



‘Worship at home’ Sunday August 18th 2024



In worship we give praise and thanks to God, we pray and deepen our relationship with God, and we learn and grow as we seek God’s ways in our lives.

Opening

We come to praise the Lord: to give thanks as God’s people. Our God is gracious and compassionate, merciful and forgiving, Our God is faithful and trustworthy, wise and just and good. We come to find nourishment and sustenance, and to learn and grow in wisdom and love. Amen!

We live in an age where knowledge is more accessible than ever. The internet makes a vast amount of information instantly available. Our society places a high value on learning and knowledge.

Reflect on the following questions:

- **How do you learn?**
- **Why do you learn?**
- **Is there a difference between knowledge and wisdom?**



The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing.



Socrates

Learning does not always come from facts or information. Intelligent people are not always wise.

*By three methods we may learn wisdom:
First, by reflection, which is noblest;
Second, by imitation, which is easiest;
and third by experience, which is the bitterest.*
- Confucius

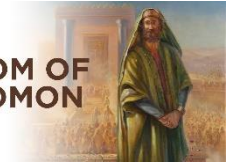
“Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom.”

- Aristotle

1 Kings 2:10-12; 3:3-14

Then David died and was buried with his ancestors in the City of David. David had reigned over Israel for forty years, seven of them in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem. Solomon became king and sat on the throne of David his father, and his kingdom was firmly established. Solomon loved the LORD and followed all the decrees of his father, David, except that Solomon, too, offered sacrifices and burned incense at the local places of worship. The most important of these places of worship was at Gibeon, so the king went there and sacrificed 1,000 burnt offerings. That night the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream, and God said, "What do you want? Ask, and I will give it to you!" Solomon replied, "You showed great and faithful love to your servant my father, David, because he was honest and true and faithful to you. And you have continued to show this great and faithful love to him today by giving him a son to sit on his throne. "Now, O LORD my God, you have made me king instead of my father, David, but I am like a little child who doesn't know his way

THE WISDOM OF KING SOLOMON



around. And here I am in the midst of your own chosen people, a nation so great and numerous they cannot be counted! Give me an understanding heart so that I can govern your people well and know the difference between right and wrong. For who by himself is able to govern this great people of yours?" The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for wisdom. So God replied, "Because you have asked for wisdom in governing my people with justice and have not asked for a long life or wealth or the death of your enemies - I will give you what you asked for! I will give you a wise and understanding heart such as no one else has had or ever will have! And I will also give you what you did not ask for—riches and fame! No other king in all the world will be compared to you for the rest of your life! And if you follow me and obey my decrees and my commands as your father, David, did, I will give you a long life."

New Living Translation

Following the death of his father, Solomon ascended to the throne. It had not been an easy process, with negotiations over women, property and power, and involving the loss of several lives. He now found himself in a situation of enormous power and responsibility and recognised his inexperience and shortcomings. Part of living wisely is realising our limitations, and sometimes the more we know, the more we realise we don't know. Solomon could have asked for riches or power or strength in battle. Instead, he put his own needs aside to ask for wisdom, that he might rule according to what was best for his people. He wished not for personal gain or material possessions, but for a listening heart and discerning mind.

The fool doth
think he is wise,
but the wise man
knows himself
to be a fool.

- William Shakespeare

When we put our own needs aside and seek God's ways, God provides. When we acknowledge our limitations, God gives us the wisdom and strength we need. When we feel we are out of our depth, or are overwhelmed by the responsibility that has been placed on us, when we are all too aware of our inexperience and shortcomings, God is already with us, guiding, enabling, and empowering. It is when we have the wisdom to realise all that we don't know, and all that we cannot do, that we are able to discover all that God can do!

Reflect on what you might learn about living wisely from this scripture passage.

Ephesians 5:15-20

So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life.

Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

New Living Translation

An understanding of wisdom, *sophia*, was central to Greek philosophy and religion. More than simply knowledge or information, it also implies experience, good judgement and insight.



- * Living wisely goes far deeper than something we can google on the internet or look up at the library.
- * Living wisely requires more than simply an intellectual head knowledge about God, with a Sunday School faith that blindly adheres to the stories we have been taught as facts.
- * Living wisely comes from a relationship with God, when we live in union with Christ, filled with the Holy Spirit.
- * Living wisely helps us make good decisions, as we discern God's ways for us that we might show God's love and grace to all by what we do and say, and how we live.

Prayer

Gracious God, we ask you today for wisdom... for strength and courage as we seek to follow your ways... for good discernment in decisions... for the ability to put our own agendas aside and seek good for others. We ask for wisdom as together we struggle with what it means to be your people in this world today... as we debate appropriate responses to issues such as homelessness, poverty, violence and abuse, climate change, war... grant us discerning minds and loving hearts. We ask for wisdom as we care for your world, its people and its resources... may we act with justice, and with love. In all these things we give you thanks, and commit ourselves again to listening, and to seeking your ways. Amen



Closing Go into the world being careful of how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity. Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. Be filled with the Holy Spirit and with praise for God. Give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. And may the grace, mercy and wisdom of God be your support, your guidance and your strength, now and always. Amen — *based on Ephesians 5*