

God in the Equation

Over the past few weeks, our Bible School class has been looking at the *Wisdom Literature* of the Old Testament. We have taken a number of stabs at differentiating terms from one another. Separating “knowledge” from “understanding” has come fairly easily. Knowledge smacks of grasping first facts. Understanding somehow seems like a more practical and thorough mastery of those first facts; the ability to apply them, to use them and, perhaps, even to impart them to others. But, what about “wisdom?” We know that wisdom must be something higher than understanding since its virtues are extolled time and again in the Scriptures, but how does it stand out above good, solid, masterful understanding?

Perhaps, in terms of how well one grasps the facts, there is no difference between wisdom and understanding. Perhaps, the biblical distinction between the two is not at all intellectual, but rather, moral and spiritual. After all, the Scripture says in at least three places:

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom ...” (Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 1:7; 9:10).

... and, in two other places:

“The fool says in his heart, “There is no God ...” (Psalm 14:1; 53:1)

Might this mean that if the Creator of all things is not held in wondrous awe, then, even if a man has the highest IQ in the world, he doesn’t have a shot at attaining wisdom? Might it mean that even a child of limited understanding and knowledge is wise far beyond the most brilliant man if that child fears God and that brilliant man does not?

When two men encounter the same truth about how some aspect of this world works, they will come to two different conclusions if only one fears God. Dave cited the example of a rainbow a couple of weeks ago in a communion meditation. How would a rainbow be defined in a typical science class today? It might be described as refracted light through the prism of raindrops. But, how might two hearts respond to that information? One might conclude, “Ho-hum. Look what man has discovered. Who needs God?” Another might respond, “Wow, so that’s how He does it,” even as he reflects on God’s promise in the days of Noah that He has set aside the “bow” of His warfare (same Hebrew word) against man.

Chuck reverted back into science teacher mode this past week as he reminded us of some of the mechanisms of this world that keep us all alive – the oceans as a heat sink, the cycles of respiration and photosynthesis, the laws of gravity that keep the seas within the boundaries that God established for them, the hydraulic cycle that nourishes the planet. We could tell that Chuck was excited and filled with a sense of awe for a God Who is such a thorough Creator. For the man who fears God, the more he learns about how creation works, the more the heavens declare the glory of God. But, sadly, many who are fools, even brilliant fools, see these naturalistic explanations as evidences that God is not necessary.

The backdrop of a God Who is to be lovingly feared is what sets wisdom apart from every other accomplishment of the mind, whether it be the “3 Rs” of grade school, quantum physics or just good old horse sense. In fact, wisdom is so linked to reverence for God that James sends us running to God whenever we need it (James 1:5). May we never lose sight and may we never allow our children to lose sight of God’s fingerprints upon this world, for in wisdom, He made it all.

¹⁹By wisdom the LORD laid the earth's foundations,
by understanding he set the heavens in place;
²⁰by his knowledge the deeps were divided,
and the clouds let drop the dew. – Proverbs 3:19, 20

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