

Wisdom In The New Testament

By and large, New Testament wisdom [Greek word “*sôphía*”] has the same intensely practical nature as in the Old Testament.

Seldom neutral, it is either God-given or God-opposing.

If divorced from God’s revelation it is impoverished and unproductive at best.

1 Corinthians 1:17 [NIV] *“For Christ did not send me to baptise, but to preach the gospel, not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.”*

Human wisdom cannot understand the power of the crucifixion for it is spiritual in nature.

1 Corinthians 2:4 [King James] *“And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:”*

Only understood by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. [**1 Corinthians 2:11**]

2 Corinthians 1:12 [NIV] *“Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God. We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but according to God’s grace.”*

The gospel message is **not** based on human wisdom but on God’s grace.

1 Corinthians 1:18-25 [NIV] *“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; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate. Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than man’s wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man’s strength.”*

Paul summarises **Isaiah 29:14** to emphasise a point that Jesus Christ often made.

God’s way of thinking is **not** like the world’s way [normal human thinking or wisdom].

God offers eternal life, which the world can **never** give.

We can spend a lifetime accumulating human wisdom and yet never learn how to have a personal relationship with the Creator God.

We must come to the crucified and risen Jesus Christ to receive eternal life, something that human wisdom can never understand.

James 3:13-17 [NIV] *“Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbour bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.”*

The earthly, human wisdom, is the product of Satan's deception [**Revelation 12:9**] and all its fruits are the fruits of Satan's influence in human society.

True Godly Wisdom can be measured by the depth of a person's character, we can evaluate our own wisdom by the way we act and react in our relationships.

Godly Wisdom delivers us from the need to compare ourselves to others and to desire what they have.

Worldly, human wisdom is based on human intuition and human experience without Godly revelation, and thus has severe limitations.

Not recognising these limitations brings failure when spiritual problems are attempted to be resolved by human wisdom.

For example strong marriage relationships are based on spiritual revealed principles because marriage is **not** a human originated relationship but one instituted by the Creator of all physical things. [**Genesis 1:27; Genesis 2:20-24**]

Truly wise people are those whom the Creator God has graciously imparted His Wisdom.

Solomon – **1 Kings 3:11-12** [NIV] *“So God said to him, ‘Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be.’”*

Stephen – **Acts 6:8-10** [NIV] *“Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people. Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia. These men began to argue with Stephen, but they could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke.”*

Paul – **2 Peter 3:15** [NIV] *“Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote to you with the wisdom that God gave him.”*

Joseph – **Acts 7:9-10** [NIV] *“Because the patriarchs were jealous of Joseph, they sold him as a slave into Egypt. But God was with him and rescued him from all his troubles. He gave Joseph wisdom and enabled him to gain the goodwill of Pharaoh king of Egypt; so he made him ruler over Egypt and all his palace.”*

One of Jesus Christ's legacies to His disciples was the wisdom to say the right thing at the right time when persecuted or interrogated.

Luke 21:12-15 [NIV] *“But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. This will result in your being witnesses to them. But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict.”*

The apocalyptic oracles and enigmas need a similar God-given wisdom for understanding.

Revelation 13:18 [NIV] *“This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666.”*

Revelation 17:9 [NIV] *“This calls for a mind with wisdom. The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits.”*

This will be given when such understanding is needed as the time of the second coming of Jesus Christ is imminent.

Godly Wisdom is needed for all church leaders.

Acts 6:3 [NIV] *“Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them”*

Godly Wisdom is needed for all believers that they may perceive God’s purposes in redemption.

Ephesians 1:7-9 [NIV] *“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ,”*

All believers need Godly Wisdom to walk worthily of God’s calling.

Colossians 1:9-12 [NIV] *“For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.”*

James 1:5-7 [NIV] *“If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord;”*

James 3:13-17 [NIV] *“Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbour bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.”*

All believers need Godly Wisdom in our interaction with non-believers.

Colossians 4:5-6 [NIV] *“Be wise in the way you act towards outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”*

Paul included Godly Wisdom in his teaching so that his students would mature [**Colossians 1:28**] opening their minds and human spirit to understanding spiritual wisdom from God that is hidden in others. [**1 Corinthians 2:6-8**]

Paul’s end goal of teaching Godly Wisdom was to enable his students to teach others. [**Colossians 3:16**]

God’s Wisdom is clearly demonstrated in His provision of redemption [**Romans 11:32-33**] which is manifested in the Church. [**Ephesians 3:8-11**]

The incarnate Jesus Christ grew in Godly Wisdom as a young boy. [**Luke 2:40, 52**]

Jesus Christ astonished His audiences by His Godly Wisdom as a man. [**Matthew 13:54**]

Jesus Christ’s claims included Godly Wisdom. [**Matthew 12:42**]

Jesus Christ personified as Godly Wisdom. [**1 Corinthians 1:24**]

Jesus Christ personally is the hidden wisdom of God. [**Colossians 2:2-3**]

Jesus Christ as the slain Lamb of God is acknowledged as the wisdom of God. [**Revelation 5:12**]

The word “*receive*” in this scripture implies acknowledgement of Jesus Christ already having these attributes, as stated in **Colossians 2:3**.

As we see from the above scriptures, Godly Wisdom centres on the character and work of Jesus Christ our Saviour, Lord and Master.