

LIFE QUESTIONS



Elim Church, Clapham

Wisdom

There are two types of wisdom. Natural wisdom is gained through knowledge, whilst spiritual wisdom comes from a revelation as to the ways and workings of God, and enables you to see the things from God's perspective and not man's. Natural knowledge generally increases with age and experience, whilst spiritual knowledge grows out of your walk, relationship and commitment to God as well as your obedience to the scriptures (Deut 4:6). Obedience mentioned here is not referring to following the letter but recognising the spirit behind them. The Pharisees prided themselves on their adherence to the scriptures - but this came from their own understanding and perspective. As a result Jesus made some of His strongest statements because of the attitude of these religious folk!

Spiritual wisdom can often be seen when a person makes difficult decisions in times of great adversity. James in the Bible points us in the direction that when we are facing difficulties, we can ask God for wisdom to help us to respond in the right way (Jam 1:5) thereby being able to give Him glory as one of the outcomes.

When Solomon came to the throne, he asked God for wisdom to govern his people aright (1 Kings 3:9) rather than seeking after riches. As a result God was pleased with his request and he ended up with both. This drew many leaders from other countries to come to visit him because of the way he treated his subjects so well.

Proverbs 1:7-9 shows us how we get wisdom and what we need to do with it. "How does a man become wise? The first step is to trust and reverence the Lord! Only fools refuse to be taught. Listen to your father and mother. What you learn from them will stand you in good stead; it will gain you many honours" (TLB). Solomon received wisdom from God but it was his responsibility to use it wisely, for he was useless at managing his own household. As parents we have a responsibility to teach our children how to be wise (Prov 4:3-4) in order to prepare them to be good individuals within the community.

When the Early Church faced a problem they looked for those who had wisdom in order that they would make decisions that were wise - and not in the best interests of the majority which is often the way politicians act today. Because a majority want to go in a particular direction we may keep most people happy, but could end up going in a direction that is against God's ways. It was a majority decision that kept the Israelites in the wilderness for forty years when they could have made the journey in just a couple of weeks or so.

If you are facing times of difficulty - take a moment to quieten your heart and ask God to help you not just to make the right choices or decisions, but to respond in such a way that will cause your character to grow and reflect something of the presence of God as a result. Then don't forget to think and praise Him as a result!