

Lesson 58

TEXT Proverbs 2:1-9

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to identify the difference between knowledge and wisdom, realizing that as they acquire both it will result in the development of spiritual discernment.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge. — Proverbs 15:14

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge. — Proverbs 23:12

**ANSWER
TITLE: Only One Answer
SEARCH
TITLE: Knowledge**

REFERENCE INFORMATION

Proverbs are short, pithy sayings about the nature of man and life which express some obvious truths. The Hebrew word most often translated as *proverb* means literally, "a similitude," or loosely, "a representation." Proverbs help to make God's truth accessible to all people, so they might direct their lives in accordance with His will.

Solomon is singled out for his use of proverbs. His wisdom was shown by his ability to make clear, true commentaries upon the nature of things. As a young man,

Solomon had a consuming passion for knowledge and wisdom (1 Kings 3:9-12). His intellectual attainments were the wonder of the age. Kings came from the ends of the earth to hear him.

The Book of Proverbs is considered by some as the best representative of the so-called "wisdom literature" of ancient Israel. Its theme is, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Proverbs 1:7).

YOUR OPENER

Knowledge

TEXT: Proverbs 2:1-9

KEY VERSE: Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge.

— Proverbs 23:12

Acquiring doctrinal knowledge should not be confused with growing in grace. While it is important to improve our understanding of the precepts of God's Word, this is not necessarily paralleled to a deepening of spirituality. The study of the Word is vital to Christian growth, but it must be applied to our lives, and not be only head knowledge.

RESPONSES

1. Allow students to share their thoughts. Guide them to conclude that spiritual knowledge is necessary so that a Christian might obtain wisdom and understanding.

2. The dictionary defines *knowledge* as, "acquaintance with facts, truths, or principles." The definition for *wisdom* is, "the power of discerning and judging properly as to what is true or right." Your students should be able to explain the difference between the two as a distinction between accumulation of facts versus correct application of facts. An example might be that a person could acquire a great deal of head knowledge about Bible stories, but still not see how the principles learned apply to his life.

3. As the students discuss this question they will probably agree that knowledge is acquired through reading, going to school, parents, friends, etc. Spiritual knowledge may be acquired through study of the Word, Christian parents, the ministry, Sunday school, church, etc. Ask your students of what value this knowledge is if it is not put to use. Bring out that as they get older, they can begin to choose what kind of knowledge would benefit them the most.

4. Give the students an opportunity to discuss the main ideas of each verse. The purpose of this exercise is to reinforce the fact that human knowledge alone is not capable of satisfying the soul of man.

1. In this quarter's lessons, we are studying Christian characteristics and attributes, some of which are found in 2 Peter 1:5,6. Knowledge is one of those attributes. Why is it so important?

2. Read the dictionary definitions for the words *knowledge* and *wisdom*, and then explain in your own words the difference between the two. Give a hypothetical example of each.

3. How is general knowledge acquired? List ways in which knowledge of spiritual things is acquired.

4. Human knowledge, apart from divine knowledge, is not capable of satisfying the soul of man. As we search the Scriptures we find some references to this effect. Look them up and write the main idea of each verse.

1 Corinthians 1:19

1 Corinthians 3:19

2 Timothy 3:7

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

5. A child gains much of his acquired knowledge based on experience. How is the concept of knowledge by experience also true in the spiritual sense?

6. What must we do to build the foundation for the right kind of knowledge and spiritual discernment? In John 5:39 and Romans 15:4 you will find the answer.

7. How might the Lord increase our spiritual knowledge through correction? See Hebrews 12:5-11. At what point does the knowledge gained through correction become wisdom?

8. For personal thought and meditation, figure the amount of time that you study for general knowledge (school, job, etc.), _____. Then add the time spent in recreation, sleep, etc., _____. Now figure the time spent in study for spiritual knowledge, including Sunday school, church, prayer meetings, daily spiritual study, etc., _____. If your time spent for general knowledge plus time spent in extra curricular activities outweighs the time spent to gain spiritual knowledge, it points out the importance of being sure that the time given for our daily Bible study and worship is quality time. We should also take advantage of each opportunity to worship together and fellowship with those who are of like mind so we can grow spiritually.

5. Knowledge gained by experience is evidenced in our spiritual lives in a number of ways. Knowledge of sin leads a person to repentance. True knowledge about salvation, sanctification, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost is based on personal experience (2 Timothy 2:6). Knowledge of something God has done for us is the basis of our testimony (John 9:25). Actively following the revealed will of God will bring knowledge (John 7:17).

6. In discussing this question, the students should realize that the foundation for the right kind of knowledge and spiritual discernment is developed through the study of the Word. Encourage students to discuss how they can better study God's Word (systematic Bible study, topical Bible study, Sunday school lessons, etc.) so that their spiritual knowledge will be increased.

7. Discussion with your students should bring out that knowledge comes when we learn that something in our life is not pleasing to God, and He checks us on it. The chastening experience brings knowledge. When we recognize it as chastening from the Lord and submit and abide by it, then it becomes wisdom.

8. This exercise is not to be used to put individuals on the spot. It is meant to help everyone realize the importance of taking time to gain spiritual knowledge and, with God's help, to use that knowledge to gain wisdom and discernment in their daily lives.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

What are some other sources of knowledge besides those acquired at school? Discuss whether or not these other sources are a good or bad influence on your character.

What is your definition of *knowledge*? *wisdom*?

What are the differences between divine knowledge, general knowledge, and experiential knowledge?

Do you think Randy, in our ANSWER story, did right to express his views in a theme paper? How can we show to others that we consider the knowledge of God important?

Is it possible to have considerable knowledge, yet lack wisdom? Explain.

What incident or incidents in Solomon's life reveal his wisdom? his lack of wisdom?

Who was Solomon's father? How might that relate to Solomon's wisdom and knowledge?

What importance does godly instruction and a godly example have in a person's attaining knowledge and wisdom?

What important task did King David leave to Solomon? Explain the need for wisdom and understanding in the completion of that task.

THINGS TO DO

Blindfold your students. Have each one take a turn feeling an object you have brought to class. Let him describe what he thinks it is. Each answer may be different.

Take apart a flashlight, comparing each part of it to a bit of learning. When it is all put together again, it must be turned on to produce light and be effective. Liken this to the wisdom of God, which will cause illumination, or understanding. The unconverted may read God's Word and understand it superficially, but only when he has received the truth into his heart (thus gaining true wisdom), is he truly illuminated.

A laptop computer or an advertisement for one would be an interesting item to help you illustrate knowledge. Be prepared to tell how vast an amount of information it can store. However, does it have wisdom?

Bring to class the comic page from the daily newspaper. Ask the students if they read the comics. Let them pick out which ones they read each day. Then ask: "How many read the Bible each day?" (Don't make them answer out loud.) Talk about how if you don't read the comics for several days you lose interest in what is happening. The same thing will happen if we neglect to read our Bible—we will gradually lose interest.

Bring a group of school textbooks to class. Tell your class you are all going to learn something out of the books. Pick them up and look at them. Comment on the size, the binding, the cover. Spread them out and look them all over. Emphasize that you want to learn. Ask your class what you should do. Lead them to say you should open the book. Compare this to studying God's Word. We must open it and read if we are to gain knowledge. Many people have a Bible in their home but seldom, if ever, open it.

Answers for ANSWER

