



[Proverbs 1:1-7](#)

(1) The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel: (2) for attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight; (3) for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; (4) for giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young- (5) let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance- (6) for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise. (7) The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

New International Version

The ancient Hebrews associated [wisdom](#) with our modern term “skill,” even though “skill” is not a direct translation of the Hebrew term. “Skill” implies what wisdom is in actual practice: excellence in quality or expertise in the practice of one's occupation, craft, or art. People may acquire many skills in life, but the Bible focuses on human life and its God-given purpose. Therefore, a practical definition of biblical *wisdom* is “skill in living according to God's way of life.”

To refine it further, biblical wisdom is unique to those truly in a relationship with [God](#). That biblical wisdom is a gift of God reinforces this fact, and according to [James 1:1-8](#), we should ask for it and He will give it. James cautions that we must be patient because God gives it through the experiences of living within a relationship with God. Living requires time, and in some cases, a great deal of time because we are often slow to learn. God gives wisdom for us to make the best practical use of all the other gifts

He gives, enabling us to glorify Him by our lives. As it is used, it displays a host of characteristics similar to the [fruit of the Spirit](#) (see [James 3:17-18](#)).

[Proverbs 1:1-7](#) helps to clarify wisdom by showing that it consists of such other godly characteristics as knowledge of God Himself, the fear of God, understanding, discernment, discretion, prudence, justice, judgment, equity, etc., all of which, melded together and used, produce a skill in living that—this is important—is in alignment with God's purpose and way of life.

Undoubtedly, some people are worldly-wise. However, biblical wisdom and worldly wisdom are not the same skillset. Biblical wisdom contains those spiritual qualities that are in alignment with and support God's purposes. Though wisdom may provide a measure of worldly success, that is not its primary purpose.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[Ecclesiastes and Christian Living \(Part Eight\): Death](#)

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