

Wisdom

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Introduction

We all know we need wisdom. We think we know what wisdom is – or we think we will recognise it when we see it.

But, when it comes to defining wisdom we can struggle to find the right words to give a clear definition.

Then there is the question – how do we get wisdom and how does wisdom relate to matters like knowledge and understanding?

Finally how does wisdom affect everyday life?

Chapter 1

Wisdom - definition

As Christian believers we are under the New Covenant we will look first at the New Testament where we will find two Greek words translated wisdom:

'Phronesis,' is translated 'wisdom' just once in Luke 1:17 where the scripture is talking about John the Baptist – *'he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.'*

So here it is denoting practical wisdom or prudence.

'Sophia,' is translated as wisdom over 50 times, so is the primary word for us to understand. My favourite definition is **'that which is deemed to be right.'**

That which is deemed to be right.

This definition begs the question – deemed to be right by who? So we can see that different people may/will have differing ideas about what constitutes wisdom.

So the bible talks about heavenly wisdom and about worldly wisdom – being clearly very different!

'For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.'

1 Corinthians 3:19

'But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic.'

James 3:14-5

By comparison James defines the wisdom from above as *'first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy, and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.'* James 3:17

'Who is wise and understanding among you, let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom.'

James 3:13

As followers of Jesus Christ we will want to know *'the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.'* Romans 11:33

..... and we will want to act in the meekness of wisdom – no room for pride!

Chapter 2

Wisdom, understanding, discernment, knowledge

'There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear.' 1 John 4:18

As Christians we have received the perfect love of Christ - so we have no fear. We can approach the following scripture realising, for us under the New Covenant, we are not to fear the Lord - rather we can approach this more in terms of the awesomeness of God.

It is when we turn to Proverbs we find a great deal about wisdom.

'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.' Proverbs 9:10

In Hebrew word studies 'fear' means 'an apprehension of danger and a sense of our own weakness, joined therefore with trembling. – fear, terror.' (Wilson's Old Testament Word Studies)

So we have to come to the subject with an awesome apprehension of the Lord God, which is only satisfied by the personal belief in Jesus Christ as the One who took the penalty of sin on my behalf and gave me the gift of righteousness (right standing). Being born again is the starting place for appreciating the Kingdom of God – otherwise there is only fear of judgement, or reckless ignorance.

In Chapter 2 there is instruction in verses 1 to 12:

*'My son, if you receive my words, and treasure my commands within you, so that you incline your ear to **wisdom**, and apply your heart to **understanding**; yes if you cry out for **discernment**, and lift up your voice for **understanding**, if you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the **knowledge** of God.'*

*'For the Lord gives **wisdom**; from His mouth come **knowledge** and **understanding**; He stores up sound **wisdom** for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk uprightly; He guards the paths of justice, and preserves the way of His saints.'*

*'Then you will **understand** righteousness and justice, equity and every good path.'*

*'When **wisdom** enters your heart, and **knowledge** is pleasant to your soul, discretion will preserve you; **understanding** will keep you, and deliver you from the way of evil.'*

Clearly these attributes are closely linked and Proverbs has them in order:

Firstly, wisdom – that which is deemed to be right.

Secondly, understanding – to comprehend what something means.

Thirdly, discernment – to distinguish between good and evil.

Finally, knowledge – (specifically of God) we would see as facts or information.

As we have already seen, so called wisdom will come in different guises – some good and some bad. What we want is more and more Godly wisdom. We want to discern that which is heavenly, to understand and to know that which is pleasing and right in His sight. The scripture invites us to cry out for discernment – it is one of the gifts of the Spirit as being needed for our practical application of our walk with the Lord.

Spirit and truth working together.

So we come to this very important position - we need to **know** and to **understand** the scripture because *'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.'* 2 Timothy 3:16-17

It is the job of the Holy Spirit to lead us and guide us into fully appreciating and understanding the truth - this was a specific promise given by Jesus. *'However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth.'* John 16:13

Submission

For the Christian there is the question of submission. That is submission to the Lord and to His truth. This means we will have to change our minds about certain things as we go along. In school we will have been taught much of the ways of the world. In life and business we have been surrounded by worldly ways, and worldly philosophy, together with traditions handed down by our family, and other and all sorts of basic worldly principles. According to Paul, writing to the Colossians, these very things can cheat us – we are urged instead to walk in Jesus, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith. (from Colossians 2:6-10)

So in the next chapter we will consider what we believe.

Chapter 3

Wisdom in what we believe.

Truth

But what is truth? - it would seem, in worldly terms, that 'truth' rather depends on some variables - i.e who you are, your culture, where you live and so on. Regretfully, It has become accepted by the people of the world that truth is not an absolute, but rather it is what you want it to be.

Yet we (born again believers) are not of this world. *'Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.'*
1 Corinthians 2:12

So whilst we live in this world, for the time being, we are not of this world, having been born into the Kingdom of God. Here is John urging his readers:

'Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides for ever.'

1 John 2:15-17

John is summing up the temptations that the world will, and does, put before us. In Matthew 4:1-11 we can see that Jesus was tested by Satan in the same way:

Lust of the flesh: *'If you are the Son of God turn these stones to bread.'* (Jesus had just fasted to 40 days!)

Lust of the eyes: from a high point, *'all these things I will give you if you fall down and worship me.'* (Satan's false promise)

Pride of life: from a high point, *'throw yourself down – angels will save you'*

Jesus defeats the testing from Satan with the truth.

This is where we have to make our starting point – there is what the world considers to be ‘truth’ and there is ‘truth’ that comes from God. They are not the same!

Truth - ‘the manifested, veritable essence of a matter,’ ‘the reality lying at the basis of an appearance.’ (Definitions from Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Bible Words.) We could sum this up as the revealed fundamental reality.

For us - ***the revealed fundamental reality is fully expressed in Jesus and the scripture, which is all about redemption found only in Him.*** And it can only be understood and appreciated when we are born again, and the Holy Spirit fulfils His task of leading us into all truth.

The Bible is the revealed word of God

We came to this very important position in the last chapter - ‘*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.*’
2 Timothy 3:16-17

Paul, writing to Timothy in the same letter, urges him, ‘*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*’
2 Timothy 2:15

- Scripture is profitable for correction
- Scripture is profitable for instruction
- Essential for making us complete and equipped
- Diligence is required
- Rightly dividing the word of truth is necessary.

Rightly dividing the word of truth.

Here is a major principle which is commonly overlooked, leading to much confusion and error.

The scripture has to be rightly divided. Literally the Greek means to 'cut straight.' Scripture covers all of time and needs to be cut straight so that the right scriptures are applied to the right time.

By looking at what the scripture says about food we can easily see that there are different 'rules' for different periods of time.

- a) Man starts off as vegetarians Genesis 1:29
- b) Man is then told that 'everything that moves is food' Genesis 9:3
- c) Then, for Israel, detailed food laws. Leviticus 11
- d) 'All foods declared clean' - Matthew 15:17-18
- e) Don't eat blood, things offered to idols or strangled. Acts 15:28-9

So here are 5 different regulations for 5 different periods of time. The food 'rules' need to be cut into 5 straight sections and applied in the correct period of time. (Today, of course, we are free to choose to be vegetarians if we so wish – there is no compulsion to eat meat, though we should consider meat is part of God's provision for us.)

What about the Law

One common error is to apply the Law or part of the Law to life today. It was completely correct for Israel to apply the Law given to them – but we have been set free from the requirements of the Law by receiving the gift of righteousness from Jesus Christ.

Indeed it is an important question – look at Paul's admonition of the Galatians: *'O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified. This only I want to learn from you:*

did you receive the Spirit by works of the Law, or by hearing of faith?’
3:1-2

Worse to come – *‘Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh.’* 3:3

Here is a clear and current danger! *‘For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.’* 5:17 We need to be careful – our flesh will try to keep us away from the truth, thus rendering us unfruitful in the Kingdom.

This is what the New Testament tells us about the Law:

It is a ministry of death 2 Corinthians 3:7

It is a ministry of condemnation 2 Corinthians 3:9

It stirs up sin Romans 7:5

It is a tutor pointing to Christ Galatians 3:24

It cannot justify Romans 3:19-20

We are:

Not under law Romans 6:14

Dead to the Law and married to another Romans 7:1-6

Dead in Christ is dead to the Law Galatians 2:9

The Law is now:

Passing away 2 Corinthians 3:11

Made obsolete Hebrews 8:13

Annulled Hebrews 7:18

(Note Jesus could not be our High Priest if the Law was still in operation for us as He is not of the order of Aaron or of Levi – Hebrews 7:11. Under the Law the High Priest could not come from the tribe of Judah)

Brings barrenness Galatians 3:10 (the text states *‘for as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse’* here *katara* in the Greek has been rendered ‘curse’ but more fully means ‘doomed to barrenness.’ (Lack of fruitfulness)

Completely renewed in Christ

By comparison to the concept of keeping law we are completely renewed in Jesus Christ by believing that He is the Son of God who gave Himself as a sacrifice for sin in our stead. By so doing He opened the door to the Kingdom for all who believe in Him and He gives us eternal life.

Eternal life is given as we are born again. According to scripture His seed remains in us from that first encounter and furthermore now that part of us cannot sin.

'Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.' 1 John 3:9

On this basis Paul says to the Ephesians (Chapter 1:13-14):

'In him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.'

(See also Ephesians 4:30 and 1 Corinthians 1:22 and 5:5)

New creation

We are now a new creation in Christ – *'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new.'* (2 Corinthians 5:17)

So now we can answer one of Christianity's questions; 'Can you loose your eternal salvation?' Emphatically not – you are a purchased possession, a new creation in Christ who cannot sin.' But:

So far as our life on earth is concerned there is the constant requirement to live by the Spirit and to put off the works of the flesh. One of the earliest heresies was to think that what we do in the flesh

does not matter – therefore we can sin all we like! No, absolutely not. Our calling is to be like Jesus – to walk in sinless perfection on this earth. Well we won't achieve that goal, though we should always have the goal in mind. When we fail, and we will, Jesus provides the way back; *'if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'* (1 John 1:9)

Predestined to be conformed to the image of Jesus.

Another of those questions in Christianity where people take different views. Are we predestined to be saved or not?

Actually, in this case, the question is superfluous – the scripture does not pose this question – it makes a definitive statement!

'For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called, these He also justified, and whom He justified He glorified.' Romans 8:29-39

In the foreknowledge of God. The Lord God knows the choice you will make before you make it – because He knows the end from the beginning. The predestination comes in the foreknowledge of God, who would that everyone be saved, but leaves man freewill choice – to believe or not to believe. Once the right choice is made then God chooses us to be predestined to be conformed to the image of Jesus.

Freewill choice.

Freewill to make that fundamental decision to believe (even though we may later suffer doubts) is essential, as there cannot be true love without it, and we are told to love the Lord with all our heart, our soul and our mind.

We are not predestined to eternal salvation as such, but after initial salvation of the human spirit then we are predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son.

There is not room enough to discuss here every area of belief.

There are many areas in Christianity where people take different views! ***Yet there is only one truth.*** Hence Paul urges Timothy to be diligent in the scriptures we saw earlier. For us it should be the same – be diligent.

I keep asking the Holy Spirit for more and more revelation of the truth – I commend it to you. It is His job – Jesus promised that the Spirit would lead us into all truth.

There are also a large number of study aids available. As we are under the New Covenant the underlying Greek language can be very important. For example: In Luke 18 verse 5 we find the unjust judge saying of the activity of the persistent widow, *'yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'*

'Weary' in the Greek is 'hupopiazō' which is only used here and in 1 Corinthians 9:27 where Paul says he disciplines his body. The literal translation of the Greek means 'to beat black and blue!' The full meaning has so much more impact!

So we need a two pronged approach – study and prayer – and a willingness to change or modify our belief as we receive more and more revelation.

Submission to scripture

Which brings us to this - what we believe is to be subjected to the acid test of scripture. We are not free to adopt our own interpretations - rather we should be like the Bereans who received what was preached and searched the scriptures to see whether these things were so. In

so doing Paul referred to them as 'fair minded. [literally 'noble']' (Acts 17:11)

Building on the rock

The only safe building is the one that will stand the winds, the storms and the floods - that is the one built on the rock.

According to Jesus 'building on the rock' is hearing and doing His words. Here 'words' is from the Greek 'logos' which has the meaning of the 'full revelation' rather than the specific saying or 'rhema.' (See Matthew 4:4 where *man does not live by bread alone but by every word [rhema] that proceeds from the mouth of God.*)

Key points

- 1) We are born again, a new creation when we believe in Jesus.
- 2) We cannot loose the eternal part of our salvation*.
- 3) So far as the salvation* of our bodies and souls are concerned we are to work out that salvation* with fear and trembling.
- 4) We are called to be diligent by rightly dividing the word of truth.
- 5) The Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth - ask and keep asking – its progressive over time.
- 6) Submit to scripture and be 'Berean' about it.
- 7) Don't try to keep the Law – that is fruitless and barren.

* Salvation – the full meaning is 'deliverance from danger,' and is applicable to body, soul and spirit. It is the salvation of the human spirit that is guaranteed – the rest is worked out with fear and trembling.

Chapter 4

Wisdom in what we think

'For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.' Proverbs 23:7

Here the scripture is referring to a miser – *'Eat and drink he says to you. But his heart is not with you.'* In his heart he is a miser – result in his actions he is a miser and not your friend.

So here is true wisdom

Line up what you think with the truth of scripture. It seems obvious when you think about it but it is apparent, after years of ministry, that many many brothers and sisters think things, generally about themselves or others, that do not line up with the plumb line of the truth.

It is evident that Jesus uses a plumb line - see Amos 7:7-9 where the actions of Israel are measured against the plumb line of truth.

Neither to high nor to low

'For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.'

Romans 12:3

Whatever skill or whatever gifting you have is by grace so acknowledge the Lord in everything. The big danger here is pride – and we know from scripture that God sets Himself against the proud. *'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'* Part of 1 Peter 5:5

John the Baptist was the greatest of the prophets – yet Jesus said, *'For I say to you, among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the Kingdom of God is greater than he.'*

Luke 7:28

John the Baptist was a great man with a great task - to herald the coming of Jesus, the King of Kings. John was a believer under the Old Covenant, the last in the line of prophets to Israel.

Every born again believer, under the New Covenant in Jesus blood, has received the Holy Spirit to indwell him or her, has become part of the bride of Christ, and now, spiritually speaking, is seated with Christ at the right hand of God.

None of us qualify through anything of our own – it is His grace and mercy. So now we need to think aright. We are worthy to be called the children of God through grace, not through our actions, or our own thoughts concerning our worthiness, or lack of it.

Think soberly:

I am a child of God.

By grace I have been saved

I have received the gift of righteousness.

I have been made worthy to be part of the bride of Christ

Take prisoners

The mind can be seen as a battlefield. On the one side is the Kingdom of God and all its attributes, on the other side are our adversary the devil, the world and its thinking, and our own flesh.

'For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.' 2 Corinthians 10:4-5

Every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ - it is a battlefield. Obedience to Christ would mean being holy for we are filled with the Holy Spirit and are called to holiness in life.

In particular - do not worry.

Jesus told us not to in Matthew 6:25-34. He says, 'do not worry,' three times. Do not worry, do not worry, do not worry. If we care to look at Proverbs 12:25 it tells us that worry / anxiety leads to depression.

Finally brethren...

'whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy – meditate on these things. Philippians 4:8

.... and little children

'keep yourselves from idols.'

1 John 5:21

This needs a little explanation! Idols is translated from the Greek 'eidolon.' According to both Thayers and Bullingers Greek lexicons the word 'eidolon' is to do with the image of an object rather than the object itself and is particularly referring to images in the mind. John is saying keep yourself from images in the mind. 'Keep yourself' - the Greek is 'phulasso' - keep guard, beware.

Don't allow your mind to dwell on or to imagine unrighteous things. Don't fantasise on sinful pleasures – as a man thinks in his heart so he is.

More on this subject in the booklet 'Renewing the Mind.'

Chapter 5

Wisdom in what we say.

'Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles. And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and is set on fire by hell.'
James 3:5-6

'If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion* is useless.'*
James 1:26

* *Threskela* – the external aspect of religious observance.

Even though the scripture speaks so clearly about the use of the tongue we see gossip, back biting, criticism and so on even in the church - it should not be so! How many relationships have been damaged or lost due to the wrong word, at the wrong time, or given in the wrong way, in every sphere of life.

Maturity

Wisdom and maturity demand that we bridle our tongues. Bridle – Like the bit we put in a horse's mouth so the horse can be controlled, led and directed.

James again – *'My brethren let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgement. For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect (mature) man, able also to bridle the whole body.*
James 3:1-2

'But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give an account of it in the day of judgement.' (Jesus speaking)

Matthew 12:36

Safety in the slow lane!

James has a lot of wisdom regarding what we say! *'So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.'* James 1:19

This is what one might call a measured response rather than an immediate or ill considered use of words. His advice is to listen carefully, think before you speak and think carefully. Be sure what you speak is of the Spirit and not of the flesh.

How many times we speak too soon and then regret it!

Like a rudder

James again, likening the tongue to the rudder of a ship, *'Look also at ships; although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires.'*

James 3:4

And *'The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature.'* From James 3:6

These two references are telling us that the direction of our lives is controlled by our tongues – hence the need to bridle the tongue - that is to have it under close control – otherwise life will take turns and directions we do not want!

James has already said in chapter 3 verse 2 that if we do not stumble in word (which means we have bridled the tongue) then we are able to bridle the whole body.

Which leads us to wisdom in what we do.

Chapter 6

Wisdom in what we do

The application of wisdom

We may have a lot of wisdom but that does not mean our actions will automatically follow. The reason for this is that action only happens when our will is engaged.

Solomon was known for his wisdom. The Lord God appeared to Solomon and asked him what he would want God to give him, '*Ask, what shall I give you?*' 1 Kings 3:5

Solomon asked for '*an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil.*' (verse 9) In 2 Chronicles 1:12 the Lord says to Solomon '*wisdom and knowledge are granted to you.*' Solomon became renowned for his wisdom with all the Kings of the earth seeking his presence to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart. (2 Chronicles 9:23.)

But Solomon allowed his emotions to overrule his wisdom. Solomon took 700 wives and 300 concubines even though Israel had been instructed not to intermarry with other nationals. His wives turned his heart away from the Lord and he started to worship other Gods. You can read it in 1 Kings chapter 11.

The application of wisdom requires choice

So there are two parts to a holy and righteous life –

- a) Understand the righteous expectations of the Lord when He says '*Be ye holy because I am holy.*' Leviticus 20:7 1 Peter 1:16
- b) By choice of the will conduct yourself accordingly. 1 Peter 1:15

We are called to follow the Spirit not the world.

The ways of the world are likely to seem good or effective because we are brought up and trained in them. But, the scripture warns:

'Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and you are complete in Him.' Colossians 2:8-9

'The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.' 1 Corinthians 3:19

The world says:

Build yourself a secure base

Build a good income

Enjoy a good life

Do what you want

Don't be concerned about how you get there

Jesus says:

I have a special calling just for you – follow Me

My ways are not your ways

I will supply all your needs when you follow Me

I have come that you may have life more abundantly

Love your fellow human beings

Empowered

So that we can follow Him He gives us the Holy Spirit to be our guide. That in itself does not guarantee our obedience – we still have to choose the right path.

The witness of the Spirit within is very valuable and the more we recognise and follow His guidance the more we will be fulfilling our destiny in Christ. The book of Ephesians is very practical on

understanding the wonderful things Jesus has accomplished and then making application to everyday life.

Wisdom understands 'faith' and 'rest'

Wisdom in what we do will involve understanding faith and acting in faith. The booklet 'Faith or Presumption' makes very clear the difference between the two.

Wisdom also involves working from rest. The booklet 'Working from rest' gives very clear teaching on this very important topic.

Wisdom understands Grace

Grace is the unlimited favour of God for those who belong to Him. There are two booklets which specifically cover grace –

'Favour - enjoying the children's bread.' And
'Powered by grace.'

Wisdom understands spiritual warfare

The booklet 'Be strong in the battle' deals with this subject.

Action

Wisdom understands all the truth of the gospel - it is up to us to choose to walk in all the truth that has been revealed to us - that would be wisdom in action.

Wisdom for husbands -

- Recognise your wife is the weaker vessel
- Love your wife unconditionally – as Jesus loves His bride
- Cover her with specific (rhema) words from the Lord
- Prayer -Lord fill me with abundant love for my wife

Wisdom for wives –

- Recognise the role of your husband as head of the household
- Submit (as in 'rank under*') to your husband. * military term to do with role not value.
- Respect your husband
- Prayer – Lord protect me from the desire to be in control and fill me with respect for my husband.

Taken from Ephesians 5 where Paul is explaining the importance of the husband/wife relationship - it reflects Jesus and the His bride and is therefore of utmost importance.

Wisdom is led by the Spirit and truth.

Our calling is to be led by the Spirit of God. His leading and guidance will never contradict rightly divided scripture. This concept, of Spirit and truth both working together in our daily experience, is of vital importance.

The early apostles called themselves bondservants of Jesus Christ – here to do the Lord's will. When we see ourselves in the same light we start to take on a realisation that we are here to do the Master's will. Jesus instruction is *'Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light'* Matthew 11:29-30

He wants us to walk through life with Him as the Master and us as His 'love slaves,' enjoying His presence and joyfully fulfilling His will day by day.

The next chapter looks at how our mind, our emotions and our will can interact – the more we understand the more we are equipped to take the right course of action.

Much wisdom and truth is found in the 'Transformed Working life' course produced by the International Christian Chamber of Commerce as detailed at the beginning of this booklet.

Chapter 7

Interaction of mind, emotions and will

I heard an illustration which pictured this interaction very well. It requires one to imagine a particular scene.

The illustration takes place in the guardroom of an ancient castle. The guardroom is set high in the walls of the castle giving an excellent view of the approach to the castle.

Like well defended castles of old there is a moat with a drawbridge, a portcullis and heavy oak doors.

In the guardroom are three characters –

‘Brains’ has a huge head but is otherwise physically challenged and can’t do much. Very clever though.

‘Flutter’ is all heart – very emotional.

‘Will’ has huge powerful chest and arms - his job is to turn the heavy wheel that lifts the drawbridge and lowers the portcullis. He has no legs, but that does not stop him doing his job of turning the heavy wheel.

On the horizon a cloud of dust is thrown up by an approaching visitor – at this distance you can’t tell whether it is a lone rider or an invading army but already Flutter is in a state shouting to Will ‘drawbridge up’ ‘drawbridge up.’ Brains on the other hand is calmly assessing the position looking to see signs that would give more information and help identify what or who was coming.

The closer the cloud appears the more and more Flutter gets in a panic. Brains keeps assessing and Will does nothing.

Then Brains can see the danger and he starts saying to Will ‘drawbridge up’ ‘drawbridge up.’ However Will still does nothing – he

can't see the danger he can only hear what his two fellows are saying. And that Flutter has been the source of many false alarms. Brains too has often been wrong - so why bother.

However, the danger draws closer and Brains is able to see and to relate to Will the nature of the horses and the weapons. Eventually Will is moved and using his immense strength turns the wheel and the drawbridge rises slowly from the ground – maybe just in time, or maybe just too late.

What's the point - only our will has the power to act. Our minds and our emotions can call, however urgently, or however irrationally, for action – but only our will has the power of action.

Choice

Our will has the final choice. I will or I won't! Choice is a vital part of our Christian lives. The Lord God has designed mankind to have freewill - that is freedom of choice. The reason for this is 'love.' True love requires choice. *'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son'* – God made a freewill choice. This is 'agape.' (Greek for love)

In this scenario – our responsibilities

Mind - our minds are to be trained in all truth. The Holy Spirit is our tutor and will lead us more and more as we seek Him and as we study the scripture. Our minds will be equipped to make right assessments and right decisions more and more – relative to our deepening understanding of the fundamental truth.

Emotions - people have very different levels of emotional response. It is really helpful to know one's own emotions - am I an emotional person? Or am I a 'cold fish?' Emotions are important in relating to others. The 'cold fish' can seek the Holy Spirit for added warmth to

his/her emotions. The very emotional can seek the Holy Spirit for increased rationality.

Will – the vital element of choice and acts. Here love is the requirement. ‘Holy Spirit please fill me with more and more love for Jesus,’ is an essential frequent prayer. Why? Because the more we love Jesus the more we will choose obedience – the more our will be lined up with His will. When asked what was the most important commandment? Jesus replied, *‘love the Lord your God with all your heart all your soul and all your mind.’* (Matthew 22:37)

In the Old Testament, Israel was instructed to do exactly this. In Deuteronomy 6:4-9 Israel was instructed to bind the words on their hands and their foreheads and to write them on their doorposts. So we see religious Jews wearing little boxes on their arms and foreheads – called ‘phylacteries’ - containing scripture passages. We do not need to wear phylacteries – rather we should soak ourselves in the New Covenant and apply it to our daily lives.

The Lord knew that they needed constant reminders. So do we! It is so easy to be caught up with the day to day activities and to miss relational time with the Lord.

‘For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.’

1 John 5:3

The more and more we love the Lord, the more and more our will is attuned to keeping all the things He tells and calls us to do.

Thought – emotion – behaviour – attitude.

Things going wrong in emotions, behaviour and attitudes - check out the initial thoughts and align every thought to Jesus. The Holy Spirit will throw light on wrong thinking as we draw close to Him.

Chapter 8

Wisdom in these times

This booklet is not about end times doctrine - there are others that cover that subject!

This is about wisdom...

...and part of wisdom is to understand the times in which we live. Without getting into discussion about end times doctrine some things are very clear:

It is clear that the world system is very corrupt.
It is clear that there are many false religions.
It is clear that man prefers darkness in many ways.
It is clear that, regardless of improvements in many areas of life, mankind remains inherently opposed to Jesus.
It is clear that there is much antisemitism.
It is clear there is much persecution of Christians.
..... and so on.

We should also know that our Lord is perfect in judgement and that He holds back His hand of judgement until man's sin has become intolerable.

This world then is:

Ungodly - in legislation – in morals – in institutions.

Unreal - in expectations - particularly financial

Unstable – in government

Unspiritual – no recognition of the Lord or of the Holy Spirit

Rendering the world - Unsustainable.

So we are told in Hebrews 12:

'Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also the heaven.' Now this 'Yet once more,' indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.' Verse 26-28

When and how God's judgement will finally come forth is subject to much difference of opinion. A read through the book of Revelation shows just how all consuming and dramatic that judgement is as time leads on towards Jesus return; Matthew warns that unless the time of judgement was shortened no flesh would survive. (24:22)

Just as in the days of Noah

'But as the days of Noah were, so also will be the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered he ark.' Matthew 24:37-38

Here is some wisdom - life will go on as 'normal' until 'suddenly' Jesus takes His bride to the place He has prepared for her. (John 14:13)

We should be able to see the signs that point to the time approaching - even though we will not know the day or the hour. Right now we should see that the world is becoming more and more 'ripe' for judgement. His return may not be very far away.

With this understanding we should know to live our lives accordingly. *'Therefore you also be ready, for he Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.'* Luke 12:40

Wisdom for now

Blessed is the servant found fulfilling his calling when the Master returns. (from Matthew 24:46)

Our focus should be on fulfilling the role God has given us - fulfilling our calling as we are led by the Spirit. Whilst people in the world focus on building their families, building their businesses, seeking our worldly happiness, we will find our happiness and satisfaction in knowing and loving Jesus more and more whilst we wait for that wonderful day when we rise to meet Him in the air as promised in 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

Seek and ask for wisdom

'If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it shall be given to him. But let him ask in faith (trust), with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.' James 1:5-6

Reading on in James you will find him exhorting application – that is application of the truth of scripture, application of the wisdom God gives and application of specific words received from God.

We all face times and experiences where our own wisdom falls short - -ask, without doubt that God will answer, maybe by answering with a specific word, maybe bringing you into a realisation of the best course of action, maybe by the intervention of another person etc -He will answer.

Final thought:

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your mind.