



NEW LIFE

BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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"For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev 1:9)

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Wisdom in Action

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(adapted from Maranatha Messenger dated 18 January 2009)*

Introduction

Wisdom is highly desired by many today. It is not merely a matter of information or knowledge alone or more degrees or diplomas, but of skilful and practical application of the truths of God revealed in His infallible word in the ordinary facets of life. James tells us, *'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.'* (James 1:5). Admitting we lack wisdom is a difficult but necessary first step on the road to prudent living. We shall consider how we can attain biblical wisdom.

The Fear of God

If God (or a messenger from God) approached you and offered to grant you one wish, what would it be?

Instead of asking for a long life, wealth, power or the death of his foes, Solomon pleased the Lord by requesting a discerning heart of wisdom. He got it and was arguably one of the wisest kings that ever lived after Christ (1 King 3:10-12).

Some thought they can get it from reading more books or getting more degrees from universities but the Bible says *'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.'* (Prov 9:10). The reverence and the awe of Jehovah will provide the necessary basis for godly discretion and prudence for this life, to keep us from sin and evil; that is true wisdom in action. We need wisdom to discern God's purposes and will in dealing with the problems of the day. Wisdom has less to do with knowledge than with the application of knowledge in specific ways. Spiritual wisdom is skill in the art of living life with each component under the dominion and will of God. When a person in the Old Testament demonstrated exceptional ability in a craft or art, that person was said to have what the Hebrew language calls *'Hokma'* or some render it as *'skill'*. In Exodus 35:31-32, *'And he hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; And to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass'*. The word translated *'skill'* here is this word *'Hokma'* or *'wisdom'*. Only God understands the way to true wisdom because He alone is the source of true wisdom. The infinite wisdom of God is clearly displayed in the beauty, order, richness, intricacy, variety and splendour of the created order, and it is also evidence of the powers and providence of the Almighty God of creation.

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Bezaleel was given the ability to take raw materials and shape them into something beautiful and ornate in the building of the tabernacle. In Proverbs, Solomon selected that Hebrew word '*Hokma*' to describe the quality needed by anyone who wanted to live a life of excellence, knowing the Fear of God.

Believers are exhorted to walk not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time for the days are evil (Eph 5:15-16). There are three characteristics of a Christian who walks in wisdom and are as follows:

- 1) Knowing what God's principles are and carefully applying them to our lives.
- 2) Making good use of their time because of the evil condition of our age.
- 3) Understanding what the Specific Will of God for their lives.

Eph 5:15 says, '*See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.*'

Paul warned all to awake out of darkness into the light, i.e., be saved by trusting the Lord (Rom 15:11-14). Paul says, '*walk circumspectly*' ie. conduct your life carefully where you go. The word '*circumspectly*' here means accurately, carefully and exactly, i.e., to look from side to side, with alertness as to what is going on as to investigate the issue. Matt 2:8; Luke 1:3; Acts 18:25; 1 Thess 5:2. It speaks of a narrow walk through life (Matt 7:13-14), where we take great thoughtful care in our direction, without getting detoured or tripping up. And this circumspect walk is one '*not as fools but as wise*'. A circumspect walk is a walk in wisdom, which is to conduct one's life to make advancement in God's will, which is a responsible godly walk.

Coming to Christ in saving faith and repentance results in the immediate possibility of walking in wisdom. The moment we are saved, we are accountable to God for our choices and can choose to walk wisely. (1 Cor 1:30-31; Col 2:9-10; Titus 2:11-15 and 3:3-8; Jer 31:33-34; Heb 8:10-13) if we really want to. What then is this wisdom?

Basically it is the Christian's innate fear of God and His practical understanding of the will of God leading to godly behaviour decisions making. It is knowing and applying the biblical principles of a righteous life.

Redeeming the time

Those who walk in wisdom are also to '*redeem the time because the days are evil.*' What does it mean to redeem the time? The word translated to English as 'time' is not continuous time as measured in hours, days, weeks, months or years but a measured, allocated, fixed season or epoch. The Apostle Paul is noting the quality of the time, i.e., '*the days are evil*'. (ie last days are difficult and perilous before Christ returns). Here is the reason why we should redeem the time. We should walk in wisdom because this is a distinctly evil age (Gal 1:4). So what does it mean to redeem the time? The term here means to buy back, i.e., to purchase the time or ourselves.

Paul is not merely exhorting us not to waste our precious limited time. He is saying we must go out of our way to seek opportunity to advance God's kingdom. It is a clarion call to seize one's opportunities for oneself in view of the particular evil of our contemporary world. Instead of fools who waste their time in trivial pursuits and ignore their opportunities during these evil days, believers are to '*buy up the time*' for themselves, in the sense of seizing their opportunities in contrast to the evil days in which they live. The wasting of time and opportunities is a foolish thing. Jonathan Edwards, the 18th century American theologian and revivalist just before his twentieth birthday wrote: '*Resolved : Never to lose one moment of time, but to improve it in the most profitable way I possibly can.*' The...

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psalmist captures the value of redeeming the time in view of our temporal existence compared to the eternity of God.

The psalmist says that *'all our days but threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years yet is their strength labour and sorrow, for it is soon cut off, and we fly away'*. *'So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom'* (Psa 90:9-12). Paul in Ephesians 5:17 adds, *'Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.'*

We need to know what constitutes a biblical life's principles and apply them obediently to our walk and make good use of our opportunities. We live in an evil age and we are not to be fools but we are to understand what the specific will of God is for our lives. Therefore we are to walk circumspectly and to redeem the time. When we live obediently and sensitively to God's direction and make full use of our opportunities, then we will have an understanding of, *'what the will of the Lord is.'*

Knowing the Will of God

The *'Will of the Lord'* in this case would refer to the specific will of God in contrast to the general will of God mentioned in Eph 5:17. At the moment of salvation we are given the spiritual wisdom in Christ. As the New Covenant promise puts it, God *'writes His law on our hearts.'* (Jer 31:33) And as we are obedient to that and seize the opportunities provided, we follow and understand the direct leading of God for our personal lives in our work, studies, family life and ministry. Obedience and sensitivity is required here to the prompting of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:16). Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding (Prov 3:13). Our culture may emphasise on information and technology but it is weak on true practical and spiritual wisdom. Christians have to learn how to take the raw material of knowledge of the word of God and refine it into true lasting practical wisdom (i.e. translating the knowledge of the word), into spiritual action. Wisdom from His Word perseveres; it lasts beyond all the currents of our fallen culture and social norms, beyond the depraved fashions of the day. Spiritual wisdom seeks that which will last forever and is willing to trade immediate gratification for an eternal reward in due time.

The Character of Wisdom

There are all kinds of claims to wisdom by the world. In Jas 3:13-17, there are two kinds of wisdom, the false earthly and devilish which lead to strife and confusion and every evil deed and the true (i.e. there is wisdom in theft or crime as well), heavenly spiritual wisdom on the other hand comes from God which has as its attributes - purity, peace, mercy, love, gentleness, impartiality and non hypocrisy among others. Do we measure up to these characteristics today? Something to think and pray about seriously.

Conclusion

Folly should not be used to describe the redeemed life. The elect are called to walk wisely and circumspectly, i.e., in wisdom where we know and fear God and understand God's principles from His holy and infallible word, and submit to the spiritual rules that God has given to guide us. We are to make good use of our time by seizing our opportunities because of the evil times in which we live. In order to understand what the specific will of God is, for our personal life we need to pray fervently for wisdom, to know, understand and do the will of God. Therefore, let us be wise in our thoughts, words and deeds. Remember to pray and ask God for wisdom and read His Word daily, follow and obey God. We will be kept in the right direction with godly prudence and discretion in these last perilous days as we remember our Creator and honour and serve Him first.

WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON

Our worship services begin promptly at 11.00 am and 4.00 pm.

Please stay back for Bible Study and fellowship lunch after the morning worship and for tea after the evening service. Do invite your friends to come to Church.

Worship Services			WELCOME
Morning	Today: 25/01/2009	Next Week: 01/02/2009	We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day. We like to welcome K. Selene to our worship service last Lord's Day.
<i>Chairman:</i>	Joey Seow	John Poh	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Mark Chen	Rev Timothy Ki	
<i>Message:</i>	Labouring in the Gospel Vineyard	Tba	
<i>Text:</i>	Colossians 1:24-29	Tba	
<i>Organist:</i>	Anthony	Joy	
Evening			
<i>Chairman:</i>	Jonathan Kim	Joshua Flinn	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Rev Yeo Seow Phong	Rev Timothy Ki	
<i>Message:</i>	Family Traits	Tba	
<i>Text:</i>	1 John 4, 5	Tba	
<i>Pianist:</i>	Hubert	Sophia	
Other Duties			NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calling of Resident Minister: Continue to pray for the Lord's calling for a resident minister. The church leaders are praying about calling Rev Timothy Ki. • Rev & Mrs Yeo Seow Phong: Rev & Mrs Yeo have been blessed with the safe delivery of their new granddaughter, Chloe, born on 23 Jan. Also, Rev Yeo will be returning to S'pore this week. We thank God for providing him to minister us for the past 4 months. May God continue to bless him and keep him. • Pray for those who are sick: Douglas (knee pain), Maria (ankle and joint pain), Constance (left heel pain), Anthony (recovery from collarbone fracture), Margaret (sprained wrist – check-up 9/2) • Pray for Journey Mercies: Douglas (Ghana), Jiak Eng (S'pore), Rev Yeo Seow Phong (departing to S'pore – 29/1), Rev Lim Chee Boon (arriving in UK – 29/1), Rev Timothy Ki (arriving in UK – 30/1), Mark & Hui Min (Paris – 31/1) • Carry-In Lunch: A special thank you to those who have contributed to the carry-in lunch. The Task Force wishes our Chinese members and worshippers a very Happy Chinese New Year.
	Today: 25/01/2009	Next Week: 01/02/2009	
<i>Ushers</i>	John / Sharon	Daniel / Evelyn	
<i>Sunday Sch:</i>	Hannah	Hannah	
<i>Lunch:</i>	CNY – Carry In	Maureen	
<i>Washing-up:</i>	Volunteers	Volunteers	
<i>PA Crew:</i>	Lee Wei	Anthony	
Appointments of the Week			
Fri 30 Jan	7:30pm	Young Adults Fellowship: Bible Study – Survey of the Old Testament	
Sat 31 Jan	4.00pm	Prayer Meeting & Bible Study: Led by Rev Lim Chee Boon	
Last Week's Worship Service Collections			
Offering:	£371.73	YAF: £45.00 Lunch: £36.86	
Spiritual Greatness			
<p><i>Adapted from "In Green Pastures" by J.R. Miller, D.D.</i></p> <p>Spiritual greatness — sanctified character, beauty of soul, the likeness of God upon the life, heart-qualities - shall endure for ever. Into this true spiritual greatness God wants to train every one of us. Many Christians grow sadly disheartened because they seem never to become any better. Year after year the struggle goes on with the old tempers and ugly dispositions, the old selfishness, pride, and hatefulness, and they appear never to be growing victorious. Yet Christ is a most patient teacher. He never wearies of our slowness and dullness as scholars. He will teach the same lesson over and over until we have learned it. If we only persevere, he will never tire of us, and his gentleness will make us great.</p>			