



# SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

## ACQUIRING WISDOM

**KEY PASSAGE:** Proverbs 2:1-7 | **SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES:** Proverbs 4:10-13; 5:1; 6:6-11; 8:11, 33-34; 9:10-12; 12:15; 13:10, 20; 14:16; 15:31-32 | John 14:6 | 1 Corinthians 1:18-20; 3:19-21 | James 1:5-6

### ► SUMMARY

#### There is a difference between knowledge and wisdom.

Our current period in history is described as the information age, and we have access to more knowledge than we know what to do with. But something is still missing—great wisdom. For example, there are many people who boast about their level of education and degrees, but they make disasters of their lives because they lack true spiritual discernment and understanding.

Although few Scriptures advise us to acquire more information, many admonish us to seek wisdom. Because God is the only source of truth, all wisdom comes from Him. He sees beyond the immediate circumstances and knows the future. That's why, if we follow biblical principles, He will give us understanding and guidance for every decision and situation we encounter in life.

### ► SERMON POINTS

#### What is wisdom?

The Bible makes a distinction between two very different kinds:

- **Worldly wisdom** is the combination of knowledge and information. It's based on human understanding and reasoning, but it is foolishness to the Lord (1 Cor. 3:19).
- **Godly wisdom** is the capacity to see things from the Father's viewpoint and respond according to

scriptural principles. With it, a person can survive any circumstance.

#### How do we acquire godly wisdom?

It takes time and effort to become truly wise, and it comes as a result of learning from the decisions we make. Throughout life, we'll face challenging questions and situations that demand a greater wealth of knowledge and understanding than human beings can possibly possess. We can acquire the godly wisdom we need by:

- **Seeking it.** No one is born with wisdom, so we have two options—seek it or face the consequences of living without it. However, we must ask ourselves if we truly want wisdom or if we are searching for something else. The world offers other things that cater to our desires—security, wealth, friends, health, popularity, prestige, or beauty. But Proverbs 8:11 says all desirable things pale in comparison to wisdom. It's a gift God gives to those who search for it like hidden treasure (Prov. 2:4-7). Wisdom won't come with half-hearted attempts at reading the Scriptures; it requires diligent pursuit.
- **Meditating on God's Word.** The Bible is God's mind recorded for us on paper. It reveals His ways, plans, and purposes, and when we read and understand it, His thoughts become a part of us and affect how we live. That's why we should begin every day with the Lord and ask Him to give us direction from His Word. Since the Lord is the only one who knows what is ahead, we need His perspective concerning our plans, actions, and choices. If we neglect His Word, we can't

understand His ways and will make poor choices. Instead of experiencing God's best blessings, we'll encounter discipline because every unwise action comes with a high price.

- **Obeying scriptural principles.** Merely having knowledge of the Bible cannot make us wise. God's wisdom is reserved for those who heed His instructions and choose to apply His truths to their lives (Prov. 8:33-34). Any time we need divine direction, it's available to us in His Word. When we believe in and abide by His principles, we'll reap the blessings of wisdom that come with obedience.
- **Praying for it.** The book of Proverbs doesn't specifically emphasize praying for wisdom, but James tells us to ask God for it if it's something we lack (James 1:5-6). However, just requesting wisdom is not enough. We must ask in faith, obey what the Lord says, and watch the results of our actions. Obedience always benefits us, but negative consequences occur when we ignore God and go our own way. To avoid making foolish and costly decisions, we need to begin each day in prayer, asking the Lord how He wants us to operate.
- **Observing how God works in the world.** The Word of God teaches us that wisdom also comes from observing various lifestyles and the results they produce. For example, wise men are cautious and turn away from evil, but fools are arrogant and careless (Prov. 14:16). God even uses ants to teach us the importance of working diligently for our provisions because laziness invariably leads to poverty (Prov. 6:6-11).

When we pay attention to the behaviors of others, we can see that consequences—both good and bad—always follow. In our culture, which emphasizes personal achievement and pleasure, few people think about the future effects of their actions. But the Bible helps us understand life from God's perspective and helps us make the wise choices that produce positive results.

- **Heeding godly counsel.** Everyone needs guidance at times, but not all advice is godly. Some people—even trained counselors—can actually lead us astray instead of helping us find God's way. Whenever we seek out someone for direction, we should examine that person's lifestyle and determine the source of his or her advice. Is the counsel based on God's Word or on academic knowledge and personal opinions? Once we've determined that the guidance is from Him, we must be willing to heed it and accept reproof if necessary (Prov. 15:31-32).
- **Associating with the wise.** We should never underestimate the influence of friends. They can either help us grow in wisdom or cause us to suffer harm (Prov. 13:20). That's why we need to examine our friends closely to determine whether they're building us up spiritually or leading us astray. We should also evaluate what kind of friends we are to others. Are we willing to tell them the truth based on what Scripture says, or is our goal only to tell them what they want to hear? Giving people bad advice just to make them feel better or to gain approval for ourselves is a disservice.

#### ▶ RESPONSE

- Wisdom is a choice, one that begins with the decision to trust Christ as Savior and increases as we follow the teachings of God's Word. If we want to be wise, we must have a passion for the Lord's guidance because there are many ideas, people, and situations that will tempt us to ignore scriptural principles.
- The world tells us to live for today's pleasures and pursuits, but knowing our time on earth is limited should actually prompt us to correct sinful behaviors and attitudes and begin living wisely. Our heavenly Father will always strengthen, defend, and help those who trust in Him, and blessings are promised to those who heed His perfect counsel.

To purchase this message on CD or DVD, please visit [store.intouch.org](http://store.intouch.org) or call **1-800-789-1473**.  
To download these Sermon Notes, visit [intouch.org/sermonnotes](http://intouch.org/sermonnotes).

