

- i. How do YOU view the cross? ^{NIV} **1 Corinthians 1:23** “...we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,²⁴ but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the **wisdom** of God.”
 → Stumbling block; → foolishness; → wisdom of God!
- j. HOW should we ask for wisdom? ^{NAS} **James 1:5** “...if any of you lacks **wisdom**, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.⁶ But let him ask in faith without any doubting...” After asking, dig into God’s Word: ^{NAS} **2 Timothy 3:15** ...the sacred writings...are able to give you the **wisdom** that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”
- k. Being wise and forgiven in Jesus, let it show: ^{NIV} **James 3:13** “Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from **wisdom**.” *Our good lives and humility do not earn heaven, but show we are heaven-bound thru Jesus!*
- l. Wisdom bears fruit: ^{NIV} **James 3:17** But the **wisdom** that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.” *Others will rejoice in our wisdom, which is connected to Jesus!*

Conclusion: Now, in this New Year, **forgiven in Jesus and instructed by the Word**, let us grow in ✦ *gaining wisdom* and ✦ *living according to it!* And all God’s people said: *Amen!*

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Let Us Proceed with WISDOM in This New Year!

Based on Various Passages
 2nd Sunday after Christmas – 2011
 January 2 → 8:00 & 10:45



Introduction: Dear friends in Jesus Christ, we now find ourselves in another New Year – *a year filled with opportunities and possibilities!* However, what will we do with such things? Will we squander them foolishly OR use them wisely?

First, let’s consider those two key words – *foolish and wise:*

- **Foolish** – Some other words for foolish are ✓ senseless, ✓ witless, and ✓ stupid; to proceed foolishly means *to live without forethought or caution* → to act without thinking!¹
- **Wise** – Some other words for wise are ✓ intelligent, ✓ clever, and ✓ sensible; to proceed wisely means *to live with discernment, judgment, or discretion as to what is true or right* → to rightly think; then to properly act!² The Greek is σοφία, pronounced **sofia**, the name of the fourth child of Rev. J and Tiina May!

We now turn to God’s Holy Word for further instruction:

¹ The Random House College Dictionary, Revised Edition (New York: Random House, Inc., 1988), 513.

² *Ibid.*, 1511.

1. **Today's OT Reading – Solomon Asked for Wisdom:**

- a. The offer from God: ^{NIV} **1 Kings 3:5** **At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you."** *Wow, what an offer! What would you ask for? Would you ✦ask without thinking OR ✦rightly think before you asked?*
- b. The request from Solomon: After carefully considering ✦God's blessings and ✦the position God had given to him as king, he wisely said: ⁹ **"...give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong."** *May we also desire and seek the same!*

2. **Today's Gospel Reading – Jesus Grows in Wisdom:**

- a. A description of Jesus, when He was an infant or a toddler: ^{NIV} **Luke 2:40** **"And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him."**
- b. A description of Jesus, when He was 12 years old: His parents ⁴⁶ **"...found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers.** [The section concludes:] ⁵² **...Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."**

3. **Other Passages on Wisdom:** May these passages encourage us to ✦desire, ✦receive, and ✦apply God's blessing of wisdom:

- a. Wisdom is NOT gained from sinning: ^{NIV} **Genesis 3:6** **"When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree**

was...desirable for gaining **wisdom**, she...ate it." *But her foolishness brought sin and death to everyone!*

- b. Wisdom is very valuable: ^{NIV} **Job 28:18** **"...the price of **wisdom** is beyond rubies. ¹⁹ ...it cannot be bought with pure gold."** *It's a gift from God!*
- c. With WHAT does wisdom begin? ^{NAS} **Psalms 111:10** **"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of **wisdom**; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments..."** *Wise people live God's Word!*
- d. Wisdom's source: ^{NIV} **Proverbs 2:6** **"For the LORD gives **wisdom**, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding."** *So dig into the Bible!*
- e. Are you sharp, perceptive, sensitive? ^{NIV} **Proverbs 10:13** **"**Wisdom** is found on the lips of the discerning, but a rod is for the back of him who lacks judgment."**
- f. How do YOU respond to the advice of others? ^{NIV} **Proverbs 13:10** **"...**wisdom** is found in those who take advice." ^{NAS} **9:8** **"...Reprove a wise man, and he will love you. ⁹ Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser..."** *Let us gladly heed good advice!***
- g. Solomon was great; Jesus far greater; He said: ^{NIV} **Matthew 12:42** **"The Queen of the South...came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now **one greater than Solomon is here.**"** *Jesus is God in the flesh, our Savior from every sin!*
- h. Jesus, the wisest of the wise: ^{NIV} **Mark 6:2** **When the Sabbath came, Jesus began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed. "Where did this man get these things?" ... "What's this **wisdom** that has been given him...?"** *Jesus spoke and acted with great wisdom – and it showed!*