

Finding Wisdom Job 28

Finding Wisdom Introduction

- What is the essential thing we need that will allow us to look back on a life well-lived?
 - Is it a good upbringing?
 - Is it a good education?
 - A good family?
 - A good job?
 - Money?
 - Good luck?

- All of those things can be helpful, but the bottom-line answer the Bible gives is, “Wisdom.”
- Wisdom is the thing we need to thrive.

- Certain books are the Bible’s Wisdom Literature.
- Job is the first of these – along with Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and some of the Psalms.

- In ancient times, training in wisdom was considered an essential part of personal development.
- It prepared those in positions of leadership in fields like law, government or the military.
- It was how the old prepared the young to live life.
- Wisdom is the topic of Job 28.
 - *The search for wisdom is at the heart of this entire poem. It would not be too much to say that it is also the theme of the entire book of Job.*
 - *Prof. T. Habtu, Ethiopian Bible Teacher*

Wisdom – What is it?

- It is a moral rather than an intellectual quality.
- It is stewardship of whatever knowledge we have.
- It is skill in the art of living life – the ability to know what to do as well as how and when to do it.

- The key verse in this chapter is the last one.
- Job 28:28 ... Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding.

Finding Wisdom Job 28:1-11

- Human ingenuity and effort can accomplish amazing things.
- In our day we might add any number of technological wonders to Job’s list.
- But true wisdom is not present in any of these.
- In other words, any number of smart, hard-working people will never look back on a well-lived life.

Finding Wisdom Job 28:12-19

- Wisdom is elusive – not easy to find.
- It may be highly esteemed, but cannot be bought at a price.

Finding Wisdom Job 28:20-22

- Wisdom remains elusive.
- Where do we find it?

Finding Wisdom Job 28:23-28

- We find wisdom when we truly find God.
- And when we truly find God in all his love, holiness, majesty and grace, we will fear him.
- Again, the key verse in this chapter is the last one.
- Job 28:28 ... Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding.

Finding Wisdom Job 28:28

- Let's listen to a few commentators on this verse.
 - *What is "the fear of the Lord"? It is loving reverence for God, who He is, what He says, and what He does. It is not a fear that paralyzes, but one that energizes ... Like Job, when you fear the Lord, you depart from evil. The "fear of the Lord" is the fear that conquers fear; for if you fear God, you need not fear anyone else.*
 - Warren Wiersbe
 - *The man who prays ceases to be a fool, while the man who refuses to pray nourishes a blind life within his own brain ...*
 - Oswald Chambers (1874 – 1917)
 - *It's all tied together. If a person is living a wicked life, that person doesn't have the fear of the Lord in his heart ... To live in sin is folly.*
 - Pastor Chuck Smith (1927 – 2013)

Fearing God in a World That Doesn't

- Fearing God is not the same as being religious.
- It is being submitting to, and walking in relationship with the God who has revealed himself in the Bible.
- This can be hard for some people to accept.

- We, in our culture, display an interesting paradox.
- We desire complete freedom.
- We also seem to question whether free will and personal responsibility are even possible.
 - *My behavior at any given moment has been nothing more than the product of my genetic endowment, my personal history, and the current setting.*
 - *B. F. Skinner (1904 – 1990), Harvard Professor of Psychology*
- Let's assume Dr. Skinner was right.
- He claimed, "Free will is but an illusion."
- We are the mere product of our genetics and environment.
- Then all of Skinner's writing must be like that too.
- He could not have arrived at his ideas freely.
- It was the product of his genetics and environment as displayed in the neurons of his brain.
- Job would not agree with B.F. Skinner.
- Job is telling us to seek and find God.
- And in fearing God – the God of the Bible – we will find wisdom.
- By the way, in 1981, at age 77, Skinner did an interview with the *NY Times*. The title of the article says a lot: B.F. SKINNER NOW SEES LITTLE HOPE FOR THE WORLD'S SALVATION
- In the last line, he says, it is "too late - I don't see any hope for it."
- What about other religions?
 - Job was not an Israelite.
 - All indications are that he live in an earlier time.
 - He is not advocating devotion to the Lord as an Egyptian, Babylonian or Canaanite would advocate his own gods.
 - Job is not saying to be true to the religion of your people.
 - He is commending the God of the Bible to anyone who will hear him.

Finding Wisdom Conclusions

- The first step toward true wisdom is a humble, reverent and respectful attitude toward God.
- It is not enough to study about God, to listen to sermons or come to church.
- We must also walk in obedience – turning away from evil.
- Godly wisdom is not at all abstract; it is extremely personal and totally practical.
- Remember what God said about Job at the beginning?
- Look back at Job 1:1 & 1:8.

- Let's also take a look at these few verses:
 - Ps 111:10
 - Proverbs 9:10
 - Col 2:1-3

- Christ is the source of all wisdom and knowledge.
- The better we know Christ, the more we will desire to become like him.
- As we become like him, we will be turning away from evil, walking in wisdom and growing in our grasp of God's will.

- We find wisdom when we find Christ.
- Wisdom is getting to know him and learning to walk more faithfully with him.
- This is what it is to fear the Lord.
- This is what it takes to depart from evil.
- This is what we need in order to look back someday on a life well-lived.