

Live by Wisdom

Ecclesiastes 9:13-10:20

Three preliminary points about Biblical wisdom:

1. God gives wisdom (James 3:13-18).
2. Fools despise wisdom (Proverbs 1:7).
3. The world's wisdom is often contrary to God's wisdom (1Co 1:18f).

Big Idea: Wisdom comes from God; so, we live by wisdom to reflect Christ.

¹³ I also saw under the sun this example of wisdom that greatly impressed me: ¹⁴ There was once a small city with only a few people in it. And a powerful king came against it, surrounded it and built huge siege works against it. ¹⁵ Now there lived in that city a man poor but wise, and he saved the city by his wisdom. But nobody remembered that poor man. ¹⁶ So I said, “Wisdom is better than strength.” But the poor man’s wisdom is despised, and his words are no longer heeded. ¹⁷ The quiet words of the wise are more to be heeded than the shouts of a ruler of fools. ¹⁸ Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good.

10 As dead flies give perfume a bad smell, so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor. ² The heart of the wise inclines to the right, but the heart of the fool to the left. ³ Even as fools walk along the road, they lack sense and show everyone how stupid they are. ⁴ If a ruler's anger rises against you, do not leave your post; calmness can lay great offenses to rest. ⁵ There is an evil I have seen under the sun, the sort of error that arises from a ruler: ⁶ Fools are put in many high positions, while the rich occupy the low ones. ⁷ I have seen slaves on horseback, while princes go on foot like slaves.

⁸ Whoever digs a pit may fall into it; whoever breaks through a wall may be bitten by a snake. ⁹ Whoever quarries stones may be injured by them; whoever splits logs may be endangered by them. ¹⁰ If the ax is dull and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed, but skill will bring success. ¹¹ If a snake bites before it is charmed, the charmer receives no fee. ¹² Words from the mouth of the wise are gracious, but fools are consumed by their own lips. ¹³ At the beginning their words are folly; at the end they are wicked madness— ¹⁴ and fools multiply words. No one knows what is coming—who can tell someone else what will happen after them?

¹⁵ The toil of fools wearies them; they do not know the way to town. ¹⁶ Woe to the land whose king was a servant and whose princes feast in the morning. ¹⁷ Blessed is the land whose king is of noble birth and whose princes eat at a proper time—for strength and not for drunkenness. ¹⁸ Through laziness, the rafters sag; because of idle hands, the house leaks. ¹⁹ A feast is made for laughter, wine makes life merry, and money is the answer for everything. ²⁰ Do not revile the king even in your thoughts, or curse the rich in your bedroom, because a bird in the sky may carry your words, and a bird on the wing may report what you say.

Big Idea: Wisdom comes from God; so, we live by wisdom to reflect Christ.

Wise living makes us good witnesses.

- 1.The world doesn't value wisdom (9:13-18).
- 2.A fly ruins the perfume (10:1-4).
- 3.Walk in wisdom (10:5-11).
- 4.Speak with wisdom (10:12-19).

1. The world doesn't value wisdom (9:13-18).

¹⁵ But there was found in [the city] a poor, **wise man**, and he by his **wisdom** delivered the city. Yet no one remembered that poor man. ¹⁶ But I say that **wisdom is better than might**, though the poor man's wisdom is despised and his words are not heard. ¹⁷ The words of **the wise heard in quiet are better than the shouting of a ruler among fools**. ¹⁸ **Wisdom is better than weapons of war**, but one sinner destroys much good.

Ever notice on Social Media the wise guy has like 10 views but the wise person has millions?

1. The world ignores wisdom but often listens to a shouting fool (vv. 16; 17).
2. Wisdom is often despised and forgotten (vv. 15; 16).
3. Wisdom is better than might (vv. 16; 18).
4. One sinner can undo much wisdom (v. 18).

Live according to God's wisdom (Jam 3:17-18).

- i. Value wisdom over strength (v. 16).
- ii. Wisdom accepts obscurity in service (v. 15).
- iii. When the world forgets, God remembers (Heb 6:10; Mt 6).
- iv. Am I pursuing wisdom to glorify God, or receive recognition?

It's not bad to receive recognition. That's not the point. But, it's a matter of heart condition.

2. A fly ruins the perfume (10:1-4).

Dead flies make the perfumer's ointment give off a stench; so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor. ² A wise man's heart inclines him to the right, but a fool's heart to the left. ³ Even when the fool walks on the road, he lacks sense, and he says to everyone that he is a fool. ⁴ If the anger of the ruler rises against you, do not leave your place, for calmness will lay great offenses to rest.

Foolishness ruins us; Wisdom saves us.

The Fool:

- Destroys their reputation (v. 1).
- Opposes God's truth (v. 2).
- Goes against God's Word (v. 2).
- Can't hide their foolishness (v. 3).

The Wise One:

- Identifies flies (v. 1).
- Pursues integrity, truth (vv. 2-3).
- Responds calmly (v. 4; Col 3:16).
- Guards their character (v. 3).

Fool:

The fool consistently opposes God's truth (v. 2), revealing his bent heart.

Fools go against God's Word (v. 2; Prov 9:1-5; 13-15).

A fool can't keep quiet (v. 3; Prov 17:28).

Fools can't hide themselves; their conduct exposes them to all (v. 3). Folly reveals itself outwardly (10:3). Sin cannot remain hidden; foolishness walks in public.

Wisdom:

Wisdom calls us to patience and calmness, even under unjust rulers (v. 4).

Calmness helps problems go away (v. 4; Col 3:16).

Godly living gives us opportunities to share Christ (1Pt 3:14f).

Wisdom brings stability under authority (10:4). Calmness under an angry ruler reflects the Spirit's fruit of peace (Gal 5:22).

Take the fly out in 4 steps from 1 Cor 5.

- i. Mourn/**recognize** sin (1 Cor 5:1-2).
- ii. **Repent**/Judge the sin (1 Cor 5:3-5).
- iii. **Remove** the source; get rid of sin (1 Cor 5:6-7).
- iv. Experience **restoration**; God forgives (1 Cor 5:8).

3. Walk in wisdom (10:5-11).

⁵ There is an evil I have seen under the sun, the sort of error that arises from a ruler: ⁶ Fools are put in many high positions, while the rich occupy the low ones. ⁷ I have seen slaves on horseback, while princes go on foot like slaves. ⁸ Whoever digs a pit may fall into it; whoever breaks through a wall may be bitten by a snake. ⁹ Whoever quarries stones may be injured by them; whoever splits logs may be endangered by them. ¹⁰ If the ax is dull and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed, but skill will bring success. ¹¹ If a snake bites before it is charmed, the charmer receives no fee.

Walk wisely; make good use of the time (Eph 5:15-17).

- i. Seek godly character, not charisma (vv. 5-7).
- ii. When fools rise to power; God remains sovereign (vv. 6-7).
- iii. Be realistic about risks in life and work (vv. 8-9).
- iv. Sharpen your blade, physically & spiritually (v. 10).

4. Speak with wisdom (10:12-20).

...even on social media.

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Watch what you say, you can't *un-say* it.

- i. Check your speech, it mirrors your heart (vv. 12-14; Lk 6:45).
- ii. Speak graciously, as a wise one (v. 12).
- iii. Say less. Too many words reveal our foolishness (vv. 13-14).
- iv. Words cause great trouble, even whispered (v. 20; Jam 3:5).
- v. God will bring every secret into judgment (Eccl 12:14).

THINK – True, Helpful, Inspiring, Needed, Kind

In wisdom, “confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” Rom 10:9

Live wisely so that you would rightly
represent the one who gives wisdom.