

On Knowledge and Wisdom

by Thomas Reade

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the source of true happiness, and it reveals the unsearchable riches of God and shows the way to obtain true happiness through faith in Jesus Christ.

Scripture: Job 28:28, Psalm 16:11, Proverbs 3:13, Isaiah 55:2, Colossians 2:3

Topics: "True Wisdom", "Loving God"

Description

Thomas Reade preaches on the distinction between knowledge and wisdom, emphasizing that true wisdom lies in loving and obeying God, not just in possessing knowledge. He highlights how human knowledge, no matter how refined, cannot transform rebellious affections into love for God or bring spiritual order and peace. Reade points out that true wisdom is found in practicing what is good, such as loving and obeying God, rather than just knowing what is right. He urges listeners to seek true happiness and fulfillment in God, as the Gospel reveals the way to obtain lasting joy, peace, and glory.

Transcript

33. ON KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM

What can be more agreeable to the dictates of true wisdom, than that a creature should love and obey its Creator, when that creature is endued with faculties capable of loving and obeying the Author of its existence? The reverse of this constitutes the grossest impiety. No man of reflection, however carried away by his passions, or perverted in his views of divine revelation, can help allowing, that to love the supreme good, is the truest wisdom; and to obey the supreme governor, the highest duty.

Yet men, who pass for philosophers, who can unfold the beauties of nature, and even expatiate on the charms of virtue, not infrequently are the slaves of sensual pleasure, and enemies to the Gospel of Christ: thus proving, that human knowledge, however refined, can never reduce the rebel state of the affections to the love and fear of God; or convert the wild, tumultuous passions to spiritual order and peace. Men may talk wisely about worldly matters; for our blessed Lord has declared, that "the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light;" but the wisest worldly character can never, by any natural effort of the understanding, think and act wisely about spiritual and eternal things.

Orthodox notions of the truth may indeed be imbibed, while the heart continues under the influence of evil; for we read of people "holding the truth in unrighteousness." But true wisdom consists not in the bare knowledge of what is good, but in reducing that knowledge to practice. Thus, I may know that it is my duty

to love and obey God; but I am only wise, when I really do love and obey him. If I had to cross a river in winter, which was frozen over, and were told, that, owing to a current in the middle of the stream, the ice would be too weak to bear my weight; this knowledge would only prove beneficial, in case I had wisdom enough to desist from the hazardous attempt.

Should I, after this knowledge of the state of the ice, still persist in crossing the river, my conduct would be termed recklessness; and, if drowned, men would condemn my folly. This distinction runs through all the transactions of political, civil, and commercial life. The truth is too obvious to need further illustration; it must therefore be apparent, that "Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one, Have oftentimes no connection." Job, with beautiful clearness, points out to us the nature of true wisdom.

It is not the knowledge of natural objects; neither can created things impart it. "The depth says, It is not in me; and the sea says, It is not in me." "God understands the way thereof, and he knows the place thereof." "Unto man he said, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding." There is in all men a natural desire after happiness. All are anxiously in quest of it. The inquiry is, "Who will show us any good?" Man, having lost his way through the fall, is now stumbling upon the dark mountains of vanity, in search of that treasure, which he never can find in earthly things.

He needs to be happy. To obtain this blessing, he is willing to forego many present enjoyments. Some brave the billows of the ocean; others dare the cannon's mouth; multitudes rise early, and late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness, in order to accumulate those golden stores, which they fondly hope will purchase happiness. Riches perchance increase, but cares and vexatious anxieties grow up together with them. Happiness, like a flying phantom, still eludes their eager grasp, until, compelled at length to give up the chase, they exclaim with Solomon, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit."

Here we may ask, why is man thus restless after an imaginary good? why does every possession lose its value, and every enjoyment its zest, while that certain something, still desired, yet unpossessed, fastens on the mind, and renders all other earthly pleasures comparatively insipid? Is it not that man was originally created for nobler ends, than those which he is now pursuing? He resembles a noble temple in ruins. We see the fragments of ancient grandeur; but they are so mutilated and destroyed, that no feeling is excited but that of pain, while viewing the desolation.

The Gospel, like a guardian angel, points out to man the way to happiness. Here he may know how to obtain felicity; and here, through grace, he may be made wise unto salvation. Is he anxious to be rich? The Gospel unfolds to his view the unsearchable riches; while the Spirit is freely offered, to enable him, like the wise merchantman in the parable, to sell all and buy this treasure. Is he thirsting after glory? The Gospel reveals to him that honor which comes from God only; and that glory which is prepared for the righteous in a future world.

Is he desirous to obtain a name? The Gospel assures him that, if a believer, his name is written in heaven; for the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance. Is he panting after pleasure? The Gospel tells him of joy unspeakable; of a peace which passes understanding; of rivers of pleasure, which flow at God's right hand for evermore. Thus the Gospel of grace discovers to fallen man, not only the nature of true happiness, but the way to obtain it. It shows him the source of all misery--the fall of our first parents; and conducts him to the fountain of all blessedness--God manifest in the flesh.

Through faith in this gracious deliverer, the soul is saved from the guilt and power of sin. The world and all its vanities, like the retiring tide, recede from the heart; while the joys of God's salvation flow in, and fill the

soul with substantial and satisfying delights. The sinner made thus wise unto salvation by the eternal Spirit, finds the way of peace, and becomes at length--what worldlings can never be--truly happy. Oh blessed Jesus! you in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, make me wise unto salvation.

Preserve me from being satisfied with the false glare of human knowledge, which possesses only the name, but nothing of the qualities of wisdom. Come, Oh divine Redeemer, with all your full salvation, into my longing heart. Without you, I cannot be happy; with you, I cannot be miserable. The world may smile; but if you frown, I must be wretched. The world may frown; but if you smile, I am blessed. Let me no longer seek my comforts from creatures, however fair and excellent. "All my fresh springs are in you."

Oh, be my all in all, in adverse days and pleasant seasons. Oh! let your grace be in me as a well of water, springing up into everlasting life. Then I shall be holy and happy. All will be serene within, the sweet presage of eternal rest! Touched by the power of love divine, To you, my gracious Lord, I come; Your Spirit speaks--I hear the call: Dear Savior, make my heart your home. Too long, alas! a wandering sheep, Far from your blessed fold I strayed; But now my hopes on you are fixed; On you my grateful soul is staid.

You are my refuge and my rest, Sweet peace in you I now may find; The richest streams of heavenly grace, To soothe and calm my troubled mind. Oh! may I never from you roam; Or feel a single wish to stray; Since you have led my wandering feet To Christ, the true, the living way.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/thomas-reade/on-knowledge-and-wisdom/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net