

# 813 How Can I Think Wisely?

## Phil Sanders

### God's Answers to Life's Questions

Ron Wilkins, a dear friend of mine, often speaks of critical thinking errors. Ron trains people to spot these errors and to correct their thinking. When people change their perspective and come to think wisely, their lives begin to change dramatically for the better. Today we are going to look in the Bible to see how God wants us to think. Wisdom is considered by many to be simply the art of learning how to succeed in life. The real essence of wisdom is spiritual, for life is more than just living by a set of rules and being rewarded in some physical manner. Undoubtedly, wisdom comes from God. Solomon said in Proverbs 2:6, "For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding." Wisdom involves observation and instruction. It really begins with God and one's faith in Him as Lord and Savior. Solomon by inspiration said in Proverbs 1:7, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction." The difference between the wise and the foolish is how they view God and His Word. The Bible says in Job 28:28, "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; And to depart from evil is understanding."

The book of Proverbs was written by a father to his son to instruct him in how to avoid moral and spiritual problems and to be successful in life. If you wish to be wise, read the book of Proverbs again and again. Proverbs 1:1-7 says: "The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel: To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight, to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity; to give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth—Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance, to understand a proverb and a saying, the words of the wise and their riddles. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction." When people take God into account in every aspect of their lives, that is the beginning of wisdom.

The Bible pictures wisdom at times as if she were a person calling out to people. Proverbs 1:20-33 says: Wisdom shouts in the street, She lifts her voice in the square; At the head of the noisy streets she cries out; At the entrance of the gates in the city she utters her sayings: "How long, O naive ones, will you love being simple-minded? And scoffers delight themselves in scoffing and fools hate knowledge? Turn to my reproof, Behold, I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you.

"Because I called and you refused, I stretched out my hand and no one paid attention; And you neglected all my counsel And did not want my reproof; I will also laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your dread comes, When your dread comes like a storm and your calamity comes like a whirlwind, When distress and anguish come upon you. Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently but they will not find me, Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD. They would not accept my counsel, they spurned all my reproof. So they shall eat of the fruit of their own way And be satiated with their own devices. For the waywardness of the naive will kill them, And the complacency of fools will destroy them. But he who listens to me shall live securely and will be at ease from the dread of evil."

To be "foolish" is to be godless. The Bible says in Psalm 14:1: The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." Such a person is not so much an atheist as he is a person who dismisses God. He doesn't care if there is a God or what God says. He intends to live his life the way he pleases regardless of what God says, because he has chosen to live life without God. Isaiah explains in Isaiah 32:6, "For a fool speaks nonsense, and his heart inclines toward wickedness: To practice ungodliness and to speak error against the LORD." In the Bible a fool is any person who acts like there is no God or that God's Word and will makes no difference.

We think of a fool as someone who lacks intelligence or common sense. But when the Bible speaks of a fool, it is not speaking of a person who is mentally deficient. Rather it is speaking in a moral or religious sense. Foolishness is a moral issue rather than an intellectual one; the fool is morally deficient. This deficiency may come from a rebellious or insolent spirit, a quick temper, acting impetuously, or insisting on one's own way. Proverbs 22:15 says: "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him." Foolishness is often characterized by an obstinate person who insists on making choices that lead to destruction.

This kind of fool refuses to learn proper ways or to concentrate on what is right. This fool rejects the fear or respect of the Lord; he thinks he knows better than God. Another kind of fool is one who denies there is a God or is closed to God, to morality, and to reason. Fear of God is a proper respect and awe for God. It regards God as God and gives Him the honor and praise due to His name. This relationship provides the necessary kind of thinking about life, about behavior, and about attitudes. The basic choices we make in our moral and spiritual lives reveal our wisdom or our foolishness. Proverbs 12:15 says, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice." Jeremiah 10:23 says, "I know, O LORD, that the way of man is not in himself, that it is not in man who walks to direct his steps."

In the New Testament, a fool is one who has not perceived reality correctly, because he or she has failed to take God and His will into account or to see things from God's perspective. Jesus called the Pharisees fools for their preoccupation with externals and for their unconcern with character warped with greed and wickedness. Jesus tells of the foolish rich farmer who had laid up possessions on earth but was not rich toward God. He only thought of himself and refused to take God into account. Fools see life in a distorted way and have lost sight of God. Jesus called the Pharisees blind fools for their complete insensitivity to God's values. They strain out a gnat and swallow a camel. Job 28:12-28 asks an important question. Job asks, "But where can wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? Man does not know its value, Nor is it found in the land of the living. The deep says, 'It is not in me'; And the sea says, 'It is not with me.' Pure gold cannot be given in exchange for it, Nor can silver be weighed as its price. It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir, In precious onyx, or sapphire. Gold or glass cannot equal it, Nor can it be exchanged for articles of fine gold. Coral and crystal are not to be mentioned; And the acquisition of wisdom is above that of pearls. The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it, Nor can it be valued in pure gold. Where then does wisdom come from? And where is the place of understanding? Thus it is hidden from the eyes of all living And concealed from the birds of the sky. Abaddon and Death say, 'With our ears we have heard a report of it.'

Job answers his question: "God understands its way, And He knows its place. For He looks to the ends of the earth And sees everything under the heavens. When He imparted weight to the wind And meted out the waters by measure, When He set a limit for the rain And a course for the thunderbolt, Then He saw it and declared it; He established it and also searched it out. And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; And to depart from evil is understanding.'"

You and I must search the Scriptures for God's revealed will. The Bible says in Ephesians 5:15-17, "Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." Wisdom comes from God; it is not like the shrewd trickery of men. Only by looking at our life from God's

revealed point of view can we avoid those foolish notions about life's meaning. These distorted notions cause people to live destructive and painful lives. Foolishness causes pain to the one who is foolish and to those who come into contact with him or her.

God's wisdom matters. Many people live their lives reading everything but the Bible. They know every movie star or every athlete or every television program, but they do not know what God wills for their lives. Proverbs 2:1-12 says: "My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.

"For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding; he stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk in integrity, guarding the paths of justice and watching over the way of his saints. Then you will understand righteousness and justice and equity, every good path; for wisdom will come into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; discretion will watch over you, understanding will guard you, delivering you from the way of evil, from men of perverted speech, who forsake the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness, who rejoice in doing evil and delight in the perverseness of evil, men whose paths are crooked, and who are devious in their ways."

Psalms 19:7 says, "The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple." The Bible is God's gift of wisdom for us all. It will bless us, if we take the time to read and study it. True wisdom is also a gift from God to those who ask for it. God promised in James 1:5, "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." Every day that we spend time with God, listening to his word and praying to him is a day that we will grow wiser in life. We'll make better choices, we'll learn how to avoid evil and the things that hurt, and we'll grow to love God more. There is nothing you'll do today that will bless you more than your private, daily worship. Of course, it is also important to attend the worship of the church.

Jeremiah spoke the words of God in Jeremiah 9:23-24: Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD." Real wisdom is in knowing God and His will for our lives. Nothing is more valuable! Not earthly wisdom, not riches, not

might. Come to know God, and true, spiritual wisdom will come with it! Proverbs 3:13-18 says: "Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding, for the gain from her is better than gain from silver and her profit better than gold. She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her. Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called blessed."

A man approached a speaker after worship at church and said, "You Christians are all brainwashed." The speaker replied, "Friend, we are all brainwashed to a degree. Everybody fills his brains with something. The important thing is that we Christians choose what we want to wash our brains with." We choose God's love, God's wisdom, and God's truth. Those things wash away the lies, the errors in thinking, the selfishness, and the hatred of our day and leave us with good will and good intentions. It builds us up and makes us authentic and real, not whitewashed tombs or actors. We belong to God, and He is in our every thought and act. We ask, "What does God will for our lives?" "How does God want us to think about this situation or that?" "How can we be like Jesus?" "What is loving?" We have learned that Proverbs 30:5 proves true. Proverbs 30:5 says, "Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him."

That's why I would urge you to do what Solomon said in Proverbs 23:23, "Buy truth, and do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding." The way to do that is by humbling your heart and listening to God and His word. Nothing else will bless your life the way the Bible will. That old book that our grandmothers read is still true; it is not simply stories and nice sayings. The Bible is God's revealed will, God's wisdom, and God's gift to us. This book, no matter what you might first think, is what God will use to examine your life at the end of time. Buy the truth, know the truth, love the truth, and obey the truth. To become a Christian you must put your trust in God out of love. You must believe that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Son of the living God, who died for your sins, was buried, and on the third day rose again to be Lord of all. Out of faith and love, you must repent of your sins. You can't love God and keep on living a worldly or sinful life. Love means that you give all that up in order to take up your cross and follow Him. Along with that faith, love, and repentance, the Lord asks you to be baptized. The Lord Jesus said in Mark 16:16, "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned." Today is a good day for you to become a Christian and we are praying that you will.

*Copyright 2007, Phil Sanders  
Concord Road Church of Christ  
8221 Concord Rd., Brentwood, TN 37027  
1-877-226-5747*

[phil@God-answers.org](mailto:phil@God-answers.org)

[www.tv.God-answers.org](http://www.tv.God-answers.org)