

***The* BATTLE PLAN for PRAYER**

FROM BASIC TRAINING TO TARGETED STRATEGIES

PART IV: STRATEGIES

6

The WISDOM OF GOD

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

(James 1:5)

"Wisdom is supreme--so get wisdom. And whatever else you get, get understanding" (Prov. 4:7 HCSB). Not many things in life come with this kind of endorsement. *Whatever else you get. Whatever else you do.* Yet anytime we hear this kind of ultimatum, we know something important is about to be said. And when God is the One who's making the proclamation through His Word, you can be sure His advice is worth heeding.

Acquiring wisdom, He says, is of "supreme" importance. And prayer is one of the keys that unlocks it. In fact, prayer yields wisdom, and then wisdom yields better prayer.

Wisdom is the ability to apply knowledge to a given situation. Making the best choices with the data you have. To take what you know and make it work really well. To make your relationships work. To make your money work. To make grand-slam, home-run decisions about friendship, marriage, and parenting. Wisdom helps the secrets of the whiz to take root in the hearts of the dumb. It guides you to do the ethically right thing in the morally right way. It unlocks everything-things that used to seem like a mystery. When faced with dilemmas that once sent you swerving out of control, wisdom helps you locate the straight, sure path, so that "when you walk, your steps will not be hindered; when you run, you will not stumble" (Prov. 4:12) . You'll be able to look back on vital moments of decision and see that you were protected from rashness and folly.

Wisdom is what we need. It helps you see things from

God's eternal perspective, understand the cause and effect of a decision, and constantly learn from any situation. And God, knowing this, promises to give wisdom to those who "ask" Him for it. That word in James 1:5 not only carries the idea of asking, but of begging, calling out for something, craving it. God promises to give wisdom "generously"--especially to those who "seek [it] like silver and search for [it] like hidden treasure" (Prov. 2:4). We should want it, and want it badly.

He also says He'll give it "without reproach"--without insult or condescension. Without making fun of us for being so foolish up till now. He wants us to win. He wants to give us what we need for being successful in our families, in our work, in everything we do--"bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1:10). Because this gives Him glory. As much as He's glorified through our spoken praise and worship, He is glorified also through our integrity, our honesty, our diligence, our humility, our purity, our faithfulness. He is glorified by our being good spouses, parents, employees, and stewards of our resources.

King Solomon, as we saw in a recent chapter, sought the Lord for wisdom. When invited by God to ask for any- thing he wanted--"What should I give you?" the Lord said (1 Kings 3:5)--Solomon responded with a heartfelt request for wisdom. He was only a young man, recently ascended to his father David's throne. He admittedly had little to no experience in leadership. So he prayed, "Give Your servant an obedient heart to judge Your people and to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?" (v. 9). God was pleased with Solomon's request, and grew him into a man whose wisdom was known far and wide. Not only did his wisdom make him known for his writing of memorable proverbs--3,000 of them, the Bible says--but also provided him the secrets of riches and honor.

One of the ways God has already answered any prayer for wisdom is with the biblical book of Proverbs--a huge collection of mostly short-answer sayings on the whole

gamut of life, as seen from the perspective of both wisdom and foolishness. Polar opposites. Verifiable differences. Every time you learn a new proverb, it's like taking a giant smart pill or anti-idiot medicine.

The Proverbs point up the difference *between hard work and laziness*: "Poor is he who works with a negligent hand, but the hand of the diligent makes rich" (10:4). *Between righteousness and wickedness*: "The memory of the righteous is blessed, but the name of the wicked will rot" (10:7). *Between honesty and dishonesty*: "Truthful lips will be established forever, but a lying tongue is only for a moment" (12:19). *Between humility and arrogance*: "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling. It is better to be humble in spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud" (16:18-19).

In fact, discovering what's "better" is a key takeaway of Proverbs, as with everything else the Bible teaches. "Patience is better than power, and controlling one's temper, than capturing a city" (16:32 HCSB). "Better is a little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and turmoil with it" (15:16). "Better is a dish of vegetables where love is than a fattened ox served with hatred" (15:17). "Better to be a poor man than a liar" (19:22).

In other words, "whatever else you get"-get wisdom.

And from God is where we get that wisdom. He "has made His counsel wonderful and His wisdom great" (Isa. 28:29). "Call to Me," He says, "and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know" (Jer. 33:3). We can expect to attain on-the-spot wisdom from Him as we ask for it, apply it, and place a high priority on it. Praying for wisdom should become a daily habit and is also a source for developing our prayer strategies.

Wisdom, despite its silver-haired persona, is not an automatic development that kicks in at a certain age. Those who truly desire it can begin living with wisdom at any age-as children, as teenagers, as young adults, as newlyweds, and as new parents. Meanwhile, older men and women who've chosen instead to live a self-seeking, unexamined life, heavy on quick fixes and light on long-

term thinking, can end up being more foolish than people half their age.

But God has put His name on the line if wisdom is something you really want. "For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding" (Prov. 2:6). "The one who understands a matter finds success, and the one who trusts in the LORD will be happy" (Prov. 16:20 HCSB). "When you lie down, you will not be afraid; you will lie down, and your sleep will be pleasant . . . for the LORD will be your confidence and will keep your foot from a snare" (Prov. 3:24, 26 HCSB).

Pray for it often and expect it promptly. Ask for wisdom.

Let it guide your praying, and enjoy its rewards.

PRAYER: *Lord, You are my wonderful Counselor and the Source of all wisdom. I take You at Your Word that when I ask for wisdom-from a heart that's ready to put it obediently and faithfully into practice-You will surely pour it out upon me freely. Because I surely need it. Every day in every way. I pray You'd help me view life from Your eternal perspective rather than the world's. Help me think long-term and understand the causes and effects of my choices. Give me the discernment between what is good, better, and best, and help me make right decisions in light of it. In Jesus ' name I pray, amen.*

HOMEWORK:

Proverbs 4:7 HCSB: "Wisdom is supreme—so get wisdom. And whatever else you get, get understanding." Look at better translation: **VOICE:** "Gaining sound judgment is KEY, so first things first: go after lady wisdom! Now, whatever else you do, follow through to understanding." or **LIVING BIBLE:** "Getting wisdom is the most important thing you can do! And with your wisdom, develop common sense and good judgment." or **The MESSAGE:** "Above all and before all, do this: Get Wisdom! Write this at the top of your list: Get Understanding!"

1. When God is the One who's making the proclamation through His

Word, you can be sure His advice is worthy _____.

2. God says, “you acquire [get as one's own] wisdom” is of ‘supreme’ importance. It means ‘any time, any place, any situation you face...keep ‘wisdom’ is first principle on your front mind and then ask God for wisdom.

3. Name one of the keys that **UNLOCKS** it [wisdom]? _____

4. In fact, your prayer _____ wisdom, then wisdom yields _____ prayer.

5. Wisdom is the _____ to **APPLY** knowledge to a given situation.

- Making the best choices with the data you have.
- To take what you know and make it work really well.
- To make your relationships work.
- To make your money work.
- To make grand-slam, home-run decisions about friendship, marriage, and parenting.
- It helps the secrets of the whiz to take root in the hearts of the dumb.
- It guides you to do the ethically right thing in the morally right way.
- When faced with dilemmas the once sent you swerving out of control, it helps you locate the straight, sure path.
- You will be able to look back on vital moments of decision and see that you were protected from rashness and folly.

It
[_____]
unlock
EVERYTHING—things
that used to seem
like a MYSTERY.

6. Name one what you need? _____

7. Wisdom helps:

- ☞ you _____ things from God's eternal perspective,
- ☞ you _____ the cause and effect of a decision, and
- ☞ you _____ learn from any situation.

James 1:5 VOC: “If you don't have all the wisdom needed for this

journey, then all you have to do is ASK God for it [wisdom]; and God will grant all that you need. He gives lavishly and never scolds you for asking.” or **AMP**: “If any of you lacks of wisdom [to guide him through a decision or circumstance], he is to ask of [our benevolent] God, who gives to everyone generously and without reproaching or faultfinding, and it will be given him.”

8. Remember when you ask God for wisdom which means you _____, calling out for something, _____ it.

☞ God promises to give wisdom ‘_____’, especially to those who “seek it [wisdom] like silver and search for it [wisdom] like hidden treasure”. (Prov. 2:4)

☞ You _____ want it, and want it _____.

☞ Also God will give it ‘**without reproach**’–

- without _____ or _____
- without making _____ of you for being so foolish up till now.

▪ God wants you to **LOSE** or **WIN**

▪ God wants to give you what you need for being **SUCCESSFUL** or **FAILURE** in your family, in your work, in everything you do.

- Why? Because this give Him what? _____

- God is glorified through your what?

- God is glorified also through your what?

- Y N NS: God is glorified by your being good spouses parents, employees, and stewards of your resources.

1 Kings 3:9–“Give Your servant ‘**an obedient heart**’ to judge Your people and to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?” You see ‘an obedient heart’ means ‘a _____ heart’.

9. How many proverbs Solomon wrote? _____

10. The Proverbs point up the difference:

- ✎ between _____
- ✎ between _____
- ✎ between _____
- ✎ between _____

11. In fact, discovering what's " _____ " is a **KEY** takeaway of Proverbs, as with everything else the Bible teaches.
12. In other words, " _____ "–get wisdom.
13. You can expect to attain [to reach, achieve, or accomplish; gain, obtain] on-the-spot wisdom from Him
 - 👉 as you _____ for it [wisdom],
 - 👉 as you _____ it [wisdom], and
 - 👉 as you _____ a high priority on it [wisdom].
 - Praying for wisdom should become your what?
 - Praying for wisdom is also a source for what?
14. What age do you acquire wisdom? _____

Proverbs 16:20–“The one who understands a matter finds success, and the one who trusts in the Lord will be happy.”

1 Corinthians 1:24–“..Christ the power of God, and the Wisdom of God”.

15. God has put His _____ on the line [connect with His wisdom-word] if wisdom is something you really want.
16. You _____ for it [_____] _____.
17. You _____ it _____.
18. You _____ for wisdom.
 - 👉 Let it [_____] guide your _____.
 - 👉 You _____ its rewards.

