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## ***Wisdom Worksheet: 12 Words to the Wise***

### ***Understanding (bene) (Prov. 1:2; 9:10)***

#### **Introduction**

Have you ever experienced a misunderstanding? In Solomon's *12 words to the wise*, the *mystery* strand's second of three pearls for wise conflict management is *understanding*. Solomon said that his purpose for writing Proverbs included "*understanding words of insight*" (Prov. 1:2). *Understanding* occurs through an intimate experience with the Holy Spirit Who gives us insight into others (Prov. 9:10).

While each of us has encountered misunderstandings in our relationships, none of us has misunderstood our refrigerator. My refrigerator's name is Benny (which sounds like the Hebrew word for *understanding*). He understands me for four reasons; each representing a characteristic of the Hebrew meaning for *understanding* discovered in Proverbs. In order to be *understanding*, we must be: (1) *Spirit-Led*, (2) *teachable*, (3) *cool*, and (4) *insightful*.

#### **(1) Spirit-Led (Prov. 9:10; 3:5-6; Blessed 3:13)**

First, Benny the refrigerator is plugged into the wall where he receives his electricity, or power. This is a picture of being *Spirit-Led*. Proverbs tells us that a person with *understanding* is plugged into and led by the Holy Spirit. Solomon said, "*Knowledge of the Holy One is understanding*" (Prov. 9:10). *Knowledge* is *intimacy* which can be defined as one's innermost being experiencing another's. Consequently, *knowledge* is a *relationship* where two hearts connect. Hearts connect through *trust*. In order to be *understanding*, we must first, *trust* in the Spirit of God with all of our hearts.



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Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Solomon recorded one of the weightiest sayings in Proverbs to explain how we connect our hearts with God's, "*Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight*" (Prov. 3:5-6). Rather than trusting in our own fallen *understanding*, we trust wholeheartedly in God. Being plugged into and led by the invisible power of the Holy Spirit makes us *understanding*. Solomon continued, describing that when we gain *understanding*, we are *blessed* (Prov. 3:13).

The determining factor of whether we are *Spirit-Led* is five seconds. The *Five Second Rule* is taking five seconds before every telephone call, text, email, encounter, or meeting to ask the Holy Spirit, "*What do you want me to do?*" This focuses our hearts on trusting the heart of God Who gives us the power of *understanding* the hearts of others.

#### *Pause and Let Wisdom Work*

This month, live by the *Five Second Rule*. Be plugged into the Holy Spirit. Before every telephone call, text, email, encounter, or meeting, ask the Spirit of God to lead you. Prior to words or actions flowing from your body, ask Him, "*What do you want me to do?*"

#### **(2) Teachable (Prov. 15:32; 19:25; 17:10)**

Second, Benny has two doors, indicative of being *teachable*. The freezer door teaches him how to cool the refrigerator side. Solomon articulated that a person with *understanding* opens the door of his heart to the door of a teacher in his life to coach and correct him, "*He who ignores discipline despises himself, but whoever heeds correction*



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*gains understanding*” (Prov. 15:32). This is true for discipleship in Christ, our careers, and our roles in our families. A teacher’s correction can come in either the form of *reproof* or *rebuke*. *Reproof* stems from the Hebrew word, *yakach*, which means “to prove again.” Solomon advised, “*Strike a scoffer and the naïve may become shrewd, But reprove one who has understanding and he will gain knowledge*” (Prov. 19:25 NASB). A *reproof* demonstrates again the teacher’s desired behavior, allowing a person with *understanding* to gain an intimate experience that sticks. Solomon said that when the teacher escalates the correction to the form of a *rebuke*, (*gearah* from *gaar* in Hebrew), or reprimand, the person with *understanding* responds to the stiffer consequences through the door of his heart, “*A rebuke goes deeper into one who has understanding, Than a hundred blows into a fool*” (Prov. 17:10 NASB).

Recruiting a teacher is the *Times Two Rule*. Anyone who takes an effort seriously enjoys a relationship with someone who is more accomplished in that field of expertise. We need to ask someone for instruction in each area of our lives. Musicians have instructors. Athletes have coaches. Artists have masters. Entrepreneurs have mentors. Why wouldn’t we enlist a coach to help us become more *understanding* in life’s conflict? The relationship can focus on us growing in our *understanding* as parents, spouses, friends, workers, or disciples of Christ.

#### *Pause and Let Wisdom Work*

This month, live by the *Times 2 Rule* by asking someone to coach you in an arena of your life where you can grow in *understanding*. Find someone who is wiser than you



in that selected discipline. Meet at least once each month to pursue specific areas of improvement.

### **(3) Cool (Prov. 17:27)**

Third, Benny is *cool*. Regardless of the heat outside, Benny always keeps *cool*. Proverbs says that a person with *understanding* has a *cool* spirit, “*He who restrains his words has knowledge, And he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding*” (Prov. 17:27 NASB). Heat expands a conflict. Cool contracts a conflict. When conflict escalates, we often lose our *cool* which impedes our *understanding*. The heated anger disrupts our connection with God, interrupts our teachable spirit, and abruptly ends our effective communication with others. Being *cool* helps us avoid misunderstandings by remaining: (1) *silent*, (2) *patient*, and (3) *straight*. First, a person with *understanding* keeps *cool* in conflict by knowing when to remain *silent*, “*A man who lacks judgment derides his neighbor, but a man of understanding holds his tongue*” (Prov. 11:12). *Silence* is *cool*. Second, a person with *understanding* keeps *cool* in conflict by remaining *patient*, “*A patient man has great understanding, but a quick-tempered man displays folly*” (Prov. 14:29). *Patience* is *cool*. Third, a person with *understanding* keeps *cool* in conflict by remaining *straight*, “*Folly delights a man who lacks judgment, but a man of understanding keeps a straight course*” (Prov. 15:21). *Straight* is *cool*. These three characteristics of *understanding* define *cool*.

Five times two is ten. This is reflective of the *Ten Second Rule*. We have heard that when conversations become heated with anger that we should count to ten.

However, merely counting to ten defers our anger rather than processes it. The *Ten*



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*Second Rule* says that in the heat of the moment—after living by the *Five Second Rule* of being *Spirit-Led* and the *Times Two Rule* of being *teachable*—we should invest ten seconds to take our anger to God. He will *cool* us down, keeping us *silent, patient, and straight*.

*Pause and Let Wisdom Work*

This month, practice the real *Ten Second Rule*. Take your anger to God. As you begin to heat up, ask Him to *cool* you down keeping you *silent, patient, and straight*.

**(4) Insightful (Prov. 20:5; 14:33; 28:11)**

Fourth, Benny lets me look and reach inside. Proverbs teaches that a person with *understanding* is *insightful*, “*The purposes of a man’s heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out*” (Prov. 20:5). *Understanding* allows us to look and reach inside another person’s heart, making us *insightful*. Solomon said that wisdom dwells in the person with *understanding*, but it only passes through one who lacks it, “*Wisdom rests in the heart of the one who has understanding, But in the bosom of fools it is made known*” (Prov. 14:33 NASB). *Understanding* produces wisdom for *insight*. The King of Israel also noted how *understanding* transcends socio-economic echelons, “*The rich man is wise in his own eyes, But the poor who has understanding sees through him*” (Prov. 28:11 NASB). Even a poor person with *understanding* has *insight* into the pretense that often lies in the heart of the rich.

Being *insightful* is lived out through the *Twenty Second Rule* which means that we take twenty seconds after each conversation to look past a person’s words into his heart.

This means that we examine his choices, thoughts, prayers, and feelings that comprise the



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source of his desires, or motives. Language is symbolic of the heart. Consequently, words spoken by a person often do not accurately reflect his heart. *Insight* allows us to look past words and into the heart. After being *Spirit-Led* with the *Five Second Rule*, being *teachable* through the *Times Two Rule*, and being *cool* through the *Ten Second Rule*, we can be *insightful* through the *Twenty Second Rule*.

#### *Pause and Let Wisdom Work*

This month, live by the *Twenty Second Rule* and look inside others. Take twenty seconds after each conversation to look past every person's words in order to peer inside his heart. Don't merely focus on his vocabulary, but reflect on what resides in his heart that he was attempting to describe.

#### **Conclusion**

Be like my refrigerator Benny who has no misunderstandings. Be a wise person who understands others by intimately experiencing the Holy Spirit. Be: (1) *Spirit-Led* through the *Five Second Rule*, (2) *teachable* with the *Times Two Rule*, (3) *cool* implementing the *Ten Second Rule*, and (4) *insightful* while engaging in the *Twenty Second Rule*. Memorize one of these verses so that you can begin to assimilate *understanding* into your life through the Holy Spirit. He will equip you to wisely minimize misunderstandings in your conflict management.