

Wisdom



Walking Through the Land of God's Promises (Part 6)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you at the beginning of a new week, sharing with you out of truths that have made the difference between success and failure in my life and can do the same in yours.

First, let me say "Thank you" to those of you who've been writing to me. Before I finish this talk we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. Feel free to share with us your personal needs, your problems, your prayer requests.

All last week I was sharing with you on the theme, "Walking Through the Land of God's Promises." My purpose was to show you by specific examples that for every need or problem that can arise in our life, there are equally specific promises in God's Word that can meet that need or solve that problem. I summed this up by saying that God's provision for us is in His promises, and that the promises are our inheritance.

In the Old Testament, under a leader named Joshua, God led His people into a promised land; but in the New Testament, under a leader named Jesus (and it's the same name in Hebrew), God leads His people into a land of promises. However, it took Joshua a long while to claim the whole inheritance that God had provided. Halfway through the book of Joshua, after Israel had gained many victories and much territory, God still said to them, "very much of the land remains to be possessed." The same is true for us as Christians, in the New Testament, very much of the land remains to be possessed. We've entered into only a small part of the provision that God has made for us in His promises.

So this week we're going to continue our exploration of this rich and wonderful land that God has provided for us through faith in Jesus Christ, our heavenly Joshua; that is, the land of God's promises.

The particular kind of promises that we will look at this week are those related to various forms of practical wisdom. Let me add that all the wisdom unfolded in the Bible is always practical. I've discovered in my long walk with the Lord that He is a very practical God, and anything that is truly spiritual is also extremely practical. We sometimes talk of people who

are so heavenly minded they're of no earthly use. But such people are not truly spiritual. People who are truly led by the Holy Spirit are always very practical people. In connection with wisdom, the first promise that we look at today is found in James 1:5-8:

> "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does." (NIV)

Well, there is a very clear promise of wisdom to any of us in any situation where we see we need it. If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God who given generously to all without finding fault. God doesn't find fault with us because we lack wisdom; He knows we lack wisdom, and He's willing to supply that lack, so He doesn't find fault. And James says, "it will be given him"; that is, wisdom will be given to the one who asks for it. One main reason why we don't have the wisdom that we need is, first of all, that we don't see our need of it. We don't acknowledge that we lack wisdom. We trust in ourselves and our own understanding and that leads to disaster. Or sometimes we see that we lack wisdom but we don't think to ask God for it.

And then again, a third reason why we may not receive is because we do not ask in faith. God insists that we ask and believe that He's given us what we ask for. That's why James says there: "But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt." That's consistent with the whole teaching of the Bible. Hebrews 11:6 says:

> "...he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (KJV)

So whatever you come to God for, God requires that you believe in Him and that you believe that He will reward you. This applies specifically in this instance to our schemeful wisdom.

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That's a very strong statement. A double-minded man is unstable in everything that he does, and he cannot expect to receive anything from the Lord.

So we see that in this seeking for wisdom from God we have to set our hearts and minds to believe that if we ask in humble faith, God will give us what we ask for. He's waiting to give. Really, He is waiting for us to see our need and ask for it.

Wisdom is a major part of our total inheritance in Jesus Christ. For example, in 1 Corinthians 1:30, Paul says:

> "...by His doing [that's by God's doing] you are in Christ Jesus [so our whole inheritance, you see, is really in Christ Jesus]... in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption..." (NAS)

So Jesus is our wisdom. All our wisdom is in Him. He's also our righteousness, our holiness, and our redemption.

And then again, in Colossians 2:2-3, Paul says this (he's praying for the Christians at Colossae and for other Christians in other places):

> "My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (NIV)

Notice that, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Jesus Christ.

Before I came to know Jesus, I was a professor of philosophy at Cambridge University, and I was searching continually for wisdom; but I was living, I would have to say, on the scraps and the garbage heaps of human wisdom. When I came to know Jesus, I was delighted to discover that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Him; and I turned aside from those garbage heaps and from those scrap piles and I made up my mind that I would seek the wisdom that is in Jesus; the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Now on the other side, we need to understand that foolishness is not just lack of intelligence. It indicates a heart that is not in tune with God. There is a moral quality to foolishness. In Mark 7:21-22, Jesus gives a list of evil things

that come out of the unregenerate human heart. He says:

> "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts and fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness." (NAS)

Notice what bad company foolishness is in. It goes with thefts, murders, adulteries, envy, slander, pride, and many other evil things. It's very interesting that in colloquial Arabic, the opposite to the word "clever" is the word "lazy." In other words, there is a moral significance to foolishness. It's not just lacking intelligence, but it's lacking character.

We've seen that Jesus Christ is made unto us wisdom by God, and that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are found in Jesus. How do we have access to these treasures? We ask. And how does God supply that which we ask?

I believe one main answer is found in John 16:13-15. Jesus is speaking to His disciples. He says:

> "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore, I said, that He takes of Mine, and will disclose it to you." (NAS)

Well, the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Christ, but the One who makes these treasures available to us, the One who takes of them and discloses them to us, is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the administrator of the riches of all the kingdom of God. That includes the riches of wisdom and knowledge, which are in Christ. So in order to receive the wisdom that God has promised to give us, we have to have a continuing close personal relationship with the Holy Spirit. It's the Holy Spirit who makes those treasures of wisdom and knowledge available to us. We have to walk in harmony and in fellowship with the Spirit of God. We have to be able to hear what the Spirit is saying. We have to be sensitive to His gentle nudges and to give heed to the warnings that He gives us. So many times we get into trouble because we pass one of the red lights that the Holy Spirit has put up in our way and we run into some kind of accident or disaster. Not because the wisdom was not available to us but because we did not heed the Holy Spirit.

In Romans 8:14, Paul says this:

> "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." (NAS)

The Greek word there used for sons indicates maturity. It's the mark of the mature believer that he'll be continually led by the Holy Spirit; that he'll be sensitive to every little nudge and direction and whisper of the Holy Spirit; and in this way, wisdom is continually made available to us.

Now one other word of guidance on how to receive wisdom. Feed your mind on God's provision for wisdom; that is, the book of Proverbs. Proverbs opens with these statements:

> "...for attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight; for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; for giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young." (NIV)

So, feed your mind on the book of Proverbs. There are 31 chapters in the book. Why not read one chapter each day and do that every month for a year. Believe me, at the end of that time you'll be a lot wiser than you were at the beginning of that year.

All right. Our time is up for today, and I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time.

Tomorrow I'll be dealing with one particular way in which God makes His promises available to us. My theme will be guidance, how to find the right way through life.

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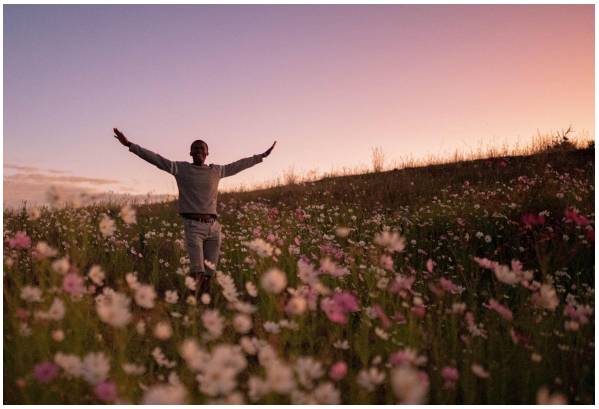

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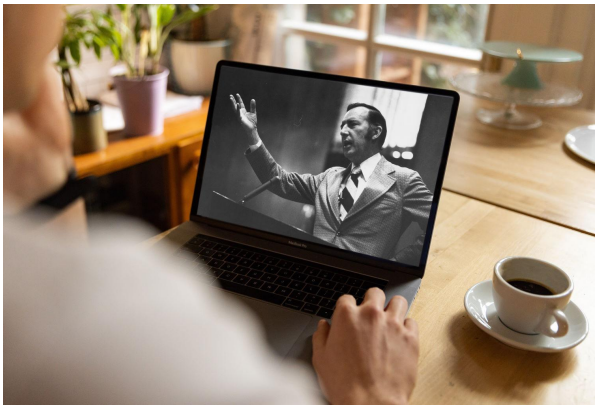

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