

Celebrating Wisdom and Knowledge

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Proverbs 1:7)

A wise woman found a precious stone in a stream, picked it up and put it in her bag. The next day she met a stranger who was hungry, so she opened her bag to share her food. The hungry man saw the precious stone and asked the woman to give it to him. She did so without hesitation. The man left, rejoicing in his good fortune. He knew the stone was worth enough to give him security for a lifetime, but a few days later, he returned the stone to the woman.

“I’ve been thinking,” he said, “I know how valuable the stone is, but I’m giving it back in the hope that you can give me something even more precious. Give me what you have within you that enabled you to give me this precious stone.” ~ Author Unknown

Some things are priceless and can’t be bought or stolen from others. Wisdom is one of them. Wisdom is a precious gift that one either has or acquires. Moreover, there is a difference between wisdom and knowledge. For example, it is possible to have a lot of knowledge—*book sense*—but very little wisdom. The dictionary defines wisdom as, ‘*the quality of having experience AND good judgment; the quality of being able to apply that judgment.*’ ‘Application’ of knowledge is the key to wisdom.

This month, we **celebrate wisdom and knowledge**. Both are recurring themes throughout the Bible as we read about characters that possessed great wisdom; Solomon, Joseph, Ruth, and Nabal’s wife, Abigail, (1 Samuel 25:1-43), are among them. One of the best books in the Bible to learn about wisdom is in Proverbs. It contains many easy and understandable nuggets of truth and wisdom; in fact, the word ‘wisdom’ occurs 46 times in Proverbs—the first occurrence is in Proverbs 1:2 and the last is in Proverbs 31:26.

James 3:17, tells us “*But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.*”

Wisdom has more to do with *discernment of matters*, while knowledge is information that is learned. This also validates one of the points that I like to make—information PLUS application equals transformation. In other words, knowledge is good, but if it is not applied or used, it’s just a reservoir of information. Similarly, we can achieve academic success and earn all kinds of degrees, but if we fail to *apply it* to our daily lives, share it with others, and translate it in meaningful ways, they are useless. Simply put, knowledge *memorizes* the Ten Commandments; wisdom *obeys* them. Knowledge *learns of God*; wisdom *loves Him*.

Many of us probably know individuals that we consider wise who may have never attended school or college. However, their life experiences have taught them invaluable lessons and skills. We can sit and listen to them for hours, or glean gems of helpful

advice and seek counsel from these sages. There are also some individuals that appear to be 'gifted' with wisdom. How many times have we encountered youth that we proclaim are '*wise beyond their years*'?

It's interesting that, these days, when we speak with our youth, we sometimes struggle to communicate effectively with them because they refuse to take what we say at 'face value'. Often this is because they are so much wiser than we were, when we were the same age. Sometimes we become frustrated with our youth because telling them something isn't good enough. We find ourselves having to explain—*in detail*—the 'who, what, when where, why and how' to them. They don't accept traditions and rituals from us 'just because we said so.' They ask questions, press for legitimate answers, and mull things over so that it makes sense to them, *before* they can accept it as truth. That's wisdom. That's curiosity, and that's good!

Many of us were raised in churches believing that it's a sin to do household chores on Sunday. We believed that God would 'zap us' if we danced or went to the movie theater—*especially on Sunday*. Children were raised to '*be seen and not heard*,' and it was 'sinful' for women to wear pants to church. We were also taught that being 'sanctified' was another religion (other than Christianity), of which we wanted no part. Today we know these things to be myths—handed down from generation to generation—that we never questioned or dared challenge. Some historians even suggest that some of the myths and traditions that our ancestors embraced were derived from slaves attempting to meld Christianity with remnants of their cultural heritage.

As Dr. Maya Angelou said, "*when we know better, we do better!*" Today, we know better. Today's youth want people to take off their masks, be transparent and relay information in a real, understandable terminology. They don't want to hear a bunch of 'temple talk.'

Our youth desire a religion not unlike what Christ desires for us—to have *knowledge of Him and of His Word*. That can only occur when we have a true relationship with Him. In order for us to obey Him, we have to study Him and get to know Him. However, wisdom requires more of us than knowing facts about God and the Bible. True wisdom is a gift from God. James 1:5 states, "*If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.*" That said, it's not enough to recite old sayings such as "He's a mighty good God," or "He's the same, yesterday, today and forever."

As we seek to engage our youth in a real relationship with Christ, it's important for us to share our real experiences and show them how God has transformed our lives. We must let them know that the person that stands before them today, is the 'new creature' that Christ created.

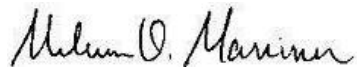
Wisdom gives us the temperament, balance, and place to be so we can help and influence others, without being condescending. As Christians, we are to grow in the

wisdom and knowledge of the Lord and understand our purpose, abilities and gifts, so we know what to do, where to go, and, most importantly, to glorify our Lord.

Wise people are nourished and nurtured by the Word of God. They study and apply its tenets and commandments, rather than read the Bible as if it were a novel. God's Word should touch us—*who we are*—and transform us. We cannot be effective Christians or leaders if we don't have wisdom and knowledge. Knowledge comes from *studying* and wisdom comes from *experience, practice and application of God's Word*.

My prayer is that as our young adults go out into the world and take up the mantle of leadership, they will effectively use and celebrate their wisdom and knowledge to disciple others and bring them to Christ. God's will is for us to change our behaviors and our lives so that others will not only respect our wisdom and knowledge, but be like the man who returned the precious stone, *desire* what we have and want to be like us.

Peace and power,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melvin O. Marriner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

Dr. Melvin O. Marriner
Senior Pastor Grove Church

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