Throughout life you will face new situations, problems, and decisions. New experiences and information will expand your perspective. These circumstances become opportunities to learn. For example, you could watch your dad fix the car, see how food grows in a garden, or discover how a machine works. When you approach life with a humble, teachable attitude, you will gain wisdom. You can also ask wise people to share from their experiences. You can learn from God’s Word how to respond to the various events in life. His Word tells you how to work, treat others, overcome sin, and receive correction. Welcome each situation as an opportunity to exercise wisdom by applying God’s ways. “Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning” (Proverbs 9:9).
Wisdom Overview

What Is Wisdom?

Read aloud and discuss what wisdom means and how it applies to life.

The operational definition of wisdom is “seeing and responding to life’s situations from God’s frame of reference.” A frame of reference is the way someone thinks about life, which affects how he responds to people and situations. A person tends to think and act based on his culture, experiences, education, and view of God. As you mature, you will find that others have a different frame of reference and have information that you do not. For example, if a boy discovers that his bike is missing, he might run into the house, crying that his bike was stolen. However, if his mother tells him that the neighbor is borrowing the bike, he is relieved. Similarly, God’s greater knowledge and perspective can help us to better understand and respond to the situations we encounter. Ultimately, no one but God has full knowledge. To those who ask, He promises to give wisdom that is “pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy” (James 3:17).

The opposite of wisdom is “natural inclinations.” Natural inclinations are usually impulsive actions or thoughtless reactions. Without considering God’s perspective, a person does what is “right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25). He lives carelessly and foolishly, as though God does not exist. One who is governed by his natural inclinations tends to gratify his desires and to disregard rules and correction. He does not care how his actions may affect others. Society reinforces this self-centered attitude through social media, television, movies, and books. In time, a person who follows his impulses will develop sinful patterns of thinking and behavior. James 3:14–16 describes this mindset as “earthly, sensual, devilish,” leading to confusion and evil.

How can someone gain wisdom? God’s Word tells us that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Proverbs 9:10). To fear God is to have reverence for and awe of Him. As we read the Bible and pray, we can cultivate our understanding of Who God is. Reverence comes as we realize God is all-powerful, holy, just, and always present. He has the right to rule as Creator and Lord, and we will give an account to Him. Fearing God is similar to hosting a guest you greatly revere. If an honorable person came to your home, you would be on your best behavior, carefully avoiding anything that may displease your respected guest. When you fear God, He is your special Guest! As you realize that He is always present, how does that awareness change how you might live, act, and speak?
Wisdom in Scripture

Wisdom in My Life

The Character of God

We see examples of wisdom in God’s character in the following ways:

- God created the world by His wisdom.
  (See Proverbs 3:19.)
- God is the source of wisdom.
  (See Proverbs 2:6, Daniel 2:20–23.)
- Jesus grew in wisdom from a young age.
  (See Luke 2:52, Isaiah 11:1–2, 50:4.)
- Jesus was God’s power and wisdom in the flesh, revealed to mankind.
  (See I Corinthians 1:24, 30; Matthew 13:54.)
- Jesus has all wisdom and is worthy of praise for eternity.
  (See Revelation 7:12, Jude 1:25.)
- The Spirit of God gave Bezaleel and Daniel the wisdom and skill to fulfill His calling to them.
  (See Exodus 31:2–4, Daniel 5:11.)
- The Holy Spirit gives believers wisdom and knowledge.
  (See I Corinthians 2:12–14, 12:8.)

As you read and study God’s Word, see Who He is, and allow Him to work in you, your life will become a radiant expression of Him. God will be glorified as His character is seen in you.

Wisdom in My Life

Now let’s examine some ways God wants us to live out wisdom daily.

- Why should I wholeheartedly pursue wisdom?
  (See Proverbs 4:7, 8:11.)
- What can I do when I don’t know what to do?
  (See James 1:5–6, Proverbs 1:5.)
- How may I bring joy to my parents?
  (See Proverbs 10:1, 23:24–25.)
- What four little creatures can teach me to be wise?
  (See Proverbs 30:24–28.)
- What results from wise actions and words?
  (See Proverbs 14:1, Daniel 12:3.)
- Why is a poor yet wise child better than a foolish king?
  (See Ecclesiastes 4:13, Proverbs 15:5, 31–32.)
- What makes a great nation?
  (See Deuteronomy 4:5–6, Proverbs 14:34.)

Wisdom Key Verse

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.” PROVERBS 9:10
### Bible Story

**Three Generations Study God’s Word**

During the Apostle Paul’s first missionary journey, he visited the city of Lystra. As the Gospel spread in Lystra, many trusted in Christ, including a youth named Timothy; his Jewish mother, Eunice; and his grandmother, Lois. Before hearing the Gospel, Timothy’s mother and grandmother had faithfully brought him up in their Jewish faith. Now they knew their true Messiah, Jesus, and continued to grow in the Lord. When Paul returned to Lystra, the other believers spoke highly of Timothy. Welcoming Timothy as his son in the faith, Paul invited the young man to travel with him. Timothy learned much from Paul, who discipled him. As time passed and Timothy grew spiritually, Paul believed the young man was ready to lead the church in Ephesus. During Paul’s travels, he wrote a letter to Timothy, warning him of false teachers and instructing him regarding pastoral responsibilities. Four years passed while Paul continued to evangelize. One day, from a cold, damp prison, he wrote a second letter to Timothy. Aware that the end of his life was near, the aged apostle was eager to see his disciple one more time. What wisdom would Paul impart to Timothy? Why would it be vital for Timothy to continue studying and learning from God’s Word?

**Let’s read the Bible story in I Timothy 2:1–4, 4:12–16 and II Timothy 1:1–5, 13–14; 2:1–4, 22–26; 3:12–17 and then discuss the following questions.**

1. **What words of wisdom did Paul give to young Timothy?** *(See I Timothy 4:12.)*
   
   How can you be a good example?

2. **What did Paul encourage Timothy to do?** *(See I Timothy 2:1–4, 4:13–16.)*
   
   Why should you pray for others? How often is it wise to meditate on Scripture? *(See Joshua 1:8.)*

3. **How did Paul set a good example and invest in Timothy’s life?** *(See II Timothy 1:2–3.)*
   
   How many generations in Timothy’s family now followed Christ? *(See II Timothy 1:5.)*
   
   What examples of good character have you seen in your elders? What qualities would you be wise to develop?

4. **What did Paul urge Timothy to hold fast (keep)?** *(See II Timothy 1:13–14.)*
   
   What is the wise response to Godly counsel and instruction? *(See Proverbs 4:13, 19:20.)*
   
   How might your parents respond when you demonstrate wisdom? *(See Proverbs 23:24–25.)*

5. **What was Timothy to do with what he had been taught?** *(See II Timothy 2:2.)*
   
   With whom can you share Biblical truth that you have learned?

6. **What did Paul instruct Timothy to do to avoid shame and ungodliness?** *(See II Timothy 2:15–16.)*
   
   When do you study God’s Word? What has God taught you?

7. **How was Timothy encouraged to behave?** *(See II Timothy 2:22–23.)*
   
   Rather than argue, what was the appropriate response to those who resisted truth? *(See II Timothy 2:24–26.)*
   
   Is arguing wise? What is a wise response toward those who appear to be Godly but produce ungodly fruit? *(See II Timothy 3:1–5.)*

8. **If Timothy continued to learn and apply Scripture, what would be the result?** *(See II Timothy 3:16–17.)*
   
   What Scriptural truths have you learned from parents and teachers? How can you wisely respond to reproof and correction? *(See Proverbs 9:8, 15:31–32.)*
Memory Verse
Proverbs 9:10

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.”

PROVERBS 9:10

Memory Verse Game: Pass the Ball
Say the verse together several times before playing this game. Then have everyone form a circle. As the children pass the ball around the circle, lead them in reciting the verse aloud together. As each word is spoken, the ball passes from one person to the next. At the end of the Scripture recitation, whoever has the ball attempts to say the entire verse by himself. Help him as needed. Then start the ball around the circle again, with everyone reciting the verse together until each child has had an opportunity to say the entire verse by himself.

Doers of the Word: Proverbs 9:10
In the blank below, write how this verse could be applied in your life, e.g., “learn Who You are from Your Word,” or “enjoy searching out and understanding Your ways,” or “be aware of Your presence.”

“Dear Lord, I yield to You and am willing to apply this verse. Help me to ________________________________
______________________________
I ask that You would develop wisdom in my life. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

When the Lord gives you an opportunity to apply this verse, write it in your journal to later recall God’s working in your life.
Word Puzzle
Word Search

Instructions

Enjoy meditating on and thinking about the words of the wisdom key verse and definition as you find them in the word search below. The underlined words are hidden horizontally, vertically, diagonally, or backwards. *(Answers can be found on page 12.)*

Proverbs 9:10

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.”

Wisdom

Seeing and responding to life’s situations from God’s frame of reference

If finding the underlined words is too difficult or frustrating for your child, assign only a few words to find, such as “God” and “see.” Younger children could point to the ABCs. Older children may enjoy the extra challenge of finding all the words of the verse and definition instead of only the underlined words.
Activity
Timothy’s Scroll

Introduction
During this character study, we are asking the Lord to develop wisdom in our lives. What a privilege to respond to the work He is doing to change us into the image of His Son! Today we are going to make a scroll to record words of wisdom. By keeping these words before us and heeding them, we can continue to learn and grow.

Supplies:
- 2 new, unsharpened pencils
- 8.5" x 11" sheet of copy paper
- Pen
- Yarn or ribbon
- Tape

Instructions
In Biblical times, people wrote information in scrolls to preserve a written record of what they wanted to remember and pass on to others. God instructed His people: “Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them” (Deuteronomy 7:11). In II Timothy 3:14–15, we see that young Timothy was taught the Holy Scriptures by his mother and grandmother.

God’s Word teaches us to ask Him for wisdom and to learn from wise people: “Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end” (Proverbs 19:20).

To make your scroll, cut your paper in half lengthwise. You will need to use only one half. Next, tape each short end of the paper to a pencil. Tape the yarn to the center of the back of the scroll. Roll the pencils together so they meet in the middle, and tie the yarn around the scroll to keep it closed.

Who are some Godly, trustworthy adults in your life? Ask them for words of advice and record what they say on the inside of your scroll. You can also add Scripture verses. Take your scroll to the dinner table each night for a week. Before or after the meal, ask if you may read one quote from your scroll. As a family, think of a few situations where these words may be applied. You may also ask your family to guess who gave the advice!
In a Nutshell


2. Our sin separates us from God (Romans 3:23).

3. God sent His Son, Jesus, to provide the way for our sins to be forgiven and for fellowship with Him to be restored (Ephesians 1:6–7). Jesus accomplished our salvation through His crucifixion on the cross, His burial, and His glorious resurrection (I Corinthians 15:3–4).

4. We can do nothing to earn salvation. It is a free gift from God that we receive by faith (Ephesians 2:8–9).

5. We receive that gift of salvation by confessing with our mouth that Jesus is Lord and believing in our heart that God has raised Him from the dead (Romans 10:9–10).

Christ Our Righteousness

You will need the following items: sticky notes, pen, and a white bed sheet.

The Bible tells us about God. He is the Creator of the universe and He is holy. God loves us and created us to have fellowship with Him. (See Revelation 4:11.)

Select a volunteer who would not mind standing to represent the sin of all people. Romans 3:23 says, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Sin is anything we think, say, or do that breaks God’s Law. Can you name some examples of sin? As the children answer, write their examples on sticky notes and place them onto the volunteer’s clothing (e.g., speaking unkind words, stealing, disobeying, doing good with wrong motives).

Because we have all sinned, and God is holy, we are eternally separated from Him. However, because God loves us so much, He sent His Son, Jesus, Who died on the cross to pay for our sin and Who rose again to conquer death! Now we can have fellowship with God forever through Christ. (See John 17:3.) If we accept God’s gift of salvation, Christ’s blood cleanses us from sin, and His righteousness is put upon us! (See II Corinthians 5:21.)

Remove the sticky notes and wrap the white sheet around the volunteer to represent Jesus’ robe of righteousness. Isaiah 31:10 describes what has happened this way: “My soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness. . . .” In Romans 10:9–10, we are told how we can accept this gift: “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Are you trusting in Jesus Christ for your salvation? If so, your sins are forgiven and Christ is living in you! Your new, inward identity is one of righteousness in God’s eyes. The more you realize that you are a new creature in Christ and walk in the Spirit, the more your outward actions will demonstrate Christ living in you. Just as the Apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 2:20, you can also say, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” God gives us eternal life—sweet constant fellowship in the Spirit with our Savior—and then His righteousness is seen in us for His glory. (See John 15:4–10.)
Hymn History

“I Want a Principle Within”

Sing “I Want a Principle Within” and read about the wisdom proclaimed by the hymn writer, Charles Wesley.

The eighteenth of nineteen children, Charles Wesley was brought up by Godly parents. However, the family’s commitment to follow Christian principles made them unpopular. During the forty years they ministered in the small town of Epworth, England, they encountered cruelty and persecution from the villagers. On various occasions, the villagers threatened to harm the Wesley children, crippled their dog, burned their crops, and injured their cows. The Wesley home was even set afire several times! Despite the persecution, Mr. and Mrs. Wesley remained steadfast in their faith. Their wise responses to such opposition set an example for their children to follow. The children, in turn, influenced others to choose righteousness.

Charles Wesley was well-educated, first by his mother and then during years of formal training at two universities. While returning from a mission trip to the United States, he wondered about his own salvation. Aboard the ship sailing homeward, he met a Christian who spoke to him of assurance of salvation. Soon thereafter, Reverend Wesley experienced peace with Christ when he received assurance of his salvation. A year later, he began preaching across the English countryside. Riding on horseback from town to town, he proclaimed God’s Word in churches and in outdoor public gatherings.

Reverend Wesley preached the Gospel for about eighteen years. He also wrote many hymns, sometimes even while riding a horse! One friend wrote that:

When [Reverend Wesley] was nearly eighty he rode a little horse. . . . As he jogged leisurely along, he jotted down any thought that struck him. He kept a card in his pocket for this purpose, on which he wrote his hymn . . . .

Writing hymns was a fruitful part of Reverend Wesley’s life. In one hymn he speaks of desiring wisdom, which is “seeing and responding to life’s situations from God’s frame of reference.” This hymn, titled “I Want a Principle Within,” describes the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom:

I want a principle within Of watchful, godly fear, A sensibility of sin, A pain to feel it near. Help me the first approach to feel Of pride or wrong desire, To catch the wandering of my will, And quench the kindling fire.

Other hymns he wrote include “And Can It Be,” “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today,” “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing,” and “O for a Thousand Tongues.” In total, he authored more than six thousand additional songs!

Like Reverend Wesley, may we ask God to give us “a principle within,” a fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom. May we seek God’s insight in His Word and obey the Holy Spirit so that our lives bring God glory!
I Want a Principle Within

Charles Wesley (1707–1788)  Louis Spohr (1784–1859)

I want a principle within of watchful godly fear,
From Thee that I no more may stray, no more Thy goodness grieve,
Grant Almighty God of truth and love, to me Thy pow’r impart; The

sensibility of sin, a pain to feel it near.
me the filial awe, I pray, the tender conscience give.
Quick burden of my soul remove, the hardness of my heart. O

me the first approach to feel of pride or wrong desire,
as the apple of an eye, O God, my conscience make;
To may the least omission pain my reawakened soul, And

catch the wandering of my will, and quench the kindling fire.
wake my soul when sin is nigh, and keep it still awake.
drive me to that blood again, which makes the wounded whole.
"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them, and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (II Timothy 3:14–15).
Word Search Answer Key

FOHMSAMFMBVDBM
BOOGNINNGEBI
YPFDTMTDGCHLM
MLRGHHWNSAWV
QOOOSEEINGII
LDMHVMRTDSZS
STIRAEUHNXDSDK
PEHRFAREOTIOO
HCFETQWPBLMEM
JORISFGESVHRY
KNOWLEDGXJBKGNIDNATSREDNU
SAIVORUQFWBYI

Recommended Resources

- 2021 Biblical Character Illustrated Calendar
- Hymns for the Family CDs
  (“I Want a Principle Within” is sung to piano accompaniment on Volume 2.)
- The Power for True Success
- Understanding Spiritual Gifts
- Character Cards
- Character Cards Memory Game
- Character Sketches, Volumes I–III
- Achieving True Success
- Wisdom Analogies
  (answer key sold separately)
- Daily Success Devotional
- Daily Success Audio Devotional
- “Light to Discern Between Principles and Doctrines” (message by Joe Norvel, available at embassymedia.com)
- “Intelligent Design Rubik’s Cube” (message by Cooper Dauer, available at embassymedia.com)
- “Make Your Life Count: Live for Eternity!” (message by David and Priscilla Waller, available at embassymedia.com)
- “How to Separate Our Will from God’s Will” (message by Ray Comfort, available at embassymedia.com)
- “Hitting the Mark with Seven Basic Principles” (message by Larry Guthrie, available at embassymedia.com)

To view these resources and many more, visit us at:
store.iblp.org

Hymn History Bibliography

