

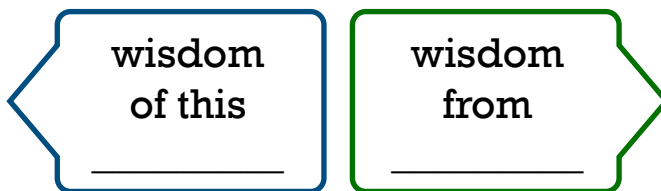
1 • Of the World or From Above?

“What is WISDOM?” We hear that word used a lot throughout the Bible, but what does it really *mean*? What does it look like if I have it and use it? What difference can wisdom really make in our lives?



A simple definition of wisdom is “_____ which _____ to _____.”

Throughout the Bible, two basic sources of wisdom are highlighted:



In **1 Corinthians 3**, the apostle Paul warns us about “the wisdom of this world” and how easily we can be “deceived” and even deceive ourselves.



For the wisdom of this world is _____ with God. For it is written, “He catches the wise in their craftiness,” and again, “The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are _____.” So let no one boast in men. (**3:18-21**)

The wisdom of this world is limited because it leaves God out. It tries to explain the world—where we came from, why we’re here, where we’re going—without God. “The world did not know God through wisdom” (**1 Cor 1:20-21**)—the wisdom of this world—which means, we need wisdom from another source. We need wisdom **“from above.”** Notice how this better wisdom is described by James:

Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first _____, then peaceable, _____, open to reason, full of mercy and good _____, impartial and _____. (**James 3:13-17**)

The choice is mine and yours. What will we listen to? The wisdom of this world or the wisdom from above? Both bear fruits. Both lead somewhere. **Proverbs 8:10-11** encourages us to look past the foolish, futile wisdom of this world to the wisdom of our Creator. **Why?** It is “better than _____, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.”

For Class & Family Discussion:

- ▶ When we describe “**wisdom**” as “**knowing which way to go**,” what do we mean by that? How is wisdom more than a knowledge of facts and figures?
- ▶ That being said, learning Bible facts is a really important thing. *How* can Bible facts, knowledge of Bible history, even Bible memorization help us **discover** the path of wisdom so that we can know which way we ought to go?
- ▶ Why would the Holy Spirit lead Paul to use words like “**folly**” (3:19), “**craftiness**” (3:19), and “**futile**” (3:20) to describe “**the wisdom of this world**” in 1 Corinthians 3?
- ▶ How can “**the wisdom of this world**” be very deceitful, even leading us to “**deceive ourselves**” (1 Cor 3:18)?
- ▶ **James 3:14-16** describes some pretty rotten fruit. How can following “**the wisdom of this world**” easily lead to that sort of fruit in my own life?
- ▶ On the flip side, **James 3:17** describes beautiful, God-honoring fruit. As you read those words, what comes to your mind? How is this fruit different? Better? Wiser?
- ▶ Can we come up with a couple of real-life scenarios together? Can you think of an everyday situation where you might come to a “fork in the road” and have a decision ahead of you? How might “**the wisdom of this world**” point you in one direction and “**the wisdom from above**” point you in a completely different direction?

For NEXT Wednesday:

- ▶ Next Wednesday we’ll explore **Job 28** where the question is asked, “**From where, then, does wisdom come?**” A variety of options will be presented, but we’ll land on “**God understands the way to it.**” **James 1** even encourages us to “**ask God**” for wisdom with confidence and faith. How can I do that? **We’ll dive in and explore it together...**