

# THINGS TO STOP AND START

## Stop Drifting Along and Start Digging In

Proverbs 2:1–9

SEARCHING  
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STUDY



### LET'S BEGIN HERE

Imagine this scenario: It is 6:15 on a weeknight, and your three-year-old is having none of it . . . none of the broccoli, that is. He polishes off the fast-food orange chicken: industrial chicken pre-cut into unnatural shapes, coated with batter, scorched into submission, then covered with an imitation-orange goo. That, he voraciously devours.

The broccoli becomes another matter altogether. Steamed, green, reminiscent of trees and green giants, this cruciferous vegetable gets no love. And yet, there remains no doubt—nothing else on this child's plate would be as nutritious or as beneficial for his body as that little veggie. Can I get a witness?

Sometimes Christians look at wisdom the way a three-year-old looks at broccoli.

Wisdom is the *broccoli* of our character. We know it's good for us. We see how much it benefits us, but somehow it's more tempting to stuff our minds with worry or anxiety or even apathy—junk food of the soul.

Wisdom is an acquired taste because it demands something back. It requires depth, commitment, action. Wisdom isn't here to entertain us; it's a tool wielded most deftly in the effort to serve others. Wisdom should not go hoarded and unused—like knowledge or possessions—but used in the context of relationships, crises, and challenges.

No wonder the author of Proverbs personified wisdom as a woman shouting in the streets (Proverbs 1:20)! We wouldn't naturally head to her house of our own volition. God calls us there. God gives us the path to get there.

## Quotable

*You have a  
prayer list?  
Put at the top  
of your prayer  
list, "My need  
for wisdom."  
Pray for it  
every day.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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**Searching the Scriptures Idea:** This would be a good time for you as you move the Searching the Scriptures process to look at the table of contents page of your study Bible. See where Proverbs fits into the overall organization of the Bible. Proverbs is part of what we call the *Poetry Books*—a genre of literature in the Bible that highlights imagery, poetic meter, and various other ancient poetic devices. The book of Psalms, for instance, is another section of Scripture in the category of Poetry Books.

Locate a commentary on the book of Proverbs and spend some time reading the introductory material that orients you to the nature, context, and literary uniqueness of these proverbs. All of this will help you as you begin to discover the meaning of the passage you are studying.



### Your Turn in the Scriptures

Now that you've immersed your mind in the background of the book of Proverbs, read Solomon's prayer in 2 Chronicles 1:7–12. Read it in the NLT, The Message, and the NASB to become familiar with the passage.

Who began this conversation? If God asked you to name your desire, what would you say?

What did Solomon ask for? What was his motivation?

The Lord listed some typical requests that people make of Him. Was He pleased with Solomon's request? How long did it take for Him to grant Solomon's request?



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### You Are Here

Solomon had every trapping of success: he was king, his kingdom had sustained peace, and he had access to untold wealth. When he had the ultimate opportunity to do so, Solomon didn't ask the Lord for riches, wealth, honor, revenge, or longevity. He asked for wisdom, because he knew that with everything he had, *he still needed the road map that only God could give him* in order to rule God's people. Solomon authored most of Proverbs and all of Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon — books of poetry. In Proverbs 2:1–9, Solomon wrote:

My child, listen to what I say,  
and treasure my commands.  
Tune your ears to wisdom,  
and concentrate on understanding.  
Cry out for insight,  
and ask for understanding.  
Search for them as you would for silver;  
seek them like hidden treasures.  
Then you will understand what it means to fear the LORD,  
and you will gain knowledge of God.  
For the LORD grants wisdom!  
From his mouth come knowledge and understanding.  
He grants a treasure of common sense to the honest.  
He is a shield to those who walk with integrity.  
He guards the paths of the just  
and protects those who are faithful to him.  
Then you will understand what is right, just, and fair,  
and you will find the right way to go.

Take a few moments to look up *Solomon* in your Bible dictionary. Make a few notes about what you discover that will help you understand Proverbs 2.

Solomon explained in Proverbs 2 that if life is a series of roads without signs, then wisdom that comes from God is the best GPS possible. God's wisdom is a road map for the lost. It is always worth finding that map and sticking to it.



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Do you want practical advice for everyday life? It's in God's Word.

Take some time now to stop and pray. Ask God to reveal to you where you are on the path to wisdom. Ask Him to lavish you with His wisdom. Write down your prayer.

### *Finding Yourself in the Story*

If you're like most of us, you're not a wealthy king with a legendary father. Though Solomon had all the trappings *and* the wisdom, he still strayed far from the road map of God's guidance, and he didn't end well. Solomon refused to *dig in* and commit to God's way.

Read 1 Kings 11:1–14.

List the ways that Solomon refused to listen to God's wisdom.

How did Solomon's choices affect his kingdom?

Read Jesus' words in Matthew 22:36–40. What are the two most important commandments?



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How does pursuing godly wisdom help to fulfill these commandments?

Read 1 Corinthians 1:20–31.

List some of the dualities that Paul mentioned, such as *foolish* versus *wise*.

The wisdom that comes from God cannot be compared with earthly wisdom—in fact, godly wisdom confounds conventional, worldly wisdom. The two are at odds. Worldly wisdom is self-aggrandizing. Godly wisdom glorifies God. Worldly wisdom scrapes the shallow surface of humanity; godly wisdom plumbs the depths of the mind of God.

We cannot follow Jesus *and* worldly wisdom. Following Jesus takes devotion to love God with our minds. The most vital part of godly wisdom is realizing our dependence on the Lord to govern ourselves in a way that honors Him, during both mundane days and crises.

When teaching about wisdom, it's vital to **link wisdom with devotion to God**. Wisdom is not the *end*; it's one of the *means* to knowing and loving God. The good news to share with those we are teaching is this: we don't need any special privilege or lineage to possess godly wisdom. We all have access. We can ask God for wisdom—He gives it generously, according to James 1:5—and humbly allow the Spirit to guide us through the Word.

Where are you in this fast-paced world? Are you still pursuing worldly wisdom? Would you like to change direction? Pray about it.



### A FINAL PRAYER

*Lord, help me to seek wisdom as I would seek a precious treasure. I submit my mind and will to You—please show me the path to wisdom through Your Word. In Jesus' name, amen.*



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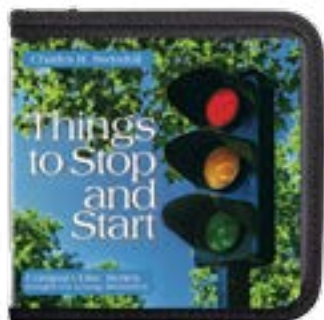
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### Tools for Digging Deeper



**Things to Stop and Start**  
by Charles R. Swindoll  
CD series



**Leisure: How to Recharge  
without Guilt**  
by Charles R. Swindoll  
booklet



**Rules for Running  
a Rewarding Race**  
by Charles R. Swindoll  
CD message

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For the 2017 broadcast, this Searching the Scriptures study was developed by the Pastoral Ministries Department in collaboration with Mark Tobey, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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