**Wisdom, Understanding and Knowledge**

Growing up in my generation a lot of shows ended with a moral message that was present in the show. I have shown my children some of these and of course they roll their eyes and laugh about how “lame” that is. And even when I was watching them, I probably thought they were a little ridiculous.

But know as I think back, maybe they were on to something. Because now I find myself remembering some of the things that were taught, but especially some of the phraseology that was used.

There are two that really stick out in my mind.

1. GI Joe – This was a cartoon about an US army force that was always battling the evil Cobra. At the end of the show they would have their message and the kids they were giving the message to would say “Now we know”, and the GI Joe Soldier would respond, “Knowing is half the Battle!”
2. The other one was from NBC. And it really wasn’t a show but more of a public service announcement – “The More You Know”

This was just a little 30 to 45 second skit that brought educational messages on social issues of the day.

These 2 shows, and more, always brought the message to give you knowledge about issues or situations and how to respond. And knowledge is a foundation that everyone needs to have. But we need to take that knowledge and apply it to wisdom so that we can have a good understanding of the correct actions that need to be taken.

In our lives there is a natural wisdom, understanding and knowledge, spelled out like in these shows, and then there is spiritual wisdom, understanding and knowledge.

From here I want to look at those 3 words as they are linked together in the scriptures: Wisdom, Understanding, Knowledge

And, in having an understanding of these words, it will help us be better servants of the Lord while we are here on the earth.

Let’s define them shall we. Definitions from Webster’s 1828 Dictionary

WISDOM defined

1. The right use or exercise of knowledge; the choice of laudable ends, and of the best means to accomplish them.
2. Quickness of intellect; readiness of apprehension; dexterity in execution

UNDERSTANDING defined

1. Comprehending; apprehending the ideas or sense of another, or of a writing; learning or being informed.
2. Knowing; skillful.

KNOWLEDGE defined

1. A clear and certain perception of that which exists, or of truth and fact; the perception of the connection and agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy of our ideas.
2. Learning; illumination of mind.

God’s word has a lot to say around wisdom, understanding and knowledge.

The Proverbs writer tells us where wisdom is to begin and what knowledge we need for understanding.

# **Proverbs 9:10**

**10**The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,
And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

Knowledge and wisdom without the fear of the Lord is a very dangerous thing. It can become something that hinders us instead of helping us.

When we gain knowledge, it can create in us a desire for things that we do not need or understand. And that knowledge can become a source of temptation for us.

We only need to look at the beginning, with Adam and Eve, to see how this can happen. Satan’s temptation for them to eat of the fruit from the tree of knowledge of Good and Evil was too much for them for they desired to be like God and to know what He knows. And it cost them everything.

#  **Genesis 3:5-7**

**5**For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” **6**When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. **7**Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.

I believe we can all agree that it would have been much better off for Adam and Eve, and us, if they would have been satisfied, or had a deep understanding, of what they already had. The knowledge that God had given them a beautiful home, eternal life and a personal relationship with Him. But their desire to gain knowledge, without God being involved, cost them pretty much all of what they had.

I the New Testament the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy and told him the same thing, about how man will continue to learn but never come to the knowledge of truth.

# **2 Timothy 3:1-7**

**3**But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. **2**For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, **3**unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, **4**treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, **5**holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. **6**For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, **7**always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

We can see in vs.7 that man will continue to learn but he won’t be able to come to the knowledge of truth because he won’t believe in the source of that truth, which is Jesus.

All in all we know that having knowledge is a good thing. Having knowledge of secular things like math, history, science, etc. helps us to get by in the world and when used with wisdom and understanding, it allows us to accomplish great things and not relive past mistakes. God’s word lets us know this.

#  **Psalm 92:6**

**6**A senseless man has no knowledge,
Nor does a stupid man understand this:

# **Proverbs 10:14**

# 14 Wise men store up knowledge,But with the mouth of the foolish, ruin is at hand.

#  **Proverbs 19:2**

**2**Also it is not good for a person to be without knowledge,
And he who hurries his footsteps errs.

The Bible has a number of examples that we can look at where God grants wisdom, understanding and knowledge.

1. Bezalel – Who was an inspired workman who helped to build the Tabernacle during the Exodus from Egypt.

# **Exodus 31:1-5**

**31**Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **2**“See, I have called by name Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. **3**I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all *kinds of* craftsmanship, **4**to make artistic designs for work in gold, in silver, and in bronze, **5**and in the cutting of stones for settings, and in the carving of wood, that he may work in all *kinds of* craftsmanship.

But not only did God instill Bezalel wisdom, understanding and knowledge to perform craftsmanship but also the wisdom to teach others.

# **Exodus 35:30-35**

**30**Then Moses said to the sons of Israel, “See, the Lord has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. **31**And He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding and in knowledge and in all craftsmanship;… **34**He also has put in his heart to teach, both he and Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. **35**He has filled them with skill to perform every work of an engraver and of a designer and of an embroiderer, in blue and in purple *and* in scarlet *material*, and in fine linen, and of a weaver, as performers of every work and makers of designs.

1. Joshua – Received an impartation of wisdom when Moses laid his hands on him.

# **Deuteronomy 34:9**

**9**Now Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; and the sons of Israel listened to him and did as the Lord had commanded Moses.

The children of Israel recognized the significance of what Moses did for Joshua, and the wisdom he had, because from that point they transferred their allegiance to Joshua’s leadership.

1. Solomon

Generally, when we think about knowledge and wisdom in the Bible, we think of King Solomon, and rightfully so. Solomon at the beginning of his reign over the children of Israel was visited by God and God asked Solomon, ***“Ask what I shall give you.”***

Let’s look at Solomon’s answer because sometimes, I think, we just stop and mention only half of what he asked.

# **2Chronicals 1: 7-10**

7 In that night God appeared to Solomon and said to him, “Ask what I shall give you.”

8 Solomon said to God, “You have dealt with my father David with great lovingkindness and have made me king in his place. 9 Now, O Lord God, Your promise to my father David is fulfilled, for You have made me king over a people as numerous as the dust of the earth. 10 **Give me now wisdom and knowledge**, that I may go out and come in before this people, for who can rule this great people of Yours?”

Again, I think a lot of times we only note Solomon asks for wisdom, but he asks for knowledge as well. There is a difference in the two.

God was pleased with his request and granted him the wisdom and knowledge he asked for along with the things he didn’t ask for; Riches, Wealth and Honor among the people.

In 1Kings 3 we read the story of how Solomon handled the situation of the two women and the dead baby. With that the people recognized the wisdom of God that was in him by the way he made the ruling. ***Tell the story***

# **1 Kings 3:27-28**

**27**Then the king said, “Give the first woman the living child, and by no means kill him. She is his mother.” **28**When all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had handed down, they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice.

From there Solomon’s wisdom continued to excel and it was known through all the nations.

# **1 Kings 4:29-34**

**29**Now God gave Solomon wisdom and very great discernment and breadth of mind, like the sand that is on the seashore. **30**Solomon’s wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the sons of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt. **31**For he was wiser than all men, than Ethan the Ezrahite, Heman, Calcol and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was *known* in all the surrounding nations. **32**He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005. **33**He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon even to the hyssop that grows on the wall; he spoke also of animals and birds and creeping things and fish. **34**Men came from all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom.

What amazing wisdom God gave to Solomon. Wisdom that far exceeded anyone else of his day. Even though God granted Solomon this great wisdom, it did not mean that that wisdom would just come automatically to him. As we further read about his life we see that he made some very bad decisions that eventually led him away from God. In his love for foreign women and wanting to please them, he allowed himself to be pulled away by building temples to their gods for them to worship. Very destructive and not what you would expect someone with great wisdom to fall in to.

For us as Christians we can take comfort in knowing that our Lord and Savior had the spirit of Wisdom, Understanding and Knowledge.

# **Isaiah 11:1-2**

**11**Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse,
And a branch from his roots will bear fruit.
**2**The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him,
The spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The spirit of counsel and strength,
The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

Wisdom, knowledge and understanding in the Lord are so important for the Christian that the Apostle Paul made sure to mention in his prayers and letters to the churches.

# **Ephesians 1:15-23**

**15**For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which *exists* among you and your love for all the saints, **16**do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention *of you* in my prayers; **17**that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. **18***I pray that* the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, **19**and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. *These are* in accordance with the working of the strength of His might **20**which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, **21**far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. **22**And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, **23**which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

# **Colossians 1:9-11**

**9**For this reason also, since the day we heard *of it*, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, **10**so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please *Him* in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; **11**strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously

# **Colossians 2:1-3**

**2**For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face, **2**that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and *attaining* to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, *resulting* in a true knowledge of God’s mystery, *that is*, Christ *Himself*, **3**in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

It is so important to have spiritual Wisdom, Knowledge and Understanding that James, our Lord’s brother, lets us know that we are able to ask God for it just like Solomon did.

# **James 1:4-6**

**4**And let endurance have *its* perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

**5**But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. **6**But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.

James even drives home the fact that there is a clear difference between natural and spiritual wisdom, as I mentioned earlier.

# **James 3:13-18**

**13**Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. **14**But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and *so* lie against the truth. **15**This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. **16**For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. **17**But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. **18**And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

These three words – Wisdom, Knowledge, Understanding – can be challenging for us. May we be found seeking to know and walk in the true meaning of these words, so others will see and know the handiwork of God in our lives!