

THE 7 PILLARS OF WISDOM **Proverbs 8:12-21; 9:1**

Building Your House on Wisdom

Introduction:

1. **Wisdom is Multi-Faceted and Multi-Dimensional... it is Spiritual and Practical...**
 - a. Some Decisions require only Knowledge—like the proper medicine to take
 - b. Other Decisions Require Moral Knowledge—to know right and wrong
 - c. But Other Decisions Require Spiritual Wisdom—on How to Live... or who to marry...
Whether to take a certain Job... or whether to Move or Stay ...
 - d. Decisions that are not explicitly moral—but a wrong decision could be disastrous.
 - e. Character Flaws or Attitudes that are not Overt or Extreme—
—but will still lead you away from God anyway...
2. **This is Why God Wants us to Have True Wisdom Rather than Wisdom of the World**
 - a. He offers us this Wisdom in the Bible—especially in Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes
 - b. This is why the Queen of Sheba crossed deserts to hear the wisdom of Solomon...
 - c. And Many other Kings did as well (1 Kings 4:34)
3. **We see the multi-dimensional nature of wisdom in the 7 Pillars of True Wisdom**
 - a. (Prov. 9:1) Seven is considered a perfect number
 - b. These are 7 elements of true wisdom—Not Worldly Wisdom

I. SEVEN PILLARS OF TRUE WISDOM

(1) **PRUDENCE** - עֲרָמָה (ormāh)

1. **DEFINITION: wisdom applied to practice; Understanding**
 - a) “Shrewdness, craftiness, prudence, discernment”
“A sense of seeing beforehand, as forethought, foresight” (ISBE).
 - b) In a Positive sense: ‘the power of forming plans’
 - c) In a Negative sense: when used in a worldly way it degenerates into Scheming.¹
 - d) Found 24 times in OT.
2. **BENEFIT: Preparation & Protection**
 - a) **(Matthew 10:16 ESV)** Wise as serpents but innocent as doves
 - b) **(14:15)** Don’t believe everything you hear
 - c) **(22:3)** Look Before You Leap
3. **IN ACTION: When Lot’s Servants & Abraham’s Servants began fighting...**
 - a) They were both so blessed that there was limited resources for all their flocks!
 - b) Abraham was wise and he was a peacemaker and gave Lot first pick where to go
 - c) But Lot saw that the grass was greener down near Sodom and Gomorra...
 - d) Worldly wisdom exalts Prosperity and Wealth—True Wisdom exalts God and His will
 - e) That ONE Decision cost his wife her life... and almost destroyed his entire family.
(James 4:13–16) Don’t Boast in plans made w/o considering God’s will

¹ Derek Kinder, Proverbs Tyndale Commentary of Old Testament

(2) KNOWLEDGE - דַעַת (da'ath)

1. DEFINITION: “perception, skill, discernment, understanding, wisdom.”

- a) Found 93 times in the OT. (Prov 1:4; 18:15) “The heart of the prudent acquires knowledge, And the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.” (18:15)

2. BENEFIT: Francis Bacon famously said: ‘Knowledge is Power’

[but even power needs a guidance system]

- a) Knowledge is Power—IF it is used with Wisdom FOR Informed Decision Making
- b) It includes common Secular Knowledge—common sense “know-how”
- c) but is more importantly about Spiritual Knowledge—the Knowledge of God

3. IN ACTION:

- a) Without Knowledge of the Truth—we will be destroyed (**Hosea 4:6**)
- b) With the Knowledge of the Truth—we can be set free (**John 8:31–32**)
- c) This is the Power of the Knowledge of God (**John 17:3**)

(3) DISCRETION - מְזִמָּה (mez-im-maw')

1. DEFINITION: Perception, Reason, ability to make wise decisions

- a) Found 9 times in OT. (Proverbs 2:11; 19:11) “The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, And his glory is to overlook a transgression.” (Prov. 19:11)

2. BENEFIT: Spiritual Maturity in mastery over self [self-control]

- a) A Person with Discretion knows What to say and what not to say.
when to speak and when to be silent.
- b) A Person who Lacks Discretion has no spiritual maturity or self-control—
—so they Run their Mouth without thinking.
- c) Discretion makes a heart wise & beautiful—lack of discretion makes it ugly (**11:22**)

3. IN ACTION: How do you handle when someone insults you?

- a) Jesus said *“whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also”* (Mt 5:39)
- b) A slap in the face is an insult—can you turn the other cheek and take an insult?
- c) But some can't handle it because they Lack the Maturity & Self Control to let it go—
- d) They Over-React and want everyone to know how offended they are

(19:11; 16:32; Eccl. 7:9; James 1:19)

- e) Discretion is the Wisdom of a Gentle and Quiet Spirit (**1 Corinthians 13:4-8a**)

(4) FEAR OF THE LORD - יִרְאָה יְהוָה (yir'ah YHWH)

1. DEFINITION: The word ‘fear’ in v.13 is a translation of Hebrew word yir'ah

- a) Meaning: “terror, awesome or terrifying thing (object causing fear)”
 - (1) Also, “respect, reverence, to honor and revere” — to act with caution, respect
 - (2) It is mentioned 45 times in the OT. (Proverbs 15:16, 33; 1:7; 3:7; 8:13; 9:10)
- b) The "fear of the Lord" refers to a deep respect, awe, and reverence for God,
recognizing His power and holiness. It is seen as the beginning of wisdom,
leading to a humble and obedient relationship with Him.
- c) It is both the beginning of wisdom and the heart of faith (**Prov 9:10; Eccl 12:13**).
- d) Those Who Do Not Fear the Lord Are Arrogant and Prideful...

They do not honor, or show reverence to God who is Holy (**Leviticus 10:1–3**)

2. **BENEFIT:** Having a right relationship with God (Isaiah 66:1–2; Prov. 28:14)

3. **IN ACTION:** Fear of Man or Fear of God? (29:25; 19:23; 14:27)

- a) The Fear of Man cares more about what man thinks than what God thinks. (29:25)
- b) Some feared the Jews more than they feared the Lord (John 12:42–43)
- c) Jesus said to Fear God! (Luke 12:4–5)

“The heaviest obligation lying upon the christian church today is to purify and elevate her concept of God until it is once more worthy of Him...” - A.W. Tozer

(5) **COUNSEL & SOUND WISDOM - עֵצָה (etsah)**

1. **DEFINITION:** The word ‘counsel’ in verse 14 is the Hebrew word etsah,

- a) defined in the Strong's Hebrew Lexicon as “counsel, advice, purpose.”
- b) Found 88 times in the OT. (Proverbs 1:5; 19:20) “Listen to counsel and accept discipline, that you may be wise the rest of your days. (19:20)
- c) Counsel and Sound Wisdom go hand in hand

2. **BENEFIT:** Continually Growing in Wisdom (1:1-5)

3. **IN ACTION:** When Rehoboam became King the people asked him to lighten the heavy burden his father Solomon put on them...

- a) He was wise to seek counsel from others—
but he was unwise in the counsel he chose to follow
- b) (1 Kings 12:6-11) Rehoboam chose to Exalt Himself and Humble Others
- c) His Arrogant Attitude caused a Civil War that divided the Kingdom (Prov. 13:20)

(6) **UNDERSTANDING - בִּינָה (biynah)**

1. **DEFINITION:** The word ‘understanding’ in v. 14 is the Hebrew word biynah,

- a) defined as: understanding, discernment, meaning
- b) It is mentioned 38 times in the OT.

2. **BENEFIT:** To see beyond the apparent to that which is real

But Not just to See, but to Know...

and not Just to Know—but to Understand.

- a) To put ‘understanding’ into perspective, we look at three of the pillars together....
 - The first pillar, Prudence, is the wise application of knowledge or the ‘how’,
 - The second pillar, Knowledge is information itself or the ‘what’,
 - The sixth pillar is ‘understanding’, this is the ‘why’.—Without the ‘why’, we won’t make proper application of the ‘how’ & ‘what’
- b) So How Do We Gain This Understanding?

Psalms 119:104 “Through Your precepts I get understanding”

- The Source of all true wisdom is from God
- He has Revealed the Wisdom from Above in His Word the Bible
- We Must Study to be able to Discern and Understand (Proverbs 2:1–8)

3. **IN ACTION:** It is like a sword that cuts through deception to the Truth

- a) Two women living in the same house each had a baby around the same time...
- b) But the child of 1 mother died and she switched the child with the other in the night
- c) The custody case came before King Solomon (1 Kings 3:23–28)

(7) STRENGTH / POWER - גְבוּרָה (gebuwrah)

1. DEFINITION: Defined: Force, power, strength, might, valor, victory

- a) Found 69 times in OT
- b) Put All of These Pillars of Wisdom Together and there is Power & Strength
- c) Not brute force strength but rather noble, righteous strength.
- d) Strength of heart & of character you would expect from a wise person of God.

2. BENEFIT: Bacon said ‘Knowledge is power’ —

—yet Wisdom is even greater than knowledge.

- a) “Wisdom strengthens the wise more than ten rulers of the city. (Ecc 7:19)
- b) “For wisdom is a defense as money is a defense, but the excellence of knowledge is that wisdom gives life to those who have it. (Ecc 7:12)

3. IN ACTION: A Poor Wise Man who saved a city (Ecclesiastes 9:13–15**)**

- a) This event had a deep and lasting impact on the heart of Solomon
- b) This small city was caught by surprise and totally unprepared...
It was surrounded and they did not stand a chance.
- c) But a poor wise man in the city suggested a brilliant strategy and the city was saved
- d) He should’ve been rewarded! > But he was not—he was forgotten!

Solomon Gives Three Lessons From This Example:

1. (v.16) Wisdom can go unrecognized and unappreciated because of prideful, self-centered people.

- Because of Human Nature—there are many self-centered people who don’t want to honor some one else—especially if they are old and poor...
- Because then they would have to admit the entire town was saved by a “nobody”

2. (v.17) Wise words spoken quietly are more powerful than the loud shouts of fools

- There are many loud people who claim to have all the answers...
- but it was the wise man’s humble and quiet words that saved the city.

3. (v.18) Wisdom is powerful, but one sinner can counteract much of the good that the wise do.

- a) This man’s wisdom was far superior to the weapons turned against his town, but one selfish sinner brought shame and disgrace upon it.
- b) No doubt humiliated by the fact that one poor man had done for the city what an entire town could not do, this foolish man likely discouraged the people from recognizing the wise old man. Their ingratitude is what they are remembered for to this day. (Preachers Outline Study Bible)

There is a Poor Wise Man Who Saved More than a City—>He Saved the World!

He was despised and rejected by men—rejected by the world because the world honors its own
But Jesus is not of this world—He gave His life for the Sins of the World—for all who trust & Obey

CONCLUSION:

1. What does wisdom look like? It is visible in Jesus Christ (Isa. 11:1-2)

2. All the Treasuries of Wisdom and Knowledge Are Found in Him (Col 2:2-3)