

## WISDOM or KNOWLEDGE – Where are You?

### GET REAL!

**Summary:** The Man who is wise knows that without God, his life is meaningless.

**Bible Verses:** Ecclesiastes 12:13; Ecclesiastes 5:1-20; James 5:12; Psalm 90:17; Genesis 2:15; Genesis 3:17-19; I Corinthians 1:26; Colossians 3:23

**Video Clips:** YouTube – “Bruce’s Breakdown - Bruce Almighty (3/9) Movie CLIP (2003) HD” and WingClips – “Bruce Almighty – Give Me a Sign”

**Music:** “Small Town Southern Man” performed by Alan Jackson

**Resources:** *The Best Question Ever* by Andy Stanley and *Ecclesiastes*

“Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?”  
—T.S. Eliot

Knowledge is gathered from learning and education, while most say that wisdom is gathered from day-to-day experiences and is a state of being wise. Knowledge is merely having clarity of facts and truths, while wisdom is the practical ability to make consistently good decisions in life. God desires that your life be a masterpiece that reflects His greatness and your uniqueness. But to create a masterpiece with your life, you must submit yourself to the hand of the Master. That moment of awareness and surrender is the beginning of true wisdom. You must allow God to influence each stroke on the canvas of your life. This series will lead you to a path of wisdom by considering the Book of Ecclesiastes, movie clips, story, and other resources.

### LIVE IN REALITY!

1. \_\_\_\_\_! (Eccl. 5:1-3). = Religious men love to use wordy prayers—they talk too much! A natural assumption of a man's ego in religion is that God is somehow impressed with a word count. Being a prayer warrior is not the same as chattering, glibness, etc. Jesus modeled for his disciples and simple and brief prayer (Matthew 6:7).
2. \_\_\_\_\_! (Eccl. 5:4-7). = Fools love thoughtless vows—arrogance pushes them to make empty promises! Talking about what you will do is a good, low-cost way to enhance your reputation (James 5:12). The humble man prays God's favor will be upon him (Psalm 90:17).
3. \_\_\_\_\_! (Eccl. 5:8-9). = It is naïve to think that we could all hold hands and think happy thoughts and world peace would happen. Men are oppressed all the time—the wise are not amazed or embittered when it happens. Some men gravitate to the seat of political power, only to be disillusioned with the shocking untrustworthiness of so many found in that arena. Many others make themselves right at home in the corruption. Wise men see the reality without becoming bitter.
4. \_\_\_\_\_! (Eccl. 5:10-11). = This relates to covetousness—it is a hunger that never stops! Lust is never satisfied – “You can't take it with you!” A man who works hard to acquire money or “stuff” will one day discover that the money or “stuff” has actually acquired him. Selfish desire for wealth can lead to oppression, leads to dissatisfaction, and leads to anxiety.
5. \_\_\_\_\_! (Eccl. 5:12-17). = The common laborer – a Small Town Southern Man in Alan Jackson's song, sleeps better than the anxiety-ridden rich (5:12). A hard day's work yields a good night's sleep (v. 12). But the sheer accumulation of riches brings insomnia. The next verses give us some idea why—wealth, whether it's hoarded or lost altogether—seems to be a grievous evil either way (vv. 13, 14). In the end, riches really do not matter, because, as the saying goes, you can't take it with you (vv. 15, 16). If you're ever in danger of making money too much of a priority, verse 17 should instantly cure that line of thinking. An existence marked by “great frustration, affliction and anger” isn't worth pursuing.
6. \_\_\_\_\_! (Eccl. 5:18-20). = God has given you the power—only God's power—to eat of it and this is the gift of God (Eccl. 5:20). When a man receives what God gives—and only then—he may thoroughly enjoy himself. His portion is sweet when it is received as a gift. BUT, if it is just there, unexamined, taken for granted, mountains of it will only add to the despair. When God gives power for enjoyment, a man may thrive, even though he lives his days under a dying sun. Quote re: Income & Happiness.

### WISDOM – LET'S GET REAL WITH YOUR VOCATION!

1. When your \_\_\_\_\_ is enmeshed in your work, when the measure of your \_\_\_\_\_ is your productivity, monetary success or renown, when remaining constantly busy is the thing you do to feel important or to avoid feelings of emptiness, then in all likelihood your work is toxic and hazardous to your health. Quote from Fil Anderson.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ is part of God's plan for you (Gen. 2:15), but many view work as affliction, a punishment for rebellion (Gen. 3:17-19). The challenge is to bring together the necessity of work and the longing for intimacy with God.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ is your contribution to the ongoing creation of the world and the means wherein you demonstrate that you are made in the image of God.
4. Your \_\_\_\_\_ is not to live long enough or work hard enough to some day retire from work. Work isn't a distraction, curse or diversion from God; it is His Gift to YOU!
5. Work is not a nuisance to be avoided or punishment to be endured. Work is a \_\_\_\_\_ given to you from the hands of God. Holiness and work are not mutually exclusive. Work is what I do to continue what God wants done. To each man God has given gifts and talents to be used for your pleasure and to meet the needs of others. Work brings dignity and honor to you and God!

### WISDOM – LET YOUR LIFE SPEAK!

1. A God-shaped view of work recognizes that work is not for \_\_\_\_\_; work is for \_\_\_\_\_, not just for getting.
2. The word vocation comes from the Latin word for a summons or \_\_\_\_\_. Vocation involves \_\_\_\_\_ that is intent on leading you to what is yours to do. You must LISTEN! Quote from Parker Palmer.
3. Your deepest calling is to be the person \_\_\_\_\_. There's no gift you have to offer that will provide God or you or those near you more pleasure delight and good than being the YOU God intended. What you seek in a vocation is discovered and expressed when you engage wholeheartedly in the task that is at hand (I Corinthians 1:26; Colossians 3:23).

### ACTION: Journal This!

1. What is the purpose of your job?
2. What are your plans for retirement?
3. What is your view of money?

**Philip K. Hardin, M.A., M.Div.**

Director of Business & Professional Outreach, Intl.

Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist & Licensed Professional Counselor

Email: [phil@bpoinintl.org](mailto:phil@bpoinintl.org)

Webpage: [www.bpoinintl.org](http://www.bpoinintl.org)

## Bible Verses

### Ecclesiastes 12:12-13

<sup>12-13</sup> But regarding anything beyond this, dear friend, go easy. There's no end to the publishing of books, and constant study wears you out so you're no good for anything else. The last and final word is this: Fear God.  
Do what he tells you.

### Ecclesiastes 5:1-20

<sup>1</sup> Watch your step when you enter God's house. Enter to learn. That's far better than mindlessly offering a sacrifice, doing more harm than good.  
<sup>2</sup> Don't shoot off your mouth, or speak before you think. Don't be too quick to tell God what you think he wants to hear. God's in charge, not you—the less you speak, the better.  
<sup>3</sup> Overwork makes for restless sleep. Overtalk shows you up as a fool.  
<sup>4-5</sup> When you tell God you'll do something, do it—now. God takes no pleasure in foolish gabble. Vow it, then do it. Far better not to vow in the first place than to vow and not pay up.  
<sup>6</sup> Don't let your mouth make a total sinner of you. When called to account, you won't get by with "Sorry, I didn't mean it." Why risk provoking God to angry retaliation?  
<sup>7</sup> But against all illusion and fantasy and empty talk there's always this rock foundation: Fear God!  
<sup>8-9</sup> Don't be too upset when you see the poor kicked around, and justice and right violated all over the place. Exploitation filters down from one petty official to another. There's no end to it, and nothing can be done about it. But the good earth doesn't cheat anyone—even a bad king is honestly served by a field.  
<sup>10</sup> The one who loves money is never satisfied with money, nor the one who loves wealth with big profits. More smoke.  
<sup>11</sup> The more loot you get, the more looters show up. And what fun is that—to be robbed in broad daylight?  
<sup>12</sup> Hard and honest work earns a good night's sleep, whether supper is beans or steak. But a rich man's belly gives him insomnia.  
<sup>13-17</sup> Here's a piece of bad luck I've seen happen: A man hoards far more wealth than is good for him and then loses it all in a bad business deal. He fathered a child but hasn't a cent left to give him. He arrived naked from the womb of his mother; he'll leave in the same condition—with nothing. This is bad luck, for sure—naked he came, naked he went. So what was the point of working for a salary of smoke? All for a miserable life spent in the dark?

<sup>18-20</sup> After looking at the way things are on this earth, here's what I've decided is the best way to live: Take care of yourself, have a good time, and make the most of whatever job you have for as long as God gives you life. And that's about it. That's the human lot. Yes, we should make the most of what God gives, both the bounty and the capacity to enjoy it, accepting what's given and delighting in the work. It's God's gift! God deals out joy in the present, the *now*. It's useless to brood over how long we might live.

### James 5:12

<sup>12</sup> And since you know that he cares, let your language show it. Don't add words like "I swear to God" to your own words. Don't show your impatience by concocting oaths to hurry up God. Just say yes or no. Just say what is true. That way, your language can't be used against you.

### Psalms 90:17

<sup>17</sup> And let the loveliness of our Lord, our God, rest on us, confirming the work that we do. Oh, yes. Affirm the work that we do!

### Genesis 2:15

<sup>15</sup> GOD took the Man and set him down in the Garden of Eden to work the ground and keep it in order.

### Genesis 3:17-19

<sup>17-19</sup> He told the Man: "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from, Don't eat from this tree,' the very ground is cursed because of you; getting food from the ground will be as painful as having babies is for your wife; you'll be working in pain all your life long. The ground will sprout thorns and weeds, you'll get your food the hard way, planting and tilling and harvesting, sweating in the fields from dawn to dusk, until you return to that ground yourself, dead and buried; you started out as dirt, you'll end up dirt."

### I Corinthians 1:26

<sup>26</sup> Take a good look, friends, at who you were when you got called into this life. I don't see many of "the brightest and the best" among you, not many influential, not many from high-society families.

### Colossians 3:23

<sup>23</sup> Do your best. Work from the heart for your real Master, for God...

## SMALL TOWN SOUTHERN MAN

Written and performed by Alan Jackson

Born the middle son of a farmer  
And a small town Southern man  
Like his daddy's daddy before him  
Brought up workin' on the land  
Fell in love with a small town woman  
And they married up and settled down  
Natural way of life if you're lucky  
For a small town Southern man

First there came four pretty daughters  
For this small town Southern man  
Then a few years later came another  
A boy, he wasn't planned  
Seven people livin' all together  
In a house built with his own hands  
Little words with love and understandin'

From a small town Southern man

*[Chorus:]*

And he bowed his head to Jesus  
And he stood for Uncle Sam  
And he only loved one woman  
(He) was always proud of what he had  
He said his greatest contribution  
Is the ones you leave behind

Raised on the ways and gentle kindness  
Of a small town Southern man

Callous hands told the story  
For this small town Southern man  
He gave it all to keep it all together

And keep his family on his land  
Like his daddy, years wore out his body  
Made it hard just to walk and stand  
You can break the back  
But you can't break the spirit  
Of a small town Southern man

Finally death came callin'  
For this small town Southern man  
He said it's alright 'cause I see angels  
And they got me by the hand  
Don't you cry, and don't you worry  
I'm blessed, and I know I am  
'Cause God has a place in Heaven  
For a small town Southern man

## QUOTES

A recent survey of American households attempted to discover the relationship between income and happiness. They polled people at varying income levels from very poor to extremely rich. The results came as some surprise to the group conducting the study. The only connection found between an increase in money and an elevated sense of happiness came at the poverty line. Families who had trouble meeting their basic needs—clothes, food, a warm home, etc.—were generally less happy than other families. But from that point on, even as the income level increased, the satisfaction level stayed the same.

"Whenever I'm looking for myself or trying to escape myself in my work, I'm flirting with that horrible dependence or addiction called workaholism.

One very clear symptom of workaholism is being so consumed with work that even when I'm not at work, my mind is working on my work. When this occurs, the things I claim that matter most in my life suffer—relationships, personal health, the perspective needed to enjoy the little things in life, and being able to rest in the awareness that my work is an important means and not an end." - Fil Anderson, author of *Running on Empty: Contemplative Spirituality for Overachievers*.

"Before you tell your life what you intend to do with it, listen for what truths and values you have decided to live up to, let your life tell you what truths you embody, what values you represent." – Parker Palmer, author of *Let Your Life Speak*

# **WISDOM or KNOWLEDGE – Where are you?**

**"Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?" —T.S. Eliot. Knowledge is gathered from learning and education, while most say that wisdom is gathered from day-to-day experiences and is a state of being wise. Knowledge is merely having clarity of facts and truths, while wisdom is the practical ability to make consistently good decisions in life. God desires that your life be a masterpiece that reflects His greatness and your uniqueness. But to create a masterpiece with your life, you must submit yourself to the hand of the Master. That moment of awareness and surrender is the beginning of true wisdom. You must allow God to influence each stroke on the canvas of your life. This series will lead you to a path of wisdom by considering the Book of Ecclesiastes, movie clips, story, and other resources.**

**GET REAL!**

***Ecclesiastes 5:1-20***

# LIVE IN REALITY!

1. **LISTEN MORE, TALK LESS!** (Eccl. 5:1-3). = Religious men love to use wordy prayers—they talk too much! A natural assumption of a man's ego in religion is that God is somehow impressed with a word count. Being a prayer warrior is not the same as chattering, glibness, etc. Jesus modeled for his disciples and simple and brief prayer (Matthew 6:7).
2. **STOP TRYING TO MAKE DEALS WITH GOD!** (Eccl. 5:4-7). = Fools love thoughtless vows—arrogance pushes them to make empty promises! Talking about what you will do is a good, low-cost way to enhance your reputation (James 5:12). The humble man prays God's favor will be upon him (Psalm 90:17).
3. **DEPENDENT UPON GOD!** (Eccl. 5:8-9). = It is naïve to think that we could all hold hands and think happy thoughts and world peace would happen. Men are oppressed all the time—the wise are not amazed or embittered when it happens. Some men gravitate to the seat of political power, only to be disillusioned with the shocking untrustworthiness of so many found in that arena. Many others make themselves right at home in the corruption. Wise men see the reality without becoming bitter.



# LIVE IN REALITY! (continued)

4. **LUST ALWAYS DEMANDS MORE!** (Eccl. 5:10-11). = This relates to covetousness—it is a hunger that never stops! Lust is never satisfied – “You can’t take it with you!” A man who works hard to acquire money or “stuff” will one day discover that the money or “stuff” has actually acquired him. Selfish desire for wealth can lead to oppression, leads to dissatisfaction, and leads to anxiety.
5. **GREED IS A LONELY COMPANION!** (Eccl. 5:12-17). = The common laborer – a Small Town Southern Man in Alan Jackson’s song, sleeps better than the anxiety-ridden rich (5:12). A hard day’s work yields a good night’s sleep (v. 12). But the sheer accumulation of riches brings insomnia. The next verses give us some idea why—wealth, whether it’s hoarded or lost altogether— seems to be a grievous evil either way (vv. 13, 14). In the end, riches really do not matter, because, as the saying goes, you can’t take it with you (vv. 15, 16). If you’re ever in danger of making money too much of a priority, verse 17 should instantly cure that line of thinking. An existence marked by “great frustration, affliction and anger” isn’t worth pursuing.
6. **LIVE WITH GOD’S PEACE & JOY!** (Eccl. 5:18-20). = God has given you the power—only God’s power—to eat of it and this is the gift of God (Eccl. 5:20). When a man receives what God gives—and only then—he may thoroughly enjoy himself. His portion is sweet when it is received as a gift. BUT, if it is just there, unexamined, taken for granted, mountains of it will only add to the despair. When God gives power for enjoyment, a man may thrive, even though he lives his days under a dying sun. Quote re: Income & Happiness.

# Parker Palmer in *Let Your Life Speak*

A recent survey of American households attempted to discover the relationship between income and happiness. They polled people at varying income levels from very poor to extremely rich. The results came as some surprise to the group conducting the study. The only connection found between an increase in money and an elevated sense of happiness came at the poverty line. Families who had trouble meeting their basic needs—clothes, food, a warm home, etc.—were generally less happy than other families. But from that point on, even as the income level increased, the satisfaction level stayed the same.

“Whenever I’m looking fro myself or trying to escape myself in my work, I’m flirting with that horrible dependence or addiction called workaholism. One very clear symptom of workaholism is being so consumed with work that even when I’m not at work, my mind is working on my work. When this occurs, the things I claim that matter most in my life suffer—relationships, personal health, the perspective needed to enjoy the little things in life, and being able to rest in the awareness that my work is an important means and not and end.” - Fil Anderson, author of *Running on Empty: Contemplative Spirituality for Overachievers*.

“Before you tell your life what you intend to do with it, listen for what truths and values you have decided to live up to, let your life tell you what truths you embody, what values you represent.”

# WISDOM – LET’S GET REAL WITH YOUR VOCATION!

1. When your **identity** is enmeshed in your work, when the measure of your **worth** is you productivity, monetary success or renown, when remaining constantly busy is the thing you do to feel important or to avoid feelings of emptiness, then in all likelihood your work is toxic and hazardous to your health. Quote from Fil Anderson.
2. **Work** is part of God’s plan for you (Gen. 2:15), but many view work as affliction, a punishment for rebellion (Gen. 3:17-19). The challenge is to bring together the necessity of work and the longing for intimacy with God.
3. **Work** is your contribution to the ongoing creation of the world and the means wherein you demonstrate that you are made in the image of God.
4. Your **purpose** is not to live long enough or work hard enough to some day retire from work. Work isn’t a distraction, curse or diversion from God; it is His Gift to YOU!
5. Work is not a nuisance to be avoided or punishment to be endured. Work is a **gift** given to you from the hands of God. Holiness and work are not mutually exclusive. Work is what I do to continue what God wants done. To each man God has given gifts and talents to be used for your pleasure and to meet the needs of others. Work brings dignity and honor to you and God!

# WISDOM – LET YOUR LIFE SPEAK!

1. A God-shaped view of work recognizes that work is not for **personal gain**; work is for **giving**, not just for getting.
2. The word vocation comes from the Latin word for a summons or **call**. Vocation involves **listening for a calling voice** that is intent on leading you to what is yours to do. You must LISTEN! Quote from Parker Palmer.
3. Your deepest calling is to be the person **God created**. There's no gift you have to offer that will provide God or you or those near you more pleasure delight and good than being the YOU God intended. What you seek in a vocation is discovered and expressed when you engage wholeheartedly in the task that is at hand (I Corinthians 1:26; Colossians 3:23).



# **ACTION: Journal This!**

1. What is the purpose of your job?
2. What are your plans for retirement?
3. What is your view of money?

WISDOM

OR

KNOWLEDGE