

January 13-17, 2025 Edition

Following

The Year^(s) Of Jesus Part 158

How To Walk In Wisdom

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When you read the Bible ask yourself if there's anything you're reading where God is speaking to you personally... anything that you need to start applying in your own life. Then try to reflect on what you read... what you heard from God throughout the day and we know you'll be blessed.

*** These are EXTREMELY rough drafts so if you see typos... well yuo knew the rest ;0) These are essentially the ramblings of thoughts running through Ed or Judy's mind the week before Ed teaches a lesson on these concepts. They are pretty much how Ed gets ready for the weekends. They are not necessarily coherent so if they don't make much sense... sorry about that.

**** Also these devotionals are the product of both Judy & Ed's experiences and education. Figuring out which are from Judy and which are from Ed (sometimes both are contained in a single day) is half the fun.

You can also get these devotionals on Riverside's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/EagleRiverside). You don't have to have a FB account to read them but if you do have an account if you "like" the Riverside page and click the box to get updates the devos will show up on your wall every weekday (along with other news and event updates).

Monday Reflection: These are reflections I wrote in 2018 not long after my brother-in-law/worship pastor/next door neighbor/friend passed away suddenly between services at Riverside on a Sunday morning. It was a rough year for all of us at Riverside but I felt like talking about walking in wisdom was pretty important so I'm "refreshing" them for you!

Today we are beginning a brand new lesson series that will take us all the way through 2018 that I'm calling The Year Of Wisdom. Wisdom is such an important part of being a human. Wisdom is the ability to make "wise" choices when faced with tough decisions. I'm guessing the vast majority of meetings I have where people want to talk to me are about trying to work through tough decisions that they know are important and they don't want to make the wrong choice. It's not easy. It never has been. Which is why wisdom is so important. And so we will spend 2018 looking at the three wisdom books of the Bible- Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and James. We are going to learn how to "grow" in wisdom (which is something the Bible says is not only possible but absolutely crucial for making our way through this world).

Thankfully wisdom is not something that is dependent upon our intelligence (or lack thereof). Wisdom isn't really about our IQ but more about our OQ (obedience quotient) or FQ (faithfulness quotient). We will look in detail at what exactly proverbs are and who the guy that literally wrote the book on wisdom (Solomon) was in future weeks but for this week I want to spend some time looking at what the practical definition of wisdom is. One of the best definitions of wisdom I've ever seen is found in Proverbs chapter 3:

Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. Proverbs 3:5-6 (NLT)

I know- the word "wisdom" isn't even in that passage of scripture but this to me is what wisdom looks like in our lives. To grow in wisdom there are 4 steps:

1. Trust the LORD with all my heart. In other words decide I'm going to live my life God's way rather than the world's way or my way. This is a decision every one of us must make. It's not easy. We are often scared that if we choose God's way we won't like where He takes us. Or we are afraid that since we don't know what God's way is we will always be flailing around in complete darkness trying but always failing to hit the mark that God has set for us. At first this may be true- we won't know what God's way is when we first make this choice but God works with amateurs (like me and you and every other human on the face of the planet. This step is all about intention. Are you willing to commit to living your life God's way? As we head into 2018 a lot of us are thinking about resolutions that we will never be able to keep up with. Why not make your singular resolution this year to walk in wisdom? Not sure what that will mean? Don't worry- as we go through the rest of the wisdom literature in the Bible God will give you plenty of information and you won't be left wondering what He wants you to do- I guarantee that within just a couple of weeks you'll have plenty to work on.
2. Question my own understanding- this seems pretty straightforward. When I start thinking I have a better way than God's way I need to "not depend" on that

understanding. In recovery groups this is called “my best thinking”. For most of us recovery starts to really pick up some steam when we begin to realize what led to the destruction of our lives was our own best thinking.

3. See God’s will in everything we do- this is where wisdom comes in. How do I know what God’s will for me is? Usually when we ask that question we’re asking about nebulous concepts like where should I live? Who should I marry/date? What job should I take? Should I stay or should I go now (and 80’s new wave music fans? If that line got your toes tapping then you know who you are)? Like I pointed out in point number 1- at first this question will have very little in the way of answers but as we walk the path of wisdom together over the next month or two you will know plenty about God’s will for you life that isn’t nebulous at all. It won’t be easy but it won’t be unclear either.
4. Look for the path God puts before you. You won’t get a map showing you the next 50 moves. You will more than likely get a view of what your next step should be. Now fair warning here- you may not like the looks of that step. It may seem scary or confusing or hard. What do we do when the steps God puts before us are scary or confusing or hard? Refer back to step number one in this process- trust the Lord with all your heart, do not depend on your own understanding, seek His will in all your ways and He will show you the path to take. At which point you refer back to point number one. This is the path of wisdom. Continually living out this definition of wisdom that Solomon himself lived out for much of his life.

This is what God is inviting us to. It is the path of wisdom and it will be a lifelong pursuit. See, wisdom isn’t really about a destination as much as it is about the path we are walking. If we walk the path of wisdom then God gives us more wisdom and as we find that God’s plans are always more generous and beautiful and meaningful than anything we could have come up with on our own (even if they may be more difficult or scary at times as well) it will make it easier to trust Him with all our hearts and question our own best thinking.

So what do you say? Are you in? If you are willing to make 2018 the year of wisdom for you then your first step on the path towards wisdom is to memorize Proverbs 3:5-6. It’s not long- It’s only 31 words. Two measly sentences. But so much wisdom is packed into those two short sentences. If you’re going to make your 2018 resolution to walk in wisdom with God then here’s what you do this week- every time you have to make a choice or decision this week- stop. Recite Proverbs 3:5-6 in your mind and then make the best decision you can. Even with just a tiny bit of knowledge about wisdom I think you may be surprised at how different your weeks goes just by making it your intention to trust the LORD with all your heart and question your own best thinking. To seek His will in all you do (even if you’re not sure what that means yet) and are committed to walking the path He chooses for you. If that’s your intention I think 2018 is going to be a miraculous one.

Tuesday Reflection: So this week we are looking at how to “walk in wisdom”. Learning what it looks like practically speaking to become “wise” and to do that we’re

going to trace the journey the Wise Men took when they went looking for Jesus. We could spend a whole day talking about the Wise Men (who they were, how they knew the star would lead them to Jesus, etc.) but we did that last week and so for today let's just assume we know the origin story of the Wise Men and move on from there. What did they do that showed they were "wise"? Well first of all they were seekers of truth. Their lives were dedicated to wisdom and that led them to a search which would take them to the very personification of truth:

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." Matthew 2:1-2 (NLT)

They saw His star. The star they had been waiting on (again if you're curious about their origin story go back to last week's devos and read all about it). They saw it and what did they do? Well, they pursued it. They didn't have to you know. They could have stayed where they were and speculated about what the king that they believed the star pointed to. But they didn't. They got up and followed the star. Why? Because they didn't just want to imagine what that baby would be like- they wanted to know. These guys were seekers of the truth (and they found out they were actually seekers of THE TRUTH but didn't know it just yet).

Who was this baby? Well, if you believe what the Bible says about what the angels told everyone about this baby (Mary, Joseph, Zechariah, Shepherds, Simeon, etc.) then this baby is God Himself stepped into our world. He is the One through Whom everything was created and Who holds it all together by His power. But you don't just have to take the angels word for it- when He grew up He made some outrageous claims about Who He is:

You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. John 8:32 (NLT)

This baby was THE TRUTH- not just A truth. And if you look at that sentence and think, "well Jesus never said there that He was the truth- just that we would know the truth..." then take a look at something He said a little later on in the book of John:

Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. John 14:6 (NLT)

Just on its face that seems pretty outrageous to me but consider this- the word that is used in this sentence for "the" is so emphatic. It's like Chesny Hawkes song from 1991- I Am The One And Only. It was a great song (if you like cheesy '80s pop music [I know... it was 1991 but it was still cheesy '80s music style] and I do- don't judge me- I'm an eclectic kind of guy. A renaissance man of sorts if you will when it comes to musical tastes) and it was on the Doc Hollywood sound track. Anyways, in the song the argument is made that Cheney Hawkes is not like anyone else. He is the "one and only" and you "can't take that away" from him. Go ahead and listen to it on YouTube and it will prepare you for what I'm going to say next.

Go ahead. I'll wait. Did you listen to it? Ok, then here it is- when Jesus says in John 14 that He is the way, the truth and the life He's not saying that He's a way, a truth and a life. There was a way that John could have written that particular passage of scripture that would have made that case. But he didn't write it that way. He used the most emphatic

form of the definite article (I think that's the right way to state that but not being an English major I may be off just a might here in my grammatical terminology but the theology is sound) available to him. I think you could write that verse out as Jesus saying that He is "THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE". Not just starting each word off with a capital letter but ALL UPPER CAPS.

All that to say this- the Wise Men were pursuing THE TRUTH. That's what Wise Men (and Wise Women for that matter) do. They look for and pursue THE TRUTH. It's ultimately what every one of God's stars guides us to- THE TRUTH. And when we find the living embodiment of THE TRUTH what we find is God Himself wrapped in human flesh, in human frailty and somehow still God Himself in the very midst of all that weakness and humanity.

If we want to walk in wisdom in 2018 what we're going to have to do is make up our minds to pursue THE TRUTH. We may have no idea what that will look like when we find it. We may be scared about what finding THE TRUTH will mean in our every day lives. I am with you. But wisdom is worth it. Remember this all about learning to trust the Lord with all of our heart, question our own best thinking about things, seek His will every day of our lives and when we do those things then God promises to show us the path we should walk. He does that by sending stars our way all of which lead to the same place- Jesus. God's Son. THE TRUTH. Will you follow?

Wednesday Reflection: So the Wise Men were in pursuit of the truth and we know that pursuit led them to THE TRUTH. But in order to find the truth they sought (walking the path of wisdom) they had to follow the stars that God sent them. When I think about the "stars" in the story of the Wise Men I generally focus solely on the celestial body that "led" them from the East to Jerusalem. But there were more "stars" in this story than the big shiny one in the sky.

First of all we know that the Wise Men were part of a priesthood that traced itself back to an Israelite named Daniel. We know Daniel was kidnapped and transplanted to Babylon where he and his friends were put into the civil service. We know that Daniel excelled to such a point that eventually he was put in charge of the "Magi"- the priesthood of Babylon:

King Nebuchadnezzar-made him chief over all the magicians, enchanter, astrologers, and fortune-tellers of Babylon. Daniel 5:11 (NLT)

Many scholars believe that Daniel (who wrote the book of Daniel that we find in the Old Testament) also wrote a book that the Magi held as sacred. A book that offered prophecies very similar to the ones found in the Biblical book of Daniel that would have had the Magi who lived 700 years after Daniel to be watching for something BIG to happen. This is not a crazy idea. It is an historical fact that around the time of the birth of Jesus there was a well known prophecy in the Roman world that a great ruler would come out of Judea (the place Jesus was born). Many Roman historians (and even the Jewish historian Josephus) talk about that prophecy. We also know that in 70 AD there is a Roman general named Vespasian (the guy who put down the Jewish revolt and destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD- a town in Judea) who used this prophecy as support for him

becoming the next Caesar since he was a great ruler who had come "out of Judea". It worked for him.

So the Wise Men probably didn't just see a star appear and come to the very logical conclusion that the newborn king of the Jews had arrived. They had other "stars" that were guiding them. Other "stars" that when put together with the bright shiny light in the sky made them realize what they had been waiting for might be here. So they followed the star. The star and the knowledge they had took them to Jerusalem and the palace of king Herod. Why? Because the information that they had wasn't complete. It got them in the ballpark but then they needed some help. God sent them more "stars" in the form of Biblical scholars who told them that the scriptures teach that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem:

King Herod was deeply disturbed when he heard this, as was everyone in Jerusalem. He called a meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law and asked, "Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?" "In Bethlehem in Judea," they said, "for this is what the prophet wrote: 'And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah, are not least among the ruling cities of Judah, for a ruler will come from you who will be the shepherd for my people Israel.'" Then Herod called for a private meeting with the wise men, and he learned from them the time when the star first appeared. Then he told them, "Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. And when you find him, come back and tell me so that I can go and worship him, too!" Matthew 2:3-8 (NLT)

Today I noticed something I hadn't really thought about until just now- God even used Herod as a "star" to guide the Wise Men on their way. That's crazy when you think about it and yet we see it over and over in the Bible. This is why we need each other- because none of us has all the information we need. God is constantly trying to send stars into our lives to help guide us on the path of wisdom. Too many of us don't think we need anyone else to walk that path. We think we can manage just fine on our own. But even if that were true (it's not but if you're not ready to let go of that illusion yet then consider this...) what makes you think this is just about you? Not only does God want to use His stars to guide you down the path of wisdom- He also wants to use you to act as "stars" to others who are trying to find the same path.

This is NOT only about me. This is NOT only about you. We need each other and God needs all of us to pitch in and do our part to make everything work the way it's supposed to. So the Wise Men get some more guidance and those "stars" lead them to Bethlehem where the big shine star in the sky guides them to the house where the baby is living at the time. I know- this doesn't fit well with our nativity sets which have the shepherds and the Wise Men at the stable. That narrative isn't correct. We're not sure exactly how long after His birth that the Wise Men show up but we know that when Herod realizes he's been tricked he kills all the babies in Bethlehem under the age of 2 years old based on the time frame he had from the Wise Men and when the star had appeared to them first.

But that's another story for another time. For the purposes of this devotional I wanted to point out that it wasn't just one star the Wise Men follow- there are multiple "stars" that guide them to Jesus. That's what wisdom does- it eventually leads us to Jesus. I've seen it

over and over in my life- people who are sincerely seeking the truth but don't believe for a second that that truth will have anything to do with Jesus are SHOCKED when they start to realize that their pursuit of the truth and the stars sent into their lives guide them to the same person that the Wise Men found. I want to talk about a couple of instances of that tomorrow but for today let me ask you this- are you keeping an eye out for the stars that God is constantly sending into your life and if so are you making yourself available to be one of those "stars" that God can use to guide others down the path of wisdom and ultimately to His Son?

And if not, what are you going to do about it?

Thursday Reflection: One thing that God promises in the Bible is that if you are searching for Him He will take care of the rest:

When you call on me, when you come and pray to me, I'll listen. When you come looking for me, you'll find me. Yes, when you get serious about finding me and want it more than anything else, I'll make sure you won't be disappointed. Jeremiah 29:12-14 (NCV)

This is something the Wise Men learned. When they went looking for the truth, God made sure they found it. He's still doing the same thing today. One of my favorite stories is about a preacher named Erwin McManus. Erwin is a fairly controversial figure in modern Christianity. He doesn't necessarily see things the way traditional 20th century fundamental Christians see things and that leads to all kinds of interesting situations for him. One such situation was being invited to be a guest on a guy named Jon Gordon's radio show. Jon Gordon was not a Christian- in fact as far as you could get from it. And yet Jon Gordon was a seeker of the truth. He would "pray" to the "universe" and ask for guidance. He considered himself a healer and saw most of his work as being an "energy coach". He was extremely "new age-y" and yet he was starting to see Jesus everywhere in his life. He couldn't believe that Jesus could be the answer to his pursuit of the truth based on every experience he had ever had with those who claimed to speak for this Jesus.

Jon had a good friend who was a Christian and yet who didn't seem to be like the people he wanted to avoid at all costs who claimed to have all the answers. This friend told John about Erwin McManus- a pastor who often was attacked by the establishment "Christians" that Jon Gordon was so repulsed by. So Jon invited Erwin to come on his radio show (a show about energy healing) and talk about his latest book. Erwin had no idea what was coming. Jon as it turned out was determined to prove that Jesus couldn't possibly be the truth he was seeking and so his plan was to get Erwin to prove that by confirming all of his preconceived notions about Jesus and the Bible.

So Erwin sits down and everything is extremely pleasant until they're on the air and then Jon Gordon attacks. He starts out saying, "Pastor McManus- don't you Christians believe that you're the only ones who will be in Heaven and everyone else will burn for all eternity in Hell?" Erwin was taken aback. He wasn't expecting this line of questions- he was expecting to be interviewed about his book. John kept attacking with these Heaven and Hell questions until Erwin finally answered him by saying, "look- In John chapter 3 Jesus says He didn't come into this world to condemn the world but to save it. He said in

John chapter 10 that He came to bring life- not death. So I decided a long time ago I want to be like Him. Everywhere I go I just want to bring a little bit of the Life that Jesus offers."

Jon Gordon sat back a little stunned and simply said, "I really like that answer..." And then the interview proceeded focusing on Erwin's book. Erwin said goodbye to Jon at the end of the show and never expected to hear from him again. Until he got a letter from Jon Gordon one day explaining what was going on. He told Erwin that he had been pursuing the truth and suddenly Jesus started popping up everywhere he went. He'd see Jesus on TV, in a magazine, on a billboard, in a book he was reading. He talked to his friend Daniel who pointed him to Erwin. His plan was to use Erwin to confirm his preconceived notions about Christians and Jesus but just the opposite occurred. He still wasn't sold so he went to see a Buddhist healer. Surely this guy would point him AWAY from Jesus. He told the healer his story and asked what he should do. Do you know what the Buddhist healer told Jon Gordon? He said, "it seems obvious that this Jesus is pursuing you. My advice would be to give yourself to him." Say. What?

Jon Gordon says he was stunned. He didn't know what to say so he just got up and left. But he said that when he got to the stairwell he got down on his knees (because that seemed like what he was supposed to do) and gave his life to Jesus. IS THAT NOT THE COOLEST THING YOU'VE EVER HEARD?!?!?!? He ended his letter writing, "God brought me to my friend Daniel who pointed me to you, Pastor McManus. Then God led me to a Buddhist healer and that healer finally led me to Jesus. And now God is bringing me to those who are stuck and need Jesus more than ever!" He signed his letter, "sending positive energy your way- Jon Gordon: Christian Energy Coach.

I'm not sure what exactly that means and I'm sure that there are a lot of Christians who would say Jon Gordon is no example of the way God leads people (through "stars" just like the He did the Wise Men by even using King Herod to get the Wise Guys ultimately to Jesus) but to me it's one of the greatest miracles I've ever heard. Jon Gordon will have a lot to learn- just like the rest of us- but he's found the greatest Teacher Who ever lived to teach him. What could be cooler than that? I want to end today's thought with the scripture we read at the beginning:

When you call on me, when you come and pray to me, I'll listen. When you come looking for me, you'll find me. Yes, when you get serious about finding me and want it more than anything else, I'll make sure you won't be disappointed. Jeremiah 29:12-14 (NCV)

I think Jon Gordon would say- it's all true. All of it!

Friday Reflection: So what happens to the Wise Men as they walk the path of wisdom? Well we already know they were seekers of truth. That's the first thing we're going to have to become if we're going to grow in wisdom in 2018- we have to want to know what the right thing to do in every decision is. We may not be experts at it yet but for God the intention is one of the most important things. He can take care of knowledge and guidance but He can't manufacture desire in someone who doesn't want to find the truth for their lives. We know that the Wise Men also followed the stars God brought to

them to lead them to the truth that they were looking for. And when the stars finally got them to their destination what happened? This:

They entered the house where the child and his mother, Mary, were, and they fell down before him and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Matthew 2:11 (NLT)

Do you see it? These guys are filled with joy and they offer gifts to the newborn King. But who did they think this newborn King was? Well, their gifts give us some insight into Who they believed Jesus to be. First of all they brought gold. Gold was a gift you brought to a king. We already knew that they believed Jesus to be a king so the next gift is very interesting. They also brought Him frankincense. Frankincense was the incense burned in the temple in the worship of God. The Wise Men believed that Jesus wasn't just a typical king but He was also in some mystifying way God Himself come to earth. How did they know that? I'm guessing the same way they knew that the star that appeared when Jesus was born was a signal that Jesus had been born. Man do I wish we had access to that book that Daniel must have left with the Magi that explained so much of this stuff. So they believed Jesus to be not just a king but THE KING and God Himself. The last gift was a little mystifying to Mary & Joseph I'm guessing- myrrh. Myrrh was a burial spice. Kind of a strange gift to bring to a baby shower. Why the myrrh? Maybe because they knew this baby/God/King was born to die. Born to give His life in a way that nobody else ever was.

Not buying it? Think it's a stretch? Well then back up and look at what happens when the Wise Men finally come before this baby- they fell down before Him and worshipped Him. This must have been SO strange, right? Imagine you're Mary or Joseph and these incredibly rich, important and powerful foreigners knock on your door, walk into your house and bow before your baby. Crazy! And if the Wise Men's path of wisdom is similar to the path of wisdom that God calls all of us to walk down then I can tell you one more thing- this encounter changed them profoundly. Take a look at how the story ends:

When it was time to leave, they went home another way. Matthew 2:12 (NLT)

I love that- they went home "another way." I know that what Matthew is telling us here is that they took a different geographical route home so they could bypass king Herod but I also believe this double meaning has a deeper meaning than just the GPS coordinates of their trip home. When people who are seeking the truth follow God's stars and eventually find the truth they were looking for it does something to them. They are never the same again.

I told you the story about Jon Gordon yesterday. That story didn't happen to me but this one did. There was a guy whose wife attended our church WAY back in 2002. One day he came to Riverside with her and after church he introduced himself to me and said, "I'm an atheist. I don't really believe any of this stuff but my wife would like me to come with her so I told her I would if it was ok with you." I think he was probably hoping I would yell at him and cast him out of the church but instead I welcomed him and told him he would keep me on my toes. So he came with his wife. About a year later he approached me and said, "I'm an agnostic (not sure he recognized the big jump from "atheist" to "agnostic" but I did... we were working on him) but I like what you do here. I was wondering if it'd be ok

with you if I supported your ministry financially?" I told him no. That his filthy money wasn't welcome here (just kidding... I showed him the donation boxes ;o). He was surprised we didn't pass a plate and I told him it was to deal with the preconceived notions that all churches cared about what people's money. I told him we didn't want anyone to have that excuse at Riverside so we never asked for money. That we had the boxes in back for anyone that wanted to support the ministry of Riverside but that nobody kept track and there were probably people going to church here who have never donated financially but we didn't know who they were and never would. He liked that and he kept coming to church with his wife.

A couple of years later he came to me and told me the Army was shipping them out to San Antonio. I told him I'd miss them both and he said, "the thing that bothers me the most is I can't imagine finding a church like Riverside anywhere else." I told him he was probably right about that but that there were lots of great churches all over the world (even in Texas! GASP!) and that if I was in San Antonio I'd give Oakhills church (Max Lucado's church) a try. About two months later I got an email from him. In it he said, "Ed- I wanted to write and let you know how much we both miss Riverside. I also wanted to let you know that I've given my life to Jesus and have become a follower of His. I'd love to talk with you more about what that might mean and what it might look like."

I. Was. Stunned.

And happy. And excited. I tried calling him a few times but we played phone tag until he wrote to me and told me he had gotten plugged in at Max Lucado's church. He had been baptized and was in a discipleship group and he was figuring things out. Then last summer he contacted me again. He was going to be a JBER doing a seminar and he wanted to get together for lunch. We actually made it happen this time and his story was amazing. Everywhere they went with the Army they found a church that could be a blessing to them and to which they could be a blessing. He had become a leader in the church they were currently attending and was walking the path of wisdom with Jesus. He told me again that they've never been able to find a place like Riverside and that he doubted he ever would have made the changes in his life he's made without the accepting and unique atmosphere at Riverside. I talked a little about our philosophy of creating a place where people who were unfamiliar, uncomfortable or even antagonistic towards church could feel safe and welcomed enough to sit and let the Spirit of God work on them as they came and watched silly video clips week after week. I'll never forget when he said, "well I'm living proof it works."

That's what walking the path of wisdom does- it changes us. As long as we are really walking that path. Remember the scripture that we started off the week with? The definition of wisdom from Proverbs chapter 3? Anytime anyone does this the end result is life change. It happened to the Wise Men. It happened to the guy who came to Riverside and went from atheist to agnostic to fully committed follower of Jesus. And it can happen to you. You've just got to want it and then you've got to walk it.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. Proverbs 3:5-6 (NLT)