

# Life of Joseph

Lessons in Humility, Leadership and Forgiveness

## Wisdom, Knowledge and Understanding

- Joseph was given understanding from God when he interpreted the dreams of the chief baker and chief cupbearer.
- He had the wisdom to know that such understanding can only come from God.
- In this study we will examine the importance of wisdom, knowledge and understanding.
- Introduction
  - The Scriptures emphasize the importance of growing in knowledge [Pr 18:15] and more particularly in the knowledge of God [2 Pet 3:18].
  - Believers must be able to distinguish between the wisdom of this world and the wisdom from above [Jas 3:13-18].
  - The terms wisdom, knowledge and understanding are used frequently in the Bible.
  - The fallen world we live in ascribes its own definitions to these words, so it is important for believers to have a grasp of the meaning of each of these words as they are used in the Scriptures.
  - Wisdom...
    - ✦ The most common Hebrew word for wisdom is חָכְמָה (chak'mah) which can refer to a skill [Ex 28:3] or to wisdom in general [1 Kgs 4:29-34].
    - ✦ Another important Hebrew word is תוֹשִׁיָּה (tushiyah) which means sound wisdom [Pr 2:7; 3:21; 8:14; Micah 6:9].
    - ✦ The Greek word for wisdom is σοφία (sophia) which means knowledge and understanding that result in function [Acts 7:9-10; Rom 11:33; 1 Cor 2:6-7; Col 1:28; 3:16; 4:5].
    - ✦ As we shall see in this study, wisdom is built upon knowledge and understanding.
  - Knowledge...
    - ✦ The most common Hebrew word for knowledge is דַּעַת (da'ath) which can also refer to a skill [1 Kgs 7:14] or to knowledge in general [Gen 2:9, 17; Ps 119:66; Pr 1:7; 8:10; 13:16; 23:12].
    - ✦ The most common Greek word for knowledge is γνῶσις (gnōsis) which refers to an intellectual grasp of something [Eph 3:19] or to that which is known [2 Cor 2:14; 10:5].
    - ✦ Another important Greek word is ἐπίγνωσις (epignōsis) which describes full knowledge [Eph 4:13; Ph 1:9; Col 2:2; 2 Pet 1:2, 3, 8].

- ✦ As we shall see, knowledge will lead to full knowledge in those who mature in the faith.
  - Understanding...
    - ✦ The most common Hebrew word for understanding is בינה (biyn) which can mean consideration [Ps 119:95; Pr 14:15; 23:1] discernment [1 Kgs 3:9-12; Pr 2:5, 9; 28:7], perception [Job 23:5, 8] or understanding in general [Ps 119:130, 169; Jer 4:22].
    - ✦ Another important Hebrew word is תבונה (t'bunah) which can mean discretion [Pr 11:12; 14:29] or understanding in general [Pr 18:2].
    - ✦ The most common Greek word for understanding is συνίημι (suniēmi) which means to comprehend [Luke 2:50; Eph 5:17].
    - ✦ The Greek word γινώσκω (ginōskō) is used in a similar way [John 12:16; Acts 8:30].
    - ✦ Likewise, νοέω (noeō) has a similar meaning [Matt 15:17; Eph 3:4; 1 Tim 1:7; Heb 11:3].
    - ✦ Additionally, the word οἶδα (oida) is used for understanding [Jn 20:9; 1 Cor 11:3; Jude 10].
  - If we were to examine all of the verses in the Bible, we would discover that...
    - ✦ Understanding is the initial ability to comprehend something as well as a total intellectual grasp of a subject.
    - ✦ Knowledge is that which is accumulated in our soul through understanding.
    - ✦ Wisdom is knowledge and understanding ready to be applied to the situations we encounter in our daily lives.
    - ✦ There are worldly counterfeits for all three of these biblical concepts.
- Development
  - God founded the earth and established the heavens through wisdom, knowledge and understanding [Pr 3:19-20].
  - True wisdom, knowledge and understanding come from God [2 Chr 9:23; Job 32:8; Dan 2:20-23; 2 Tim 2:7; Pr 2:6].
  - God will even give us the knowledge we need for our jobs [Ex 31:3-5; Dan 1:4, 17].
  - The Holy Spirit provides wisdom, knowledge and understanding to us [Isa 11:2; John 16:13].
  - Wisdom, knowledge and understanding are all necessary elements for a worthy spiritual walk [Col 1:9-10].
  - Understanding is a prerequisite for learning [Ps 119:73; Mark 12:24-27].
  - Only those who are spiritual can understand God's Word [1 Cor 2:9-16].

- Understanding of God's Word allows our minds to be renewed day by day [Rom 12:2; 2 Cor 4:16; Eph 4:23; Col 3:10].
- This renewal through the knowledge of God's Word allows us to grow [1 Pet 2:2] and become more Christ-like [Eph 4:15].
- Our growth must include grace and love, not knowledge alone [2 Pet 3:18; 1 Cor 8:1; 13:1-3].
- God desires for us to come to a full knowledge of His Truth [Ps 51:6; 1 Tim 2:4].
- Full knowledge of God's Word leads to maturity [Eph 4:13] which is expressed in love [Phil 1:9].
- Full knowledge and understanding produce stability [Col 2:2-8].
- We gain understanding and wisdom through instruction [Pr 1:1-7; 4:1-7; 13:10] and humility in the face of reproof [Pr 15:31-33].
- We should act according to wisdom we are given [1 Kgs 2:6-9; Ezra 7:25].
- Our words will reflect our wisdom [Ps 37:30; 49:3; Pr 10:13, 31; 31:26] or lack thereof [Pr 15:2, 28; Ecc 10:12; Jas 3:10].
- It should be our goal to acquire spiritual wisdom and understanding [Pr 4:5-9].
- Conclusions
  - We cannot learn what we do not understand.
  - Believers in fellowship can understand spiritual truth through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.
  - Unless we humble ourselves before God, we cannot be taught.
  - We grow in knowledge through daily instruction in God's Word.
  - We must also grow in grace and love.
  - God wants us to have full knowledge of the truth.
  - This full knowledge comes as we unite our knowledge with faith [Heb 4:2].
  - This full knowledge increases as we mature by gaining a deeper understanding of God's Word.
  - Wisdom comes through instruction, discipline, reproof and testing.
  - Wisdom is knowledge and understanding ready for application in our daily walk.
  - If we lack wisdom for any work assignment, God will provide it to us if we ask in faith [Jas 1:5].
  - And finally, beware of the "wisdom" of this world.