

Buy Wisdom by Tricia Berg

Buy truth, and do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding.
Proverbs 23:23

Solomon, who was the wisest man who ever lived (2Chron. 9:22-23), wrote the proverb quoted above. He was a "type" of Jesus in many, but not all, respects. Jesus told the scribes and Pharisees who wanted a sign from Him (to prove who He was) that the Queen of Sheba would stand in condemnation of their generation because she came from far away to hear the wisdom of Solomon, but they would not listen to Him (the WISE Son of God). (1Kings 10:1-10, 2Chron. 9:1-9, Luke 2:46-47 - age 12, Matt. 7:28-29, Matt. 22:15-46) By including the concepts in the same discussion (as related in two of the Gospels), Jesus connected the wisdom of Solomon with a lamp as well as with what happens when people do not fill their "houses" with the Holy Spirit. (Keep in mind when studying that the chapter breaks and section headings were not present in the original texts.)

*When the crowds were increasing, he began to say, "This generation is an evil generation. It seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah. For as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so will the Son of Man be to this generation. The **queen of the South** will rise up at the **judgment** with the men of this generation and **condemn** them, for **she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.** The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. No one after **lighting a lamp** puts it in a cellar or under a basket, but on a stand, so that those who enter may **see the light.** Your **eye** is the **lamp of your body.** When your eye is healthy, your whole body is **full of light**, but when it is bad, your body is **full of darkness.** Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be **wholly bright**, as when a **lamp with its rays gives you light.**" Luke 11:29-36*

The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. Then it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when it comes, it **finds the house empty,**

swept, and put in order. Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So also will it be with this evil generation.” Matthew 12:42-45 (Also see 2Pet. 2:17-22, Jude 1:12-13)

*For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home [our body] is destroyed, we have a **building from God**, a **house** not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.* 2 Corinthians 5:1-5

No wonder Solomon advises us to “buy wisdom”—we need it in order to make good decisions—like when the Israelites were told to choose whether or not to serve God and follow Joshua into the promised land (which is a “type” of the kingdom of God). (Josh. 24:14-28) What is wisdom according to the Bible, and where and how we may acquire it? Here are just a couple of the passages that tell us:

*Who is **wise and understanding** among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.* James 3:13-18

***Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above**, coming down from the Father of **lights** with whom there is **no variation or shadow due to change**. Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.* James 1:17-18

*Behold, **you delight in truth in the innermost being**, and **you teach me wisdom** in the hidden **heart**.* Psalm 51:6

Since we know that Solomon himself was given wisdom by God because of his humble request (1Kings 3:5-12), it comes as no surprise to find that wisdom is a gift from God—just like salvation! (Eph. 2:8-10) No one who rejects the Word of Truth (Jesus, as revealed in the written word, the Bible - John 1:1-2, John

14:6, Rev. 19:11-13) is wise. (John 3:36, 1John 2:23) To deny that God exists, or that He created the world, is also unwise—and God is not pleased with those who do so. People who think they're "too smart" to believe in God just because they cannot see Him are actually fools. We've all heard the quote from Alice in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll: "Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast." Well, I think we all do the same, since we "believe" in gravity, oxygen, time, thought, sound waves and radiation, to name just six. But you say—we can observe the effects of those things! So it is with God. (John 3:8, 2Cor. 4:18)

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none who does good. The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one. Have they no knowledge, all the evildoers who eat up my people as they eat bread and do not call upon the LORD? Psalm 14:1-4

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness **suppress the truth**. For what can be **known** about God is **plain to them**, because God has **shown** it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been **clearly perceived**, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are **without excuse**. Romans 1:18-20 (Also see Jude 1:14-16, 1Thess. 5:2-11.)*

*By faith we understand that the **universe was created by the word of God**, so that **what is seen was not made out of things that are visible**. Hebrews 11:3 (Also see Col. 1:15-17.)*

*In the beginning was **the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God**. He was in the beginning with God. **All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made**. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. John 1:1-5*

*The LORD **by wisdom** founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens; **by knowledge** the deeps broke open, and the clouds drop down the dew. Proverbs 3:19-20 (Also see Prov. 8:22-31.)*

*The **fear of the LORD** is the **firstfruits** [first and best of the harvest] of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever! Psalm 111:10*

And **without faith it is impossible to please him**, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. Hebrews 11:6 (Also see John 6:44, Jam. 4:8.)

It takes WAY more faith to believe that the first particle sprung into existence on its own from nothing (let alone the rest of what has to happen after that in the sad, unbelievable story of the big bang and evolution which is now taught to children as "proven fact") than to believe the account that the one, true God so graciously had recorded and preserved for us all these millennia.

Let no one deceive himself. **If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise**. For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their craftiness," and again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the 'wise', that they are futile." 1 Corinthians 3:18-20

Continuing on, besides the distinction of not being among the foolish, what are the other benefits of being wise? Pretty much everything we ever could ever need or want!

Take my **instruction** instead of **silver**, and **knowledge** rather than choice **gold**, for **wisdom** is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her. Proverbs 8:10-11

"And now, O sons, listen to me [wisdom]: **blessed** are those who **keep my ways**. Hear instruction and be wise, and do not neglect it. **Blessed** is the one who **listens to me**, watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my doors. **For whoever finds me finds life and obtains favor from the LORD, but he who fails to find me injures himself; all who hate me love death**." Proverbs 8:32-36

By me [wisdom] **kings reign, and rulers decree what is just**; by me **princes rule, and nobles, all who govern justly**. I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me. **Riches and honor** are with me, **enduring wealth and righteousness**. My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold, and my yield than choice silver. I walk in the way of righteousness, in the paths of justice, granting an inheritance to those who love me, and filling their treasuries. Proverbs 8:15-21

Jesus taught many lessons about being wise or foolish. (See Matt. 7:13-29: don't just hear the word, but DO it - also see Jam. 1:22-27; Luke 12:35-48: keep your lamp burning and stay awake, keep watching for the master to return; Matt. 24:45-51: blessings for those servants found doing as they were told when their master returns; Matt. 25:14-30: rewards for the good and

faithful servants who invested his master's resources wisely while he was away; Luke 19:11-27: rewards for those servants who served well in the master's absence.) But for now, let's take a closer look at the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins so that we can "buy" for ourselves the incredibly valuable commodities of instruction, wisdom and understanding.

"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, 'Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to those who are selling and buy for yourselves.' And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour. Matthew 25:1-13

Notice above that the wise tell the foolish to go to those who sell to buy oil for their lamps that are going out. Right away that fact connects the lack of oil to lack of wisdom. Doesn't that remind you of the verse at the top? "Buy wisdom and do not sell it," but there's a catch. The price is not money, is it? If that were the case, then the richest people of the world would be the wisest, but far too often they're not. The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord, but the majority of them DO NOT fear the Lord. Many times we find that the wealthiest people have the loosest morals. Why? Because they don't hold themselves accountable to God, since they don't believe. So they are not wise (and if they are honest, they will admit that money cannot buy happiness, either).

*Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have **treasure in heaven**; and come, **follow me**." When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. And Jesus said to his disciples, "**Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven**. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?" But Jesus looked at them and said, "**With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible**." Then Peter said in reply, "See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?" Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, in the new world,*

when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first." Matthew 19:21-30

*My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, "You sit here in a good place," while you say to the poor man, "You stand over there," or, "Sit down at my feet," have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? **Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?** But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called? James 2:1-7*

*Come now, you **rich**, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. **Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you** and will eat your flesh like fire. **You have laid up treasure in the last days.** Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived on the earth in **luxury** and in **self-indulgence**. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you. James 5:1-6*

*Let marriage be held in **honor** among all, and let the marriage bed be **undefiled**, for God will **judge** the sexually immoral and adulterous. Keep your life **free from love of money**, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."* So then we are able to confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?" Hebrews 13:4-6 (Also see Matt. 6:33-34, Psa. 37:25-26, Deu. 31:6, Josh. 1:5, 1Chron. 28:20, 2Cor. 4:8-9, Matt. 10:28, John 14:18, 1John 4:4, 1Pet. 4:14-16, Matt. 5:10-14 - *This is not reassurance that God doesn't "care" if believers delight in sin, but that He will not leave us to fight battles in His name on our own—as well as a reminder that He is the provider of everything we need in life. See 1John 2:1-6 for advice for believers regarding sin, for starters.)*

As for the **rich** in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure [in heaven] for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life. 1 Timothy 6:17-19

Who is usually the wisest among us? Those who are old, right? (I wish it weren't so, but this is getting to be less and less true as more of the aged, who should be pillars of society, accept the "theory of relativity" of morals.) They've been around long enough to (hopefully) mature and learn a few things from experience. Bear in mind that there is a BIG difference between knowledge and wisdom—mostly the length of time they take to obtain. We can watch a YouTube video to find out how to do something in a few minutes, but to gain true wisdom can take a lifetime. (Psa. 90:12) In addition, the focus of wisdom usually involves virtuous qualities that make life pleasant (and pleasing to God), such as fidelity and respect, whereas "knowledge" sometimes has the opposite effect—puffing people up with importance, finding new and creative ways to get into trouble, etc.

O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called "knowledge," for by professing it some have swerved from the faith. Grace be with you. 1 Timothy 6:20-21

And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. 1 Corinthians 2:1-6

Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. Colossians 1:28

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained. Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as

enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. Philippians 3:14-21

Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away. And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and **their fruit does not mature**. As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience. Luke 8:11-15

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, **to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ**, so that we may **no longer be children**, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to **grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ**, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. Ephesians 4:11-16

About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a **child**. But solid food is for the **mature**, for those who have their **powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil**. Hebrews 5:11-14

And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, **with knowledge and all discernment**, so that you may **approve what is excellent**, and so be **pure and blameless** for the day of Christ, **filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ**, to the glory and praise of God. Philippians 1:9-11

When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. **When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.** 1 Corinthians 13:11

Brothers, **do not be children in your thinking.** Be **infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature.** 1 Corinthians 14:20

People these days always want a quick fix (preferably without having to give anything up). Like the foolish virgins, they think that money can buy anything. There will always be someone willing to sell anything we demand, but what we get is not always what it was claimed to be, is it? "Buying wisdom" takes time (not money), which the foolish virgins ran out of at the same time they realized they needed "oil" for their lamps in order to see their way on the narrow path to the bridegroom. Not only that, but because we have free will, all the time in the world will not be enough for a foolish person who has chosen to squander it pursuing worthless, temporary things instead of seeking true riches, which is wisdom that leads to eternal salvation. (2Tim. 3:14-15)

"But **where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? Man does not know its worth,** and it is not found in the land of the living. The deep says, 'It is not in me,' and the sea says, 'It is not with me.' It cannot be bought for gold, and silver cannot be weighed as its price. It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir, in precious onyx or sapphire. Gold and glass cannot equal it, nor can it be exchanged for jewels of fine gold. No mention shall be made of coral or of crystal; the price of wisdom is above pearls. The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it, nor can it be valued in pure gold. From where, then, does **wisdom** come? And where is the place of **understanding?** It is hidden from the eyes of all living and concealed from the birds of the air. Abaddon and Death say, 'We have heard a rumor of it with our ears.' God understands the way to it, and he knows its place. For he looks to the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens. When he gave to the wind its weight and apportioned the waters by measure, when he made a decree for the rain and a way for the lightning of the thunder, then he saw it and declared it; he established it, and searched it out. And he said to man, 'Behold, the **fear of the Lord, that is wisdom,** and to **turn away from evil is understanding.**'" Job 28:12-28

But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. **Older men** are to be **sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. Older women** likewise are to be **reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine.** They are to **teach what is good,** and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. Likewise, urge the younger

men to be **self-controlled**. Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us. Bondservants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior. Titus 2:1-10 (Note: Bondservants put themselves in that position in order to pay debt, similar to how employees today choose to work in order to afford the things they need and want—whereas many people are enslaved to their jobs, and many of their “wants” are considered “needs”.)

Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with **humility** toward one another, for “**God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble**.” 1 Peter 5:5

Gray hair is a **crown of glory**; it is gained in a righteous life. Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and **he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city**. Proverbs 16:31-32 (During the earthly millennial reign of Christ, people who live to only a hundred years will be considered “cursed.” Isa. 65:20)

Steadfast love and faithfulness preserve the king, and by steadfast love his throne is upheld. The glory of young men is their strength, but **the splendor of old men is their gray hair**. Proverbs 20:28-29 (So much for the “wisdom” of this world where both men and women are encouraged and even expected to try to look younger, which usually includes dying their hair...)

In addition to being willing to invest time, we need to be HUMBLE in order to be teachable—that narrows out the majority of people in this modern age where pride is continually exalted. (Jam. 4:6) Following the “wisdom of the crowd” when Jesus said that the broad path leads to destruction is NOT wise. (Matt. 7:23-14)

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. **Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil**. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones. Proverbs 3:5-8

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. **Never be wise in your own sight**. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay,

says the Lord." To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." **Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.** Romans 12:16-21

Whoever corrects a scoffer gets himself abuse, and he who reproves a wicked man incurs injury. Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you. Give **instruction** to a **wise man**, and he will be **still wiser**; **teach a righteous man**, and he will **increase in learning**. **The fear of the LORD is the firstfruits of wisdom**, and the **knowledge of the Holy One is understanding**. For by me your days will be multiplied, and years will be added to your life. If you are wise, you will have wisdom; if you scoff, you alone will bear it. Proverbs 9:7-12

But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be **lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God**, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. 2 Timothy 3:1-5 (Also see 2Pet. 2:18, Jude 1:16.)

This problem the foolish virgins have in the parable does not allow for a last-second remedy. Once the midnight call goes out that the Bridegroom is arriving, the only ones who will be entering into His kingdom with Him will be those who have oil in their lamps at that time. But isn't that cruel? If the "oil" is wisdom, then are they are being punished for being foolish? No, there's more to it than that. We could NEVER buy ANYTHING that would save us, but the "purchase" is metaphorical, just as Jesus Himself is the door through which we enter. (John 10:9)

As we've seen, wisdom comes from GOD. He provides it to whomever He will by His Spirit. (1Cor. 12:4-11) Oil (like that in the lamps of the five wise virgins who did not run out of theirs before the arrival of the bridegroom) represents the Holy Spirit in the Bible. (No wonder it's a metaphor—you could never BUY the indwelling presence of God! Simon the Sorcerer tried to buy the ability to give the gift of the Holy Spirit and was severely rebuked by Peter. Acts 8:9-24) An example from the Old Testament is when God sent Samuel to anoint David (another "type" of Jesus) with oil as future king and the Holy Spirit came upon him from that day forward.

As a side note: King David offered acceptable sacrifices to God, even though he was from the tribe of Judah and not the tribe of Levi (like Jesus, his

"descendant" through Mary and Joseph's lineage, who is both High Priest and King of Righteousness in the order of Melchizedek). (1Chron. 21:26, Heb. 7:11-28, Heb. 7:13-17) True believers have the Holy Spirit dwelling inside of them and they offer spiritual sacrifices. (Rom. 12:1, 1Pet. 2:4-5, John 3:34, Acts 4:31, Acts 13:52, Rom. 8:9, Eph. 5:15-21) Furthermore, David was not perfect, but because he always repented and sought God's forgiveness, he is remembered to this day with honor as a "man after God's heart." (Acts 13:22, 2Sam. 12:13, 2Sam. 24:10, Psa. 139:23-24)

*When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed is before him." But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: **man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.**" Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen these." Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here." And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had **beautiful eyes** and was handsome. And the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him, for this is he." Then **Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him** in the midst of his brothers. And **the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward**. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah. 1 Samuel 16:6-13 (Keep in mind that the eye is the lamp of the body. Luke 11:33-36)*

*Daniel answered and said: "**Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him.**" Daniel 2:20-22*

The LORD is exalted, for he dwells on high; he will fill Zion with justice and righteousness, and he will be the stability of your times, abundance of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is Zion's treasure. Isaiah 33:5-6

Back to our parable, undeniably the saddest detail of the parable is that when the foolish virgins return (presumably having made some sort of a purchase since that was their intention upon leaving, but the text doesn't specify), the bridegroom (Jesus - John 3:27-29) does NOT know them! How tragic, when ALL TEN were waiting in expectation of entering the kingdom with Him! Parables are

filled with symbolism, and we understand that “virgin” is a term referring to believers (2Cor. 11:2-3), so that would indicate that all ten had received and accepted the word of truth (the Gospel). The lamps represent something else that serves a similar function—and since the word of God is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path, that explains how they all had “lamps.”

*Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day. Your commandment makes me **wiser** than my enemies, for it is ever with me. I have more **understanding** than all my teachers, for your **testimonies** are my meditation. I understand more than the aged, for I keep your precepts. **I hold back my feet from every evil way, in order to keep your word.** I do not **turn aside** from your rules, for you have taught me. How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I **hate every false way.** **Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.** I have sworn an oath and confirmed it, to keep your righteous rules. Psalm 119:97-106 (This is the longest Psalm, and contains MANY treasures for those who love God.)*

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:14-17

*So **faith** comes from hearing, and hearing through the **word of Christ.** Romans 10:17*

*In him you also, when you heard the **word of truth,** the **gospel of your salvation,** and **believed in him,** were **sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,** who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. Ephesians 1:13-14*

The only difference between those the Bridegroom knew and those He did not know was whether they had oil in their lamps at the time He returned after an unexpected delay. Having "lamps burning" so that we can be among the “wise virgins” or “wise servants” (Matt. 24:36-51) who are prepared for Jesus’ return STARTS with hearing and believing the Gospel. That is how we BEGIN our WALK. In order to see where we’re going, we need our lamps (believe the Word of God), along with oil to fuel them (walk in wisdom, in the Spirit, in the LIGHT). We need to abide in Jesus and in His love by faithfully keeping His words, out of love, as He kept the charge of His Father. (John 15:6-10)

Hear, my son, and be wise, and direct your heart in the way. Proverbs 23:19

"Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "**I am the light of the world.** Whoever **follows me** will not **walk in darkness,** but will have the **light** of life." John 8:12

For it is you who **light my lamp;** the LORD my God **lightens my darkness.** Psalm 18:28

For you are my **lamp,** O LORD, and my God **lightens my darkness.** 2 Samuel 22:29

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that **God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.** If we say we have fellowship with him while we **walk in darkness,** we **lie and do not practice the truth.** But if we **walk in the light, as he is in the light,** we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 1 John 1:5-7

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. **By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.** Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the **darkness** is passing away and the **true light is already shining.** Whoever says he is in the **light** and **hates** his brother is **still in darkness.** Whoever **loves** his brother **abides in the light,** and in him there is no cause for stumbling. But whoever **hates** his brother is in the darkness and **walks in the darkness,** and does not know where he is going, because the **darkness has blinded his eyes.** 1 John 2:1-11 (Note, we are to love even our enemies, but the definition of our brothers in the Lord was given in Matt. 12:46-50.)

But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all **children of light, children of the day.** We are not of the night or of the darkness. So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us **keep awake and be sober.** For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. But since **we belong to the day,** let us be sober,

having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. 1 Thessalonians 5:4-8

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but **whoever does the will of God abides forever.** 1 John 2:15-17

In the Bible, people who do not know God are compared to being blind and walking in the dark. (John 8:12, 12:35, Eph. 5:8, 1John 1:6, 2Cor. 4:4, Rev. 3:17)

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever *believes* in him should not perish but have *eternal life*. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. *Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.* And this is the judgment: **the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.**" John 3:16-21

Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, "Are we also blind?" Jesus said to them, "If you were **blind**, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, '**We see,**' your guilt **remains.**" John 9:40-41 (Also see Matt. 15:14, Matt. 23.)

Fret not yourself because of evildoers, and be not envious of the wicked, for the evil man has no future; **the lamp of the wicked will be put out.** Proverbs 24:19-20

The indwelling Holy Spirit lights the way for believers, but He doesn't force anyone to listen to Him. (Hearing is one thing, listening is another.) We can use our free will to grieve and even quench Him. (1Thess. 5:19, Eph. 4:30) Needless to say, those are FOOLISH things to do, NOT wise.

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to **life and godliness**, through the **knowledge of him** who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his **precious and very great promises**, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine

nature, having **escaped** from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. For this very reason, make every effort to **supplement your faith** with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.** Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be **richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.** Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are **established in the truth** that you have. I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things. For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. And we have the prophetic **word** more fully confirmed, **to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts,** knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:3-21

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but **those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.** For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact **the Spirit of God dwells in you.** Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. **For if you live according to the flesh you will**

die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" **The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but **we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.** For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. Romans 8:5-25 (Also see 1Pet. 2:16, Jam. 1:25, 2:12, 1Thess. 4:2-8, 2Cor. 12:20-13:3, 2Pet. 2:19, John 8:34-36, Rom. 6:20-23 regarding our freedom in Christ.)

How can a lamp shine brightly to see by (and also to give light to this dark world) if we interfere with its proper functioning, perhaps by hiding it under a basket (Matt. 5:14-16) or by letting it run out of oil? Since we have been cautioned not to grieve and quench the Spirit (which could cause the light in our lamp to go out if sustained indefinitely - Heb. 3:12-13), a good question would be: "How might one do that?" (in order to avoid it). The quick answer is "by disobeying God" (and refusing to repent), but what are some examples? Since we only have two commands to keep (Mark 12:28-34, Rom. 13:8-10, Jam. 2:8), I'll put them into two categories—but they are not really separable since we can't love others unless we first love God, and if we claim to love God but don't love others, then we are being untruthful. (1John 3:14-18, 1John 4:19-21)

*Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you **shine as lights** in the world, **holding fast** to the **word of life**, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. Philippians 2:12-16*

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." Matthew 5:14-16

*For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be **wise** as to what is **good** and **innocent** as to what is **evil**.* Romans 16:19

As for keeping the first of the two greatest commands, some signs that we don't really love God are: Loving the world and its misguided ways more than God and His perfect ways, worshiping Him with empty words instead of from the heart, blending worship of Him with that of false gods (including "new age" practices which have been around ever since Satan tricked Eve in the Garden of Eden), grumbling and complaining rather than being content with the blessings we're given (1Tim. 6:8), being unthankful, being stingy towards God—prioritizing the satisfaction of our own wants (which we often call "needs" Jam. 4:3) above the support of God's household and His work (which is giving Him leftovers instead of the firstfruits), doing good works NOT out of love, but in order to attract attention to ourselves, accepting credit for our "accomplishments" and praise for ourselves instead of giving God the glory, denial of having sinned and/or refusing to repent when disciplined by Him, being proud of anything or anyone except the Lord and what He has done, and refusing to honor God's wishes that the Body of Christ should remain unleavened—all of which can be summarized as loving anything or anyone more than God, which is idolatry.

Here are some behaviors that could indicate that we are not keeping the second of the two commands—to love our neighbor (including enemies as well as brothers and sisters in the Lord - Rom. 12:14-21, Matt. 5:43-48, Gal. 6:10) as ourselves: Holding grudges—withholding forgiveness, harboring hate for people in our hearts, lying, gossiping, slandering, stealing, using foul language, coarse or inappropriate humor, mistreating anyone, especially children, having ANY sexual relations outside of marriage between a man and woman, participating in or approving of evil, casting stumbling blocks to cause or tempt others to sin, being jealous/coveting what others have (including things, status, etc.), gluttony (excessive living), getting drunk (or using any substance in such a way that it causes loss of self-control), having fits of anger, inability to be happy unless everything goes "right" (i.e. our way), being stingy toward others, criticizing others for sins we practice ourselves (hypocrisy), devaluing the service to God of others and inflating the importance of our own, being overly domineering over the household of God, insisting upon having our own way (which is selfish),

stirring up trouble, being argumentative and contentious, and being defensive when someone lovingly offers constructive correction (i.e. "we're never wrong").

Our bodies are temples of God, and so what we do IN them matters. (1Cor. 6:12-20, 1Cor. 3:16-17) Jesus cleansed the temple in Jerusalem during the week of Passover both at the beginning and end of His earthly ministry. (John 2:13-17, Matt. 21:12-13) That should set an example for us to keep OUR temples undefiled. We should love what He loves and hate what He hates rather than being indifferent. (Rev. 3:15-17) The main motive of those who were making God's temple into a marketplace at the time Jesus became irate with them was the love of money (but needless to say, they also had an unhealthy disrespect for the holiness of God. I would say they had forgotten about his awesome power as well.) We all know greedy tele-evangelists who are constantly trying to get people to send them money for their (often wealthy) "ministry." And what do most of us ourselves do with the money we have left once our basic needs are met? We usually use it to please ourselves, often in the same exact ways that people who don't even KNOW God do. Not good. Our inheritance and citizenship are in heaven, and we're only sojourners here.

Note that it is normal even for true believers to slip and fall (sin, whether unintentionally or due to weakness)—no one is perfect except God—but it is not acceptable to deliberately continue practicing any known sin. God KNOWS whether a person is aware that they are sinning or not, and also what ways they could have avoided temptation. We can't trick Him, but neither do we need to live in fear of "losing" our salvation for making too many mistakes. (2Tim. 2:19, 1John 4:18, 1John 3:19-20, 1John 1:9) For a person who has truly been born again, the process of walking away from God is not quick, but it is still VERY serious. It takes striving against His Spirit until the wayward soul can no longer even hear His voice calling them to repent and return. (2Tim. 2:24-26, 2Pet. 3:15, 2Pet. 3:9, 1Tim. 2:1-6, Heb. 3:12-15, Heb. 6:4-8, 2Pet. 2:20-22)

We can compare eliminating sins from our lives to pruning a branch on a fruit tree or vine, or to trimming the wick on a lamp (which is the point at which the foolish virgins' lamps began to go out). Trimming a lamp's wick makes it burn cleaner. Have you ever lit a candle without trimming the wick (after it has been previously burned?) The flame will not be nice and steady—it will jump around erratically. And needless to say, a lamp will no longer provide light to see by at all if it has no oil, even if it ONCE had oil. (Mark 4:21-25, Matt. 25:24-30)

*"I am the true **vine**, and my Father is the **vinedresser**. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he **prunes**, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the*

word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. **If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.** If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so **prove to be my disciples**. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. **If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.** These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you." John 15:1-14

"For **no good tree bears bad fruit**, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks. **Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?** Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great." Luke 6:43-49 (The foundation and rock are Jesus. Isa. 28:16, 1Cor. 3:11)

"Every **tree** that does not bear good fruit is **cut down and thrown into the fire.**" 24 "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a **wise** man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a **foolish** man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it." Matthew 7:19, 24-27

The sealing of the Holy Spirit provides the LAMP, upon belief in our hearts and confession of faith with our mouths. (Rom. 10:8-10, 1Cor. 6:19-20, 1Cor. 15:23, Rev. 5:9-10) The indwelling of the Holy Spirit provides the continuous supply of OIL inside the lamp. (Acts 13:52) Both are gifts which require us to simply stop rebelling against God and to surrender to His will. That is repentance from unbelief and of behaving as though we are “gods” who can do as we please without accountability to God. The Holy Spirit bears GOOD and abundant fruit, which is observable in works of faith that come out from inside of a pure, believing heart. HE is the reason we love our neighbor AND obey Christ, again, out of love. We remain continually filled as we seek to WALK in the Spirit (in the LIGHT), according to the gift of God’s wisdom through His word in the Scriptures (which His Spirit illuminates for us from within). (1John 1:5-2:6, Gal. 5:16-24) We need God (and His wisdom) BOTH to believe and obey (because we believe, not to “save ourselves”). He doesn’t force us to do either—thus, there are MANY exhortations in the Bible to (use our free will to) believe and walk in a manner worthy of the Gospel.

*But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has **no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not become partners with them; for at **one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light** (for the **fruit of light** is found in all that is **good and right and true**), and try to **discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” Look carefully then how you **walk**, not as unwise but as **wise**, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore **do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is**. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but **be filled with the Spirit**, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. Ephesians 5:3-21*****

Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must **no longer walk** as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are **darkened in their understanding**, alienated from the life of God because of the **ignorance** that is in them, due to their **hardness of heart**. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But **that is not the way you learned Christ!**—assuming that you have heard about him and were **taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus**, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be **renewed in the spirit of your minds**, and to put on the new self, **created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness**. Ephesians 4:17-24 (Also see 1Pet. 4:1-5.)

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be **filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding**, so as to **walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God**. May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the **inheritance** of the saints in **light**. He has delivered us from the domain of **darkness** and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1:9-14

Our bodies are “vessels of clay” filled with priceless treasure (the LIGHT of the Gospel—just like that in the parable of the virgins shining from the lamps filled with oil in order to light the way to the bridegroom), created by God for the One who is the Master of God’s House, and our Lord, Jesus Christ. (1Cor. 6:13) Notice the way that the bodies of those who have received the gift of faith being temples/vessels of the Holy Spirit matches the concept of a lamp holding oil, and of our being lights in this world? Notice also that the passage continues right along to talk about suffering for His sake and dying to ourselves in order that people can see the life of Jesus in and through us. (Also see Rom. 6:3-13, Col. 3:3-10.)

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the **light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God**. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but **Jesus Christ as Lord**, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has **shone in our hearts** to give the **light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ**. But we have this **treasure in jars of clay**, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God

and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 2 Corinthians 4:3-11 (For WHY God would "blind" anyone, see Rom. 1:18-32 and 2Thess. 2:9-12.)

*But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." Now in a **great house** there are not only **vessels** of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for **honorable use**, some for dishonorable. Therefore, **if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.** So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a **pure heart**. Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And the **Lord's servant** must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will. 2 Timothy 2:19-26*

Believers in this age are members of the Body of Christ, which is also the temple of God, since the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in them. Wisdom says she has built her house with seven pillars—the same number of churches there are in the letters of Rev. 2-3. In fact, the church at Philadelphia is told that the overcomers will be made into pillars in the temple of God. The bread and wine in the next passage bring to mind the Lord's Supper, and the calling of guests definitely correlates in my mind to the parable about the king giving a wedding banquet for his son in Matt. 22:1-22 (which is about His Father drawing believers to Jesus through the Holy Spirit - John 6:44).

Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn her seven pillars. She has slaughtered her sacrifice; she has mixed her wine; she has also set her table. She has **sent out her young women to **call** from the highest places in the town, "Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!" To him who lacks sense she says, "Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. Forsake your simple ways, and **live—walk in the way of understanding.**" Proverbs 9:1-6**

The one who conquers, I will make him a **pillar** in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Revelation 3:12-13

As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, **you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house**, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 2:4-5 (Also see Heb. 3:5-6)

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are **fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God**, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, **Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone**, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, **grows into a holy temple in the Lord**. In him you also are being **built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit**. Ephesians 2:19-22

By **wisdom** a house is built, and by **understanding** it is established; by **knowledge** the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches. Proverbs 24:3-4

Now Moses was **faithful in all God's house as a servant**, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, but **Christ is faithful over God's house as a son**. And we are his **house** if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope. Hebrews 3:5-6 (Also see Heb. 4:14)

The Holy Spirit is our guide, helper and teacher. Jesus, the Good Shepherd (and obviously shepherds guide flocks of sheep - John 10), sent Him for just that purpose. It is IMPOSSIBLE to be wise in God's eyes without Him. (1Cor. 3:18-20, Heb. 11:6, Rom. 8:7-8, Rom. 10:17)

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments, and I will ask the Father, and he will give you another **Helper, to be with you forever**, even **the Spirit of truth**, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for **he dwells with you and will be in you**. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will manifest

*yourself to us, and not to the world?" Jesus answered him, "**If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.** Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me. These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But **the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.** Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. John 14:15-27*

*Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will **abide** in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life. I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. But **the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.** And now, little children, **abide in him**, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming. If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who **practices righteousness** has been **born of him**. 1 John 2:24-29*

*When the Spirit of truth comes, he will **guide you into all the truth**, for he will not speak on his own authority, but **whatever he hears he will speak**, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and **declare it to you**. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that **he will take what is mine and declare it to you**. John 16:13-15 (Also see Acts 8:38-40.)*

Coming to faith in Jesus as our Savior and Lord (Rom. 10:8-10) is the beginning of our walk following Jesus on the narrow path, to the door of eternal life (which is Him—we ABIDE in Him, and He is returning for His OWN - John 14:1-3, 1Cor. 15:23, 50-53, 1Thes. 4:16-18).

*Jesus said to him, "I am the **way**, and the **truth**, and the **life**. No one comes to the Father except through me. John 14:6*

*"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep **hear his voice**, and he **calls his own sheep by name and leads them***

out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **I am the door of the sheep.** All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." John 10:1-11

I have taught you the **way of wisdom**; I have led you **in the paths of uprightness.** When you **walk**, your step will not be hampered, and if you run, you will not stumble. Keep hold of instruction; do not let go; guard her, for **she is your life.** Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of the evil. Avoid it; do not go on it; turn away from it and pass on. Proverbs 4:11-15

So you will **walk in the way** of the good and keep to the **paths of the righteous.** For the upright will inhabit the land, and those with integrity will remain in it, but the wicked will be cut off from the land, and the treacherous will be rooted out of it. Proverbs 2:20-22 (Also see Matt. 13:36-43.)

The opposite of wisdom is folly. She also calls people to follow her and invites them to come in to eat with her and abide with her.

The woman **Folly is loud**; she is seductive and knows nothing. She sits at the door of her **house**; she takes a seat on the highest places of the town, calling to those who pass by, who are going **straight on their way**, "Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!" And to him who **lacks sense** she says, "Stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." But he does not know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of Sheol. Proverbs 9:13-18

So [if you heed the voice of wisdom] you will be delivered from the forbidden woman, from the adulteress with her smooth words, who forsakes the companion of her youth and **forgets the covenant of her God**; for her **house** sinks down to **death**, and her **paths** to the **departed**; **none** who go to her **come back, nor** do they **regain the paths of life.** Proverbs 2:16-19 (Also see 2Pet. 2:18-22)

*And now, O sons, listen to me, and be attentive to the words of my mouth. Let not your **heart turn aside** to her **ways**; do not **stray** into her **paths**, for many a victim has she laid low, and all her slain are a mighty throng. Her **house** is the way to Sheol, going down to the chambers of death. Proverbs 7:24-27*

In order to remain safe and secure on the narrow path to life (Matt. 7:13-14), we need to cut off (prune the branch, trim the wick) the teachings (and related behaviors) that do not match the whole counsel of the Scriptures. (Acts 20:26-33, Acts 17:11) At first glance, a teaching may sound acceptable by itself (possibly a snippet extracted from the rest of the verse and context of the passage), only to turn out to be contradictory to other passages. If so, it is a false teaching—probably twisted in order to support an unbiblical viewpoint.

There is a saying “eat the meat and spit out the bones.” That is NOT in the Bible! Would you feed your child a piece of fish without the bones removed and tell them to just spit them out? I hope not! How about one with “only a little” poison? No? Well, neither should we listen to false teachers and just ignore the parts of what they say that which go against the Bible. It is arrogant and careless for anyone to think they can “spot false teachings in their sleep.” Maybe YOU can, but what about those who listen to those teachers because they trust YOUR judgment? Did you know that on Facebook if you “like” a ministry or click “like” on their post, then the system will recommend them to your friends? It is foolish and WRONG to take chances that the leaven of false teachings (which lead to the leaven of sin) will slip into the unleavened lump of the Body of Christ. (1Cor. 5:6-8) Likewise, thinking we’re so smart that we’ll be able to control the spread of it once it does enter in is foolish and arrogant. No one was EVER commended in the Bible for being foolish OR arrogant (which is prideful).

The letter to the last church of the seven in Revelation 2-3 contains a description of people who are self-sufficient instead of humbly depending upon God for everything (including the wisdom which would have benefitted them greatly). Interestingly, the letter also advises purchasing more things from the Lord Jesus that cannot be bought with money.

*"And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: 'The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation. "'I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. I counsel you to **buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your***

nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. Revelation 3:14-18

Since the Bible teaches us NOT to pursue riches and love money, we know that the “gold refined by fire” would not be something that would cause anyone to be financially wealthy. Instead, it would result in something MUCH better—being spiritually rich (and with treasure stored in heaven), even though financially poor. (1Tim. 6:9-10, Luke 12:32-34, Matt. 19:20-24, Luke 16:9)

*Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are **poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom**, which he has promised to those who love him? James 2:5*

*“And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: ‘The words of the first and the last, who died and came to life. ‘I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are **rich**) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.’” Revelation 2:8-9 (See more below.)*

We know that at least some degree of tribulation (trial) is GOOD for us, because it is a way of proving that our VERY VALUABLE faith is genuine. All must be tested and all overcomers (those who successfully pass the test through endurance) will be rewarded. (Mark 9:49, Rom. 8:28, Matt. 5:10-13, Mark 9:49-50, Rev. 2-3, Col. 3:23-25) It takes wisdom to realize that what we see is not all there is, and that what is coming is far more valuable than good things we might experience now, and worth suffering for, if necessary. It pleases God when we trust Him to deliver us; and when He does, it builds up our faith. We also learn to comfort others as we have been comforted. (2Cor. 1:3-5, Psa. 50:14-15)

Buy wisdom, buy understanding. Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth. Do not forsake her and she will **guard** you. Love her and she will **watch over** you. The **firstfruits is wisdom**—buy wisdom, and with all of your acquisitions, buy understanding. **Prize her highly, and she will exalt you**; she will **honor** you if you embrace her. She will place on your head a graceful garland; she will bestow on you a beautiful **crown**.” Proverbs 4:5-9

*Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be **tested**, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the **crown of life**.* Revelation 2:10 (Also see John 11:25, 1Thess. 4:16)

Because you have kept my word about **patient endurance**, I will keep you from the **hour of trial** that is coming on the whole world, to **try those who dwell on the earth**. I am coming soon. **Hold fast** what you have, so that no one may seize your **crown**. Revelation 3:10-11 (Also see John 11:25, 1Thess. 4:17)

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. **If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.** But let him ask in faith, without doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits. **Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.** Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. James 1:2-16

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. **Be sober-minded; be watchful.** Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of **suffering** are being experienced by your brothers throughout the world. And **after you have suffered a little while**, the God of all grace, who has **called you to his eternal glory in Christ**, will himself **restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you**. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 5:6-11

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an **inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven** for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in

*the last time. In this you **rejoice**, though now for a little while, **if necessary**, you have been **grieved by various trials**, so that the **tested genuineness of your faith**—precious **gold** that, being destroyed by fire, is moreover being **tested**—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. 1 Peter 1:3-9*

*For I consider that the **sufferings** of this present time are **not worth comparing with the glory** that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. Romans 8:18-19*

*For this light **momentary affliction** is **preparing** for us an eternal weight of **glory beyond all comparison**, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. **For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal**. 2 Corinthians 4:17-18*

*Beloved, I urge you **as sojourners and exiles** to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. 1 Peter 2:11-12*

*So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. **For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come**. Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. Hebrews 13:12-16*

Wisdom is compared to living water, like that which Jesus gives freely through the Holy Spirit to those who believe. (We do not obey in order to earn salvation—we obey because we truly believe in our hearts, the fruits of which are obedience out of love, honor, respect and gratitude, by the power of the Holy Spirit IN us and overflowing OUT of us. Matt. 13:23, Gal. 5:22-24, Rom. 6:22, Rom. 7:4-6, Eph. 5:9-11, Phil. 1:9-11, Col. 1:9-10, Heb. 12:11, Jam. 3:17-18, Titus 3:14, 2Pet. 1:8-12, Eph. 5:4/Prov. 4:24)

*My son, be attentive to my words; **incline your ear** to my sayings. Let them not escape from your sight; keep them within your **heart**. For they are **life** to*

those who find them, and healing to all their flesh. **Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.** Proverbs 4:20-23

Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. **The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.**" John 4:13-14

On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever **believes in me**, as the Scripture has said, '**Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.**'" Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. John 7:37-39

The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one **who hears** say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the **water of life without price.** Revelation 22:17

Wisdom is also compared to a tree of life, whereas eating from the tree of life is one of the rewards promised to those who overcome trials to enter the kingdom of God. (Acts 14:22) We are also exhorted to HOLD FAST to wisdom, just as we are told the same in regard to our confession of faith.

*Blessed is the one who finds **wisdom**, and the one who obtains understanding, for she is **more profitable than silver**, and her gain is **better than fine gold**. She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her. **Long life** is in her right hand; in her left hand are **riches and honor**. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a **tree of life** to those who lay hold of her; those who **hold her fast** are called blessed.* Proverbs 3:13-18

*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the **tree of life**, which is in the paradise of God.'* Revelation 2:7

*Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the **tree of life** and that they may enter the city by the gates.* Revelation 22:14

Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; **hold fast** what is good. Abstain from every form of evil. 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22 (Also see Romans 12:9, Rev. 2:25)

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the **gospel** I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being **saved**, if you **hold fast** to the **word** I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. 1 Corinthians 15:1-2

Isn't it interesting that Jesus talked about storing treasure in heaven below, and then went right on to say the eye is the LAMP of the body. Remember that children's song "Be Careful What You See, Little Eyes" - we can't "un-see" anything, but we can get caught in the same trap that foolish people are caught in. Better to be careful of the company we keep and to be separate from the world as God told us He desires that we do. (1Cor. 10:12-13, 1Cor. 15:33-34, Eph. 5:11, Gal. 6:1, Jude 1:22-23, 2Tim. 2:24-26, 2Cor. 6:14-18, Prov. 23:17, John 15:19)

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but **lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven**, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your **treasure** is, there your **heart** will be also. The eye is the **lamp** of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the **light** in you is **darkness**, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money." Matthew 6:19-24

Jesus also warned us to keep ourselves free of the love of money. It reminds me of the saying, "Not all that glitters is gold." If we think (like the rest of the world) that pursuing money and the things (including experiences) that it can buy will make us happy, then we will be very disappointed. Our Creator designed us to be complete IN HIM, and we will never be satisfied with inferior substitutions—at least not for long.

"Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a **treasure in the heavens** that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your **treasure** is, there will your **heart** be also. **Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning**, and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. **Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes.** Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them. **If he**

comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants! But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. **You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.**" Luke 12:32-40

In the passage above, Jesus starts out discussing storing treasure in heaven (where our hearts will be if we LOVE HIM), and goes on to talk about being ready for His return with LAMPS burning. Sounds like what the wise virgins are doing, right? We understand that the point is NOT that we can buy our way into heaven. The point is that IF we love God, then our priorities and desires will match His. We will believe that He actually sees what we do, that His reward is better than anything here on earth, and that He IS returning for those who love Him to take them to the place He has prepared for them. (1Cor. 2:9, John 14:1-3) One of the ways we show we LOVE Him is investing as much as possible of every kind of resource He blesses us with for His glory (instead of hoarding them or squandering them on worthless, unnecessary, temporary things). (1John 3:17-18, Luke 12:13-21)

If our spirit (life), soul (mind/heart - Heb. 4:12) or physical body were torn from the rest of our person, we would no longer be the same individual, would we? Nevertheless, having a spirit, soul and mind does not make us three people—we are still one being. Just as our God in whose image we were created is ONE (Gen. 1:27, Isa. 45:5-6), and the Father, Son and Spirit are inseparable, so wisdom, salvation and the Holy Spirit are inseparable—all three are gifts from God. The foolish virgins are NOT being punished for not being "smart enough." If a humble little child has enough sense to trust God, he is wiser than someone with a PhD who thinks they "know better than to believe in fairy tales." (Matt. 10:15-16, Matt. 11:25-26, Luke 10:21, Luke 18:17, John 20:29)

So **teach** us to number our days that we may get a **heart of wisdom**. Psalm 90:12

"Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God **like a child** shall **not enter** it." Mark 10:15

For the word of the cross is **folly to those who are perishing**, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "**I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.**" Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? **Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?** For since, in the wisdom of God, **the world did not know God through**

wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, **Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God**. For the **foolishness of God is wiser than men**, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that **no human being might boast in the presence of God**. And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, **"Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."** 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

What atheists are really saying is that they don't want God ruling over them. (Luke 19:27, Rev. 6:15-17) They know they don't have all of the answers by any stretch of the imagination, but they present themselves as experts and their current research and hypotheses as facts (to be replaced later with new "facts"). The one who is truly wise will SUBMIT to God. Everyone WILL do so eventually, but those who bow their hearts to Him now will be rewarded with eternal life. Those who wait until it's too late will receive eternal punishment. (Phil. 2:9-11, Rom. 14:11-12, Acts 17:30-31, Rev. 20:11-15, Rev. 6:15-17, Rev. 14:9-11)

*Declare and present your case; let them take counsel together! Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the LORD? And **there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides me**. "Turn to me and be **saved**, all the ends of the earth! **For I am God, and there is no other**. By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: **'To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.'**" Isaiah 45:21-23*

If He should set His heart to it and gather to Himself His spirit and His breath, all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust. Job 34:14-15

Isn't it just like our delightful, glorious God to hide the answer to this parable in plain sight? (Luke 10:21) The ONE thing that the foolish MUST have in order not to be foolish anymore is WISDOM! Wise people are not foolish—those are opposites, plain and simple. This advice applies to EVERYONE—buy wisdom!

*My son, if you receive my words and **treasure** up my commandments with you, making your **ear attentive to wisdom** and **inclining your heart to***

understanding; yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you **seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures**, then you will **understand the fear of the LORD** and **find the knowledge of God**. For **the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding; he stores up sound wisdom for the upright**; he is a shield to those who walk in integrity, guarding the paths of justice and watching over the way of his saints. Then you will **understand** righteousness and justice and equity, every **good path**; for **wisdom** will come into your **heart**, and **knowledge** will be pleasant to your **soul**; **discretion** will watch over you, understanding will guard you, delivering you from the way of evil, from men of perverted speech, who forsake the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness, who rejoice in doing evil and delight in the perverseness of evil, men whose paths are crooked, and who are devious in their ways. Proverbs 2:1-15 (Also see 1Cor. 15:33-34, 2Cor. 6:14-18, Eph. 5:6-17, 2Tim. 3:12-13, Phil. 1:27-30, Luke 12:4.)

It may take time, but it's worth more than anything else you could ever have or want. The worthless things that the lost world spends all of its time on are intentional distractions of the devil to keep us from recognizing what is really important. Wisdom is not like the junk of the world that becomes "more valuable" due to demand. The value of wisdom doesn't fluctuate—it's always priceless, and God never runs out of anything, including wisdom.

How much better to buy wisdom than gold, to buy understanding than choosing silver. Proverbs 16:16

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality. Colossians 3:23-25

But, as it is written, "**What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him.**" 1 Corinthians 2:9

Apply your **heart** to instruction and your **ear** to words of knowledge. Proverbs 23:12

To you, O men, I call, and my cry is to the children of man. **O simple ones, learn prudence; O fools, learn sense**. Hear, for I will speak noble things, and from my lips will come what is **right**, for my mouth will utter **truth**; wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are **righteous**; there

*is nothing twisted or crooked in them. They are all straight to him who **understands**, and right to those who find **knowledge**. Proverbs 8:4-9*

*I, **wisdom**, dwell with **prudence**, and I find **knowledge** and **discretion**. **The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil**. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate. I have **counsel** and **sound wisdom**; I have **insight**; I have **strength**. Proverbs 8:12-14*

Think for yourself what is desirable and worthy instead of following foolish, blind people around you. (Matt. 7:13-14, Matt. 15:13-14) We will each be answering for ourselves according to the grace given us. (Gal. 6:4-5, Phil. 3:15-16, Rev. 2:24-25, Luke 12:47-48, 1Pet. 4:10, Eph. 4:7, Rom. 14:12, 2Cor. 5:9-10, Rev. 11:18, Matt. 25:19) And whatever you do, don't rely on someone else's faith to save you. Remember, the wise virgins could not give their oil to the foolish. Nor did the foolish have time to "buy oil" to see their way to the bridegroom after the cry had already gone out that he was arriving. The door had been closed when they returned, and they were not allowed in (to the kingdom - Matt. 25:1-13). NOW is the time to "buy wisdom"—to become wise instead of foolish—to ensure entry into the kingdom when the KING returns. If you haven't done so yet, you can start by humbly seeking God, who is the Giver of the FREE gifts of both faith and wisdom through His Holy Spirit (including the GRACE, which is power, to WALK in and be LED by the Spirit - Rom. 8:9-14).

*For the **word of God** is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the **thoughts** and intentions of the **heart**. And **no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account**. Hebrews 4:12-13*

*The end of the matter; all has been heard. **Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man**. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 (Also see Matt. 22:34-40, Mark 12:28-34, Rom. 13:8-10)*

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