

Wisdom Gained
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Job 28:12-28

Have you learned a new skill or the solution to a problem from a YouTube video? Any examples of what you've learned on YouTube? Susan uses YouTube instruction so much I refer to it as the "University of YouTube!" We jokingly say you can learn almost anything on YouTube. Of course, that's not exactly true.

Thanks to the Internet we have more sources of information (both correct and incorrect) than ever in the history of mankind. There are lots of places we can go to "dig" for knowledge; but knowledge and wisdom are not synonymous.

We're told, "A student attending Columbia University believed he had been assured by the university that he would be taught wisdom. Feeling that the university had failed him in the matter, he filed suit against ... The superior court dismissed the case. The presiding judge declared, "Wisdom is not a subject that can be taught and ... no rational person would accept such a claim made by any man or institution."

Scripture makes it plain over and over that true wisdom only comes from God. The question for God's people is, HOW can we access His priceless wisdom? Job posed this question and quoting God Himself, gave us the answer.

Truth that should change us: God's wisdom is found in fearing and obeying Him.

We are never more "thirsty" for Godly wisdom than in the midst of trials and suffering. That is where Job was as we turn to chapter 28. His friends have grilled him with questions and accusations: "*Job, if God has allowed this kind of suffering in your life you must have done something bad!*" After three rounds of questioning they've run out of steam and Job is making his "final speech" in response. Job and his

friends were out of answers, but Job knew where to go “digging” for them. We begin reading in verse 12:

Job 28:12–28 (ESV) — 12 “But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? **13** Man does not know its worth, and it is not found in the land of the living. **14** The deep says, ‘It is not in me,’ and the sea says, ‘It is not with me.’ **15** It cannot be bought for gold, and silver cannot be weighed as its price. **16** It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir, in precious onyx or sapphire. **17** Gold and glass cannot equal it, nor can it be exchanged for jewels of fine gold. **18** No mention shall be made of coral or of crystal; the price of wisdom is above pearls. **19** The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it, nor can it be valued in pure gold. **20** “From where, then, does wisdom come? And where is the place of understanding? **21** It is hidden from the eyes of all living and concealed from the birds of the air. **22** Abaddon and Death say, ‘We have heard a rumor of it with our ears.’ **[No one can find wisdom – here is the answer]** **23** “God understands the way to it, and he knows its place. **24** For he looks to the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens. **25** When he gave to the wind its weight and apportioned the waters by measure, **26** when he made a decree for the rain and a way for the lightning of the thunder, **27** then he saw it and declared it; he established it, and searched it out. **28** And he said to man, ‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding.’ ”

- In the first eleven verses of this chapter Job gave a detailed description of mining the earth for precious metals and jewels.
- This was all to set up the truth of verses twelve and thirteen: Where can we find wisdom and understanding? Dig all you want but wisdom can't be found by human methods and effort.
- Verses 15-19 tell us wisdom cannot be bought with gold or silver.
- It's worth more than precious jewels. Wisdom is PRICELESS.
- Verse 20: Again, Job asks, where can people find wisdom?
- Verse 23 reveals the answer: God alone knows where it can be found.

- Verses 24-27 remind us WHY God alone is the source of wisdom: He created and controls everything in the heavens and the earth.
- He is ALL POWERFUL (omnipotent,) ALL KNOWING (omniscient,) and ALL PRESENT (omnipresent.) He is the Master of wind and rain and the only source of WISDOM and UNDERSTANDING.
- Then in verse 28, God Himself says to mankind: *‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding.’*
- The truth that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom shows up in several places in scripture. Here are a few verses:

Psalm 111:10 (ESV) — 10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!

Proverbs 9:10 (ESV) — 10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

Proverbs 14:27 (ESV) — 27 The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, that one may turn away from the snares of death.

Proverbs 15:33 (ESV) — 33 The fear of the Lord is instruction in wisdom, and humility comes before honor.

- What does it mean to have “the fear of the Lord?” What kind of fear is it?
- The Hebrew word for fear in verse 28 can mean “terror” but in this context the definition is: “a state of piety and respect toward a superior”ⁱⁱ
- The Got Questions? website reminds us: *“When we incorporate the fear of the Lord into every moment of our lives, we make decisions based upon His approval. We live with the knowledge that the Creator of the universe is intimately involved in our every move. He sees, knows, and evaluates all our choices, and we will answer to Him ([Psalm 139:1–4](#)).”*ⁱⁱⁱ
- If I live in awe and reverence of God, I will desire His wisdom. Why would I settle for man’s knowledge without God’s wisdom.
- Look at a contrast in **Proverbs 1:7 (ESV) — 7** The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

- “Fools despise wisdom and instruction.” Ever know anyone like that?
- “Despise” is a strong word. It means to show “contempt.”
- “Contempt” means “lack of respect or reverence for something.”^{iv}
- What kind of person has contempt for wisdom and instruction? On any topic how does that kind of person want you to see things?
- If I think I have all the answers then I want people to see things “my way.”
- If God has all the answers then wisdom is seeing things HIS way.
- Chuck Swindoll writes, *“Wisdom is looking at life from God’s point of view. When we employ wisdom we are viewing life as God sees it... Understanding is responding to life’s struggles and challenges as God would have us respond.”*^v
- Tony Evans: *“Truth is God’s view on any subject.”*
- Important point: If God is the source of wisdom and a person despises wisdom then in essence they are saying they are smarter than God.
- Let that sink in: If we make decisions without seeking God’s perspective, then we must think we’re smarter than God.
- You might push back and say, “Don’t be silly. No one thinks they are smarter than God!” How many people do you know who get all their information on any topic from social media instead of their Bible?
- How many people have turned to Oprah instead of the pages of scripture?
- Where do we get God’s perspective?
- The wisdom of God comes from the word of God. As Paul told Timothy it is “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” so we can “be complete, equipped for every good work.”
- **Colossians 3:16a (ESV) — 16** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...
- Translation: Read your Bible --- A LOT and apply it to living life!
- Some will say the Bible is fine if you want information on “religion” but it isn’t relevant to everyday life in the 21st century.

- I would challenge you to think of any situation you are facing and ask, *“What does scripture say about how I should deal with this situation?”*
- You may be surprised at how many situations are addressed directly in scripture without the need for help in interpretation.
- It’s like Mark Twain said, *“It ain’t those parts of the Bible that I can’t understand that bother me, it is the parts that I do understand.”*^{vi}
- Some topics will require solid commentary from trusted scholars.
- Some topics require the teaching of solid, biblical preachers and teachers.
- Ask yourself: When you need wisdom, are you looking to scripture as well as consulting Godly experts? This verse doesn’t mean to ignore the knowledge God has given to men, just make sure it doesn’t run counter to what His word says on your course of action.
- Verse 28 gave two steps to wisdom. What was the second step?
- The most UNWISE thing a person can do is to pursue evil in direct disobedience to God’s commands in His word.
- *“I don’t understand why my life is going so badly!”* Could it be because you’re disobeying God’s commands in scripture?
- A person who despises God’s instruction thinks they are smarter than God. Ignoring God’s commands takes that to another extreme.
- It’s one thing to think you’re smarter than God; it’s another to shake your fist in His face and say, *“I’ll live the way I please!”*
- What about leaning on God’s wisdom when we’re in a terrible situation like Job was and there seems to be no apparent reason for our suffering?
- This is where fearing God really means trusting God in the silence.
- The NIV Application Commentary gives us some good advice:
 - *“Trust God rather than blame him or make demands of him for explanations.*
 - *Trust God for strength to endure.*
 - *Don’t expect it all to make sense.*

- *Channel resentment toward the fallenness of the world, not the God who has given all to initiate its redemption.*
- *Resist succumbing to the temptation to believe that you could run this world better than God does.*
- *Above all, trust that he is wise.*^{vii}

So, What's the Takeaway?

- Job was in an unimaginable “mess” and yet in the midst of tragedy and suffering he was “upright” enough to remember that *“the fear of the Lord...is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding.”*
- Knowledge is good, but the key is knowledge PLUS wisdom.
- Wisdom doesn't come from academic study it only comes from God.
- Wisdom is seeing things the way God sees them and living to please Him.
- Before I make a decision I should look at it through that lens.
- If we don't hold God in awe and reverence we won't seek His wisdom, that's why the first step to wisdom is “fear of the Lord.”
- The ultimate example of holding Him in reverence is turning from evil and obeying His commands in scripture.
- Disobeying His word is the most unwise thing we can do.
- Later this quarter we'll be studying Ecclesiastes. At the very end of that book, Solomon really gave us the “takeaway” for Job 28:28.
- In Ecclesiastes 12:13 Solomon closes the book with these words, *“13 The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.”*
- The other day in Dallas, Chuck Swindoll quoted that verse to us in our meeting. Chuck “exegeted” the text right there in front of us as he said, *“Obey His commands. Hold Him in awesome respect and trust His word. Lean on it, believe it, shape your life according to it. [Solomon] didn't always live like that and he was honest enough to say that in Ecclesiastes.”*
- This week when we need wisdom in some area of life let's ask God to reveal how He sees our situation and what He would have us to do.

- As Chuck said, “*Obey His commands, hold Him in awesome respect, and trust His word.*”

ⁱ Anders, Max. Holman Old Testament Commentary Volume 10 - Job (p. 241). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

ⁱⁱ Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)* (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems,

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.gotquestions.org/fear-Lord-beginning-wisdom.html>

^{iv} Merriam-Webster, I. (2003). *Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary*. (Eleventh ed.). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc.

^v Swindoll, Charles R.. Great Lives: Job (Great Lives from God's Word) (p. 226). Thomas Nelson. Kindle Edition.

^{vi} https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/mark_twain_153875

^{vii} Job (The NIV Application Commentary) Kindle Edition by John H. Walton