Last time we started looking at practical advice from the book of Proverbs and we started at the beginning – **the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge**... That is a great place to start, so where do we go from here, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge and what does the next part of Proverbs 1:7 say? **But fools despise wisdom and instruction.**

Let me start with this question – if God came to you and ask you what you wanted, anything in the world, what would be your response? That question was put to Solomon 1 Kings 3:5 *In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.*

He had wealth, but that is not what he asked for,
He had peace, but that is not what he asked for
He had an expansive kingdom, but that is not what he asked for,
He had everything, but that is not what he asked for

1 Kings 3:9 *Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?*

He asked for wisdom – he is known as the wisest man ever to have lived. Wisdom is an important attribute, but few posses it. The one thing that is really lacking in the world today (and sadly lacking among many Christians) is wisdom.

Let's look at what the Scripture says about wisdom, what it is, how important it is and what it does in our lives.

I. **The Importance of Wisdom** – Proverbs 4:7

Proverbs 4:7 *Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.*

The meaning of the word “**principal**” is “the first, in place, time, order or rank.” Have you ever had a
list of things to do and you’ve placed them in order of priority? There are certain things you have to get done right away whilst others can wait. What Solomon is saying here is that wisdom is the main thing, it is our top priority…we need wisdom more than a good job, we need wisdom more than strength and health, we need wisdom more than anything!…it is the principal thing!

Solomon here tells his son and us that nothing is more important in life than obtaining wisdom. Once we have wisdom we would have everything. Wisdom will guide and guard all our other choices and decisions.

Wisdom will decide what friends we make in life, it will determine our business choices, it will decide who we marry and how we bring up our children. It will decide what we believe and how we behave.

When you compare wisdom with knowledge, wisdom must always comes first…knowledge is important, but it always fails if it is not linked to wisdom! For wisdom gives you the ability to rightly apply the knowledge you have been given. And knowledge is worthless and even dangerous without wisdom holding its hand, guiding it in the right direction.

There's a big difference between being smart and being wise.

There were 4 men in airplane — the pilot, Richard Dawkins (scientist/atheist), an elderly preacher, and a Boy Scout

During the flight the plane started to develop some problems and the pilot told everyone that they now had a dilemma. They had to jump out of the plane to survive, but they only had 3 parachutes.

Pilot said: the Her Majesties Royal Air Force has spent many thousands of £’s training me, so I have to live — he grabbed the parachute and jumped out.

Richard Dawkins said, I have the highest IQ here, 4 PhD’s, I’m probably the smartest man in the world, so the world needs me—and he jumped

Elderly preacher looked at Boy Scout and said son, I’ve lived a long life, you have all your life ahead of you, please take the last chute and jump.

Boy Scout said, no, that’s not necessary…we can both live.

“How’s that possible?”

“Because the smartest man in the world just jumped out wearing my rucksack.”

You can have knowledge without wisdom, but a man of wisdom WILL get knowledge! Great definition of wisdom: “The ability to apply Bible truths to all of life’s situations.”

You can’t apply truth you haven’t learned, so you have to study **2 Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself**
approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Here’s the difference between the 2: Knowledge is learned, but wisdom is given.

This is why James said in James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

So we’ve seen the importance of wisdom, now we’ll see how wisdom instructs us

II. The Instruction of Wisdom – Proverbs 4:5

Proverbs 4:5 Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth [7] Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. The word for get means to procure, to own, to attain, to buy – it basically means that we need to do everything we can in order to get wisdom, it is that important because of what it instructs us to do....

Wisdom leads us to Salvation – Proverbs 1:20-33

There is nothing clandestine, secret or underhanded about wisdom. It is not hidden, it is open and available to all. It is visible and audible to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear.

The secret societies, lodges, and mystery religions of the world offer esoteric knowledge – but only for the initiated. Only those who follow the tortuous mazes of a cult and participate in its secret rites along the way find the inner shrine, and usually some horror lurks there. Nearly all the religions of antiquity were mystery religions. They offered knowledge and power to the initiates. But only those who climbed the winding stairways from one degree of initiation to another found the ultimate secret. When unmasked the secret was invariably one of the deep things of Satan - John Philips, Exploring Proverbs Vol I page 43 –

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Wisdom points the scorners, the simple, and the foolish to a spiritual experience. Ephesians 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

True wisdom has a spiritual quality to it, true wisdom turns away from the wisdom of this world which knows little or nothing of God and is often sensual and devilish. Proverbs 9:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.
1 Corinthians 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

Wisdom Leads us to true Wealth – Proverbs 3:13-16

Warren Wiersbe said, “Some people know the price of everything but the value of nothing; consequently they make unwise choices and end up with shoddy merchandise.”

It is good to have the things money can buy, provided you don’t lose the things money can’t buy. What good is an expensive house if there’s no happy home within it? Happiness, pleasantness, and peace aren’t the guaranteed by-products of financial success, but they are guaranteed to the person who lives by God’s wisdom.

The Bible constantly teaches us that there can be no happiness without holiness. A lost person will spend his whole life looking for happiness everywhere. They think they can find it in pleasure, marriage, money, or even in religion. However, all these approaches are flawed if God and His Word are left out.

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, that is heaven’s recipe for happiness and true wealth.

III. The Influence of Wisdom – James 3:13-17 (This point came from Jerry Shirley - Grace Baptist Church)

Have you ever bothered with someone who really wasn’t a good influence on your life? Have you ever had it said about someone you hung around with, “They’re a bad influence on you!”

I wonder if anyone has said that you were a good influence or a positive influence in someone’s life. Wisdom is a positive influence in our lives, so what does it influence us to do?

Wisdom influences us to do good – James 3:13

James 3:13 Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

Goodness is a by-product of wisdom…it results from it. True wisdom shows up more in our walk than in our talk! More in what we do than what we say
The opposite of a wise man is a fool… Eccles. 5:3… a fool's voice is known by multitude of words.

Proverbs 10:19 In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.

Fools tend to talk too much / say all they’re thinking…but a wise person listens more than they speak… why? Because you can’t learn anything when you’re talking! I’m doing all the talking right now so what does that make me? Well, the Bible talks about the foolishness of preaching!

So, wisdom will show up more in your works than in your words.

Wisdom influences us to be gentle – James 3:13

James 3:13 Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness [gentleness] of wisdom.

Meekness=power under control. Meekness isn’t weakness…Jesus was meek. You can be the boss but you don’t have to throw your weight around or have things all your own way.

Wisdom influences us in godliness – James 3:17

James 3:17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure... Wisdom helps us to overcome sin because wisdom helps you have eyes to see the price tag on sin! We see what the cost of sin was for the Lord Jesus Christ, wisdom also shows us what the price of sin is in our own lives - “pleasure in sin for a season”

James 3:17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, Wisdom helps us to overcome strife you’re either a peacemaker or a troublemaker.

James 3:17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, Wisdom helps us to overcome stubbornness, wisdom recognises the time to stand and the time to be flexible.

James 3:17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, Wisdom helps us to overcome selfishness - easily intreated, literally translates to compliant it’s not all about us, we have to put others first sometimes and that’s when wisdom steps in to help.

James 3:17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be
intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, Wisdom helps us to overcome snobbery, without partiality, this basically means that we understand that the ground is level at the cross! That we understand the church is no place for cliques, that everybody is somebody and nobody is anybody…it’s all about God and not about us.

James 3:17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. Wisdom helps us to overcome shams, wisdom will help you be real! Many Christians are like hollow logs…appear sturdy and solid, but step on them and you find there’s not much inside…sin has been eating at them from the inside out as they have tried to appear wise outwardly but lack true, inner, Godly wisdom.