

## Active and Growing...Wisdom!

Colossians 1:9-14  
January 20, 2019

One of my nightly routines, after watching the evening news, was to watch, Jeopardy!

I hardly watch the evening news anymore, except the last 5 minutes when they usually highlight some good person or situation that happened in our country.

I have totally quit watching Jeopardy. Instead of the opening line of, "This is Jeopardy!" I was experiencing, "This is frustrating!" I consider myself fairly well-educated. However, when I would watch Jeopardy, I realized how little knowledge I had about many subjects.

I started setting a goal to get 5 answers or questions right in a show. Then I would get excited if I got two. I believe in all the years I watched Jeopardy I only got one final Jeopardy answer right!

When the championship week was on I turned it off. The questions were way out of my league...so why bother. I thought the College week would be better. Not! The only week I somewhat enjoyed was Kid's Week. The questions geared for the elementary age students were more of my level. Soon I quit watching it when I realized I was getting beat by some 5th graders!

At whatever level, Jeopardy made me realize how I was lacking in knowledge.

The game of Jeopardy is all about "book smarts!"

The game of life is all about common smarts or wisdom.

There is a huge difference in these two types of wisdom.

How many of us have a friend, or know of someone, who is what we call a "know-it-all!"

Know matter the subject or the experience of life, they seem to know more about it than you and they have no problem letting you know about it.

You make, what you think is a great declaration of knowledge, and Mr. "know-it-all" replies with, "Oh, I knew that!" or he has done it even better.

One of the most annoying kind of people, is the "know-it-all" person. They seem to have an opinion about any and everything. Their "know-it-all" opinion is always given in a way that demeans and makes you want to turn the channel. This person often refuses to learn from others much less listen to their options.

The writer of the book of Wisdom in the bible calls this person a fool. (Proverbs 1:7)

For you Jeopardy junkies, under biblical wisdom for \$300, the answer is "this is the book of wisdom in the Old Testament." Any answers? "What is the book of Proverbs!" Now for \$500. "He is the writer of the book of wisdom." "Who is Solomon!"

Solomon was an interesting person. His story is one of being the King who followed David. One day God approached Solomon and said he could have whatever he desired. If God approached you and told you He would grant you one wish...whatever you wanted...What would you want?

This is final jeopardy. "This is what Solomon asked God for?"

The correct question: "What is wisdom?"

What? Not a huge kingdom, money or fame? Nope! Wisdom! (II Chronicles 1:1-14)

God's offer to Solomon stretches our imagination! "Ask for whatever you want me to give you." (vs. 7) Solomon put the needs of the people before his own. He realized that wisdom would be the most valuable asset he could ask for as the leader of the people. He spoke volumes about the value of this God-given wisdom in the 31 chapters of the book of Proverbs.

Here is a challenge of wisdom for us: read one chapter of Proverbs each day. You will complete the book in a month's time. Then repeat it! Apply the wisdom and you are guaranteed a more significant life.

Here is the amazing news for you and me. The same wisdom God gave to Solomon, He offers to us! As we continue our desire for 2019 to become more "active and growing" in our faith we are to add wisdom to basic faith and good character.

This wisdom, of course, is not Jeopardy, book smarts, wisdom. It is a different kind of wisdom. Eugene Peterson described this wisdom in his intro to the book of Proverbs in the Message bible.

*"Wisdom is the biblical term for this on-earth-as-it-is-in-heaven everyday living. Wisdom is the art of living skillfully in whatever actual conditions we find ourselves. It has virtually nothing to do with information as such, with knowledge as such.*

*Wisdom has to do with becoming skillful in honoring our parents and raising our children, handling our money and conducting our sexual lives, going to work and exercising leadership, using words well and treating friends kindly, eating and drinking healthily, cultivating emotions within ourselves and attitudes toward others that make for peace. Threaded through all these items is the insistence that the way we think of and respond to God is the most practical thing we do."*

Do you desire this one thing from God?

Do you desire this wisdom?

Do you desire to be active and growing in this wisdom?

In this age of the internet, we have so much information available to us. We can google so much knowledge. But wisdom is scarce. Wisdom, biblical wisdom, that God desires to activate and grow in us, is lacking.

Wisdom means far more than answering a whole Jeopardy category correctly. Wisdom is a basic attitude that effects every aspect of life.

Solomon suggested that a basic faith or love of God is the beginning point of this wisdom. (Proverbs 1:7)

I was talking with a friend the other day about how he was doing. He shared how he was involved in a 6 month disciple program at his church. I asked what was the purpose of it. It was to grow in his knowledge about God. I pushed him a bit and asked then what? He stuttered for an answer. He then realized where I was going with my inquiry. How are you going to apply this knowledge about God into the daily?

Jesus was a little more "in your face" with some folks about their knowledge of him. Let me share this challenge He gave to the church folks:

***"A lot of you are going to assume that you'll sit down to God's salvation banquet just because you've been hanging around the neighborhood all your lives. Well, one day you're going to be banging on the door, wanting to get in, but you'll find the door locked and the Master saying, 'Sorry, you're not on my guest list.' You'll protest, 'But we've KNOWN you all our lives!' only to be interrupted with His abrupt, 'Your kind of KNOWING can hardly be called KNOWING. You don't KNOW the first thing about me. That's when you'll find yourselves out in the cold, strangers to grace.'" (Luke 13:25-28 Message bible)***

Wisdom is not mere head knowledge, or book smarts about Jesus. Wisdom becomes a heart relationship of spiritual understanding of Jesus.

I'm sure we have heard the saying, "It's not WHAT you know but WHO you know that counts."

This is true with biblical wisdom. It is not WHAT you know but it is WHO you know.

I would get excited when I saw that one of the categories of Jeopardy was the Bible. I thought, I'm going to nail this one. How humiliating when I didn't get even half of them right.

I'm so thankful that God does not expect us to get the head knowledge right. We talked last week about character. He looks at our hearts. Wisdom begins with a heart knowledge of God. Simply knowing who Jesus is is not enough for salvation. Even the evil spirits knew who Jesus was.(Mark 3:11)  
It is the day to day active and growing relationship with Jesus that is the wisdom we are to ask God for in our lives. It is that wisdom He desires to give to us.

In our scripture reading, the Apostle Paul was exposing a heresy in the Colossian church that was similar to Gnosticism. Gnostics valued the accumulation of knowledge, but Paul pointed that knowledge in itself was empty.

To be worth anything knowledge must lead to a changed life and right living. If I drive down the highway and I see a sign that reads, "Speed limit 65mph" then I have the knowledge that I am to drive no faster than 65 mph. However, if my lead foot takes over to where I am at 70 mph then I have not put my knowledge into action. Wisdom tells me to slow down or pay the consequences...literally pay the fine for speeding if I get caught.

To be worth anything wisdom incorporates our knowledge into the daily. Paul's prayer for the Colossians has two dimensions:

1. That they might be filled with the knowledge of God's will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.
2. That they would bear fruit in every good work in their daily **living out of their knowledge** of Jesus and they would be active and **growing in their wisdom**.

Knowledge is not more and more volumes of books placed on our library shelves. Knowledge is not measured by the number of letters or degrees we have after our name. Wisdom is not a secret reserved for the "educated." The wisdom God desires of us is freely available to everyone...that is everyone who asks for it.

A few weeks ago my wife and I took on the job of renovating one of the bathrooms at our house. We took down all the wallpaper with the intentions of painting the walls. Part of the renovation meant creating 5 holes in the drywall when the towel bar, toilet paper holder, soap dish and tooth brush holder were chiseled down off the wall. The holes ranged in sizes from 3"x5" to one that was 5"x9"!

With my drywall knowledge I tried to patch a hole with spackling. The next day I could push the speckling into the wall. Not good! So what do you do when you lack wisdom?

I don't know about you but I often "YOUTUBE" it! Sure enough a Do It Yourself video guided us on how to properly patch the hole. It even showed us the trick of screwing in a wood brace in the hole before placing the drywall patch into place. Sweet! It worked. We did it! Me, my wife and YOUTUBE!

James, a disciple of Jesus, made it clear that if we lack wisdom to not YOUTUBE it but to ask God for it! (James 1:7) Sweet! He gives us the wisdom we need to get through the tests of life. Side note: this was always the most quoted bible verse in seminary before a final exam...Lord give me wisdom!

Now that is not the kind of wisdom we are to be active and growing in on a daily basis. James went on to point out the two kinds of wisdom and the one we are to pursue prayerfully in our daily character building struggles.

Here is how he described the two types of wisdom:

***13-16 Do you want to be counted wise, to build a reputation for wisdom? Here's what you do: Live well, live wisely, live humbly. It's the way you live, not the way you talk, that counts. Mean-spirited ambition isn't wisdom. Boasting that you are wise isn't wisdom. Twisting the truth to make yourselves sound wise isn't wisdom. It's the furthest thing from wisdom—it's animal cunning, devilish conniving. Whenever you're trying to look better than others or get the better of others, things fall apart and everyone ends up at the others' throats.***

***17-18 Real wisdom, God's wisdom, begins with a holy life and is characterized by getting along with others. It is gentle and reasonable, overflowing with mercy and blessings, not hot one day and cold the next, not two-faced. You can develop a healthy, robust community that lives right with God and enjoy its results only if you do the hard work of getting along with each other, treating each other with dignity and honor.***  
---James 3:13-18 Message bible

What wisdom are you living?

Self-serving knowledge or real wisdom?

Ask God for His wisdom to be active and growing in your life each day?

Let us ask God to fill us with the knowledge of His will throughout all spiritual wisdom and understanding so that we will live a life worthy of the Lord. May we seek the wisdom that will please him in every way of our everyday living.

May we seek His wisdom that will bear good fruit in every good work we do daily for Jesus. May we be active and growing in His wisdom, strengthened by His power to live this life on earth-as-it-is-in heaven to His glory!

This is NOT Jeopardy wisdom!

This IS an active and growing wisdom in Christ!

Ask for His Wisdom daily!

Pray for His Wisdom daily!

Live out God's wisdom daily!