

The background of the image is a dramatic sunset or sunrise sky with dark, swirling clouds. A bright, multi-pointed star is visible in the upper left quadrant. In the foreground, the silhouettes of three people riding camels are visible against the horizon. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

WISE MEN
STILL SEEK HIM
(Part 2)

THE "WISE MEN"

- ❑ Last time we saw that in modern English Bible versions like the NIV and NASB, the Greek "magoi" is rendered by the transliterated Latin form - "Magi". In the KJV, the translators rendered 'magoi' as "wise men".
- ❑ These Magi were indeed wise men as indicated by their actions. But what can we learn today from their story?



THE "WISE MEN"

1. The Wise Men sought to understand the signs of the times. They were aware of the imminent coming of the Messiah and were looking diligently for the signs that had been prophesied by the ancient prophet.
2. They were searching for God's promised redeemer. Like these Magi, wise men today still look for God's way of redemption.
3. They made an effort to find the truth.
4. And upon finding Jesus, they worshipped him and presented him with gifts.
5. After seeing Jesus, they didn't go back the way they came. After their encounter with Jesus, the direction of their lives was changed; he set them on a new road.

WISDOM

- ❑ Wisdom entails having common sense, good judgement, insight - and the ability to discern or judge what is true and right and to act accordingly.
- ❑ This involves an understanding of people, things, events and situations, and the willingness and the ability to apply perceptions, judgements and actions in keeping with an understanding of what is the right course of actions... In short, wisdom is a disposition to find the truth coupled with an optimum judgement as to right actions. ¹

¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wisdom>



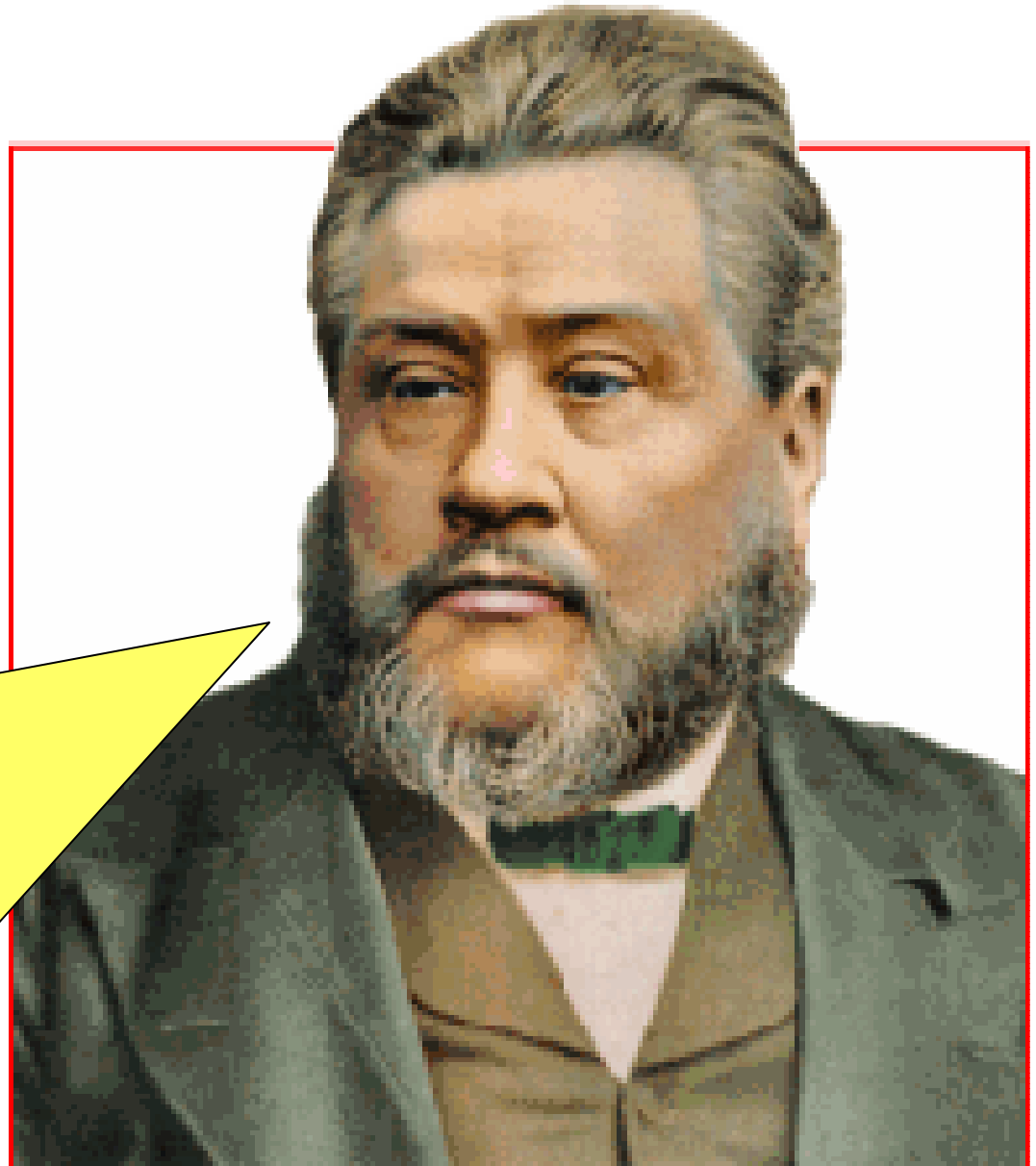
KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM

- ❑ We saw that there is a difference between knowledge and wisdom.
 - Knowledge is what you know.
 - Wisdom is who you are in the light of what you know.
- ❑ Herod and the religious leaders in Jerusalem had knowledge, but when the Wise Men discovered that same knowledge (about the new king) - it changed their lives.
- ❑ Knowledge is knowing facts and truths, but wisdom is the practical ability to consistently make good decisions based on our knowledge.
- ❑ Jesus said that "wisdom is proved right **by her deeds**" (Matt 11:19).

KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM

Wisdom is the right use of knowledge. To know is not to be wise. Many men know a great deal, and are all the greater fools for it. There is no fool so great a fool as a knowing fool. But to know how to use knowledge is to have wisdom.

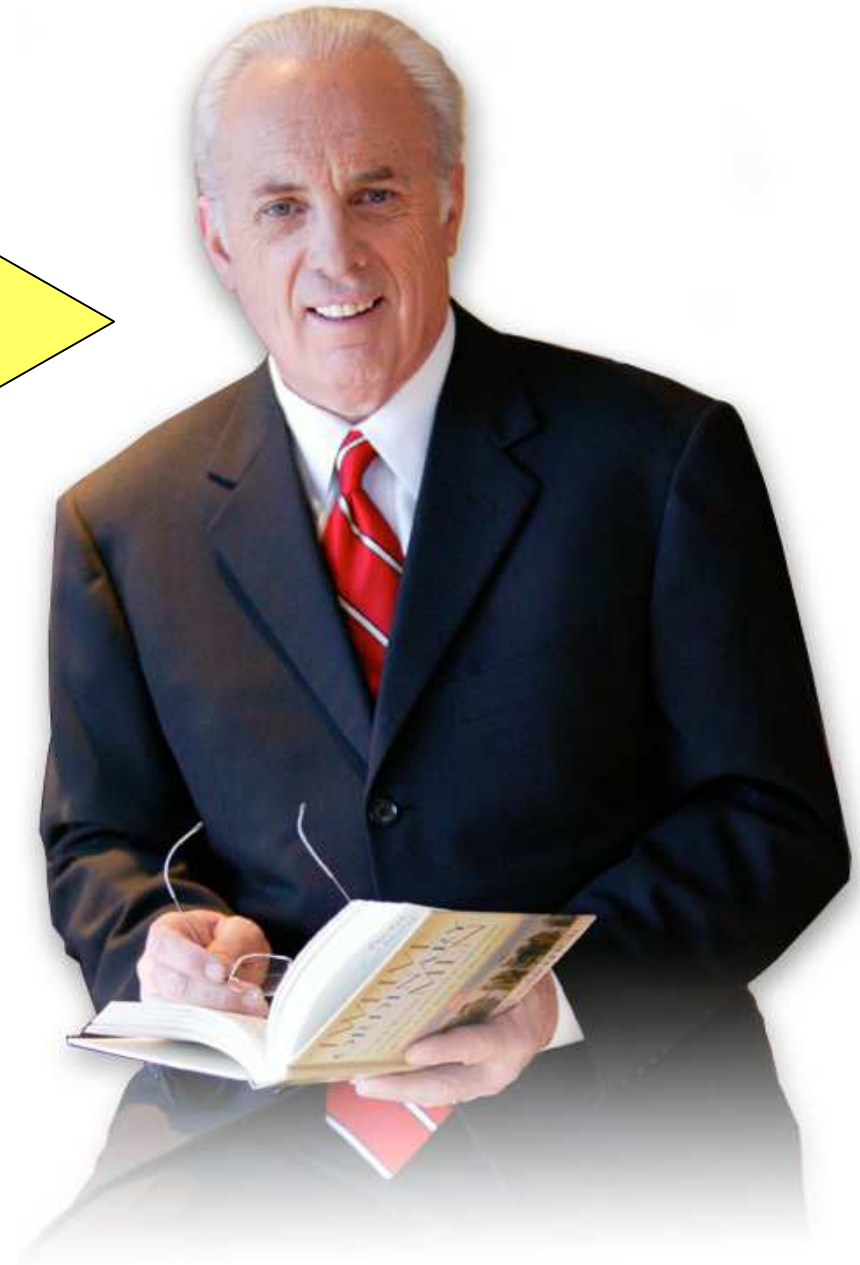
(Charles Spurgeon)



KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM

'Wise' speaks not of one who merely knows some fact, but of one who is skilled in the art of godly living. He submits to Scripture and knows how to apply it to his circumstances.

(John MacArthur - Source: Our Sufficiency in Christ)

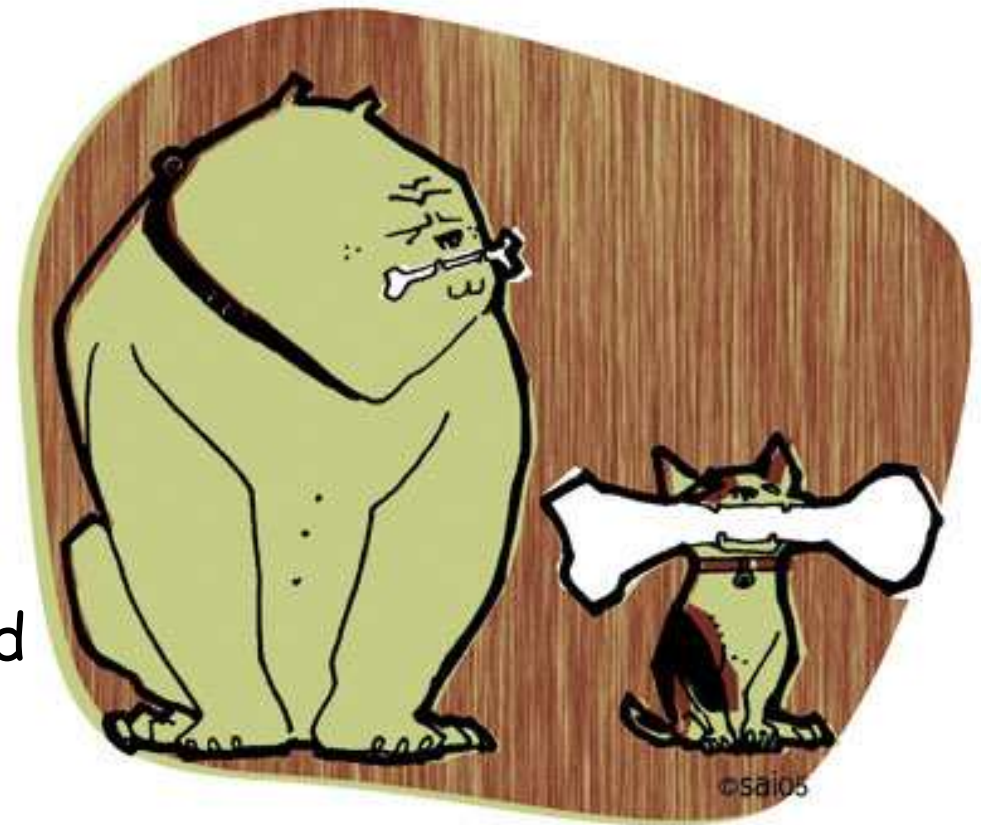


KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM

- ❑ Knowledge without wisdom and love simply puffs a man up.
 - 1 Cor 8:1-2 Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that we all possess knowledge. **Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.** The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know.
- ❑ Paul writes this in the context of discussing the questionable matter of eating food which had been sacrificed to idols. Often on questionable matters of conscience, people show an arrogant sense of being better informed than others - rather than having love, which "builds up". They divide the Lord's work with their 'knowledge' which "puffs up" rather than trying to build the Lord's work in love.

NOT ENVIOUS

- ❑ People who are envious and have selfish ambition do not have the wisdom from above:
 - James 3:14-16 But if you harbour 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, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.



NOT ENVIOUS

- ❑ Envy is a feeling of discontentment and resentment when someone lacks another person's qualities, achievement, possession or luck - and wishes that they possessed it, or that the other person lacked it, or both.



NO SELFISH AMBITION

- ❑ To have selfish ambition is to be self-seeking and look out for one's own interests above the interests (or at the expense) of everyone else.
- ❑ So while the world tells you to look out for "number one" (i.e. yourself), God's Word says:
 - Phil 2:3-4 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.



HUMBLE

- ❑ Wise men are not proud or boastful:
 - James 3:13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in **the humility that comes from wisdom.**
 - Prov 11:2 When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but **with humility comes wisdom.**
- ❑ Wise men recognise the limits of their own knowledge and ability.
- ❑ The people who do things that count don't usually stop to count them.

HUMBLE

- ❑ They are not "wise in their own eyes":
 - Isa 5:21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight.
 - Prov 3:7 Do not be wise in your own eyes...



There is a difference between happiness and wisdom: he that thinks himself the happiest man is really so; but he that thinks himself the wisest is generally the greatest fool.

(Francis Bacon)

HUMBLE

- ❑ Wise men are not always commending themselves to others and engaging in self-praise:
 - 2 Cor 10:12 We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with **some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.**
- 1. Rather let others commend you:
 - Prov 27:2 **Let someone else praise you, and not your own mouth; an outsider, and not your own lips.**
- 2. Or let the Lord commend you:
 - 2 Cor 10:18 **For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.**

HUMBLE

- ❑ I suspect that the English idiom "blowing your own trumpet" possibly originated from Jesus' teaching:
 - Matt 6:2 "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honoured by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full."



PURITY

➤ James 3:17 But the **wisdom** that comes from heaven is **first of all pure...**

❑ Purity is the absence of vice in human character; innocence; chastity.

❑ Wise men:

1. have pure motives (this is listed by James as the primary characteristic of godly wisdom).
2. always try to be good, honourable and **ethical** in all their dealings.



PEACE-LOVING

- ❑ Wise men love peace:
 - James 3:17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is ... **peace-loving**...
 - Romans 12:18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.
- ❑ Wise men always endeavour to resolve conflicts between people. Jesus not only gives us personal peace, he instructs us to **facilitate peace** between conflicting parties (even when one party is not necessarily yourself).
 - Matt 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
 - Prov 29:8 Mockers stir up a city, but wise men turn away anger.

PEACE-LOVING

□ Wise men:

1. seek to restore broken relationships
 2. mitigate strife and alleviate conflict
 3. set aside resentment and revenge
 4. keep moving forward in life, while the foolish waste time holding grudges
- Proverbs 19:11 A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to **one's glory to overlook an offence.**

MERCIFUL

- ❑ Wise men are merciful:
 - James 3:17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is ... **full of mercy and good fruit...**
- ❑ Mercy is forbearance to inflict harm under circumstances of provocation, when one has the power to inflict it; compassionate treatment of an offender or adversary; clemency. - Daniel Webster
- ❑ So wise people are :
 - forgiving, lenient and forbearing
 - compassionate, gracious, pitying, humane, mild, soft-hearted, tender-hearted, kind and sympathetic.

INVESTIGATION

❑ Wise men hear a matter out before passing judgement. They don't pass judgement on a matter (or principle) without first investigating it:

➤ Edmund Spencer: "There is a principle which is a bar against all information, which is proof against all argument, and which cannot fail to keep man in everlasting ignorance. That principle is **condemnation before investigation.**"

➤ King Solomon: "He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him."
(Proverbs 18:13)



Edmund Spencer
(1552-1599)

IMPARTIAL

➤ James 3:17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is ... **impartial**...

- ❑ Wise men are impartial, treating all rivals or disputants equally. They are unbiased, objective, unprejudiced, neutral, non-partisan, non-discriminatory, even-handed, fair and just in their judgements.
- ❑ Wisdom in judgement includes considering multiple perspectives, realising that at times things change and knowing how to compromise.
- ❑ It often requires control of one's emotional reactions (the "passions") so that universal principles, values, reason and knowledge prevail to determine one's actions. ¹

¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wisdom>

IMPARTIAL

- ❑ If you are impartial you will:
 1. be free from any form of prejudice
 2. be guided by reason rather than emotion
 3. go where the facts lead you
- ❑ Proverbs 2:9-10
Then you will understand what is right and **just and fair - every good path**. For **wisdom will enter your heart**, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.



CONSIDERATE

- ❑ Wise men are considerate:
 - James 3:17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is ... **considerate**...
- ❑ Foolish people are inconsiderate and thoughtlessly cause hurt or inconvenience to others. They are insensitive, selfish, self-centred, unsympathetic and uncaring.
- ❑ In contrast the wise are careful not to inconvenience or harm other people, taking care as to how their words or actions will affect others.



SUBMISSIVE

- James 3:17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is ... **submissive...**
- ❑ Wise men submit themselves to any authority that is instituted by God.
- Rom 13:1-2 Everyone must **submit himself to the governing authorities**, for there is no authority except that which God has established. **The authorities that exist have been established by God.** Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgement on themselves.



SINCERE

➤ James 3:17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is ... **sincere**.

□ Wise people are sincere i.e. they :

1. aren't devious and choose transparency over deception
2. are free from pretence, deceit or hypocrisy
3. have actions and speech which proceed from genuine feelings without any hidden agenda

□ Prov 2:12-15 Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men, from men whose **words are perverse**, who have left the straight paths to **walk in dark ways**, who **delight in doing wrong** and **rejoice in the perverseness of evil**, whose **paths are crooked** and who are **devious in their ways**.

PRAGMATIC

- ❑ Wise men are pragmatic. They deal with things sensibly and realistically in a way that is based on practical rather than theoretical considerations.
- ❑ The pessimist complains about the wind; the optimist expects it to change; the realist adjusts the sails.
-William Arthur Ward



PLANNING

- ❑ A wise man plans ahead and allows for every eventuality; a fool procrastinates.
- ❑ Wisdom prepares for the worst, but folly leaves the worst for the day when it comes. - Richard Cecil
- ❑ Prov 21:5 The plans of the diligent lead surely to advantage, But everyone who is hasty comes surely to poverty. (NASB)

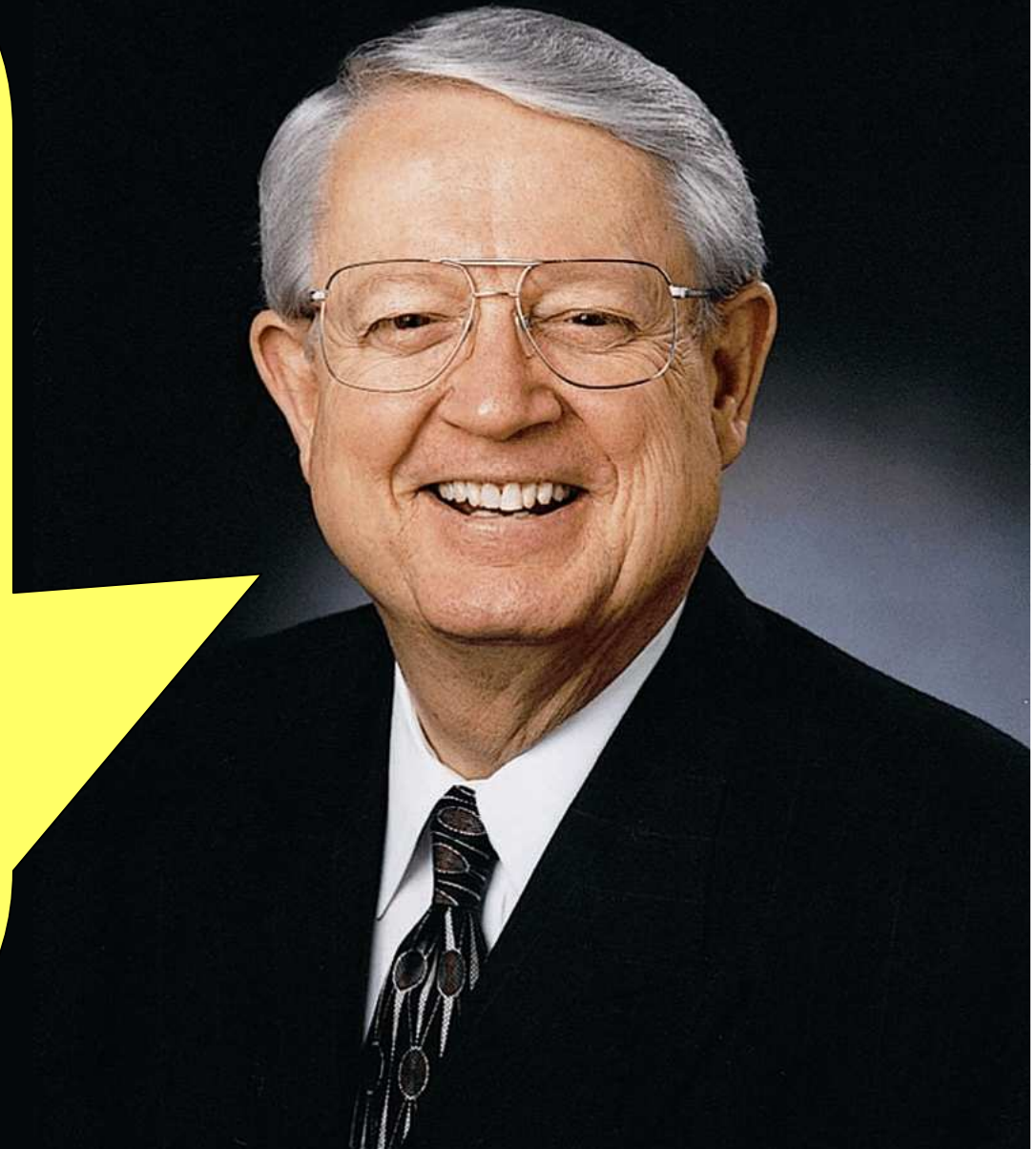


PLANNING

A saying I heard years ago: "It doesn't matter what you do. Just do something, even if it's wrong!"

That's the most stupid counsel I've ever heard. Never do what's wrong! Do nothing until it's right. Then do it with all your might. That's wise counsel.

(Chuck Swindoll)



TEACHABLE

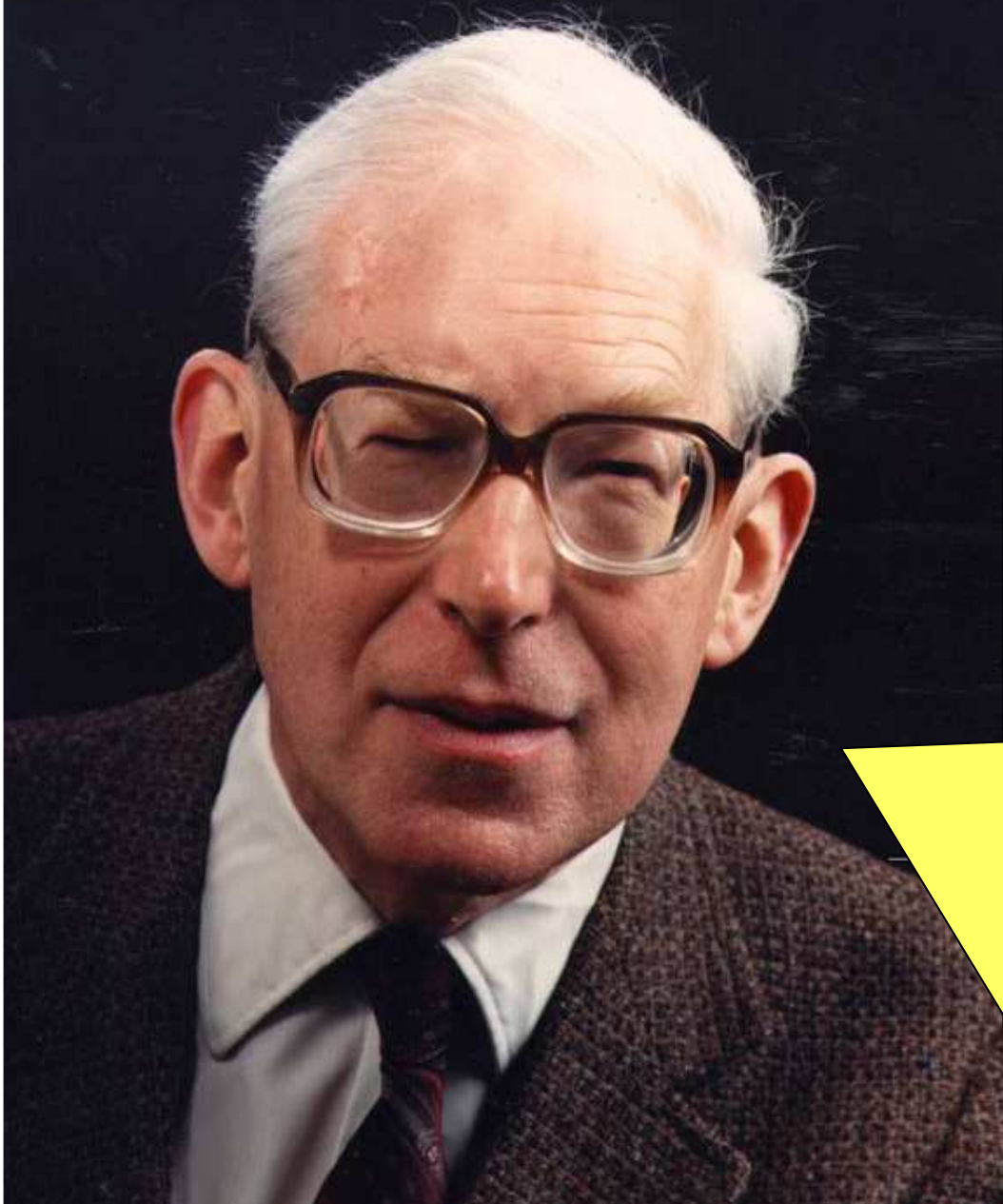
- ❑ Wise men don't think they have arrived - they are teachable:
 - Prov 9:8-9 Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you; **rebuke a wise man and he will love you.** Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning.
 - Prov 12:15 The way of a fool seems right to him, but a **wise man listens to advice.**
 - Prov 19:20 **Listen to advice** and accept instruction, and in the end **you will be wise.**

□ *A wise person can take criticism:*

- *Prov 15:31 He who listens to a life-giving rebuke will be at home among the wise.*
- *Prov 17:10 Rebuke is more effective for a wise man Than a hundred blows on a fool. (NKJV)*
- *Prov 13:1 A wise son heeds his father's instruction, but a mocker does not listen to rebuke.*

ARE YOU
teachable?


TEACHABLE



Not until we have become humble and teachable, standing in awe of God's holiness and sovereignty. acknowledging our own littleness, distrusting our own thoughts, and willing to have our minds turned upside down, can divine wisdom become ours.

(J.I. Packer)

LEARN FROM MISTAKES



A man must be big enough to admit his mistakes, smart enough to profit from them, and strong enough to correct them.

(John C. Maxwell)

SPEECH

❑ Wise men don't talk too much:

- Prov 10:19
When words are many, sin is not absent, but **he who holds his tongue is wise.**

❑ When they do speak, their words bring healing:

- Prov 12:18 Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the **tongue of the wise brings healing.**

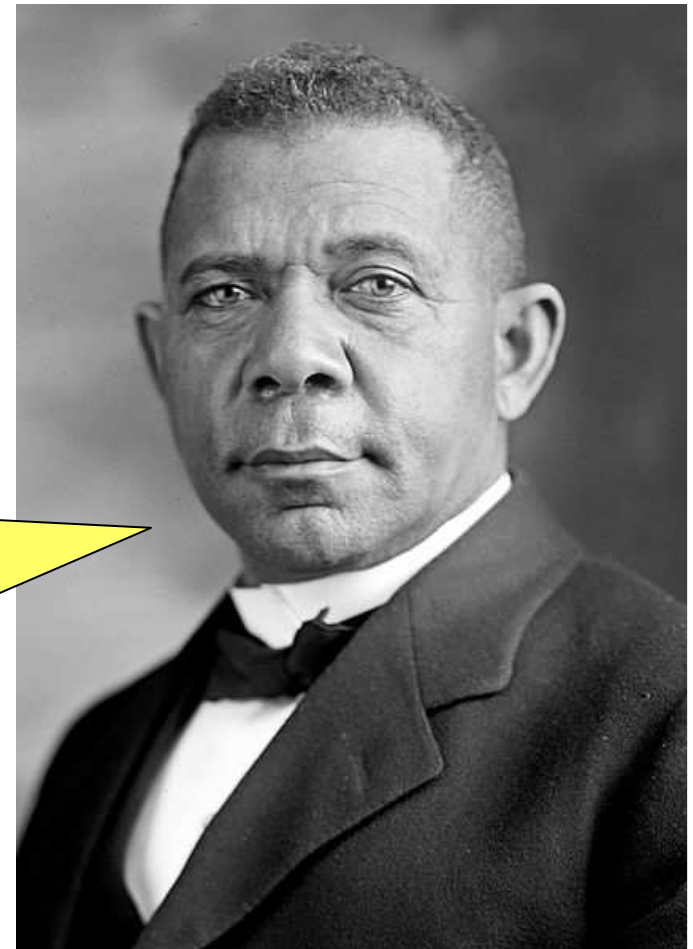


GOOD COMPANY

- ❑ Wise men keep good company:
 - Prov 13:20 **He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.**
- ❑ Choose your friends with care; you become what they are.
- ❑ A wise man may look ridiculous in the company of fools. - Thomas Fuller

Associate yourself with people of good quality, for **it is better to be alone than in bad company.**

(Booker T. Washington)



SELF CONTROLLED

- ❑ Wise men control their temper:
 - Prov 29:11 A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a **wise man keeps himself under control.**
 - Prov 14:16 A wise man fears the LORD and shuns evil, but a **fool is hotheaded and reckless.**
- ❑ Wise men are not impetuous or quick-tempered in nature. They are not impulsive, rash, headstrong, irresponsible, foolhardy, unruly or volatile.



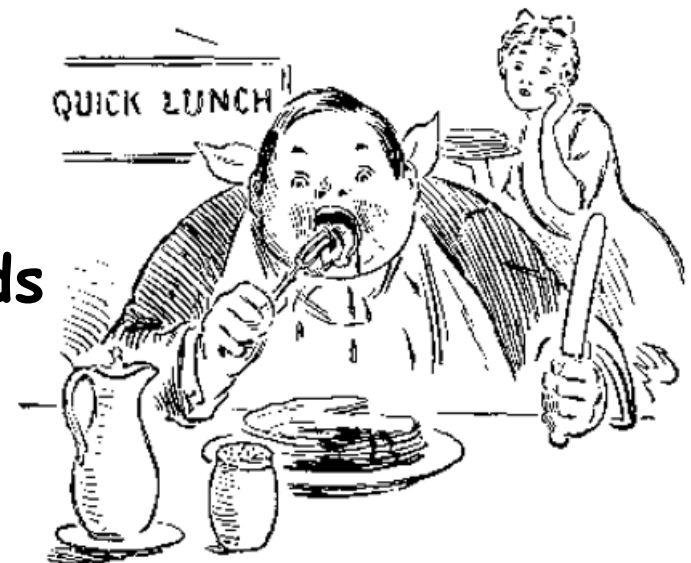
DRUNKENNESS & GREED

❑ Wise men are not drunkards or greedy:

➤ Prov 20:1 **Wine** is a mocker and **beer** a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is **not wise**.

❑ Drunkenness and gluttony lead to poverty:

➤ Prov 23:19-21 Listen, my son, and **be wise**, and keep your heart on the right path. Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat, for **drunkards and gluttons become poor**, and drowsiness clothes them in rags.



WISE WITH MONEY

- ❑ Wise men do not squander their money:
 - Prov 21:20 In the house of the wise are stores of choice food and oil, but a foolish man devours all he has.

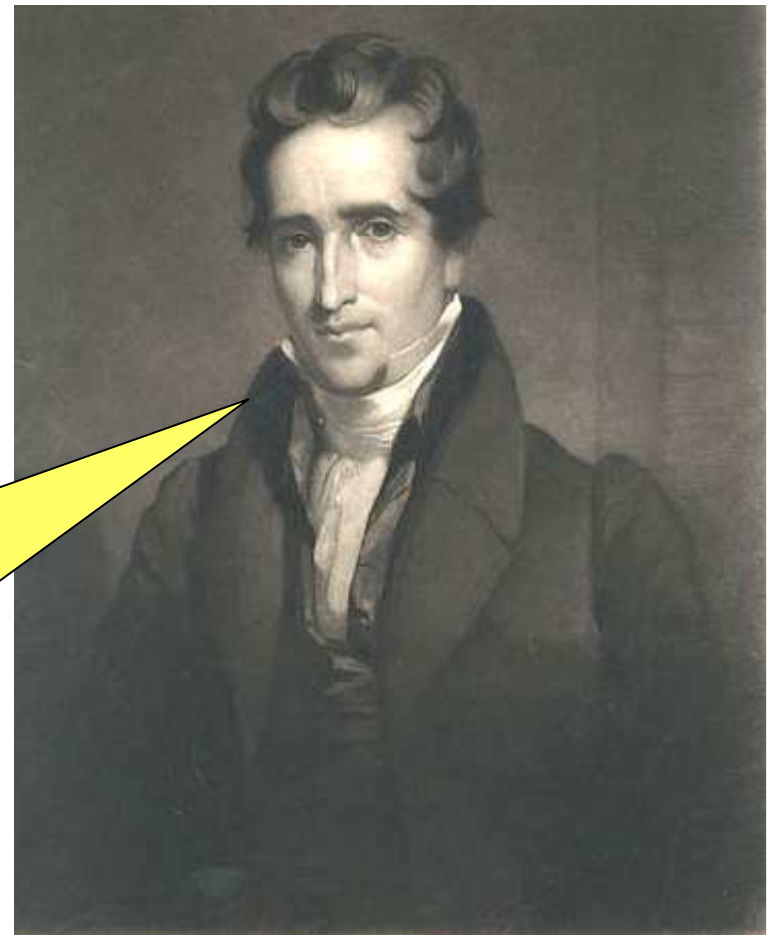


FEAR GOD

- Prov 15:33 The fear of the LORD is the instruction for wisdom... (NASB)
- Prov 9:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.
- ❑ He who fears God, need fear nothing else.

There is nothing more foolish than an act of wickedness; there is no wisdom equal to that of obeying God.

(Albert Barnes)



WITNESS

- ❑ Wise men understand God's will and make the most of every opportunity to witness for Jesus:
 - Eph 5:15-17 Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as **wise, making the most of every opportunity**, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but **understand what the Lord's will is**.
 - Col 4:3-6 And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message... Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be **wise** in the way you act toward outsiders; **make the most of every opportunity**. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

WITNESS

- ❑ Prov 11:30 ... he who wins souls is wise.
- ❑ Daniel 12:3 Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

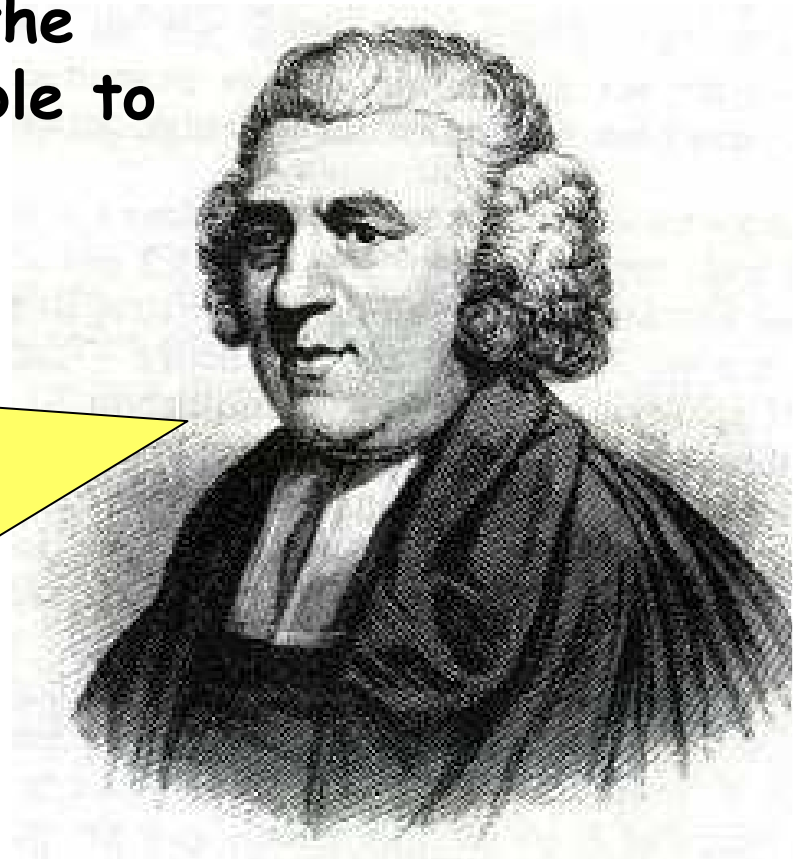


READ THE WORD

- ❑ Wise men read God's Word:
 - 2 Tim 3:14-15 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy **you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.**

The chief means for attaining wisdom, and suitable gifts for the ministry, are the Holy Scriptures, and prayer.

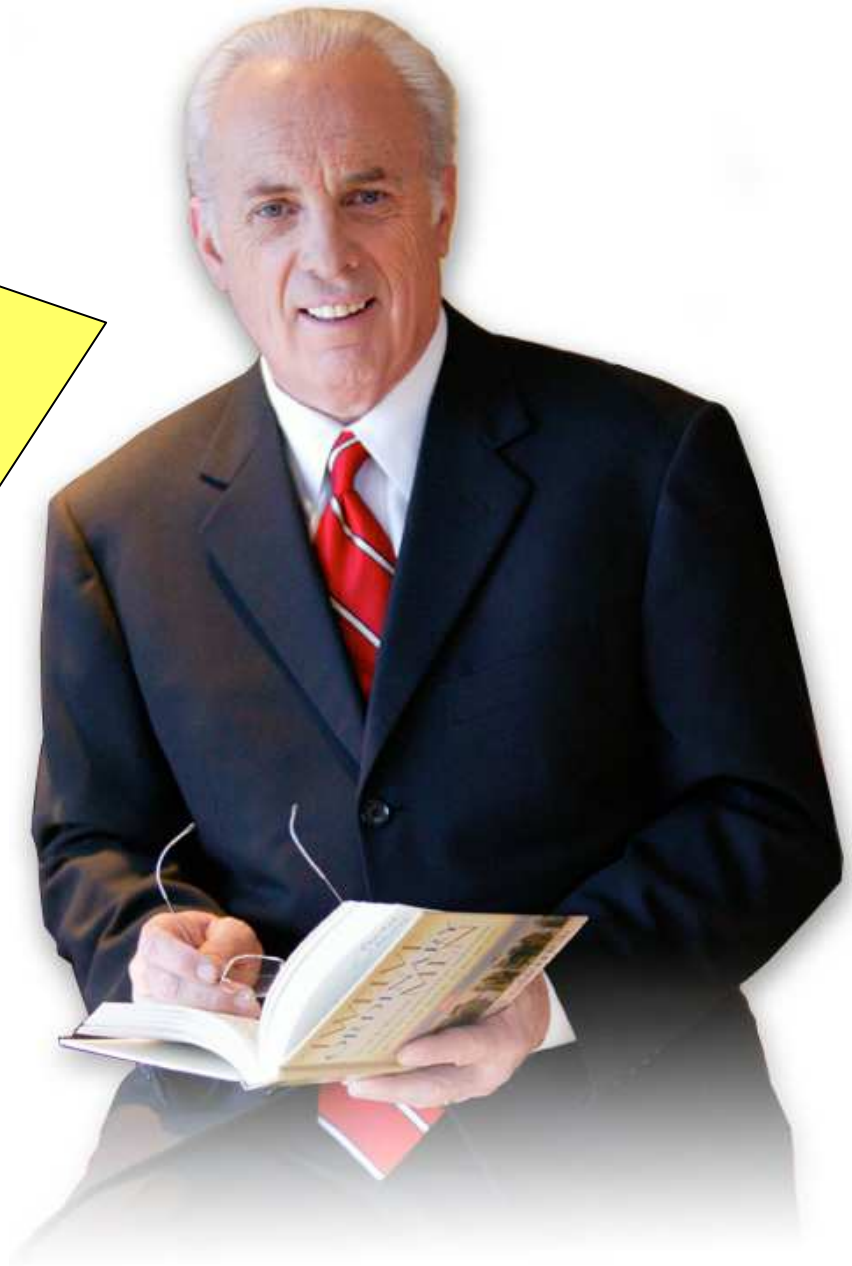
(John Newton)



STUDY THE WORD

Sound, biblical doctrine is a necessary aspect of true wisdom and authentic faith. The attitude that scorns doctrine while elevating feelings or blind trust cannot legitimately be called faith at all, even if it masquerades as Christianity. It is actually an irrational form of unbelief.

(John MacArthur)



LIVE THE WORD

- ❑ But wise men don't only listen to and study the Word of God - they put it into practice.
 - Matt 7:24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and **puts them into practice** is like a **wise man** who built his house on the rock."
 - Ps 107:43 Whoever is **wise**, let him **heed these things** and consider the great love of the LORD.
 - Ps 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, **making wise the simple**.
 - James 1:22 **Do not merely listen** to the word, and so deceive yourselves. **Do what it says**.

BENEFITS OF WISDOM

1. A wise man makes the most of every opportunity:
 - A wise man turns chance into good fortune. - Thomas Fuller
2. Wise children are source of joy to their parents:
 - Prov 10:1 A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son brings grief to his mother.
 - Prov 23:24 The father of a righteous man has great joy; he who has a wise son delights in him.

BENEFITS OF WISDOM

3. Wisdom gives protection:

- Prov 2:11 Discretion will protect you, and understanding will guard you.
- Prov 4:5-8 Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or turn away from them. Do not forsake wisdom, and **she will protect you**; love her, and she will watch over you. The beginning of wisdom is this: get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding. Cherish her, and she will exalt you; embrace her, and she will honour you.

BENEFITS OF WISDOM

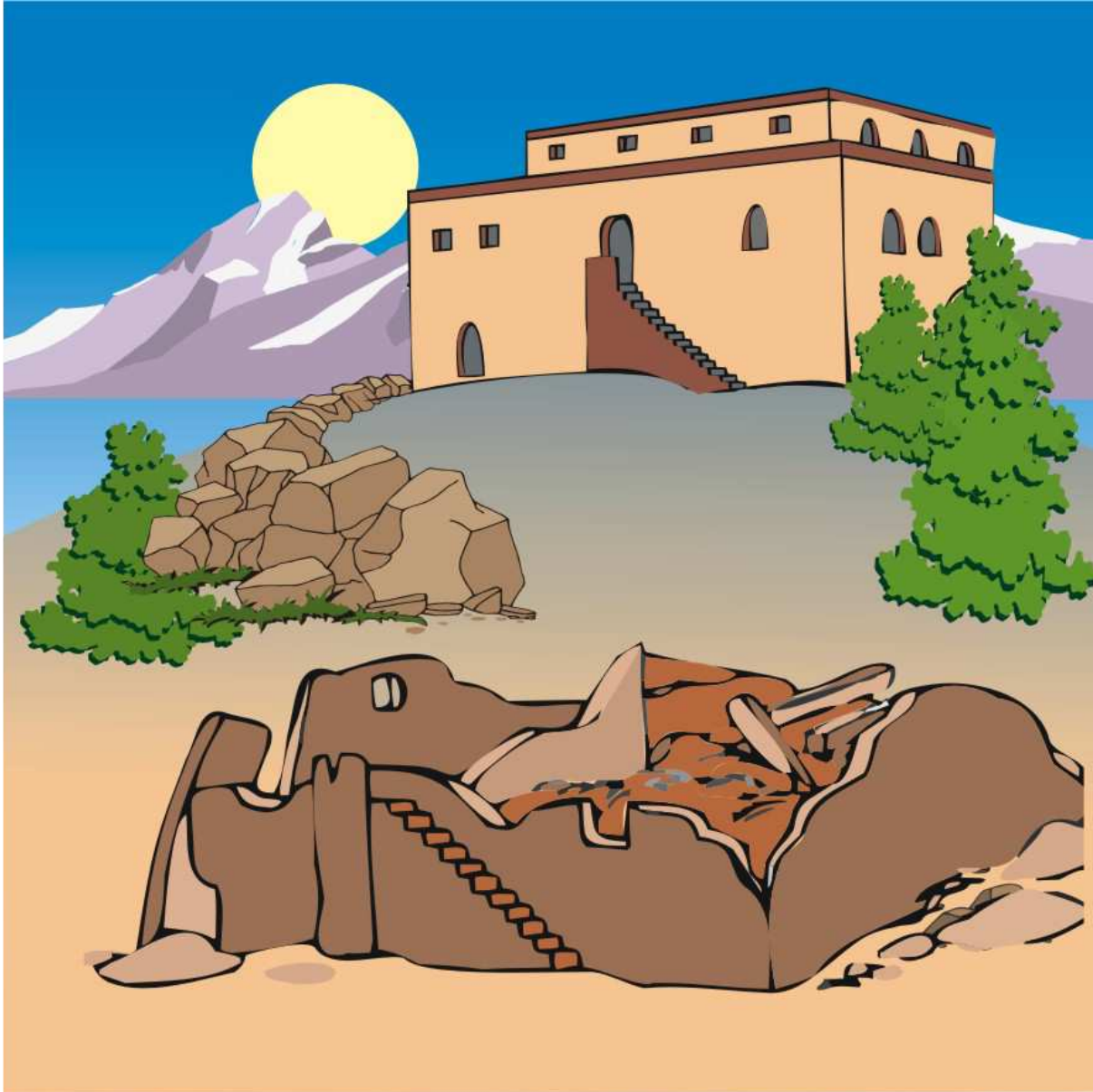
4. Wisdom leaves no regret:

- The sublimity of wisdom is to do those things living which are to be desired when dying. - Jeremy Taylor

5. Because wise men don't just listen to the words of Jesus, but put them into practice, as a result they can withstand the storms and troubles of life:

- Matt 7:24-27 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock."

BENEFITS OF WISDOM



- "But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."



- ☐ Does your life fall to pieces when troubles come? If so then you haven't put Jesus' words into practice in your life and you have a poor foundation.

BENEFITS OF WISDOM

6. Because wise men don't just listen to, but also put the God's words into practice, they will be blessed:

- James 1:23-25 Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, **not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.**



HOW TO GET WISDOM

- ❑ How do you get wisdom?
 - James 1:5 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.
 - Proverbs 2:6 For **the Lord gives wisdom**; from his mouth come **knowledge and understanding**.

If you lack knowledge, go to school. If you lack wisdom, get on your knees!

(Vance Havner)



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