

Characteristics of Godly Wisdom

A Devotional
by Scarlett Stough

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Introduction

James 1:5-8 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; he is a *double-minded** man, unstable in all he does.

**Excerpt from The New Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001 [All other asterisked words are so excerpted from this source]: "1374 dipsuchos, two-spirited, vacillating (in opinion or purpose), literally means "two-souled." This person lives one life for himself and lives another for God."*

Twelve Characteristics of Godly Wisdom

One

Wisdom comes from the Lord and his word.

Proverbs 2:6 For the LORD gives wisdom and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

2 Timothy 3:14-15 ...continue in what you have learned and become convinced of...from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

John 5:39-40 You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

1. Why is belief in Jesus as the Son of God and our Savior and Lord more important to wisdom for salvation than Scriptures alone?

Two

Wisdom develops in humility and is repelled by pride.

Proverbs 11:2 When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.

James 4:6 ...God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.
(Quoted from Proverbs 3:34.)

2. How can pride hinder growth in godly wisdom?

Three

Wisdom goes to those who seek knowledge and understanding by listening to God's instruction, godly advice and correction.

Proverbs 9:9 Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning.

Proverbs 12:15 The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice.

Proverbs 13:1 A wise son heeds his father's instructions, but a mocker does not listen to rebuke.

Proverbs 13:10 Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.

Proverbs 18:15 The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge; the ears of the wise seek it out.

Proverbs 26:12 Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

3. What actions would you take to grow in godly wisdom?

Four

Wisdom requires integrity to increase and will not be given to the wicked.

Daniel 12:10 Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand.

James 3:13 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.

Ephesians 5:15-17 Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

4. What are some examples, from current events or your experience, of how ignoring, or being ignorant of, God's moral law has produced some unwise and destructive results.

The following characteristics, Five through Twelve, are all taken from James 3:17-18:

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. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.

Five

Wisdom is pure.*

2 Corinthians 11:2-3 I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

1 Timothy 5:22 ...and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.

1 John 3:2 Dear friends, now we are the children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself just as he is pure. [This passage goes on to define sin.]

**53 hagnos meaning innocent, modest, perfect; 1) pure from every fault, immaculate, clear 2) Pure from carnality, modest. 3) Hagios Syn. Holy, free from admixture of evil.*

5. We know that only through Christ's sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins can we be pure in God's sight, but what is our role in purifying ourselves?

Six

Wisdom is peace-loving.*

Hebrews 12:11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

James 3:18 Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.

Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

**1516 eirenikos--peaceable. (from 1515) eirene, describes harmonious relationships between men, between nations and between God and man.*

6. Why do you think God emphasizes peacemaking as an essential element of wisdom?

Seven

Wisdom is considerate (gentle.)*

Titus 3:1-2 Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do what is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate* and to show true humility toward all men.

1933 epreikes, equitable, fair, moderate, forbearing, not insisting on the letter of the law. It expresses that considerateness that looks humanely and reasonably at the facts of a case.

7. How does being considerate or gentle produce a wise action for a problem?

Eight

Wisdom is submissive (easy to be entreated)* [open to reason.]

Proverbs 18:13 He who answers before listening--that is his folly and his shame.

2138 eupeithes, good for persuasion, compliant Heavenly wisdom can be freely approached, is not rigid, but is open to discussion (compliant) will not waver but will attempt in gentleness to persuade. [Strong's does not show eupeithes used anyplace else in the NT.]

8. How does being compliant and also not wavering complement rather than contradict in exercising wisdom?

Nine

Wisdom is full of mercy.*

Matthew 9:12-13 ...Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.

Matthew 23:33 Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees. You hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices--mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law--justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.

James 2:12-13 Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!

**1656 eleos compassion (human or divine, especially active): mercy 28X....Eleos (1) is the outward manifestation of pity; it assumes need on the part of him who receives it, and resources adequate to meet the need on the part of him who shows it....*

9. What are some examples of how mercy does triumph over judgment.

Ten Wisdom is full of good fruits.*

Matthew 3:8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.

Matthew 7:16 By their fruit you will recognize them....every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.

John 15:4 Remain in me and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

John 15:8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

**2590 Karpos used as a noun means fruit....metaphorically (4a) of works or deeds, "fruit" being the visible expression of power working inwardly and invisibly, the character of the "fruit" being evidence of the character of the power producing it...*

10. In what ways is wisdom displayed by good fruits?

Eleven

Wisdom is without partiality* (KJV).

The American Heritage Dictionary (2006) definition of partiality: 2. favorable prejudice or bias. 3. A special fondness; a predilection.

**87 adiakritos, undistinguished, impartial, primarily signifies not to be parted; hence, without uncertainty, or indecision, without partiality. [Strong's does not show adiakritos used anyplace else in the NT.]*

James 3:17 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.

1 Timothy 5:21. I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism.

11. How can we remain objective, setting aside our personal preferences, so that we can act wisely?

Twelve

Wisdom is without hypocrisy* (KJV).

Wisdom is sincere (NIV).

Romans 12:9 Love must be sincere....

2 Corinthians 6:4,6 Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way:.... in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love....

1 Timothy 1:5 The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

2 Timothy 1:5 I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

1 Peter 1:22 Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have a sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.

**505 anupokritos This word signifies "true, unfeigned, without hypocrisy."*

12. Sincere love and sincere faith are both important to dealing wisely with others. What does sincerity (lack of hypocrisy) mean to you? Give examples.

Business problems, child rearing challenges, family relationships, and church conflicts all seem to be very different areas of life. How are these characteristics of wisdom applicable in all circumstances of life?