



## CHAPTERS 27 & 28

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### Introduction

Looking at it from the surface, you'd never know what lies deep beneath the earth. Beneath the surface of the earth lie precious metals, minerals, and materials that have been formed by "fire" and pressure. Job describes the mining efforts of men to extract these precious elements.

The description is intended as an illustration. Job's friends saw only the outward circumstances of his life, only the surface. Those circumstances were the "fire" and pressure that were at work to form precious things in Job. What Job needed was a mining expedition to extract those precious elements from beneath the surface.

Miners apply certain specialized tools and techniques, like those Job describes. *Spiritual* miners need to apply certain tools and techniques. What are they?

Job uses two words in combination four times in chapter twenty-eight: "wisdom" and "understanding." God's wisdom and understanding are the spiritual tools and techniques needed to mine what is precious from beneath the surface of your circumstances.

With this in mind, we'll see two things in our study:

#1 God's Wisdom And Understanding  
Are Fixed Beneath The  
Surface Of Your Circumstances

## #2 God's Wisdom And Understanding Are Found Beneath The Surface Of Your Circumstances

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### #1 God's Wisdom And Understanding Are Fixed Beneath The Surface Of Your Circumstances (Chapter 27)

Job's three friends saw only the surface of his circumstances. Seeing his afflictions and adversity, they assumed that Job was living in sin and was being punished by God. Job, knowing he was **not** living in sin, knew that he was suffering even though he was righteous before God. He rejected the words of his friends, saying in verses one through six of chapter twenty-seven,

Job 27:1 Moreover Job continued his discourse, and said:

Job 27:2 "As God lives, who has taken away my justice, And the Almighty, who has made my soul bitter,

Job 27:3 As long as my breath is in me, And the breath of God in my nostrils,

Job 27:4 My lips will not speak wickedness, Nor my tongue utter deceit.

Job 27:5 Far be it from me That I should say you are right; Till I die I will not put away my integrity from me.

Job 27:6 My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; My heart shall not reproach me as long as I live.

Job insisted that there was something going on at a deeper level. He mentioned his "heart" and its characteristic of "integrity." We know from the opening chapters that he was right. The suffering he was enduring was proving his heart and his integrity.

You **must** look beneath the surface of your circumstances. There is *always* something going on beneath the surface of your circumstances. God sees your heart, and He tries your heart. Your circumstances the fire and pressure that try your heart and which produce precious characteristics - - things like "integrity."

Job 27:7 "May my enemy be like the wicked, And he who rises up against me like the unrighteous.

Job 27:8 For what is the hope of the hypocrite, Though he may gain much, If God takes away his life?

Job 27:9 Will God hear his cry When trouble comes upon him?

Job 27:10 Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call on God?

Job contrasts himself with those whose outward circumstances look good on their surface, but who are empty and vain within. He would rather be *suffering* and *spiritual* than *carefree* and *carnal*. The carnal person has no hope in prayer, no hope of peace. While the righteous person may suffer, he can have peace which surpasses human understanding, and he can be confident his prayers rise as incense before the throne of God.

Job 27:11 "I will teach you about the hand of God; What is with the Almighty I will not conceal.

Job 27:12 Surely all of you have seen it; Why then do you behave with complete nonsense?

Job was confident that "the hand of God" was upon his life, and that "the ways of God" (which is how it reads in the NIV) in allowing his suffering would not be forever "concealed." He was surprised that his friends couldn't see that there was something more going on.

The closing words of chapter twenty-seven are a warning to his three friends to be careful about their conclusions regarding Job's circumstances:

Job 27:13 "This is the portion of a wicked man with God, And the heritage of oppressors, received from the Almighty:

Job 27:14 If his children are multiplied, it is for the sword; And his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread.

Job 27:15 Those who survive him shall be buried in death, And their widows shall not weep,

Job 27:16 Though he heaps up silver like dust, And piles up clothing like clay;

Job 27:17 He may pile it up, but the just will wear it, And the innocent will divide the silver.

Job 27:18 He builds his house like a moth, Like a booth which a watchman makes.

Job 27:19 The rich man will lie down, But not be gathered up; He opens his eyes, And he is no more.

Job 27:20 Terrors overtake him like a flood; A tempest steals him away in the night.

Job 27:21 The east wind carries him away, and he is gone; It sweeps him out of his place.

Job 27:22 It hurls against him and does not spare; He flees desperately from its power.

Job 27:23 Men shall clap their hands at him, And shall hiss him out of his place.

A key to these verses is to realize that in them Job uses many of the same phrases that his three friends used against him. He is warning them. They judged him by his outward circumstances and were wrong. They ought to be more careful in their judgment. Jesus said,

Matthew 7:1 "Judge not, that you be not judged.  
Matthew 7:2 "For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you."

Scripture records several instances where the judgment planned by an enemy was measured against that enemy! Pharaoh ordered the newborn Jewish boys to be drowned, and his own army was drowned in the Red Sea. Haman built a gallows on which to hang Mordecai, but Haman and his sons were hanged there instead. Daniel's enemies had him thrown into the lion's den only to end up there themselves.

Let's look at the first phrase of verse eleven again:

Job 27:11 "I will teach you about the hand of God..."

Job was confident that "the hand of God" was upon his life. There was therefore nothing random about Job's circumstances. Beneath the surface of his circumstances he knew there had to be a meaning, a purpose, a value that would be revealed in time. He may not yet have found the answers he was seeking on his ash heap, but he knew his seeking them was not in vain. He will tell us in chapter twenty-eight that God is both wise and understanding. God's wisdom and understanding are fixed qualities. In other words, they are always the foundation upon which your life rests - - even in times of affliction and adversity. God in His wisdom has *allowed* them; God in His understanding will *arrange* them.

Before you can seek and find God's wisdom and understanding for what you are experiencing, you must believe that there **is** a wise and understanding God behind everything that is allowed to occur in your life! God's wisdom and understanding are always fixed beneath the surface of your circumstances. What seems random and meaningless to you is fixed by God's wise and understanding design.

## #2 God's Wisdom And Understanding Are Found Beneath The Surface Of Your Circumstances (28:1-22)

Having rejected the arguments of his friends in chapter twenty-seven, Job was still seeking answers in chapter twenty-eight. What God gives him is not so much an *answer* to his problem as it is an *approach* to his problem.

He was to approach his problem by applying God's "wisdom" and "understanding," words used in combination four times in chapter twenty-eight, culminating in the conclusion of 28:28,

Job 28:28 And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, And to depart from evil is understanding.

Chapter twenty-eight gives you a poetic picture of applying God's "wisdom" and "understanding." Wisdom and understanding are tools and techniques by which you mine for the precious things being produced beneath the surface of your circumstances. To illustrate, Job takes us into an ancient mine in verses one through eleven:

Job 28:1 Surely there is a mine for silver, And a place where gold is refined.

Job 28:2 Iron is taken from the earth, And copper is smelted from ore.

Job 28:3 Man puts an end to darkness, And searches every recess For ore in the darkness and the shadow of death.

Job 28:4 He breaks open a shaft away from people; In places forgotten by feet They hang far away from men; They swing to and fro.

Job 28:5 As for the earth, from it comes bread, But underneath it is turned up as by fire;

Job 28:6 Its stones are the source of sapphires, And it contains gold dust.

Job 28:7 That path no bird knows, Nor has the falcon's eye seen it.

Job 28:8 The proud lions have not trodden it, Nor has the fierce lion passed over it.

Job 28:9 He puts his hand on the flint; He overturns the mountains at the roots.

Job 28:10 He cuts out channels in the rocks, And his eye sees every precious thing.

Job 28:11 He dams up the streams from trickling; What is hidden he brings forth to light.

Beneath the surface of the earth lie precious metals, minerals, and materials that men seek diligently after by applying various mining techniques. Your circumstances - - with their pressure and fire - - need to be mined to reveal what God is forming there.

If wisdom and understanding are the critical tools and techniques of spiritual mining, you'd better become acquainted with

them. In verses twelve through twenty-two Job begins to identify them for you.

Job 28:12 "But where can wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding?  
Job 28:13 Man does not know its value, Nor is it found in the land of the living.  
Job 28:14 The deep says, 'It is not in me'; And the sea says, 'It is not with me.'  
Job 28:15 It cannot be purchased for gold, Nor can silver be weighed for its price.  
Job 28:16 It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir, In precious onyx or sapphire.  
Job 28:17 Neither gold nor crystal can equal it, Nor can it be exchanged for jewelry of fine gold.  
Job 28:18 No mention shall be made of coral or quartz, For the price of wisdom is above rubies.  
Job 28:19 The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it, Nor can it be valued in pure gold.  
Job 28:20 "From where then does wisdom come? And where is the place of understanding?  
Job 28:21 It is hidden from the eyes of all living, And concealed from the birds of the air.  
Job 28:22 Destruction and Death say, 'We have heard a report about it with our ears.'

God's wisdom and understanding are "hidden from the eyes of all living." They are spiritual tools and techniques available only to those who by faith trust that a wise and understanding God is at work in their lives.

How do you apply God's wisdom and understanding to mine the circumstances of your life?

First you must *concede* that God alone is wise and understanding... Then you must *consent* to His wisdom and understanding.

►► Concede that God alone is wise and understanding:  
"Concede" *means to acknowledge, often reluctantly, that something is true.* We **are** too often reluctant to acknowledge God's wisdom and understanding in our circumstances - - especially when they involve affliction and adversity. God remains wise and understanding, despite our reluctance.

Job extols God's wisdom and understanding in creation.

Job 28:23 God understands its way, And He knows its place.  
Job 28:24 For He looks to the ends of the earth, And sees under the whole heavens,  
Job 28:25 To establish a weight for the wind, And apportion the waters by measure.  
Job 28:26 When He made a law for the rain, And a path for the thunderbolt,  
Job 28:27 Then He saw wisdom and declared it; He prepared it, indeed, He searched it out.

All around you in creation are evidences of the wisdom and understanding of the Creator! If God exhibits so much wisdom and understanding in His creation, *how much more* will He exhibit it in dealing with His beloved creatures! Remember from our study last time - - creation is only the edge surrounding God's work in your life. **You** are the crown of His creation, His most significant work.

You see now what I meant earlier when I said that wisdom and understanding were not so much an *answer*, but an *approach*. When you suffer, God may not give you what you consider to be an answer; but He has given you an approach! It is to know that His decision to allow your suffering is wise, and that He understands all the variables and outcomes.

▶▶ Consent to God's wisdom and understanding:  
"Consent" means *to agree as to a course of action*. It is only reasonable to consent to your circumstances if they are, after all, from a wise and understanding God.

Verse twenty-eight is a statement of consent, of submission:

Job 28:28 And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, And to depart from evil is understanding.

"Fear" is a word of reverence, respect, and awe. It is not a fear that paralyzes, but one that energizes. If you "fear" the Lord, you will consent to the circumstances He has allowed. You fear the Lord when you trust Him with the management of your life.

If you trust the Lord to manage your life, it will reveal itself in obedience. You will follow God's course of action in every circumstance, as it is revealed in the Word of God. That means you will consciously choose to "depart from evil."

I rarely have answers for people's problems. They want to know exactly why something happened - - they want to see the future outcome so that they can judge from their own perspective whether or not their affliction or adversity was worthwhile.

I always have an approach for people's problems. I can't tell them what the future holds, but I can tell them Who holds the future!

God, Who alone is wise and Who understands all things, holds the future - - holds *your* future.

### Conclusion

It's better to have an approach than an answer. Answers can take time to reveal themselves. Some of your questions will take your whole life to answer... And some of them won't be answered until you see Jesus face to face.

But you can *approach* all of your questions the same way - - by applying God's wisdom and understanding. Applying them you will be able to extract every precious thing that is being formed by the fire and the pressure of your circumstances. You'll be a spiritual miner, blasting, tunneling, and digging to discover precious qualities and characteristics being formed beneath the surface of your circumstances.