

Do You Know the Biblical Difference Between Wisdom and Knowledge?

One of the most challenging things I needed to do in my role as a chief technologist was staying current with the ever-changing state of technology. This week I watched a video of a Microsoft Conference Speaker using a hologram of herself to give a speech. She spoke in English, but the hologram spoke in Japanese. I was amazed.

The Prophet Daniel said that at the end of the age, knowledge will increase (Dan. 12:4). This is clearly happening. However, I have to wonder if wisdom is growing as well. At times, I don't feel it is.

I think of knowledge as the collection of facts that answer the questions "What?", "Where?" and "How?" Wisdom, on the other hand, answers the question, "Why?" I like the following statement that contrasts the two:

"Wisdom isn't simply intelligence or knowledge or even understanding. It is the ability to use these to think and act in such a way that common sense prevails, and choices are beneficial and productive."

The Bible has a lot to say about wisdom.

Proverbs 9:10-12 from the Passion translation of the Bible declares what is the value of wisdom and how to get it:

"The starting point for acquiring wisdom is to be consumed with awe as you worship Jehovah-God. To receive the revelation of the Holy One, you must come to the one who has living-understanding. Wisdom will extend your life, making every year more fruitful than the one before. So, it is to your advantage

to be wise. But to ignore the counsel of wisdom is to invite trouble into your life.”

Wisdom comes from experience, and life provides us with many opportunities to learn from our experiences. However, there is a way to rapidly increase the amount of wisdom we have, and it is found in James 1:5 (MEV).

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men liberally and without criticism, and it will be given to him.”

This type of wisdom is called revelation.

God will provide us this type of wisdom if we ask Him for it. Today we need His understanding—although we have more knowledge, we need His wisdom to know how to use that knowledge.

Scientific Phenomena

Scientists have recognized that wisdom is mysterious and that it does not just come from the collection of facts.

Jonas Salk was a doctor who found the cure for polio. He was not a Christian, but he recognized a phenomenon that he did not understand. He said, “I felt the cure for polio wanted to be discovered.”

At its peak in the 1940s and 1950s, polio would paralyze or kill over half a million people worldwide every year. There were millions of prayers going before the Lord during this time from parents asking Him to heal their child. I believe the Lord heard those prayers and said, “I don’t want to just heal one child; I want to heal them all,” and released the cure for polio. Salk heard that solution.

Salk recognized that flows of thoughts would come into the intuition part of his mind. Here is how he explains how his mind works:

“The way I like to put it is that I might have an intuition about something; I send it over to the reason department. Then after I’ve checked it out in the reason department, I send it back to the intuition department to make sure that it’s still all right. For myself, that’s how my mind works, and that’s how I work. That’s why I think that there is both an art and a science to what we do. The art of science is as important as so-called technical science. You need both. It’s this combination that must be recognized and acknowledged and valued.”

Albert Einstein once said, “I want to know God’s thoughts—the rest are mere details.” He also recognized that there was an unexplainable part of the wisdom development process. Here is how he explains how it works in his own words:

“The intuitive mind is a sacred gift, and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift. When I examine myself and my methods of thought, I come close to the conclusion that the gift of imagination has meant more to me than any talent for absorbing absolute knowledge. All great achievements of science must start from intuitive knowledge. I believe in intuition and inspiration ... At times I feel certain I am right while not knowing the reason ... Imagination is more important than knowledge.”

Nikola was one of the most amazing engineers of the 20th century. He invented the power systems that we all use today based on the concept of alternating current. This concept came to him in a vision in February 1892. The result of his revelation has fueled the development of all mankind for that last 100 years.

Man’s Mandate

All three of these great scientists experienced the same thing. They had epiphany moments. I suggest that these

epiphany events were all God-inspired and were words of revelation given by Him to advance society. I believe that this is how we are to fulfill the mandate He gave to mankind.

In Genesis 1:28b, God spoke to Adam and Eve and gave them this mandate, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

God gave Adam and Eve the mandate to manage and subdue this earth, but we were not to do it alone. We were to abide in Him and together accomplish the transformation of the world. We are all called to different parts of the world system to bring the kingdom of God. But we are not to do it alone; we are to partner with Him and receive His wisdom to do it.

Biblical Example: Joseph

A great example of this is found in Genesis 41. Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dream, and as a result, was given responsibility to implement a plan to prepare Egypt for an upcoming famine. The dream that Joseph interpreted not only contained the warning of the seven years, but also gave the key to resolving the problem. You will notice that the seven fat cows and the seven lean cows all come out of the Nile. This is a critical fact. The solution to the problem was to capture the Nile and create a system of irrigation that would provide a reservoir of water so that they could continue to produce crops and have water even during the seven years of famine.

"When American engineer Francis Whitehouse was asked to come up with a scheme to irrigate large portions of 19th-century Egypt, his British employers little realized the astounding conclusion he would present them with! After surveying the Fayum Province of Egypt and discovering the remains of a huge flood control and irrigation project from the ancient past, he

concluded that the most practical method of irrigating the arid Egyptian desert was to reconstruct the system of irrigation that had been so skillfully put in place 3,500 years previously!" (*Joseph and the Engineering Wonders of Egypt*).

This system of irrigation he discovered was developed by Joseph and was the direct result of receiving revelation from the Lord.

Biblical Example: Bezalel

Bezalel was a man whom the Lord chose to build the tabernacle. Exodus 31:2-5 states that several unique gifts of the Spirit were given to him to do this job.

"See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of craftsmanship to devise artistic works for work with gold, with silver, and with bronze, and in the cutting of stones for settings, and in carving of wood, to work in all manner of craftsmanship."

The wisdom given to Bezalel and others included skills in design, metallurgy, carpentry, chemistry and jewelry. I see many of the engineering disciplines listed here. This further reinforces that God's wisdom is not limited to spiritual topics.

Personal Example

When I was a chief technologist, I regularly asked God for wisdom. I once had to write a business plan for a company. A business plan has several components—one part has to do with identifying the inhibitors to the growth of the company.

The Lord spoke to me and told me explicitly what was restraining the company's growth and how to fix the problem.

The president of the firm implemented my suggestions and has increased his delivery capacity by 30 times as a result.

The First Step

We are called to transform this world, and we are all given unique gifts to accomplish this mandate. We are not expected to do this alone. The first step is learning how to hear God. If you do not know how to do this, I recommend that you listen to Mark Virkler's teaching on "The 4 Keys to Hearing God." Mark taught me how to hear God in 1992 and my life has never been the same since.

When we call on the Lord for wisdom, it will be given to us and we can live every day out of revelation from our heavenly Father.

Bill and Sue Dupley *have been ministering for over 35 years, preaching and leading worship on five continents. Together they minister renewal and teach adults and children how to hear the voice of God. Bill and Sue believe that the supernatural should be the natural for all believers and that every believer can impact their world for the kingdom of God as they hear God's will and follow His leading.*

For more information on Bill and Sue's books and seminars, visit .