

HOW GREAT IS OUR GOD?

WEEK 10 – WISDOM

Book recommendation: *Louis Berkhof Systematic Theology*

Introduction

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|------------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| 1. Intro: Fear/Worship | 5. Just | 9. Faithfulness |
| 2. Love | 6. Wrath | 10. Wisdom |
| 3. Jealousy | 7. Merciful | |
| 4. Graciousness | 8. Goodness | |

With each attribute, we follow this same pattern:

1. What does the attribute mean?
2. Does scripture teach that God exhibits this attribute?
3. How does this attribute affect the Christian life?

What Does This Attribute Mean?

Definition:

- Wisdom = knowledge practically applied to the best ends, natural sagacity (readiness of apprehension, discriminative intelligence, acute practical judgment)
 - skill in affairs, piety, foresight, judgment
- Wise = to judge correctly from experience; skillful, learned

Biblical Definition:

Psa. 104:19 He made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows its time for setting. **20** You make darkness, and it is night, when all the beasts of the forest creep about. **21** The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God. **22** When the sun rises, they steal away and lie down in their dens. **23** Man goes out to his work and to his labor until the evening. **24** O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. **25** Here is the sea, great and wide, which teems with creatures innumerable, living things both small and great. **26** There go the ships, and Leviathan, which you formed to play in it.

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Jer. 10:12 It is he who made the earth by his power, who established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding stretched out the heavens.

Prov. 3:19 The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens; **20** by his knowledge the deeps broke open, and the clouds drop down the dew.

Eph. 3:1 For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—**2** assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you, **3** how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. **4** When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, **5** which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

6 This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

7 Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God’s grace, which was given me by the working of his power. **8** To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, **9** and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, **10** so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

11 This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, **12** in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. **13** So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

New Testament Wisdom

Unmatched intelligence & skill & cleverness, “Clarity & sophistication”

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Manifold

Manifold means multi-faceted, multi-variegated, manifesting in many different ways, many-sided, even = ultra-diverse

Summarize God's Wisdom

1. Creation

2. God's sovereign providential activity

Presby theologian Robert Reymond wrote: "Thus the all-wise God is at every moment cognizant of everything that ever was, now is, or ever shall be. And it has never been otherwise." (Reymond, Systematic Theology, p184)

Listen to Dutch Theologian, Louis Berkhof, 1932:

God's wisdom is His intelligence as manifested in the adaptation of means to ends. It points to the fact that He always strives for the best possible ends, and chooses the best means for the realization of His purposes. H. B. Smith defines the divine wisdom as "that attribute of God whereby He produces the best possible results with the best possible means." We may be a little more specific and call it *that perfection of God whereby He applies His knowledge to the attainment of His ends in a way which glorifies Him most*. It implies a final end to which all secondary ends are subordinate; and according to Scripture this final end is the glory of God, Rom. 11:33; 14:7,8; Eph. 1:11,12; Col. 1:16. (Berkhof, Systematic Theology, p74)

3. God's wisdom in the church

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John Frame:

God's wisdom is the source of his words and laws. It is the source and standard for all the world's knowledge and skills, for the godly living, and for the way of salvation in Christ. (Doctrine of God, p508)

Tozer:

In the Holy Scriptures wisdom, when used of God and good men, always carries a strong moral connotation. It is conceived as being pure, loving, and good. Wisdom that is mere shrewdness is often attributed to evil men, but such wisdom is treacherous and false. These two kinds of wisdom are in perpetual conflict. (Tozer, Knowledge of the Holy, p60)

Wisdom, among other things, is the ability to devise perfect ends and to achieve those ends by the most perfect means. It sees the end from the beginning, so there can be no need to guess or conjecture. Wisdom sees everything in focus, each in proper relation to all, and is thus able to work toward predestined goals with flawless precision. (Tozer, Knowledge of the Holy, p60)

Does Scripture Teach That God Exhibits This Attribute?

1Cor. 1:17 For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. **18** For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. **19** For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."

1Cor. 1:20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? **21** For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.

1Cor. 1:22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, **23** but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, **24** but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. **25** For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

1Cor. 1:26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. **27** But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the

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strong; **28** God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, **29** so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. **30** And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, **31** so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

Job 12:13 “With God are wisdom and might; he has counsel and understanding. **14** If he tears down, none can rebuild; if he shuts a man in, none can open. **15** If he withholds the waters, they dry up; if he sends them out, they overwhelm the land. **16** With him are strength and sound wisdom; the deceived and the deceiver are his. **17** He leads counselors away stripped, and judges he makes fools. **18** He looses the bonds of kings and binds a waistcloth on their hips. **Job 12:19** He leads priests away stripped and overthrows the mighty. **20** He deprives of speech those who are trusted and takes away the discernment of the elders. **21** He pours contempt on princes and loosens the belt of the strong. **22** He uncovers the deeps out of darkness and brings deep darkness to light. **23** He makes nations great, and he destroys them; he enlarges nations, and leads them away. **24** He takes away understanding from the chiefs of the people of the earth and makes them wander in a trackless waste. **25** They grope in the dark without light, and he makes them stagger like a drunken man.**and so on...**

How Does This Attribute Affect the Christian?

Let’s get into the application section, focus on how it leads us to worship God.

1. Wise Creation

2. Wise Circumstances

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3. Wise Word

4. Wise Gift

Prov. 9:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

James 3:13 Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. **14** But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. **15** This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. **16** For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. **17** But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.