

SERMON GUIDE

Get Wisdom

Proverbs 4:7



Check out the TJC Weekend Recap podcast for a more in-depth look at our sermons each week!

The podcast is available on all streaming platforms!

SERMON NOTES

We begin a brand new series today throughout June and July called "Get Wisdom." It is a study in the book of Proverbs. We are going to be looking at different themes that emerge in Proverbs, the preeminent book of wisdom in the world. Wisdom isn't just for solving riddles or writing philosophy—it's for Tuesday afternoon in the break room at work or in a crowded store in town. It's for the kitchen table. It's for hard text messages and hard talks. Let me show you what I mean...

Scenario 1: The Parenting Moment

You're exhausted after work. Your 10-year-old bursts into the room crying, "I hate school! I'm never going back!" You wince. Your heart breaks for them. What do you say next? This moment isn't just about reacting—it's about wisdom.

Scenario 2: The Leadership Dilemma

You manage a small team. One of your best workers is quietly undermining morale behind the scenes. You're 90-95% sure about. Do you confront them? Wait? Watch? Talk to others first? What's the wise thing to do?

Scenario 3: The Financial Crossroads

You're offered a promotion—but it'll require 20 more hours a week and pull you away from your family and church life. The pay increase is significant. Is this God's blessing... or a detour in disguise? What does wisdom say?

Scenario 4: The Conflict Text

A friend sends you a passive-aggressive message that really gets under your skin. You have the perfect response drafted—sharp but clever. Do you hit send? What would a fool do? What would the wise do?

Scenario 5: The Scroll Trap

You find yourself scrolling your phone most days. You find yourself envious of others. Or maybe you see a video that triggers lust. How should you handle those responses of envy and lust? Do you stop scrolling or stop using social media? Do you ignore it? Do you do something to fight against those responses? What does wisdom look like here?

Notice that none of these scenarios have clear easy answers for what actions should be taken. Multiple avenues of actions could be taken. These scenarios drive deeper into the kind of life you're building. Wisdom isn't a list of rules. It's a way of walking. And the call of Proverbs is urgent: Get wisdom. The book of Proverbs is a street-level book. It's part of the Bible's Wisdom Literature, written to teach people how to live skillfully in God's world. Though various authors contributed (including Agur and King Lemuel), most of the proverbs are attributed to Solomon, the son of David and the wisest king of Israel (see 1 Kings 4:29–34). Proverbs isn't a narrative or a list of laws—it's a collection of short, memorable sayings and teachings designed to impart practical wisdom for everyday life. The book opens with its purpose: "To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight..." (Proverbs 1:2). It aims to shape the whole person—mind, heart, and actions. Proverbs doesn't just tell you what's right and wrong; it trains you to discern what is best, fitting, and godly in the messy, complex situations of life. Through vivid contrasts between the wise and the foolish, it calls us to fear the Lord, pursue understanding, and walk the path that leads to life. It's a book about wise living.

Here's a working definition for us for biblical wisdom: **Wisdom is the Spirit-given grace to understand and apply God's truth in daily life, living in humble obedience that brings glory to Him and blesses others.**

Exegesis

V7a – “The beginning of wisdom is this”

This phrase sets up a rhetorical emphasis. The Hebrew word for beginning can also mean principal thing or foundation. It's a way of saying: “If you want wisdom, here's the most essential starting

point—go get it." It may sound circular at first ("The beginning of wisdom is: get wisdom"), but it's actually profound. It's saying: the wisest thing you can do is to pursue wisdom with all your effort. This is an urgent call to value, prioritize, and pursue wisdom above all.

I remember reading as a young man going into ministry at 21 years old the story of Solomon becoming king and the Lord asking him what he wanted. The Lord was ready to give him anything. Rather than asking for riches or power, he asked for wisdom. I remember feeling the need for the same thing at such a young age and wanting to make a difference in people's lives. I prayed for wisdom often. And still do.

V7b – “Get wisdom”

The verb (get) here means to acquire, buy, or gain. This isn't passive learning—it's intentional effort, even if it costs you. Proverbs often presents wisdom as something to be sought out like treasure (cf. Prov. 2:4–5). There is a cost. It may mean time, humility, repentance, or sacrifice of other pursuits. The tone here is urgent and emphatic—"Get it!" Don't drift. Don't wait. Don't assume you have it.

Some costs:

Time - You have to spend time in God's Word and prayer. Time with God brings wisdom. Time with godly, wise people brings wisdom. If you don't prioritize that time, you won't grow wise. If you only give 20 minutes to God but 4 hours a day to TikTok and YouTube, don't expect to grow wise. In fact, wisdom makes the connection between where you direct your time and what you're becoming.

Pride - Wisdom requires a humble, teachable spirit. This means you have to admit you don't know everything. In fact, the wisest people are the ones who often feel they know the least. Why? Because they recognize how much there is to know and how much other people know things. Wisdom also requires the willingness to receive correction. To apologize when you get it wrong.

Comfort - Wisdom requires making uncomfortable decisions. Saying no to opportunities, relationships, or other things because it's not wise.

Reputation - Living wisely in a foolish world will often make you look like a fool to the foolish. They may mock you for not indulging in things they do or for the priorities you have. But the wise stand firm, even when it costs social points.

Ease - Wisdom doesn't take shortcuts. Wisdom does the hard work because it recognizes being reactionary doesn't bring the best decision.

Money - Sometimes investing in becoming wiser cost money, whether it be for books, seminars, counseling, mentors, software, a conference, or whatever it is. These things are often investments in wisdom.

V7c – “And whatever you get, get insight”

This second clause intensifies the first: “Whatever you get” translates a phrase meaning "with all your possessions / everything you have". Insight speaks to understanding, discernment, the ability to see how things really are. This is a Hebrew poetic parallel to reinforce the message: Wisdom and understanding are worth everything. Give it your all to get them.

In Proverbs, a major theme that runs through the book is the contrast between the wise man and the fool. A fool isn't just someone who lacks intelligence—it's someone who rejects God's ways and refuses correction.

Key Traits of the Fool:

- Despises wisdom and instruction
- Is quick to speak, slow to listen
- Mocks sin
- Trusts in himself
- Resists correction and discipline
- Repeats his folly

A fool is morally and spiritually stubborn. He might be clever, but he's unteachable, prideful, and shortsighted.

The wise person is the one who:

- Fears the Lord Proverbs 9:10
- Listens to counsel and correction Proverbs 15:31
- Controls their tongue Proverbs 17:27
- Walks in integrity Proverbs 10:9
- Seeks knowledge and understanding Proverbs 18:15
- Lives with prudence and humility Proverbs 11:2

Wisdom in Proverbs is tied to a person's attitude toward God and their responsiveness to truth. The wise don't just "know"—they obey, adapt, and grow. The book of Proverbs helps us discern and avoid foolishness:

- It exposes patterns. Proverbs doesn't just tell you what is foolish—it shows you how fools act, speak, and think over time.
- It offers warnings. Fools may seem successful at first, but their end is destruction (Prov. 14:12).
- It celebrates wisdom. Proverbs doesn't just warn—it holds up wisdom as beautiful, noble, and rewarding.
- It trains perception. Like muscle memory, Proverbs helps readers instinctively recognize folly and choose wisdom—even in gray areas.

One of the differences between the wise and the fool is the ability to connect cause and effect. Wisdom is the ability to anticipate consequences. Fools live only in the moment—wise people live with the future in view. In other words, the wise can "see further down the road." They are trained to recognize patterns and outcomes—because they've internalized God's design for how the world works. I've pastored and counseled people for over 20+ years now. Most people come in with an issue they are dealing with and it feels unique to them. But it rarely is. 90% of counseling is dealing with the same 2-3 things over and over again with folks. I can give them direction and wisdom because I know where this goes if they keep the same pattern and know what needs to happen if they want a different result.

Application

1. Wisdom is not automatic. It's not gained simply by aging or being religious. It must be sought intentionally.

2. Wisdom requires ambition. You have to want it. You have to desire it. The appetite for wisdom marks the wise. Fools don't value it (cf. Prov. 1:7).

3. Wisdom is worth any cost. Like the treasure in the field or the pearl of great price (Matt. 13:44–46), wisdom is worth giving up lesser things to obtain.

4. Wisdom is connected to God. This verse assumes the broader biblical context: the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 9:10). So “get wisdom” means “get God’s mind and way in your life.”

Close

Next week, I'm going to preach on how "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." But I'll close with this today: your pursuit of wisdom begins with prioritizing your relationship with God. You'll never be wise as the Bible defines it without being reconciled to the Father through trusting in the finished work of Jesus, the Son. You must trust Christ and be found in Him to ever be truly wise. There is a Spirit-empowered wisdom that comes only to those in Christ. So as you "get wisdom," you must seek the Lord.

R.C. Sproul -- “Authentic wisdom begins when we understand that God is to be the object of our devotion, our adoration, and our reverence.”

And those of us in Christ have this incredible promise. God tells us in His Word to ask for wisdom. This is an exhortation with a promise attached to it. If you lack wisdom, ask God, and He will give generously to those that ask. Do we take God at His Word?



LOOK BACK

- How was your week? What is one thing you're grateful for and one thing that challenged you?
- How did you grow in obedience to Christ over the last week?
- Where did you go to share the gospel or have a spiritual conversation with someone?
- What is a sin you have been struggling with that you need to repent of?



LOOK UP

- **REVIEW**

- Read Proverbs 4:7 and then have someone else in the group read it again, preferably from a different translation.
- Additional Scripture
 - Proverbs 1:7
 - Proverbs 9:10
 - Proverbs 10:9
 - Proverbs 11:2
 - Proverbs 12:1
 - Proverbs 14:9
 - Proverbs 15:31
 - Proverbs 17:27
 - Proverbs 18:2
 - Proverbs 18:15
 - Proverbs 26:11
 - Proverbs 28:26
 - James 1:5

- **DISCUSS**

- Review the scenarios in the opening of the sermon and discuss how you would respond to each one.
- What does Proverbs teach us about the urgency of seeking wisdom, and how does this contrast with our tendency to wait until a crisis arises before seeking help?
- How does biblical wisdom differ from simply being intelligent or knowledgeable?
- Why does Proverbs emphasize the costliness of wisdom, and what are some common "costs" we might face when seeking it?
- Why is the fear of the Lord foundational to wisdom, and how does that inform how we approach every other decision in life?

- What are some key differences between the wise and the fool, and how does that help us examine our own hearts?
- Why is wisdom ultimately inseparable from a relationship with Jesus Christ, and what does it mean to walk wisely as a follower of Him?
- What is a practical step you can take as a result of this sermon?



- **BUILD UP | SEND OUT**

- **How are you making yourself known at church this week?**
- **How are you growing to know Christ better this week?**
- **How are you making Christ known this week?**

- **PRAYER**

- **Pray over any request from your group members.**
- **Pray for our staff:** Greg McRay (Directional Elder)
- **Pray for our replanters:** Christ's Fellowship
- **Pray for our short-term teams:**
 - Philippines Team departing on June 21, 2025
 - Kenya Team departing on June 29, 2025
 - Europe Student Team departing on July 6, 2025
 - Indonesia Team departing on August 11, 2025
 - Rome Team departing on November 7, 2025
- **Pray for our long-term units on the mission field:**
 - The Wilsons
 - The Grays
 - The Starks
- **Pray for the unreached.** Want to keep up with Unreached People Groups? Download the Unreached of the Day App <https://joshuaproject.net/pray/unreachedoftheday/app>