

UNEQUALED

There's nobody like Him.

Lesson 2 of 4

Are You Trying to Be a Wise Guy?

Scope and Sequence

Doctrine: Wisdom comes from God alone.

Objective

Students will understand that wisdom can only come through God and they will seek to receive their wisdom from the Bible.

Memory Verse

1 Corinthians 2:7
Who has secret hidden wisdom?

Worth Repeating: Treasure the Wisdom of God's Kingdom

HOOK: Seeking wisdom to make life better

Today it's popular to give out wisdom. We are almost completely surrounded by the wisdom that people are trying to spout every day. The Internet is filled with blog posts, videos, and new stories claiming to bring wisdom to the person who will read or watch their content. People are posting quotes and sayings on Twitter and Facebook, things that they think are smart or wise. There is no shortage of "wisdom" being thrown at us today.

LESSON CONTENT: Seeking wisdom in the right place

- I. Do not choose the wisdom of the world (vv. 6, 8).
 - A. Not the Wisdom of the "Successful"
 - B. Note the Wisdom of Intellectuals
 - C. Not the Wisdom of Leaders or Authority
- II. Choose the wisdom of God (vv. 7, 9).
 - A. God has all knowledge.
 - B. Man cannot perceive God's wisdom.
 - C. God's wisdom is for our good.
- III. Receive God's wisdom (v.10)
 - A. The Spirit reveals God's wisdom.
 - B. We receive this wisdom through the Bible.

CONNECTION: Treasure the wisdom of God's kingdom.

1. Stop chasing the world's wisdom.
2. Start receiving God's wisdom in three ways.
 - A. Desire wisdom: prize it above all other things.

- B. Pray for wisdom: ask God for it.
- C. Study for wisdom: begin a lifelong journey of studying the Bible.

DECISION: Continually choose God’s wisdom

You have a simple choice to make. Will you choose to treasure God’s wisdom, or will you seek for wisdom in every other place?

If you have spent little or no time reading the Bible, why not commit to spending five minutes each day this week reading and applying God’s Word to your life? Maybe you already have devotions each day, but you realize you need to take more time reading, studying and applying God’s Word. Why not commit to spending some additional time this week in God’s Word?

Definitions

Wisdom: Making the right decision or action by using experience and knowledge.

Checklist

- A small obstacle course made from things you have on hand in your youth room prepared ahead of time
- A PowerPoint presentation is available for this lesson.

Resources

Desiring <https://teachersource.wol.org/videos/SBS17/16-1/>
 The New American Commentary *1 Corinthians*. Taylor, M. (2014). (E. R. Clendenen, Ed.) (Vol. 28, p. 89).

Additional Teacher Resources

<https://teachersource.wol.org/videos/SBS17/16-2/>

Hook: Seeking wisdom to make life better

Today it’s popular to give out wisdom. We are almost completely **surrounded** by the wisdom that people are trying to spout every day. The Internet is filled with blog posts, videos, and new stories claiming to bring wisdom to the person who will read or watch their content. People are posting quotes and sayings on Twitter and Facebook, things that they think are smart or wise. There is no shortage of “wisdom” being thrown at us today.

We are going to study God’s wisdom. But before we talk about God’s wisdom let’s hear some words of wisdom from students just like you. These aren’t exactly serious, but they are definitely wise!

Teacher’s Note

Have students read the following quotes that are real pieces of “wisdom” written by actual teenagers. There are five, so print out each one and give them to five different students or choose two or three of your funnier students to read the following funny words of wisdom.

Statement of Wisdom 1: If your selfie gets at least sixty-eight likes on Instagram then you’re definitely ready to become a professional model.

Statement of Wisdom 2: Always avoid that horrible moment when you thought your phone was charging all night only to realize it was never plugged in.

Statement of Wisdom 3: Homework...ain’t nobody got time for that!

Statement of Wisdom 4: Always give yourself just ten seconds to get out of bed in the morning: one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, nine, nine, nine...

Statement of Wisdom 5: Real friendship is when your friend comes over to your house and... then you both just take a nap.

Teacher's Note

Dismiss the students that helped and have them return to their seats for the remainder of the lesson.

Now those weren't exactly what we think when we think of words of wisdom. The truth is we could all use a steady stream of real wisdom. In fact, even if you don't realize it we are all searching for wisdom. It's not really a question of "if" but more a question of "when." Here are some examples of situations where we search for wisdom.

- #1 When the future is unclear: Often we have no idea what is coming right around the corner in our lives and it makes it hard to know what to choose or what to do in the present. This is a great time to start looking for wisdom.
- #2 When we are experiencing new things: When we face unique situations in our lives we might not know how to handle them. We might be afraid or uncertain about what will happen. Wisdom from someone who has faced that situation before us can go a long way toward helping us think through and handle a new situation.
- #3 When we want to change something in our lives: We all have things in our lives that we don't really like. Maybe you want to do a little better in school, or you want to get better at a sport, or you just want to make some new friends. Wisdom can give us the answer to help us know what to do to make some changes in our lives.
- #4 When hard situations sneak up on us: Maybe you just found out a close friend or relative has a medical condition or you didn't get that scholarship you've been counting on, or you just totally bombed an important test. When we suddenly face hard times we really want wisdom to give us some answers to know how to deal with tough situations.

When these situations happen to us we automatically seek wisdom. What are some places that we go to for wisdom in our lives?

Teacher's Note

Allow time for a few student answers, which may include friends or relatives, pastor or youth pastor, Internet, etc.)

We might go to friends or peers, we might go to a parent or relative. We might ask a pastor or youth leader (hopefully!), or we might even go to the Internet. But here's the key, whether you realize it, we are all seeking wisdom. We all seek wisdom; it's not a question of *if* you are seeking wisdom. The real question is, "Where am I getting my wisdom from?"

We see from the Bible that the only wisdom you can always rely on comes from God. God's Word will clearly show us that we should always treasure the wisdom of God's kingdom. In other words, we should put the wisdom that comes from God above the wisdom from any other source. That's not to say that we can't get wisdom from friends, loved ones, or even the Internet, but it's a matter of whose wisdom we treasure the most. Treasure the wisdom of God's kingdom.

What is wisdom? Wisdom is *making the right decision or action by using experience and knowledge*. It's important to notice something very important about that definition; a huge part of wisdom is having experience and knowledge about things. The greater the knowledge or experience a person has the wiser they can be. Just having knowledge alone doesn't make a person wise. A huge part of true wisdom is knowing *how* to use that knowledge in practical situations.

Lesson Content: Seeking wisdom in the right place

Teacher's Note

Turn with me to 1 Corinthians 2:6 and let's read to verse 12 together as we look at God's Word.

Read 1 Corinthians 2:6-12.

- I. Do not choose the wisdom of the **world** (vv. 6, 8).

The first thing that we see in this passage is a clear statement about the other places that we can find wisdom. Notice what it says in verse 6, "not the wisdom of this age." God's wisdom is so **radically different** from the wisdom of the world that we must start by putting the two in separate categories. What we are not talking about is the wisdom that comes from man. In this passage, we can clearly see that we are not to seek after the wisdom of man.

- A. Not the Wisdom of the "**Successful**"

The first wisdom we should watch out for is the wisdom of the "successful." This is hard to do because as humans we naturally look to people who are successful for wisdom. If you see a rich guy with a swanky car you think, "That guy must have a lot of wisdom about money and business." If you see a guy who's ripped from working out you think, "That guy must have a lot of wisdom about the body." If you see a girl who is popular and outgoing you think, "That girl must have a lot of wisdom about people." We tend to think that successful people *must* have some kind of wisdom that we don't possess. You may think: "If only I had that same wisdom I could have their same success!" But is that the kind of wisdom we really need?

- B. Not the Wisdom of **Intellectuals**

We should watch out for the wisdom of intellectual or "smart" people. Sometimes it is hard to put God's wisdom in a separate category because some people are insanely smart and it makes them seem very wise. Maybe you've read a book by a world-renowned scientist and everything he said made a lot of sense to you. It's hard to think that a very well-educated person who can talk about concepts you don't even understand and use big words that go over your head *isn't* wise. They may make a good point that you had never thought of before, and it helps you think differently. When that sort of thing happens, we tend to think that person is very wise. But is that the kind of wisdom we really need?

- C. Not the Wisdom of **Leaders** or Authority

Finally, this is NOT the wisdom that comes from rulers or authorities. Politicians and government officials like to think they are very wise, and they spend a lot of time and money trying to convince us that they are wise so they can keep their jobs. They create new laws and create massive legislation that make it seem as if they know how to fix every problem in our world. But notice what it says in verse 8, "none of the rulers of this age

knew.” Paul is making it clear that even leaders and those in authority don’t have the same kind of wisdom as God. Is the president wise? Is our governing body wise in the laws that they make? How about your teacher at school or principal?

Paul is saying that God’s wisdom *must* be put in a higher place from all the other kinds of wisdom that we think we might get from this world. Whether that’s successful people, the intellectual, or even those in authority over us. Paul says that God’s wisdom is “not the wisdom of this age” (v. 6). Instead we must *choose* to treasure the wisdom of God’s kingdom. One way we do that is by putting God’s wisdom *above* the wisdom from every other person or thing in this world.

II. Choose the wisdom of **God** (vv. 7, 9).

Now let’s see what this passage says about God’s wisdom. Look at verse 7: “But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory...”

A. God has all **knowledge**

The main reason we treasure the wisdom of God’s kingdom is because God’s wisdom is based on perfect knowledge of everything. Notice in verse 6 it says, “who are coming to nothing” when talking about the rulers of this age. But when it talks about God’s wisdom it says in verse 7 it was “ordained before the ages.” In other words, God has a huge advantage when it comes to wisdom. He knows the past, the present, and the future perfectly and He uses that **knowledge** to full effect. Everything that God does is perfectly wise in every way.

Teacher’s Note

Read Isaiah 46:9-10.

God knows the end from the beginning and knows what happened in the distant past and what will happen in the far future. That is the kind of knowledge humans can’t even begin to understand. God doesn’t make His plans for the next week or year, He has planned all of history and knows what every person will do throughout the entire history of the world!

B. Man cannot **perceive** God’s wisdom.

There’s another reason why God’s wisdom is superior. Let’s look at 1 Corinthians 2:9 (read).

Teacher’s Note

Cradle Bring a student forward to help you in this illustration. No special skill is required. Have the student complete a small obstacle course that you create with whatever you have on hand. The catch is that they must do it blindfolded. The first time they can receive verbal commands from the crowd to help them. Make sure the course is small and relatively easy to complete. The second time blindfold them as well as cover their ears with something. Give them no commands. Also, tie their hands behind their back to make it impossible. Once it’s clear they cannot complete the course allow the student to go back to their seat. This is to illustrate what it says in this passage that “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard...” To show how losing these senses makes it impossible to complete simple tasks. Use this illustration as something funny by allowing the student to fail.

I need a volunteer to help me illustrate what this verse is saying. Now I've set up an obstacle course here for you to complete. Does it look hard?

Teacher's Note

Student should answer "no."

Great. Now this obstacle course represents our ability as humans to understand and receive wisdom. At first it doesn't look too difficult, right? Now I want you to try and complete this obstacle course blindfolded. But I'll let everyone here give you direction so you can complete it safely.

Teacher's Note

Blindfold the student and let them complete the course.

Was that difficult? Not being able to see made it much harder, right? Well I want you to do it one more time, and this time I'm going to blindfold you, cover your ears, give you no commands, and tie your arms behind your back.

Teacher's Note

Now allow the student to try and fail for a little while, time depending. When you have called it as impossible, let the student go back to her seat.

That probably seemed like it would be easy to complete because the obstacle course itself wasn't too hard. But when you can't see, can't hear, and don't get commands on where to go it becomes impossible, right? That's just like us when we try to go after wisdom ourselves.

At first it seems like a straightforward thing for humans to be able to understand and receive wisdom, but notice what this verse says, "Eye has not seen...nor ear heard...nor have entered into the heart of man..." Remember Paul is still talking about God's wisdom here. He's explaining to us why God's wisdom is better. It's because as humans, all the **normal ways** that we understand and perceive things *don't work* when it comes to wisdom. We can't see it, hear it, touch it, measure it, or even think clearly about it. We can't figure it out on our own.

So, how can we ever get wisdom?! We can't apart from God. Only through God can we understand and receive wisdom. That is why we *must* treasure the wisdom of God's kingdom.

C. God's wisdom is for our **good**.

It tells us that wisdom is for our glory in verse 7: "wisdom which God ordained before the ages for *our glory*." Let's look at the last part of verse 9, "the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." When we choose God's wisdom, when we decide to treasure His wisdom above all other wisdom, it always works out for our benefit. God's wisdom is always working for our **good**.

Treasuring God's wisdom is ultimately an exercise in **trusting** God. You see, it's easy for us to understand the world's wisdom. We can grasp it, read it, and think through it. We find it difficult to trust God's knowledge because our knowledge is limited. God's wisdom is far above us and based on complete **knowledge**. Treasuring His wisdom means trusting Him completely.

Although we can't see, feel, or perceive, God's wisdom is preparing amazing things for us if we simply choose to treasure His wisdom. The things that God has been preparing since before the world was even made He is doing for *our glory*. His wisdom is always working for our good. That is one more reason why we must treasure the wisdom of God's kingdom.

III. **Receive** God's wisdom (v. 10).

Hopefully by now you are convinced that God's wisdom is better than the wisdom of the world. Maybe you are ready to treasure the wisdom of God's kingdom. What's the next step? The next step is to start receiving and understanding the wisdom of God.

A. The Spirit **reveals** God's wisdom.

Didn't I say earlier that there's no way for us to perceive or understand this wisdom? That's right; we need some major help. Look at verse 10, "But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God." This verse is the last piece of the puzzle. If we can't understand God's wisdom, but we are at the same time called to search for it and treasure it, then how can we get it? We get it through the Holy Spirit.

Notice how Paul says that "the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God." The Spirit is our wisdom **search engine**. God uses the Holy Spirit to reveal His wisdom to us. In this passage, Paul is talking about the amazing things His wisdom has been at work to create for us. When we choose to place our faith in Jesus, the Holy Spirit takes up residence inside of us (Ephesians 1:13-14) and one of His most important jobs is to reveal to us the wisdom and knowledge of God.

Look at this incredible phrase, "the deep things of God." Maybe you think that you could never understand the things of God. Perhaps when we talked earlier about the intellectual people that seem wise you thought, "I don't even understand what those guys are saying, how can I understand this stuff?" Maybe you think the Bible is such a huge book that it almost seems impossible to learn or understand it, but here's the incredible thing: we have a **helper!**

**Teacher's
Note**

John 14:26 makes it clear that one of the jobs of the Holy Spirit is to remind us of the teaching and truth of Jesus. If you want to drive this point further feel free to add this passage here.

The Spirit searches everything, even the deep recesses of God's infinite mind, and brings His wisdom to us when we need it the most. So how does the Spirit do this important job?

B. We receive this wisdom through the **Bible**.

The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to teach us the wisdom of God. Psalm 19:7 (have a student read) informs us that God's Word is perfect and makes the simple wise. The only way that humans can become truly wise is through the Word of God. The Bible is our true **source** of wisdom.

The more we know the Bible, the more wisdom we have in our lives. Even though as humans we can't understand wisdom and we have no ability to perceive it or attain it on our own, all we need to do is go to God's Word to receive wisdom. You can search in many other places for wisdom but God makes it clear that there is one place to receive His wisdom and that is only through God's Word.

Connection: Treasure the wisdom of God's kingdom.

I. Stop **chasing** the world's wisdom.

Before we talk about how to practically treasure the wisdom of God's kingdom, there is an important question we need to discuss. Are you chasing after the world's wisdom? Earlier we talked about how easy it is to think that successful people are wise, that smart people are wise, and that those in authority are wise. They might be, but we must put God's wisdom ahead of all of those things.

The very first step in receiving and understanding God's wisdom is **putting aside** all of the other kinds of wisdom. The wisdom of the world is exactly the opposite of the wisdom of God. You should decide right now from whom you will get your wisdom.

Doesn't the world's wisdom **change** all the time? Atari was a company in the 1970's that was popular for video gaming. Steve Jobs, a college student, went to Atari and said, "Hey, we've got this amazing thing, even built with some of your parts, what do you think about funding us? Or we'll give it to you. We just want to do it. Pay our salary, we'll come work for you." And they (Atari) said, "No."

Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak went on to be the founders of Apple Computer Inc. and the developers of the personal computer. Atari closed their business in 2008 because they did not see the wisdom in investing in personal computers. The world's wisdom changes all the time. God's wisdom *never* changes.

In this area there is no "middle ground." You can't have just a slice of God's wisdom and then abandon it when something else comes along. If you choose the world's wisdom, then you are rejecting God's wisdom!

II. Start **receiving** God's wisdom in three ways.

Let's look at some practical steps and see what it really looks like to get wisdom from God. Here are three ways to practically receive wisdom from God:

A. Desire wisdom: **prize** it above all other things.

The first and most important thing you can do is to desire wisdom. That's why we've been saying *treasure* the wisdom of God's kingdom. The more you value wisdom the more you will work to get it.

Teacher's Note

Have a student read Proverbs 16:16.

At the end of the day you must believe that wisdom is better than gold and more valuable than silver.

You may be very wealthy, but you can lose every penny. Maybe have a lot of friends, but they can all leave you. You may be incredibly happy, but hard times can make you bitter. However, if you have wisdom, then you can learn how to be productive; if you have wisdom, you know how to make friends that stick with you; and if you have wisdom, you can have true joy during hard times. Wisdom is the key that unlocks the best things in life; therefore, the most important thing is to be wise. It is much better than gold or silver.

B. **Pray** for wisdom: ask God for it.

Second, you need to know that God isn't stingy with His wisdom. He isn't *trying* to hide it from us even though it might seem like it sometimes. It's just that we don't always understand it. Let's read James 1:5 together.

Teacher's Note

Have a student read James 1:5. You may choose ahead of time which student will read it as the other students follow along.

Notice what it says, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God..." The easiest thing you can do to receive God's wisdom is to pray and **ask** Him for it.

When the future is unclear, when you are experiencing new things, when you want major change in your life, or when hard situations sneak up on you, the amazing thing is that we can *always* go to God for wisdom. He says, "Just ask!" because He wants to give His wisdom to everyone.

That seems like such a simple thing, but when was the last time you did that? Have you ever taken a step back from your life, gotten alone, and just said, "God I really need wisdom in this situation?" Prayer is one of the ways we open ourselves up to receive God's wisdom. It's us saying to God, "I am ready to listen to Your wisdom. I'm done trying to use my wisdom and the world's wisdom and now I need Your wisdom!" The best part of all is that it is such a simple thing to do. Nothing is stopping you from praying right now and asking God to show you His wisdom.

C. **Study** for wisdom: begin a lifelong journey of studying the Bible.

Finally, one of the most effective ways to receive wisdom is to start **seriously** studying the Bible. If the Bible is the Holy Spirit's way of communicating God's deep and infinite wisdom to us, the best way for us to get it is to read the Bible, study, and apply it. The Bible is a big book. It is full of hard, complicated, and very deep things. It is a lifetime challenge to study and learn from it. You will realize that the more you study it that you've only just scratched the surface of what is in the book.

But the important thing is that you start! Just open your Bible and start reading it.

Teacher's Note

Have a few recommendations of resources to help students understand the Bible, i.e., a commentary, the quiet time books, etc.

Studying God's Word means committing yourself to spend **deliberate** time in God's Word. You may want to set aside the same time each day or have a special place to read and study your Bible. If you don't understand what you are reading, you can ask your leaders or pastor to help you. Ask them for suggestions on some reference books or some internet sites. As you are

reading you may see a verse that you want to memorize. When you start applying it, you'll start to see God's wisdom seep into you!

If you have truly decided to treasure the wisdom of God's kingdom, it will be a time you look forward to each day. It will feel like digging for a bar of gold you know is just below the surface of the earth. Each shovel full of dirt gets you one step closer to the treasure of God's wisdom!

Decision: Continually choose God's wisdom

You have a simple choice to make. Will you choose to treasure God's wisdom, or will you seek for wisdom in every other place? If you are ready to treasure the wisdom of God's kingdom, I want you to come forward and take one of these cards. It says, "I choose to treasure the wisdom of God's kingdom." Sign your name and put it somewhere you will look at it often. This choice is really *not* a onetime action. It's a choice that we choose over and over again. The purpose of this card is to remind you to continually choose God's wisdom. If you have spent little or no time reading the Bible, why not commit to spending five minutes each day this week reading and applying God's Word to your life? Maybe you already have devotions each day, but you realize you need to take more time reading, studying and applying God's Word. Why not commit to spending some additional time this week in God's Word?