

1. Receiving God's Wisdom for 2023

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Subtitle: Wisdom is the Principal Thing

We are at the beginning of another year. As in previous years, there are multiple focuses & responsibilities before us that need to be negotiated, balanced and 'fleshed out'.

- Decisions that we make at the beginning of the year will largely determine where we find ourselves towards the end of the year
- (Making good decisions at any stage of our life will ensure a good life)

Proverbs 4:5–9 (NKJV) *Get wisdom! Get understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth. 6 Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you; Love her, and she will keep you. 7 **Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore get wisdom.** And in all your getting, get understanding. 8 Exalt her, and she will promote you; She will bring you honor, when you embrace her. 9 She will place on your head an ornament of grace; A crown of glory she will deliver to you."*

- In the Book of Proverbs, there are three words that keep re-occurring:
 - Wisdom
 - Knowledge
 - Understanding
- Knowledge has to do with information (input)
- Understanding has to do with comprehension
- Wisdom has to do with output
 - Wisdom is the ability to correctly apply knowledge
 - Wisdom helps us to avoid and / or solve problems
 - Wisdom empowers us to make wise decisions & choices in life

1. Wisdom is the Principal Thing

- Prov. 4:7 tells us that "*Wisdom is the principal thing*"
- Among the trio of "wisdom", "knowledge" and "understanding", we should make it our priority to get wisdom
- 'Principal' – beginning, chief, choicest part
"that which is superior in value to all others in the same class or kind"

Proverbs 2:6 (NKJV) *For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come **knowledge and understanding**;*

- Here are those three words again: wisdom, knowledge & understanding
- Notice, all three of these fundamental “qualities” come from God
- Note, we are speaking of God’s wisdom, not of this world’s wisdom

James 3:13–17 (NKJV) *Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. 16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.*

- Here, the Bible contrasts between God’s wisdom and worldly wisdom
- Worldly wisdom is:
 - Earthly (of this world)
 - Sensual (soulish, feeling-based & springing from corrupt desires)
 - Demonic (KJV. devilish)
- God’s wisdom is:
 - Pure
 - Peaceable
 - Gentle
 - Willing to yield
 - Full of mercy and good fruits
 - Without partiality
 - Without hypocrisy

1 Corinthians 3:19–20 (AMP) *For this world’s wisdom is foolishness (absurdity and stupidity) with God, for it is written, He lays hold of the wise in their [own] craftiness; 20 And again, The Lord knows **the thoughts and reasonings of the [humanly] wise** and recognizes **how futile they are.***

- Legitimate sciences have been twisted & mixed with this world’s wisdom
- Much of what we have been told in the last few years under the guise of “follow the science” has been, and is, utter absurdity and stupidity
- The thoughts and reasonings of many of the humanly wise, veiled & disguised in clever language, are not only futile, but also very evil

2. God wants to give us His wisdom for 2023 (and beyond)

Jeremiah 6:16 (NIV) *This is what the Lord says: “Stand at the crossroads and look; **ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls ...***

- The ancient paths of Judeo-Christian values are being abandoned
- The fabric of Christian ethics and principles in society is being torn up
- The “good way” is now called the “evil way” by the humanly wise

Isaiah 33:6 (NKJV) ***Wisdom and knowledge will be the stability of your times, and the strength of salvation; the fear of the Lord is His treasure.***

- God’s wisdom and His knowledge produce:
 - Stable times
 - Stable lives
 - Stable families
 - Stable nations
- It would be fair to say that we currently live in unstable times
- God wants to give us His wisdom & help us to live stable lives in unstable times
- To successfully negotiate new challenges that we will face in 2023, we need to, not only “Return to the ancient paths”, but we also need to ask for new wisdom, concerning:
 - New technologies will be rolled out
 - New philosophies are being promoted (“isms”)
 - New traps are being laid
 - Free speech is under threat
 - Biblical Christianity is on a collision course with civil authorities due to newly proposed laws
 - The biblical mandate to call people to repentance will be deemed hate speech

Jeremiah 18:15–16 (NLT) *But my people are not so reliable, for they have deserted me; they burn incense to worthless idols. **They have stumbled off the ancient highways and walk in muddy paths.** 16 Therefore, their land will become desolate, a monument to their stupidity. All who pass by will be astonished and will shake their heads in amazement.*

- As Christianity is being abandoned by western nations, they are turning to worshipping worthless idols
- “Save the planet” is the new catch cry
- “Climate change” is becoming the new religion

- The muddy paths of wokeness, cancel culture, gender equality etc. are all monuments to people's stupidity

3. How do I get God's Wisdom

a. It's in God's written Word

Proverbs 2:6 (NKJV) *For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding;*

The entire Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is God's general wisdom for everyday living.

- Commit to a regular Bible reading plan

b. It's in the Preaching & Teaching of God's Word

Colossians 1:28–29 (NKJV) *Him (Christ) we preach, warning every man and **teaching every man in all wisdom**, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.*

- Don't slacken off in your commitment to church services
- The very answer you need from God could be preached in the very church service that you choose to miss

c. Ask God for specific wisdom

James 1:5 (NKJV) *If any of you lacks wisdom, **let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.***

d. Pray before you act

Colossians 1:9 (NKJV) *For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to **pray for you**, and to **ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;***

e. Jesus Christ is your wisdom

1 Corinthians 1:30–31 (NCV) *Because of God you are in **Christ Jesus**, who **has become for us wisdom from God**. In Christ we are put right with God, and have been made holy, and have been set free from sin. **31** So, as the Scripture says, "If people want to brag, they should brag only about the Lord."*