

# The Meaning of a Wisdom Life Based on Proverbs 2:1-22 in Christian Teachers

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## Abstract

Education in elementary schools is a period of laying the foundations of education not only on the ability to read, write and count, but especially the formation of character and interest in learning. In the world of education, the golden age category is a stage for instilling spiritual values and character building as well as introducing knowledge and skills in a simple way. At this age, children begin to imitate the behavior of those around them. What children do is a reflection of the behavior of adults they see, especially parents and teachers at school. Christian teachers are called to bring students to know God, so that students live for God and obey His word. This study aims to find a way to succeed in this task according to God's will in the Bible with the phrase living wisely based on Proverbs 2:1-22. By using a quantitative method with a survey research type, and SPSS 25 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) as a software to calculate the data, the researchers took a sample of 10% (95 people) of the 928 Christian teachers at the Palangka Raya City Elementary School as a population.

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## Introduction

Education in elementary schools is a period of laying the foundations of education not only on the ability to read, write and count, but especially the formation of character and interest in learning. Sudiria Hura revealed, essentially in the world of education, the golden age category is to instill spiritual values and character building as well as introduce knowledge and skills in a simple way.<sup>1</sup> At this age, children begin to imitate the behavior of those around them. From the exemplary aspect, what children do is a reflection of the behavior of adults seen by children, especially parents and teachers at school. Their behavior is imitated by children, and even becomes a habit in life and becomes a character. The factor of character growth in children cannot be separated from the role of parents and teachers in schools as a source of role models for children.

The Bible has given a principle of successful living, especially in carrying out tasks with the phrase "living wisely." Joshua (Deuteronomy 34:9), David (2 Samuel 14:20), Solomon (1 Kings 3:9,12; 4:29, dab) are endowed with wisdom to enable them to fulfill their official duties. Wisdom (Hebrew: khokhma) in the Bible, is always practical, not theoretical. Basically wisdom is the ability to achieve results, the ability to plan the right way to get the desired results. The book of Proverbs is one of the wisdom literature that is full of teaching.

## Exegesis of Proverbs 2:1-22

"My son, if you accept my words and my commandments, keep them in your heart" (2:1)<sup>2</sup> The particle "if" (אִם) is conditional, and serves to introduce a series of clauses (verses 1-4) that establish the conditions on which the promise is based and that form the multiple causal relationship in the verse. 5 and 9. "If...then..." The verbs "to receive" and "to keep" indicate that the pursuit of wisdom is carried out in honesty and sincerity. "To receive" (לָקַח) seems to be used here, like LXX. in the sense of "receive generously", "acknowledge the words of the Wise."<sup>3</sup> Wisdom is obtained by asking through prayer and placing the heart under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to receive in its study. Thus, receiving the word (word) is not done passively, but actively seeks to understand through listening intently, researching and doing it so that it becomes a living experience.

"So that you will turn your ear to wisdom and incline your heart to understanding" (verse 2)<sup>4</sup> The basic idea of –kashav (to turn one's ear or to pay attention) is "to sharpen" the ear by paying diligent attention to wisdom. In Proverbs 1:24 it is

translated "to heed." To apply your heart means to turn the heart with the full scope of its power, in a spirit of humility and desire, to understand.<sup>5</sup> Just as the ear symbolizes the external means of communication, so the heart (לב, lev) symbolizes the mind, intellectual ability, mind, or it can also mean affection. We must incline our ears to His word. Matthew Henry adds that we should seize every opportunity to listen to God's words with earnest attention, like people who fear loss.<sup>6</sup>

"Yes, if for wisdom you weep loudly, (and) you give your voice to understanding" (2:3).<sup>7</sup> Studying God's word must be accompanied by an attitude of earnest prayer, crying out for wisdom and understanding. As stated in the Abundant Life Guide Bible, studying alone may make us Bible scholars, but the prayer that accompanies studying God's word allows the Holy Spirit to take that revelation and transform us into spiritual people.<sup>8</sup>

Not only listening to the word, but there is crying after knowing and understanding. Joseph Parker called these terms an exercise in prayer.<sup>9</sup> If we personify knowledge and understanding as a person, then the attitude of the seeker of wisdom is like begging, praying to knowledge, expecting the excitement of understanding, asking knowledge to have mercy on him, and holding nothing back from him anything that can enrich his mind and build his character.

"If you seek it earnestly as if you are looking for silver and treasure" (2:4).<sup>10</sup> Seeking wisdom is like seeking silver, an allusion to mining, which was understood long before Solomon's time.<sup>11</sup> Wisdom does not lie on the surface. Wisdom must be extracted; there are no stones to permanently interfere with the pursuit of the seeker. Deserts must be conquered, stones must be crushed, mountains must be excavated, deep waters must be dived to find the object of prime concern of the mind.

"Then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God" (2:5). Ellicott states that finding the knowledge of God is the highest of all gifts, even eternal life itself.<sup>12</sup> Knowledge of God (דַּאֲתֵּי עֵלֹהִים daath Elohim); literally not just cognitive, but knowledge in a broader sense. The two ideas of "fearing the Lord" and "knowledge of God" act reciprocally with each other.<sup>13</sup> Matthew Henry interprets "understanding of the fear of the LORD" (verse 5) as knowing how to worship Him properly.<sup>14</sup> Thus, knowing and having an understanding of the true God is the highest gift, bestowed after tireless effort. This recognition will lead to a true fear of God, which is manifested in worship and obedience to His word.

"For the LORD will give wisdom from his mouth knowledge and understanding" (2:6). As James puts it (James 1:5), He gives it to all people "with generosity, and without being aroused. Solomon may be cited as a striking example of this; he asked for a "understanding heart that weighs things," and the Lord graciously granted his request with "a heart full of wisdom and understanding" (1 Kings 3:9, 12). God has wisdom to give us (verse 6). God is not only wise, but also gives wisdom, and that is more than even the wisest person in the world can do. Matthew Henry states that it is God's privilege to open human understanding.<sup>15</sup>

## Wisdom in the Book of Proverbs

The idea of wisdom stems from the human need to overcome the reality of human existence struggling to survive and achieve success. Andrew A. Hill & John H. Walton state that another aspect of the idea of wisdom is that the knowledge and experience already acquired can be passed on to the next generation. Therefore the sages encapsulated the idea of

wisdom and taught it so that the next generation can tread the path of life safely and successfully.<sup>16</sup>

Wisdom is a gift from God. Living wisely means discovering and possessing the highest gifts. James D. Martin stated that wisdom is finding the meaning of life and how to achieve success and happiness in that life, "finding meaning in life and discovering the means of achieving success and happiness in that life."<sup>17</sup>In human life, wisdom manifests in various manifestations.

When ascending the throne to succeed David, the young king Solomon did not ask for wealth and power or victory over the enemy. Solomon actually asked God for wisdom to be able to run the government properly and correctly. It is written in 1 Kings 3:9 Solomon's request to God: "So give your servant a heart that understands things to judge your people, so that they can distinguish between good and evil, for who is able to judge your people who are how big is this?" Thus, wisdom is the most important gift in carrying out tasks so that they are carried out successfully. The wisdom that God gave to Solomon, led him to success in carrying out his duties as king of Israel. Despite the anticlimax he experienced, Solomon's achievement with the wisdom he received, has been a role model for the lives of believers throughout history. Wisdom is a source of actualization of life. The impact is so strong that it deserves attention and effort.

Thus, wisdom includes knowledge, attitudes or decisions, and skills. Humans cannot be separated from wisdom. In wisdom, we live, we move, we exist and act. Girdlestone said that wisdom covers all aspects of human life, both physical and spiritual, good or evil.<sup>18</sup>According to Proverbs 2:1-22, wisdom is obtained only through knowing God. Wisdom is hard to come by, but it is worth working for (Proverbs 2:1-10), and God rewards everyone who has an earnest heart after Him (Hebrews 11:6). Wisdom can keep people from evil association (2:12-15), from sexual perversion (2:16-19), and live righteously (2:20). Wisdom is followed by the promise of blessings.

So, what is meant by living wisely according to Proverbs 2:1-22, is:

1. Make God the Source of Wisdom (Proverbs 2:1, 6).
2. Strive to live wisely (Proverbs 2:1-5), by: Paying attention and inclining the heart to wisdom (Verse 2); Pray for wisdom (Verse 3); and seek wisdom ready to pay the price (Verses 4-5)
3. Knowing God and living in Him (Proverbs 2:5,7-11), which includes: Having an attitude of fearing the Lord (Verse 5); Live in honesty (Verse 7a); Live in righteousness (Verses 7b, 8-9); Have wisdom (Verse 11)
4. Experience the impact of living wisely (Proverbs 2:7,10,19-22), where Wisdom becomes a shield (Verse 7b); Wisdom pleases the soul (Verse 10); Wisdom guards (Verse 11); Apart from the evil way (Verse 12a); Apart from error (Verses 12b-15); Apart from adultery (Verses 16-19); Live in God's blessing (Verses 20-22).

## Christian teacher

A Christian teacher is someone whose profession is teaching to mature students through education that emphasizes cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects, based on the Christian faith. Spiritual intelligence is the highest intelligence possessed by a person to understand and understand his existence as a creature, in relation to God. Kiki Debora and Chandra Han stated that the formation of spiritual intelligence of students is a process to shape the spiritual life of

students so that they have the skills to realize the truth of God's Word in daily life.<sup>19</sup> Thus, the main task of a Christian teacher is to bring students to the knowledge of God in Jesus Christ.

Christian education has a very important influence. As the Bible states, a teacher must be proficient in teaching. The formation of student character is influenced by many things, especially the role of parents, society, and schools. Every child has their own character that influences their daily behavior. The character crisis that occurs in students sometimes makes students perform unexpected negative actions. In addition to the family, one of the most important parties to shape the character and life values of students is education in schools. Tety and Soeparwata Wiraatmadja stated that in the formation of students' character, the Bible becomes the center of Christian education, which provides many valuable lessons about the experience with God.<sup>20</sup>

Teaching is not just a profession, but a calling. The call is not from the education office, but the call of the heart, the call of the soul, and moreover is a divine call. This calling is what makes a teacher able to survive in carrying out his duties. The difficulties that exist, do not make him resign and leave his responsibilities, but will try to find a solution.<sup>21</sup> Teachers like this are expected to create a young generation that is strong in facing the changing times. So a Christian teacher has a responsibility before God to dedicatedly strive to educate students, both cognitively: knowledgeable; affective: Christian character, namely living according to Christ; psychomotor: wise, which is able and skilled to apply knowledge in everyday life.

In Christian education, one's renewal is initiated by the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit as the Person who convicts man of all sins, opens the spiritual eyes of man to realize that he and his actions are evil, and need renewal. Mulyo Kadarmanto stated that a teacher who relies on the work of the Holy Spirit will be accompanied by a commitment as a new human being to live a new life, marked by fruit in life.<sup>22</sup>

The Christian teacher's job is to help students come to know God through the new birth. 1 Timothy 3:16 states "All writing which is inspired by God is useful for teaching, for reproofing, and for educating people in the truth." So through education based on the word of God, a teacher is able to lead students to become individuals who are pleasing to God. For this reason, every Christian teacher must have a close personal relationship with God and rely on the power of the Holy Spirit in carrying out his teacher duties. The phrase is "make God the Source of wisdom." Relying on the power of the Holy Spirit is marked by praying to God so that his students experience repentance and renewal of life. A close relationship with God and a life that relies on the power of the Holy Spirit is also evident in daily Bible reading and personal prayer. In addition, a Christian teacher must also build a harmonious relationship and be an example for students. And also by the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, a teacher will be able to present an interactive and conducive learning atmosphere.

Implementation of wise living among Christian teachers in Palangka Raya City Elementary School

## Research Instrument Development

Research instrument is a tool used to collect useful data or information to answer research problems. Sugiyono suggested

that the research instrument is a tool used to collect data that will be used to measure the value of the variable under study by producing accurate quantitative data.<sup>23</sup>

## Data Analysis Techniques

Another important part of the research process is data analysis. Data analysis means an effort to process data that is already available to be used to answer the formulation of the problem in research. Sujarweni suggests that data analysis can be interpreted as a way of carrying out analysis of data with the aim of processing data to answer the formulation of the problem.<sup>24</sup> Data analysis is an important part, because no matter how good the data obtained, if it is not analyzed with the right method, it will not be able to give good and appropriate conclusions. Sinambela said that attention to the data analysis to be carried out started from the time the research was planned. This is intended to obtain the characteristics and requirements of the right analysis.<sup>25</sup> This data analysis stage is the stage for processing the data obtained at the time of distributing the questionnaire (questionnaire). After the research data is collected, the next step is to analyze the data. The first step that the researcher will take is to re-check whether all the required data has been collected and complete.

The data analysis that the researchers used in this study was quantitative analysis. Sugiyono stated that the data analysis technique in quantitative research uses statistics.<sup>26</sup> The method is an effort to find, develop, and test the truth of knowledge, so that a scientific work from a research can achieve what is expected in a precise and directed manner by using the scientific method.<sup>27</sup> Meanwhile, Furchan defines that the research method is a general strategy adopted in collecting and analyzing the necessary data, in order to answer the problems at hand.<sup>28</sup>

Inferential statistics (often also called inductive statistics or probability statistics) (litas) according to Sugiyono is a statistical technique used to analyze sample data and the results are applied to the population.<sup>29</sup> Inferential analysis tries to explain and make various inferences to a set of data that comes from a sample. The level of inference is like making estimates, forecasting, making decisions from two or more variables that are complained of.<sup>30</sup>

The data obtained is then calculated and sought for its implementation, analyzed and synthesized. In the process of studying data, it is possible to involve outsiders as collaborators, as is the case when helping researchers to be sharper in reflection and evaluation. In this process of reflection, all the experiences, knowledge, and theories that are mastered are mobilized.<sup>31</sup> In scientific research, data processing and analysis is the application of certain statistical techniques or methods.

## Data collection

Based on the results of the data that has been collected from research conducted by distributing questionnaires directly to respondents, the researchers have obtained data with using a Likert scale measuring instrument, by giving a quantitative value, namely a score of 1 strongly disagree; score 2 disagree; score 3 undecided, score 4; agree; score of 5 strongly agree. After the questionnaire was distributed to a total of 95 respondents, the collected data can be explained in statistics as follows:

## Research Methodology

According to Arikunto, the research method is the method used by researchers in collecting research data, which is adjusted to the subject and object under study.<sup>32</sup> This research method uses a quantitative design with a survey research type. Quantitative research is research that is carried out through measuring instruments using objective and standard instruments and meets high standards of validity and reliability and is continued with statistical analysis so that the results can give meaning.<sup>33</sup>

Quantitative research methods produce *output* in the form of statistical figures, which in this study were processed using software or applications for the social science family, namely SPSS 25 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

Sources of data from this study using primary data. Primary data is data collected directly by the researcher, which was obtained directly from the respondents by randomly distributing questionnaires to Christian teachers in elementary schools throughout the city of Palangka Raya.

While secondary data were obtained from the Office of the Ministry of Education of Palangka Raya City, as follows:

<b>Number of SD:</b>	124 schools
<b>Number of Christian Teachers:</b>	928 people (845 civil servants and 83 honorary) <sup>34</sup>

## Conclusion

Based on the results of the research and discussion presented, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- *First*, the level of implementation of wise living based on Proverbs 2:1-22 among Christian teachers at the Palangka Raya City Elementary School is in the medium category. This conclusion is based on the results of data analysis carried out using the Confidence Interval statistical calculation at a significance level of 5%..
- *Second*, the most dominant dimension determining implementation is experiencing the impact of living wisely. This conclusion can be seen from the results Linear Regression analysis states this dimension has the highest determination value. Likewise with htest results using Classification and Regression Trees (CRT).
- *Third*, the background that most dominantly determines the implementation is employment status. This conclusion is obtained from the results of the analysis using Classification and regression trees (CRT). shows that work status background is the most dominant background category.

## Contribution

After the researcher has attempted to draw conclusions and provide the implications above, in this last section, the researcher will provide suggestions to teachers, school principals and foundation administrators, especially those who are

engaged and involved in the world of basic education so that:

1. Recommend to Christian teachers in Palangka Raya City Elementary Schools to increase the level of implementation of Wisdom Living Based on Proverbs 2:1-22 among Christian Teachers in Palangka Raya City Elementary Schools from the medium category to higher levels in the implementation of teacher assignments.
2. Suggests that Christian teachers at the Palangka Raya City Elementary School continue to maintain the implementation of the dimension of “experiencing the impact of living wisely” by manifesting it in loving service to others. The experience of enjoying the impact of a wise life, should be an encouragement to be an example for students and those around them.
3. Suggests that Christian teachers in Palangka Raya City Elementary Schools see their duties and vocation as teachers as a privilege where God places Christian teachers in a strategic position to bring students to know God, rather than as a job.

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Sudiria Hura and Marde Christian Stenly Mawikere, “Biblical Studies on Children's Education and the Nature of Early Childhood Education,” *EDULEAD: Journal of Christian Education and Leadership* 1, no. 1 (2020): 15–33.

<sup>2</sup> John Joseph Owen, *Analytical Key to The Old Testament*, Vol. III (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1994), 524-526

<sup>3</sup> Pulpit Commentary in <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/pulpit/proverbs/2.htm>

<sup>4</sup> John Joseph Owen, *Ibid*

<sup>5</sup> Pulpit Commentary, *Ibid*

<sup>6</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary: Book of Proverbs* (Surabaya: Momentum, 2013), 30

<sup>7</sup> John Joseph Owen, *Ibid*

<sup>8</sup> Bible Guide to Abundant Life (Malang: Wheat Mas, 1992), 964

<sup>9</sup> The People's Bible by Joseph Parker in <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/parker/proverbs/2.htm>

<sup>10</sup> John Joseph Owen, *Ibid*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>12</sup> Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers in <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/ellicott/proverbs/2.htm>

<sup>13</sup> Pulpit Commentary, *Ibid*

<sup>14</sup> Matthew Henry,, 31



- <sup>15</sup> Matthew Henry, *Ibid*
- <sup>16</sup> Andrew A. Hill & John H. Walton, *Survey of the Old Testament* (Malang: Wheat Mas, 1996), 413
- <sup>17</sup> James D. Martin, *Old Testament Guides: Proverbs* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 17
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- <sup>23</sup> Sugiyono, *Management Research Methods*, (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2014), 133
- <sup>24</sup> V. Wiratna Sujarweni. *Research Methods* (Yogyakarta: New Pustaka, 2014), 102
- <sup>25</sup> Poltak Lijan Sinambela. *Quantitative Research Methodology* (Yogyakarta: Graha Ilmu, 2014), 187
- <sup>26</sup> Sugiono, *Educational research methods*, (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2010), 207
- <sup>27</sup> Soekidjo Notoatmojo, *Health Research Methodology*, (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 2005), 19
- <sup>28</sup> Arief Furchan, *Introduction to Research in Education*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2005), 39
- <sup>29</sup> Sugiono, *Educational research methods*, (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2010), 209
- <sup>30</sup> V. Wiratna Sujarweni. *Research Methods* (Yogyakarta: New Pustaka, 2014), 105
- <sup>31</sup> Farida Harun. *Complete Guidelines for Writing Research and Non-Research Papers for Teachers* (Yogyakarta: Aksara, 2016), 163
- <sup>32</sup> Suharsimi Arikunto, *Research Procedure, A Practical Approach* (Jakarta: Rineke Cipta, 2014), 203
- <sup>33</sup> Iskandar, *Educational and Social Research Methods* (Jakarta: Gaung Persada Press, 2009), 27
- <sup>34</sup> Letter of Head of Education Office of Palangka Raya City No 424/165/Disdik.PTK/2022 Dated 20 September 2022

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