

Question: Does it seem like Solomon and other biblical authors often affirm the priority and superiority of wisdom to wealth?

Answer: Yes! The first time Solomon mentioned this connection he challenged his son to seek wisdom like you are seeking for silver and treasures. But now he says wisdom is better than silver, gold, and rubies.

- **Pr 2:2** So that you incline your ear to wisdom, *And* apply your heart to understanding; **3** Yes, if you cry out for discernment, *And* lift up your voice for understanding; **4** If you seek her as silver, *And* search for her as *for* hidden treasures; **5** Then you will understand the fear of the LORD, *And* find the knowledge of God.
- **Pr 8:10** Receive my instruction, and not silver, *And* knowledge rather than choice gold; **11** For wisdom *is* better than rubies, *And* all the things one may desire cannot be compared with her.
- **Pr 8:17** I love those who love me, *And* those who seek me diligently will find me. **18** Riches and honor *are* with me, *Enduring* riches and righteousness. **19** My fruit *is* better than gold, yes, than fine gold, *And* my revenue than choice silver.
- **Pr 16:16** How much better to get wisdom than gold! *And* to get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.
- **Job 28:18** No mention shall be made of coral or quartz, *For* the price of wisdom *is* above rubies. **19** The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it, *Nor* can it be valued in pure gold. **20** "From where then does wisdom come? *And* where *is* the place of understanding?"
- Warning:
 - **Eze 28:4** With your (Prince of Tyre) wisdom and your understanding You have gained riches for yourself, *And* gathered gold and silver into your treasuries; **5** By your great wisdom in trade you have increased your riches, *And* your heart is lifted up because of your riches),"

Question: Consider your decisions in using your time, talent, and treasure; what percentage is devoted to the pursuit of knowing and applying God's word?

- Remember! Wisdom is learning, knowing, and applying God's Word in all situations.

NT Insights: (Connecting Wisdom with Salvation)

- **Mt 13:44** "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.
- **Mt 13:45** "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, **46** who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.
- **Mt 6:31** "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' **32** For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. **33** But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.
- **Mt 19:21** Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." **22** But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. **23** Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. **24** And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."
- **Lk 12:15** And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."

Warnings about Wealth:

- **Pr 10:4** He who has a slack hand becomes poor, But the hand of the diligent makes rich.
- **Pr 10:22** The blessing of the LORD makes *one* rich, And He adds no sorrow with it.
- **Pr 23:5** Will you set your eyes on that which is not? For *riches* certainly make themselves wings; They fly away like an eagle *toward* heaven.
- **Pr 11:4** Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, But righteousness delivers from death.
- **Ec 2:17** Therefore I hated life because the work that was done under the sun *was* distressing to me, for all *is* vanity and grasping for the wind. **18** Then I hated all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me. **19** And who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will rule over all my labor in which I toiled and in which I have shown myself wise under the sun. This also *is* vanity.

- **Ec 5:10** He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; Nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also *is* vanity. **11** When goods increase, They increase who eat them; So what profit have the owners Except to see *them* with their eyes?
- **Mt 6:24** "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.
- **Mt 16:26** For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?
- **Mk 10:25** It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."
- **1 Ti 6:18** *Let them* do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, **19** storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.
- **Famous Rich People in the Bible:** Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job, Joseph of Arimathea, Lydia

Quote: It (wisdom) is *better than the profit of silver* because money can put food on the table, but not fellowship around it, a house but not a home, and can give a woman jewelry but not the love she really wants.²

B. Consider How You Will Live Your Earthly Life (Proverbs 3:16-17)

Pr 3:16 Length of days *is* in her right hand, In her left hand riches and honor. **17** Her ways *are* ways of pleasantness, And all her paths *are* peace.

Sound Familiar? **Pr 1:9** For they *will be* a graceful ornament on your head, And chains about your neck.

Keywords:

- **Riches** – material wealth
- **Honor** – distinction, significant, weighty, excellent reputation (when applied to God, it is translated ‘glory’)

² Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 1–15*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 257.

- **Ways** – emphasis on activity, conduct but includes direction
- **Paths** – emphasis on direction, but can include activities
- **Pleasantness** – kindness, acceptable, favorable
- **Peace** (Shalom) – safety, prosperity, satisfaction

Explanation:

Quantity of Life - Length of Days (left hand): genuine, abundant life

- **Pr 9:11** For by me your days will be multiplied, And years of life will be added to you.

Quality of Life - Rich and honor (right hand):

- **Pr 8:18** Riches and honor *are* with me, Enduring riches and righteousness.
- **Pr 22:4** By humility *and* the fear of the LORD *Are* riches and honor and life.

Connection: Wisdom is about living rightly on the right path resulting in favor and peace.

C. Consider the life you will live Beyond the Grave (Proverbs 3:18)

Pr 3:18 She *is* a tree of life to those who take hold of her, And happy *are all* who retain her.

Keywords:

- **Tree of life** – same expression as Genesis 2:9. This expression is alluding to the original tree of life but is referencing the benefits.
- **Take hold** – grab and seize with intensity to have
- **Retain** – grab and seize to uphold and keep

Explanation:

Mentioning the ‘tree of life’ is a clear reference back to the Garden of Eden and what was lost. Wisdom stands in stark contrast to the ‘tree of the knowledge of good and evil.’ We obey God’s wisdom in the present and receive temporal benefits, which points and leads to the tree of life with eternal benefits in the future.

- **Pr 15:24** The way of life *winds* upward for the wise, That he may turn away from hell below.

- Tree of Life Passages
 - **Genesis 2:9** And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life *was* also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
 - **Proverbs 3:18** She *is* a tree of life to those who take hold of her, And happy *are all* who retain her.
 - **Proverbs 11:30** The fruit of the righteous *is a* tree of life, And he who wins souls *is* wise.
 - **Proverbs 13:12** Hope deferred makes the heart sick, But *when* the desire comes, *it is* a tree of life.
 - **Proverbs 15:4** A wholesome tongue *is* a tree of life, But perverseness in it breaks the spirit.
 - **Revelation 2:7** "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." ’
 - **Revelation 22:2** In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, *was* the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each *tree* yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.
 - **Revelation 22:14** Blessed *are* those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.

Question: Does your life demonstrate wise thinking and living? Could you prove to others that you not only found wisdom, but you are gaining and growing in understanding and knowledge?

D. Consider the Lord's Use of Wisdom (Proverbs 3:19-20)

Pr 3:19 The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; By understanding He established the heavens; **20** By His knowledge the depths were broken up, And clouds drop down the dew.

Keywords:

- **Founded** – establish a base from which to build more
- **Established** – arrange and determine
- **Wisdom** (hokma): This is knowledge from God. He is the source of all wisdom. It is an attribute of God.
- **Understanding** (tebuna): logic, aptitude, intelligence, thinking Biblically
- **Knowledge** (da-at) : Skill. Applying knowledge and understanding
- **Depths** – deep waters

Explanation:

Lord by wisdom founded the earth, by understanding He established the heavens

- **Pr 8:22** "The LORD possessed me at the beginning of His way, Before His works of old. **23** I have been established from everlasting, From the beginning, before there was ever an earth. **24** When *there were* no depths I was brought forth, When *there were* no fountains abounding with water. **25** Before the mountains were settled, Before the hills, I was brought forth; **26** While as yet He had not made the earth or the fields, Or the primal dust of the world. **27** When He prepared the heavens, I *was* there, When He drew a circle on the face of the deep, **28** When He established the clouds above, When He strengthened the fountains of the deep, **29** When He assigned to the sea its limit, So that the waters would not transgress His command, When He marked out the foundations of the earth, **30** Then I was beside Him *as* a master craftsman; And I was daily *His* delight, Rejoicing always before Him, **31** Rejoicing in His inhabited world, And my delight *was* with the sons of men.
- **Job 38:4** "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell *Me*, if you have understanding. **5** Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? **6** To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, **7** When the morning stars sang together, And all the sons of God shouted for joy?
- **Ps 104:24** O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. The earth is full of Your possessions—

- **Je 10:12** He has made the earth by His power, He has established the world by His wisdom, And has stretched out the heavens at His discretion.

Depths Broken Up & Clouds Drop Dew

- **Ge 7:11** In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.

Implication: If the world was created with wisdom, then to ignore wisdom in this world is akin to ignoring gravity and other laws of nature with grave consequences. Orderly world requires and orderly life. If the wisdom designed life to thrive, then you will need wisdom to thrive!

Did you know? The fascinating link between wisdom, knowledge, and understanding

- **Ex 31:3** And I have filled him (Bezalel) with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all *manner of* workmanship,
- **Pr 9:10** "The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One *is* understanding.
- **Is 11:2** The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.
- **Da 1:4** young men in whom *there was* no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who *had* ability to serve in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans.
- **Da 2:21** And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise And knowledge to those who have understanding.
- **Col 1:9** For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

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- **1 Co 1:24** but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.
- **Col 1:16** For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.
 - **Ge 1:2** The earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.