



**An Important Ingredient For Success**  
**Proverbs 3:13-26**  
**Westport Christian Church**  
**June 13, 2010**

What is it that most people want in life? According to a recent Lew Harris poll it is success. Success can be defined as the accomplishment of an aim or purpose.

I think that we should strive to be successful in everything we do. However, many people in the world and in the church have the wrong concept of success. They make decisions on how it helps them climb the ladder of success, but we have to be careful climbing the ladder of success. Because too many have found that when they got to the top of the ladder of success it was leaning against the wrong wall. So, is there an important ingredient success and what could it be? How blessed is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gains understanding. For her profit is better than the profit of silver and her gain better than fine gold. She is more precious than jewels; and nothing you desire compares with her. Long life is in her right hand; In her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are pleasant ways and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who hold her fast. The LORD by wisdom founded the earth, by understanding He established the heavens. By His knowledge the deeps were broken up and the skies drip with dew. My son, let them not vanish from your sight; keep sound wisdom and discretion, So they will be life to your soul and adornment to your neck. Then you will walk in your way securely and your foot will not stumble. When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. Do not be afraid of sudden fear nor of the onslaught of the wicked when it comes; For the LORD will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught. Prov 3:13-26

Now, in case you didn't catch it, the ingredient that I am referring to is wisdom. More than anything else, wisdom is the one ingredient that helps us to be successful. With wisdom we make wise choices. Perhaps you heard the story about an old minister, a Boy Scout and a renowned scientist who proclaimed himself as the smartest man in the world taking a plane ride. The single engine plane began to have engine trouble and the pilot ejected from the plane after instructing the passengers to use the parachutes behind their seats. There was a slight problem, for there were only two parachutes for the three passengers.

The scientist insisted that as the smartest man in the world his expertise was needed. He grabbed some gear and jumped. The old preacher looks at the Boy Scout and said, "Son, I have lived a good long life, and I'm ready to go to heaven. You take the other parachute and jump." The Boy Scout replied, "Don't worry, the smartest man in the world jumped out of the plane wearing my backpack."

## **I. WHAT IS WISDOM?**

In God, wisdom is the infinite perfect understanding of all that is or might be. In man, wisdom is getting desired results by effective means. It's been said that wisdom is putting into practice the things that you've learned. There's a Persian Proverb that says, "For every pound of learning a person has, he needs ten pounds of common sense to know how to use it."

You and I need to develop wisdom in our daily lives by education. Being educated doesn't have to take place in a class room. My aunt learned how to speak Chinese at home by using books and a tape player. Many people today learn at home by teaching themselves. I use to work for an elderly lady while I was growing up. She had taught school in Chicago during the depression and she never stopped teaching. One thing that she told me was never stop learning. Read something every day to keep your mind working and ready to learn.

We develop wisdom by experiences. It's been said that after 150 attempts to produce an electric light bulb, Thomas Edison was asked if this meant it was time to give up. In which Edison replied, "By no means. For we have just discovered 150 things that don't work."

We develop wisdom from God. Wisdom is bound up and tied to doing the will of God. Ps. 111:10, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." 1 Cor. 1:24, "Christ is the power and wisdom of God." James 1:5, "If you lack wisdom you should ask God for it."

Wisdom is knowledge (facts), insight (common sense), and judgment (proper action). Wisdom is the ability to consider the facts and then decide right from wrong. Wisdom is making right choices. In 1Kings 3:16-28 we find a wonderful account of wisdom. In this account Solomon is faced with a very serious matter. Here we have one baby and two women who are claiming to be the mothers. Solomon in his wisdom threatens to cut the baby in half. The real mother gives the baby up to save its life. Solomon then knew whom the baby belonged too.

J. I. Packer once said, "Wisdom is, in fact, the practical side of moral goodness."

## **II. WHY SHOULD WE DESIRE WISDOM?**

**Without wisdom we can't be successful. All knowledge is useless without the ability to use it. That is wisdom.**

**"Here is a formula for success: Wisdom + effort=Success and Knowledge + Perspiration = Success. We should seek wisdom from every source and take advantage of others' wisdom. Wisdom keeps the good and throws away the bad. A wise man learns from the mistakes of others. Nobody lives long enough to make them all himself. (Anonymous)**

**How much better it is to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen above silver. (Prov. 16:16NASU) We don't see it that way do we? We place things such as gold and silver, material things above wisdom and understanding.**

**Remember what verses 13-14 of our text said, How blessed is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gains understanding. For her profit is better than the profit of silver And her gain better than fine gold. (Prov 3:13-14NASU) Solomon, who has been proclaimed as the wisest man that had ever lived chose wisdom and because of that God gave to him wealth and power as well. In Matthew 25 we find a great story told by Jesus. "At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. "At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!' "Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.'**

**"'No,' they replied, 'there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.' "But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. "Later the others also came. 'Sir! Sir!' they said. 'Open the door for us!' "But he replied, 'I tell you the truth, I don't know you.'**

**"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour. (Matt 25:1-13NIV) Here Jesus tells of 10 virgins. Five were foolish and they spent no time in preparation for their future after they left this life, they were only concerned with the here and now. The five wise virgins did prepare for the future and when the groom, who is Jesus, came, they went with Him to the wedding feast, which represents eternal life with God. Wisdom is the ability to apply biblical truths to all situations of life. Wisdom helps us to make the right choices.**

## **III. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF WISDOM?**

**The benefits of wisdom are profound and are found throughout the Scriptures. Let's just take a look at our text to see some of the benefits that are listed here. In verse 14 we find that it is more profitable than silver and gold. In the next verse it says more precious than rubies and no desire compare to it. In other words, more valuable than**

anything you could buy, more beneficial than any material possession you could own.

In verse 16 it brings long life, with riches and honor and in verse 17, pleasant and peaceful ways, followed by blessing and long life in verse 18. When a person lives their life with wisdom, they make wise choices and avoid much of the hardship which unwise choices bring. Their life has less stress, they are healthier and live longer because they make wise decisions

Verse 22 speaks of life to our soul. This wisdom that speaks life to our soul is the word of God. His word is the fountain which produces the nourishment that we need for our soul.

In Verse 23 we discover that wisdom grants us safety and security. We also find inner peace, freedom from fear and sweet sleep with no fear of disaster in verses 24 and 25.

In verse 26 we find confidence and see that wisdom keeps us from being easily tripped up by problems and situations of life.

The benefit of wisdom is astounding and brings much success in our lives. It is something that each of us should be striving for. R. C. Sproul once said, "Actually, the wisest person in the world is the person who knows the most about God. (R. C. Sproul, "Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness," RTS Bulletin, Fall 1986, Vol. 5 No. 3,2.)

Conclusion; There is a town in Virginia named wise. If you lived there do you think you would feel a sense of more responsibility to live more wisely? The town was named for a man named Wise. If your name was Wise would you feel a sense of obligation to live up to your name? Each of us need to seek wisdom, for it is the key to success. It will also help you to be faithful to God. James, the brother of Jesus wrote, "But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him." (James 1:5) Many people each and everyday make unwise choices and because of that they will have to reap the consequence of living without the main ingredient for success.

Real success is not found in possessions that one might have. The world sees it as he with the most toys win. I saw a bumper sticker a while back that said, he with the most toys still dies! True success, true wisdom come about by a personal walk with God through Jesus Christ. Do you want to succeed not only for this life, but for all eternity? So what are you waiting for?

**AMEN**