



# attributes of *God*

WEEK 8 — GOD IS WISE



## ROMANS 11 : 33 - 36

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!  
How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!  
"For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?"  
"Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?"  
For from him and through him and to him are all things.  
To him be glory forever. Amen.

## Review

### COMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES

Attributes that God shares (“communicates”) with us *in part*

**Genesis 1:27** – “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them”

**Ephesians 5:1** – “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.”

**Last week: God is omniscient**

## God Is Wise

### Generally, what is wisdom?

It is not just knowledge.

Knowledge of what is true and right coupled with true and right actions

Choosing the best end and the best means to reach that end

### What is God’s wisdom?

**A. W. Tozer** – “God Almighty must be flawlessly precise. God doesn’t bumble.”

**Wayne Grudem** – “God’s wisdom means that God always chooses the best goals and the best means to those goals... God’s decisions about what he will do are always wise decisions; that is, they always will bring about the best results (from God’s ultimate perspective), and they will bring about those results through the best possible means.”

**James P. Boyce** – “Wisdom in God is infinite and unerring, choosing always the best end and the best means of attaining it. It is seen in creation, and in providence, but is most signally manifested in redemption.”

**J. I. Packer** – “Wisdom is, in fact, the practical side of moral goodness. As such, it is found in its fullness only in God. He alone is naturally and entirely and invariably wise.”

### How do we know that God is wise?

“We believe God is wise because God is God.” (A. W. Tozer)

**GOD HAS REVEALED THIS TRUTH ABOUT HIMSELF TO US IN SCRIPTURE:**

**Job 9:4** - "He is wise in heart and mighty in strength-- who has hardened himself against him, and succeeded?"

**Job 12:13** - "With God are wisdom and might; he has counsel and understanding."

**Psalms 104:24** - "O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures."

**Daniel 2:20-22** - "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."

**Romans 16:27** - "to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ!"

**1 Corinthians 1:25** - "For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

**Ephesians 3:10** - "... through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places"

## Clarifications about God's Wisdom

### 1. He has ALL wisdom

### 2. He is perfectly wise ALL THE TIME

*"If I thought that God were only a little bit wise, or even 90 percent wise, I'd never go to sleep tonight."  
(A. W. Tozer)*

### 3. Wisdom is not an addition to God, it is part of His very essence.

### 4. God's wisdom cannot be thwarted.

**Job 36:5** - "Behold, God is mighty, and does not despise any; he is mighty in strength of understanding"

*"Omniscience governing omnipotence, infinite power ruled by infinite wisdom, is a basic biblical description of the divine character." (J. I. Packer)*

*"Wisdom without power would be pathetic, a broken reed; power without wisdom would be merely frightening; but in God boundless wisdom and endless power are united, and this makes him utterly worthy of our fullest trust." (J. I. Packer)*

## God's Wisdom Is Seen In:

### 1. Creation

**Proverbs 3:19** – “The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens”

**Jeremiah 10:12** – “It is he who made the earth by his power, who established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding stretched out the heavens.”

**This world is perfectly designed by God.**

**All creation is perfectly designed to bring God glory.**

### 2. Redemption

**1 Corinthians 1:21-29** – “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. <sup>22</sup> For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, <sup>23</sup> but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup> but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup> For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. <sup>26</sup> 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. <sup>27</sup> 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; <sup>28</sup> God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, <sup>29</sup> so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.”

*“The wisdom of God has ordained a way for the love of God to deliver us from the wrath of God without compromising the justice of God.” (John Piper)*

### 3. Church

**Ephesians 3:8-10** – “To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.”

*“Today this means that God’s wisdom is shown even to angels and demons (‘principalities and powers’) when people from different racial and cultural backgrounds are united in Christ in the church. If the Christian church is faithful to God’s wise plan, it will be always in the forefront in breaking down racial and social barriers in societies around the world, and will thus be a visible manifestation of God’s amazingly wise plan to bring great unity out of great diversity and thereby to cause all creation to honor him.” (Wayne Grudem)*

## 4. Our Lives

**Proverbs 4:11** – “I have taught you the way of wisdom; I have led you in the paths of uprightness.”

**Romans 8:28-29** – “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.”

## But Wait! If God is wise, why can life be so hard?

Remember one of our definitions of God’s wisdom...

God “always will bring about the best results (from God’s ultimate perspective)...”

**Isaiah 43:7** – “Everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”

**Romans 8:29** – “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son...”

*“Here many go wrong. Misunderstanding what the Bible means when it says that God is love they think that God intends a trouble free life for all... But this idea of God’s intention is a complete mistake: God’s wisdom is not, and never was, pledged to keep a fallen world happy, or to make ungodliness comfortable. Not even to Christians has he promised a trouble-free life; rather the reverse. He has the other ends in view for life in this world than simply to make it easy for everyone. What is he after, then? What is his goal? What does he aim at? When he made us, his purpose was that we should love and honor him, praising him for the wonderfully ordered complexity and variety of his world, using it according to his will, and so enjoying both it and him.” (J. I. Packer)*

**James 1:3-4** – “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.”

*“We may be frankly bewildered at things that happen to us, but God knows exactly what he is doing, and what he is after, in his handling of our affairs. Always, and in everything.” (J. I. Packer)*

**So we trust that God’s means and ends are best, even if we do not understand.**

*“We go to church and we pray to give our heart to the Lord.... But when things get turbulent and we run and say, ‘Lord, let me run this thing!’ That’s why we’re so messed up in our Christian lives. We’re not ready to let God run our world for us – to run our family, our business, our home, our job, our everything.” (A. W. Tozer)*



## This is a “communicable” attribute

**As rational creatures who can “know,” we can have wisdom.**

**Remember, He shares this attribute with us *IN PART*. Our wisdom is limited.**

**What is wisdom for us?**

*“Wisdom is that power which enables one to put to practical use the knowledge and skill which he possesses, to choose wise ends of action, and to attain these ends by wise means.” (James P. Boyce)*

*“Wisdom is the ability to see the end from the beginning, to see everything in proper relation and in full focus. It is to judge in view of final and ultimate ends and to work toward those ends with flawless precision.” (A. W. Tozer)*

**Wisdom is part of God’s nature. But we must gain it.**

**How do we gain wisdom?**

### **1. Realize it is a gift from God**

**Daniel 2:21** – “... He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; he reveals deep and hidden things.”

### **2. First and foremost, revere God.**

**Psalm 111:10** – “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!”

### **3. Ask for it**

**James 1:5-6** – “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, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.”

**Colossians 1:9-10** – “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.”

### **4. Search the Scriptures with a heart to obey**

**Psalm 119:98** – “Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is ever with me...”



## Two Cautions as We Seek Wisdom

### 1. If it leads to pride, it is not wisdom from God.

True wisdom from God leads to changed lives, and that includes humility.

**Proverbs 11:2** – “When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom.”

**James 3:13-18** – “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.”

### 2. Do not equate our personal preferences with wisdom for how others should live.

The wisdom we share with others should be the clear revelation of Scripture.

*“The point is that it’s either got to be God’s wisdom or yours. It’s either God’s way or yours.” (A. W. Tozer)*

## Challenge - Thinking about God’s Wisdom Should Lead Us to Worship and Dependence

**Romans 11:33-36** – “Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?” For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.”

*“Lord, forgive me for relying upon my own wisdom when yours is readily available. I have not always sought your guidance. I have frequently looked to the world for counsel instead of looking into your Word. I repent and ask you to help me look only to you for all the wisdom that I will ever need.” (Rosemary Jensen)*

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Because God's wisdom is unsearchable (Romans 11:33-36), there often will be times when we are not able to understand why God does what He does. Does that truth lead us to hope or despair? Why?
2. How should the attribute of God's wisdom encourage us to pray?
3. How should the attribute of God's wisdom affect how we relate to other believers as we live together in community?
4. Consider the promise of James 1:5-6. Why do we often rely on our own "wisdom" and the opinions of others rather than seeking wisdom from the Lord?
5. Is there a trial in your past that you did not understand at the time, but looking back now you see the wisdom of God in sending you that trial for your good and for His glory? If so, what was it and how did you realize that God was sovereignly working in that difficulty?
6. How do you see God's wisdom at work in the world today?
7. What songs do you know that include God's wisdom?

