**True Wisdom Is . . .**

**Introduction:**

Read Proverbs 2:1-5. We see three words that are essentially the same: wisdom, understanding, and discernment. This is the ability to judge properly; tell right from wrong; reason correctly from the available evidence. The familiar account of King Solomon judging in I Kings 3 tells of two women, both of whom claimed to be the mother of the boy infant. (Tell the story.) This is an example of wise judgment; proper discernment.

**Theme of Lesson:** To discover from the Scripture who the wise man really is. Read Ecclesiastes 8:1.

**Body:**

1. **The wise man takes into account the nature of man**. Read Ecclesiastes 7:20-22.

The best of men will sometimes do bad things. (I John 1:8) One who claims to never sin does not have God’s Word within him. Sometimes we need to make ourselves blind and deaf, especially to small things. Even our closest friends may on occasion make a harsh unjust criticism. Best to ignore it! Don’t be quick to take offense. Don’t wear your feelings on your sleeve. The wise man doesn’t know that not all like him. If we are truly honest, we too have made unkind remarks about others. The wise man takes into account the nature of man.

1. **The wise man knows wisdom does not come easily.** Read Ecclesiastes 7:23-24. We are not born all-wise and all-knowing. We must seek it with diligence. This search begins in Scripture. (II Timothy 3:14-17, II Timothy 2:14-15) Recall Proverbs 2:1-5. This also means some things are beyond our understanding. (Romans 11:33) The wise man accepts his limitations and doesn’t fret about it. (I John 3:1-2)
2. **The wise man knows and obeys authority**. Read Ecclesiastes 8:2-5. Wisdom warns us to submit to the “powers that be.” God has appointed the institution of government. (Romans 13:1-2, 5) A society or nation must have rules and regulations or chaos reigns. Verse 3 It is folly to defy the authorities unless there is a very good reason, like Peter and the apostles had in Acts 5:29. Even though Jesus was the Son of God, He paid taxes. (Matthew 17) Verse 3b-5 The wise man knows the King has power. Note Romans 13:3-7, I Peter 2:13-14.
3. **The wise man knows the limitations of his own power**. Read Ecclesiastes 8:6-8.

Verse 6 Some things happen that are beyond our control. We cannot anticipate them nor prevent them. (James 4:13-16) Also the wise man realizes he does not know when death, that “pale rider,” will come. He only knows that it is appointed for him to die. Finally, the wise man understands that he has limitations concerning his ability to withstand temptations. He flees from every wicked thing. He does not see how close to sin that he can get without being hooked. (James 1:14-16)

1. **The wise man realizes that justice will eventually prevail**. Read Ecclesiastes 8:11-13.

Verse 11 Evil is not always punished immediately in this life. Criminals are not always caught. Even if they are, they are not always punished in proportion to their crime. Because of this, many will continue to do wrong, especially if their evil acts help them to prosper. It may be years between the first drink and death due to liver disease.

Verses 12-13 There is much to learn here!

1. The wise man knows that the God-fearer lives the best life now, regardless of how the wicked prosper.
2. The day of reckoning awaits us all. (II Corinthians 5:10-11a)
3. There is a law of sowing and reaping. (Galatians 6:7-8) Several years passed between Ahab having Naboth murdered and Ahab’s payday. (I Kings 22) The wicked will be separated from God throughout eternity. (II Thessalonians 1:7-9)

**Conclusion:** Our text provided great insight into who the wise man is. Our Lord, during the Sermon on the Mount, also describes the wise man. (Matthew 7:24-27) The wise man is the one who hears the words of the Savior and does them. Bobby Stafford April 28, 2013