

Lesson 1: CONCEPTS OF WISDOM, UNDERSTANDING, AND JUSTICE; ROOT CAUSES TO INTERPERSONAL PROBLEMS

SUMMARY OF THIS LESSON

The book of Proverbs exhorts that wisdom is the principal thing and that we should get wisdom along with understanding. In this lesson we learn what wisdom is and how it is different from knowledge. The consequences of making decisions based upon wisdom and those based upon knowledge are also discussed. The distinction between wisdom and human reason is really the core basis of the difference between a Biblical worldview and a humanistic worldview. As Christian attorneys, we do not want to rely on our knowledge alone in making decisions, but we want to view issues and strategies from God's perspective so that we truly help our clients, love mercy, and do justice.

You will also be challenged to consider that in every personal, and even legal, conflict there are root causes to the surface problems. Only by addressing the root problems can a lasting solution be attained in interpersonal conflicts. The root problems result from not looking to and seeking from God the grace to properly respond to any situation with which we are confronted. Our responses must be consistent with the seven basic, non-optional principles of life. If we violate any of these principles we will experience conflicts in key relationships. In the practice of law, only by dealing with root attitudes and perceptions can an attorney bring about resolution and reconciliation between parties.

God's Word is the source of the principles of life studied in the course. As with every Biblical truth, there is only one interpretation, but there are many applications. In law, the application of a legal principle may change over time as society changes, but if the principle is based upon truth, it never changes. The key is meditating on God's Word to discover the unchangeable principles. In addition to this course, true legal principles are explored in the *Principles of the Common Law*.

APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLE TO LAW

All laws and court decisions should be based upon principles. The laws should set a standard of behavior consistent with policies or principles rooted in truth. Court decisions should be applications of just legal principles to resolve disputes. The key issue is whether the principles are based upon godly wisdom or upon human reason. Godly wisdom results in justice, but human reasoning often results in fairness which is only a balancing of interests, as determined by a person's morality. "*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*" Proverbs 14:12.

The practical wisdom derived from God's Word must also be applied to questions of strategy raised by clients. In addition, interpersonal conflicts which often accompany legal problems can only be truly resolved by encouraging the parties to humble themselves and seek restoration. To be the most effective legal *counselor* possible, it is necessary that you discern the root problems with which your client may be struggling. This will allow you to address all of the issues which may have led to a lawsuit and will help you assist your client in avoiding further liability or consequences from wrong decisions.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the relationship between wisdom, understanding and justice.
- To understand the difference between wisdom and knowledge.
- To learn to identify root problems causing attitudes and actions resulting in interpersonal conflicts.
- To understand the cause and effect relationship between violating God's principles of life and interpersonal conflicts.
- To understand that God's Word has only one interpretation, but many applications to every area of life.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR THIS LESSON

- Watch Session 1 on CD Number 1 or Basic Seminar Video Number 1. Be sure to read the Scriptures referred to in the side margins and overheads. Use the SEMINAR WORKBOOK to take notes or to review notes you previously have taken when attending the seminar.
- Read the BASIC SEMINAR TEXTBOOK, pp. 2–9.
- Do the review questions.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. List the seven basic principles and give a brief summary of each in your own words. What is the primary benefit of each principle?
2. What is wisdom? Write your own definition using at least two other sources.
3. What is understanding? Write your own definition using at least two other sources.
4. What are the steps to discerning levels of conflict by tracing surface problems to root causes?
5. What is grace? Write your own definition using at least two other sources. What are five factors of grace? Why is it important to define grace?
6. Compare and contrast the natural and correct responses to enemies. What are the ways God is showing or has shown you the importance of responding correctly to those who are critical of you?
7. What are the four basic steps to maturity?
8. What is the basis of mental health?
9. What is the difference between interpretation and application of Scripture? Give at least one Biblical example not mentioned in the Seminar.