

3. New Year's Message

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Sub-title: Take hold of Wisdom & retain her

We are still at the beginning of the new year. 2023 is now behind us. As wise people, we settle all the issues of last year, and focus on the year before us.

- We can't change the past, but we can position ourselves for a better future
- Wise decisions made today bear rich fruit in the coming weeks & months

Recap of previous messages' main points:

- i. Solomon asked God for a (wise &) discerning heart & the ability to distinguish between (what's) right and (what's) wrong
- ii. Wisdom, Knowledge & Understanding
- iii. Where do Wisdom, Knowledge & Understanding come from, & how do we get them?
- iv. Ask for wisdom for specific areas
- v. Wisdom to win souls

1. Wisdom and knowledge produce stable times & stable lives

Isaiah 33:5–6 (NKJV) *The Lord is exalted, for He dwells on high; He has filled Zion with justice and righteousness. **6 Wisdom and knowledge will be the stability of your times, and the strength of salvation; the fear of the Lord is His treasure.***

- Vs. 6: *Wisdom and knowledge will be the stability of your times ...*
 - Times – seasons (a period of time)
 - Stability – steady & strong, to remain in one place (Moses' hands)
- When God's wisdom is applied, and correct knowledge is acted on, it produces stable times (stable generations)
- Conversely, when times are unstable, it means that God's wisdom & knowledge are not applied (missing)
- This is true of nations, families & individuals

Genesis 49:4 (NKJV) *Unstable as water, you shall not excel ...*

- Reuben, one of Jacob's sons, lacked wisdom, and because of his unstable character, he was therefore unable to excel or advance

- Having wisdom & knowledge makes us stable & strong
- Lacking wisdom & knowledge weakens us, & hinders us from excelling
- If we want a stable life, stable marriage, a stable family & a stable home, we must seek & apply God's wisdom

2. How do we define God's wisdom?

2 Timothy 3:15–17 (NLT) *You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus. **16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.** 17 God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.*

- Judeo-Christian principles & values contained in & derived from the Holy Scriptures are God's collective wisdom & knowledge for our lives
- Western societies & nations have been built on Judeo-Christian principles & values
- Christianity has been the bedrock of western civilisations

Psalm 119:105 (NLT) *Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.*

- God's written Word is our "modus operandi"
- It is God's wisdom to guide our every decision, and teaches us how to respond in every situation

3. Taking hold of Wisdom & retaining her

Proverbs 3:13–18 (NKJV) *Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding; **14** For her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, and her gain than fine gold. **15** She is more precious than rubies, and all the things you may desire cannot compare with her. **16** Length of days is in her right hand, in her left hand riches and honor. **17** Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. **18 She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who retain her.***

- Vs. 18 Wisdom is a tree of life to those who take hold of her ...
- Western nations have at one time taken hold of God's wisdom (Judeo-Christian principles & values), and it has been a tree of life (peace, economic growth, prosperity, etc.)

- Vs. 18 ... happy are all who retain her.
- Sadly, Western nations are not retaining God's wisdom
- Instead, they are taking hold of another type of wisdom (humanism, socialism, wokeism, critical race theory, etc.)
- This will inevitable produce unstable times

4. God used His Wisdom at creation

Proverbs 3:19–20 (NKJV) *The Lord by wisdom founded the earth; By understanding He established the heavens; 20 By His knowledge the depths were broken up, and clouds drop down the dew.*

- Here are those three words again: Wisdom, knowledge & understanding

5. Search for Wisdom & cry out for understanding

Proverbs 2:1–6 (NLT) *My child, listen to what I say, and treasure my commands. 2 Tune your ears to wisdom, and concentrate on understanding. 3 Cry out for insight, and ask for understanding. 4 Search for them as you would for silver; seek them like hidden treasures. 5 Then you will understand what it means to fear the Lord, and **you will gain knowledge of God.** 6 For the Lord grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding.*

- Key words:
 - Listen
 - tune your ears
 - cry out for
 - ask for
 - search for
 - seek them
- Wisdom doesn't come to the lazy, nor to those who aren't looking for it

Ecclesiastes 1:12–13 (NKJV) *I, the Preacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. 13 And I set my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven; this burdensome task God has given to the sons of man, by which they may be exercised.*

Ecclesiastes 7:25 (NKJV) *I applied my heart to know, to search and seek out wisdom and the reason of things, to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness.*