

Aim: To understand what wisdom is and how to become wise.

Refer: Great Controversy chapter 4

The Waldenses lived during what we call the dark ages – a time in history when the Pope and the Church of Rome were at their most powerful and those who didn't obey were persecuted or even put to death; copies of the Bible were not available and even learning in the arts and sciences was banned. During this time the Waldenses retreated to hidden mountain valleys; they had a copy of the Bible and would follow its teachings no matter what. They wisely taught their children how to survive not only in their hidden valleys but in the world outside; they were taught to be very careful about what they said and not to draw attention to themselves; they were taught to work at a trade. They were taught to read and write and spent time copying verses and chapters from the precious copies of the Bible.

When a young person had learned all they could from their schools, they were sent to outside universities. This had two purposes 1. They studied and learnt 2. They took copies of Bible verses which they could share when they found someone who was searching for the truth, but they had to be very careful, because if the Pope or Priests found out they would be arrested.

The Waldenses sent many missionaries throughout the world, but they couldn't operate openly or they would be arrested and even killed. Instead they acted as merchants or peddlers, travelling around selling their things. They also carried copies of Bible verses that they could share with their customers.

Solomon is famous for his wisdom so today we are going to have a look at what wisdom means.

- Some people think that having wisdom means knowing a lot. But having knowledge (knowing a lot) doesn't mean you will use it; lots of people know that smoking is bad for their health yet they still do it - we wouldn't call that wise. **Can you think of other examples?**
- Someone who is wise not only knows a lot, but also makes good choices.
- According to the Collins English Dictionary: Wisdom is the ability to think and act using knowledge, experience, understanding, common sense, and insight.

What does the Bible say about wisdom?

Read James 3:17 – Does that remind you of the Fruit of the Spirit?

Read James 1:5

How can we become wiser?

- Spending time with God and reading the Bible
- Increasing our knowledge – this helps us to be able to make good decisions.

Where can you find knowledge? Teachers, books, parents, older people, the Bible, documentaries, the internet- but the difficulty with the internet is that people can put whatever they want up there even if it is not true.

- Learn from experience. Even bad experiences can have a good outcome if you learn from them.

Does that mean we should purposely go out and try dangerous stuff just so we can learn from experience?
No! - There is a saying: "A wise man learns by the experience of others; a fool, by his own." So be wise, and learn what you can from other people.

Who better to learn from than King Solomon?

Read and discuss Proverbs 1:1-8

The whole book of Proverbs is about wisdom and is worth reading many times.

(If you have time, choose more Proverbs to read from the following)

- Proverbs 17:28 (fools look wise if they are silent)
- Proverbs 19:20 (advice and discipline increase wisdom)
- Proverbs 29:11 (the wise bring peace not rage)

Solomon also learnt something else, he learnt what it is like to have wisdom without God, because for a while he turned away from God and worshipped idols with his wives. You can read about this in the book of Ecclesiastes which Solomon wrote.

Read Ecclesiastes 1:1-3, 14-18. Over and over again in Ecclesiastes, Solomon tries to find meaning in life without God.

Read Solomon's conclusion in Ecclesiastes 12:1, 13-14