Pursuing Wisdom

God promises to provide His wisdom to those who search for Him.

Proverbs 8:6-21

God offers wisdom by which to live life and glorify Him. He has revealed Himself in nature (Ps. 19:1), in His written Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17), and in Jesus (Heb. 1:1-4). Even though God has taken the step to reveal His wisdom, God’s people cannot be passive when it comes to pursuing it. He reveals His wisdom, and simultaneously we must pursue the revealed wisdom of God. This pursuit is critical to spiritual maturity and growth.

If you were granted the opportunity to gain wisdom in one area of life, what would it be and why?

Session 6
UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

PROVERBS 8:1–9:18
Proverbs 8:1–9:18 concerns the necessity of pursuing the wisdom of God. Solomon emphasized several important truths in this passage. First, he taught that God’s wisdom is valuable, powerful, and obtainable. God’s wisdom is of infinite value because God is of infinite value. Second, Solomon proposed that as a result of its infinite value, the wisdom of God is to be pursued with great and sustained effort.

Solomon personified wisdom as a wise woman calling out to her neighbors: “To you, O men, I call ... learn prudence; O fools, learn sense” (8:4-5). Solomon pictured foolishness as a woman who is “seductive and knows nothing” (9:13). He contrasted a wise woman with a foolish woman in comparing the person who is pursuing the wisdom of God to a foolish and unwise person. Solomon contrasted the wisdom of God and the foolishness of worldly wisdom.

The choice between wisdom and folly is presented as two houses. Wisdom lived in one house, and she invited Solomon’s son to a banquet that she had prepared (9:1-5). Folly lived in another house, and she also invited everyone to come to her house. There they could join her for a meal that consisted of nothing more than water and bread (9:13-18).

Solomon’s persistence in calling God’s people to pursue wisdom was reminiscent of his own pursuit of wisdom at the beginning of his administration. Rather than asking God for great wealth and notoriety at the beginning of his rule, Solomon asked for wisdom and discernment. (See 1 Kings 3:7-9.) God was pleased with Solomon’s request and, as a result, gave him not only wisdom and discernment, but great wealth and notoriety.

Read Proverbs 8:6-21, looking for the action words. How do the actions point to the value of God’s wisdom?
6 Hear, for I will speak noble things, and from my lips will come what is right, 7 for my mouth will utter truth; wickedness is an abomination to my lips. 8 All the words of my mouth are righteous; there is nothing twisted or crooked in them. 9 They are all straight to him who understands, and right to those who find knowledge. 10 Take my instruction instead of silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold, 11 for wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.

VERSES 6-9
Solomon called to his students: Hear, for I will speak noble things, and from my lips will come what is right. He repeatedly called his students to sit up and take notice, to listen, and to adhere to what he was saying.

Solomon was focused on calling God’s people to pay attention because he knew that sinful man’s attention span is short. We need continual reminders to pursue the things of God. Further, Solomon’s instructions were right because they were from God; therefore, he wrote: for my mouth will utter truth; wickedness is an abomination to my lips.

We need continual reminders to pursue the things of God.

Solomon encouraged the pursuit of the wisdom of God by reminding God’s people that His instructions were righteous—there is nothing twisted or crooked in them. In other words, Solomon was not attempting to deceive anyone but was passing along the great principles and precepts of God’s truth as the most valuable things in all the world. Sin obscures the obvious, the true, and what is truly beautiful. Wisdom removes the fog of ignorance. Solomon reminded God’s people that God’s teachings of wisdom are all straight to him who understands, and right to those who find knowledge.
What might a person pursue instead of God’s wisdom in an effort to find truth? What are the limits of each thing you listed?

VERSES 10-11
Solomon portrayed God’s wisdom as more valuable than any earthly acclaim. He declared that godly wisdom is more valuable than silver or gold and is better than jewels. In fact, all that you may desire cannot compare with her.

When God’s wisdom is pursued first, the other issues of life tend to become more manageable and understandable.

More than wealth, power, or notoriety, the pursuit of the wisdom of God is the most valuable commodity in an otherwise materialistic world. Solomon turned things on their head by placing the value of the pursuit of God’s wisdom above all other pursuits. Solomon’s admonition to pursue first God’s wisdom was a foreshadowing of Jesus’ call for His followers to “seek first the kingdom of God and his

BIBLE SKILL: Notice repeated words or phrases in a Bible passage.
Read Proverbs 8:6-21 out loud and notice the number of times in which the pronoun “I” is repeated. How does the voice of wisdom speaking directly to God’s people make the appeal to be wise more compelling? Jot down the ways in which Solomon’s approach in the passage has a positive effect on the appeal. Also, make note of the ways that the appeal can be misunderstood.
righteousness” (Matt. 6:33). Because wisdom is valuable, it must be pursued with great passion and persistence. When God’s wisdom is pursued first, the other issues of life tend to become more manageable and understandable.

**Why might someone not consider God’s wisdom to be a priceless treasure? What do you cherish about it most of all?**

---

**POWERFUL (PROV. 8:12-16)**

12 “I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and I find knowledge and discretion. 13 The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate. 14 I have counsel and sound wisdom; I have insight; I have strength. 15 By me kings reign, and rulers decree what is just; 16 by me princes rule, and nobles, all who govern justly.

**VERSES 12-16**

Fearing God puts a person on the path to being wise (see 1:7). **Fear of the LORD** means revere, respect, trust, and submit to God. Fearing God in this way is the difference between growing wise or becoming foolish.

Having the wisdom of God means loving what He loves and detesting what He detests. For that reason, everyone who values His wisdom will hate evil. To hate evil is to hate pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech. God’s wisdom gives believers an option that goes against the evil we see in the world.

**Having the wisdom of God means loving what He loves and detesting what He detests.**

God will give us His wisdom when we study His Word, go to Him in prayer, and seek the advice of mature believers in Christ. The understanding we gain can enable us to make sound judgments. Strengthened by His wisdom, we won’t be overwhelmed when faced with circumstances that seem daunting for us.
How does fearing God lead to gaining wisdom? Can you gain true wisdom without a fear of God? Explain.

There is no greater power in the world than the knowledge of God. Solomon stated these four truths to help us understand the power of God’s wisdom:

- God’s wisdom is good counsel.
- God’s wisdom is sound.
- God’s wisdom gives God’s people insight.
- God’s wisdom gives God’s people strength.

In other words, God’s wisdom equips His people with sound reason, clear thinking, sufficient knowledge, endurance, patient strength, and faith.

In verses 15-16, Solomon seems to become autobiographical, as if reflecting on his own experience as king. God’s wisdom, when he adhered to it, was the very thing that gave him success. He personalized wisdom by saying, *By me kings reign, and rulers decree what is just; by me princes rule, and nobles, all who govern justly.*

Solomon recognized that God’s wisdom impacts all of the functions of government, of a free and orderly society. There is wisdom for the executive in kings who reign; there is wisdom for the legislative in what is just; and there is wisdom for the judicial in recognizing all who govern justly. Solomon desired to show the power of God’s wisdom by demonstrating how it applied to every dimension of life, even to leading a nation.

**OBTAINABLE** (PROV. 8:17-21)

17 I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me. 18 Riches and honor are with me, enduring wealth and righteousness. 19 My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold, and my yield than choice silver. 20 I walk in the way of righteousness, in the paths of justice, 21 granting an inheritance to those who love me, and filling their treasuries.”
VERSE 17

Some people might perceive that God’s wisdom is only for the already wise, the educated, the intellectual, or the high and mighty, and not for the humble or the average person. Solomon promised that the person seeking God’s wisdom would find it no matter his or her background. Further, Solomon asserted that the person who lives by God’s wisdom will experience God’s blessings, including the avoidance of self-destructive patterns of living.

To pursue the wisdom of God is to pursue God’s written Word.

Where is this wisdom to be found? The wisdom of God is found in the Word of God; to pursue the wisdom of God is to pursue God’s written Word. In 2 Timothy 3:16, Paul stated: “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.” To pursue God’s wisdom requires the knowledge of God’s Word. The degree to which a believer knows and embraces God’s Word is the degree to which that believer is advancing in his or her pursuit of the wisdom of God.

KEY DOCTRINE: The Scriptures

All Scripture is totally true and trustworthy (Ps. 119:140).

In verse 17 Solomon outlined a clear promise for the seeker of God’s wisdom: I (wisdom) love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me. The wisdom of God loves the seeker who pursues her. As we seek God in His Word, He blesses us with wisdom. Further, Solomon promised that those who seek wisdom will find it. God does not play cat and mouse with His wisdom. He gladly rewards the seeker with the knowledge of Himself.

How does knowing that God shares His wisdom motivate you to pursue it?
VERSE 18-21
If the wisdom of God is valuable, powerful, and obtainable, then what is gained when the believer pursues and embraces God’s wisdom above everything else? In verses 18-21, Solomon outlined the rewards and benefits of pursuing God’s wisdom. What is remarkable about the wisdom of God is that it is comprehensive in its impact:

- God’s wisdom makes people rich in the things of God.
- God’s wisdom enables people to live with honor. (In contrast, pursuing riches leads to dishonor and ruin; Jer. 17:11; 1 Tim. 6:10.)
- God’s wisdom gives people enduring wealth that does not fade.
- God’s wisdom offers people His righteousness.
- God’s wisdom is better than fine gold.
- God’s wisdom is more valuable than choice silver.
- God’s wisdom enables people to walk in the way of righteousness.
- God’s wisdom calls people to move along the paths of justice.
- God’s wisdom provides an inheritance to the godly.

THE WISDOM OF PURSUING WEALTH THAT LASTS

- “Riches and honor are with me, enduring wealth and righteousness” (Prov. 8:18).
- “… the expectation of wealth perishes” (Prov. 11:7).
- “Wealth gained hastily will dwindle” (Prov. 13:11).
- “for riches do not last forever” (Prov. 27:24).
- “A stingy man hastens after wealth and does not know that poverty will come upon him” (Prov. 28:22).
- “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Matt. 6:19-20).
- “As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God” (1 Tim. 6:17).
IN MY CONTEXT

- God’s wisdom can be trusted as true.
- God’s wisdom comes through fearing Him.
- God’s wisdom can be found and acted upon.

What roadblocks keep you from seeking true, godly wisdom? What actions do you need to take to remove these roadblocks?

Discuss as a group the characteristics of a wise person based on Proverbs 8. How can the group foster these characteristics within the group?

What are you doing to better place yourself in a position to discover and act upon God’s wisdom? Who can hold you accountable for taking action and how?

Prayer Needs