

Chapter 2

WISE LIVING

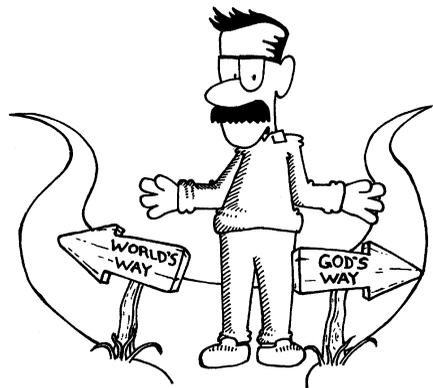
Would others identify wisdom as one of your gifts? How does it show? We need wisdom to understand who we are, what we are, and where we are going. Wisdom that leads us to fear, love, and follow God is essential if we are to live “life at its best.” With God’s wisdom, we know Whose we are. Proverbs 3:7 warns us: *“Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil.”* Without wisdom, life becomes disjointed, lacking direction and purpose. Proverbs 4:11 promises, *“I guide you in the way of wisdom and lead you along straight paths.”* With wisdom, we are able to understand reality and live a prudent life. With wisdom, we are motivated to make necessary changes in life.

Life is like a puzzle. Wisdom enables us to fit the pieces together. God has made the wisdom to live life skillfully available to all believers. We live a life that is very complex, full of pressures, burdens, and traps. No wonder Solomon wrote in Proverbs 3:13-14, *“Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold.”*

Proverbs 9:10a points out, *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”* We are called to revere and respect God and to acknowledge God for Who He is. True wisdom begins when we submit ourselves to His will. Bill Gothard said, *“Wisdom is seeing things from God’s perspective.”* Only when we see things from God’s perspective will they make sense.

We receive wisdom as a gift from God. *“For the Lord gives wisdom, and from His mouth come knowledge and understanding”* (Proverbs 2:6). We read in 1 Corinthians 2:10-12 that this gift of God’s wisdom is received through the Holy Spirit.

But God has revealed it to us by His Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit Who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.



God gives us wisdom, and, along with it, the freedom to choose between His wisdom or that of the world.

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. But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

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 (James 3:13-18).

Godly wisdom offers an eternal perspect. Godly wisdom . . .

- motivates us to seek after things that are right and pure.
- motivates us to seek God’s direction as we follow His plan for our lives.
- is not popular with people with worldly interests.
- will give us the ultimate victory over Satan and death.



Worldly wisdom has a much different orientation. Worldly wisdom . . .

- causes us to seek worldly success.
- urges us to seek fame, power, and monetary wealth.
- seeks self-gratification.
- focuses on the pleasures of this life.

Charles Swindoll defines Biblical or Godly wisdom as follows: “Wisdom is the God-given ability to see life objectively and to handle life with stability.”¹ God gives us the ability to see life from a different perspective; life here on earth is a preparation for the life to come. “*And He said to man, ‘The fear of the Lord—that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding’*” (Job 28:28).

Wisdom equips and prepares us to handle life so we can live “life at its best.” God gives us wisdom, knowledge, and happiness. Through these gifts, we receive abundant joy and peace as well. “*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*” (James 1:5). God’s wisdom is free. Unfortunately, many of us end up loving the

world and the friendship of the world more than we love the wisdom God has to offer.

With Godly wisdom, we are not seized by fear of what life may or may not offer. By the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we can follow God’s wisdom in our places of work, our homes, and our neighborhoods. Wisdom balances out the highs and lows of life because God is with us each step of the way. With His wisdom, we can live more confidently, because we can see things more clearly. *“I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence; I possess knowledge and discretion”* (Proverbs 8:12).

Wisdom allows us to see with discernment. With wisdom we are able to see below the surface of things. It also includes the ability to look at ourselves, others, and even obstacles we encounter from a Godly perspective. We will be able to demonstrate better judgment in our relationships, finances, business transactions, and in all areas of our lives.

WISDOM VERSUS KNOWLEDGE

In our country, we are overwhelmed with information. With CBS, NBC, and ABC news programs, as well as round-the-clock news sources like CNN and C-Span, we are the most informed people ever. However, information is replacing knowledge, even as knowledge has supplanted wisdom as the answer to life’s problems. T.S. Eliot asked: “Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?”



We grasp at information and memorize facts but many times stop short of using that knowledge wisely. We can recite the 10 Commandments and quote Scripture but lack discipline to incorporate God’s Word into our minds, hearts, and lives. We’re content with the bare bones and ignore the meat! The result is that we are full of knowledge but still lack wisdom. We have wisdom when we use knowledge properly. Knowledge provides facts and information, but it does not answer the “why” or “for what purpose.”² Knowledge does not help us in times of crisis, despair, or loneliness. Knowledge combined with a fear—awesome respect—of the Lord is wisdom, and wisdom is the key to transforming panic into peace, stress into serenity, and chaos into control.

1 Corinthians 3:18-21 teaches,

Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a “fool” so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God’s sight. As it is written: “He catches the wise in their craftiness”; and again, “The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile.” So then, no more boasting about men!

Today’s world admires the “wise” man, the “self-made” man, the one who needs no one as he goes through life. Paul says that wise man’s thoughts are “futile.” He advises the one who is wise in the eyes of the world to become a “fool.” That “fool” is the one who already possesses knowledge and, beyond that, knows who and Whose he is. His reliance is on the Lord. He knows the danger of self-sufficiency. *“Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know. But the man who loves God is known by God”* (I Corinthians 8:1b-3). Knowledge may lead to pride and arrogance which can cause us to disdain dependence on God. The Bible tells us that even when we are weak we can still be strong in the Lord (2 Corinthians 12:9). Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us, *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.”* We must be mindful that knowledge apart from application for the benefit of others falls short of what God desires from us.³

As Christians, we trust in the wisdom of God, not in our own. We read in 1 Corinthians 1:21, *“For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know Him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.”* Certainly all the accumulated knowledge of the world would not devise such a plan of salvation as the wisdom of God did. To the world, God’s plan is foolishness, but *“the foolishness of God is wiser than man’s wisdom . . .”* (1 Corinthians 1:25).

CHOOSING GOD’S WISDOM OVER WEALTH

Our standard of living in this country has increased because we have more money today than ever before to purchase more things. We may think we have improved our lifestyles, but, in the process, we are losing our ability to live. We are amassing wealth at the expense of wisdom. We are living in a rat race without understanding where the finish line is. Life is out of focus because we are not seeking God’s wisdom. Somewhere on life’s journey, most of us will realize that a fifty-fifty proposition with God is too little. We need more, because we need 100 percent of God. We need His spiritual wisdom. We need spiritual wisdom that works from the inside out. What we need is God’s wisdom in our minds and hearts. Then we can give God all of ourselves.

Solomon, one of the best-known Old Testament characters, taught us about the importance of wisdom. *“At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, ‘Ask for whatever you want Me to give you.’ ”* (1 Kings 3:5). Solomon requested, *“So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people . . .”* (1 Kings 3:9). *“God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. Solomon’s wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the men of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt”* (1 Kings 4:29-30).



The Lord was so pleased that Solomon chose wisdom over wealth and a long life that He not only gave him wisdom, but riches and honor as well. Ecclesiastes 7:12 says, *“Wisdom is a shelter as money is a shelter, but the advantage of knowledge is this: that wisdom preserves the life of its possessor.”* The wisdom God gave Solomon enabled him to lead a very productive and prosperous life. His Godly wisdom was both his shield and his strength.

The society in which we live tells us there is more wisdom in gaining the “things” of this world than in following God’s ways. We face temptations that seek to pull us away from seeking and acting in accordance with wisdom God has given us. *“Choose my instruction instead of silver, knowledge rather than choice gold, for wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her”*(Proverbs 8:10-11).

Most of us want to be accepted by our families, our peers, and our employers, but more importantly, we want to be accepted by God. God accepts us as we are. *“But God demonstrates His love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8). However, He does not leave us in the low state in which He found us. He makes us *“new creations”* (2 Corinthians 5:17) and gives His wisdom to all who ask for it (James 1:5). Paul tells us to pray, . . . *asking God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding . . . that you . . . may please Him . . .”* (Colossians 1:9-10). May we find real truth in these two lines from an unidentified poet:

To know God’s will is life’s greatest treasure.
To do God’s will is life’s greatest pleasure.

Fulfillment, peace, and a sense of purpose can be found in the heart of a person seeking to know and do the will of God.⁴

The wisdom of the world pulls at us to deny the will of God. It wants us to exchange our devotion for quick thrills and to exchange spiritual wisdom for

worldly wisdom. The wisdom of the world says, “Go ahead; it’s OK.” “Don’t worry, no one will know.” The world promises pleasure; Jesus promises that we will find pleasure in Him. The world pounds raucously at our door; Jesus knocks quietly at our door. Do you hear the pounding or the knocking? Which wisdom will you follow?

The Apostle Paul imparts the wisdom of seeking God and concentrating on the eternal. *“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things”*(Colossians 3:1-2). When we set our minds on things above, we understand that God owes no one anything. God does not owe us reasons or explanations.

In the book of Job, we read about an upright man who lost everything but his life. He and his friends try to make sense of it all. Finally, God speaks, but not to explain Job’s troubles or give him answers. If He would give them, neither Job nor we could understand them anyway. God knows what He is doing. When you can’t trace His hand, trust His heart. Job responded, *“Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know”* (Job 42:3b). Surely, these are the “things above” Paul spoke of.

When we set our minds on the eternal, we realize all that Christ has done on our behalf. In Him, we experience the limitless joy that only God can provide. The wisdom of God is found in Jesus Christ. *“It is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus, Who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness, and redemption”* (1 Corinthians 1:30). The God Who spoke still speaks. The God Who forgave still forgives. The God who came still comes. He comes into our world to do what we can’t. He comes to bring us the wisdom we lack.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. How do you get wisdom (Proverbs 2:6)?
2. With Godly wisdom what do you seek? What does worldly wisdom seek?
3. What did Solomon ask from God (1 Kings 3:9)? What did he receive (1 Kings 4:29-30)?
4. Why does the Apostle Paul admonish the “wise” man and lift up the “fool” (1 Corinthians 3:18-21)?
5. When you have received Godly wisdom what will others see in you (James 3:13)?

CONSEQUENCES OF WORLDLY WISDOM

Jesus used two parables to show us the foolishness of our ways when we choose to focus on “things” rather than on Him.

The Parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12:13-21).

The Parable of the Rich Fool gives two contradictory glimpses of the rich man alongside each other. He was shrewd and “worldly wise” enough to become rich; yet he was not discerning enough to realize that he was lacking God’s wisdom and had no relationship with Him. There was nothing wrong in his desire for bigger barns to take care of more crops. God was not critical of this rich man because he had a lot of money. God called this man a “fool” because he turned his back on God. The rich man mistakenly believed that all he had accumulated belonged to him. He used the gifts God had given him solely for himself. He never acknowledged God as the giver.



The rich man was of the world, and he desired to enjoy life to the fullest without concern for God or his fellow man. He was not a giving or generous person to anyone but himself. His goal in life was to “*take life easy; eat, drink, and be merry.*” He epitomized worldly wisdom. He got what he wanted out of life, but, at the end, God told him his life was demanded of him. He had to leave everything behind. All that he had accumulated meant nothing any more. He died before he could use all that he had gathered in his barns. His preoccupation with

money and things of this world robbed him of eternal life. A lifetime of worldly wisdom made him a “fool.” If we focus our attention on amassing material possessions, we will end up as empty as the “Rich Fool.” “*Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions*” (Luke 12:15).



The Rich Young Man (Mark 10:17-25)

On the surface, everything about the Rich Young Man looked okay. He had done the right things by keeping the commandments “*since [he] was a boy,*” but Jesus confronted him about his priorities. Jesus knew that his wealth was his treasure and security. He knew the

Rich Young Man had adopted the wisdom of the world and had made his wealth his god. *“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”* (Matthew 6:21). Jesus told the Rich Young Man, *“Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me”* (Mark 10:21).

The rich man was unable to separate himself from his worldly treasure. Consequently, he left sadly, knowing he had disobeyed God in not giving away his wealth. Like the Rich Fool, the Rich Young Man was foolish and lacked true wisdom. Neither was willing to acknowledge God as the Creator and Provider of his wealth. Their possessions had become the most important thing in their lives, their greatest obstacle to fellowship with God.

Jesus urges us to discard material security to follow Him. By sacrificing the treasures of this world, we gain the treasures of Heaven. Because the world in which we live gives rewards for good performance, it is understandable that the rich young ruler thought heaven was just a payment away. It only made sense. We work hard, we pay our dues, and our account is credited as paid in full. Jesus says, *“No way.”* What we want costs more than what we can pay. We don’t need a system; we need a Savior. *“With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God”* (Mark 10:27).

Those endowed with Godly wisdom find their treasure in Jesus Christ. Money is important, but we acknowledge that our earthly treasures are gifts from God. Money is not to be worshiped or idolized. It is God Who makes it possible to work and to acquire the financial success we do enjoy. *“You may say to yourself, ‘My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.’ But remember the Lord your God, for it is He Who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms His covenant, which He swore to your forefathers, as it is today”* (Deuteronomy 8:17-18).



RESULTS OF GODLY WISDOM

Godly wisdom enables us to make the choices that result in our living “life at its best.” God’s wisdom helps us handle the difficulties and challenges of life. *“All this [our abilities and success],”* Isaiah tells us (28:29), *“also comes from the Lord Almighty, wonderful in counsel and magnificent in wisdom.”* Finding our strength and wisdom in the Lord will bring us contentment, peace, and happiness.

“Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is he who trusts in the Lord” (Proverbs 16:20).

Because of God's wisdom, positive things happen. The book of Proverbs identifies the results of God's wisdom.

1. Life is more stable.

Proverbs 3:17 describes wisdom: *"Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace."* Even when Christians are called by God to suffer and endure hardships, spiritual wisdom helps to keep life smooth, on an even keel. If we accept the wisdom of God found throughout the Scriptures, we will be able to reduce some of life's ups and downs. Spiritual wisdom provides us with "pleasant ways" and "paths of peace."

Without wisdom, we are like

- sailing ships without wind.
- cars without gas.
- chariots without horses.

Jesus is the embodiment of wisdom. Wisdom was what the disciples lacked when they doubted. Wisdom was what the crowds lacked when they misunderstood. Wisdom is what we lack when we fall. The wisdom that Jesus wants to impart most of all is that there is only one path to salvation, and that path is Jesus Himself.

God's wisdom will alert us to problems that lie ahead of us. If we listen to what God tells us through His Word and His Spirit, we will avoid many pitfalls in life. We may be wise to heed the words of Martin Luther: "You cannot prevent a bird flying over your head, but you can prevent his making a nest in your hair." We have a responsibility to stay clear of things in the world that could put us on the wrong path. *"Avoid every kind of evil,"* Paul warns in 1 Thessalonians 5:22, *"Every word of God is flawless; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him"*(Proverbs 30:5). Heeding God's wisdom will keep us away from places where we shouldn't be, reading material we shouldn't read, or watching what we should avoid.

2. Life is longer.

"My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity" (Proverbs 3:1-2). God gives commands, not to squelch us, but for our good. We see the present. We want to enjoy today what the world has to offer. We can't see into the future, and often we ignore the lessons we could learn from others who have been down that seductive path of hedonism. God warns us about the fleeting nature of these earthly pleasures and promises a better way. God said, *"The fear of the Lord—that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding"* (Job 28:28).

In answer to Solomon's prayer for wisdom," *"The Lord was pleased"* (1 Kings 3:10), and, along with granting the king his request, God gave him wealth and honor. In addition God promised, *"And if you walk in My ways and obey My statutes and commands . . . I will give you a long life"* (1 Kings 3:14). It seems that obedience is a key to long life. We are wise to choose to obey and to seek to do God's will.

3. Life is peaceful.

Proverbs 3:17-18 says of wisdom, *"Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who embrace her; those who lay hold of her will be blessed."* One of the many blessings we receive from God's wisdom is peace with the Lord and the world around us. When we have peace with our Creator, we will be at peace in our places of work, at home, and everywhere. John 14:27 tells us God's peace surpasses anything that the world can offer. *"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."*

Only a great God does for His children what they can't do for themselves. God's blessings are received upon surrender, not awarded upon conquest. The first step to spiritual peace is a plea for help, an acknowledgment of moral destitution. When we have tasted the richness of God's peace, we will understand our spiritual bankruptcy and seek His mercy and peace. This is wise living!

4. We follow God.

"He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them His way" (Psalm 25:9).

- God commands us not to trust in ourselves (Proverbs 3:5).
- God warns us not to be wise in our own eyes (Proverbs 3:7).
- God tells us to be humble (1 Peter 5:6).
- God asks us to trust in Him (Proverbs 3:5).
- God wants us to be guided by Him (John 16:13).

Transferring control of our lives to God is a faith issue with which we wrestle daily. When we trust in Him, God will prove His faithfulness to us.

Often God's wisdom may not seem like the logical direction to take. We need to remember the words in Isaiah 55:8-9, *" 'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,' declares the Lord. 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.' "*



“Let go and let God”? We are to let go of our own wills, desires, and ambitions and let God have His way in our lives.

It is not easy to “Let go and let God.” It is not easy to give up our own wills and ambitions to let God have His way in our lives. When we are sick and in pain, we may be tempted to question God’s ways: God, why should this happen to me?

God’s ways are not our ways. God’s wisdom is not like the world’s wisdom. In *The Good Life*, Max Anders lists several ways in which the world’s wisdom contrasts with God’s wisdom.

Elevating yourself lowers you;
Lowering yourself raises you.

To keep what you have is to lose it;
To give it away is to keep it.

To find your life is to lose it;
To give it away is to keep it.

Abundance can bring poverty;
Poverty can bring abundance.

Freedom leads to slavery;
Slavery leads to freedom.

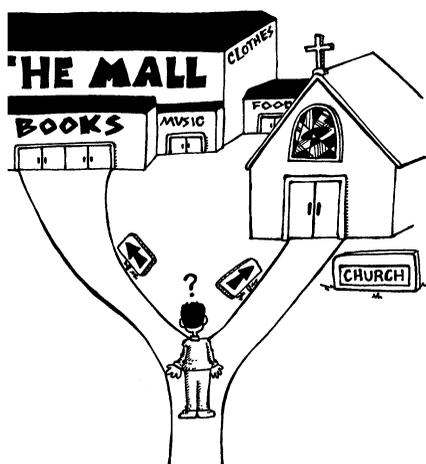
Cleverness is folly;
Foolishness is wisdom.

Strength leads to weakness;
Weakness brings strength.

The first shall be last;
The last shall be first.⁵

We need to question less and trust and follow more. Trust is being willing to let go of our tight grasp on worldly things and believe that God will provide for us. Trouble begins when we rely on our own understanding rather than on God’s wisdom (Proverbs 3:5). We do not have the answers, so we need to wait for God’s direction. “*Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it’*” (Isaiah 30:21). We may question the rationale at the time, but sometimes God “puts us on our backs so we will look up.”

Even though we may not understand why God does certain things, we can be sure that He does them for our good. In the same way, everything God asks us to do is for our ultimate good. God loves us and wants the best for us. “*And we*



know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28). As we learn and do what God expects of us, we will receive the blessings of obeying His will.

We may ask for God’s wisdom as we answer these questions:

- What is the wise thing to do in light of my past experiences?
- What is the wise thing to do in light of my present state of mind?
- What is the wise thing to do in light of my future goals and dreams?
- What would God have me do?

Only God knows what is best for us. He has the perfect plan and direction for our lives. The guidance God provides may come through the counsel of wise Christian friends as Solomon suggested in Proverbs 15:22: “Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.” When we acknowledge that He is in control and seek His wisdom through prayer and study of His Word and listening to Christian counsel, we will see how He guides our paths.

To live a wise and godly life, we are to live as God wants us to live. In the Old Testament book of Micah, the question is asked, “What does the Lord require of you?” God answers the question through the Prophet Micah, “To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with God” (Micah 6:8). God exalts humility. When God works in our lives, helping us to become humble, He gives us a permanent joy. Humility gives us a joy that cannot be taken away. Yes, let us walk “humbly with God.” When we accept and apply God’s wisdom, life takes on a new direction and an important purpose.

DEVELOPING A PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT

To help us live wisely with the Lord, we may want to develop a personal mission statement. As Christians, there is no requirement to have a mission statement, but it offers the potential to enhance our lives. A mission statement can help us focus our thoughts, energies, and resources, as well as give us a purpose for our lives. A mission statement can help provide a framework for thinking and help us achieve our goals.

Jesus gives us the basis for our mission statement.

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything



I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age (Matthew 28:18-20).

The Great Commission prompts and calls us to do the Lord's work during our lifetimes. Our individual mission statements will identify our own unique individual gifts, abilities, and resources.

In order to develop our personal mission statements, we need to determine what we want to accomplish and which characteristics we want to develop. In addition, we need to examine the calling God has given us. If you are a spouse, parent, teacher, manager, plumber, or doctor, you need to identify God's specific plan for you. In this process, you identify core principles and values by which to live.

Below is an example of a brief three-sentence personal mission statement:

Through God's grace, I seek to please Him in all I do as a husband, father, churchman, and disciple of Christ. With God's guidance, I will do all I can, as long as I can, to equip myself to serve Him and others in order that I might help to "make disciples of all nations." It is my prayer that He prepare and place me in settings where I can make a difference in people's lives.

Write your own mission statement:

ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS

LIFE-ENRICHING

LIFE-DESTROYING

God's wisdom

World's wisdom

Eternal values

Worldly values

Loves people and uses things

Loves things and uses people

Follows God's plan

Takes control and stays in charge

Fears God

Has no fear

God's purposes are primary

Success, power, fame, and money are primary

Lives a moral life

Lives a life of self-gratification

Under God's control

No control

Generous

Selfish

Committed to serving Christ

Committed to ungodly things

Humble and serving

Proud and using

Sees what is inside as important

Sees the outside and the glitz as important

WRAPPING UP

In contrast to the wisdom of the world, God's wisdom will lead us to Him and give us lives of purpose. Godly wisdom promotes purity. Worldly wisdom leads to a life of lust, greed, and power. Wisdom from God directs us into God-pleasing thoughts and activities. The wisdom of the world causes us to seek self-gratification and the pleasures of this life. Only God's wisdom gives us "life at its best." In His divine wisdom, God works for the good of those who love Him.

God is eager to give us His wisdom. Through God's Word, the Holy Spirit draws us closer to the Lord and reveals God's knowledge. Filled with His Spirit, we are capable of seeking Him with all our hearts. God's wisdom will help us choose the path in life that gives us peace and an eternal home.

As God's people, we look upon life as a sacred trust. We are stewards, managers, and caretakers of God's gifts. All of our time, talents, powers, and earthly possessions belong to Him. We are to use our gifts wisely and profitably to accomplish God's purposes in our lives.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. How are information, knowledge, and wisdom alike? How are they different?
2. How would you contrast Godly wisdom with worldly wisdom?
3. How do you obtain God's wisdom (1 Corinthians 2:6-16)?
4. What are some daily temptations you face that try to pull you away from God's wisdom?
5. *"Choose my _____ instead of _____, _____ rather than choice gold, for _____ is more precious than rubies, and nothing you can desire can compare with her"* (Proverbs 8:10-11).
6. What was the problem in the Parable of the Rich Fool? Was it having too many barns? Was it the use to which he planned to put his riches—taking life easy, eating, drinking, and having fun (Luke 12:19)? What are the "barns" that keep you away from an intimate relationship with Christ?
7. What does it mean to be rich toward God (Luke 12:21)? What is the role of possessions in your life?

8. Why does Jesus ask the Rich Young Man (Mark 10:17-25) to sell everything? Why did He ask him to give it away before becoming a follower? Did Jesus ask this of others? Does He ask it of you?
9. Has the growth in man's knowledge, technical advancement, and wealth helped or hindered growth in people seeking God's wisdom? Why or why not?
10. In Ecclesiastes chapter 7, we find some things God's wisdom provides:
Vs. 11 _____ Vs. 12 _____ Vs. 13 _____
11. What does God promise you when you face obstacles, bumps, and crises in your life (Joshua 1:5)?
12. God's wisdom says there is a wealth that does satisfy. What is that wealth (Proverbs 8:18)?
13. Who of your acquaintances lives a life of Godly wisdom? What characteristics or Biblical principles do you see operating in his or her life?
14. Why will Godly wisdom help you live "life at its best"?

Notes

¹ Charles R. Swindoll, "A Faithful Heart: Seeking Wisdom and Integrity", Audiotape (Anaheim, California: Insight for Living, 1973).

² Ibid.

³ Woodrow Kroll, *Proverbs, God's Guide for Life Choices* (Lincoln, Nebraska: Back to the Bible, 1996) 13-20.

⁴ Ibid. 32-33.

⁵ Max Anders, *The Good Life* (Dallas, Texas: Word Publishing, 1993) 69.