew our minds based on His perspectives. We need to be willing to become foolish in the world's eyes, or even in our own eyes, in order to become truly wise for "the Lord knows the thoughts of the wise and He knows that they are worthless."

1 Corinthians 3:18-20 Stop deceiving yourselves. If you think you are wise by this world's standards, you need to become a fool to be truly wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God... "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise; he knows they are worthless." (NLT)

How does one become wise in God's eyes in practical terms? As a start, here are some qualities of godly wisdom.

One, we will uphold a reverent fear of God in our hearts at all times. We will seek to know and fulfil His thoughts and will for us, day by day.

Psalms 111:10 Fear of the LORD is the foundation of true wisdom. All who obey his commandments will grow in wisdom. Praise him forever! (NLT)

Secondly, we will choose to be humble. As we mentioned in an earlier lesson, humility is not a fruit of the Holy Spirit that He produces in us, it is a discipline of our own spirit to submit to God's will.

Proverbs 11:2 Pride leads to disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom. (NLT)

Thirdly, we will make time to self-reflect and ask God to show us if our ways have become evil or unwise.

Ephesians 5:15-16 Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. (ESV)

And we will be careful about the company we keep. The Bible tells us that those who walk with the wise become wise, while those who associate with fools get in trouble.

Proverbs 13:20 Walk with the wise and become wise; associate with fools and get in trouble. (NLT)

We also won't wear ourselves out trying to get rich but will be wise enough to know when to quit.

Proverbs 23:4 Don't wear yourself out trying to get rich. Be wise enough to know when to quit. (NLT)

We will seek the Holy Spirit's counsel and leading in all that we do. Through Him, we will know the wonderful things God has freely given us.

1 Corinthians 2:12 And we have received God's Spirit (not the world's spirit), so we can know the wonderful things God has freely given us. (NLT)

Lastly but very importantly, we will be open to discipline and correction for our own good.

Proverbs 15:5 Only a fool despises a parent's discipline; whoever learns from correction is wise. (NLT)

We have now come to the end of this lesson as well as the end of the "Love the Lord" discipleship course. We hope that you have gained valuable insights into how to walk in the fear and counsel of the Lord, as the Holy Spirit has guided and tutored you throughout this time.

We would like to close with this loving reminder, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take," for "the instructions of the Lord are perfect, reviving the soul. The decrees of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The commandments of the Lord are right, bringing joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are clear, giving insight for living."

Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. (NLT)

Psalm 19:7-8 The instructions of the Lord are perfect, reviving the soul. The decrees of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The commandments of the Lord are right, bringing joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are clear, giving insight for living. (NLT)

Let us remember that as human beings, we can only see our circumstances, but God sees our final destination and He knows how to get us there safely, and we demonstrate our love for God by obeying Him and following His will, so that we get to spend eternity with Jesus with no need for any regret.

John 14:15 “If you love me, obey my commandments. (NLT)

We will close today’s lesson with the reflection questions for you to prepare answers to before your small group meeting as well as a testimony to watch. We pray that you will be blessed.

Time for reflection

1. What have been some personal highlights for you in this discipleship course?
2. What have you gained the most and how can you continue to support one another, moving forward?

Watch the testimony for this lesson

To be uploaded soon.

Personal notes