

## Christ Our Wisdom

Godly Wisdom Defined

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There is so much knowledge in our global society, that we don't merely face information overload, we are drowning with knowledge overload.

According to a research project titled, *How Much Information?*

"The world's total yearly production of print, film, optical and magnetic content would require roughly 1.5 billion gigabytes of storage. This is the equivalent of 250 megabytes per person for every man, woman and child on earth."

(That's roughly the equivalent of 250 average size books for every man, woman and child on the earth.) That is beyond my imagination how much that would be, but that gives you an idea about the amount of information that is flowing today

In this information age, a steady stream of input is bombarding us. Like water from a fire hose, information overwhelms and numbs us. But are we any wiser? Are we any closer to God, or to God's design or His intentions for life? Are we humbler? Are we learning anything about the way life really works with this information overload?

I fear the subtitle of a book by C. John Sommerville sums up our situation: *The Dearth of Wisdom in an Information Society*. As one observer notes, we are in a "wisdom famine."

Who wants to be wise anymore? People want to be rich. They want to be right. They want to be popular and they want to be in control. But who wants to be wise? If you ask someone in society who wants to be wise rather than something else in society, wise will almost always be the last choice. It's just not something pursued in this society. In fact, the opposite, foolishness is in!

In sharp contrast, Proverbs 9 pictures a wisdom feast. In this allegory full of poetic images, wisdom is personified as a woman??a kind of hostess. She has prepared a lavish feast and sent out formal invitations. She says, "Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed."

All you need to do is RSVP. Just show up! Come on in, sit down and feast on wisdom!

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This is the sense that we get from this section of scripture. We will read Proverbs 9:1-12. My subtitle says: The Way of Wisdom.

**Proverbs 9:1-12** Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn out her seven pillars; She has slaughtered her meat, she has mixed her wine, she has also furnished her table. She has sent out her maidens, she cries out from the highest places of the city, "Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!" As for him who lacks understanding, she says to him, "Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. Forsake foolishness and live, and go in the way of understanding. He who corrects a scoffer gets shame for himself, and he who rebukes a wicked man only harms himself. Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you; rebuke a wise man, and he will love you. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a just man, and he will increase in learning. The fear of the LoORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For by me your days will be multiplied, and years of life will be added to you. If you are wise, you are wise for yourself, and if you scoff, you will bear it alone."

So once we are given the invitation it's our choice whether or not we pursue wisdom. If we don't take the road to wisdom, by default we take the road to foolishness. There is no in-between! Your decision is either wisdom or foolishness.

Later in Chapter 9 we meet another woman, "a foolish woman" who lives down the road. She wants our company as well. But her place is not a mansion but a dive, and the sustenance she offers is meager, even deadly. We need to be careful, because she represents foolishness, and foolishness is very, very dangerous.

Before we continue in Proverbs 9, I want to make a comment on folly and foolishness. As a word in common secular use, folly is a weak or absurd act, and foolishness is a lack of wisdom or judgment. But, of course, there is far more to folly and foolishness than this. I just wanted to give you a general idea of what the world thinks of it in the way of a secular definition.

While folly in the Old Testament is sometimes plain silliness, it is usually guilty of a disdain for God's truth and discipline. Proverbs 1:7 expresses this succinctly,

**Proverbs 1:7** The fear of the LoORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Even the simple or gullible person is not merely without sense, but is fatally rebellious. He must make a moral and spiritual choice, not only a mental effort to reject God's truth.

In the New Testament, a person's folly may sometimes lie in his being unable to perceive the issues, but a person's folly is more often in the fact that he has made an unworthy choice. (A foolish person is unworthy of God's blessings.)

**Romans 1:20-23** For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

Now back to Proverbs 9 to finish our brief comparison of wisdom with folly, we will read Proverbs 9:13-18 which is subtitled: The Way of Folly .

**Proverbs 9:13-18** A foolish woman is clamorous; she is simple, and knows nothing. For she sits at the door of her house, on a seat by the highest places of the city, (This gives you the feeling of an in-your-face promotion of foolishness in her doing this.) To call to those who pass by, who go straight on their way: "Whoever is simple, let him turn in here"; and as for him who lacks understanding, she says to him, "Stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." But he does not know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of hell.

This way of folly is pictured as something we do not want to desire, that we want to outright avoid at all costs. Proverbs 9 seems to suggest that someone might be tempted to bypass wisdom's feast and try to survive on the thin gruel of folly (or, you might think of it as, useless information in our society today). How many people today are on their computers most of the day receiving this gruel of folly we call information.

Ephesians 5:15-17 is a call to wisdom too, although it comes across less as an invitation and more as a kick in the backside. It is more pointed and more direct.

**Ephesians 5:15-18** See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but

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as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,

The text even gives some specific ideas of what wisdom looks like, examples of what a wise person does, things like "make the most of the time" or "understand what the will of the Lord is" or "don't get drunk" and "be filled with the Holy Spirit." So we see specifics stated there. Specifics on how to live our lives are what the wise receive.

Of course, the book of Proverbs gets down to specifics too. The first 9 chapters describe how wisdom works in general, but the proverbs in chapter 10 concern the nuts and bolts of godly living. As someone once pointed out, a proverb is "a short sentence based on long experience."

Some proverbs are real zingers. They're plain truth, brought home with the gentleness of a sledgehammer.

Fourteen times in the book of Proverbs we're reminded, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Wisdom and godly living begins with letting God be God. In that sense, Proverbs is not for the general public but it is for God's people. It is for those to whom He has given His Holy Spirit. It is to people of understanding. Although, we have to admit, the general public would benefit from receiving wisdom.

Proverbs is for God's people, calling us beyond the theoretical to the practical, beyond the intellectual to the actual, beyond abstractions to application, beyond beliefs to behavior, and beyond the physical to the spiritual. In contrast to Greek wisdom??which is about philosophy and ideas and intellectual thought??biblical wisdom is about what to do day by day. It is not the philosophical fluff we receive from the world.

In this Information age, where words flow at an incredible rate, words are just not enough. Spoken words, even a vocalized statement of belief, mean nothing without the behavior to back it up. That is why we are here in God's church—to learn how to have the behavior of God's way of life.

Information today is fast, loud, superficial, and numbing. We can't get away from it. Today, it's intellectual fast food!??Full of useless mental fat!

Wisdom is slower, deeper, lasting, and more elusive. We can begin to make our way toward wisdom by clearing out the data smog that is in our lives. We can begin by

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fasting from TV, computer, cell phone and pocket planner long enough to talk with a friend face-to-face, to pray, to study the Bible, to read a book, or simply to sit still, meditate, and listen for wisdom, for the way of God.

Psalm 4:4 says,

**Psalm 4:4** ...meditate within your heart on your bed, and BE STILL.

If we do not take the time to do this, if we continue to be carried along by this information age that we live in, then we will not be able to receive wisdom because we are not standing still long enough to acquire it.

Wisdom, in a general sense, is a comprehensive knowledge of things in their proper nature and relations, together with the power of combining them in the most useful manner. That is the most general definition of wisdom.

Wisdom is the ability to judge correctly and to follow the best course of action, based on knowledge and understanding. It is the art of being successful, of forming the correct plan to gain the desired results.

The term Wisdom has several applications in Scripture: (I've listed 7.)

1. It is used to express the understanding or knowledge of things, both human and divine, mainly in a practical and moral aspect, especially in the Psalms, Proverbs, and the book of Job. It was this wisdom that Solomon entreated and received from God, especially in a governmental sense.
2. It is used to express ingenuity, skill, or dexterity, as in the case of the skilled workmen Bezaleel.

**Exodus 31:1-5** Then the LoORD spoke to Moses, saying: "See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze, in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of workmanship.

God wanted His Temple to be so beautiful and so fine in its workmanship that He

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actually gave specific wisdom, understanding, and knowledge to make it possible on a human level.

3. Wisdom is used for subtlety, craft, and stratagem??whether good or evil.

Exodus 1:10 records that Pharaoh dealt shrewdly (some translations use: "wisely") with the Israelites.

4. It stands for doctrine, learning, and experience.

**Job 12:12** Wisdom is with aged men, and with length of days, understanding.

This is the general wisdom that we acquire as we live our lives and acquire new experience.

5. It is used sometimes for the skill or arts of the world's magicians, wizards, and fortune tellers.

**Genesis 41:8** Now it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them for Pharaoh.

6. It is used of the learning and philosophy among the Greeks and Romans during the time of the apostles, which stood in contrast to the simplicity of the Gospel, and tended to draw away the minds of men from divine truth. This is called:

"fleshly; wisdom" in II Corinthians 1:12

"wisdom of this world" in I Corinthians 1:20; 3:19

"human wisdom" in I Corinthians 2:4

"wisdom of men" in I Corinthians 2:5

"the wisdom of this age" in I Corinthians 2:6

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and "man's wisdom" in I Corinthians 2:13

7. It is used with regard to divine things, generally called "wisdom," i.e. knowledge, insight, and deep understanding. It is represented everywhere as a divine gift, including the idea of practical application, and is in this way distinguished from theoretical knowledge. (That is the theoretical knowledge that is the type of Greek logic and wisdom of this world.) This is the wisdom we want, and we must ask God for.

Acts 6 describes the dispute that the men from the Synagogue of the Freedmen had with Stephen. It says, "They were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke." That is because God inspired him and gave him that wisdom as a gift.

Paul spoke about wisdom as a gift that is given through the Holy Spirit.

**I Corinthians 12:6-8** And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit,

Paul added to his explanation of wisdom in Ephesians 1 that wisdom ultimately comes from God the Father??the Father of Wisdom.

**Ephesians 1:15-17** Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,

The dominant use of "wisdom" in the Bible is as an attribute of God. Wisdom is intimately related to the divine knowledge, manifesting itself in the selection of proper ends with the proper means for their accomplishment.

Simply stated: Wisdom is the right use of knowledge!

The biblical concept of wisdom, therefore, is quite different from the classical worldly view of wisdom, which is sought through philosophy and man's rational thought to determine the mysteries of the existence of the universe. The worldly view of wisdom is

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motivated by pride, which we see (more than anywhere) in the Greek logic and in the educational system of this world.

The first principle of biblical wisdom is that man should humble himself before God in reverence and worship, obedient to His commands. This idea is found especially in what is called the Wisdom Literature: the books of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes.

In the Old Testament, the best example of a "wise man" is King Solomon, the man who God inspired to write Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. And yet the book of I Kings that heaps such lavish, warm, and glowing praise upon Solomon for his wisdom, also points out how Solomon's heart turned away from God.

**I Kings 4:29-34** And God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding, and largeness of heart like the sand on the seashore. (This something every one of us would like to have.) Thus Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the men of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men—than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was in all the surrounding nations. He spoke three thousand proverbs, and his songs were one thousand and five. Also he spoke of trees, from the cedar tree of Lebanon even to the hyssop that springs out of the wall; he spoke also of animals, of birds, of creeping things, and of fish. (He was a foremost biologist in the world.) And men of all nations, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom, came to hear the wisdom of Solomon.

Eventually, because Solomon didn't fear God and obey Him, his heart turned from the LoORD. Turn over to I Kings 1:11 and we will see the end result of Solomon's lack of *use*, of the wisdom God gave him, as well as the *misuse* of the wisdom he had.

**I Kings 11:1-12** But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites—from the nations of whom the LoORD had said to the children of Israel, "You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love.

This is something we see happening in an accelerating rate in this nation—those who were part of this nation earlier are both dating and marrying foreigners and those of

different races and ethnic groups. This should not be done because there is still that cultural background that has a heavy influence and it can pull a person in God's church away from His truth. When a person seems to fall in love with a person, regardless of race or ethnic background, it often clouds the mind; then the wisdom, for understanding and living God's way of life, is also absent.

**I Kings 11:3-11** And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LoORD his God, as was the heart of his father David. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. Solomon did evil in the sight of the LoORD, and did not fully follow the LoORD, as did his father David. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab [If I remember correctly, it was Chemosh that the people sacrificed their children to. That is how much it degenerated as a result of Solomon not using his wisdom properly in fear of God.], on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods. So the LoORD became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the LoORD God of Israel [to foolishness], who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the LoORD had commanded. Therefore the LoORD said to Solomon, "Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant.

That is one of the things we are seeing happen today, in the United States. This nation is being torn away and given to the Gentile nations and to the Gentiles that have infiltrated the United States. I saw a news item just within the last 24 hours. It said the highest concentration of Arabs in this nation are in Dearborn, MI. The main mall there is 100% owned by the Arabs. Dearborn, MI is also where Osama Bin Laden is producing a newspaper with their help, and he is very fondly thought of in that city that is 2/3 Arab. So we see God giving our nation away to the Gentiles as a result of this same sin.

**I Kings 11:11-13** "Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son. However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of my servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen."

We see there in this story that Solomon lacked the humility to fear God, and he lacked the submission to obey God??both are requirements for receiving the wisdom from above.

For the most part, the NT presents wisdom with the same intensely practical essence as in the Old Testament. It is rarely neutral, and is either God-given or God-opposing. If separated from God's revelation it is impoverished and unproductive at best, and foolish or even satanic at worst. I am speaking of the wisdom of this world.

Worldly wisdom is based on intuition and experience without revelation, and as a result has severe limitations. The failure to recognize these limitations brings biblical condemnation on all who haughtily attempt to cope with spiritual issues by human reasoning called "wisdom" by the world.

The truly wise are those to whom God has graciously imparted wisdom. One of Christ's legacies to his disciples was the wisdom to say the right thing in times of persecution and examination.

**Luke 21:10-15** Then He said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. "And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist.

God will give us what we need in the time of need when we are witnessing for Him and speaking His testimony.

A similar wisdom is necessary for understanding prophetic oracles and enigmas. Wisdom is essential not only for leaders of the church, but for all members, so we can all understand God's purposes and will in salvation.

God's wisdom is demonstrated in his actions with regard to salvation, which is manifested in the church. It is revealed, not in some esoteric doctrine addressed to

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some secret cult, but in action. We see this action manifested in God's supreme accomplishment in Christ's sacrifice.

This wisdom was previously veiled to human minds and has no philosophical or practical rivals. The best attempts of people to untangle the problems of human existence are shown to be foolish in light of God's way of life.

The wisdom of this world doesn't compare with the wisdom of God because the wisdom of this world is spiritual foolishness. Even God's wisdom looks like foolishness to the world.

**I Corinthians 1:18-31** For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."

The prudent here in verse 19 are the people professing understanding; those called the knowledgeable or illuminated of the world.

The wisdom of God includes the message of Christ's crucifixion and reveals essential things to us that are **impossible** for the great minds of the world to understand.

Briefly, here are 7 elements of divine wisdom:

1. God's plan of salvation was not the contrivance of human wisdom.
2. It is "unlike" what people have themselves devised as systems of religion. It did not occur to the ancient philosophers; nor has it occurred to the modern theorists.
3. It will stir to anger those opposed ?? the contemptuous, and the scorn of the "wise" people of this world.
4. The gospel is promoted and witnessed, not by the approval of the world's educated, but contrary to their wishes??in the face of their opposition.
5. Its success confounds and perplexes the world, because they so despise it they can't see its secret power. They witness its effects, but are unable to account for them. It has always been a question with philosophers why the gospel has met with such success.

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**James 3:17** But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

These attributes of wisdom are foreign to this world, unimaginable and not able to be understood. These elements of divine wisdom produce more fruit. They are dynamic!

6. The reception of the gospel wisdom requires a repentant heart and a humble mind.

7. Christianity is like all science in that the discoveries in science are such that it bewilders the wise in their own conceits. Science constantly overthrows the opinions of the logical person, just as much as the gospel does, and thus shows that both are from the same God. God pours such a flood of truth on the human mind through science as to overwhelm it in admiration of Himself. Meaning that His creation is such a great and wonderful and fantastically designed essence that science cannot explain it. They have just a very minute amount of understanding of it.

The most insightful theories in science, and the most clever speculations of people of genius, in regard to the causes of things, are often overthrown by a few simple discoveries ?? discoveries of truths that are at first despised as much as the gospel is.

The invention of the telescope by Galileo was to the theories of philosophers and astronomers, what the revelation of the gospel was to the systems of ancient learning, and the deductions of human wisdom. Many discoveries in science have confounded the world almost as much as the gospel. Initially, both were opposed.

**I Corinthians 1:20** Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

The wisdom of God is the way in which God makes clear His will in our salvation. We see that the plan is wise. We see that it leads to a wonderful completion and eternal life. We see that it is suited to forgiveness, justification and sanctification. We see that there is beauty in his character; excellence in his doctrines; and effectiveness in His atonement, to secure our salvation.

What is Christ's relationship to wisdom?

**I Corinthians 1:22-24** For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Another way of saying this is that, by His example and teaching, Christ shows that God the Father is powerful and wise. In that sense, God *made* Christ our Wisdom.

Let's look at the concept that God made Christ our Wisdom. The human Jesus Christ grew in wisdom as a boy and astonished his audiences by his wisdom as a man. He became the epitome of true wisdom for human beings. Twice he personifies wisdom in a manner reminiscent of Proverbs:

**Matthew 11:18-19** "For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' "The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is justified by her children."

The children of wisdom are the wise??those who understand. Jesus means that though that generation of Pharisees and fault-finders did not appreciate the conduct of John and Himself, still the wise did—those who understood the reasons for John and Jesus' conduct??and approved of and did justice to it.

**Luke 11:49** Therefore the wisdom of God [i.e., Christ] also said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute,'

I wanted you to see, there, another reference personifying wisdom in Jesus Christ.

In both Matthew 11 & Luke 11, Christ seems to be alluding to Himself as 'Wisdom'. Jesus is called "the word of God" in John 1:1, because He is the spokesman by whom God speaks or makes His will known. He is called "the wisdom of God," because by Him God makes His wisdom known in creation and in salvation.

Paul's dynamic concept of Christ being the Wisdom of God is shown by the emphasis on Christ's activity in creation and in redemption. Remember in I Corinthians 1:24 Paul

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calls Christ, "the power of God and the wisdom of God."

God made Jesus our wisdom??a wisdom that embraces righteousness, sanctification and redemption. In one sense, when Christ came the first time He brought wisdom to His Church. When He returns He will bring wisdom to the world. In Revelation 5:12, as the slain yet exalted Lord of the Church, He is praised for His wisdom.

**Revelation 5:11-12** Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!"

In verse 12, 'receive' implies acknowledgement of attributes that are already Christ's. Regarding Christ, Colossians 2:3 says, "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." We see there that wisdom is an attribute of God the Father and is an attribute of Jesus Christ, and we receive that wisdom through Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit. So Christ is our wisdom in that sense.

The principle is simple: If we want to live wisely we must follow the example and testimony of Jesus Christ!

In I Corinthians 2, verses 1-5 speak of Christ crucified, and verses 6-16 speak of spiritual wisdom and the connection is made here.

**I Corinthians 2:1-7** And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory,

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In verse 7 of I Corinthians 2, the apostle Paul does not say that their preaching was mysterious. Nor does he say that their doctrine was unintelligible, but he refers to the fact that this wisdom had been "hidden in a mystery" from people until that time, but was then revealed by the gospel through Christ.

In other words, he does not say that what they then declared was "hidden in a mystery," but that they made known the divine wisdom that had been concealed from the minds of people. The word "mystery" for us today is commonly used in the sense of that which is beyond comprehension. And it is often applied to the doctrines that exhibit difficulties that we can't explain. But God's wisdom is not beyond comprehension with the help of the Holy Spirit.

**I Corinthians 2:8-13** which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

Here in verse 13, the phrase, "not in words which man's wisdom teaches" in other words says, not such as human philosophy or eloquence would dictate. It is not nice-sounding fluff that we often get from the educators of this world. They don't have their origin in the devices of human wisdom, and they are not expressed in clever and enticing words as would be used by those who pride themselves on the wisdom of this world.

**I Corinthians 2:14-16** But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. For "who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

By having the mind of Christ we have the wisdom of Christ—not the totality but the

beginnings of it.

**I Corinthians 1:25-26** Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.

In verse 26, the phrase "not many wise" refers to those who are regarded as wise in secular areas; or who are ranked with professors and philosophers of the world. This assumes that there were some who were wise in worldly areas of knowledge, though most Christians were then, as now, from more lowly levels of society.

It's well known that there were some of high rank and wealth at Corinth who became Christians. Crispus and Sosthenes, rulers of the synagogue; Gaius, a rich, hospitable man; and Erastus the chancellor of the city of Corinth, were members of the Church.

The apostle Paul was showing that God had not consulted the wisdom, and power, and wealth of men in the establishment of His Church. It was strictly through the revelation of God the Father through Jesus Christ.

**I Corinthians 1:27-31** But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord."

In verse 30, the phrase, "Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God", tells us that Christ is our source of wisdom; it is by Him that we are made wise. We become truly wise by the activity, the teaching, and the work of Christ.

Philosophers attempt to become wise by their own investigations and analysis. But we become wise by the work of Christ; that is, by His instructions we learn the true character of God; with His law; with our application of it in life; and with the hope of eternal life. None of these truths is obtained by the searches of philosophers, but by the instructions of Jesus Christ.

In a similar way, it is through Him that we are made wise to salvation. Not through philosophy, but through Christ.

**Colossians 2:1-3** For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

In verse 3, it speaks of the wisdom needed for our salvation. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ and revealed through Him. The "all" in verse 3 answers to "all" in verse 2; as "treasures" answers to "riches" it is from the treasures that the riches are derived. "Are" in verse 3 is the predicate: all the treasures ARE in Him. "Hidden" is predicated of the manner in which they are in Him.

Like a gold mine of unknown wealth, the treasures of wisdom are all in Christ, in a hidden way. They are a mystery to anyone without God's Holy Spirit. They are not hidden permanently. But when God reveals them, they have to be explored to attain all of the riches available in this spiritual mine of wisdom. We do this through prayer, Bible study and teaching from God's ministers.

**Romans 11:33-36** Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! "For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him?" For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

If we don't work at digging in this spiritual mine after finding out about what is there, the spiritual treasures stay hidden. The availability of God's wisdom through Christ is not thrust before the unconverted person's eyes, but is hidden from them. The wisdom from above is seen only by those to whom God gives spiritual eyes.

We know that Jesus Christ is the great representative of God the Father by whom we become truly wise. Christ is often represented as eminently wise, and as the source of all true wisdom to us.

Let's look at 3 main ways Christ communicates wisdom to us:

1. Jesus Christ has??in his own ministry??instructed us in the true knowledge of God, and of the great truths which pertain to our salvation.

**II Peter 1:1-4** Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

2. Jesus Christ has??by his word and spirit??led us to see our true situation, and made us "wise for salvation." He has turned us from the ways of folly, and inclined us to walk in the path of true wisdom.

**II Timothy 3:12-17** Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

3. Jesus Christ is??to his called and chosen??the source of wisdom. He enlightens us when we are confused; guides us in His way of life; and leads us to truth. People who are ignorant in the wisdom of this world, who have been taught in the school of Christ, have more true knowledge and understanding in areas of real long-lasting importance than can be learned in all the schools of worldly philosophy and learning on the earth.

**I Timothy 6:20-21** O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babble and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge—by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith.

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Grace be with you. Amen.

**II Timothy 3:1-7** But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Does that describe the leaders of our educational system today—that last comment especially. In sharp contrast, Christ is the source of wisdom for the elect of God.

**Ephesians 3:14-19** For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

But how can "the love of Christ which passes knowledge," be known? This phrase may have two explanations to it. I think both of them are very interesting.

1. If the Greek word *gnosis* here signifies: comprehension, then this phrase may mean that we can acknowledge and approve of that which surpasses our comprehension. We cannot fully comprehend God; yet we can know that He is??we can love, and serve Him. In a similar way, we can't comprehend the immensity of the love of Christ, yet we know that He has loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood; and we acknowledge him as our only Lord and Savior. In this sense, we may know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge.
2. It is likely that the word *gnosis*, which we translate knowledge, signifies science in general, and specifically the science of which the rabbis boasted, and that of which the Greeks gloated over. The rabbis professed to have the key of knowledge??the secret of

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all divine mysteries; the Greeks considered their philosophers, and their systems of philosophy, superior to everything that had ever been known on earth before, and thought of all other nations as barbarians. (We see that pride stems from a lack of true knowledge and wisdom. And we see this very strongly in the educators of our nation today.)

When the apostle Paul asked in his prayer that the Ephesian saints be given an understanding of the love of Christ that passes knowledge, he may have referred to all the boasted knowledge of the Jewish doctors, and to all the greatly celebrated science of the Greek philosophers. To know the love of Christ, infinitely surpasses all other science.

Let's begin to wrap this up.

True wisdom can only be gained by cultivating the fear of the Lord. Biblical wisdom is both religious and practical. Stemming from the fear of the Lord, it branches out to touch all of life, as the extended manifestation of wisdom in the life of the righteous as Proverbs indicates. Wisdom takes insights gleaned from the knowledge of God's ways and applies them in daily life. All insight must issue from obedience. This combination of insight and obedience relates wisdom to the love and obedience of God.

**Job 28:28** And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.'

**Psalm 111:10** The fear of the LoORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever.

Though pagan wisdom may be religious, it has no anchor in the true God and, therefore, is doomed to failure, as the prophets frequently pointed out.

When a nation does not fear God, they are a foolish people, because they lack wisdom in judgment. And since the descendants of ancient Israel (primarily the English speaking nations today) have lost their fear of God, He is giving us drought and is withholding blessings from us. We are going to see this prophesied here in Jeremiah 5:19-25

**Jeremiah 5:19-25** "And it will be when you say, 'Why does the LoORD our God do all these things to us?' then you shall answer them, 'Just as you have forsaken Me and served foreign gods in your land, so you shall serve aliens

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in a land that is not yours.' "Declare this in the house of Jacob and proclaim it in Judah, saying, 'Hear this now, O foolish people, without understanding, who have eyes and see not, and who have ears and hear not: Do you not fear Me?' says the LoORD. 'Will you not tremble at My presence, who have placed the sand as the bound of the sea, by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass beyond it? And though its waves toss to and fro, yet they cannot prevail; though they roar, yet they cannot pass over it. But this people has a defiant and rebellious heart; they have revolted and departed. They do not say in their heart, "Let us now fear the LoORD our God, who gives rain, both the former and the latter, in its season. He reserves for us the appointed weeks of the harvest." Your iniquities have turned these things away, and your sins have withheld good from you.

This condition is prevalent in our own country today. Foolish decisions and attitudes run rampant. In fact, it's the norm rather than the exception.

It is such a refreshing contrast to see God's inspiration of the truth. King David summarized the elements of wisdom that of course include the fear of the Lord.

**Psalm 19:7-11** The law of the LoORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LoORD is sure, making wise the simple; The statutes of the LoORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LoORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; The fear of the LoORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LoORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them Your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is great reward.

In verse 7, the word 'simple' in the phrase, "making wise the simple", means simplicity or folly. David refers to "the simple" in the sense of being open to persuasion and easily seduced. It is also being ignorant or untaught.

Simple refers to those who need spiritual guidance and direction, and applies to the human nature of people, as untaught, or needing instruction. It is the idea that their minds are susceptible to impressions, or are open to conviction. Only God's law and testimony can make wise those who are naturally destitute of wisdom.

That testimony??revealed truth??imparted by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit,

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makes us wise in the knowledge of God! We can certainly be thankful that Jesus Christ  
became for us wisdom from God!

Wisdom is a wonderful, valuable, and essential gift from God! In humility and obedience:  
Value it??Seek it??Use it!