

## *Summer of Personal Worship*

### **WEEK 8 - Wisdom**

The biblical book of 2 Chronicles shares a story of God's visit to King Solomon. The event begins with the statement "Solomon, son of David strengthened his hold on his kingdom. The LORD his God was with him and highly exalted him" (Ch1:1-2). God is pleased with Solomon because he is worshipping and following Him in the manner God desired. Scripture goes on to record that God visited Solomon one night and asked him "What should I give you?" Solomon recognizes the great responsibility he has been given as King over all of Israel and replies "Now grant me wisdom and knowledge so that I may lead these people, for who can judge this great people of yours?" (Ch 1:10). Solomon knew that to be the leader who would rule over God's chosen people, he needed wisdom that came from God. God was pleased with the request and chose to bless Solomon with more than any King who had gone before him, Solomon went on to rule and 1 Kings 4:30 records "Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt".

Did you note that Solomon did not say to God "give me the wisdom to know when to call on you so that you can tell me what to do"? He knew God had equipped him to make decisions and that by using scripture, experience, advisors and God's gift of wisdom, he could do it. He gave God the glory and did not sit around constantly asking himself, "What is my purpose? or "what is God's plan for my life".

God created us in His image, which included the ability to reason and make correct moral choices and decisions. Although these abilities were corrupted by Adam and Eve's actions in the garden, God knew that we still had the potential to make right choices. Christ reminded us before He ascended that we would receive the Holy Spirit's aide who would help us remember Jesus teachings on how we should live by making right choices. Paul, in a letter to Timothy writes, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Tim 3:16-17) . In addition to the wisdom of the Holy Spirit and scripture, God has placed wise, godly and righteous people in our paths, who we can talk to about decisions we may want to make. They can corroborate our own wisdom or offer more. We need the undefiled wisdom of God, which is free from self-interest in order to love God with our whole being and to love others.

Over the next week we will look at wisdom and hopefully be challenged to examine how we use biblical guidance in our decision making such that our actions and choices both honour and please God. Below are the **10 Biblical principles for making wise decisions** and will be addressed on that last day of this week's devotional. These principles are very useful in the decision making process.

We must never be afraid to ask God for wisdom.

#### **Day 1**

The material below, (scripture, reflection video, praise song and prayer) are designed to prepare you for the upcoming week of prayer, reflection and action. We have not previously commented

## *Summer of Personal Worship*

on reason the suggested song was selected as its relationship to the Theme seemed obvious. This week the song chosen to guide you to a place where you just want to honour God. It is a great song to listen to as well as sing throughout the week.

This week as we pray and reflect on wisdom we thought it fitting to keep this song in our heart as we seek God's grace.

### **SCRIPTURE - James 1:5-8 (New International Version)**

*“If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.”*

**REFLECTION VIDEO** – What is wisdom (taken from an introductory video prepared for a church's children's summer teaching series).

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PAPt\\_CWCmZA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PAPt_CWCmZA)

**PRAISE SONG** – Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty. [Agnus Dei]

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UWndDW\\_271g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UWndDW_271g)

**PRAYER** - Read and reflect on this prayer while asking God to help you express your faith.

*Lord, I know I that I can come to you and ask for wisdom because you want me to make choices and decisions that honour you, myself and those I encounter. I come to you now Lord and ask that you impart into me divine wisdom, that I may be able to rightly apply your Word. I also pray for the gift of discernment to help me to know the difference between Godly and ungodly intentions, spirits, actions and gifts. Help me to know who has been sent by you, and who has not so that I can lean on their advice. Help me to learn to seek, hear and listen so that my actions, along with the words of my mouth, speak your truth with wisdom and in simplicity so that all may understand and benefit by them. Thank You Father for helping me make choices that bring glory to you. In the mighty name of Jesus I pray and ask these things. Amen.*

### **Day 2 - Where does wisdom begin?**

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (Proverbs 9:10). The wisdom that leads to life and ultimate joy begins with knowing and fearing God. Fearing the Lord means not running from him and only seeking refuge, joy, and hope in God because you know he has all we need. It means understanding what a fearful prospect it is to stop trusting and depending on God to meet our needs. When the Bible says, get wisdom, it is referring to that practical knowledge of how to attain true and lasting happiness. It's a knowledge that leads us to making decisions and choices that honour God. It begins with the fear of the Lord and consists in humbly hearing and doing God's will based on perceived direction found in Scripture, advice from others, and our own intellect. It helps us address the unique circumstances of our lives. Such wisdom is

## *Summer of Personal Worship*

essential because the person who has it finds life and joy and the one who does not finds death and misery. However it is not enough to say wisdom is a humble hearing and doing of God's Word, because not every human dilemma is addressed in God's Word.

Have you read the following passage in the past and glossed over it without thinking about what the FEAR implied? The Hebrew word used in this verse suggests having a moral reverence for God suggesting we are incapable of finding joy and hope on our own. As you pray and talk with God reflect on areas where you intentionally seek to align with God as well as areas where He has not been a consideration.

*“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” Proverbs 9:10.*

### **Day 3 - What does Godly wisdom look like?**

Proverbs offers numerous useful thoughts on the characteristics of a wise man or woman. It is worth going over the book and selecting the passages that can be applicable to you. The book of James, however, offers a short overview of identifiable characteristics for both men and women and can be used as self-examination benchmarks. As we reflect on the motive or outcome of future choices and decisions we ask ourselves “Will my choice negatively impact one of these characteristics?” James suggested characteristics of a wise person are:

1. **Humble** – wise people don't constantly brag, boast, or display a prideful attitude;
2. **Good works** – wise people believe God has prepared good works for them to perform which honour and glorify Him as they seek to serve others;
3. **Gentle** – wise people understand God's desire that we love with our whole being and we also seek to love others by firstly treating them with care and respect;
4. **Considerate** – wise people put the need of others ahead of their own as desired by the AGAPE type love God wants us to have for others;
5. **Peace loving** – wise people don't create tension or division instead work to end strife and turmoil;
6. **Merciful** – wise people demonstrate compassion, forgiveness and kindness to others;
7. **Sincere** – wise people are genuine, real, honest and are not hypocritical, deceitful or false; and
8. **Impartial** – wise people are fair and just. They do not show favouritism to others especially for their own benefit.

Take some time to read, reflect and pray about this passage.

*“Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.*

## *Summer of Personal Worship*

*But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness". James 3:13-18*

### **Day 4 - The blessing of wisdom**

One thing humanity seems to have in common is the desire to be happy. It is difficult to get people to agree on what brings the greatest happiness, which we all long to have. This longing is not bad and in fact can be good. However, when we try to find happiness in ways that displease and dishonour God then the pursuit of happiness can be considered evil. Wisdom helps us make choices that glorify God.

Goodness consists in finding happiness in ways that please and honour God. Sometimes doing what is good might have an impact on us in ways we may not expect or desire. Followers recognize that they can be called upon to do right at the expense of their ultimate happiness. Wisdom helps them understand they must make that choice because of how God is glorified. God established this world in such a way that doing good through faith in Christ always leads to greater happiness. He did not create a world where we must choose between our eternal happiness and God's glory! God has created this world and its moral laws in such a way that the more we choose to glorify God, the happier we will be. Godly wisdom helps us recognize this truth and seek to apply it in our daily activities.

Blessings are wonderful gifts from God that we desire. Read today's scripture and reflect on its meaning to you. Ask yourself "how wisdom can be a blessing in my life?" Talk with God about what is on your mind and for wisdom to choose to do what is right.

"Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding" Proverbs 3:13

### **Day 5 - Purpose, plan and .....**

Wisdom helps us see that our purpose for existence is linked to the reason why we were created. We can only speculate on the exact reason but scripture does offer hints as to why God created us. We are an expression of His unimaginable love. He wanted us to undergo the pure joy of being in His love and so He created us in His image so we could experience and revel in this love. In His love we could continually bring glory and honour to Him because our actions and words would speak of God. However, God knows, chosen love offers more than enforced love and so we were given the right to accept or reject Him. Adam and Eve rejected God seemingly condemning humanity from experiencing our created purpose. But God wants us to be with Him and has made it possible for us to get back on the path to Him. Simply put, our purpose is to express our faith in words and action that show our love for God and for His creation and to make others aware of the God who loves them.

The book of Jeremiah records the verse "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future". This verse has caused many believers to spend time talking with God about their purpose because they somehow interpreted it to mean "I, God, have a detailed, moment by moment blueprint that I had created for each human being hoping that you eventually figure it out and willingly align

## *Summer of Personal Worship*

with it". Many have spent a lot of time on their knees in prayer searching hard for this plan and as such may have been blinded to the daily opportunities God placed before them to bring Him glory.

Wisdom reveals to us that God's expectation for us is that every day we strive to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and we also seek to love others in a same manner. It also reveals that we can express that love in words and actions such that it causes others to want to know more about God.

Do you think you could love as God desires, while working in the retail industry or by being a stay at home parent socializing with other stay at home parents? Can you love God as an invalid confined to a hospital bed for the remainder of your life or while working as a trade person on a construction site? Could you love God and others and express your faith in those circumstances or do you think God's plan is, for you to be a missionary, work at a food bank, become a pastor, quit your job and give away all your assets to orphans because you think that is what all Christians must eventually do? Wisdom helps us see what makes sense based on our personalities, skills, gifts and circumstances. We seek wisdom so we can discern life.

Take some time to read this verse. Maybe pull out your LECTIO DIVINA guide and read the passage using that method. Speak with God about how you are expressing your faith and even speak with another believer who could help you live out your purpose in your current circumstances.

*"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself'"*  
*Mark 12:30-31*

### **Day 6 - Wisdom of others**

Who is the wisest person you know, not the smartest, but the wisest? Who is the person you notice listens as you talk, gets you to ask yourself the hard questions, and who is able to tell others what must be heard without offending, sounding smug, or even appearing wise?

We all can ask for wisdom, but God does give a spiritual gift of wisdom to people allowing them to help others who don't necessarily understand or consider God in their analysis. The spiritual gift of wisdom is also referred to as the "word of wisdom" or "utterance of wisdom." The Greek word for wisdom is *sophia* and it refers to the intimate understanding of God's Word and His commandments which results in holy and upright living. In the context of 1 Corinthians 12:8, it means to speak to the life of an individual or to a specific situation with great understanding and a righteous perspective, with the goal of guiding others toward a life of holiness and worship. Our actions should express our faith which tells us we can be transformed into a holy person (a person set aside for God) who desires to worship God with all they are. Spiritual gifts are meant to be used so that others may be blessed. We must be willing to put aside our overconfidence in our ability to make big decisions alone and seek the counsel of a wise person.

## *Summer of Personal Worship*

Have you ever gone to someone whom you considered to be wise and strong in their faith to seek out their advice? Did you listen and then consider or even follow it? Read the scripture below asking yourself, do you trust God to put wise people in your path. Talk with God about your decision making process. If necessary ask Him to remind you to seek the counsel of another believer the next time you have a big decision to make.

*“The way of fools seems right to them, but the wise listen to advice” Proverbs 12:15*

### **Day 7 - Applying wisdom**

Seeking God’s wisdom is a necessary step to making choices and decisions that are honouring to God. Every day we are faced with choices, some small some big but how often do we reflect on the impact of that decision. When it comes to making big decisions we acknowledge we have the Holy Spirit, scripture, and wise and godly advisers to help us. However many also have a favourite methodology they use to aide when making big decisions; a process that often does not take God into consideration.

Included in this email is a document, which you also received at the start of this week, called *10 Biblical Principles for Making Wise Decisions*. It offers thought provoking steps and questions that we can take into consideration and have been shown to be helpful in the decisions making process. Take some time to read over it and next time you have a big decision to make, use it.

Psalms 1 offers some thoughts on the person who seeks after God, the wise person. Slowly read the scripture below and note which thoughts or words jump out at you. Meditate on them and then talk with God, even telling Him how you think it applies to you. Thank Him for the wisdom you have received and ask for more because He wants to give it.

*Blessed is the one*

*who does not walk in step with the wicked  
or stand in the way that sinners take  
or sit in the company of mockers,  
but whose delight is in the law of the LORD,  
and who meditates on his law day and night.  
That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,  
which yields its fruit in season  
and whose leaf does not wither—  
whatever they do prospers.*

*Not so the wicked!*

*They are like chaff  
that the wind blows away.  
Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,  
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.*

*For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,  
but the way of the wicked leads to destruction. Psalm 1:1-6.*

## *Summer of Personal Worship*

### **10 Biblical principles for making wise decisions**

(Original author unknown. Found on decision making resource site).

#### **1. What Biblical Principles Should Inform My Decision?**

**Proverbs 2:6:** *For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.*

**Proverbs 3:5-6:** *Trust in the Lord with all of your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.*

**1 Corinthians 10:31:** *So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

**2 Corinthians 6:14:** *Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?*

**Proverbs 22:7:** *The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower becomes the lender's slave.*

**Philippians 4:8:** *Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.*

#### **Questions to Ask**

1. What does the Bible have to say about this decision?
2. Who can help me better understand what God's Word says about this decision?
3. Make sure you are not the only one who holds to your interpretation.

#### **2. Do I Have All The Facts?**

**Proverbs 18:13:** *He who gives an answer before he hears, it is folly and shame to him.*

**Proverbs 18:17:** *The first to plead his case seems right, until another comes and examines him.*

#### **Questions to Ask**

1. Ask a lot of questions.
2. Don't fall prey to "wishful thinking" or let your emotions get the best of you.
3. Remember that there are two sides to every story.

#### **3. Is The Pressure of Time Forcing Me to Make a Premature Decision?**

**Proverbs 19:2:** *Also it is not good for a person to be without knowledge, and he who makes haste with his feet errs.*

**Proverbs 21:5:** *The plans of the diligent lead surely to advantage, but everyone who is hasty comes surely to poverty.*

#### **Questions to Ask**

1. Beware of the "once in a lifetime" deal and the lure of instant gratification.
2. Don't let the fear of missing out drive your decision.
3. When in doubt, leave it out.

## *Summer of Personal Worship*

### **4. What Possible Motives Are Driving My Decision?**

**Proverbs 16:2:** *All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, but the Lord weighs the motives.*

**Proverbs 20:9:** *Who can say, "I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from my sin"?"*

#### **Questions to Ask**

1. Acknowledge that you have "blind spots."
2. Honestly assess your motives, both good and bad.
3. Give others permission to speak in to your life.

### **5. How Should Past Experiences Inform My Decision?**

**Proverbs 26:11:** *Like a dog that returns to its vomit is a fool who repeats his folly.*

**Proverbs 17:10:** *A rebuke goes deeper into one who has understanding than a hundred blows into a fool.*

#### **Questions to Ask**

1. Look for patterns of behaviour – "triggers."
2. Understand how your family background might affect your thinking.
3. Learn from your mistakes!

### **6. What Is The Collective Counsel of My Community?**

**Proverbs 11:14:** *Where there is no guidance the people fall, but in an abundance of counsellors there is victory.*

**Proverbs 18:1:** *He who separates himself seeks his own desire. He quarrels against all sound wisdom.*

**Proverbs 18:2:** *A fool does not delight in understanding, but only in revealing his own mind.*

#### **Questions to Ask**

1. Avoid having many separate conversations.
2. Recognize the difference between "selling" and "sharing."
3. Know when to "open the circle."

### **7. Have I Honestly Considered the Warning Signs?**

**Proverbs 10:17:** *He is on the path of life who heeds instruction, but he who forsakes reproof goes astray.*

**Proverbs 16:25:** *There is a way, which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.*

**Proverbs 27:6:** Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.

#### **Questions to Ask**

1. Don't think you are the "exception" to the rule.
2. Remember that God's way is the best way.

## *Summer of Personal Worship*

### **8. Have I Considered the Possible Outcomes for My Course of Action?**

**Proverbs 14:1:** *The wise woman builds her house, but the foolish tears it down with her own hands.*

**Proverbs 14:15:** *The naïve believes everything, but the prudent man considers his steps.*

**Proverbs 27:12:** *A prudent man sees evil and hides himself, the naïve proceed and pay the penalty.*

#### **Questions to Ask**

1. Do the “long math.”
2. Assess the potential risks.
3. Have a contingency plan.

### **9. Could This Decision Jeopardize My Integrity or Hinder My Witness for the Lord?**

**Proverbs 25:26:** *Like a trampled spring and a polluted well is a righteous man who gives way before the wicked.*

**Proverbs 10:9:** *He who walks in integrity walks securely, but he who perverts his ways will be found out.*

**Proverbs 20:7:** *A righteous man who walks in his integrity—how blessed are his sons after him.*

**Proverbs 22:1:** *A good name is to be more desired than great riches, favor is better than silver and gold.*

#### **Questions to Ask**

1. Work toward the “center” rather than flirt with the “edge.”
2. Ask yourself, “Would this pass the ‘newspaper’ test?”
3. Keep short accounts.

### **10. Is There a Better Option That Would Allow Me to Make a Greater Impact for God’s Kingdom?**

**Proverbs 11:30:** *The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who is wise wins souls.*

#### **Questions to Ask**

1. Ask yourself, “What story could God be writing?”
2. Don’t assume that just because something is hard that it is not God’s will.
3. Understand how God has uniquely gifted and resourced you.