

God's Wisdom in Our Work

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[0 : 00] Turn in your Bibles to Isaiah chapter 28. Isaiah 28 and we'll read verses 23 through 29 tonight.

! Listen and hear my voice. Pay attention and hear what I say. When a farmer plows for planting, does he plow continually?

Does he keep on breaking and harrowing the soil? When he has leveled the surface, does he not sow caraway and scatter cumin? Does he not plant wheat in its place, barley in its plot, and spelt in its field?

His God instructs him and teaches him the right way. Caraway is not threshed with a sledge, nor is a cartwheel rolled over cumin. Caraway is beaten out with a rod and cumin with a stick.

Grain must be ground to make bread, so one does not go on threshing it forever. Though he drives the wheel of his threshing cart over it, his horses do not grind it.

[1 : 11] All this also comes from the Lord, almighty, wonderful in counsel, and magnificent in wisdom. Let's hear his wisdom tonight.

Well, did you ever watch Saturday morning cartoons growing up?

Before Cartoon Network started broadcasting cartoons 24-7, it was Saturday morning that it was the glorious morning for cartoons growing up.

And that, I know I spent a lot of Saturday mornings that way. And that brings me to Foghorn Leghorn.

Every now and then, Foghorn Leghorn would be put in charge of watching this little, very little nerdy chicken.

[2 : 11] And you knew he was a very little nerdy chicken because he wore big blackhorned rimmed glasses, and he carried this big pencil around. And Foghorn would do something mean to this little nerdy chicken, and the chicken would then plot his revenge against Foghorn.

And you knew it was going to be something scientific because he took out his pencil and paper and he started scratching all these equations with this ginormous pencil.

And you knew that something elaborate and very scientific was coming up. And a little later, Foghorn would be walking along, and he'd see a dollar on the ground.

And he'd pick it up. And, of course, the dollar was attached to a string. And the string was attached to a stick. And the stick was propping up some sort of ball, a bowling ball or something.

And when Foghorn took the dollar, the string pulled the stick, and the ball would start moving. And the ball would roll off of a little cliff onto a raised seesaw.

[3 : 26] And, of course, it would land, and then the other side of the seesaw would fly up. And on the other side of the seesaw was a piece of rock, and it had sandpaper on it.

And, obviously, he figured out the exact right trajectory because the rock with the sandpaper on it would go flying through the air, light a match, and the match would light a fuse attached to a cannon, and the cannon ball would go whizzing down a funnel, and the funnel would hit a circular saw, the lever of a circular saw, and the saw would cut a rope holding up a telephone pole.

And, finally, Foghorn, realizing that this whole show was, for his sake, would start taking off running, and the telephone pole would land, just the very tip of it would land and hit him on the head, drive him through the ground like a tent peg.

And we would be all so impressed at how scientific and how clever this little chicken is. That's what you call a Rube Goldberg machine.

It's a complicated machine designed to do a simple task. Now, you're cutting vegetables, and you cut the end of your finger off, and you start to bleed.

[4 : 52] Why don't you bleed to death? Why don't you bleed to death? Well, you say, well, my blood clots.

Oh, what's that? Well, the blood, which was liquid, actually starts becoming a solid and forms this hard little covering, scab, that holds the blood in.

You say, wow, that's amazing. Well, how does it do that? Well, here's an even better question. Why doesn't your blood start clotting while it's in your veins?

You ever think of that? It's the same blood. You don't actually add something to your blood to make it clot consciously. It just does it on its own.

So why doesn't it start clotting as it's going along? Why aren't your veins filling up with clots right now? So if your blood doesn't clot, you die, or you're endangered.

[5 : 58] But if your blood does clot at the wrong time, what happens? Well, that too is dangerous and deadly. And so you have to create a machine that does that.

Now, how do you do that? You have to create a liquid that carries oxygen to all parts of your body that will turn into a solid all by itself, but only in the right conditions.

Well, how do you come up with a machine like that? Ben, can you put up the slide now? I don't know if you can see it in the back. And I know no one here in the front can even understand it.

This is what God came up with. This is the blood coagulation cascade. And there's almost 29 different proteins there.

And the thing about Rube Goldberg machines is that if you just pick out one of those links, none of it works. If you just take one of those things out, you either bleed to death or you clot to death.

[7 : 07] All those little symbols, if they don't have names, if they have Roman numerals, all of them are different proteins. The most common form of hemophilia, where you can't stop bleeding or you're slow to clot, is from a deficiency in Roman numeral number nine, which is sort of near the top, and it's called Christmas factor.

And generally, people with hemophilia have a suppressed amount of that. They don't have as much as normal. And if your genes don't produce as much of this Christmas factor, you have hemophilia. Now, young people, this is why evolution is impossible. Because in order for this to work, it all has to show up at the same time.

And if one of the pieces is missing, it doesn't do any good. And so, if you're an evolutionist, you say, well, there has to be some sort of gradual positive effects.

And the reality is, if all 29 don't show up and don't work at the same together, the whole thing is completely worthless. And that's why we can, with joy, say God is the only wise God.

[8 : 23] Romans 16 ends with a doxology, to the only wise God. Be glory forever through Jesus Christ. Amen. Now, we look at something like the coagulation cascade, and we do, we stand amazed at God, at his wisdom.

We just heard about the stars. That's God's creativity and grandeur on the huge scale. This is God's wisdom on the minute scale.

And we say, how would we ever, how could anyone have thought of this? Where could this, where would we even begin to come up with something like this? Well, we could go on and on about God's wisdom in creation, but what I want to do tonight is talk about God's wisdom, and I want to make it very practical and bring it down to where we are, because we are talking about God's attributes and our problems.

And as fascinating as this is, we need to understand how God's wisdom applies to our lives. And so tonight, we're going to talk about a very everyday, very common problem or difficulty, and it's work. It's work. So going to work, having problems with work, having problems with projects at work, having problems with people at work, having to make decisions at work.

[9 : 55] I remember driving to work and saying to myself, I don't think I can do this. I don't know if I can do this.

I don't know what I'm going to do. I don't know what I'm doing. I don't know how to handle these people. I don't know how to handle this situation. Lord, I need help.

I need wisdom. It's no different now. Now I'm driving to someone's house and I'm thinking the very same things. I don't know what to do.

I don't know what to say. I don't know how to handle this situation. I don't know how to answer this email. I don't know what I'm supposed to do. I don't know what we should do. I need wisdom.

I need wisdom. Now, you know that feeling. I'm sure you do. You're going to that place and you're going to be called upon and you don't have what it takes. You don't have the wisdom and it's uncomfortable and you're not certain.

[10 : 55] You're confused. You say, I need wisdom. And then we can thank God that our God is a God of wisdom. God of wisdom. He's the only wise God.

The only wise God. Now, what does that mean? Stephen Charnock, who wrote his large book on the existence and attributes of God, he sort of unpacked this phrase this way and I'm going to extremely abbreviate it.

And this is what Stephen Charnock said. This is how he described, this is why God is the only wise God. He's the only wise God originally. Originally.

Now, we do share in wisdom to some degree, but we get it as the years go by, don't we? Generally, as we age, we grow in wisdom.

We grow in experience. And folly is bound up in the heart of a child. And sometimes by God's grace and hard knocks, we gain wisdom.

[12 : 03] But God doesn't grow in wisdom. He doesn't get wisdom. He doesn't go and find wisdom. He doesn't grow in experience and therefore have more wisdom than last time. He's the fountain of wisdom.

He's the source of wisdom. He himself is wise. Now, he's the only wise God originally. He's the only wise God perfectly. There's no cloud or doubt on his wisdom.

Man can be wise, but it's always an imperfect wisdom. Only God grasps everything. Everything.

And that brings us to he's universally wise. He's universally wise. Now, not bragging, but I am wiser than you in some areas.

I'm probably wiser in sort of public speaking than most of you. And I'm not bragging because you all easily surpass me in wisdom in so many other areas.

[13 : 10] wise cooks and computer programmers and marketers and artists and mechanics and taking care of your house, construction and gardening and all sorts of things that you are all much wiser than I am.

Warren Buffett, the famous investor, is rich because this is what he says. He stays in a circle of competence. What that means is he knows what he knows and he doesn't stray outside of that small circle of competence.

He just sticks to what he knows. Now, my circle of competence is very small. Very small. And yours is too.

But God's circle of competence has no bounds. He knows how to do my job better than I do. And he knows how to do your job better than you do.

He's wise at everything. We read Isaiah and Isaiah here is instructing the farmer. He's instructing the farmer of how to do his job, how to be a farmer.

[14 : 30] He's the one that gave farmers the wisdom to know when to plow, how to do it, each method. He gave the farmer the know-how.

But it's not just farmers. It's my job and it's your job. God is universally wise. His circle of competence has no boundaries.

God is perpetually wise. Now, we start off with folly bound up in our hearts. And sadly, a lot of times we end up that way.

Charnock says this, wisdom is got by instruction and lost by dotage. By old age.

And so now, we can't do our job as well as we used to. And our minds aren't as sharp and as clear as they used to be. We don't pick up on things so much.

[15 : 32] The youngsters are talking faster and faster and we're having a harder time keeping up. And this is why, listen, older men, God is perpetually wise.

His wisdom never wears out. He never, his brain doesn't start to get weaker. The counsels of the Lord stand forever through all generations.

So his wisdom hasn't slipped. His creativity hasn't slipped. His comprehension hasn't slipped. His competence hasn't slipped. Everything about God and his wisdom are on tip-top working condition.

There's no rust. There's no stuck doors. You know those stuck doors that you're like, I know that the information I need is behind that door and I just, I can't get to it. There's no stuck doors.

Everything is right there, right where he needs it all the time and always. So God is perpetually wise. God is infallibly wise. There is that saying, the best laid plans of mice and men oft go astray.

[16:35] The best laid plans. So what does a wise person do? If you're wise when you're considering making plans, well, what you do is you count and you consider and you think and you plan, you plot.

You ask different people, don't you? You say, what do you think about this? And you get someone else's perspective. What do you think about this? And you look around this corner and you look around that corner and you look under this rock and you look under that rock.

You think and you think and you plot and you plan and then you put it into practice and what happens so often? Falls apart.

You didn't, as much as you tried, you didn't have all the facts, you didn't have all the information, you didn't give it the proper consideration. But God's plans never go astray.

God's plans never go astray. He knows what he has planned and it always reaches its goal. And he can plan thousands and thousands of years apart. We don't know what tomorrow will bring, but God plans a thousand years out and he brings all of it together.

[17:47] He never loses his way. So the best laid plans of mice and men go astray, but our God is the only wise God. Now, what I'm driving towards and what I'm trying to bring to your attention and I want you to remember is that God's, God has wisdom for you at your work.

God has wisdom for you. He has wisdom that you need. He has wisdom that he offers. And so when you're driving in saying, I don't know what to do.

I don't know how to handle these people. I don't know how to handle this project. God has wisdom for you. God has wisdom to give you.

When you're dealing with your kids and you're carrying out your calling as a stay-at-home mom, your job is no less complicated. And God has wisdom for you.

That's, that's your hope. That's your help that you can lean on. You're not all by yourself in your ignorance and in your foolishness. You have him to help. Well, let's keep digging a little deeper and do that by answering this question.

[19:00] What is wisdom? Because if this is what we need and this is what God has, well, what exactly are we talking about? Because if we answer this question, it's going to help us to see not only one, our need, but what God has to offer, what God has in abundance and that we can be asking for.

So what is wisdom? Well, it boils down to basically three things. It boils down to first picking out the right, picking out the right goal. Picking out the right goal.

What should we aim for? Because if you pick the wrong goal, you're going to go astray. You're going to go off. So what should we aim for? That's the first and probably the most important question that wisdom asks.

And that's the question that we are always asking at work, isn't it? What's the first thing on my to-do list? What's on the highest priority? What do I need to really focus on? Of all the possible things that we could or should be doing, what do I need to do at this moment?

What's the best thing? Well, God always knows the best goal. The ultimate goal that God always has is to glorify himself. And that's because it's right and that's also because it's wise.

[20:15] The world works best when God pursues his own glory and we enter into that. And so from him and through him and to him are all things.

So everything originates from God, it works through God, and it's going to and towards God. That's the ultimate goal. But God knows that's the ultimate goal.

That's what he's working for all the time. But he also knows all the lesser goals, all the goals that we need to build to reach that ultimate goal. And so what I'm saying is the most important thing maybe at work is, okay, of all the possibilities that we could be doing and should be doing or I should be focusing on or I need to be doing, what do I pick?

Well, God has that kind of wisdom for you. What is wisdom? Number two, it's taking into consideration all the facts and all the circumstances. It's taking in all the facts and all the circumstances.

And this is where people who think they are wise but generally aren't, they fall in and make a mistake because they get part of it. They get part of the facts and part of the circumstances and they run with it oblivious to so much of what they're already missing.

[21:30] They think they know what is best but they haven't taken into consideration all the facts and all the circumstances. And so, wisdom is not only grasping all of those facts and those

circumstances, it's learning how to measure them and putting them onto a scale and say, this is important or this is of less importance.

It's putting everything in its proper way. Now, a foolish person thinks he or she sees everything and she starts talking.

He starts talking. And you say, well, that's kind of right. They have some of the truth there. They're on to something but, you know, I don't think they considered this or I don't think they considered that when they chose to do whatever they chose to do.

Or maybe they have all the stuff there, they have all the information but it's all out of the balance is completely wrong. Now, you see that all the time.

People get some truth and they run with it and they forget all the other truth that is attached to it.

You see it when people only see danger on one side of an issue.

[22 : 47] You know, I don't know if I've ever found an issue where there's not two ditches. But if you only see danger on that ditch over there, it means you're already in the ditch on the other side.

But wisdom is taking into consideration all of the data. So, here you are at work. You're at work.

And there's all this information there, isn't there?

There's these people and these projects and there's feelings and there's ideas and there's histories and there's plans for the future and there's little details and there's big details.

There's all this wisdom out there and wisdom is gathering it all up and putting it into the scale and measuring it and putting it into order. That's hard.

That's hard to do. But this is what I want to say. God has all of that data and God has the perfect judgment to weigh it all. And so, do you need wisdom?

[23 : 51] Well, God has that wisdom. He knows everything you need to know and He can reveal everything you need to know at that time.

And He can help you understand it and He can help you weigh it. He has that kind of wisdom.

wisdom. Number three, what is wisdom? Well, wisdom is being willing to act according to those facts, according to the truth.

This is where knowledge and wisdom are different because you can know all sorts of things and still not be wise. Wisdom is practical. That's why Proverbs is so wonderful.

It's so practical. It gets down into the nitty-gritty of life. And so, I can know what I'm supposed to do, but if I don't do it, then I'm not wise.

I'm not wise. And if I know I should be keeping my mouth shut, if I know I shouldn't be talking, and I know that, but I don't do it, that's not wisdom.

[25 : 00] Or I know I shouldn't eat 20 Oreos, but there I am eating 20 Oreos. That's not wisdom. I can know all about everything that a dietician knows, but if I don't put anything into practice, that's not wisdom.

Wisdom is practical, and our God is practical. Our God is so practical. He knows what is best, and He does it. He planned that coagulation cascade, and then He actually went to work, and He built it and put it into our DNA.

He put it into us. And He knew salvation should work this way. From eternity past, He had it all planned out in His wisdom.

He saw the best plan, and He planned it all out. But His wisdom is ultimately seen in Him carrying it out. And just at the right time, He sent His Son. And though it was costly, and though it was painful, and though there were reasons not to do it, He did it.

And so His wisdom isn't seen ultimately in planning salvation, but in doing the work of doing it, carrying it out.

[26 : 16] It was after Paul's great exploration, explanation of the fall and redemption and election and this problem of the Jews and the Gentiles and their relationship and salvation for them.

It was Paul's brilliant exploration of this is how the gospel is, and this is how it works, this is how God put it into practice, and this is what God is going to do that Paul says, oh, the depths, oh, the depths of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God.

Paul was looking at that from a practical point of view. This is what our God did and is doing. And so wisdom has dirt under its fingers.

You know, knowledge, knowledge can wear a scholar's gown and that's fine, but wisdom has on overalls. And that's our God. He's not an ivory tower philosopher.

He came into the world in the person of his son, and it was at the cross, that bloody, dirty, sweaty place that God showed his wisdom.

[27 : 37] For Christ is the wisdom of God. That's where he did his wise work, and that's where he put his wisdom on full display. It wasn't in theory. It was in reality.

And so, do you need that kind of wisdom? Practical, considerate, thoughtful, know-how. God has that. He has it abundantly. He has it perfectly. He has, let's get more specific. He has wisdom for your projects at work.

Do you need considerate, thoughtful, know-how with those projects at work? Of, okay, we have to get a whole bunch of people together to work on this one thing.

Is this the one thing we should be working on? Well, those kinds of questions, those project questions. He has wisdom for those projects. Isaiah 28, again, it shows a farmer working on his field, and farming is broken up into different projects.

[28 : 43] right now, they're plowing up the fields, aren't they? They're not harvesting, and they're not planting, and then going to plow it all over again. There's different projects for different times.

There's sometimes for sowing and reaping. There's different stages and different crops and different methods for every crop. There's different projects that a farmer has. Well, God taught the farmer all that know-how.

This is when you should do that. And this is how you should do that. And this is when you should do this. You want caraway? You want cumin? This is how you take care of these crops.

This is how you get the grain out of it. This is how you make bread. He taught the farmer when. He taught the farmer where.

He taught the farmer how. And so do you need wisdom for the when and the where and the how. God has that kind of wisdom. Sometimes we know the right thing to do, but we need to know the when of it or the where of it or the how of it.

[29 : 50] God has that kind of wisdom. His wisdom for projects. He has wisdom for dealing with people at work. You know, people are complicated as it is.

But then when you add money and you add life and sweat and sin, it becomes much more complicated.

People are complicated even the ones that you choose, like your spouse or the ones that you know very well. But work with people with, but generally work you do with people that you don't choose generally, or you don't know that well, or you don't agree with naturally, and you're trying to make this work.

Does God know how to manage different people? Well, just look at how Jesus handled all the people that he met in the Gospels. They weren't all the same.

They weren't all the same. They didn't all have the same priorities, the same desires. They didn't all have the same relationship to him. They didn't have the same attitude toward him. But he knew how to handle each one individually.

[31 : 03] He knew how to handle Pharisees in one way. But even within that group of Pharisees, he knew how to handle some in one way and some in the other. He knew how to handle his friends and his family.

You get to see all of this in the Gospels. He's managing his enemies. He's managing his family. He's managing his friends. He's thinking about them. He has wisdom for them all.

And you need people wisdom? He has people wisdom for you. So, wisdom for projects, for people, for problems is the next thing I have for problems.

In this world of sin, in this world of fallenness, there's always problems in the work. And some of your jobs are just merely fixing problems.

You troubleshoot problems. You try to make things better. You fix things that are broken and you have to figure out why they aren't working and then you have to make them work. Well, does God have wisdom for your problems?

[32 : 09] And I say, yes. Not to be trite, but God took care of your biggest problem. He took care of your biggest problem, your sin problem.

problem. And he saved you through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ from the biggest falling apart. And so he knew the exact problem and he knew exactly how to solve it.

And so you can begin there with the gospel and say, God, you knew how to take care of that problem. I have a lesser problem. I have a smaller problem.

Help me with this problem. And again, I think God can help. It's not above his pay grade. Nothing's too hard for him. And it's not below his care.

Because he loves you. And when you love someone, everything that that person loves and cares about is on your heart too. You care about that. And so that's God's wisdom.

[33 : 16] For projects, for people, for problems. God has wisdom for all of those things at work. So how do we apply this?

It's very, very simply. The first is from Proverbs chapter 3. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, but in all your ways, acknowledge him.

If God has wisdom and you need wisdom, the thing to do is to lean into him, lean upon him, trust him. And that means praying more.

It's just that simple. If we need wisdom and we're going to trust him for it, that means praying more. And so how often do you need wisdom at work? Well, every day.

Then you should be praying every day. Lord, give me wisdom for today. And you say, well, I know I should be asking. Well, I know I should be asking too.

[34 : 24] But it's my foolishness and my pride that doesn't do it. It would be my wisdom if I actually did it. So I'm encouraging you. If we want to be wiser in this area, then we would be asking more.

And so let's be wiser and actually put into practice what we know, lean harder into him and pray more. The second and the last thing is this, that we should be searching the scriptures for wisdom. Proverbs says, from the mouth of the Lord comes wisdom and understanding. When God speaks into our life through his word, that's how wisdom comes to us.

The scriptures are able to make you wise unto salvation, but the scriptures are also able to make you wise for this life and the life to come. So you should be thinking Proverbs.

Thinking Proverbs. But more than that, meditate on the law of the Lord. I know that sounds like you think.

[35 : 27] Maybe that doesn't go together in your mind. The law of God and wisdom. If I want wisdom, I go to Proverbs. If I want to know the law of God, I look at the law of God. But listen to Psalm 119.

This is verses 98 through 101. And basically in that passage, he says, your commands make me wiser than my enemies. And then he says, it makes me wiser than my teachers.

And then it makes me wiser than my elders, than the elders in the community. It's not Proverbs there that the psalmist is saying, that word makes me wise.

It's the law of God. It's the law of God. The law of God will make you wiser than your enemies, wiser than your teachers, wiser than the leaders in your community.

God's word will make you wise and your wisdom stand out at work. So, do you want people to look at you and say, that person is wise, that person is insightful, that person really knows how to live, they know how to make life work.

[36 : 36] Well, listen to Deuteronomy chapter 4, that's exactly the promise and the carrot that God holds out to his people. He says this in Deuteronomy 4, observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations who will hear about all these decrees and say, surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.

When we listen to God's word and we put it into practice, it shows God is saying, you will be wise in such a way that other people will see it.

Other people will see it. So know the word and do the word. Again, go back and read the end of the Sermon on the Mount.

Very interesting passage. I know even little children know the end of the Sermon on the Mount and how it ends of the wise man built his house upon the rock and the foolish man built his house upon the sand.

But read it again. And Jesus says, it's he who hears my words and puts them into practice that is a wise man, that is like a wise man.

[37 : 49] And it's the person that hears my word and doesn't put it into practice that is a foolish man. The hearing is the same.

It's the putting it into practice that shows your wisdom or your folly. So do the word and you'll be wise. That's what we've kind of been seeing in Sunday school in the digital Babylon.

Daniel and his three friends stood out as wiser than all of the rest. It was because they were faithful to what God had said. They were leaning on him.

And so, do you want to stand out as wiser than all the rest? Well, do the word and you'll be wise. So you need wisdom for work.

I need wisdom for work. God has that wisdom. God's the only wise God. And the wonderful thing is he's the only wise God for us.

[38 : 57] so that there's that promise in James. If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God. And God will give. How will God give?

Generously. To all without finding fault. He won't pick on you for needing wisdom or blame you for needing wisdom. He'll give you generously without finding any fault.

Well, that's our wise God. Let's pray. our Lord, we are foolish people. And we are bumping into our creatureliness and our need every day at work.

We're called upon to do and to think. And we say we just don't have what it takes. We feel our need. And so we thank you that you are wise for us.

That you don't leave us alone to wallow and to wander. But you give us guidance. You give us help.

[40 : 03] And you give us wisdom. And so I would pray for my brothers and my sisters that tomorrow as they go out into the work world and they're faced with people and problems and projects and all of the rest and they need your wisdom and they need your help.

For Jesus' sake, pour out your wisdom upon them and give them a heart that would be asking, a heart that would be crying out for that wisdom and make your word and your spirit to come powerfully to them, to make them wise in the places where they work, that people might see and wonder and be drawn to that light.

Pray that in Jesus' name. Amen.