

KEYS
to
EXCELLENCE
in Life



WISDOM · KNOWLEDGE · UNDERSTANDING · HOLY SPIRIT
FAITH · PRAYER · CHARACTER

"An excellent spirit was in him"

DANIEL 6:3

UDEH TOCHUKWU LIVINUS

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“Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm” (Daniel 6:3).

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CHAPTER ONE

Wisdom

*Wisdom is simply seeing things from God's perspective
and responding to the issues of life according to the
principles of God's word.*

~ Pastor Udeh Tochukwu Livinus

*“Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and
with all thy getting get understanding” (Proverbs 4:7).*

Wisdom is defined as applied knowledge. It is the quality of having good, sound and healthy knowledge. Wisdom is shown by the quality of the work you do. It is revealed by the kind of judgments you make in times of difficulty. In the pursuit of life, one thing stands above all others as the principal thing, and that thing is wisdom.

Let me explain this with an example from my own schooling in Nigeria. When I wrote my final secondary school examinations, a science student who hoped to go on to university had to pass five principal subjects:

1. English
2. Mathematics
3. Biology
4. Physics
5. Chemistry

In Nigeria, a student needed a credit pass in each of these five subjects before he could take the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) examination for admission into a university. Failing even one of them meant that he could not move on to the next stage of his education. In the same way, life cannot move forward until its principal thing is in place. The key ingredient for excellence in life is wisdom. The Bible says that “Wisdom is the principal thing.” The word *principal* means chief, foremost, first in importance. So when the Bible says wisdom is the principal thing, it means wisdom comes first in order of importance in the pursuit of life. You cannot see the light of day in the absence of wisdom. There is no replacement for wisdom. If you fail in wisdom, you fail in life.¹

The problem we have in life is simple: the absence of wisdom, the failure of wisdom, the lack of wisdom. A family crisis is the result of a lack of wisdom. A business crisis is the result of a lack of wisdom. A financial crisis is the result of a lack of wisdom. Failure in academics is the result of a lack of wisdom. A societal or national crisis is the result of a lack of wisdom. A church crisis is simply a lack of wisdom. Every problem you can think of in life is simply a lack of wisdom. Once wisdom is lacking or insufficient, the by-product is chaos, crisis, death and destruction. The Bible says that wisdom is the principal thing. If you fail a principal subject, you are bound to repeat the exam. Many people are busy pursuing useless ventures, which I call shadows, instead of pursuing the principal thing in life, which is wisdom. Any venture you pursue without wisdom is bound to fail and boomerang.

The Bible describes how God made the world: He used wisdom. The Scripture says, “The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens” (Proverbs 3:19). “He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion” (Jeremiah 10:12). As I said at the start, wisdom is seeing things the way God sees them and responding according to the principles of Scripture.

Every part of God's creation displays His manifold wisdom. Look at the lilies of the field, how finely arranged they are. Consider the fish in the ocean and their beauty, the birds of the heavens, the creeping things that creep over the face of the earth, the cattle that move all over the earth, the mountains, valleys, oceans and heavens, the stars and the moon. All these display God's unfathomable wisdom. His wisdom can be seen in the structure and make-up of human beings: the complexity of our brain, the fitting arrangement of our teeth, the power of the eyes and everything in us. All of it testifies to God's wisdom. God was not in haste when the earth was without form and void. He deployed wisdom, and so everything came into being. There is no success, breakthrough or progress in life in the absence of wisdom. Wisdom excels above all.

Types of Wisdom

There are different kinds of wisdom. It is very important that we identify them, so that we know which type of wisdom we are discussing or pursuing in order to excel in life. There are four main types of wisdom. They are:

a. *Wisdom of the rulers of this world.* "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Corinthians 1:21). "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought" (1 Corinthians 2:6). James calls such wisdom "earthly, sensual, devilish" (James 3:15). This type of wisdom comes from demonic sources, for example, psychics, horoscopes, witchcraft, crystal balls and the occult. People consult these sources in order to find their way and to know how to handle different situations in their lives. These sources never point people to God; rather, they lead them away from God.

b. *Human wisdom.* This is the wisdom we have naturally. It is sometimes called common sense. This wisdom serves human

development. For example, the longer you live, the better you know how to behave and how to respond to the people and the environment around you. A baby is not wise enough to know the danger of fire, but as the child grows into a teenager, he learns to handle fire with caution. This type of wisdom increases as we mature in age.

c. *Wisdom of this world: educational wisdom (scientific, technological, philosophical).* “For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness” (1 Corinthians 3:19). Every vocation in life requires training to equip you with the relevant skills, expertise and application in your field of endeavor. Through the training process you acquire and develop the skills you need to carry out the procedures and operations of your vocation. The process of acquiring the required skills in your field results in the wisdom of this world. For example, the training a person receives to become an engineer, doctor, mechanic, fisherman, technician or swimmer gives that person the wisdom of this world. The wisdom of the world has these features: it is sensual; it is earthly; it is controlled by physical or natural elements; it is subject to change; it is temporal; it is not pure; and it is superficial. Even so, the skill learned in training is good and can be God’s gift (Exodus 31:3). But when this wisdom is cut off from God, it becomes what Paul calls the wisdom of this world, which is foolishness with God, and what James calls earthly and sensual (James 3:15).

d. *Wisdom of God.* This is divine wisdom. It is the wisdom that comes expressly from God. This wisdom makes us work, talk and act like God. It was the wisdom God used to create the entire universe. This wisdom has the following characteristics (James 3:17): it is pure; it is from above; it is gentle; it gives peace of mind; it is full of mercy; it is submissive; it is sincere; it is not partial; it is eternal; it empowers a believer to live above reproach; and it shields a believer against satanic attacks. This wisdom provides both spiritual and physical immunity to God’s people. It sets us on high above others. It deposits excellence in

our inner man to do wonders. It unveils the hidden mysteries of God. It is a wonder-working wisdom.

Having considered all these kinds of wisdom, we will now focus on one type: the wisdom that comes from God. This is the wisdom that propels us to excellence in life and ministry. It is the wonder-working wisdom, the wisdom that made Jesus remain a mystery to the world to this day. That is the God-kind of wisdom.

How to Receive the Wisdom of God

This is the question many people are still asking today: How can I receive this wisdom that comes from God? I don't want to remain mediocre in the pursuit of life. I don't want to remain a puppet in the hands of the enemy. I want to break loose from the chains of darkness so that I can fulfill my God-given potential. I have been struggling in my business; how can I break through? My marriage is struggling; what can I do to save my marriage? What, then, can I do to have the wisdom of God? You can receive the wisdom of God:

a. *Through the fear of God.* “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding” (Proverbs 9:10).

b. *By asking God.* You must ask God for it. “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (James 1:5).

c. *Through revelation from the Spirit of God.* “But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 2:10–11). “And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD” (Isaiah 11:2).

These are the principal conditions one must fulfill in order to receive wisdom from God. Are you ready to fear the Lord? Are you ready to ask God in prayer and believe by faith? Are you ready to obey the voice of the Holy Spirit today? If you are ready, then consider yourself a candidate for God's divine wisdom. God does not withhold good things from those who ask. He said, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it" (Psalm 81:10). He will fill it with words of wisdom. He will give it to you in full measure, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Benefits of Wisdom

Wisdom has many benefits. Just as no one can do without air, so we cannot do without wisdom. Once we embrace wisdom, we are on our way to the miraculous. The following are the benefits of wisdom:

a. *Wisdom helps us to win the battles of life.* There are many seen and unseen battles in life. You cannot win your battles without wisdom. Life is a battle. There are winners and there are losers, and what makes the difference between the two is wisdom. Your level of success depends on your level of wisdom. Your level of progress depends on your level of wisdom. Your height in life depends on your depth of wisdom. The more wisdom you have, the higher you soar. The amount of ammunition in a country's military bases is not what determines its success in war. Success is not in the multitude of troops a nation possesses. Wisdom is the only weapon used to win a war. Israel was surrounded by enemies on all sides, yet through God's help it survived and grew strong. The Bible shows the power of wisdom in the story of a poor man whose wisdom saved a city. Solomon said:

"This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it seemed great unto me: There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it: Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet