

In Search Of Wisdom

For the Teacher

God's Word extols wisdom in the most glowing terms: *"For wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her."* (Prov. 8:10,11). And God doesn't leave us in the dark as how to obtain wisdom. In my preparation, I surveyed over 500 verses on the topic, and I'm sure that I've just scratched the surface. But alas, the demon of "duh" has gripped this generation of students, and he doesn't relinquish his grip without a fight. How can we hope to inspire our own students to break from the foolish crowd to passionately pursue wisdom? Foremost, they need an example. As one of my heroes in youth ministry used to say, "If you want your youth to bleed, you've got to hemorrhage!" May God grant you a heart that burns for His wisdom, and that your exuberance will light a fire in the hearts of your students.

SERIES PURPOSE: BY THE END OF THIS SERIES, I WANT MY STUDENTS TO KNOW THE PATH TO WISDOM, AND HAVE THE MOTIVATION TO PASSIONATELY FOLLOW IT.

LESSON 1 PURPOSE: BY THE END OF THIS LESSON, I WANT MY STUDENTS TO DEVELOP A PASSION FOR SEEKING WISDOM.

Tip: Reflect on this lesson's purpose in the light of your students. What attitudes do they now have concerning seeking wisdom? In what areas do they currently seek wisdom that you could capitalize on? What hurdles keep them from seeking wisdom? (Boring teachers, apathetic classmates, uninvolved parents, distracting entertainment?) How can you help them cross these hurdles? How can the following lesson be adapted to better fulfill this purpose in *your* students?

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DEVELOP A PASSION FOR WISDOM

LESSON I

INTRODUCTION

ILLUSTRATION: *To introduce this series, I'd like each of you to close your eyes and join me on an imaginary summer hike in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Are your eyes closed? Okay. You're walking along a wooded trail, when you hear a brook cascading over a small waterfall somewhere nearby. (Can you see the trees, smell the clean air, hear the brook?) You venture over to take a closer look, and as you sit on a rock taking in the waterfall, you notice a peculiar glimmer, seemingly caused by the angle of the sun's rays reflecting off of something behind the waterfall. You gingerly reach your hand through the water, and pull out an ancient bottle inscribed with strange words. You rub the bottle to get a better look, and to your shock and amazement, a mystical fog begins to pour out, which, when it disappears, reveals a huge genie, standing with arms crossed, dressed in Arabian garb. He immediately addresses you as Master, and, being a rather stingy genie, offers you not three, but one wish. Anything you want except, of course, the normal exclusions of more wishes or more genies.*

Now, with your eyes still closed, with your wish being your genie's command, what will you ask for? Put aside all spiritual thoughts like "the salvation of the world," or "a Bible for every child." This is something for you. Think about it. Now, open your eyes. Tell us, what would you ask for? (Let them share.)

Well, believe it or not, one person in history was indeed promised one request, anything he wanted. Only the promiser was not a genie, but the almighty God. Let's turn to II Chronicles 1:7ff to discover who he was, and what he asked for. (Read the passage.)

So, what did Solomon ask for? (Wait for the answer: wisdom and knowledge.) And was God pleased with his request? How did God show his delight? (He made Solomon not only the wisest man in the world, but added great riches and honor besides.)

Today, we start a new series entitled, "In Pursuit of Wisdom," where we will try to pursue something that most people avoid. In some schools, it's actually dangerous to act interested in learning. You'll be branded a "geek" and put in a category of people with shirt pockets filled with colored pens, a calculator, one shirttail hanging out, and an unnoticed bugger lodged in a conspicuous location. But if that's your idea of a wisdom-seeker, God is out to change your mind. Let's pray for open hearts:

PRAY

Do *you* want to be wise? And I don't mean just the wisdom to get better grades in school, but also the intensely practical wisdom you need to carry on successful relationships, make wise decisions, become a successful musician, athlete, chef, mechanic or architect. We're talking about the insight it takes to be successful in life.

Do you want to be wise? I hope so, because the only other option is to be a fool. And most people today have chosen a path that will lead them to be fools. Today, a fork in the path of life is offering us an option to the beaten path. It's the path to wisdom. And today God's Word will reveal what awaits each of us, if we only take this path.

I. GET FIRED UP

A. SOLOMON LAYS OUT A CHALLENGE

Everyone turn to Prov. 8:10,11, and let me read to you an astounding claim that Solomon made about wisdom.

*"Choose my instruction instead of silver,
knowledge rather than choice gold
For wisdom is more precious than rubies,
and nothing you desire can compare with her."
(Prov. 8:10,11; cr. Pr. 4:13)*

Word Study: The primary Hebrew word translated wisdom is *hokma*, meaning *wisdom, skillful, prudence, cleverness*. More than academics, it covers "the whole gamut of human experience." It sometimes refers to technical skills, like that of artisans (Ex. 31:3) or navigators (Ez. 27:8,9). Also of decision-making skills for leaders (Deut. 34:9; 2 Sam. 14:20). And more broadly of the practical wisdom needed to live life successfully. (NBD, TWOT, EDTh, BDB, Strongs)

Exegesis - "'rubies' remains the nearest equivalent."

Now, I can desire some pretty big things: 1) *A credit card with no upper limit that will be magically paid off every month.* But according to this verse, the worth of that card doesn't even compare to the worth of wisdom. 2) *An Olympic sized indoor pool attached to my house.* It would be neat, but this verse tells me that it's not even in the same category with wisdom. 3) *An exciting girlfriend with the looks of a beauty queen* (and, of course, the spiritual life of John the Baptist!), *who is madly in love with me.* But according to this verse, wisdom is so much better than any of these, that you can't say, "On a scale of 1 to 10, wisdom gets a 10 and the magic credit card an 8." No. You can't even compare on a scale. It's beyond comparison. Comparing anything else you desire with wisdom is like comparing your top middle school

basketball player with Michael Jordan. You can't say, "Well, I think Jordan's got the accuracy but Junior edges him out on quickness." It's laughable to even try a comparison. It's the same way with wisdom. Nothing else even compares.

B. GOD LAYS OUT THE BENEFITS

But if given a choice between wisdom and the magical credit card, I'd say most would grab the credit card. I think that since God knew that this point would be hard to swallow, He decided to show us in His Word exactly *why* wisdom is so valuable. You see, when we get wisdom, we get more than wisdom; we get a package deal. Let's unwrap the rest of the package.

Activity: Divide into small groups and I'll give each group a few verses that tell us part of the package deal. Your responsibility is to read the verses, discover what benefits wisdom and knowledge bring, and discuss how you think that wisdom brings about those benefits. (As each group reports on their verses, you may wish to make some of your own points about certain verses. I give some ideas below.)

- **Proverbs 4:22 – Health and Long Life (cr. 3:16,18,22; 4:13; 8:18,35; 9:11; Jn. 8:51)**

In what ways can wisdom extend our life span? (It keeps us from alcohol and drug abuse, dangerous friendships, etc.)

***ILLUSTRATION:** If instead of buying a pack of cigarettes every day, a youth invested the money at 10% interest, he might not only be healthy at age 65, but have an extra \$700,000 to spend! Or, he could be broke with lung cancer. Which course do you think the wise man will take?*

Caution: Proverbs often teaches tendencies that happen in most cases rather than absolutes that will happen in every case. For example, Stephen, in the book of Acts, was wise (Acts 6:3,10) yet he died young (7:60). Jesus died at 33 years. But, although not absolute in every case, these verses show us that wisdom tilts the scale in our favor in some very attractive areas of life.

Do you want to spend your life enslaved to drugs and foods that will rob you of your health? Do you want to die young? Then be a fool.

- **Proverbs 17:2 - Authority**

Whether you're into sports, the military, or business, people want wise people in leadership.

***Illustration:** To a large extent, the United States owes its independence to the brilliant military leadership of George Washington. Why did the Colonists choose Washington to lead the fight? Guess. They not only knew of his bravery; they recognized his great wisdom.*

So if you want respect, get wisdom. If you want no one to take you seriously, you can always be a fool.

- **Proverbs 21:22 – Power (cr. 24:5, Ecc.9:13-16)**

***Illustration:** Most people don't know just how bad Washington had it with his soldiers. Sometimes the soldiers would miss their families and simply leave the ranks without telling anyone. Once, when spooked by a lightly armed advance guard of 100 British troops, his militia of 4000 men fled, leaving*

Washington sitting alone on his horse, steaming with rage, 100 yards in front of the troops. The British could have easily shot or captured him, but they suspected some kind of trick! So how did Washington, with often undisciplined and sometimes cowardly troops, defeat the seasoned British troops, which greatly outnumbered him? He outsmarted them with brilliant strategy, and the clever use of spies.

Want to be a wimp? Then be a fool.

- **Proverbs 1:33 - Safety and Security (cr. 1:32; 2:12; 3:23-26)**

Are we getting the picture? "Nothing you desire can compare" with wisdom.

Want to go through life in fear, without any confidence? Then be a fool.

- **Proverbs 24:14 - Hope**

Are you beginning to see why God's Word tells us that "nothing you desire can compare" with wisdom?

- **Proverbs 3:13 - Happiness (cr. 3:18; 9:11)**

Want a sad, disappointing life? Be a fool.

- **Proverbs 8:35, 36 - The favor of God (cr. 3:4)**
- **Proverbs 3:16 - Riches, honor, long life (cr. 9:11)**

***ILLUSTRATION:** In Dec. 8, 1989, the Wall Street Journal reported on a study of 152 Christian-based companies and found that they grew "significantly faster than other companies in their fields by every criterion examined." (Dec. 8, '89)*

Do you want to be poor, embarrassed, and die young? Choose foolishness.

Are you getting the picture? Do you see why God tells us, "Choose instruction rather than silver, knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire..." Let's say it together: "nothing you desire can compare with her." Once you see the incredible package that comes with wisdom, the choice is a no brainer. Seek wisdom.

C. SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE PROVE ITS WORTH

Jumping ahead about 2500 years from the time Solomon was writing Proverbs, we find the same principles at work today. At a time when the demon of "duh" seems to have possessed people in unprecedented numbers, some notable exceptions stand out...

***Illustration:** First, **Bill Gates**. What do you know about him? Without an **insatiable thirst for understanding computers** that began at 13 years old, Gates could have never led the computer revolution, become a millionaire in his 20's, and in his 30's the wealthiest man in America, a multi-billionaire. He was so motivated to learn computers that as a youth he would act like he was going to bed at night, only to sneak out and take a bus to an office which allowed students access to their computers. In future weeks, we'll find out more about this remarkable man's zeal for learning.*

*Illustration: Second, **Benjamin Franklin**. What do you know about him? When most of us think of*

Franklin, we picture a chubby old man dressed like a Quaker who flew a kite in a storm and found out something important about electricity. But let's fill in some of the blanks that you might have missed about this incredibly successful man. The son of a Boston candle maker, Franklin had scarcely two years of formal schooling. But his insatiable thirst for wisdom allowed him to enlighten the world concerning the nature of electricity, to invent the lightning rod, a machine for duplicating handwritten documents, the Franklin Stove, a simplified clock, and a musical instrument for which Mozart composed music. He wrote America's Declaration of Independence, and wrote on such diverse subjects as agriculture, chess, military strategy, and silk worms. During his life, this man with two years of formal education would be received by five kings, awarded honorary degrees by six universities, and be hailed as the "greatest philosopher of the century" by an Italian academy. How did he do it? As we will see in coming weeks, **he passionately pursued wisdom.**

*Illustration: Third, Steven Spielberg, arguably the most successful film maker ever. What do you know about him? How did Spielberg, as a 21-year-old (who looked more like 16), land a director's job at Universal Studios, becoming perhaps the youngest director ever? At 22-years-old, he directed such greats as Joan Crawford. How did he pull it off? I'll tell you how. He developed an **insatiable thirst for learning filmmaking** before the age of 15, so that at 21 he had seven years of film making wisdom from both his hands-on experience and observing the greats in action.*

During this series, we will find out how Gates, Franklin, Spielberg, Michael Jordan and other fascinating people became wisdom-seekers. Without a burning desire to learn, I doubt we would have ever heard of these guys. But today I just want us to catch some of their fire for wisdom.

PRAY

CONCLUSION AND ACTION POINTS

Are you ready to seek wisdom? Don't let Satan and discouraging people convince you that you don't have what it takes. In Proverbs 8:17, wisdom says,

"I love those who love me,
And those who seek me find me."

Does it say, "The *unusually gifted* who seek me find me?" Or, "Those who get straight 'A's' find me?" No. Wisdom is for *anyone who is willing to seek*. It's more a matter of M.Q. than I.Q. - Your Motivation Quotient than your Intelligence Quotient. If you want to become a lover of wisdom and seeker of wisdom, you can start this week. Here are some action points:

ACTION POINTS: If you're serious about pursuing wisdom, it will take more than showing up for this study. Take on "The Wisdom Challenge." Fortunately for us, Solomon didn't take all his wisdom with him to the grave. He put much of it behind in the book of Proverbs, to help us become wise. (See Pr. 1:1-7) "The Wisdom Challenge," for those who dare to accept it, will help us to move these principles those vital 12 inches from our heads into our hearts.

PART I - Read and Meditate on Proverbs. The book of Proverbs has 31 chapters, so that by reading a chapter a day, you can complete it in a month. Written largely by Solomon, it contains wisdom that speaks to today's world as practically as it spoke to Solomon's world. Read with a note pad in hand, so that you can write down the insights that stand out to you, and bring them back with you to share with the group each week.

PART 2 – Memorize Some Proverbs. Memorizing Scripture helps us to meditate on a passage now, and recall it later when we need it. For next week, memorize Proverbs 8:10,11. Circle it where it's written out on your student handout. I recommend writing it out on a note card tonight and carrying it with you through the week, so that you can review it several times a day during the week.

[Assign the skit included in next week's lesson to two youth and give them a copy of the script. *Optional: If some of your youth are budding Spielbergs, have them videotape this beforehand and play it on a TV for the group.*]

IN SEARCH OF WISDOM WEEK II

PURPOSE: AFTER THIS SESSION, I WANT MY STUDENTS TO PRIORITIZE SEEKING WISDOM AND RESOLVE TO HANG AROUND WISE PEOPLE.

Idea: Consider offering a reward to any students who successfully quote the verses to you each week. Since Jesus used rewards to motivate us to righteous behavior (Mt. 6:4,6,18), why should we feel that using rewards is somehow unspiritual? I memorized several chapters in high school when my teacher promised a New Testament as a reward. Often something as small as a blue ribbon, a sticker, or a day trip can generate the extra bit of motivation a youth needs to reach a spiritual goal.

THE WISDOM CHALLENGE: Who wants to try your memory verses before the group, or in front of a friend? **Your verse for next week is Prov. 13:20.** **Continue to review Pr. 8:10,11.** Could any of you share with us what you learned from Proverbs during the week? Here's an idea for the coming weeks: keep two sheets in front of you, one entitled "Characteristics of the Wise" and the other entitled "Characteristics of Fools." As you read, note the verses that speak of wisdom and foolishness and record your observations.

SKIT for review: *In order to review last week's lesson, listen carefully to a skit that your friends have prepared for you.*

Student 1 *"Stay tuned to your TV set for the exciting conclusion of the X-Files. But first, a word from our sponsors."*

Student 2 *"Do you think there are three kinds of people in this world: those who can count and those who can't? If someone were to write a feature article on you for the school newspaper, would it be entitled "Clueless?" Then have we got the product for you. The Book of Wisdom! (Pull out a Bible, covered with a brown paper slip book cover, with WISDOM written on the front in bold letters.) No more trying to convince your parents that your "D" was really the highest grade in the class. No more playing the dunce because you fell for the old line "But everybody's doing it." More valuable than gold, more precious than silver - in fact, nothing you could ever want even compares with it! And what do you think it would sell for in stores? \$5000.00? \$10,000.00? But no, if you call today, 1-800-WISDOM, you can own this invaluable product for only \$19.95. But wait! Order now and you'll also receive length of life, enduring wealth, health, and power. And there's still more! This package deal brings you authority, freedom, safety, confidence and honor. Don't delay! Order today! (Visa and Mastercharge accepted, sales tax may apply in certain countries.)"*

INTRODUCTION

Alternative Intro: Use clips from a movie like Spielberg's "Goonies" which shows kids finding a treasure map, dropping everything to search for the treasure, and the excitement of finding the treasure. After the clips, ask, "If you were to find a treasure map which you thought was legitimate, would you be willing to carve some time out of your busy schedule to look for it?"

Illustration: To introduce today's message, imagine that an eccentric uncle recently died, leaving you the large house he had recently acquired and whatever belongings remained in the house. In your first visit to the old mansion, you don't find much of interest in the living area. So you climb the ladder into the attic and begin rummaging through the dusty relics of a by-gone generation. But just when you're about to leave, you spot an old wooden chest. You pry it open to discover a tattered, yellowed map, clipped to a note from your deceased uncle. It reads, "You hold in your hands a treasure map of inestimable worth, concealed by our ancestors for generations, waiting until we could acquire the deed to this estate. But upon obtaining it, I became terminally ill. So it's left to you to unravel the riddles and instructions on the map. If you succeed, you will discover a vast chamber of gold, silver, and precious stones, all untraceable and worth billions,

originally hidden on this estate by our infamous ancestor, Long John Silver."

Now, imagine that you believe that the treasure is real, just waiting for you to find and claim it. Would you say, "Well, some day, when I get around to it, I'll have to make time to try to find that treasure". No way. You'd immediately begin clearing time in your busy calendar, even if it meant giving up some TV and favorite leisure activities.

Last week we found that the treasure wisdom offers is of much more value than the treasure I described. Let's say that memory verse over one more time. But, like the effort required in finding the treasure on the estate, so acquiring wisdom involves concentrated effort. Who will read Pr. 8:17 for us?

"I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me."(cr. 4:8;15:14)

So, according to this verse, does wisdom come effortlessly, just by sitting in a classroom? (No. We must love it and diligently seek it.) When you get into the lives of guys like Gates, Spielberg, and Michael Jordan, you find that they loved learning so much that they didn't mind missing out on lesser things, even when it meant separating themselves from the crowd. While the foolish live for fitting in with the crowd, successful people pursue their goals and eventually develop friendships with others who are going the same direction. And that's what this lesson is about: **Dare to Be Different.**

II. DARE TO BE DIFFERENT

A. By Watching Your Mental Diet

ILLUSTRATION: *Arnold Schwarzenegger* discovered that if he wanted to develop a body that would beat every competing body builder, he needed to not only hit the weights, but to eat a muscle-building diet. In the same way, wisdom seekers find that they must eat a mind-building diet.

Let's see how Solomon put it in Proverb's 15:14:

"The discerning heart seeks knowledge, but the mouth of a fool feeds on folly."

On Pr. 15:14 – "The verbs express eager interest and devotion." (Toy)

*ILLUSTRATION: Last week we mentioned **Bill Gates**. He's now the wealthiest man in America, considered the world's greatest entrepreneur. If you ever work with a computer, you find the name Microsoft popping up everywhere - Microsoft Windows, Microsoft Internet Explorer, Microsoft Word. A computer won't do anything without an operating system, and Gates managed to produce the systems that became the standard. So when almost anyone buys a computer, part of that money goes to Microsoft, which Gates started when he was around 19 or 20 years old. (Gates, 179) In the early days of Microsoft, Gates was so young that when he flew into cities to market his software, he couldn't rent a rental car. He was too young, and looked even younger. A year later, Steve Wood, general manager for Microsoft, hired a secretary who was instructed that a couple of rooms were off limits for visitors. It wasn't long till she spotted someone who looked like a teenager, complete with mess-up hair and blue jeans, rummaging through the president's office and heading for the off-limits computer room. She dutifully ran to warn Woods, who calmly instructed her, "That's Bill."*

"Who?"

"Bill Gates. The president. He's your boss."(Gates, pp. 116, 117)

The next year, when Gates was 22, Microsoft would have its first million dollar sales year.(p. 128) While in his 30's, he became a billionaire.

*So how did this guy get the smarts to be able to write computer code lightning fast, lead a fast-growing company, and keep a step ahead of his competitors, while many people his age were still trying to decide on a career? Later on in the series we'll discover some of how he came to have a grasp of the computer industry that some said was unequaled. But for now, I'll mention one thing that he determined **not** to do.*

He knew that he couldn't keep ahead of the computer industry while spending the time that most spend following the popular sitcoms and soap operas. So to make sure this didn't happen, he didn't even own a TV until he was 29. Even then, it was just a monitor and a VCR given to him by a long-distance girlfriend so that they could watch the same movies and talk about them by phone afterwards. He made sure that he didn't get a broadcast tuner, so that he couldn't pick up TV stations. Knowing how enticing TV is, he couldn't risk wasting the time. As if that weren't radical enough, he disconnected his car radio so that he could think better in the car. (Gates, pp. 232, 253, USA Today Weekend, p. 5.)

Like Gates, all serious wisdom seekers separate themselves from the crowd by showing an apathy toward the folly that many folks live for. It's just like the Solomon said, wise people soak up wisdom while fools feed on folly. So let's get specific. Imagine that Solomon were to hang out with an average group of youth today. What parts of their mental diet do you think he would describe as "folly?" (Let your students discuss. Following are some ideas.)

- **Devouring Celebrity Magazines.** Some girls know more about Leonardo de Caprio - how he dresses, his current movies, who he's dating, what brand of deoderant he uses - than they do about Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. And some of you guys know sports stats like you were a sports commentator. There's nothing wrong with being interested in the lives of stars. But if this dominates a person's reading, aren't they feeding on folly?
- **Feasting on Romance Novels** that take you nowhere.
- **Scarfig Down TV Shows and Movies.** It's been called "The One Eyed Monster," and "The Cyclops That Eats Books." The more you watch, the lower your grades. Studies prove it. Yet, many students, by the time they finish high school, will have spent more time in front of a TV set than in the classroom.

If you feed your mind a steady diet of "Dumb and Dumber," Glamour Magazine, and MTV, don't be surprised if your mind is flabby and you can't get motivated to seek wisdom.

B. By Using Your Time Wisely

“Be careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.” (Eph. 5:15,16; cr. Heb 12:1)

ILLUSTRATION: When everyone else was chasing girls and hanging out in high school, Steven Spielberg carried a camera around the school and hung out with the photography club. A high school acquaintance tried to ridicule him into the party lifestyle by asking, “What are you going to do, make movies all your life?” But Spielberg stayed with his movies, and got the last laugh.

ILLUSTRATION) Last week we mentioned Benjamin Franklin, who had only two years of schooling, but ended his life with a string of accomplishments that allowed him to be received by five kings and be awarded honorary degrees by six universities. But Franklin realized early on that he had to make a choice: either pursue wisdom or goof off with the crowd. So, since he had to work instead of attending school, he set apart an hour or two each day for study, and used his weekends for reading and rubbing shoulders with wise people. According to Franklin, “Reading was the only amusement I allowed myself.” (p. 87, Autobiography)

Activity: Some of you say, “But I just don’t have any time.” But we’re not talking about becoming a library ornament or dropping all social life and sports. Just a little effort each week adds up to big wisdom over time. Let’s have a quick Math contest to see who can figure the following amounts of reading the quickest:

Imagine that you can read 20 pages per hour. (Some can read much more.) If you gave up a 30 minute TV program each day, replacing it with reading good books on topics you want to learn about, how long would it take you to read a 160 page book? (Wait for them to answer: That’s 10 pages per day for 16 days.) How many books in a month? (About 2) How many books in a year? (About 24) How many books in 10 years? (About 240)

By sacrificing 30 minutes of MTV per day, you could reap the counsel of the wisest of the wise on a sport you are trying to perfect, friendships, family life, making and saving money, the Bible, ministry, health, etc.

Or, with 30 minutes a day you could teach yourself a skill such as piano, guitar, cooking, or woodworking.

ACTION POINTS: Is there anything you can write down from this point under your action points? Would you like to set a goal of 30 minutes per day, or a couple of weekend hours to accomplish something great over the years?

III. SURROUND YOURSELF WITH WISE PEOPLE

“He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.” (Prov. 13:20; cr. P. 14:7,)

Exegesis - Could mean either "become evil" or "suffer evil (harm)" (Kidner)

If your greatest concern each morning is whether or not you are having a bad hair day, and you have no motivation to learn or better yourself, you might want to look around to see what kind of people you hang around.

I know, I know. Some will argue, "My friends don't really influence me much." But the Word of God says, "*He who walks with the wise grows wise...*"

So, what do wise people look like? Don't be fooled. Straight "A" students are not necessarily wise. Many "A" students are in prison today. Neither are slow students necessarily dumb. Spielberg couldn't get into film school because of his low grades. We're talking about people who not only a thirst for learning, but can make the wise decisions that bring them success.

Illustration: *Last week we met **Bill Gates**, and talked about his meteoric rise to the top of the computer industry. Now, according to God's Word, the people we choose to hang out with have an incredible influence on us. What kind of people do you think Gates hung out with in school? (Let them guess.) Through the 7th grade he was a problem student who seldom applied himself (Gates, pp 18-24) He wasn't going anywhere. But the eighth grade he found his niche with some high school math-science whiz kids who fell hopelessly in love with computer programming. Never mind that the other students thought they were geeks. Gates and friends spent their free time learning computer languages and writing programs. One of those friends, a tenth grade electronic whiz named Paul Allen, would become the co-founder and idea person behind Microsoft. You see, by walking with wise people, he became wise.*

Illustration: ***Benjamin Franklin** felt he couldn't attain wisdom by himself. So he formed a club, named Junto, which continued for 40 years of his life. While others were hitting the taverns on Friday nights, Junto would meet to present and critique each other's essays, debate issues, and discuss important matters. (p. 65 of Autobiography) At age 18 his chief acquaintances were three people who he discribes as "lovers of reading." They took pleasant weekend walks together where they would read to one another and talk about what they read. (p. 41, Autobiog.) So, by walking with wise people, he became what? Wise.*

Illustration: *When 15-year-old **Arnold Schwarzenegger** caught fire for bodybuilding, he began to hang around the local serious bodybuilders, although they were twice his age. He learned from them, looked up to them, and by hanging around those who were wise in bodybuilding, he became wise in bodybuilding.*

Illustration: ***Steven Spielberg** didn't fit into the social life of his school any better than Gates. But in middle school he wasn't the only kid making movies. Incredibly, four other students within 10 houses from him spent their time making films while other kids chased girls and played sports. One of these friends said that he doubted Spielberg could have kept his motivation for filmmaking without the camaraderie of his fellow-enthusiasts. By hanging around those who were growing wise in filmmaking, Spielberg became wise.*

Illustration: *As basketball superstar **Kareem Abdul Jabaar** once said, "Don't let those who are going nowhere influence your opinions."*

Listen, if the loftiest goals of your close friends are to get their hair fixed, go to a party, or to try a new drug, you're going nowhere in life and will never make a dent in this world for Jesus. Because "a companion of fools suffers harm." So, as you define where you are going in life, surround yourself with people who are going the same direction. Then you will find yourself growing wise.

ACTION POINTS:

Are your closest companions wise? If not, who is someone you could seek to bring into that close circle

that could help bring out the wisdom seeker in you? Like Franklin, they may have only two years of formal education, but within them burns that fire that keeps them restless with what they currently know, and in their conversations and reading they are constantly growing. In the closing, silent prayer time, ask God if you need to make any changes in your friendships.

IN SEARCH OF WISDOM WEEK III

PURPOSE: AS A RESULT OF THIS LESSON, I WANT MY STUDENTS TO PURSUE WISDOM BY GATHERING WISE COUNSEL AND LEARNING FROM REBUKE.

THE WISDOM CHALLENGE: It's time to quote the verses from the past two weeks. For next week, keep reviewing the old verses and add Prov. 19:20; 17:10. Who has something interesting to share that you read in Proverbs?

INTRODUCTION

I've heard it told that a mechanical problem caused a factory to shut down, so that the head of operations had to call in a master mechanic. The mechanic asked few questions, pulled out a screw driver, and fixed the entire problem by adjusting one screw. Then he promptly presented the owner with a bill for \$550.00. "For turning a screw?" the owner objected. "By no means," replied the mechanic. "I only charged \$.57 for turning the screw. The balance of \$549.43 was for knowing which screw to turn." This may have been written as a joke, but it's true in a lot of cases. You see, as one man said, "Knowledge is the currency of exchange of the information age." (John Galbreth) The more you know about your profession, the more valuable you are to your company, and the more they will pay to keep you.

That's depressing to some of you. You're thinking, "Learning isn't my thing. No matter how hard I try in school, I can't seem to keep up with the other students. I must not have what it takes to grow wise." But listen, **Winston Churchill's** father was ashamed of Winston's apparent dullness and felt that he would never be able to earn a living in England. (Cradles, p. 264) **Albert Einstein** struggled with languages and failed his test to enter college. **Steven Spielberg** wasn't accepted into film school because of his low grades. In Benjamin Franklin's two years of formal education, he struggled with Math. **Thomas Edison's** teachers considered him one of their slowest students. So you see, wisdom is not just available to academic whiz kids. The requirement for becoming wise is not quickness in school. Listen to Proverbs 8:17, where wisdom is pictured as speaking:

*"I love those who love me,
and those who seek me find me."*

So, according to this verse, who can be wise? (Those who love wisdom and seek it.)

You see, there are three kinds of people in this room: 1) **Teach me if you can.** 2) **Passive listeners** who will learn only what need to pass a test. 3) Then there are **those few who sit on the edge of their seats**, pen in hand, in hot pursuit of the jewels that most people miss. Solomon says that this third group will find wisdom. Let's go on a treasure hunt!

PRAY

Let's review the path to wisdom that we've covered so far.

- 1) **Get fired up** ...Develop a thirst by envisioning the things you want out of life, and realizing how wisdom can get them for you.
- 2) **Dare to be different** ...Radically cut out the detractors that keep you from becoming wise.
- 3) **Hang around wise people.**

IV. GATHER WISE COUNSEL

A. What God Says

So, you want to perfect excel at a skill, like Michael Jordan with basketball or Bill Gates with computers. Or, you want to be an all-around wise guy like Ben Franklin. How do you do it? Solomon gives us a path in Proverbs 19:20 and 15:22. Who will read these for us?

*"Listen to advice and accept instruction,
and in the end you will be wise."* (Prov. 19:20; cr. 1:5; 12:15, 19:20)

*"Plans fail for lack of counsel,
but with many advisers they succeed."* (15:22)

So, if you want to end up wise, how does this verse say to go about it? (Listen to advice and accept instruction.) Many people can't learn from others because they're consumed with impressing others (cr. Pr. 18:2). If you want to be wise, you've got to develop an intense curiosity about other people's interests, and learn to get them talking by asking interesting questions.

ILLUSTRATION: One guy studied millionaires to discover how they did it. Most of them made the money themselves rather than inherit it. So, how did they do it? One surprising find was that most millionaires don't live in high class neighborhoods or drive expensive cars. They are more interested in investing money than spending money. But one thing they will spend money on. Any ideas? Paying financial counselors for advice. You see, they've learned the principle we're working on learning today.

B. How We Can Live It

One president said that he had never met anyone who was not his superior in some way. You don't necessarily need to consult a Ph.D. A parent or a little brother may have unusual insight, especially since they know you better than many others. Wise guy Benjamin Franklin once said, "Who is wise? He that learns from everyone."

- **Your Family:**

ILLUSTRATION: Basketball superstar Michael Jordan reigns as America's most popular athlete, perhaps the most popular in the world. He's mastered the game to such an extent that pro player Magic Johnson could say, "There's Michael – and then there's the rest of us." (Rare Air, on front sleeve) But he didn't just wake up one morning, pick up a basketball, and begin his lightning fast moves and stratospheric jumps, dunking baskets against giant defenders. Believe it or not, he was cut from the Varsity team his Sophomore year in high school. So what did he do to improve? One could argue that without the fierce, daily, one-on-one, back yard competitions with his older brother

Larry, who was a better athlete at the time, Michael would have never developed his ability and confidence enough to compete at the game. Larry was his mentor as well as best friend.

So learn as much as you can from your family - cook, garden, build. Learn from their wealth of experiences, both good and bad.

- **Your Friends:** Last week we spoke of surrounding yourself with wise people. After you get them around you, be more concerned with learning from them than showing off how much you know.

*ILLUSTRATION: While walking to school each day, future comedian **Rodney Dangerfield** perfected his humor by telling a joke in several different ways to his friends, and then ask which delivery was funnier.*

Many people learn the guitar this way. They ask someone who's a step ahead of them how to read a cord chart or how to position their fingers for a certain chord. Then, they practice till they can do it.

Whenever they want to do something new, they ask a person who can do it how they do it, or learn to read the music magazines that show how the professionals do it.

- **Experts**

*ILLUSTRATION: To pick back up on **Michael Jordan**, after his humiliating cut from the high school team as a Sophomore, he began waking up at 6:00 each morning to practice with his Junior Varsity coach. Then there were the basketball clinics he began attending during the summers, where he got input from top coaches.*

*ILLUSTRATION: During his college years, **Steven Spielberg** spent his time after classes and during the summer helping out at Universal Studios, where he asked millions of questions and watched the masters in action.*

It takes more than practice. It takes the right kind of practice. Usually, we need experts to show us how.

- **Your Church (cr. I Cor. 12:8)** - Look around Sunday morning and see how many cumulative years of experience these people have. If 100 adults attend on a Sunday morning, at average age of 40 years each, you have 4000 years of varied experience to draw from. God has gifted some of these with Teaching, Wisdom, or Prophecy. And even in this room, every student has areas of interest and expertise, which, if we were curious enough to tap into it, could broaden us incredibly.

C. A Chance To Do It

ACTIVITY: "GIVE ME SOME ADVICE." Let's apply this verse right now. Divide into groups of four, sitting in a circle. Now, each of you write down one or more areas that you have an interest in - a sport you participate in, an instrument you play, a school subject you enjoy, cooking, building, exercise, animals, hiking, etc. Now, one at a time, share your areas of interest and let other members of the group ask you questions about it. (Example: Jan has an interest in pets. Students ask, "What pets do you have? How much time does it take to care for a pet? Is it very expensive? [No difficult trivia questions please.])

CONCLUSION

The world's greatest successes didn't make it by themselves. They found ways to add other people's wisdom to their own, thus multiplying their own wisdom.

Homework: Come up with an area of life that you would like to know more about. 1) How to get along with difficult people. 2) How to get my body into shape. 3) How to choose a vocation or major. 4) How to get better grades. 5) How to play an instrument. Now, decide who might give you some good input on this area (parents, teachers, neighbors, family members). During the week, talk to some people about these topics to gather wise counsel. Report back next week about anything profitable you might have learned.

V. LEARN FROM CRITICISM

If you take point 3 seriously and begin asking for advice, you'd better prepare yourself for #4, because you're not always going to like the input you get. Do you get your feathers ruffled every time someone criticizes you? If so, you'd better memorize this warning:

*"A rebuke impresses a man of discernment
more than a hundred lashes a fool."* (Prov. 17:10; cr. 9:7-9; 10:8; 19:25)

ILLUSTRATION: *We all understand colorblind people. If their mom or wife doesn't match their clothes for them, they are in trouble. But I'm convinced that all of us have some kind of blindness. Some people are relationship blind. They can't keep friends, but have no idea why. They may have bad breath, a sense of humor that only their mom appreciates, and body odor. But they are clueless. Their only hope of not going through life with the problem is if they can get someone to be honest with them, and take the truth to heart.*

But fools blow off correction, thinking, "Who is *he* to try to set me straight?" That's why they never improve themselves. They are too defensive to ever face their weaknesses. *It's like the American Civil war general whose last words were, as he raised his head above a parapet - "Nonsense, they couldn't hit an elephant at this dis..."* Wise people, on the other hand, take criticism to heart, regarding their critics as some of their most valuable friends.

Super-successes go beyond taking criticism well; they ask for it.

ILLUSTRATION: *One day Benjamin Franklin's friend sharply rebuked him. "Ben," he said, "you are impossible. Your opinions have a slap in them for everyone who differs with you. They have become so expensive nobody cares for them. Your friends find they enjoy themselves better when you are not around." Franklin took the rebuke seriously and began to work on his relational abilities. The effort paid off in later years as he became one of the most sought out, respected men of his time. At another time, in order to improve his writing, he and some friends each wrote a paper based on a Psalm, and then critiqued each other's writing.*

ILLUSTRATION: *As a young grade-school movie maker, Steven Spielberg, would show his films on a sheet, thrown over a clothes line in his backyard, with his sister selling tickets and candy. Between showings, he would get their input on what they liked, and how he could improve.*

ILLUSTRATION: *Basketball Superstar Michael Jordan played an extraordinary game as a college freshman. But that didn't keep him from intently listening to his coach's evaluation of his weaknesses. By*

working hours a day on these weaknesses, he came a step closer to being the best player of all time.

ILLUSTRATION: Bodybuilder **Arnold Schwarzenegger** asked a fellow-bodybuilder to evaluate his physique. Schwarzenegger took his advice, changed part of his routine, and took another step toward becoming the world's top bodybuilder.

ILLUSTRATION: **Bill Hybels** started a church in a movie theatre that grew, in 15 years, to over 14,000 attendees, making it the largest church in America. How did he perfect his speaking ability? He asked a diverse group of people to critique his sermons each Sunday and write their input, both positive and negative, to help him improve himself. Besides this input, his staff also meet with him the following week to critique the entire service.

If **Michael Jordan** had refused to listen to his coaches' critiques of his game...

If **Franklin** had never taken his friend's advice...

If **Spielberg** had never gotten input on his films...

If **Dangerfield** had never gotten input on his jokes...

...we might have never heard of these guys.

It makes a lot of sense when you think about it. But how many youth ever say to their parents over supper, "Mom and dad, whenever you see anything I do that you think I need to be corrected about, please let me know." Some of your parents might have a heart attack!

CONCLUSION AND ACTION POINTS

Now what about you? What are some action points that you need to apply from today's lesson? Ideas:

- Give a friend or acquaintance permission to let you know how you could improve yourself.
- Ask your parents for their input. After they pick themselves up from passing out on the floor, ask "What could I do to improve myself? To better handle myself in social situations?" When you see stuff I need to improve upon, please let me know.

Idea: Learning From the Wise. For next week's lesson, take a break from teaching. Instead, use the time to apply this week's lesson by gathering some wise counsel from wise members of your church. In our church, we had some wise, well respected, spiritually minded, senior adults that I wanted my youth to know better. I asked the youth to tell me who some of the senior adults were that they would like to learn from. Out of this list, I asked about two men and two women if they would be willing to participate. Then, I helped the youth come up with questions that they would like to get answers to from this panel. (I suggested some questions to get them started: *What are some things you did throughout your life that you would recommend someone else to do? What do you regret that you did not do? What qualities should we look for in a life's mate? What lessons have you learned about handling money?*) I ignored the stupid questions ("*Have you seen Elvis recently?*"), typed up the good questions and made some copies. I gave a copy to each of the four adults to let them reflect on the questions during the week. During the session, I handed out the questions for the youth to ask, making the session more informal and conversational. The adults sat in a row of chairs in the front of the youth, like a panel discussion. I was the moderator, to make sure that no one adult dominated the discussion. It worked so well, that I'd consider doing this a couple of times per year.

Keys to this session's success: 1. A quality panel of adults. If your church doesn't have enough sharp senior adults to pull from, broaden it to any adults. 2. Interesting questions.

IN SEARCH OF WISDOM WEEK IV

PURPOSE: BY THE END OF THIS LESSON, I WANT MY STUDENTS TO BE MOTIVATED TO SOAK UP KNOWLEDGE, AND KNOW SEVERAL WAYS TO DO IT.

THE WISDOM CHALLENGE: It's time to quote the verses from the past three weeks. (Let them quote to each other.) For next week, keep reviewing the old verses and add **Prov. 18:15**. Who has something interesting to share that you read in Proverbs last week?

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever taken an IQ test, only to have the results come back negative? Do you think there are three kinds of people in the world: those who can count and those who can't? Then this series is especially for you.

But it's also for people who breeze through school with straight A's, but are flunking in your relationships with friends and family. It's for anyone who would rather be known as wise, rather than as an air head. Listen, our success in life hinges largely on how we live out the principles of this series. So let's pray that God will teach us tonight.

PRAY

VI. SOAK UP KNOWLEDGE (Any Which Way You Can!)

Pay close attention to a skit that your friends have prepared for you, and see if you can relate to it.

SETTING: TEACHER LECTURING FROM IN FRONT OF HER DESK, WITH FOUR STUDENTS SEATED IN FRONT OF HER.

TEACHER: (SPEAKING IN A SINCERELY PASSIONATE WAY) *"So, as you can see, the Roman Empire fell, not only because of invaders from without, but because of moral corruption within. If you hear nothing else today, please, please hear this. Santayana said, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." If we fail to learn from the Romans, our country could crumble as well. Can't you see..."*

STUDENT #1: (BREAKING INTO THE MIDDLE OF THE TEACHER'S SENTENCE) *Do we have to write this down?*

STUDENT #2: Yea, is this going to be on a test or something?

STUDENT #3: (Pointing to his watch) Didn't you say we were going to take a break about now?

STUDENT #4: Excuse me! Emergency! I was just doing my fingernails and broke my file. May I run to my locker and get a spare?

AS THE TEACHER THROWS UP HER HANDS IN DESPAIR AND PUTS HER HEAD DOWN ON

HER DESK, A NARRATOR COMES OUT TO READ A SCRIPTURE:

And Solomon wrote, “Do not speak to a fool, for he will scorn the wisdom of your words.” (Prov. 23:9)

(applause please)

Some of you are probably thinking, “Déjà vu! That’s the attitude I see every day in school.” In your school, out of a class of 30 students, how many do you think are hot after wisdom? (Get answers from several people.) But God doesn’t want us to float downstream with the crowd. Here He wants us to swim against the flow. Look up Prov. 18:15, and see how Solomon put it.

“Knowledge” here is a general term, which can refer to 1) knowledge of a personal, experimental nature, 2) technical knowledge or ability (like builders of the temple), 3) discernment, 4) moral cognition, or 5) contemplative perception. (TWOT)

“The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge;

the ears of the wise seek it out.” (cr. Prov. 1:5; 2:1-5; 4:5,7; 8:34; 10:23; 1:5; 10:14; 15:14; 18:15)

So, according to Solomon, what does a wise man do? (Acquires or seeks out knowledge.)

Today we will look at different ways to live out

this passage, and illustrate each with some wise guys who took this principle and ran with it.

SCRIPTURE SEARCH: I’m handing out some verses for you to read out loud. (Only the main verse beside each point. *Not* the verses following the “cr.” As each of you read your verse, others of you tell me in your own words what the verse says about how to acquire knowledge. Now, who’s willing to write each way of seeking knowledge on the blackboard (or overhead, or poster paper) for us as people call it out? (A few of these verses will be review. Most will be new.)

Ways to Get It

1. **Pay Attention/Listen (Prov. 7:24)** (cr. 12:15; 13:1; 4:1,10,20,21; 7:24;8:32,34; 19:20; 22:17; 23:12,19,22; 5:1,7; 25:12; 18:2; Jms. 1:7)

“Now then, my sons, listen to me; pay attention to what I say.”

ILLUSTRATION: CBS used to run dozens of late night news specials a year, but since **Ted Koppel** began hosting Nightline, they knew they’d be crazy to try to compete. Some regard him as the smartest man on television, and his skills as host bring him well over \$1,000,000 per year. So what makes him such a great host?

How can he keep coming up with the perfect questions and leads to pull the best material from his guests? According to Koppel, “I listen. Most people don’t. Something interesting comes along and - whoosh! - it goes right past them.” But listening didn’t just come naturally to Koppel. He says that he sharpened this skill while travelling with Secretary of State Henry Kissinger as reporter for ABC news. (Newsweek article)

Prov. 7:24 “Listen”/“Pay attention” – Translations of two Hebrew words which are practically synonymous. The basic meaning is “to hear,” but can also include paying close attention and obeying. (Strong, Gesenius, TWOT)

Koppel's attention to listening has

helped net him \$1,000,000 per year. It's hard to find good listeners these days. But if you want to aspire to be a wisdom seeker, you've got to learn.

Got any ideas as to how we can sharpen our listening skills? (Ideas: Make eye contact, get rid of distractions, summarize the main points in your mind, take notes, get enough sleep.)

2. **Gather it (Proverbs 18:15)** (Cr. Prov. 4:5-8; 7:1-4; 8:10,11,17,34; 10:14,23; 15:14; 18:2; 22:17; 23:23; Ecc. 12:9)

***“The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge;
the ears of the wise seek it out.”***

- a. By Getting Good Advice (Pr. 15:22)** (cr. Prov. 27:17; 11:14; 12:15; 20:18)

“Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.”

We've already talked about this one over the last couple of weeks. What advice stands out to you that you got from either last week's panel, or those you have talked to personally?

b. By Asking Questions

ILLUSTRATION: As a child, **Steven Spielberg** had an aunt who babysat him. Listen to her observations:

“From the time he was able to open his mouth his first word, I think, was ‘Why?’ You just had to answer every question, and then there would be more. Most of what I remember is Steve’s curiosity and inquirious (sic) nature. He was just curiouser and curiouser....” (Spielberg, p. 37,40)

ILLUSTRATION: As a schoolboy, **Albert Einstein’s** science teacher was infuriated that he kept asking questions that they couldn't answer. Although the teacher couldn't expel Albert for asking questions, he told him that the teachers preferred that he leave the school. (Albert Einstein: Young Thinker, pp. 131ff.)

Do you think Einstein's and Spielberg's curious nature and innumerable questions had anything to do with their ultimate success? In what way?

c. By Experimenting

Sometimes, the best way to learn is by experimenting, or learning by trying to do something.

ILLUSTRATION: I heard of three missionaries who lit upon a scheme save more time for language study. They'd let only one go to the market to buy food so that the other two could spend the time studying their language books. But do you know which one ended up learning the language better? The one who went to the market. Why? Because he got to experiment with using the language with the native speakers.

And it's not just languages that come better by experimenting. If you want to learn how to cook, get a recipe and then try it out. Experiment to see if you can make it better. A big part of learning computer

programs is to get on a computer and fool around with programs.

ILLUSTRATION: *When people look at some of the movies that Spielberg made while he was in high school they are amazed at how he could make such realistic scenes with an infinitesimal budget. He didn't learn most of it by reading books. He just thought up stuff and experimented. No fader? No problem. He just blew smoke in front of the camera.*

- d. **By thinking (II Tim. 2:7a)** (cr. Ps. 1:2, Josh. 1:8; Ps. 119:15,23,48,78,148; Pr. 14:8,15,16; 17:10; 22:17; Ecc. 12:9)

“Reflect on what I am saying....”

Does anyone know the motto of IBM? “THINK”

ILLUSTRATION: *Bill Gates' mother says that, as a child, he was never ready to leave when they needed to go somewhere. She'd call and ask, “What are you doing?” to which he'd reply, “I'm thinking. I'm thinking.” (Gates, p. 16)*

“Reflect on” = “to perceive with the mind, to understand, think upon, ponder, consider.” (Wuest) Lenski brings out the present tense of the verb – “be applying your mind.” “...one must pause and think to apprehend it all.” (Lenski)

Some people are great at taking notes or memorizing facts, but horrible at understanding the facts.

ILLUSTRATION: *Shortly after the Civil war, Thomas Edison worked as a telegraph operator in Cincinnati. Before the telephone, telegraph operators would send messages via dots and dashes, which an operator on the other end of the line would translate back into words. One day Edison looked outside to see an immense crowd gathering outside the newspaper office. A messenger soon appeared, shouting, “Lincoln's shot!” The crowd wanted the details. But to everyone's surprise, all the operators claimed they had not received the message. But after their boss demanded that the operators look through their transcripts, an embarrassed operator held up the account. Incredibly, the operator had translated the account so mechanically, that he had no idea of the significance of what he was writing. Makes you want to knock on the guy's head and say, “Hello! Is anybody home in there?” (Boys' Life of Edison, p. 53)*

Since much of school work is simply rote memory, it's easy to fall into simply taking notes and memorizing without thinking. In fact, I've heard Howard Hendricks define today's education as “transferring a set of notes from the teacher to the student, without going through the mind of either.”

ACTIVITY: Each year, for a period of time, inventor Thomas Edison would take in a couple of the most brilliant graduates of one of America's top schools, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Once he handed the new arrivals a light bulb (Hold up one before the group.) and asked them to figure how much water, by weight, it would take to fill it. Now give me some ideas. How would you solve this complex mathematical problem? (Let some answer.) At the end of the day, each came back with a different way of mathematically calculating the problem, and each had a different answer. So Edison simply weighs the bulb, chips off a bit onto the scale, fills it with water, weighs it again and subtracts to find the difference. Then he said to the new recruits, “There's your answer. Now forget everything they taught you at MIT and get to the point.”

Some of us need to talk less and think more. How about you? Would this make a good action point?

e. Any which way you can (Prov. 18:15)

***“The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge;
the ears of the wise seek it out.”***

Now look closely at this verse. Reading is one of our best skills to acquire knowledge. But does the verse say “read all the time?” No. It simply says to acquire knowledge and seek it out. Even if you can’t read books, you can read people and learn how to relate to them. You can listen to audio tapes checked out of the library, or learn languages by listening to Bible cassettes in the other language. In other words, find out some ways you can learn, and start seeking.

IDEA: If this lesson runs into two weeks, consider bringing the REVIEW from the next lesson (the brief life of Edison) into the end of your second week of this lesson.

And don’t just stay with a few pet subjects. Like young Spielberg, become curiouser and curiouser about everything. Solomon’s wisdom extended to composing over 1000 songs, describing plant life, and teaching about animals. (I Kings 4:29-34) Do you ask questions when you work in the garden with your parents, or experiment to find the best ways to grow the plants?

ILLUSTRATION: *Bill Gates soaks up knowledge like a sponge soaks up water. For example, he read the entire World Book Encyclopedia, I mean all the way from A to Z. And I don’t mean as an adult. He did it as a nine- year-old! It wasn’t until the eighth grade that he met his first computer. But there wasn’t a class offered in computers. No matter. He read manuals and learned programming by doing it along with a few friends. One day sharp Senior at his school couldn’t get a program he had written to run, so the teacher directed him to a little blond kid who was so small that his feet dangled off the end of the chair. The 13-year-old, freckled-faced kid was named Gates, Bill Gates. He probably preferred his Cool Aid shaken, not stirred. Bill quickly solved the problem.*

Later, when the school arranged free computer time in exchange for testing a company’s computer, Bill and his friends were out there on Saturdays and some weekday afternoons. In fact, Bill was so hot after learning to program computers that he would often fake going to bed so that he could sneak out of his house and take a bus back to the computer. (pp. 16, 27,31)

When his high school administrators decided to schedule their classes by computer, they let Gates program the software. A side benefit was that he was able schedule his classes with all the best looking girls! Just another benefit of wisdom...

CONCLUSION

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION: We’ve said that thee are three kinds of learners in the world. 1) **Scoffers** who say “Just see if you can teach me something I don’t know.” 2) **Passive Listeners** who lay back and learn only what they need to pass a test. 3) Then there are those rare, **‘Edge of Your Seat’ Wisdom Seekers**, who sit, pen in hand, in hot pursuit of the jewels that most people miss. In small groups, brainstorm and list on a sheet of paper the habits that you think sets apart a wisdom seeker from the rest of the crowd. What’s different about her attitude in school or in church? How does she respond to homework? What are some things she does and doesn’t do with her free time?

Now, from your list, come up with a couple of attitudes or actions you want to make a part of your own life, and write them in your Action Points.

Sharpening Your Ax

Why use so many stories? Because Jesus, the Master Teacher, set the example by telling stories to make His points. When the complainers grumbled about Jesus eating with sinners, He could have shot back, “Hey, God loves sinners. Got a problem with that?” Case closed. But instead, He told three stories, one about a lost sheep, another about a lost coin, and a third about a lost son. (Lk. 15:1-31) Ever wonder why? Perhaps Jesus reasoned that a compelling story would stir the heart and stick in the mind much better than a simple statement. How about putting this principle to a test? A couple of times during the series, review past weeks by asking questions like, “What are some specific ways that Bill Gates sought wisdom? What about Steven Spielberg.” If you told the stories well, I bet you will be amazed at how much they have retained. Compare this to asking if they remember your outline from two weeks ago!

IN SEARCH OF WISDOM WEEK V

PURPOSE: BY THE END OF THIS LESSON, I WANT MY STUDENTS TO BE MOTIVATED TO SOAK UP KNOWLEDGE, AND KNOW SEVERAL WAYS TO DO IT.

NOTE TO TEACHERS: Although I don’t have any creative, small group activities for this session, I’ve included some discussion questions at the end of each point which should stir up some good ideas, interaction, and brain storming. Think through these questions well, and revise them with the background and needs of your own students in mind.

THE WISDOM CHALLENGE: It’s time to quote the verses from the past four weeks. (Let them quote to each other.) For next week, keep reviewing the old verses and add **Prov. 14:15**. Who has something interesting to share that you read in Proverbs last week?

INTRODUCTION

No matter how much of an air head some people think they are, they probably have no idea of the intellectual potential God has given them. Let’s put it this way...

ILLUSTRATION: *Within this building today we have some of by far the most advanced computers ever constructed. But I'm not talking about anything with a man-made Intel chip inside. I'm talking about the brain that God has given each of us. Even if you think your brain is the slowest in the group, I want you to follow me on this. Slowly look around the room (go ahead, look around) and realize how your brain is processing hundreds and thousands of bits of information at lightning-speed: colors, shapes, sizes,*

sounds, smells, sensations of hot, cold, anger, exhilaration. At the same time that you're observing all this, your brain tells your arm just how much muscle to exert so that the book you are holding doesn't either slip out of your hand or get tossed up into the air, and exactly how many breaths you need per minute to take in the optimum amount of oxygen. You don't have to concentrate on how many times per minute your eyes need to blink in order to keep it from drying out. Your brain does it automatically, at the same time that it's processing hundreds of other tasks. Now take a reflective look at the people sitting around you. If you go back at all with some of these, you can instantly recall memories of how that person dresses, places you have been with them, and your evaluation of what kind of person he or she is.

Incredible. Have you ever considered what an incredible gift God gave you when he constructed your brain?

*Your brain – yes, **your** brain - is made up of between 10 billion and 100 billion neurons which communicate with each other by almost instantaneous electrical and chemical messages. And although weighing in at only about 3 pounds, it has the capacity of storing more information than all the libraries in the world. ("The Brain," by Restak) Years ago some scientists estimated that to build a computer with the capabilities and circuitry of the human brain, they would need a building the size of the Pentagon to house it. (The Pentagon has five floors plus a basement, and covers 29 acres of ground.)*

Howard Hendricks once asked a brain surgeon if he had ever seen a brain that was maxed out. "Not even slightly used," the brilliant surgeon replied.

So even those of you who suspect your brain was picked up on special at Big Lots have an incredible capacity that you're probably scarcely using. But how you develop that brain will determine to a large extent how well you succeed in life. And again, I'm not just speaking about IQ or becoming an "A" student. Some people breeze through their school work, but bomb in their relationships. We want to grasp wisdom in all areas of life.

In this series, we're learning ways that God wants you to use your brain to achieve wisdom. Let's ask God for illumination.

PRAY

Last week we saw that to become wise, we must soak up knowledge like a sponge soaks up water. As Solomon put it, *"The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge; the ears of the wise seek it out."* (Prov. 18:15) And we discussed several ways to *get* it. I've listed them up here on the overhead (blackboard). But it's one thing to *get* knowledge, and often quite another to *keep* it. Let's go to God's Word to find some ways to retain what we learn.

B. Ways to Keep It (Prov. 3:1; cr. Pr. 2:1; 3:3; 3:18; 4:4,5,21; 6:21; 7:3; Ps. 119:11,16)

1. Collect It (Ecclesiastes 12:9; cr. 3:18,21; 4:4,13; Lk. 1:3)

"Not only was the Teacher wise, but also he imparted knowledge to the people. He pondered and searched out and set in order many proverbs."

Some people have poor memories, but compensate by figuring out a workable retrieval system, much like Solomon setting in order his collected wisdom in Proverbs.

ILLUSTRATION: *Steven Spielberg* couldn't act in his school plays, because, no matter how much he tried, he couldn't memorize the parts. But he kept up with his story ideas in a notebook, so that, for example, when he produced *E.T.*, he could pull from ideas had been written down years before.

ILLUSTRATION: *Mary Kay* has been called America's foremost woman entrepreneur, a super-success at selling beauty products. She has collected some of her best ideas by carrying a small tape recorder with her to record her thoughts as they come to her. (*Bottom Line*, p. 10, Dec. 15, '85)

ILLUSTRATION: *Star Wars* creator **George Lucas** knows how to collect wisdom. One day he was searching for a movie reel which was located in Row 2, section D-2. Can anyone guess what came to Lucas' mind? The assistant called out section R-2-D-2. Sounded like a catchy name, so Lucas wrote it down and later used it to name the short, spunky robot of *Star Wars*.

DISCUSSION: In our youth meetings, we're learning to collect wisdom through taking notes. Have any of you discovered a way to file away or keep these lessons? (Put in notebook, or file in a cabinet...) Do you have any ways that you collect ideas?

2. Remind Yourself of It (II Tim 2:14a, II Pet. 1:12,13; 3:1,2) (cr. Ex. 16:31ff.; II Pet. 1:12-15; 3:1,2)

“Keep reminding them of these things,....”

Some things are so important that you need a way to constantly remind yourself to think about it.

ILLUSTRATION: A minister of youth and his brother in Michigan searched for a way to remind the youth group to ask themselves, **“What Would Jesus Do?”** before they acted (taken from the novel, *In His Steps*.) They considered writing the phrase on a bracelet, but realized it contained too many letters to be practical. So, they shortened it to the initials, **WWJD**, and put them on a nylon wrist band. It made quite a hit, especially after CNN reported on the phenomenon, leading one company to sell 15 million of the nylon wrist bands in 1997 alone. But did it make a difference in people's lives? For many it was probably just a fad. But one 14-year-old student said that for him, “It helps me think before I do something stupid.” The bracelet served him as a great reminder.

ILLUSTRATION: **Benjamin Franklin**, because of the influence of a preacher, used to begin each morning by asking, “What good shall I do this day?” and concluded each evening, at ten o'clock, by asking, “What good have I done today?”

DISCUSSION: Some Christians put especially meaningful verses up in their bedroom, or on their mirror, so that they will see them every day. Have you or your parents found ways to keep important principles in front of you?

?

3. Memorize It (Mt. 4:1-11)

**“Jesus answered, it is written....” Jesus answered him, “It is also written....”
“Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written....”**

ILLUSTRATION: Some things are too important to simply keep on file or in a book. For example, when Satan tempted Jesus, our Lord wielded the Sword of the Spirit against him. After meeting each of Satan’s challenges with quotes from the powerful Word of God, Satan conceded defeat and took a hike. You see, being alone in the wilderness, Jesus couldn’t ask his parents for advice or run by the local synagogue to roll out a scroll. At some point in His life, He had stored away these verses in His mind and this victory was a big payoff. You see, a black belt in karate won’t intimidate a demon. Schwarzenegger might as well be built like Gumby or Pokey as far as the powers of darkness are concerned. Spiritual battles are won with spiritual weapons. But when some youth find themselves face to face with a demonic temptation, the only words they’ll have memorized will be from the latest Spice Girls’ CD.

DISCUSSION: Some of you have been memorizing Scripture for the past few weeks. Do any of you have some memory tricks that help you memorize more effectively?

Here are some techniques you can use in school or anywhere: 1) **Listen and read attentively.** Make sure you hear it in the first place. Cut out all distractions. 2) **Relate the unfamiliar with the familiar** 3) **make interesting pictures or stories** 4) **make up acrostics for lists.** 5) **Make up a song** 6) **Start early in the week so you can review regularly.**

And by the way, has it occurred to you that if you continue memorizing merely a verse per week, that’s 56 verses per year, 560 in 10 years, and an astounding 2800 verses in 50 years? All that wisdom, just from a verse a week.

REVIEW

Now that we’ve got all these ways to grow in knowledge (from last week and this week) on the board in front of us, let’s practice what we learned in II Tim. 2:14 and remind ourselves of what we’ve learned. We’ll do it this way. I’m gonna tell you the story of a fascinating guy who lived out this “sponge up knowledge” principle. But as I talk, keep your eye on these principles and raise your hand to stop me when you see one of the principles in action.

Thomas Edison was probably the greatest inventor who ever lived. You may only know him as inventor of the light bulb, but he also invented the phonograph, mimeograph machine, and paraffin paper for wrapping candies. He also perfected or made usable such inventions as motion pictures, the telephone, the electric train, and the electric generator. But that’s just 8 of an astounding 1,093 inventions he patented during his lifetime. Astonishingly, he averaged inventing something every 10 to 12 days of his adult life! (Uncommon Friends, p. 19)

A Harvard grad, right? Wrong. During his **3 months** of school, 7-year-old Edison exasperated his teacher with his incessant questions. In his teacher’s mind, an ideal student sat quietly and mindlessly memorized his lectures. Edison was about last in his class, and his teacher told the school supervisor that Edison was addled. Overhearing the comment, he ran home and told his mom, who, enraged, promptly pulled him out of the school, taught him how to read, and allowed him to ask his questions and explore on his own.

He had already begun to experiment by the age of 6, when he watched a goose sitting on her eggs and saw them hatch. Soon, he disappeared, and his frantic parents found him sitting in a hand-made nest filled with eggs, trying to hatch them. And he never stopped experimenting. He would ask, “What makes birds fly?” “Why does water put out a fire?” When no one could answer his questions, he experimented, sometimes getting into trouble. Upon learning that gas-filled balloons would float, he persuaded a friend that he could fly if he took a triple dose of Seidlitz powders, thus filling his stomach with gas. The unfortunate boy may have felt like he was floating, but his body stayed securely laid out on the ground, until his pain eased up.

His dad encouraged his reading by paying him for each book he mastered. At 9 years he read a Chemistry book that fascinated him. He tried every experiment himself, and eventually collected over 100 bottles of chemicals for his experiments, labeling them “Poison” to keep people out, so that he could continue to experiment.

By 12 years of age he had read books like Gibbon’s Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. I suppose his mom stopped teaching him around that time, since he took a job selling newspapers and snacks on a train. The daily 6 hour layover in Detroit gave him time to read voraciously at the library, where he set out to read the entire library, subject by subject. (There’s an old saying that goes, “Good things come to them that wait.” But Edison would later say, “Good things come to those who hustle while they wait.”) With his earnings, he bought apparatus for his experiments, and set them up in a baggage car so he could experiment on board. This worked out fine until a bump in the rail caused a stick of phosphorus to fall to the floor, burst into flames, and set the baggage car on fire. The conductor threw him and his chemicals off the train.

So Edison learned a new trade as a telegraph operator. But he wasn’t content to simply transcribe messages. He studied the principles by which electricity made telegraphy possible, and constantly experimented to make the telegraph work better. He loved learning. Often, he would play jokes on his fellow-operators, like the time he ran a small voltage of electricity through the wash-water of the men’s bathroom. He cut a hole into the ceiling so that he could watch the fun. You see, back then, people weren’t used to being around electricity. A man would touch the water, receive a shock, and then join the crowd around the water to marvel at the astounding quality of the water. On another occasion, when roaches and rats infested the telegraph office, he connected two metal plates to a battery, insulating them from one another, and placed them to where any unfortunate varmint that stepped on both plates at once would complete the circuit and immediately go to meet its Maker.

At 22 years, he walked into New York City broke and hungry, waiting for a telegraph job to open up. But in that same year he went from rags to riches when someone bought his patents for improvements on the stock ticker for \$40,000.00. He spent the money setting up a shop with apparatus to continue his inventions, and the rest is history.

Contrary to some people’s idea of Edison’s inventions, he wasn’t just a patient tinkerer who eventually got lucky. He would thoroughly study the principles behind an invention, and the work that had been previously done, before choosing his course. Then, he would perform ceaseless experiments. For example, in inventing a filament for the incandescent bulb, he tested over 6,000 species of plants before he found one that would last long enough. After

9,000 failed experiments on the storage battery, such as we now use in cars, someone expressed their regrets at his having no results. “Results!” Edison replied, “Why, man, I have gotten a lot of results! I have found several thousand things that won't work.” (p. 221) It would take more than 10,000 experiments before he achieved his first positive result, and 40,000 more, working day and night for several years, to perfect it. Now you can see why Edison replied, when his work was attributed to genius, “Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration.”

Edison also put his remarkable memory to good use. At one time, he did a thorough inspection of his cement mill, without taking any notes. After taking a train home, he spent the night and next morning writing down a list of about 600 specific items, from memory. (pp. 192,193) Don't you just hate someone who can do that? But he didn't always trust his memory. He kept carefully written records of experiments, numbered in consecutive order from 1 to 10,000, before starting over with a new series.

But Edison not only spent time studying and experimenting. He spent time thinking. Once, one of his engineers submitted three possible designs of a machine, which I believe was to be used for his cement plant. When the designs were rejected, the engineer remarked to Edison that it was a shame, since these were the only three possible ways of solving the problem. Edison said nothing, but returned two days later, laying his own 48 sketches on desk, again without a word. One of the 48 ideas was implemented.

In his latter years, Edison was known to go fishing near his Florida residence, but without any bait on his line. You see, he wasn't out to catch fish. He just wanted undisturbed think time. In that area of the country, it was considered rude to disturb a man while he was fishing. In this way, neither man nor fish bothered him. Edison said that there was no limit to how far most men would go to avoid the real labor of thinking. (Uncommon Friends, p. 18)

A new invention every 10 to 12 days. Can you imagine? So what was his secret? According to Edison, “Hard work, based on hard thinking.”

(Facts taken from The Boys' Life of Edison, 1911, Harper and Brothers, USP, William M. Meadowcroft and Charles Henry Meadowcroft. Uncommon Friends, by James Newson, 1987, Harcourt Brace Janovich, Publishers, Orlando, Florida. Also, World Book Encyclopedia.)

CONCLUSION

As Solomon told us, "The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge; the ears of the wise seek it out." Several weeks ago, we saw the rewards that knowledge and wisdom bring. It's not just for whiz kids. It's not just for those in the best schools. God wants us all to be wise. But the choice is up to us. What will it be, a life of foolishness and regrets, or a life of wisdom and rewards? Let's ask God for the motivation to stand against the crowd, and become sponges for wisdom and knowledge. Let's take a moment to silently ask God for the power we need to become a wisdom seeker.

PRAY

IN SEARCH OF WISDOM WEEK VI

PURPOSE: BY THE END OF THIS LESSON, I WANT MY STUDENTS TO LEARN DISCERNMENT SKILLS.

PREPARATION: Toward the beginning of your preparation week, call some of your students and ask them to bring in (along with yourself) magazine advertisements (or video clips of commercials, or written summaries of radio or TV commercials) that project subtle lies about products. Examples: 1) cigarette ads projecting manliness, 2) a beer commercial suggesting that drinking their beer attracts girls, or 3) a product bringing friends, good times and happiness. Bring some of your own as well.

THE WISDOM CHALLENGE: It's time to quote this week's verse and a few past ones. (Let them quote to each other.) For next week, keep reviewing the old verses and add **Ps. 119:98-100**. Who has something interesting to share that you read in Proverbs last week? People's memories work in different ways. What memory techniques are working for some of you that you would recommend others try?

INTRODUCTION

ACTIVITY: To begin this lesson we need to tell some "Dumb Blonde" jokes or "Rival University" jokes. I'll start with a couple to get the ball rolling. ...

So, why the jokes? This series is designed to cure us of whatever problem these unfortunate fools have. "But," you might object. "Nobody could be as dumb as the people in those jokes." Oh really? People make decisions like that every day. And some of them are respected experts in their fields. Had you lived in a previous generation, here are some items that you might have believed, had you trusted in the authorities of the time. (You may want to put these on an overhead for more impact. Uncover one at a time.)

- The widely read *Popular Mechanics* magazine accurately predicted in 1949: "**Computers in the future may weigh no more than 1.5 tons.**" Right, *Popular Mechanics*. I think laptops have come in slightly under the 1.5 ton figure.
- In 1957, the editor in charge of business books for Prentice Hall publishers said, "**I have traveled the length and breadth of this country and talked with the best people, and I can assure you that data processing is a fad that won't last out the year.**" Can you say, "computer revolution?"
- If you lived in 1957 and wanted an expert's opinion on cigarettes, why not trust Dr. Ian MacDonald, a member of the highly distinguished California Cancer Commission, who was quoted by *US News and World Report* as saying, "**A pack a day keeps lung cancer away.**" (p. 101, *The Complete Guide To Alternative Cancer Therapies*.)
- In 1899, the commissioner of the U.S. Office of Patents proposed closing the agency because, in his own words, "**Everything that can be invented has been invented.**"

- And what about early thoughts about the usefulness of airplanes? Marechal Ferdinand Foch, professor of strategy at Ecole Superieure de Guerre, flatly stated, "**Airplanes are interesting toys but of no military value.**"
- And don't leave it to the experts to decide which movies will fly. Successful actor Gary Cooper turned down the leading role in "Gone With The Wind," one of the most popular movies of all time. He confidently stated, "**I'm just glad it'll be Clark Gable who's falling on his face and not Gary Cooper.**"
- In 1946 Darryl F. Zanuck, then head of 20th Century-Fox Studios, said that the **television "won't be able to hold onto any market it captures after the first six months. People will soon get tired of staring at a plywood box every night."**
- Decca Recording Co. ought to have a pretty good handle on what groups are destined for greatness. But when they heard one group of guys perform, they responded, "**We don't like their sound, and guitar music is on the way out.**" They'd later regret the decision. They had just turned down "The Beatles."

(For over 300 pages of such "expert advise," see *The Experts Speak: The Definitive Compendium of Authoritative Misinformation*, by Christopher Cerf and Victor Navasky, 1984.)

And if these experts of the past were so far off base, what does that say about our present experts? (They are fallible too.) And fifty years from now, some of you could write a book about the idiotic predictions and ideas that today's brightest leaders are promoting. So how can we keep from falling for today's lies and blunders? We have to...

VII. LEARN TO DISCERN TRUTH FROM ERROR

Let's all quote together our memory verse one more time:

***"A simple man believes anything,
but a prudent man gives thought to his steps."(Prov. 14:15)***

So, the simple person hears an advertisement stating, "Two out of every three dentists recommend (choose a brand) toothpaste" and never stops to ask, "Now I wonder how many dentists were surveyed? Could it have been only three, and two of those worked for that toothpaste company?"

You see, people can twist surveys and scientific studies to make them fit whatever they are pushing. That's why the wise man sifts everything he hears through his questioning mind before he accepts it.

So how can we learn to discern truth from error and keep from being taken in by the million dollar advertisements that bombard us every day? Let's get some ideas from an activity:

ACTIVITY: "Liar, Liar." In the movie by the same name, Jim Carey played a compulsive liar who experienced a magical day where he could only speak the truth. In this activity, I'll confront you with scams and half truths, but give you the opportunity to ask questions which I have to answer honestly. This will give us an opportunity to take Solomon's challenge to not believe everything we hear. Listen carefully to each scenario, and ask me the hard questions to bring out the truth.

SCENARIO #1: The Metric Hoax

A few years ago a 9th grade science teacher in Toledo, Ohio told his students that the USA was switching to a metric time system. Students could send their watches and calendars to the state capital to be converted.

Clocks would have 10 hours of 100 minutes. Each year would have 10 months. July and August would be dropped and students with birthdays then would have them cancelled, reducing the summer vacation to 20 days. (From newspaper source)

Now, imagine that you're in the class. What questions could you ask to see if the teacher is shooting straight with you? (If they fail to think of these questions, mention: Where can I read more on this? What is the name of the government agency? Hey, if each day had 10 hours of 100 minutes each, then each day would have 1,000 minutes instead of $60 \times 24 = 1440$ minutes. After a few days, we would be going to school at night instead of during the day!)

Interested in how the actual class responded? The teacher just wanted to teach his students to think for themselves. So mid week, the teacher admitted that he was fibbing. But not before some parents had called in to ask when the metric time would begin! Not even one student objected or asked questions. No one sat down with a pencil and figured out that it couldn't work.

SCENARIO #2: "The Advertiser"

A salesman at the market tries to sell you some fruit juice with the following sales pitch: "Juicy Juice contains 100% fruit juice, has no artificial sweeteners, and was recently voted the number one fruit juice for nutrition and taste by three out of four students and nutritionists." If he would give you straight answers, what questions could you ask? (If they fail to come up with these, mention them: 1 – By "contains 100% natural fruit juice," do you actually mean that "contained in your drink is a small portion of 100% fruit juice?" [yes] How much of the total product is really fruit juice? [10%] 2 – You said it has no artificial sweeteners, but does it contain other artificial substances? [Yes. Artificial colors and preservatives.] 3 – How many people were surveyed? [4 people] 4 – Did they have any connection with the juice company? [Three of them were employees.] 5 - Why did the fourth person vote against the product? [He was an unbiased nutritionist who said that Juicy Juice contained so much sugar in it that it should be banned to the candy section of the store.]

SCENARIOS #3, #4, ...

Now let's put our critical minds to work on the commercials and ads that usually bombard us so fast that we don't have time to think about them. (Use the ads that were brought in for this section. Let them give their general evaluation as to the appeal of each ad. You may want to follow with questions like: "What does the ad use to grab your attention? Sex? Beauty? Music?" Does it appeal to your reason? [Such as, quoting facts and studies.] If so, what questions would you like to ask about the facts? Is the appeal based on something that has nothing to do with the product [girls will like you, life will be fun, your worries will be over, etc.]

CONCLUSION

So, while simple people believe everything they hear, the wise sift what they hear through their critical minds. But often, even our best reasoning isn't enough.

ILLUSTRATION: *I hear experts train bankers to detect counterfeit money by thoroughly acquainting them with the real money. They master what authentic money feels like, how the fine detail looks, etc. Because the more they know the look and feel of the real thing, the more likely they are to spot a forgery when it comes along. So, the best way to spot lies and inaccuracies is to familiarize ourselves with the truth. And the best place to find it, in its most undiluted form, is in God's holy Word.*

But we'll tackle this theme next week. For now, consider two action points:

- 1) Continue with "The Wisdom Challenge." This familiarizes you with the real thing.
- 2) This week, think critically about the TV commercials, billboards, and magazine ads you see. For let's say the verse together: *"A simple man believes anything, but a prudent man gives thought to his steps."(Prov. 14:15)*

PRAY

IN SEARCH OF WISDOM WEEK VII

PURPOSE: By the end of this session, I want my students to seek wisdom by immersing themselves in God's Word, and asking Him for wisdom.

THE WISDOM CHALLENGE: It's time to quote the verses from the past few weeks. (Let them quote to each other.) For next week, keep reviewing the old verses and add **James 1:5**. Who has something interesting to share that you read in Proverbs last week?

INTRODUCTION

In case you haven't noticed, we're growing up in the middle of a knowledge revolution. More information has been produced in the past 30 years than in the previous 5000. Now the amount of information available in the world's libraries and computers doubles every 5 to 8 years. (*Reader's Digest*, July '85, and Michael J. McCarthy, *Mastering the Information Age*, from tape series) Yet, in the midst of the knowledge revolution, we seem to have a wisdom deficit. It's like people can't distinguish the truth from the lies, the wacky from the wise. For example,

ILLUSTRATION: In March, 1997, 39 people committed mass suicide. They were all members of a New Age cult called "Heaven's Gate," which taught that people could rise to a "Level Beyond Human" by riding a spaceship into the heavens. "What a senseless tragedy?" most people would say. "If only they had been educated enough to know better." But that's the catch. Some of them were educated. LaDonna was a successful 37-year-old computer programming whiz and

outstanding violinist. Margaret was so brilliant that she graduated from the University of California at Berkeley in three years with a triple major in math, German and computer science. (USA TODAY, March 31, 1997, p. 2A)

As we said last week, sometimes it's not enough to be smart and educated. Who remembers what we said about how bankers are trained to spot counterfeit money? If these people had known God's truth, they could have spotted the lie. If you aren't grounded in God's Word, your boat's adrift without a sail, and you could end up anywhere. That's why we're discussing where God fits into our search for wisdom.

VIII. IMMERSE YOURSELF IN GOD'S WORD

Let's turn to 119:98-100, your memory verse from last week, and look at it more closely.

*"Your commands make me wiser than my enemies,
for they are ever with me.
I have more insight than all my teachers,
for I meditate on your statutes.
I have more understanding than the elders,
for I obey your precepts." (Ps. 119:98-100 cr. II Tim. 3:16, Deut. 4:6,7)*

INTERACTION: What are the three things the Psalmist does with God's Word? (keeps it with him, meditates on it, obeys it) So, this guy didn't put his Bible down after church and pick it back up the next Sunday before church. He lived with that book, read it, meditated on its truth, and obeyed it. That takes some time. Do you think it's worth the effort? According to these verses, what was the payoff for him? (He became wiser than his enemies, gained more insight than his teachers, and acquired more understanding than the elders.) Do you want that kind of wisdom? You've got to take this book seriously.

ILLUSTRATION: *U.S. president Bill Clinton had enough political wisdom to attain the **most powerful office in the world**. But his lack of biblical wisdom and obedience led him, following his moral failure, to become perhaps **the most embarrassed person in the world**.*

Lots of people would be satisfied with having the wisdom to master soccer like Ronaldo, or theoretical physics like Einstein. And sure, the benefits in this life are enormous. But if these guys fail to prioritize God's Word, they will be clueless about life's most important issues, like "Why am I here?" and "Where am I going?" "What's important and what's trivial?" "What can I do now to ensure not only a good *temporal* life, but a good *eternal* life?"

Preparation: To ensure that you get some response, call some of your stronger youth at the beginning of the week and let them know you will be asking these two questions, so that they will have some time to prepare some ideas. By letting youth share, you build their confidence, allow them to develop their gifts, plus motivate weaker students by letting them know that some of their fellow students are into Jesus.

DISCUSSION: During this series we've been trying to start the habit of daily Bible reading and meditation. If you take nothing else out of this series except for this invaluable habit, you will go far. So let's get practical. How can we get motivated to spend regular time in God's Word? And how can we get the most out of it? I know that some of you have made a habit of spending personal time in God's Word for some time now. So help me out here.

- Could some of you share with us the **benefits** you've received from personal Bible study? (Whatever they don't share, you as leader can mention afterwards: e.g. direction for life, makes the day go better, keeps problems in perspective, helps me to know God, teaches me how to live life, etc.)
- Next, let's hear some **hints** that have made personal Bible study easier for you? (If they miss, you could add: use a readable version, have a plan (not just open Bible), don't begin in Genesis, try to come out with a thought for the day, sometimes use a good devotional guide

[suggest one], have a regular time and place.)

So, do you want to be wiser than your enemies, have more insight than your teachers, more understanding than your elders? Do you want to not only know a trade, but to know God? To not only be able to get a job, but to get a life? Here's a great **action point** for some of you: Spend time in God's Word each day, so that you can learn His will, obey it, and continue your pursuit of wisdom.

IX. ASK GOD FOR WISDOM

But sometimes you can't get the wisdom you need from either books, wise counsel, or even the Bible. Here are a couple of examples:

ILLUSTRATION: *The missionaries to Africa knew that the political situation was heating up, but until now, all of them had chosen to remain in the troubled country to minister as long as they could. But today their prayers led them all to the same, distinct warning: "It's time to leave." Although located miles apart, they had all individually, without consulting one another, been similarly impressed by the Spirit to leave. They packed light, leaving most of their belongings behind, and headed to the airport. Their impressions were confirmed when they found that this departure would be the last chance to flee the country. (From chapel message at Columbia International University)*

ILLUSTRATION: *A young Malaysian Christian knew the dangers of being bold in his faith, but the news of Jesus was too good to keep to himself. He'd just trust God to care for him. One day, as he undertook a journey by bicycle, he felt distinctly impressed to change roads and take another route. He obeyed the Lord's prompting and didn't know until later that another person traveling by bicycle on the same day, traveled down the first road and was murdered. (Heard from the Malaysian Christian at Columbia International University)*

The wisest person in the world couldn't have foreseen the need for the African missionaries to depart at that specific time, or for the Malaysian Christian to take another path that day. And listen, no matter how clever you are, you can never know for sure what that cute girl or guy you like is going to be like 20 years from now. That's why we need direct access to God through prayer. Let's turn to James 1:5 and see how God put it...

"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him." (Jms. 1:5)

So God, whose mind contains all the wisdom there ever was and ever will be, tells us that we can come to Him when we need wisdom. Sometimes, He may tell us that we need to exercise the brains He gave us and do some seeking. But however he chooses to answer the prayer, He promises to answer. In the same way that a bank stores money for us and lets us draw from it with checks, so God stores a vast bank of wisdom for us, which we draw from with prayer checks.

ILLUSTRATION: Bill Gates' mind is so absorbed with the world of computers that he often overlooks the details of life, like his gas gauge and his wallet. In the middle of the night in the middle of winter, Gates ran out of gas on a freeway somewhere near Microsoft's headquarters. He coasted off the side of the road, walked back to a Ramada Inn and requested a room. But when they asked for his ID and a deposit, he couldn't find his wallet. And no matter how hard he tried to convince the desk clerk that he was Bill Gates, worked down the street at Microsoft, and that an assistant would pay in the morning, the skeptical clerk stood her ground. She had probably heard similar lines before. No money? No room. Probably some bum off the street. So that night, the leader of a company that would make around 100 million dollars that year, took a lonely walk to his office in the cold. (Gates, p.252,265) You see, it didn't matter how much money he had in the bank if he couldn't access it.

So God's telling us that we've got a wisdom account in heaven. But if we fail to access it with prayer, we might never get the wisdom we need.

ILLUSTRATION: Benjamin Franklin realized this. Reasoning that God must be the source of all wisdom, he made it a point to pray daily for God's wisdom. (Autobiog., p. 96)

ILLUSTRATION: And don't just pray for the big things. Have you seen the New Age bumper stickers that say, "Visualize World Peace." Well later I saw another one that said, "Forget World Peace. Visualize Using Your Turn Signal!" A good reminder that we need help, not just with big matters, but also with the daily, routine matters.

What about you? Is prayer becoming almost automatic, like breathing to you? Do you talk to Him as a friend, wherever you are, whatever you're doing? Do you pray for wisdom as you study, pray for the wisdom to mend family relationships, and the patience to endure an overactive brother or sister?

Note to Leaders: Most Christian groups do their group prayer the same way, year after year. But since the Bible never restricted us to those methods, I think it's valuable to expose our youth to many different ways of praying. Sometimes a fresh change can expand youth's ideas of prayer, and energize their personal prayer lives. I've found conversational prayer especially effective for extended group prayer, such as all night prayer meetings. **Cautions:**

1) This activity isn't appropriate for all groups. A spiritually lukewarm group would yawn through it. A group of non-Christians in an evangelistic meeting would be understandably clueless. But some groups will surprise you. Don't sin against the spiritually alive youth by exclusively appealing to the spiritually dead. **2) Don't force kids into praying or reading scripture out loud.** Some kids are extremely shy. Others are self-conscious of their reading or speaking ability. In fact speaking in public is listed by many as their worst fear. So do unto others as you would have them do unto you. If kids think they might be randomly called upon to read or speak aloud, some won't come back.

CONCLUDING ACTIVITY: "Conversational Prayer" is a way of making group prayer more natural, like a conversation. Maybe you've never prayed in a group before because you think you've got to say things a certain way, or use special language. But with conversational prayer, you just carry on a conversation the way you would with any small group of people. Here's how it's done:

- **When you pray, try to limit yourself to one subject.** Other people might want to pray about that thought as well. Think about it. In regular conversation, we don't spout off everything on our mind, and then let the other person take his turn. Instead, we talk about something, then let others interact about it if they want to.
- **You don't have to pray a long prayer.** As others pray, you'll think of something you want to add. Just add it into the conversation at that point.
- **Pray one at a time.** This way you can pray silently along with other's prayers, agreeing with them.
- **Don't think you have to use special Bible language.** Believe me, God can understand the way you speak.
- **Don't be afraid of silence.** I encourage you to all try to pray some out loud. But if you've got a shy group, some can pray silently while others pray out loud.

Let's spend some time in prayer, and I'll give you some topics to pray about as we go along. (Let them pray for one topic before giving them the next. A) Wisdom in family matters. B) Wisdom related to school. C) Wisdom concerning the future.)

CONCLUSION

Some of the people in the "Heaven's Gate" cult were smart and had a superior education. But all that learning wasn't enough to keep them from falling for a lie that ended in mass suicide. We can't neglect seeking God through His Word and through prayer. Only then can we become truly wise. Let's pray.

PRAYER

IN SEARCH OF WISDOM WEEK VIII

PURPOSE: BY THE END OF THIS SESSION, I WANT MY STUDENTS TO DEVELOP A RESPECT FOR GOD.

WISDOM CHALLENGE: It's time to quote the verses from the past six weeks. (Let them quote to each other.) For next week, keep reviewing the old verses and add **Ps. 111:10**. Who has something interesting to share that you read in Proverbs last week?

INTRODUCTION

Introductory Activity (#1-#7 were sent to me from an internet source): We're almost finished with our series on wisdom, so I thought we should have a test to see how much wisdom we've soaked up over the past weeks. I'll give you the questions one at a time on the overhead, and call on several of you to try to answer. (This should produce some tension in your students, until they see how stupid the questions are, which hopefully will result in a good time. To make it more fun, make sure to hoop and holler when they answer correctly.)

1. **Advanced Math:** Listen carefully. Paul has three apples. How many apples does Paul have?
2. **Ancient History:** Orally discuss the ancient Babylonian Empire with particular reference to architecture, literature, law and social conditions. Or, give the first name of George Bush. (George)
3. **Religion:** How many commandments were written on a stone for Moses?
4. **Social Studies:** What are the people of America's far north called? A) Westerners B) Southerners C) Northerners
5. **English Spelling:** Spell Bush, Carter and Clinton. (Have the names written on the overhead.)

Bush:
Carter:
Clinton:
6. **British History:** *Six kings of England have been called George, the last one being George the Sixth. Can you name the previous five?*
7. **Physics:** Can you explain Einstein's theory of relativity? A) yes B) no
8. **Practical:** Along the theme of "duh" questions, let me ask one more. Both of the following men have died and are experiencing their eternal reward or punishment. Today, which would you rather be? **A) Howard Hughes**, whose business wisdom allowed him to become one of the wealthiest man of his day, but so thoroughly ignored God and His ways that anyone who got close to him learned to thoroughly despise him? Or, **B) John Wesley**, who gave away most of the money he didn't need to live on, and used his energy and wisdom to touch as many lives for Christ as he could in his generation?

You see, all these are “duh” questions. The answers are obvious. But the way people live, we can tell that many are missing the last question. Yet it’s the most important. That’s why our next signpost on the road to wisdom is so important that God places it first.

Let’s pray before we begin...

PRAYER

Now turn to Psalm 111:10 to find the next signpost.

IX. GIVE HIM SOME RESPECT

**"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
all who follow his precepts have good understanding.
To him belongs eternal praise." (Ps. 111:10, cr. Pr.
1:7; 9:10)**

ILLUSTRATION: *“The beginning of wisdom.” Has it ever occurred to you that when you’re taking a trip, the first turn is probably the most important? If you take a wrong turn once you get close to your destination, you can simply turn back around and you’re still close. But if you begin on a main road going North instead of South, you can end up in the wrong country quick. So when God speaks of “the beginning of wisdom,” He seems to be saying, “If you miss everything else about wisdom, don’t miss this. Here is where you start.”*

Ps. 111:10 – When “fear” is used in reference to God, the emphasis is on awe or reverence. (TWOT) Leupold sees “the beginning” as meaning “the chief thing,” “the essence,” “the foundation,” “the zenith” of wisdom.

So according to this verse, what is the beginning of wisdom? (“The fear of the LORD”) To fear means to be in awe of Him or have a reverence for Him. Why do you think that’s so important?

ILLUSTRATION: Comedian **Rodney Dangerfield** has built his comic image on the phrase, “I can’t get no respect.” But it seems to me that it’s God who gets no respect out of much of this

BRAINSTORM: *Let’s get into small groups and brainstorm two items: #1 – What are ways that people show disrespect for God? (They will hopefully come up with some like cursing in God’s name, not reading His Word, ignoring His commands, neglecting His church). #2 - Why should we respect God? (Hopefully, they’ll come up with ideas like: He’s big. He holds our eternity in His hands. He will judge us one day.)*

generation.

Now let’s look at Ecclesiastes 12:13,14, the conclusion of a book where the wisest man on earth has been reflecting on the meaning of life. Who will read it for us?

“Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter:

**Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.
For God will bring every deed into judgment,
including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.” (Cr. Pr. 3:7,8)**

I suppose the highest motive for serving God is out of love and gratefulness for all He has done for us. But if you're not close enough to God to serve him out of love and gratefulness, then fear is not a bad place to start.

Yet, many people picture God as a laid back old man in the sky, a celestial jolly good fellow with a long white beard who rocks back and forth in His rocking chair, chuckling to himself at our rebellion and sighing, “Well, boys will be boys.”

ILLUSTRATION: But hey, did you hear about the fellow and his wife who sold a personal belonging, kept part of the money for themselves, gave the rest to the church, but told the church that they were giving it all? Sounds like nothing more than a little fib to get people to like them more. But did you hear what happened to them? Soon after they told the fib, they both fell dead within three hours of each other. Have a hard time believing that story? It's in your Bibles in Acts chapter 5. The guy's name was Ananias and his wife, Sapphira. And verse 11 concludes the story with, **“Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.”**

And with good cause. You see, even though God doesn't strike down everyone who shakes his fist in His face, both Christians and non-Christians will reap what they sow in one way or another (Gal. 6:7). So we're crazy if we play around with God.

But people do it all the time. It's hard to imagine anything more foolish than cursing in God's name, or using His name lightly. It's the third of the Ten Commandments, right up there with killing, stealing, and adultery, important enough for God to write with His finger in stone: “You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses His name.” (Ex. 20:7) So why do it? It's not like it brings some great benefit that people can't stand to miss out on. Think about it. If you steal something you want, at least you get a short term thrill out of it before you're judged. But taking God's name in vain gets you nothing but judgment. So why do it? It's mind boggling that otherwise rational people, who would never ridicule “The Terminator” if he were in hearing distance, throw God's name around

Ecc. 12:13,14 – “**the whole duty of man**” is literally, “for this is the whole of the man.” The phrase is used elsewhere in Ecc. as an idiom for “every man.” (3:13; 5:9) (Eaton) Thus, others translate “the duty of all men,” or “because this applies to every person” (NASB) Keil interprets: “It is a great thought that is thereby expressed, viz., the reduction of the Israelitish law to its common human essence.”

“**every deed into judgment**” is taken by some to be our future judgment following death (so Eaton, Keil, TBC), but is also argued to refer to judgment in this life (BKC). However we take the meaning in this passage, both aspects of judgment are well attested throughout the Bible.

Acts 5:1-11 – In vs. 3, “**heart**” was understood to mean “the centre of life, corresponds most to our will or purpose.” (Rackham)

Ex. 20:7 – Could be either translated as taking His name “**in vain**,” referring to any “profane or idle utterance” or translated as “**swear falsely**.” (TBC) But even the commentators I read who take the latter translation think that it also prohibits the former. “To take the name of God in vain is to use it with any idle, frivolous, blasphemous or insincere intent.”

without the slightest thought of what they're saying. So let's wise up and show God some respect.

But take a second look at the Ecclesiastes passage. We don't fear and follow Him just because He might zap us. What did verse 13 say? ("**for this is the whole duty of man**") In other words, that's what we were put here to do.

ILLUSTRATION: *Have you ever finished an assigned project in Math class, only to look around and discover that everyone else is still working? You're thinking, "I never finish first." And as you casually glance at the nearby desktops, your worst fears are confirmed. Nobody else is working on the page you worked on. A sinking feeling overwhelms you as you realize that for entire class period, you've been working on the wrong page. How many have ever had this happen to you? Do you remember the feeling?*

Perhaps it's the same sinking feeling, only intensified many times, that many of the world's greatest successes will experience when they meet God on judgment day. At that time God will expose, not only what they've done, but also their motives. And many people will realize that for their entire lives, they knocked themselves out to complete the wrong page.

If Gates has Jesus in his heart, loves God's Word more than Microsoft Word, and leads the computer industry as a service to God to benefit mankind, his life makes sense in the light of eternity. But if he ignores God, pursuing knowledge and success for his own glory, then he is on the wrong page. As Jesus put it, he gained the world, but forfeited his soul. (Lk. 9:25) And on his last day on earth, he might hear a still, small voice telling him the words of Luke 12:20,21, "**You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself? This is how it will be for anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.**"

Lk. 12:20,21 – "**rich toward God**" could mean 1) "rich with treasure laid up with God" referring to spiritual riches (so EGT), or could refer to 2) using literal earthly riches to glorify God rather than glorify self.

IX. RECEIVE HIS SON

We began this lesson with a series of “duh” questions, those questions whose answers are obvious to any reasonable person. Jesus asked His own “duh” question in Mark 8:36: **“What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?”** Obviously, in the light of eternity, it’s no good at all. It’s a foolish tradeoff. Don’t get so caught up in girls, grades, money and success that you neglect your soul.

And besides, by trusting in Christ to save your soul, you get the ultimate in a wise Counselor to guide you here on earth – His Spirit to dwell inside. The apostle Paul clued the Colossians into where they could find all spiritual wisdom: **“...Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”** (Col. 2:3, cr. I Cor. 1:30,31) Some things in life you can never figure out with your own wisdom, even if you memorized the entire Encyclopedia Britannica. That’s why we need His Spirit to teach us. If you’ve got Jesus, you get to draw on His wisdom. But if you want His leading, you’ve got to first become His child and have His Spirit living within. (Rom. 8:9,14; Jn. 1:12; cr. I Cor. 1:26-2:16; Jn. 16:13; Lk. 12:11,12; Jms. 3:17)

CONCLUSION

Do you want the Spirit living within? Do you want to live for things that will last, and not end up facing God and realizing that for all your life you were on the wrong page? Then let’s get on the right page.

First, make sure you have trusted Christ for your salvation.

Getting saved means more than believing He exists. Demons are smart enough to believe that. And they also have enough sense to fear Him. (See James 2:9). But they’re not saved. You see, salvation doesn’t come until you move what you know about salvation that 10 inches from your head to your heart.

And don’t tell me all the religious stuff you’ve done. Bill Gates memorized the entire Sermon on the Mount when he was a child. That’s over 100 verses! But the Pharisees memorized many verses, and Jesus referred to them as “sons of hell.” The question Bill and you and everyone else will have to answer one day is, “What did you do with Jesus?” Did you receive him (Jn. 1:12) and trust Him for your salvation (Jn. 3:16), not depending on your own goodness to get you to heaven (Eph. 2:8,9)?

(Give them an opportunity to pray with you.)

Second, take God seriously. Sometimes even God’s children start taking Him lightly. Like Ananias and Sapphira, church becomes just another place to try to be cool. You ought to be serving God out of love and gratefulness for your salvation, but if you’re ignoring Him, you’d better give God some respect. Remember, “the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.” Don’t take Him lightly.

Col. 2:3 – Paul was concerned that the Colossians might fall into a false teaching that sought spiritual wisdom through philosophy, human traditions and the principles of the world (2:8;16-23). To correct this, he points them to Jesus, who has all the spiritual wisdom and knowledge there is. So why go anywhere else for spiritual wisdom? Thus this passage is speaking of obtaining spiritual wisdom, not the knowledge to pass a Biology test or the skill to play the trumpet.

Rom. 8:9 – **“If”** = “if, as is the fact” (EGT), “seeing that” or “since” (Cranfield). Not meant to express doubt.

Close in Prayer

Idea: Sing “Our God is an Awesome God,” or another song on this theme.

IN SEARCH OF WISDOM WEEK IX

PURPOSE: BY THE END OF THIS MESSAGE, I WANT MY STUDENTS TO AVOID THE DANGERS OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND PRIDE.

THE WISDOM CHALLENGE: It’s time to quote the verses from the past six weeks. (Let them quote to each other.) For next week, keep reviewing the old verses and add **Prov.3:5,6**. Who has something interesting to share that you read in Proverbs last week?

X. BEWARE OF WISDOM’S DANGERS

INTRODUCTION

*Tonight we complete our nine-week series on Wisdom. Looking back, we’ve seen that nothing that you could acquire in this world even compares with the value of wisdom. We’ve seen scripture after scripture where God has laid out for us the incredible value of wisdom, encouraged us to love wisdom, and challenged us to run after wisdom as hard as people pursue silver and gold. And we’ve seen in life after life how wisdom has changed ordinary people into extraordinary world changers. So some of us have become edge-of-your-seat learners, who are beginning to soak up knowledge like a sponge soaks up water. But if you’ve chosen the path of wisdom, **watch out**. You heard me right, “Watch out.” “But wait a minute.” you might argue, “How could I possibly go wrong seeking wisdom?” Tonight, I want to warn you about the dark side of wisdom, some pitfalls that lie close to the path of wisdom which claim many lives. As hard as it is to imagine, with all of Solomon’s great wisdom, he blew it in his latter days. I’m not sure why, but I’ve got a hunch. And you don’t want to take that same fall. So let’s pray.*

PRAYER

Some people seem to think that the sole answer to youth’s problems is: “Get a good education.” But education alone isn’t enough. Let me tell you about a guy named Ted.

ILLUSTRATION: *You’d think that **Ted** had a bright future. He was so brilliant that he was able to skip two grades, graduate from Harvard University (one of the top schools in the world), and win a prize for his doctoral thesis. So it was no surprise that he landed a job teaching math at prestigious Berkeley University. But before you take him on as a role model of wisdom seeking, hear out the rest of the story. He became famous in 1996, not as a Math whiz, but when detectives discovered that he had been mailing pipe bombs to people over a period of 18 years, wounding 23 people and killing three. His full name is Ted Kaczynski, the infamous “Unabomber.” (Newsweek, April 22, 1996, “Blood Brother,” by Evan Thomas, pp. 28ff.)*

The point? Knowledge isn't enough. You see, if you educate a thief, you get an educated thief. The uneducated thief picks pockets in town. The educated one swindles your money out of the bank by clever bookkeeping and computer tricks.

BRAINSTORM: We said that the search for wisdom has its dark side, its special temptations that trip people up. Think about it. What temptations do wise, knowledgeable people face more than others? (They may say pride, self-sufficiency, the tendency to look down on others, using knowledge to swindle or control others, etc. Try to get some discussion about each area they mention.)

Let's look at a couple of dangers that the Bible warns us about.

A. SELF-SUFFICIENCY

*"Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make your paths straight."
(Prov. 3:5,6; cr. 3:7,8)*

ILLUSTRATION: *Some people get so smart that they think they can figure out life on their own. They think they can lean on their own understanding. But genius Albert Einstein knew better. In a personal letter to Queen Elizabeth, he wrote that we have "just enough intelligence to be able to see clearly how utterly inadequate that intelligence is...." (Sept., 1932 letter, from Albert Einstein: The Human Side, ed. By Helen Dukas and Banesh Hoffman, Princeton Univ. Press, 1979)*

None of us can be wise enough to save him or herself. And I'd rather be a mental case with Jesus than a genius without God. Wouldn't you? Here's another pitfall to keep your eye out for.

Prov. 3:5,6 – "Heart"- In contemporary American culture, the heart symbolizes our emotions and feelings, as distinct from the mind. But in the ancient Hebrew culture, the heart more often represented the intellect and will, although the emotions are sometimes referred to. (BKC,WBC) Thus, WBC understands "*commit your inner self to God.*" Toy explains, "*with the whole conviction and force of the mind, absolutely.*" "**Lean**" = not "incline," but "support yourself" or "rely upon." (Kidner) "**Acknowledge**" = more than just realize He exists. Includes being aware of, having fellowship with, having a personal acquaintance with. (Kidner and Toy) "**Make your paths straight**" – Although the KJV translated "direct thy paths," the meaning seems to be broader. The same Hebrew word was used in Isa. 40:3 of clearing a highway in the desert. NBC interprets "make plain, clearing obstructions." In modern times, perhaps we'd say that He bulldozes the path before us.

DISCUSSION: What are some things that we could never figure out with our own wisdom? (Which girl would be best for me to marry? How can I get to heaven? How can I learn right from wrong?)

B. PRIDE

"Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know." (I C. 8:1,2; cr. Jer. 9:23,24; Pr. 18:2; I Cor. 13:1-3; Jms 3:7;

13-18)

Here's something that just might be worse than being a fool: attaining wisdom and getting puffed up about it. Don't you get disgusted when people feel they have to top everything you say? You probably know someone like this. You excitedly tell someone about your wonderful ski trip to the Tatras, and she says, "I thought the Tatra's were great till I skied the Swiss Alps." You say, "I finally passed that History exam!" And someone says, "Oh, that's nothing, I passed it with no problem the first time around." You say, "I met the lead singer of 'TEAM' in Bratislava last week!" And someone says, "That reminds me of the time I met Mick Jagger in Vienna." They are so hung up on topping everything you say that they can't just rejoice with you in what you accomplished.

ILLUSTRATION: *Wisdom seeking can become a pride trip, a competition. One student at Ohio State University was so brilliant that she set out to read every book in the school's enormous library. But competition and pride were two of her motivators. In order to top another guy's grade point average, she dated him and tried to keep him up late the night before important tests. (Fortunately, the story has a happy ending. As she was reading through the reference section of the library, she came to the Bibles, read one, and got saved!) (From a professor's personal testimony)*

Discussion: In order to keep from falling into pride, let's come up with some warning signs that can tip us off that we're falling into pride or self sufficiency. We'll do it by brainstorming how we spot these obnoxious qualities in others.

What are prideful and self-sufficient people like? (You might mention some of the following to get them started. Or mention some at the end that they missed.)

- *They refuse to take time to help a little brother with his homework, because their personal goals may suffer. (Do you do this?)*
- *They're constantly dropping big names of "important" people they've met. (What about you?)*
- *They constantly talk about themselves and their accomplishments.*
- *They have difficulty rejoicing with their brother's or sister's accomplishments, because it takes people's eyes of their accomplishments.*
- *When they ace a test, they leave it on top of their books so everyone will see it.*
- *They get mad because their coaches and friends don't seem to notice their great abilities.*

Here at the end, let's reflect on where this series started. When Solomon asked for wisdom (II Chron. 1:7-13), do you remember *why* he wanted it? (Wait for a response.) Not for his own glory or to win a historic run on a game show like Jeopardy, but in order that he could lead his people properly. Wisdom can't be some pride trip for us. Check your motives. Learn and grow wise so that you can better help others. If pride's a problem of yours, here is an antidote that might help.

An Antidote To Pride

While some fools are deceived into thinking they know everything, the truly wise realize how little they really know.

ILLUSTRATION: *Some of us think that Sir Isaac Newton was just a guy who sat under a tree one day, felt an apple fall on his head, and decided to name the force gravity. But he was so much more. He has been called "one of the greatest names in the history of human thought." Amazingly, he made major contributions to Mathematics, Physics, and Astronomy. This genius (and some of you will hate him for this) invented calculus, showed us how the universe is held together, and discovered the secrets of light and color. His book, Principia Mathematica, is considered one of the greatest single contributions in the history of science. Albert Einstein idolized him and said that his own work would have been impossible without Newton's discoveries.*

Now, if you had accomplished all that heady stuff, wouldn't it be pretty easy to get puffed up? But some of you may not know that Newton was also a devoted student of theology and the Bible. Perhaps because of this, rather than getting puffed up with pride, he saw his great intellectual accomplishments in perspective. This is what he said of himself shortly before his death:

"I do not know what I may appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me." (Isaac Newton, p. 308, World Book Encyclopedia, 1978)

It's hard to get proud when you realize that your greatest wisdom is foolishness to God. No matter how much wisdom you obtain here on earth, comparing it to God's infinite wisdom is like comparing the wisest chimpanzee on earth to Einstein.

You see, from eternity's perspective, your attitude is vital. I don't know what motivated Edison to labor day and night to invent over 1000 wonders. But let's imagine that he didn't do it out of love for people. What if he just did it all to make a name for himself? If so, then look at I Corinthians 13:1-3 to find what all his work is worth. (Nothing)

1 - If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

2 - If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

3 - If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

If pride was his motive, then as we put it yesterday, he was on the wrong page. And what about you? Does your fire for wisdom and improving yourself come from your need for attention and your hopes to become rich and famous? If so, you are on a pride trip. You are on the wrong page. But there's still time before the end of class to get back on the right page, and to ask God to strip away your pride and replace it with a heart of love. I'll give you a moment to express your heart to God.

Pray

CONCLUSION TO SERIES

Wisdom is for everyone, but only reveals itself, not to the casual seeker, but to the ones whose hearts burn with a desire to learn how to successfully live life. We are gold diggers, and there are veins of gold all around us.

Look around yourself at church. As familiar and normal as these faces seem, these people each contain a rich vein of gold, and if you add their lifespans together, might have 3,000 cumulative years of experience, which if any of you knew how to mine it, could become wise beyond anyone's imagination.

Look down at that book in your lap. It is a rich vein of gold, just waiting for you to take it seriously and begin digging out nuggets each morning or night.

Look up. With us today is a God, who is ready and willing to begin giving freely of His vast store of wisdom, for those who ask with a sincere heart. Happy Digging!!

I Cor. 13:1-3 – The Corinthians were fired up about spiritual gifts (14:12), but needed a motive check. Their object should have been, not spectacular manifestations of the Spirit, but the building up of others (14:26) out of love (ch. 13). **“Tongues”** = The gift of tongues (see chapters 12 and 14), although some would broaden it to include eloquent speech as well (so BKC). In what way does a **“resounding gong or a clanging cymbal”** resemble tongues without love? Commentators offer several opinions: 1) Both are “momentarily electrifying,” but short lived. (BKC) 2) Unhelpful or senseless. (NBC,EGT) 3) Disturbing or distracting (ICC,NBC) **“I am nothing”** = “an absolute zero” (Robertson)

In Search of Wisdom
Lesson I
Develop a Passion for Wisdom

Introduction

“A Hike, a Bottle, and a Genie”

I. GET FIRED UP

A. Solomon Lays Out a Challenge (Prov. 8:10,11)

B. God Lays Out the Benefits

Health and Long Life (Proverbs 4:22)

“A Pack a Day, or \$700,000.00?”

Authority (Prov. 17:2)

“Why Choose George Washington?”

Power (Prov. 21:22)

“How Washington Won”

Safety and Security (Prov. 1:33)

Hope (Prov. 24:14)

Happiness (Prov. 3:13)

The Favor of God (Prov. 8:35,36)

Riches, Honor and Long Life (Prov. 3:16)

“Wall Street Journal Reports On Christian Businesses”

C. Successful People Prove Its Worth

“Bill Gates Learns Computers”

“Benjamin Franklin Seeks Wisdom”

“Steven Spielberg Learns Filmmaking”

ACTION POINTS

The Wisdom Challenge:

1 – Read and Meditate on a Chapter of Proverbs Each Day.

2 – Memorize a Passage Each Week. For next week: Proverbs 8:10,11

*“Choose my instruction instead of silver,
knowledge rather than choice gold,
for wisdom is more precious than rubies,
and nothing you desire can compare with her.”*

In Search Of Wisdom (Week II)

The Wisdom Challenge: Proverbs 13:20

*“He who walks with the wise grows wise,
but a companion of fools suffers harm.”*

INTRODUCTION

“An Eccentric Uncle Leaves a Treasure Map”

I. DARE TO BE DIFFERENT

A. *By Watching Your Mental Diet (Prov. 15:14)*

“Something a Billionaire Wouldn’t Buy”

B. *By Using Your Time Wisely (Eph. 5:15,16)*

“Spielberg Get’s The Last Laugh”

“How Franklin Became Wise After Two Years Of School”

C. Surround Yourself With Wise People (Prov. 13:20)

“Bill Gates’ Seventh Grade Friends”

“Benjamin Franklin’s ‘Junto’ Club”

“Schwarzenegger’s High School Buddies”

“Spielberg’s Neighborhood Friends”

“Jabaar On Influence”

ACTION POINTS

In Search Of Wisdom
(Week III)

INTRODUCTION

“\$550.00 For Turning a Screw”

IV. GATHER WISE COUNSEL

A. What God Says (Prov. 19:20; 15:22)

“How Millionaires Did It”

B. How We Can Live It

- **Your Family**

“Michael Jordan Goes One On One With Big Brother”

- **Your Friends**

“Rodney Dangerfield Perfects His Humor”

- **Experts**

“Michael Jordan Wakes Up Early”

“Spielberg Assists and Asks Questions”

- **Your Church**

A. A Chance To Do It

ACTIVITY: “ Give Me Some Advice”

ACTION POINTS

Overhead

In Search Of Wisdom
(Week IV)

THE WISDOM CHALLENGE: Keep reading Proverbs. Memorize Proverbs 18:15:

“The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge; the ears of the wise seek it out.”

VI. SOAK UP KNOWLEDGE

Skit: “The Classroom”

A. Ways To Get It

1. Pay Attention/Listen (Prov. 7:24)

“Ted Coppel Learns To Listen”

2. Gather It (Prov. 18:15)

a. By Getting Good Advice (Prov. 15:22)

b. By Asking Questions

“Young Spielberg: Just Curiouser and Curiouser”

“Young Einstein: Why His Teachers Asked Him To Leave”

c. By Experimenting

“Who Learned The Language?”

“Spielberg Learns Directing”

d. By Thinking (II Tim. 2:7a)

“IBM’s Motto”

“Why Bill Gates Was Always Late”

“The Problem With Air Head Telegraph Operators”

ACTIVITY: Can You Outsmart The Technical Whiz Kids?

e. Any Which Way You Can (Prov. 18:15)

“Gates Sponges Up Knowledge”

ACTION POINTS

In Search Of Wisdom Week V

Overhead

THE WISDOM CHALLENGE: Keep reading Proverbs. Memorize Ecc. 12:9:

“Not only was the Teacher wise, but also he imparted knowledge to the people. He pondered and searched out and set in order many proverbs.”

VI. *Soak Up Knowledge (Last Week)*

A. *Ways To Get It (Last Week)*

B. *Ways To Keep It*

1. *Collect It (Ecc. 12:9)*

“Why Spielberg Can’t Act”

“Mary Kay Captures Her Ideas”

“George Lucas Names A Character”

2. *Remind Yourself Of It (II Tim. 2:14a)*

“What Would Jesus Do?”

“Ben Franklin Begins and Ends Each Day With This Thought”

3. *Memorize It (Mt. 4:1-11)*

“Jesus Wields His Sword”

REVIEW: HOW MANY WISDOM PRINCIPLES CAN YOU SPOT?

ACTION POINTS

In Search Of Wisdom

Week 6
(Overhead)

The Wisdom Challenge: Memorize Psalm 119:98-100.

*“Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me.
I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes.
I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts.”*

INTRODUCTION

“Got any ‘dumb blonde’ jokes?”

“The Experts Speak”

VII. LEARN TO DISCERN TRUTH FROM ERROR

ACTIVITY: “Liar, Liar”

SCENARIO #1: “The Metric Hoax”

Your questions:

SCENARIO #2: “The Advertiser”

“Juicy Juice contains 100% fruit juice, has no artificial sweeteners, and was recently voted the number one fruit juice for nutrition and taste by three out of four students and nutritionists.”

SCENARIOS #3,4... “Your Ads and Clips”

Your questions:

ACTION POINTS

**IN SEARCH OF WISDOM
WEEK VII
(Overhead)**

INTRODUCTION

“The Heaven’s Gate Tragedy”

VIII. Immerse Yourself In God’s Word (Psalm 119:98-100)

“From Most Powerful to Most Embarrassed”

- **Benefits Of Studying The Bible**

- **How To Get More Out Of The Bible**

IX. Ask God For Wisdom (James 1:5)

“Escaping In The Nick Of Time”

“Take A Different Route Today”

“You Must Access Your Account”

CONCLUSION

“Conversational Prayer”

Action Points:

In Search of Wisdom
Week VIII

(Overhead Sheet)

Wisdom Pop Test

1. **Advanced Math:** Paul has three apples. How many apples does Paul have?
2. **Ancient History:** Orally discuss the ancient Babylonian Empire with particular reference to architecture, literature, law and social conditions. Or, give the first name of George Bush. (Hint: George)
3. **Religion:** How many commandments were written on a stone for Moses? (Hint: It's more than 9 but less than 11)
4. **Social Studies:** What are the people of America's far north called? A) Westerners B) Southerners C) Northerners
5. **English Spelling:** Spell Bush, Carter and Clinton.
Bush:
Carter:
Clinton:
6. **British History:** Six kings of England have been called George, the last one being George the Sixth. Can you name the previous five?
7. **Physics:** Can you explain Einstein's theory of relativity? A) Yes B) No

IX. Give Him Some Respect (Ecclesiastes 12:13:14)

"The First Turn On A Trip"

"I Can't Get No Respect"

Brainstorm!

1. What are ways people show disrespect for God?
2. Why should we respect God?

"Their Last Fib"

"Working On The Wrong Page"

**In Search of Wisdom
Week VIII**

(Overhead Sheet)

X. Beware of Wisdom's Dangers

“Education Isn't Enough”

Brainstorm! The Dark Side Of Wisdom: What special temptations do knowledgeable people face?

A. Self-Sufficiency (Prov. 3:5,6)

“A Genius Knows His Limits”

Discussion: What are some things you could never figure out apart from God and His Word?

B. Pride (I Corinthians 8:1,2)

“Dating For Grades”

Brainstorm! How can you spot a person with a pride problem?

“He Invented Calculus, But Avoided the Big Head”

ACTION POINTS

In Search of Wisdom
Lesson I
Develop a Passion for Wisdom

Introduction

“A Hike, a Bottle, and a _____”

I. GET FIRED UP

A. Solomon Lays Out a Challenge (Prov. 8:10,11)

B. God Lays Out the Benefits

_____ and _____ Life (Proverbs 4:22)

“A _____ a Day, or \$700,000.00?”

_____ (Prov. 17:2)

“Why Choose George _____?”

_____ (Prov. 21:22)

“How Washington _____”

_____ and _____ (Prov. 1:33)

_____ (Prov. 24:14)

_____ (Prov. 3:13)

The _____ of God (Prov. 8:35,36)

_____, Honor and Long Life (Prov. 3:16)

“Wall Street Journal Reports On Christian Businesses”

C. Successful _____ Prove Its Worth

“Bill Gates Learns Computers”

“Benjamin Franklin Seeks Wisdom”

“Steven Spielberg Learns Filmmaking”

ACTION POINTS

The Wisdom Challenge:

1 – Read and Meditate on a Chapter of Proverbs Each Day.

2 – Memorize a Passage Each Week. For next week: Proverbs 8:10,11

*“Choose my instruction instead of silver,
knowledge rather than choice gold,
for wisdom is more precious than rubies,
and nothing you desire can compare with her.”*

In Search Of Wisdom (Week II)

The Wisdom Challenge: Proverbs 13:20

*“He who walks with the wise grows wise,
but a companion of fools suffers harm.”*

INTRODUCTION

“An Eccentric Uncle Leaves a _____”

I. DARE TO BE _____

A. By Watching Your Mental _____ (Prov. 15:14)

“Something a Billionaire Wouldn’t Buy”

B. By Using Your _____ Wisely (Eph. 5:15,16)

“Spielberg Get’s The Last Laugh”

“How Franklin Became Wise After Two Years Of School”

C. _____ Yourself With Wise People (Prov. 13:20)

“Bill Gates’ Seventh Grade Friends”

“Benjamin Franklin’s ‘Junto’ Club”

“Schwarzenegger’s High School Buddies”

“Spielberg’s Neighborhood Friends”

“Jabaar On Influence”

ACTION POINTS

In Search Of Wisdom
(Week III)

INTRODUCTION

“\$550.00 For Turning a Screw”

IV. GATHER WISE _____

A. What God _____ (Prov. 19:20; 15:22)

“How _____ Did It”

B. How We Can Live It

- **Your** _____

“Michael Jordan Goes One On One With Big Brother”

- **Your** _____

“Rodney Dangerfield Perfects His Humor”

- _____

“Michael Jordan Wakes Up Early”

“Spielberg Assists and Asks Questions”

- **Your** _____

A. **A Chance To Do It**

ACTIVITY: “ **Give Me Some Advice**”

ACTION POINTS

In Search Of Wisdom
(Week IV)
Student Sheet

THE WISDOM CHALLENGE: Keep reading Proverbs. Memorize Proverbs 18:15:

“The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge; the ears of the wise seek it out.”

VII. SOAK UP _____

Skit: “The Classroom”

B. Ways To Get It

3. Pay _____/_____ (Prov. 7:24)

“Ted Coppel Learns To Listen”

4. _____ It (Prov. 18:15)

f. By Getting Good _____ (Prov. 15:22)

g. By _____

“Young Spielberg: Just Curiouser and Curiouser”

“Young Einstein: Why His Teachers Asked Him To Leave”

h. By _____

“Who Learned The Language?”

“Spielberg Learns Directing”

i. By _____ (II Tim. 2:7a)

“IBM’s Motto”

“Why Bill Gates Was Always Late”

“The Problem With Air Head Telegraph Operators”

ACTIVITY: Can You Outsmart The Technical Whiz Kids?

j. Any Which _____ You Can (Prov. 18:15)

“Gates Sponges Up Knowledge”

ACTION POINTS

In Search Of Wisdom Week V

Student Sheet

THE WISDOM CHALLENGE: Keep reading Proverbs. Memorize Ecc. 12:9:

“Not only was the Teacher wise, but also he imparted knowledge to the people. He pondered and searched out and set in order many proverbs.”

VII. _____ *Up Knowledge (Last Week)*

C. *Ways To _____ It (Last Week)*

D. *Ways To _____ It*

4. _____ *It (Ecc. 12:9)*

“Why Spielberg Can’t Act”

“Mary Kay Captures Her Ideas”

“George Lucas Names A Character”

5. _____ *Yourself Of It (II Tim. 2:14a)*

“What Would Jesus Do?”

“Ben Franklin Begins and Ends Each Day With This Thought”

6. _____ *It (Mt. 4:1-11)*

“Jesus Wields His Sword”

REVIEW: HOW MANY WISDOM PRINCIPLES CAN YOU SPOT?

ACTION POINTS

In Search Of Wisdom

Week 6

(Overhead)

The Wisdom Challenge: Memorize Psalm 119:98-100.

*“Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me.
I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes.
I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts.”*

INTRODUCTION

“Got any ‘dumb blonde’ jokes?”

“The Experts Speak”

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ACTIVITY: “Liar, Liar”

SCENARIO #1: “The _____ Hoax”

Your questions:

SCENARIO #2: “The Advertiser”

“Juicy Juice contains 100% fruit juice, has no artificial sweeteners, and was recently voted the number one fruit juice for nutrition and taste by three out of four students and nutritionists.”

Your questions:

SCENARIOS #3,4... “Your Ads and Clips”

Your questions:

ACTION POINTS

**IN SEARCH OF WISDOM
WEEK VII
(Student Sheet)**

INTRODUCTION

“The Heaven’s Gate Tragedy”

VIII. Immerse Yourself In _____, _____ (Psalm 119:98-100)

“From Most Powerful to Most Embarrassed”

- **Benefits Of Studying The Bible**

- **How To Get More Out Of The Bible**

IX. Ask _____ For Wisdom (James 1:5)

“Escaping In The Nick Of Time”

“Take A Different Route Today”

“You Must Access Your Account”

CONCLUSION

“Conversational Prayer”

Action Points:

In Search of Wisdom Week VIII

(Student Sheet)

Wisdom Pop Test

8. **Advanced Math:** Paul has three apples. How many apples does Paul have?
9. **Ancient History:** Orally discuss the ancient Babylonian Empire with particular reference to architecture, literature, law and social conditions. Or, give the first name of George Bush. (Hint: George)
10. **Religion:** How many commandments were written on a stone for Moses? (Hint: It's more than 9 but less than 11)
11. **Social Studies:** What are the people of America's far north called? A) Westerners B) Southerners C) Northerners
12. **English Spelling:** Spell Bush, Carter and Clinton.
 Bush:
 Carter:
 Clinton:
13. **British History:** Six kings of England have been called George, the last one being George the Sixth. Can you name the previous five?
14. **Physics:** Can you explain Einstein's theory of relativity? A) Yes B) No

IX. Give Him Some _____ (Ecclesiastes 12:13,14)

“The First _____ On A Trip”
 “I Can't Get No _____”

Brainstorm!

3. What are ways people show disrespect for God?
4. Why should we respect God?

“Their Last _____”
 “Working On The _____”

In Search of Wisdom Week VIII

(Overhead Sheet)

X. Beware of Wisdom's _____

“Education Isn't Enough”

Brainstorm! The Dark Side Of Wisdom: What special temptations do knowledgeable people face?

C. Self-_____ (Prov. 3:5,6)

“A Genius Knows His _____”

Discussion: What are some things you could never figure out apart from God and His Word?

D. Pride (I Corinthians 8:1,2)

“Dating For _____”

Brainstorm! How can you spot a person with a pride problem?

“He Invented Calculus, But Avoided the _____”

ACTION POINTS
