

## **THE MIND OF CHRIST SERIES**

### **FOUR PROGRESSIONS IN WISDOM**

We are going to look at Proverbs chapter 1,2,3 and 4, 4 glorious chapters in wisdom. It speaks about how we are to grow in wisdom. Last week we look at the five different rivers of wisdom. And we want to see how to progress into wisdom.

Wisdom is not stagnant. Its something that is progressive and sometimes the progression can be delayed in some people's lives. All along they could be making average grades and then suddenly in their late teens or early 20s, they began to have a hunger for knowledge and wisdom. Things began to change in their lives. So wisdom is not stagnant.

There is a debate in the secular world about whether the environment or hereditary genes that affects a person more. We realize that both areas are important.

But if we look at God's Word, hereditary plays a lesser role because of Jesus. It doesn't matter what your background is. It doesn't matter what your education level is. If there is no Jesus then your hereditary genes play a great role. But thank God for Jesus, no matter whether you are rich or poor, educated or uneducated, smart or not quite smart in the past, in Jesus we have wisdom,

sanctification, righteousness and holiness. One of the first thing mentioned in II Cor.1 is that in Christ we have wisdom. In Him we possess wisdom.

Even in current research in the world, they found that environment and what a person does with it play a heavy role. It is not 50-50. From the latest research it looks like 90 to 10. 90% of our intelligence was found to be due to environmental factors and 10% due to hereditary genes.

See they found these 2 little children in India many years ago and they grew up among the wolves. So a pastor discovered them. This pastor tried to bring them back to human society, took them into the orphanage that he runs. He did everything he could. These kids behaved like wolves. They were no more like human beings. We know they are not wolves. They are humans but wolves in that environment had raised them. The pastor put all the training he could into their lives and by the time they grew up to be teenagers they spoke only a handful of human words. The wolf's nature was so deeply ingrained in them. When I read that story another factor comes to my mind, demon possession, which was not mentioned in that article that I read. It's a true story. There is possibly demonic activity involved, so they did their best from the natural point of view and training and education level and that was like towards the end of their teenage time, they don't seem to have much progress. The environment that they were thrown in has such an influence upon their lives. As I read that my spirit picked up that possibly there are demon spirits that are involved that have not been dealt with.

There is a human environment and there is a demonic environment. If the demonic environment influences or denominates a person's life, the demon must be cast out. There are some things that cannot be dealt with by exorcism. I mean if it is a soul problem or a flesh problem you cannot cast it out. You have to meditate on God's Word and get your mind renewed but if it is a spiritual problem or evil spirit, no amount of training or meditation can do it. The demon has to be dealt with and we have to be led by the Holy Spirit in both areas.

But we look in the kingdom of God and in Jesus Christ. The only factor that plays a role today in people's ability or inability is the mind of Christ or the lack of it. God wants every one of us to have the wisdom of Christ. There is more what we do with our lives and the environment we chose that will affect our ability to possess the mind of Christ. It's all fully environmental. How much you spend time with God, how much you spend time around the right things. All these are going to affect the area of wisdom and these confirm with the 4 progressions of wisdom that the book of Proverbs bring to us.

See Proverbs 1,2,3 and 4 are 4 progressive stages of the development of wisdom in a person life.

### First Progression : Obedience

In Proverbs 1 we are going to read the key verses here. In verse 2,3 *To know wisdom and instruction, to perceive the words of understanding, to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment and equity.* Then verse 7 *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

The first possession of wisdom is in the area of learning obedience. That is learning to obey God and His words before we understand. That's a very tough area for human beings for we have been educated and trained to know first before we obey. But many times it is required that we obey first before we know. Sometimes after you obeyed His Word He would let you know the reasons quite quickly. Sometimes it takes time. The first progression of wisdom is to obey God. Wisdom comes through the fear of God. By choosing His commandments above our natural understanding, above our natural mind, above traditions, above what our peers and our friends say if it's against God's word. To choose obedience in God is the right step towards the development of wisdom.

We could study the development of wisdom in Daniel's life. The prophet Daniel

went through all the four stages of development of wisdom. In Daniel chapter one, Daniel was just among the bright kids that were taken as slaves from Israel and brought to Babylon. Of all these bright kids that were there, they were offered the opportunity to break the Jewish laws. Why, because Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel chapter one prepared a great feast for all these people and gave them all the secular training that they required. All under scholarship, under the king himself, was to train a group of advisers or counselors; so all these Hebrew kids followed the ways of the Gentiles.

I mean, if you think like them, their nation had been destroyed. There is no other home that they have now. Their very lives and souls belong to the Babylon Empire. If they have parents, they were separated from their parents. They have no homes, no families, and were unwanted people. The king only separated them for service in the kingdom. It looked like they have got nothing to lose and everything to gain in the secular realm by giving themselves fully to Nebuchadnezzar.

But Daniel and his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego showed the first part of wisdom. Against all their peers, it must have been so unusual. You must know that it's not easy; it's not easy to take the first step. It's against peer's presence. Then it will be against the king's commandment. They had to have special grace. There were barriers to them following even the first step.

But God gave them favor. This was what Daniel said in Dan.1 to the captain in charge over them, chief of the eunuchs verse 8, *"But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself."* Daniel says to the chief of the eunuchs I do not want to break Jewish laws. He considers that a defilement. That tells me that Daniel is not just concerned about his health, although it's good to take care of your health, he is concerned about the covenant of God. At the time where there was no temple, no priest, no nation, looks like all of the Jewish religion is lost, Daniel chose to keep God's covenant, for obedience is better than sacrifice. His three friends went along with him and God brought them into favor with the eunuchs.

Grace comes after obedience. We all need grace. You need grace in your job because there are competitors and the only reason why somebody chose you above the others is the grace of God. Why were you promoted above the others? As a believer you realize that there is no such thing as luck, no such thing as *fortunately* or *unfortunately* or *coincidence*. All these words do not apply if there is a God. There is a God who guides our life. So every time grace is given, it is conditional upon obedience first. See, God does not favor anyone above the other. God does not play favoritism. This amount of grace He has stored up in the storehouse of heaven. He says this amount of grace is available to whomsoever. But to receive it because this grace is holy and clean you must obey My word.

You say, "So hard, I want grace before obedience." God replies, "No, obey first and then you will receive grace." You say, "God, if you will only bless me this way and bring me so much blessing I will do this for you." That's the same kind of statement as saying, "Lord I want grace before obedience." "O God, if you would only promote me I will spend more time with you." They got the cart before the horse. Poor horse can't even drink, blocked by the cart. How would you like to drive a car with the steering wheel facing the other way? That's what some people are like. They want the blessing of God, they want to go the right direction but that's the way they approach God, grace before obedience. God says obedience before grace. As we are going to see it's obedience before wisdom. So those who are saying, "Lord if you bless me with that much, I will give that much." God said, "No. You show your faithfulness and your obedience then it shall be given and more will come. To him who has more, more will be given. To him that has not that which he has will be taken away also."

We see this in Matt.25: 14 the parable of the 3 servants, one receiving 5 talents, the other 2 talents and the third 1 talent. Each one must be faithful to what he has. Obedience must come first. I believe we got to teach obedience in the Body of Christ because when we come to the Body of Christ we come many times with a natural approach. Let me illustrate. When you ask people to do something or people to go for some areas with zeal, most of the time the question at the back is, "What do I get out of it?" There are very few who would do something

without getting anything out of it. Even some of the most holy people when they do something, if recognition is not given then they say, look I have done so much they do not appreciate me. You don't work for anything but for God. We believe it is right to compliment, we believe it is right to encourage, we believe it is right to do all these things but remember there are different stages of development in our walk with God.

Usually when people just come to know God, they want to know what God can do for them. Most of us come to know God that way. We come to God because we have a need. Either our need is spiritual like habits and sins, or financial, or emotional. We come to God because we have a need. But the sad thing is if we keep that kind of mental attitude all the time, we have not matured in God. So most people come to God because of a need and then when you think about serving God we cannot think about what we can get out of it because that would be level one of obedience.

Its just like little kids. You tell the Sunday school teacher who work with the kids, you know how kids are, and they don't have a concept of time like adults have. You ask the kids when is your birthday, they say I don't know. Some of them may know and you ask them about time the concept is not there, but they always will remember their rewards and punishments. So when you work with kids you work at their level. If you do well that is it. You see kids when they know what their reward is and they know what their punishment is, so they learn reward and punishment. There will be some principles in bringing up kids but remember don't ever judge another family just based on your family because no two kids are the same. There are some principles that apply to all. There are some that are slightly different because each kid has a different personality.

It's a different thing to bring up a kid that is like a mouse all the time. It's a different thing to bring up boys. You don't expect boys to behave like girls. Most adults at the back of their minds still believe in the old things, children should be seen and not heard. Kids are kids we don't treat kids like adults. At the same time we don't treat adults like kids. We don't treat teenagers like kids. They are different. They have grown. They want you to be friends with them; they want you to be buddies with them. Many teenagers would say my parents

never have time for me. My parents never talk with me. One of the things we learn is you need eye contact with them. They will never be satisfied unless you look at them in the eye. I could visualize a little kid tugging at the mother's apron. Mummy looks at what I've made. Mummy is busy, her two hands are full of soap. The child is about done in another 30 seconds. Her mind is thinking about her days activity, so there she says ok, ok nice. Somehow the kid will not be pleased. Until the mother turns her whole body, look at the kid eyeball to eyeball and say very nice, then the kid will be happy. Sometimes it is better to take 15 seconds to do that then to just ignore them and for the next 15 minutes they are still pulling you. So kids have a different way of bringing up.

When we come to Christ we come as little spiritual kids or babes in Christ and we understand God's system of reward and punishment. We understand God's system in that area. One of the things we need to appreciate is learning to obey. Original sin is cause by a free will that always wants to go independent. One of the goals in bringing up little kids is to break their will without breaking their spirit. I mean if you break their spirit they are finished. One of the goals is to break the will so that the will of the child learns to submit because submission is something that is not hereditary in a human being. Since Adam's fall men have not learned how to submit so submission is difficult and that's one of the goals in bringing up kids: to break the will. You could tell whether a kid's will has been broken. If their will is not broken while they are under 10 year old, they will be rebellious when they are teenagers. You reap what you sow. But if their will have been broken, molded, their spirit still intact, they have learned obedience and they will grow up to be obedient kids. Train the child in the way of the Lord and they will grow and will not depart from the way of the Lord.

One of the things that God deals with our lives, when we are new in Christ as we began to walk with Him in obedience, it is enshrined in the 10 commandments, thou shall obey thy father and thy mother. What does that teach us? Obedience. Learning to submit to authority. Some people hear the word submission they run because they never want to submit. Submission is not domination. Only someone who had submitted to the authority will be able to use authority correctly. When someone who does not understand submission gets into authority they will be abusive. Just like the centurion who comes to Jesus and said, "Jesus my servant is sick. I need you to help." Jesus said, "I will

come." I mean Jesus was prepared to go all along the way. Walk all the way to this man's house, lay hands on that servant and heal that servant. This centurion who was an obedient servant said, "Sir you don't have to do that. I am a soldier and I know. My commander says attention, I will stand to attention, and I have been taking orders and know what it is in the natural realm." He says, "Jesus you have spiritual authority, you give the command, if you say attention, all the demons will shrink. You say, 'Out,' the demons will go out. Jesus if you say heal all the germs will run for they will obey you." So the commander says, "Jesus, you have authority and I submit to your authority, you just give the command Lord. Just like my commander above me, give the command." Jesus said, "I have never seen such faith in all Israel." He has not seen such faith. And he says go your way, it is done. The amazing thing was that Jesus originally wanted to go with that person.

So we learn one lesson. Jesus' methods are adapted to our faith level. He could have walked with that person all the way to the house, lay hands and heal that person and come back. Jesus' methods are able to adapt to our faith level. So today you don't have to see Jesus if you have the faith. The same work will work for you. The same Jesus of Nazareth at the first level of obedience.

In order to move into wisdom Jesus also went through all four steps. Like Daniel before he gets wisdom, you have to learn obedience. So Daniel says I choose not to defile myself. We may not appreciate the context that he went through but let me remind you that they were putting themselves in danger of their lives. Somebody else could have come to Daniel and asked, "Why do you endanger your life? You are foolish and stupid. Be wise like us, be smart." I tell you what the world calls smart God calls foolish sometimes. For Daniel says the commandments of God are above our lives. It's better to die and obey than to live and be destroyed. That's the kind of obedience he had. Remember it's the Babylonian Empire. It's not the United States democratic government. This is a Nebuchadnezzar up there; the people feared Nebuchadnezzar with all his soldiers. To them a life is nothing. I mean they are killing and killing like nobody's business.

For Daniel, "Your commandments O Lord are above my life." That's the first

commandment. If you want to be wise the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. What is the beginning of the knowledge in God? The fear of the Lord, and we need the fear of the Lord in our lives. It's not a bad fear. It's a good fear, meaning a reverential fear. If you have the fear of the Lord you will have no other fear. You will not fear the devil, you will not fear man, and you will fear God.

As I said like Daniel's life, it's not easy to take the first step, neither was it in Jesus' life. Jesus when He was a young boy, He grew in favor with God and with man. Grew in wisdom and in stature but there were times in His life where His obedience was tested. We have only one record of that. There could be more than one time. In Luke 2 when Jesus was about 12 years old, His parents visited Jerusalem and they attended the feast then they left thinking Jesus was in their caravan group. They couldn't find Him. They came looking for Him and finally they found Him in the temple in verse 46, *Now as it was that after 3 days they found Him in the temple sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. All who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.* That's powerful, Jesus knew more than His parents. Jesus was wiser than His parents. He was wiser than all the other teachers and doctors of the law. His answers and His questions astonished them. That's God wisdom operating. Don't miss the next verse. Verse 48, *When they saw Him they were amazed and His mother said, "Son why have you done this to us?"* Obviously she was highly tensed, anxious and reactive.

Here is a fantastic teacher that the doctors of the laws have never heard before. He was only 12 years old, yet the things that came from His lips astonished them. Everyone was sitting amazed. *She said, "Your father and I have sought you anxiously."* He said to them, *why is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?* What a son! I tell you, some mothers today wish that their children are like Jesus. I tell you, if they are really like Jesus, you may regret especially if you are not like Jesus because they will tell you things that you don't know. They will tell you things in your heart that you will say, "O God; I have a Jesus walking in my house who knows my every sin." But it's good to have little children like Jesus. Make sure they are like Jesus too. So we have this Jesus who said, "Don't you know I must be about my Father's business?" This is what they did not understand the statement that Jesus spoke to

them.

I like the next thing in verse 51, *Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was subject to them.* I mean, our King of kings, Lord of lords, even though He was 12 years old, He was still Son of God and Son of Man. Can you imagine, a perfect sinless man submitting to an imperfect father and mother. That must be different. Some of you could be in a certain situation where you felt the one above you didn't know as much as you and you become rebellious. He doesn't know what he is doing. Why not I take his place, and let him come down. It doesn't mean just because we know more that the authority will automatically come. It's more difficult to submit when the one you submit to doesn't know as much as you do. I mean it's easy to submit to someone who knows more than us. It's easy to submit your area of work to somebody whom you know is an expert in that field. But if either you think you know more or if you actually know more makes it difficult. But yet Jesus, even though He knew more, He was in touch with God and His parents didn't know as much. It tells us obviously their brainpower was not as much as His because they didn't understand what He said. He only said two sentences, and they didn't even understand them. Imagine if He said a hundred. Yet Jesus Christ submitted, that's a miracle of character.

Here was the reward when you get to the first step of wisdom. The first stage of wisdom is to take God at His Word whether we understand it or not. Take God at His Word. Don't question His word because it's one spark of dust challenging the Creator of the universe. You must know how big the universe is. Our earth is only one tiny planet of our solar system. One solar system is only one tiny corner of the galaxy. Our galaxy is only one tiny corner of many billion of galaxies. God made everything. That's how big He is. You are right just one spot in that galaxy challenging God and saying explain this to me. If God starts explaining your brain will explode. So He tells us things step by step.

So, the first step to wisdom is to take Him at His word. The Word of God produces wisdom. It's amazing that the more someone yields to things that are carnal and sinful the more their intelligence deteriorates. Obedience comes first. Can you imagine trying to have more wisdom, while for example, you are living

in adultery or you are stealing and lying and cheating? Your conscience is troubling you every night. So you can't sleep, every night you sleep on drugs. You wake up and your conscience wake up with you. All through the day all kind of thoughts running. Will you ever be found out? When will your mind have anytime for any things else.

So God says obey Him, remain clean, washed by His blood and we have to give up what we have been trained all the time. You are saying God we will obey before we understand. In the world you are trained to understand before you obey. So my question is not just blind obedience, but rather careful obedience. That mean before I obey I am allowed to analyze. By my analysis is not to understand, my analysis is, "Is this from God?" I mean if it's straight from the Bible I know its God. But if I hear His voice or if I have a thought that comes from Him, if I see a vision, the most important thing is, "Is this from God?" Because if it's God whether I understand it, let me obey first. That's the only area we are allowed. God will allow us to check on His word. Check your vision, check your voice, check your thoughts, and check your ideas with the word. We are not advocating a kind of zombie obedience, which you obey like a zombie. Unthinking hypnotized followers. Jesus wants people to obey Him intelligently but your intelligence has to be qualified. You are only allowed to examine the source. If it's from God, and if it's in line with the Word of God, then that settles it. In fact if it's His written Word there is no question. He says it that settles it. That's the first step. It's hard to give up. There are many things God tells you to do that it's very hard to understand and because it's hard to understand and you can't see what is beyond that, it's not easy to obey. Think about Abraham. God says, "Abraham get out of this land and go to the land that I shall show you." It's not easy to obey. He has lived there all his life. You ask anybody whether he or she wants to shift home and shift hometown. Abraham had to follow that voice all the time. That vision that voice of God that he heard to obey is better than to sacrifice.

So Jesus obeyed and looks at the blessings involved in Luke. 2:52 and when you see the word and you know that the precious sentence resulted from this is the consequence of the precious verse. It says Jesus submitted to His parents. Step one of wisdom, "*And Jesus increased in wisdom ad stature.*"

What about Daniel? Daniel chapter one, when he obeyed God in verse 15, *“At the end of 10 days their countenance appear better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king’s delicacies.”* I tell you that was a side bonus. Verse 17, *And for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had the understanding in all visions and dreams.*

Look at that, obedience; he is not talking about spiritual knowledge although we know spiritual knowledge is involved. Look at that first part there *in all literature*. What literature? The literature of the Babylonians. All these young men who were slaves from Israel had to study all the Babylonian books and because they obeyed God they made better grades than the rest of them. All because of obedience. How wonderful is the mercy of God. Then as a side benefit, as a bonus, God gave them better health and countenance. Verse 15 tells us they looked better than all the rest. Even though the rest had 10 days of the feasting of the king’s wine, the king’s pork, crabs, prawns, at the end of 10 days even without a word spoken, the best looking guys were Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So we have the blessing that comes after obedience. Step one. Lets look at Proverbs chapter one, it says, *The fear of the Lord is the beginning, (not the end of knowledge), but fools despise wisdom and instruction.* That’s the beginning.

What’s the stage 2? Before we go to stage 2, one more verse from chapter one in verse 23, *Turn at my reproof, (that is wisdom talking) surely I will pour out my Spirit on you.* In wisdom there is a spirit and it says wisdom is a spirit. That Spirit can come into us if we obey. When we obey God what happens is we become clean vessels then the Spirit of wisdom pours into our lives and the understanding comes forth.

Second Progression : Asking for Wisdom

Then stage 2. Proverbs chapter 2:2-3 *“So that you incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding; Yes, if you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding, if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the Lord.”* The first thing is obeyed. He is talking about stage 2 understanding. The second stage of progressing in wisdom is given there in verse 3, *You will cry out, you will lift up your voice and ask for it.* The book of James chapter one verse five tells us, *If anyone lacks wisdom let him ask from God.* Hold it there, it is stage 2. If you live in sin and you ask for wisdom, God’s only answer is get rid of sin first, obey His commands before you talk about the rest. So stage two will not work if you don’t have stage one. But after stage one, you obeyed God and tasted the first part of His blessing of wisdom you go on to stage two. Thirst and hunger after that wisdom, cry, ask, fast and pray for that wisdom from God. We have not because we ask not. If you don’t ask God will not give. God desires that we desire it.

Now watch Daniel’s life in the book of Daniel chapter 2, see Daniel already has wisdom but it’s not enough. We want the mind of Christ, we want the full measure, and we don’t want half measures. In Daniel chapter 2 there was a crisis. All the wise men were being taken to be executed. Daniel wanted to find out the reason so he asked Arioch the captain of the king’s guard in verse 14. *Then with counsel and wisdom Daniel answered Arioch, the captain of the king’s guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon.* Now Daniel already has wisdom. Incidentally the word *wisdom* in the above verse we studied in the previous message is the word *sakal*. *Sakal* is the wisdom to relate to people. *Sakal* is wisdom to understand human nature.

It says in Daniel chapter 2, Daniel made use of what he had in stage one. He didn’t just approach Arioch. Arioch could be a bad tempered guy. If Nebuchadnezzar is like that Arioch could be the same. There is something about the way that Daniel asked. Its not enough to do something right, to do something right has to be done in the right way. When you talk about the right way there is a right way of presenting it and a wrong way of presenting it. You can have the right thing presented in the wrong way. It did reach people. You must have the right thing presented in the right way. Daniel had the right, he

was right to enquire and it says he enquired with wisdom and counsel. He asked Arioch the captain of the king's guard who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon. Verse 15 to 17, *He answered and said to Arioch, "Why is the decree from the king so urgent?" Then Arioch make the decision known to Daniel so Daniel went in and asked the king himself to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation. Then Daniel went to his house and makes the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, his companions.*

**What Daniel has done is this, all the wise men including Daniel was sentenced to death and Daniel went to the king and said, give me some time to tell what that dream is. The king not only wanted the interpretation, he also wanted the wise men to tell him what he dreamt, which was impossible in the natural.**

So Daniel said, O king give me time. Imagine Nebuchadnezzar sitting on his throne with arms folded. "How much time do you need?" "One day." I mean he didn't ask for one year. If Daniel asked for one year, straight away his head will be cut off. "One day, all right go." Daniel hurried back. He got all his friends, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah and said, "Hi, our heads are on the chopping board, and I told the king we'd get the answer." "Daniel, have you gone crazy? How are you going to get it?" "Cry and you shall cry for wisdom and you shall lift your voice for understanding." Now Daniel already has wisdom but wisdom is not stagnant. It can grow. So he says, "Cry." So Mishael and all his guys joined him and all of them cried the whole night. They prayed and prayed. I don't know how God showed Daniel, perhaps in a vision but the next day he had it.

You shall cry for wisdom, you shall lift up your voice and you shall have it. James chapter one says, *if anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask from God.* And *anyone* means you and me whether we live in the Bible days or in the twentieth century, whether our problems are different from the problems in the first century, whether there be big problems, small mountains, little mole hills or mount Everest they should cry out for wisdom. We have not because we as not.

So Daniel cried and in Daniel chapter 2 this is part of their prayer in verse 20-23,

*“Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and power are His. And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him. I thank You and praise You, O God of my fathers; You have given me wisdom and might, And have now made known to me what we asked of You, for You have made known to us the king’s demand.”*

That was his closing prayer because in verse 19, the secret was reveal to Daniel in a night vision. He saw everything so he worshiped God. He did not forget to thank the Lord. Don’t forget that, when God does something and God answers don’t forget to thank Him. Be polite as He is polite. Daniel went to the king and said this was your dream. He gave him the whole dream and Daniel said this is the interpretation.

I tell you king Nebuchadnezzar sitting proudly on his throne and when he heard Daniel’s interpretation, he rose up and fell down on his face. Almost worshipping Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar nearly made a fool of himself that day. In a sense he was an earthly king of kings, he was a ruler of an empire and he rose up and bow down to Daniel. In chapter 2: 46 *He fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him.* Do you know why he did that? He knew this had to be God. No human being can get that wisdom and he was treating Daniel like a god. Jesus said those who have Word and receive the Word they shall be gods. Not that we should have people worshipping us but that we should demonstrate the wisdom of Jesus in such a way that even earthly kings will marvel.

It’s a shame that in the New Testament we don’t have demonstration on that and in the body of Christ. Where are the believers who shall be the head and not the tail? Where are the believers who shall stand before great man stand before kings and presidents and show forth the wisdom of God? Where are the prophets, where are the apostles, evangelists, pastors and teachers? Where are both men and women in the body of Christ? They are there and you know what is lacking? Wisdom. Unless we have the same wisdom that Jesus has, that Daniel tapped a little bit of that. We cannot see that manifestation, all you have to do is you begin to have an

impact on the ruler or rulers and you have an impact on an entire nation.

We prophesy that the day will come when members of the body of Christ will challenge nations. Will one day a nation turn to God? Let me tell you, how can that take place unless the people get on their knees and cry out to God for wisdom. Because it's not by might, not by power, not by our words, not by our plans, it's only by the wisdom of God that comes from the Spirit of the living God. Only that wisdom can challenge the things in this life and in this world. And Daniel had it and the king promoted him. Because with wisdom comes honor and riches and glory. There are people today running after money, running after possession and riches, but they forget that riches, honor and power are fringe benefits of wisdom. When you go for a job, you don't just go for the fringe benefits but go for the job itself. Thank God for the fringe benefits, they make life more interesting but they are too many people running around for fringe benefits and forgetting the job. The job is to get the gospel of Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God established. We can never do that unless we draw wisdom from God that can only come from Him and Daniel had that.

O what a lovely start and that is step 2. Sadly I am sure if Jesus was to look down right now from the kingdom or from God above, I am not sure how many in the body of Christ are living free from sin today. I am talking about the whole world. If it were 30%, 40%, 50% or 60%, the whole of these would have been cut off until they get their first stage right. And of the 40% left they have to have people who are determined to pray and spend time with God and ask from God mighty things and great wisdom. No wonder we are not affecting the world, no wonder the world has not been shaken as it was shaken in the New Testament because there is a vacancy for people who would step into the full wisdom and mind of God. In Daniel chapter 2 Daniel did that.

### **Third Progression : The Reward**

The third stage of wisdom is found in Proverbs chapter 3. Proverbs 1 – 4 are four lovely chapters on wisdom. Here comes the reward. It says here in verse 13 to 15, *“Happy is the man who finds wisdom and a man who gains understanding. For her proceeds are better than the profits of silver and her gain than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies and all the things you may desire cannot compare with her.”* It is better to be wise than to be rich. It is better to be wise than to have power. It is better to be wise than have glory. It is better to be wise because in verse 19, *The Lord by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding He established the heavens.* Wisdom is the principal thing.

That is one thing that you notice that Paul understood. Almost in every prayer he asked for wisdom, he prayed about wisdom. Eph. Chapter one he prayed for wisdom and revelation for the Ephesians. Colossians chapter one he asked for wisdom in walking in the things of God. Phil. Chapter one he talked about a love growing in wisdom and discernment. Paul understood the value of wisdom. It's not gold or silver or glory that is going to establish you, it's wisdom. Why? Because wisdom is the foundation for all God's creation, it's the key force behind it. So Paul in his whole life has always been thirsting after this divine wisdom. He says in Phil. That he forgets those things that is behind and pursue for the knowledge of God the high call of God, the knowledge of Jesus Christ, the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering. There is no wisdom and knowledge like the wisdom and knowledge from God in the world we live in. We can appreciate it a little better because today's education and training is to give you a place in life. From young we are trained to get a good education and we know the value. How much more this wisdom from God will bring us before great men and make us stand before kings on the planet earth. This is the wisdom of God.

Continue in chapter 3:16 & 17 *“Length of days is in her right hand, in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.”*

Everything falls nearly into place. In Daniel you see him tasting the third stage of wisdom. When do you begin to taste the reward of wisdom? In verse 48 of chapter 2 *“Then the king promoted Daniel.”* You see, wisdom length of days and long life is in her right hand; honor and riches are on her left hand. Daniel had wisdom and the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon. He was the wisest of them all. Can you imagine, it all started when

Daniel said, "I will not defile myself with the king's food." From a nobody, lower than a pauper because at least a pauper owns his or her own life. He was a slave; he rose up to be next to the king. And it's not something temporary. Kingdom may come and kingdom may go but if you don't lose your wisdom you keep your headship.

When Nebuchadnezzar died and his other son took over, notice that in chapter 5 he still tastes the third progression of wisdom. Always when they have a need he is the one they count on. When Belshazzar got some problems and nobody could solve it and they said in verse 11, "*There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the Spirit of the Holy God.*" They recognized that God was in him. If the spirit of wisdom is in Christians, people will recognize God is in them. Why do Christians do foolish things and wrong things, because they don't have wisdom when it's potentially theirs. In verse 11, *And in the days of your father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him.* Notice this statement, like the wisdom of the gods was in him. Now you know why for Daniel, king may come and king may die, kingdom may rise and kingdom may fall but Daniel remained the same because the One who is the same yesterday, today and forever is in him. Unchangeable, the one who was and is and is to come is in him. You know why some Christians are like a yo-yo? Sometimes they are blessed; sometimes they are in need, sometimes blessed and sometimes in need; they are not consistent, because they don't seek after the establishment of God's wisdom in their lives.

In verse 12, they called Daniel "*Inasmuch as the excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and explaining enigmas were found in Daniel.*" So they called him and they said, verse 14 *I have heard of you, that the Spirit of God is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you.*

Verse 17 I want you to see what Daniel wanted more than silver and gold and all the glory. See the king said in verse 16, *Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around your neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.* Verse 17, *Then Daniel answered, and said before the king, "Let your gifts be for yourself and give your rewards to another; yet I will read the writing to the king, and make known to him the interpretation.*

What a man! You know what he has? He had progressed to stage three. There are some people who have only 2 stages. They had wisdom but when riches come, the lure and the glitter of gold blinds them to the fact that all honor, promotion and position are but dust. I don't care what kind of position you have in society, it doesn't matter when you are a pauper or prince, rich or poor, your greatest asset is not your bank account, it's not your title in society. What comes after your name or what comes before your name but the greatest asset that you could build your whole life on is the wisdom of God. Some started well but when they start reaping the benefits of the first 2 stages of wisdom, they forget that it's better to be wise than to be rich. It's better to be wise than to be famous. It's better to be wise than to have honor and glory. It's better to have wisdom than anything on earth for wisdom is the principal thing. That is the third stage that we must develop because many people are easily moved by money and pressure. You should only be moved by the Spirit of wisdom. And Jesus called Him the Spirit of truth. Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself recognizes, and what is truth? Truth is the entire spectrum of God's wisdom in the universe. He has specially given the title to the Holy Spirit.

Daniel said you could keep all these things, they mean nothing to me. Daniel has weighed wisdom, honor, glory, gold in the scales and Daniel has bonded his life with wisdom. He said I would still interpret the interpretation of the writing. In the book of Daniel in chapter 5 verse 29 it says, after interpreting Belshazzar gave the command, they clothed Daniel with purple and put a chain of gold around his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. For wisdom is the principal thing. In her right hand are length of days and long life; on the left hand are riches and honor. Don't go for the hand, go for the holder of those things called wisdom who is the Holy Spirit.

Because verse 30 that very night Belshazzar died. See, if you build your life on property, in times if difficulties of this life would come, they will be gone in a moment of time. Here is another point to take note of, that Daniel had all these prestige given to him, gold, garment, third ruler but what's the use? The one who gave to him died, in the next verse. If he had sort all these things and built his life on them, it will also be gone with the giver of it. But if it comes from God no man can snatch it out of your hand or your life. For when God gives it's yours. No man

can take it from you. Daniel pursued wisdom. I sense in my spirit that Daniel probably knew that Belshazzar is going to die but anyway Belshazzar was gone and the whole Babylon Empire was removed and Darius the Mede came.

Daniel 6:1&2 *"It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom; and over these, three governors, of whom Daniel was one."* I tell you Daniel had an asset that was not measured tangible in term of this life. We are not sure whether he had a paper degree or not, but one asset he had was the spirit of wisdom. It tells us in verse 3 Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps. I mean there were 120 satraps and over them 3 governors and Daniel was one of them. Of the 3 governors he was the top one. Kingdom may come, kingdom may go, king may rise and king may fall but wisdom established Daniel. Recession may come, recession may go, depression may come and depression may go, oppression may come and oppression may go but if you are established in wisdom, come what may, you shall be established. Your life shall be established, your family, your home, everything you have shall be established because you have the wisdom of God and you treasure it above all other things. That was the third stage of wisdom. He knew the value of it but that's not the end.

In Daniel chapter 6: 28 *"Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian."* What does this say, and in her right hand are his long lives, are length of days and long life. What is the use of building and accumulating millions of dollar and just when you have accumulated it, you have cancer and given three days to live. Go for wisdom, the wisdom of God. There are some things that the world has not placed a value on but as children of the kingdom and children of the light we place an infinite value to it, even beyond anything on this planet earth. To know God like He knows Himself, to have the same wisdom that God has. Put that as your goal. So Daniel tasted the full benefits of the third stage of wisdom.

## **Fourth Progression : Shining Light**

That's not all in Proverbs chapter 4, the forth progression of wisdom. Verse 7 and

8, "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding." Exalt her, and she will promote you. She will bring you honor, when you embrace her.

What does that mean in all your getting? It's all your pursuit for a good education, degree, to establish your business, your ministry, your life or to accumulate anything. In all your getting, make sure you get wisdom. Because if you don't get wisdom whatever you got will be temporary. You can't keep it long. It says get wisdom, get understanding, exalt her. I mean show the importance of wisdom in your life and she will promote you. She will bring you honor when you embrace her.

Verse 9, *She will place on your head an ornament of grace, a crown of glory she will deliver to you.* But the puff of the just is like the shining sun that shines even brighter onto the perfect day pointing to Jesus. That's the fourth progression of wisdom. You could be the richest man on earth, when you die you cannot take anything with you. All your prestige, does it make any difference? When you go the only difference it makes is whether you go with an expensive coffin or a cheap coffin.

The most important thing in these four things is to remember that all things are temporary, but wisdom and the acquirement of wisdom are permanent. If you receive the wisdom of God, that wisdom is with you when you leave aside this body and go to be with the Lord because it's in you and a part of you. That's the fourth thing. Wisdom is permanent. All other things are temporal. Wisdom will make you like the shining light permanently. You will shine in eternal glory. That tells me something that part of the light shone from Jesus. You know what causes the light? Holiness and wisdom. It was the wisdom flowing from His life, the transformation of wisdom. You know the garments of Jesus that were transfigured in Matt.17, Luke 9 and Mark 9, that same word *transfigured* is used in Rom 12: 2. Your mind is renewed and transformed, the same Greek word transfigured. What is the renewal of the mind? The wisdom of God. The wisdom of God will cause you to be like the light on this planet earth and like the bright light in eternity. You should shine as the stars in eternity.

Lets us look at the fourth stage of Daniel. Daniel grew in wisdom but he began to desire after wisdom like he never had before. These are the closing statement by Michael the Archangel in chapter 12: 3 He says something like Proverbs 4. Daniel 12:3 *"Those who are wise shall shine, like the brightness of the firmament."* You know what is that? The same light when God says let there be light. The same light that made the planet earth. Now we understand why the book of Proverbs says wisdom is the principal thing because in Gen.1 God says let there be light and that was the wisdom in the light that shine. Out of that light everything was made that was made. You shall shine like the light. That's why when you have wisdom you have the same creative force of God working in your life. The same force that in one day made the world.

It takes men years to build a building like the Empire State building but it took God one day to make the whole world. Six days to fill it up. I believe we live in the time of acceleration, those things that took us 1000 years ago when the church started, things that took us 100 years to do it's going to take us just a month or even less. We are living in the time of acceleration and acceleration is only possible if there is an increase in knowledge and wisdom. It is not only working hard, you could work hard till your flesh is reduced to bones but if you work hard without wisdom, its empty toil. It's what I call futile labor. It is working hard in the wisdom of God and working smart with God. So that the thing that may take the people of God 100 years can be done in one day. The best thing about it it's eternal. See, those who are wise they shall shine like stars. He told Daniel to shut up the words and seal the book until the time of the end, many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall increase. Have you not heard? It is written in God's word that says and the whole earth shall be full of the glory of God. But that's not the end yet, even as by the knowledge of the Lord. If you want glory you need wisdom, if you want glory you need knowledge from Him.