

Get Wisdom
By Rick Ezell

“Get wisdom, get understanding” (Proverbs 4:5 NIV).

Child custody cases are always difficult, but this one was harder than most, because it involved determining maternity. Two women stood before the judge, each claiming that a living baby was hers. No witnesses were available, and blood tests and DNA tests had not been invented. How could the judge determine which woman was the true mother?

He said, “Bring me a sword I will cut the living child in two and give half to one and half to the other.”

One of the women cried, “Please . . . give her the baby! Don’t kill him!”

This response revealed to the judge that she was the true mother. His decision was a stroke of genius, some would say, but it was far more than that. It was true wisdom.

Wisdom understands what is true and right. Sometimes it goes by its nicknames, good judgment, insight, perception, and understanding. It’s the ability to make the right calls. Other words that fit under the umbrella of the concept of wisdom are discerning, judicious, prudent, and sensible. Not very glamorous words, perhaps, but words you can build a life on.

Someone has said that knowledge is the ability to take things apart, while wisdom is the ability to put things together. Wisdom is the right use of knowledge.

In the end, we have to want wisdom. Wisdom comes to those who press after it like a thirsty deer searching for water or like a greedy man wanting to make more money. You have to go for it, want it more than nearly anything else. Then you shall find it.

There’s a story about a proud young man who came to Socrates asking for knowledge. He walked up to the muscular philosopher and said, “O great Socrates, I come to you for knowledge.”

Socrates recognized a pompous numbskull when he saw one. He led the young man through the streets, to the sea, and chest deep into water. Then he asked, “What do you want?”

“Knowledge, O wise Socrates,” said the young man with a smile.

Socrates put his strong hands on the man’s shoulders and pushed him under the water.

Thirty seconds later, Socrates let him up.

“What do you want?” he asked again.

“Wisdom,” the young man sputtered, “O great and wise Socrates.”

Socrates crunched him under again. Thirty seconds passed. Thirty-five. Forty.

Socrates let him up. The man was gasping.

“What do you want, young man?”

Between heavy, heaving breaths the fellows wheezed, “Truth, O wise and wonderful . . .”

Socrates jammed him under again. Forty seconds passed. Fifty.

“What do you want?”

“Air!” he screeched. “I need air!”

“When you want knowledge, wisdom, and truth as you have just wanted air,” stated Socrates, “then you will have it.”

Those who arrange their lives around the goal of gaining wisdom will receive rewards that far exceed anything they can imagine. You think you want wealth or power or beauty or long life? Wisdom is better. Nothing you desire can compare with wisdom. Seek and find wisdom.

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