Practical wisdom as executive virtue for Positive Psychology: a Pastoral-Theological evaluation

Johan Leon Ferreira

Student number: 13145584

B.A. Soc.Sci. (RAU); B.A. Hons. Psych. (RAU); M.A. Couns. Psych. (US)

Thesis submitted for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy in Pastoral Studies

at the North-West University
(Potchefstroom Campus)

Promoter : Prof. Dr. G.A. Lotter
Co-promoter : Prof. Dr. P. Joubert

Potchefstroom
November 2010
PREFACE

My sincere gratitude and thanks to:

- My promoter, prof. dr. George Lotter, for his patience, his committed guidance and his shared wisdom

- My co-promoter, prof. dr. Pieter Joubert, for his professional insight and for the privilege of the unrestricted use of his personal library

- The participants who shared in the therapeutic process for the purpose of the study

- The information specialists of the libraries of the North-West University for their exceptional and sustained efforts in searching for, locating and providing access to sources for the successful completion of the study

- The technical and language editor, Sophia Kapp, for her exact editing of the technical and language aspects of the manuscript

- My friends, family and colleagues, for their constant encouragement

- Our sons, Francois and Christoff, who were boys when this study commenced, and who are now teenagers. Thank you for your sacrifices

- My wife, Christine, for her unrelenting support that motivated and inspired me through the most difficult of challenges

- My Heavenly Father, to whom this work is dedicated.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>PROBLEM STATEMENT AND SUBSTANTIATION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.2</td>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.3</td>
<td>Positive psychology</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.3.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.3.2</td>
<td>Aim of positive psychology</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.3.3</td>
<td>Central hypothesis in positive psychology</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.3.4</td>
<td>Values in Action classification</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.3.5</td>
<td>The virtue of wisdom</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.3.6</td>
<td>Character traits and virtues</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.3.7</td>
<td>Positive psychology and religion</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.4</td>
<td>Possible misuse of spirituality in practice</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.5</td>
<td>Contribution to fields of study</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.5.1</td>
<td>Christian psychology</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.5.2</td>
<td>Practical theology</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>LITERARY SEARCH</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>RESEARCH QUESTIONS</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>RESEARCH OBJECTIVES</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>CENTRAL THEORETICAL STATEMENT</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6.1</td>
<td>Model of Lotter</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6.2</td>
<td>Model of Heitink</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6.3</td>
<td>Model of Zerfass</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6.4</td>
<td>Other technical aspects</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>DIVISION OF RESEARCH REPORT</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# CHAPTER 2: BASIS-THEORETICAL APPLICATIONS OF PRACTICAL WISDOM FROM OLD TESTAMENT PERSPECTIVES – (ARTICLE 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPSOMMING</td>
<td></td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>PROBLEM STATEMENT</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1</td>
<td>Background</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2</td>
<td>Problem statement</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>HISTORICAL BACKGROUND</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>BODY OF RESEARCH</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.1</td>
<td>‘Positive’ wisdom literature</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.2</td>
<td>The fear of God</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.3</td>
<td>Ben Sira</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.4</td>
<td>Wisdom’s female personality</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.5</td>
<td>Wisdom and structure</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.6</td>
<td>Wisdom and justice</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.7</td>
<td>Wisdom and order</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.8</td>
<td>Wisdom and the design of creation</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.9</td>
<td>Wisdom and caring love</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.10</td>
<td>Realistic wisdom</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.11</td>
<td>Wisdom and the sage</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.12</td>
<td>The full picture of wisdom</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>SUMMARY</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 3: BASIS-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT ON PRACTICAL WISDOM AS FOUND IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT – (ARTICLE 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPSOMMING</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1 Background</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2 Problem statement</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1 A manifesto for life</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2 The genre of the Beatitudes</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.3 Jewish wisdom literature and the Beatitudes</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.4 The concept of participative grace</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 BODY OF RESEARCH</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.1 Focus on God</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.2 The Lord’s Prayer</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.3 Code of conduct</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.4 Virtues identified in the Beatitudes</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.5 Psychological steps identified in the Beatitudes</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.6 The vicious cycle and the transformative initiative</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.7 The concept of character formation</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.8 The concepts of righteous living</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.9 Jesus as the fulfilment of the Old Testament law</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 SUMMARY</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7 REFERENCES</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 5: META-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE VIRTUE OF PRACTICAL WISDOM BY MEANS OF AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION – (ARTICLE 4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>RESEARCH DESIGN</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1</td>
<td>Qualitative research</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2</td>
<td>Empirical research</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2.1</td>
<td>Aim of study</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2.2</td>
<td>The therapeutic process</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2.3</td>
<td>Data gathering</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2.4</td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.3</td>
<td>Data analysis</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.3.1</td>
<td>Personal information</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.3.2</td>
<td>Evaluation of information during phase 1 of research</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.3.2.1</td>
<td>Evaluation of wisdom strengths</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.3.2.2</td>
<td>Executive style of functioning</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.3.2.3</td>
<td>Biblical wisdom principles</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.3.3</td>
<td>Evaluation of information during phase 2 of research</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.3.3.1</td>
<td>Evaluation of wisdom strengths</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.3.3.2</td>
<td>Executive style of functioning</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.3.3.3</td>
<td>Biblical wisdom principles</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>DISCUSSION OF EMPIRICAL RESULTS</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1</td>
<td>Summary of results</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1.1</td>
<td>Wisdom strengths</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1.2</td>
<td>Executive style of functioning</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1.3</td>
<td>Biblical wisdom principles</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>SUMMARY</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND SUBSTANTIATION

1.1.1 Introduction

During twenty years of therapeutic work I have become increasingly aware of the desperate need of most clients to acquire a positive, functional and integrated psychological and spiritual map for their lives. It was during this personal process of searching for the more positive elements and emotions in psychology that I became interested in the topic of wisdom as an executive function in personality style and the relevance thereof for the spiritual components in the lives of clients.

The following statement by Jung (1976:156) directed my psychological focus towards the Bible:

We must read the Bible or we shall not understand psychology. Our psychology, whole lives, our language and imagery are built upon the Bible.

The importance of the interface between psychology and religion is stated by Wulff (1991:16):

No other human preoccupation challenges psychologists as profoundly as religion. Whether or not they profess to be religious themselves – and many do not – psychologists must take religion into account if they are to understand and help their fellow human beings.
As the need for a greater understanding of the religious and spiritual needs of clients becomes clear, the psychologist in practice will have to develop a greater respect, and use more effectively, the spiritual resources of the client. Spirituality has been defined within religious and ecclesiastical contexts or with regard to issues pertaining to the soul (Fowers et al., 2010:139; De Vries-Schot et al., 2008:90; Galek et al., 2007:375; Gray, 2006:58; Gall & Grant, 2005:515; Doherty, 2003:181-182; Gall, 2003:223; Unterberger, 2003:161; Watts, 2002:2-3; Daaleman et al., 2001:1503-1504; Graham et al., 2001:2; Jason et al., 2001:585; Koenig et al., 2001:4-6; Sheldon & King, 2001:216; Fisher et al., 2000:133; Collins, 2000:110-111; Richards & Bergin, 2000:4; Hood et al., 1996:23-25; Loewenthal, 1995:161; Tyrrell, 1985:62-63). Recent studies focus much wider, incorporating many more aspects of human life, indicating that human life is made up of good characteristics within people and of excellence of virtue within relationships. Professional organizations have openly acknowledged that religion and spirituality must be respected by professionals in the field, in order for religious clients to trust their psychologists in terms of their spiritual beliefs. A greater number of clients are bringing their spiritual beliefs into the therapeutic context because they view spirituality as a resource that influences their lives, and health care professionals should therefore be able to evaluate spiritual and religious beliefs effectively. There is a large body of empirical research that proves the positive relation of religious and spiritual factors to emotional well-being and encourages psychologists to take up a more open and constructive perception regarding human potentials, motives and capacities.

Positive emotions have become the centre of attention in the expanding field of positive psychology, with researchers turning their focus on increasing awareness of the long-term effects of positive emotions. Positive emotions feel good in the present, but increase the possibilities of feeling good in the future (Diener & Ryan, 2009:395; Lambert et al., 2009:32, 40; Landis et al., 2009:71; Bryant, 2003: 175; Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002:172; Watson, 2002:106-107; Fredrickson et al., 2000:255-256). According to Kim-Prieto and Diener (2009:448) religion can provide guidelines for emotions, such as the experience
of the specific emotion and its intensity. In order to maintain a balanced integration of psychology and theology, Beck (2003:27), Watts (2002:137) and Collins (2000:107) are of the opinion that scholars and researchers should be able to master psychological text and content to the degree that they can differentiate between valid research findings and mere popular inclinations in order to interact with their biblical worldview. Only then will psychology and theology work successfully alongside each other as valid resources in counselling.

During the last few decades, as the need for wisdom increased in society, the topic of wisdom has been expanded from the province of philosophy to a wider, more general range of interdisciplinary research fields (Kok, 2009:53; Mick et al., 2009:99-100; Takahashi & Overton, 2005:33; Glück et al., 2005:197; Baltes & Kunzmann, 2004:290; Watts et al., 2002:288-289; Sternberg, 1990:13). Allport (1966:456-457) concluded that a meeting of the minds within the fields of theology, sociology and psychology could lead to collaboration between behavioural and religious disciplines. Bergin (1991:396) found that therapists were more religious that he expected them to be. His deduction was that these professionals showed an unexpected investment in religion. Forty years after Allport came to these conclusions, Collicutt McGrath (2006:292) discussed the early development of Christianity from a social-psychological perspective. She uses the positive psychology model of wisdom to provide an outline for understanding the progress of Christianity as an illustration of growth through challenges of life. Koenig et al. (2001:53) state and Byron and Miller-Perrin (2009: 68) determine in their current research findings that the presence of faith in a person’s life will predict well-being significantly and Benson and Scales (2009:86) highlight that significant progress has been made in discussing, naming and measuring positive developmental experiences and outcomes in the last five years so that religion can be successfully and validly integrated into the clinical and counselling practice.
According to Abdel-Khalek and Naceur (2007:159-160), Bosworth et al. (2003:911), Collins (2000:104), Pargament (1997:3), Wulff (1996:43) and Hood et al. (1996:2-3) an increasing number of publications regarding the psychology of religion focus on the positive and negative associations between religion and emotion. In the 4th edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-VI) (1994) the category 'Religious or spiritual problem', code V62.89, was added to accommodate religious and spiritual issues in the social and personal lives of people. Tan (2006:69) points out that the field of positive psychology actually overlaps with much of what has been researched in the fields of psychology of religion for many years. Baumeister and Exline (1999:1189) conclude that research in psychology has aimed to be value-free in its pursuit of scientific idealism and that this may have restricted the study of virtue. Koenig (2009:283-284), Galek et al. (2007:363-364) and Harris et al. (2007:4) are of the opinion that spirituality is increasingly recognized as a significant cultural and coping factor that may affect counselling relationships, processes and outcomes, and Van Rooyen and Beukes (2009:26) and Butler and Pargament (2003:175) point out that historically religion and psychology have been (artificially) separated by practitioners.

It is the goal of this study to possibly identify, clarify and implement the effective interplay of Christian wisdom within religion and psychology.

1.1.2 Wisdom

Wisdom research has been a focus area in the behavioural sciences for the last two decades, but still a definition has not been formulated. What seems to be agreed upon by researchers is that wisdom is a multifaceted and multidimensional concept where these concepts have an influence on each other and is seen as a desired objective of development (Kok, 2009:53-55; Baltes & Kunzmann, 2004:290-292; Ardelt, 2004:257; Bluck & Glück, 2004:545, 569; Ardelt, 2003:277; Baltes & Kunzmann, 2003:131; Staudinger & Leipold,
Wisdom is seen as the search for human excellence and has been defined within various philosophical and theoretical frameworks as incorporating the following aspects:

- an outline of superior cognitive functioning;
- proficiency in the conduct and meaning of life;
- the art of questioning;
- the awareness of ignorance;
- the growth of intrapersonal, interpersonal and transpersonal experiences in the areas of personality, cognition and conation;
- the development of wisdom over a lifetime

Wisdom can be defined as 'the power of judging rightly and following the soundest course of action, based on knowledge, experience and understanding'. (Webster's New World dictionary, 1997:1533).

Zimmerli maintained early in his research of literature that wisdom has always been central to the effort of mastering life (cf. Perdue, 1994:35 & 36). Referring to wisdom as 'the art of steering', Zimmerli, Bluck and Glück (2004:545), Baltes and Staudinger (2000:122) and Sternberg (1990:30) suggest that the purpose of the wise person is to master life by the process of coming to awareness of the world, and relating that knowledge to any and all situations in life. Therefore wisdom is considered to be a well-balanced management of cognition, motivation and emotion that can lead to the person having a meaningful life (King & Hicks, 2009:317; Mick et al., 2009:99; Moser, 2009:2; Staudinger & Leipold, 2003:178, Staudinger & Pasupathi, 2003:242; Sternberg, 1990:299). Deane-Drummond (2007:589) comments that practical wisdom is related to how people live their lives on a daily basis.
Day-to-day living occurs within the context of society and relationships with other people. Glück et al. (2005:198), Ardelt (2004:260), Baltes and Staudinger (2000:122), Baltes and Kunzmann (2004:290) and Sternberg (1990:286) argue that wisdom cannot exist independently from individuals and that wisdom is distributed within a society by the connectivity between the minds of people. This means that humans are active beings who need to seek out their place in God's world, to order their reality, and to ultimately master life. This process is a feature of human behaviour observed in primary cultural traditions.

Authors are of the opinion that in the early wisdom tradition wisdom is focussed on finding practical results for the individual who applies wisdom principles. Mick et al. (2009:99), Sternberg (2007:145), Staudinger and Leopold (2003:179), Weeks (1994:58), Sternberg (1990:285-287) state that wisdom-related performance can be motivated by practical, measurable results. Von Rad is of the opinion that wisdom also attempts to assist man in shaping his position and standing in the world by applying positive character traits such as maturity, judgment and interpersonal skills (Ardelt, 2003:276, Weeks, 1994:58; Sternberg, 1990:266). Wisdom is further considered by Reiterer et al. (2005:259) as having a distinctive grasp of God's will and being able to pass it on to those who have a need for development of wisdom within their lives.

According to Powlison (2000:210, 222) and Perdue (1994:36) much of the Old Testament, and especially the wisdom literature, acknowledge the value of the quality of human life and place a high premium on the well-being of humankind. Wisdom emphasizes autonomy and the responsibility in people to create a social and individual future for them under the prompt of God's instruction. Wisdom is seen as the link between the individual and the specific situation that requires a wise choice. This knowledge can be used effectively in counselling, but is often not fully explored. Biblical wisdom is complex and vast, and it is often unclear what exactly constitutes wisdom (Park, 2009:462; Sternberg & Jordan, 2005: 100-101; Staudinger & Leipold, 2003:174; Pargament, 1997:60-61).
For the purposes of this study, wisdom is evaluated as it is portrayed mainly in the Old Testament in the book of Proverbs and in the New Testament in the book of Matthew. I have chosen to look at wisdom from the perspective of The Sermon on the Mount, as it starts by giving an entire moral code for the New Testament. According to Augustine, the seventh Beatitude achieves the highest stage of excellence, suggestive of peace, and peace is indistinguishable from wisdom. Wisdom is considered to be the contemplation of truth. In pondering truth, man is calmed and can take on the likeness of God. For Augustine the mediation of truth within the individual was a high priority, as he believed this to be wisdom. Wisdom is received from the Holy Spirit, as peace is accomplished by the person (Plume & Quasten, 1948:6). The relevance of this dated source is reinforced by Abraham (2009:149), Ford (2009:187), McIntosh (2008:153), Hayford (2005:6) and Watts et al. (2002:289) who stated that baptism in the Holy Spirit was part of Jesus' plan for man and that the Holy Spirit can assist man to become more like Christ. This is a matter of will, connecting the inner and outer world by choice and then changing behaviour through actions (Pascual-Leone, 1990:249).

In analysis of Matthew 2:9, Augustine continues on the association between peace and wisdom. Peace indicates no opposition to God and as the individual liberates his mind and reason to the will of God, he will be releasing himself into the truth that is God. Augustine identifies the task of theology as enabling the person to access the wisdom of God (Charry, 2009:295; Ardelt, 2003:277; Watts et al., 2002:289; Argyle, 2000:171; Powlison, 2000:146; Pascual-Leone, 1990:250; Plume & Quasten, 1948:16-17). As the person releases the higher order functions to God, the lower order functions of humanness will stand under the control of the superior functions. The person will then receive the peace which is given on earth to men of good will. This person's life will be characterized by wisdom, which will have aspects of cognition, reflection and affect. When peace and wisdom is attained by the person and established in the soul, onslaughts are dealt with in a way that glorifies God. It becomes visible to the world that the person has a peace beyond the stimulus of trauma and that a
wise decision can be made regarding the current circumstance. This process is made possible by God's grace.

Augustine states further that if a man's spirit obeys the Spirit of God, there is no emotion to revolt against reason, and order will triumph within. Therefore wisdom works well with the individual who seeks the peace of God, for 'blessed are the peacemakers' (Mt 5:9).

As the person attains peace, and therefore starts to act in wisdom, he will start to submit to the will of God. 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven' (Mt 6:10). A person who has submitted to the will of God does as the angels do: he stays close to God in every respect, so that his wisdom cannot be compromised (Staudinger & Leipold, 2003:175; Dixon, 2003:46-47; Powlison, 2000:222; Plume & Quasten, 1948:19-20). The person's will is in line with what God wants for a specific situation, and the peace of God reigns. 'Thy will be done' (Mt 6:11) interpreted correctly means that obedience is so absolute that God's will can be seen in actions, deeds, conduct, behaviour, attitude and approach towards life in general. The person yields to the will of God, has peace and therefore obtains practical and functional wisdom from the Holy Spirit. This process can be aided and directed by the Christian therapist and will be influenced by the client's level of emotional and spiritual maturity.

Cherry (2009:296), Powlison (2000:222) and Ceresko (1999:5, 183) support this view by explaining that wisdom sets out to motivate and educate the individual in the virtues that lead to a God-fearing life. The person develops into a mature, whole human being, able to love and be loved. It is, however, of the utmost importance for the therapist and the client to recognize that God is in essence central to all wisdom.

Park (2009:462), Branick (2006:75-77) and Meisinger et al. (2006:129) provide some understanding of the definition of wisdom. They suggest that wisdom functions in such a way as to initiate order into the lives of people. It comprises
qualities such as humility, patience, understanding and forgiveness, and they suggest that wisdom may be defined as a gift from the Holy Spirit. According to Tan (2006:72) the list of the six virtues and the 24 character strengths as defined by positive psychology come close to the nine-fold fruit of the Holy Spirit, who alone can produce such deep and eternal results in a person. According to Staudinger and Leipold (2003:180) wisdom may be seen as one of the major strengths within the field of positive psychology.

### 1.1.3 Positive psychology

#### 1.1.3.1 Introduction

The positive psychology movement has opened up the awareness of a positive attitude towards the treatment methods and therapeutic outcomes within mainstream psychology. The roots of positive psychology lie in the Aristotelian frame of reference. The body of research and theory in positive psychology aim to point out the state of today's conventional psychology, and this is seen as one of the most positive developments in psychology in the last decade (Maddux, 2008:55-56, 66; Froh et al., 2007:29; Wallace & Bergeman, 2007:323; Harvey & Pauwels, 2004:621; Linley & Joseph, 2004:16; Terjesen et al., 2004:163; Bryant, 2003:175; Lopez et al., 2003:4; Snyder & Lopez, 2002:4-5; Miller & Harvey, 2001:314; Fabricatore et al., 2000:221). Traditional psychology has focussed on symptom reduction whereas positive psychology aims at adjusting psychological thought from a pathology-orientated understanding to an outlook of progress and positive development. The field of positive psychology has presented itself as an integrative research area where dysfunctional patterns of behaviour, cognitions and emotions are seen as problems in living, not as disorders or diseases. Theorists and researchers have adopted a rationale that the ideas of positive psychology are sound.
Various researchers (Benson & Scales, 2009:86; Wallace & Bergeman, 2007:323; Joseph & Linley, 2005:9; Linley & Joseph, 2004:17; Bryant, 2003:175; Lopez et al., 2003:4-6; Wissing & Van Eeden, 2002:42; Diener, 2000:41; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000:10) support the attempt to demand from mainstream psychology not to continue the marginalization and elimination of the positive aspects of human nature. These investigators promote the restoration of positive subjective experience, positive individual traits and civic virtues, traditionally the field of study of researchers in the psychology of religion. Through their efforts, positive psychology has reclaimed character and virtue as justifiable subject matter in psychological research (Peterson et al., 2007:149; Lewis & Cruise, 2006:213; Rathunde, 2001:136). The role of the positive therapist is to shift from aiding in social adjustment of the client to actively aid in their personal transformation, where the focus is on evaluation of the person's strengths and weaknesses.

1.1.3.2 Aim of positive psychology

The aim of positive psychology is to facilitate people in a process of modification of behaviour, mood and attitude so that they may realize their personal objectives. The desired results of positive psychology are happiness and well-being. Subjective well-being refers to the summation of the person's life contentment. Positive and negative emotions add up and everyday happiness is experienced or not. Psychological well-being refers to enjoyment, which is indicated by the engagement with and full involvement in the challenges of life (Peterson et al., 2008:19; Hitlin, 2007:249; Wallace & Bergeman, 2007:324; Diener et al., 2006:313; Linley et al., 2006:6; Glück et al., 2005:198; Kashdan, 2004:1226; Linley & Joseph, 2004:4-6; Lopez et al., 2003:9-10; Roothman et al., 2003:212; Snyder & Lopez, 2002:284-285; Diener & Lucas, 1999:213-214). The principles of positive psychology can be applied with great success to the individual, to a group, a community and to an organization. The full array of human functioning is incorporated in this methodology, integrating pathology, full
functionality and pre-emptive measures. The individual affects the society at large and it would seem that psychological well-being can be linked to affective, physical, cognitive, spiritual, self and social processes.

1.1.3.3 Central hypothesis in positive psychology

The notion of good character becomes the central hypothesis in positive psychology. Seligman (2002:125) formulates the basic suppositions of positive psychology:

1. There is a human 'nature'.
2. Actions ensue from character.
3. Character comes in two forms, both equally essential – bad character and good, honourable character.

The Aristotelian approach to human nature and growth includes the view of a good person, and that the person has the ability to realize his vital nature. Aristotle states clearly that it is not possible to be good in the stringent sense without practical wisdom (Fowers et al., 2010:139-142; Headey et al., 2010:74; Pasupathi & Staudinger, 2001:401). This view is in conflict with an approach that focuses on failure, pathology, illness and categorization of mental illness. Positive psychology proposes that human beings have the given potential for positive and constructive character and virtues.

Within the positive psychology framework character refers to the complete set of positive traits that have become apparent across cultures and throughout history as imperative for a good life. Virtues are the foundational characteristics valued by moral philosophers and devout thinkers that contribute to the realization of the human good. Character strengths are the psychological processes or procedures that characterize or display the virtues (Robbins, 2008:96; Park & Peterson, 2006:893; Kotva, 1996:23)
Positive psychology focuses on limitations and strengths. The aim of the therapeutic process is to aid in the healing of emotional wounds, as well as support in leading people to fulfilment in their lives (Ong et al., 2007:20; Diener, 2006:399-402; Linley et al., 2006:7; Linley & Joseph, 2004:20-24; Lopez et al., 2003:7-8; Snyder & Lopez, 2002:279). The focus should be on encouraging the potency of the lives of people so that they can be directed and guided towards psychological well-being, facilitating adaptation, growth and fulfilment through the awareness and development of virtues and character strengths.

1.1.3.4 Values in Action classification

The Values in Action (VIA) classification of strengths was a preliminary measure towards specifying critical positive traits and aims to complement the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association by turning the focus to people’s strengths (Kim-Prieto & Diener, 2009:447; van Rooyen & Beukes, 2009:26-27; Peterson et al., 2008:215; Van Eeden & Wissing, 2008:87-88; Linley et al., 2007:342-343; Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 2006:30; Park et al., 2004b:628; Park et al., 2004a:604; Snyder et al., 2003: 35-36; Snyder & Lopez, 2002:18-22). The aim of the classification project is twofold: firstly it provides a consensual vocabulary for talking about positive traits, and secondly it provides a means to measure traits so that a comparative psychology of character strengths could be established. The focus is on the strengths of the individual and on how these strengths can contribute to an excellent life. This classification aims to provide additional understanding of psychological strengths. Spirituality is considered to be one of the traits that encourage positive well-being and the attainment of the 'good life'.

Petersen and Seligman (2004:13-14) developed a list of 24 strengths which they arranged under the six virtues of wisdom and knowledge, courage, humanity and love, justice, temperance, transcendence. The authors suggest that all of these virtues have to be present at above-threshold values for a person to be
experienced as of good character and temperament. According to Peterson et al. (2007:149) this categorization offers the possibility for a comparative psychology of character. Lopez and Snyder (2003:463-464) asserted that all individuals have psychological strengths and all have the potential to achieve optimal mental health.

The character strengths are the psychological components essential for growth (Linley et al., 2007:342-343; Lopez & Snyder, 2003:464; Seligman, 2002:24; Kotva, 1996:17, 23). These processes of growth and mechanisms define the virtues. Some of the character strengths they identified are: zest, gratitude, severance, bravery, optimism, gratitude, leadership, fairness, curiosity, open-mindedness, perspective, kindness, loyalty, duty, self-control, caution, bravery. These identified virtues and character strengths are treated as logically independent of each other. Positive psychology proposes that people identify their signature strengths, and then develop them by following healthy processes that may have human fulfilment as a result, which is measured by a development from the person one is into the person one could be.

1.1.3.5 The virtue of wisdom

Practical wisdom implies the correct use of reason in day-to-day choices. A central theme to practical wisdom is ethical judgment (Kok, 2009:54; Sternberg, 2009:10; Werpehowski, 2007:57; Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 2006:32; Staudinger & Leipold, 2003:173-175; Sternberg, 2003:479-480). Wisdom can ensure that ideas are ethical and to the universal good of mankind rather than being merely beneficial for the individual. The virtue of wisdom and knowledge, on which this study focuses, needs certain cognitive strengths to function well:
1. Creativity in thinking of new and creative ways to do things
2. Curiosity and interest in the world in exploring and discovering the world
3. Judgment and critical thinking in evaluating issues and examining them thoroughly, grasping paradoxes and reconciling contradictions
4. Love of learning in mastering new skills.
5. Ability to provide wise council to others

There is the notion that the principles of positive psychology have the potential to lead to transformation of the world. Seligman is of the opinion that positive psychology as an approach to psychopathology could possibly reduce the incidence of major depression by 50%. Positive emotions increase people's perception that life is significant (Saroglou et al., 2008:166). Baltes and Kunzmann' (2003:133) and Staudinger and Leipold (2003:171-172) are of the opinion that wisdom holds great potential as psychologists focus their attention on positivity and distinction in human behaviour. According to Werpehowski (2007:56-57) and Welton (2004:371-372) a person has to find meaning in his life, which will in turn lead to the decrease of psychological tension. Positive psychology per se will not transform anything, but Christ will surely use positive psychology as He transforms the world.

1.1.3.6 Character traits and virtues

The current literature in positive psychology seems to be directed at understanding the various traits and virtues and to determine the functionality of these identified variables. Mazzucchelli et al. (2010:105) and Maddi (2006:226) state that the emphasis is on positive features of performance and health, and that an understanding is required of how these traits and virtues relate to a well-adjusted life where frequent positive emotions and infrequent negative emotions are experienced. Schwartz and Sharpe (2006:379) and Averill and More (2000:664-666) accept the importance of these virtues and strengths, but believe
that the Aristotelian view that virtues and strengths are mutually supporting, should be adhered to. They are of the opinion that happiness requires all the virtues, and that more of a virtue is not necessarily better than less of a virtue. They argue that practical wisdom is the 'master' or executive virtue that is essential in solving problems of life. When character strengths have to be translated into action, practical wisdom is required to resolve conflict, to understand specific details and to determine relevance of the demands.

Mick et al. (2009:99), Schwartz and Sharpe (2006:377) and Johnson and Jones (2000: 262) state that practical wisdom is becoming increasingly difficult to nurture and display in modern society and that social institutions should be encouraged to make use of practical wisdom in everyday life, where practical wisdom suggests the diversity of behavioural wisdom in everyday life.

Peterson and Seligman (2004:13) and Day and Rottinghaus (2003:18-19) acknowledge that a great deal of discussion has arisen regarding the possibility of a master or executive virtue. They are of the opinion that a specific master virtue will probably be identifiable in certain cultures, within certain individuals and within certain developmental phases. Powlinson (2000:222) claims that within the Christian mindset wisdom is a connecting element in psychology and theology.

Watts et al. (2006:277) have a continued programme of research at the University of Cambridge into topics of forgiveness, hope and gratitude. They are of the opinion that positive psychology is possibly the link between religion and psychology, as many of the topics addressed in positive psychology have long been fundamental to the philosophy and practice in religious traditions. The theory and practice of positive psychology have brought a new attention to the examination of topics traditionally seen as religious in nature. It is aiding people to endorse spiritual practices in the secular milieu. This view is supported by Powlinson (2000: 222; 262).
1.1.3.7 Positive psychology and religion

Joseph et al. (2006:210-211), Koenig (2006:1), Davis et al. (2003:356), Watts et al. (2002:299-300) and Johnson and Jones (2000:13-15) note that the discipline of psychology, with its emphasis on observable and measurable behaviour, has often been regarded as an opposite of religion, with its emphasis on faith. However, they state that in their opinion that the answers to life’s questions provided by both disciplines are quite similar. They suppose that the movement of positive psychology has served to highlight the similarity. According to Watts et al. (2002:299) and Richards and Bergin (2000:3) the separation and distancing that has existed between mental health professionals and religion has come to an end.

Joseph et al. (2006) evaluated six papers that were representative of the research in positive psychology of religion and spirituality. Their evaluation of these papers is to further the research into this topic. They are of the opinion that there is a need to investigate further on the relation between religion and psychology, the compatibility of the disciplines and their relevance and functionality in a therapeutic context. Emmons and Paloutzian (2003:378) and McCullough et al. (2000:114-115) contend that psychologists should come to an understanding of the psychological bases of religious belief, experience and behaviour, so that this knowledge can be applied for the good of people.

According to Van Rooyen and Beukes (2009:32-33) and Taylor (2001:383) the role of religion and spirituality has often been ignored by psychologists as a domain of study. The examination by positive psychology of positive states and temperament highlights the parallel in focus of religion and positive psychology. Beck (2003:28) states that future directions in research should be aimed at training psychologists in an effective and accountable manner so that they can use biblical and theological material in an informed way. Averbeck (2006:111-114), Watts et al. (2002:299) and Johnson and Jones (2000:262-263) attempt to
integrate a biblical theology foundation for psychology by specifying the following goals for Christians working within the field of psychology:

1. Christians should work towards an accredited body of knowledge within the broader field of psychology consistent with high standards of psychological research and knowledge

2. Christians should work toward a uniquely Christian understanding of the general field of psychology and counselling that would lead to a therapeutic approach that is increasingly consistent with scripture and Christian belief

1.1.4 Possible misuse of spirituality in practice

Miller and Thoresen (2003:33) voice their concerns regarding possible misuse of spirituality in practice. They point out the dangers of coercion of patients by practitioners because of the powerful position that they may have in a client's life, the possibility of invasion of privacy of the client's spiritual needs and the threat of religious discrimination due to the imposing views from the professional.
1.1.5 Contribution to fields of study

This research aims to contribute empirical evidence to the fields of Christian psychology and practical theology.

1.1.5.1 Christian psychology

Christian psychology is seen as a branch of psychology that adheres to the principles of Christianity. Christianity is a monotheistic religion focused on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ as presented in the Bible. The prospectus of the Institute for Christian Psychology (2010:4) defines Christian psychology as 'an approach to psychology that emphasizes a holistic approach to the scientific study of human behaviour. A holistic approach includes the critical study of human behaviour on an intra-psychological, interpersonal, socio-economic and spiritual level'.

According to Martin and Sihn (2009:71) the primary goal of Christian psychology is to help people to change within the Christian context. Johnson (2007:13-17) offers a Christian psychological proposal in which he places increased emphasis on the importance of the Bible without minimizing the value of psychological theory or training. According to him the process of psychotherapy should be focused on the glorification of God. Jesus is seen as the personification of God's wisdom (Morgan, 2003:29).

1.1.5.2 Practical theology

Practical theology covers a number of areas within the field of theology, such as evangelism, pastoral psychology, spiritual formation, pastoral theology, spiritual direction and psychology of religion. It also incorporates the theology of caring within a relationship, where Christians care for others as Christ cares for the
world and is described as the meditation of the Christian faith in modern society. Practical theology mirrors the expression by the speaker at a given period, at a given time and therefore the main focus is on constructing dialogue. Within the field of practical theology the seeking of wisdom entails an active participation of individuals and of communities, where their lives are shaped by who God is (Ford, 2003:4; Heitink, 1999:26; Visau, 1999:88-89; Browning, 1985:1-5).

1.2 LITERARY SEARCH

An extensive electronic search of the following databases was done at the Ferdinand Postma and the Jan Lion-Cachet Library at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus):

- ATLA – American Theological Library Association – Religious Database
- EBSCO HOST – Academic Search Elite Database
- Library Catalogue
- NEXUS DATABASE SYSTEM – Dissertations and Theses
- SCOPUS - Multi-disciplinary Articles Database
- ISI - Web of Science
- ISAP – South African Journal Articles
- SABINET – SA Cat - Publications
1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to achieve the objectives of adding to the accredited body of knowledge within the broader field of psychology and providing a wider Christian understanding of the field of psychology and counselling, the following research question was formulated:

How should practical wisdom as the executive virtue within positive psychology be evaluated from a pastoral-theological point of view?

The individual problems that will be investigated are the following:

- What scriptural perspectives are to be found on practical wisdom?
- What 'virtues' form the main elements in the theory of positive psychology?
- How may 'practical wisdom' be regarded as the 'executive virtue'?
- How can practical wisdom be proved to be applicable by way of an empirical study?
- In which way may practical wisdom as the executive virtue within positive psychology be applied in a pastoral-theological paradigm?
1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The rationale of the proposed research is to suggest possible guidelines to equip Christian psychologists with an effective and valid methodology to treat clients within the framework of positive psychology, using the guidelines of wisdom as an executive virtue. In order to attain a valid methodology, the researcher will endeavour to reach the following objectives:

- to investigate and clarify the scriptural perspectives found on practical wisdom on the Old and New Testaments;
- to investigate how positive psychology defines and explains the main virtues in the theory;
- to investigate how practical wisdom can be used as an 'executive' virtue;
- to investigate how practical wisdom can be applied by way of an empirical study in order to incorporate it into a valid theory so that Christians can have the benefit of relevant psychological theory practiced within boundaries of Christian faith;
- to propose a counselling model founded on the theoretical principles of positive psychology that can be effectively defended and integrated from a balanced biblical point of view.

The manner in which these objectives will be pursued and applied in this study will be discussed in section 1.6.

1.5 CENTRAL THEORETICAL STATEMENT

Practical wisdom as an executive virtue within positive psychology may be applied in a pastoral-theological paradigm.
1.6 METHODOLOGY

1.6.1 Model of Lotter

The model of Lotter (2007) consists of three dimensions: Scriptural perspectives, the context and the pastoral-theological model. In the model it is proposed that the scriptural perspectives attained through exegesis will have an influence on the context of the proposed study, on the empirical aspects of the study undertaken and the literature that will be used. These scriptural perspectives will impact on the proposed theological model. The context of the study, the literature and the empirical study will also have an effect on the scriptural perspectives. It is in the reciprocity and inter-connectedness of the process that the pastoral-theological theory is accomplished.

![Diagram of Model of Lotter](image)

**Figure 1**: The model of Lotter (2007:4)

Within the field of practical theology the research models of Heitink and Zerfass were evaluated, and it was found that the categories of Lotter's model do correspond to those of Zerfass, but the model of Lotter (2007) was decided upon as the most applicable to this investigation. (Unfortunately the theoretical
framework of Lotter has not been described further and it is applied as it appeared in 2007).

1.6.2 Model of Heitink

Heitink's model is applicable to the study of practical theology and consists of three circular processes that are interrelated and depend on one another. The hermeneutical process aims to understand and identify the individual(s) being studied within a specific context. Their behaviour is evaluated in terms of motivation and content. The hermeneutical perspective is developed by a literature study, supported by recognized exegesis principles. The empirical process is achieved by qualitative or quantitative research methodology. The regulative process provides the opportunity to incorporate the empirical evidence and the hermeneutical deductions into a new perspective (Heitink, 1993:160-212).

![Figure 2: The model of Heitink (1999)](image-url)
1.6.3 Model of Zerfass

The model of Zerfass was developed for the field of practical theology. Basis theory is developed from the theological traditions and then the meta-theory is developed from relevant fields of study. These two fields of theory interplay with the goal of developing practice theory (Heyns & Pieterse, 1998:38-39; Zerfass, 1974:166).

Figure 3: Model of Zerfass (Heyns & Pieterse, 1998:37)
1.6.4 Other technical aspects

- The thesis will be submitted in article format, comprising five articles.

- The articles comply with the requirements for an article according to the journals *Practical Theology in South Africa* and *Koers*.

- In this study, when referring to a Christian or a believer, the personal pronoun 'he' or the possessive pronoun 'his' is used, but the researcher refers to both genders and vice versa.

- The term 'client' refers to the participant in the investigation who was receiving psychotherapy.

- The term 'therapist' or 'psychologist' refers to the researcher who offered the psychotherapy during the investigation.

- The psychologist and the clients are Christians.

- All references to the Bible were quoted from The New International Version (NIV), unless indicated otherwise.

- The abbreviations for the books of the Bible were used as they appear in the NIV.
1.7 DIVISION OF RESEARCH REPORT

CHAPTER 1
Introduction, problem statement and aims

CHAPTER 2
ARTICLE 1: Basis-theoretical applications of practical wisdom from Old Testament perspectives

CHAPTER 3
ARTICLE 2: Basis-theoretical perspectives from the New Testament on practical wisdom as found in the Sermon on the Mount.

CHAPTER 4
ARTICLE 3: Meta-theoretical perspectives on the virtue of practical wisdom

CHAPTER 5
ARTICLE 4: Meta-theoretical perspectives on the virtue of practical wisdom by means of an empirical investigation

CHAPTER 6
ARTICLE 5: Pastoral-theological perspectives on applying practical wisdom as foundational virtue within the framework of positive psychology

CHAPTER 7
Summary and collected inference of preliminary conclusions, final conclusions and suggested topics for further research
1.8 REFERENCES


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY CONCEPTS</th>
<th>KERNBEGRIPPE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive psychology</td>
<td>Positiewe sielkunde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>Lewensgeluk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical wisdom</td>
<td>Praktiese wysheid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>Hoop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral theology</td>
<td>Pastorale teologie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtues</td>
<td>Deugde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology of wisdom</td>
<td>Psigologie van wysheid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 2
(ARTICLE 1)
Basis-theoretical applications of practical wisdom from Old Testament perspectives

ABSTRACT

The literature review on wisdom principles found in the Old Testament reveals that biblical wisdom must be applied to day-to-day living in order for a person to lead a successful and happy life. Wisdom sets out to inspire and instruct the reader in the qualities that lead to life – the complete, joyous life of a person characterized by being modest, conscientious, wise, in control of emotions, devoted to relationships, kind-hearted and God-fearing. Wisdom is seen to inspire behaviour. According to King Solomon, wisdom gives structure to a person’s life when individuals understand their place in the world. Wisdom is closely connected to the order that God has selected for the world. In order for teachings regarding wisdom to be accepted, belief in God is a pre-requisite. Wisdom is seen as originating from God. A daily connectedness with God is needed to establish and maintain a relationship of wisdom with God. God is honoured as Creator by actively living according to his values and order. At the heart of wisdom is caring love. The universal offer of wisdom is supported by love. The understanding that wisdom is available to all people is an important insight gained from the literature on wisdom in the Old Testament.
OPSOMMING

Die literatuuroorsig oor wysheidsbeginsels in die Ou Testament dui daarop dat Bybelse wysheid 'n voorvereiste is vir geluk en tevredenheid in die alledaagse lewe. Die persoon verkry inspirasie vanuit die kennis van wysheid en gebruik hierdie kennis om deugde soos vreugde, beheersde emosies, goeie verhoudings, beskeidenheid en 'n Godvresende houding te ontwikkel. Wysheid inspireer gedrag. Volgens koning Salomo verskaf wysheid struktuur aan die persoon se lewe wanneer die persoon sy posisie in die lewe verstaan. Wysheid staan in noue verbintenis tot die orde wat God vir die wêreld geskep het. Die geloof in God is die voorwaarde vir die aanvaarding van die wysheidsbeginsels. God is die bron van alle wysheid. 'n Daaglikse, noue verbondenheid met God is noodsaaklik om 'n verhouding van wysheid met Hom te kweek en te onderhou. Deur meetbaar volgens God se waarde en orde te leef, word Hy geëer as die Skepper. Liefde is die kern van wysheid en word onderhou deur die beginsels van liefde. Wysheid is beskikbaar vir alle mense.
2.1 INTRODUCTION

The objective of this chapter is to determine whether the use of biblical wisdom, as found in the Old Testament, can be applied to achieve a level of successful living within a valid process in psychotherapy. The most apparent concepts of wisdom will be evaluated for the purpose of determining the validity of their application to a psychotherapeutic process.

The basis theory refers to the scriptural perspectives that are part of the model proposed by Lotter (2007). The findings from the scriptural perspectives will influence the context and empirical study and will have an influence on the pastoral-theological model that will eventually be proposed.

Figure 1: Lotter (2007:4)
2.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

2.2.1 Background

The wisdom literature of the Old Testament is directed at the search for truth in terms of the questions of life. The exploration will be focussed on the particular ways in which the Christian faith can provide guidance and motivation in modern everyday life.

The chapter will consist of a historical literary study, focusing on the biblical text. The researcher would like to achieve an articulation of the biblical text, in the same way as Branick (2006:69), in order to show the reader how to connect with the wisdom in a realistic and time-appropriate way in order to enable the reader to apply the wisdom literature to current life and times in a valid manner.

There are three important understandings of wisdom literature, as indicated by Werpehowski (2007:59-60) and Perdue (1994:34), that are pertinent here:

- Wisdom literature is rooted in the creation of the universe and of humankind.
- Wisdom literature supports the universal belief that faith and ethics are needed in the world.
- Wisdom literature exposes the one-sided emphasis on male metaphors in the Old Testament.

Early wisdom literature in the Old Testament deals explicitly with ethical instruction. Applying these teachings to current times requires from the reader to connect modern times to the social structures of the times during which these teachings were written down. Wisdom is considered to be the ethics of knowledge, integrating what people are with what they know. Wisdom is considered the highest virtue in Hebrew culture (Park, 2009:456; Du Toit, 2005:132; Martin & Martinez de Pison, 2005:163; Tanzer, 2005:42; Whybray,
According to Anstey (2009:607), Dyas and Hughes (2005:83) and Peterson (1980:79) the modern day pastor and counsellor should apply these teachings in ministry by educating people to use what they know of God's approach in daily habits and customs. Johnson (2003:86) sees the role of the counsellor as being a source to reveal to the client who God is. The counsellor 'eventually can become the bridge for more direct work with God'.

2.2.2 Problem statement

The wisdom elements in the Old Testament can be used as applications in a legitimate and appropriate process of psychotherapy.

2.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The wisdom literature of the Old Testament originates from the Hebrew Bible and the Jewish-Greek Bible. It is recognized by its characteristic genre and comprises Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Book of Wisdom and the Book of Sirach, as well as certain psalms (Crenshaw, 2009:42; Sanders, 2007:297-298; Branick, 2006:70; Osborne, 2006:242; Sparks, 2005:56; Whybray, 2005:12; Waltke & Diewert, 1999:295; Rogerson & Davies, 1998:293). The corpus of wisdom literature has its roots in a number of cultures. It is without a doubt Near Eastern in nature, exposing a combination of Hebrew, Egyptian, Canaanite and possibly Sumerian customs (Sanders, 2005:263-264; Tiede, 2005:374; Harris, 2002:64-65). Wisdom, in these traditions, encompasses a relationship with God as well as aspects of conscious daily experiences on an individual basis and within groups (Averbeck, 2006:122; Du Toit, 2005:132; Takahashi & Bordia, 2000:2).
Johnson (2009:65), Branick (2006:70) and Deane-Drummond (2006:22) state that these wisdom writings petition to human life rather than to revelation, reflecting on day-to-day living. Its innermost theme is accomplishment in life. The *mashal* or comparison shows itself to be the standard form by which this teaching was articulated and taught. In its simplest form the comparison consists of a two-line proverb, a short, condensed statement that encapsulates a fascinating facet of life. In more complex varieties, the comparison consists of an instruction often spoken to by a teacher to a student, sometimes as an illustration or a consideration. Deane-Drummond (2006:22) and Wendland (2002:506) (see also Proverbs 1:2) emphasize that Israelite wisdom was not seen to be one element in daily living, but was evaluated as a comprehensive teaching method pertaining to life in general. Wisdom is attained through experience in life, traditional teaching by elders, or Godly inspiration. Wisdom is given to all by God (Whybray, 2005:198).

Wisdom is treated as an all-encompassing ethical code for life. Davis (2009:267), Fox (2007:670), Tiede (2005:376) and Nel (2002:437) (see also Proverbs 30:24-28) maintain that wisdom is attained by observing and experiencing life through contact with nature, other people and engaging in society. All these sectors of life add to the knowledge a person needs to live successfully by applying wisdom and discipline.

Wisdom sets out to inspire and instruct the reader in the qualities that lead to life – the complete, joyous life of a person characterized by being modest, conscientious, wise, in control of emotions, devoted in relationships, kind-hearted and God-fearing. The person who has wisdom would therefore display the ability to love, be loved and to live an emotionally mature life where there is knowledge of God and knowledge of self (Johnson, 2007:72; Deane-Drummond, 2006:23; Johnson, 2003:78; Ceresko, 1999:5) (see also Proverbs 4:10). This idea of emotionally mature behaviour is often the focus of therapeutic intervention and therefore wisdom should be considered as an effective tool in the attainment thereof.
When evaluating behavioural issues, wisdom provides an effective outline for consideration and rational trepidation. In order for uncertainty and puzzlement to end, wisdom teaching requires that priorities be established before choices can be made. The mere implementation of conventional rules and the reinforcement of established prejudices need to be replaced by a wider understanding. The promotion of human happiness opens the door to the exploration of the ultimate meaning and goals in the lives of its readers. The Bible certainly provides an important reference for the contemporary challenges of modern Christians (Martin & Sihn, 2009:71; De Vries-Schot et al., 2008:89-91; Johnson, 2007:13; Day et al., 1995:286). The insight that is achieved through the process of evaluating a wider base of knowledge and understanding, can, in essence, be supported by wisdom teachings taken from the Old Testament to identify contemporary values and principles and be used in counselling and the therapeutic practice.

Wisdom is the perpetuation of societal customs, mores and principles. Wisdom can be seen as basic common sense, which is part of the natural, God-given order of life and is normally not questioned. Proverbs provides us with the idea that God supports wisdom in an absolute way. Therefore, all wisdom begins with fear (see paragraph 2.4.2) and acceptance of dependence on God (Anstey, 2009: 606-608; Wilson, 2009:109; Deane-Drummond, 2006:23; Osborne, 2006:244; Viviers, 2005:883-884) (see also Proverbs 1:7). Wisdom can be evaluated as a gift that comes with responsibility. Wisdom is a virtue that should be spread to many people so that all people should observe it well, for the sole reason that wisdom symbolizes the order God destined for creation.

This knowledge is therefore only accessible to the wise within the context of the 'fear of the Lord'. Understanding that this is the beginning of true wisdom, the individual can accept wisdom's challenges. The way of wisdom ultimately leads to life and to deliverance for the wise (Anstey, 2009:606-608; Roberts, 2009:9; Deane-Drummond, 2006:23; Nel, 2002:444) (see also Proverbs 4:10-27). A life of emotional maturity can therefore be seen as a life where insight into values
that determine choices of wisdom will lead to the individualized motivation for Godly order.

According to Walton and Hill (2004:315) Old Testament wisdom literature covers the entire field of wisdom in the following defined areas:

1. Psalms : Relationship with God
2. Proverbs : Society and family
3. Song of Songs : Love and sex
4. Ecclesiastes : Meaning of life
5. Job : Moral structure

From the body of research it is seen that wisdom literature in the Old Testament has a variety of angles that pushes the reader to develop an integrated worldview, with God at its core. Within this God-centred wisdom (Ford, 2003:10) core wisdom elements will now be discussed as a guide to greater understanding of the concept of Old Testament wisdom.

2.4 BODY OF RESEARCH

2.4.1 'Positive' wisdom literature

Proverbs is one example of positive wisdom literature. In these writings we find the uncomplicated instruction that if you want to thrive in life, you should aim to be a fine individual. Accomplishment of your goals will follow. Proverbs educate the reader in simple terms that there is a comprehensible and obvious connection between present action and future results (Branick, 2006:73; Davies & Rogerson, 2005:188; Joyce, 2003:100-101; Young, 2003:102-103) (see also Proverbs 12:19). The principal objective of wisdom texts is therefore *instructional*, in that the writers seek to keep knowledge and insight alive from one generation to the next (Sparks, 2008:284; Deane-Drummond, 2006:22-23;
Wisdom can be seen as knowledge that is gained and conclusions reached by experience and observation. Wisdom becomes an act to arrange these results from observation and experience into a whole, so that man can discover successful living in the world (Park, 2009:457; Nel, 2002:443) (see also Proverbs 1:2-6). The instruction that the wise person adheres to, becomes the determining factor in the goal that will be reached and by living these rules practically and visibly, the next generation will have a clear view of practical wisdom by the example set by the previous generation.

Deane-Drummond (2006:22-24) and Nel (2002:443) (see also Proverbs 3:25) state that the knowledge of discovering successful living is considered of high value for those who manage to attain it as they are considered not only wise, but also righteous and principled. This realization saves the wise from destruction, where the absence of such insight leads to loss and desolation. The true value of wisdom is seen when it becomes apparent that this knowledge is the means by which God himself determines the limitations of his creation. With God there has always been ultimate knowledge, certainly prior to the act of creation. In the final analysis, wisdom is the order that passes through the entire universe. One can then assume that knowledge is attained by the wise. The wise has the ability to access this knowledge. Through observation and experience, the wise are able to experience the insight into wisdom. Wisdom can therefore be taught, one can be coached in wisdom and wisdom can be observed attentively. According to Deane-Drummond (2006:23) and Wendland (2002:508-509) (see also Proverbs 8:5) individuals who defy wisdom teaching are not considered fools because of an intellectual deficit, but rather as a result of their rebellious attitudes and unwise choices that lead them to take conscious decisions that contravene the norms given by God. They choose to serve their own ends (Pr 13:19, 14:16, and 15:20-21). By acting in pride they not only damage and devastate their own lives, but often also the lives of people who come in contact with them (Pr 13:20, 18:6-7, 20:3, 27:3). Wisdom is found in the order of the universe and the wise can access the wisdom by submitting to this order. In understanding the
analogies that are provided in the Old Testament regarding wisdom, the reader can select behaviour that he has been guided or coached in and wise behaviour will produce the desired effect of successful day-to-day living.

In the first nine chapters of Proverbs we find a personification of wisdom as Lady Wisdom. The reader is directed by her in the way of life and she can be seen as shaping the lives of the readers. Wisdom is presented as a person and is therefore instructing the living. This instruction, served as wisdom, only becomes measurable reality when actively lived by people (Viviers, 2005:879-888). According to Deane-Drummond (2006:22-23), Du Toit (2005:141), Martin and Martinez de Pison (2005:165), Sinnott (2005:65) and Weeks (1994:76) (see also Proverbs 1) wisdom is applied in daily life with intelligence, good judgment and skill. Wisdom is not only to the province men, but women also possess it and is associated with it throughout the Old Testament.

Thus, by using the wisdom teachings in a practical way in everyday life, the knowledge that transpires from this deliberate action, takes the individually attained knowledge into the public arena of life where others can observe and learn from it. Deane-Drummond (2006:23), Viviers (2005:882-884) and Sinnott (2005:1) (see also Proverbs 8) maintain that wisdom is characterized as a figure in the public domain. The gateways of cities in Old Testament times were the places where people congregated to speak and plan life. Here they deliberated on justice and the safety and the happiness of the people living in the city. Within this cultural context, Wisdom makes her call at the city gate. Here she moves with great ease and impact. Her message has a serious undertone and her communication style is bold and zealous. She commands the people to understand what she is saying. She refers to the wholeness of the body in order to achieve the healing of the entire body. This knowledge is open to all and is not necessarily considered to be based on religious opinions. The wisdom of God is displayed in day-to-day living where people are dealing with the demands of health, relationships and community and people are confronted with basic choices that have to be made. Wisdom requires obedience to God and the
refusal to obey God is seen as foolishness. Wisdom that is discussed openly can resemble common sense and is seen as the order of life and would not normally be challenged.

These public choices that align the reader with the will of God, introduce the person to the reality of correct positioning in relationship to God. The fear of God is a theme in the wisdom literature of Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes within the context of retribution (see Job 1:9; 2:3; 4:6; 22:4; Proverbs 10:27-32; 14:26-27; 22:3-6; 28:14; Ecclesiastes 7:18; 8:11-13). God's reckoning is regarded as blessing and judgment. In Job and Ecclesiastes the expectation is communicated that the fear of God will ensure blessing, but it is clear that the fear of God is also a necessity for the correct quality of relationship with God, with the blessing being the glorification of God's name (Anstey, 2009:606-608; Torrance, 2009:127; Sinnott, 2005:77; Coetzee & Van Deventer, 2004:509-510).

Wilson (2009:109), Nel (2002:440) and Johnson and Jones (2000:262) note that 'fear of the Lord' appears on many occasions in wisdom literature to emphasize the limitations of human wisdom and to show God as the definitive regulator of wisdom. God places limits on the attempts of man to be wise. Man's intelligence is recognized as a gift from God and should be practised within the limits of subordination to God (Whybray, 2005:5). Man's knowledge is curbed by his limited understanding and acceptance of his relative position to God. For that reason, appropriate humility and reverence for God's position in relation to man's position, become prerequisites for access to the wisdom that can be received from God. Consequently, the incorrect position that follows an arrogant attitude will lead to the absence of wisdom in a person's life.
2.4.2 The fear of God

If it is proposed that wisdom is rooted in the fear of God, the deduction can be made that the process of gaining knowledge originates in the fear of God (Proverbs 1:7; 9:10). One can therefore accept the evidence that real wisdom is only possible within a context of trust and belief. This does not imply that trust creates wisdom. In order to regard wisdom appropriately, we need to acknowledge the limits of wisdom and God's order as a reality. This insight can only be achieved if faith underlies one's concept of wisdom (Anstey, 2009:606-608; Charry, 2009:301; Roberts, 2009:9-10; Wilson, 2009:109; Fee, 2007:192; Ford, 2007:92; Wiebe, 2007:81; Osborne, 2006:245; Harrington, 2005:31; Edgar, 2004:88; Paffenroth, 2004:140-141; Ford, 2003:12; Hooker, 2003:118; Lucas, 2003:109; Nel, 2002:447; Waltke & Diewert, 1999:299). Hence the process of acquiring wisdom can only commence from a position of clarity in terms of belief system and trust and dependence on God, having only fear for God and being free from fearing anything else.

Wisdom is seen as an unobtrusive ally in the process of change. Wisdom brings consistency into the choices of the person who chooses to follow the instructions. Wisdom is applicable to all life situations and will address the problem and protect the outcome. The person making use of wisdom will be strengthened and guided. The effect will be one of change and transformation in the life already being lived. Wisdom demands that the reader will take an active approach in reaching the assets available. The beckoning to respond to wisdom's call is actually a call to listen to God. God's existence in the world is made known through the discovery of wisdom. This plea for knowing that God is a reality in everyday life needs to be continuous, even in times when God seems to be absent. The Old Testament sages taught that God was always present and that his presence manifested in daily life if the person would take the time to investigate and focus on God. Wisdom permeates life in a way that is not always immediately visible, but when she is found, her presence provides a safeguard for the steps of life. It becomes the challenge to detect and want Sophia – the
Greek for wisdom that is a fundamental premise in Hellenistic philosophy and religion, as well as Christian mysticism referring to the theological notion concerning the wisdom of God – for who she is and what she can do, and how she can do it (Hirst, 2006:349; Arjakovsky, 2005:219-220; Deane-Drummond, 2005:221-222; Harrington, 2005:47; Tataryn, 2005:206-208; Green, 2003:54). When the process of actively seeking wisdom starts for the individual, God is found to be ever-present, in all circumstances. This cognitive awareness creates the possibility for personal growth and development of the person.

The cognition that there are difficult choices to be made arrives when man refuses to accept God's gift of intimacy that is available through wisdom. The polarities that are warned against in the wisdom teachings cause internal conflict with the reader who starts to see the effects of disobedience to these teachings. The emphasis for the obedient is to see and focus on the possibility of transformation that cannot be missed. The disobedient can have a moment of insight when they see the results, but remorse is certainly not repentance, and knowledge does not lead to a guaranteed change of heart (Arjakovsky, 2005:221-222; Francis et al., 2003:274-275; Green, 2003:60-61). When man comes into the correct position with God and accepts God's intentions, he can begin to accept his shortcomings and start to learn from history and personal experience.

2.4.3 Ben Sira

According to Nickelsburg (2005:23), Sanders (2005:273), Paffenroth (2004:3-6), Lucas (2003:113), Venter (2002:480-481) and Rogerson and Davies (1998:306-307) Ben Sira fits into the wisdom tradition. It is positioned halfway between the traditional experiential knowledge of Proverbs, the essential suggestions of Job and the Hellenistic-inclined composition of the Wisdom of Solomon. Ben Sira uses Israel's history as a source of wisdom and teaching. The ideas of the prophets were often employed by him. Isaiah is used most often of all the
prophets because he combined the imperfection and weakness of human experience and worldly wisdom with the concept that creation and the history of the world is manifested as God's universal wisdom. Isaiah brings wisdom in relation to the Law of Moses and equates wisdom with Israel's revered story. He progresses in the type of wisdom found in Proverbs, simultaneously bringing it into intimate connection with Torah-based wisdom taught by teachers in Leviticus.

Ben Sira synchronizes wisdom and Law in such a way that the Torah can be comprehended as the gradual development of heavenly wisdom (McGuckin, 2007:433; Sanders, 2007:300; Davies & Rogerson, 2005:194-195; Harrington, 2005:40, 43; Wright, 2005:89-92; Rogers, 2004:119; Dell, 2002:121-122; Venter, 2002:482). In essence then 'all wisdom is the fear of the Lord and includes the fulfilling of the law' (Ben Sira, 19:20). This insight means that the person can now start moving along the path towards Godly wisdom by having an awareness of God's supreme position in his life and for that reason be motivated to follow the instructions of the law, which include self-control over one's passions.

### 2.4.4 Wisdom's female personality

Wisdom has a striking, female personality and is considered as the most arresting personification in the Bible (Pr 2:10-15). She has a happy and cheerful disposition and uses this to share with the reader a lifestyle that is characterized by joy, an encouraging attitude and a positive outlook on life. The key word in these verses is _pleasant_ and explains how wisdom becomes part of the individual's emotional thought process. It has to do with the fortification Wisdom provides against malevolence. Wisdom's personality is directed at winning her way into the heart of an individual, so that the person can have the benefits listed in the following verses: protection (11), guarding (11) and saving (12). Verse 15 indicates the more negative elements in life. Following these guidelines leads to thriving of the self, family and community (Charry, 2009:300; Dell, 2009:229;

Sin is seen as manifested in foolishness and sloth. People have the capacity to do grave harm to each other and then even have a delight in their actions. When the heart of the person is saturated with wisdom and the intellect and moral development is permeated by it, the context and content of life is pleasant. Harmony develops between the person's soul and God's design, and the individual's being is affirmed. Wisdom leads to well-being; it removes the harshness of the world, and provides safety under the protection of God. The concept of accepting wisdom into your heart implies that the person will be in touch with God, will have an awareness of the correct way of living and will follow the instruction given by God. The result of the assimilation of wisdom into the heart is that it produces the sense of security, safety, liberation from bondage and hope which enables us to feel good in God's presence and in God's world. In Genesis 1 we read that God was satisfied that the whole created order and the creation called man, was good (Deusterman, 2010:138; Dell, 2006:413; Deane-Drummond, 2005:217-221; Atkinson, 1996:34-35). The emotional thought pattern of the wise person is thus structured towards the elements that bring harmony and happiness into daily life.

Wisdom is a woman who rejoices over her life (Pr 3:13-18). Proverbs includes this aspect of celebration, even of worship, which indicates that life is meant to be lived in completeness, with wisdom directing the effort. When wisdom is found, blessing can be expected. The incentives to search for Wisdom are clear: a long life (verse 16), riches and honour (verse 16), pleasant ways (verse 17), peace (verse 17) and a happy or a long life (verse 18). This tribute to wisdom found in this section reminds us of Job 28. The wisdom of God himself is at the core of the teaching. Wisdom is compared to a tree which produces life (verse 18). According to Proverbs 3 the fruit of the tree nourishes, brings happiness and exalts those who find it. Life should have high value and should be celebrated. Wisdom indicates that peace, wholeness, health, connectedness,
not only in our inner heart, but also in our outer network of relationships in the world, should be the main focus of life (Wiebe, 2007:96-97; Deane-Drummond, 2005:217-221; Atkinson, 1996:35-37). As the person becomes aware of the need for personal wholeness, a need for wisdom is created. The process of uncovering God’s wisdom in his life will demand attention to Scripture and measurable results to keep motivation for growing strong.

Wisdom is seen as originating from God. Lady Wisdom is therefore seen as being one with God and she should be acknowledged as God is acknowledged. What is offered by Lady Wisdom should be seen as being offered by God. The acceptance of this offering of wisdom is demanded and rewarded by God. These gifts are for all to enjoy, except those who are foolish and refuse them (McGuckin, 2007:429; Wiebe, 2007:98; Viviers, 2005:884). It is through the active process of growth that the person can discover that the rewards for wise choices are available to all mankind.

2.4.5 Wisdom and structure

According to Solomon, wisdom gives structure to a person's life when the individual understands his place in the world. A person should know where they fit into life and should know how to act appropriately. This is why Solomon learnt the names of the trees, animals, birds, reptiles and fish, indicating that the sages of Israel lived close to the natural world (I Kings 4:33). The wisdom found in Proverbs is also a practical wisdom that is optimistic and positive in outlook. The person can be happy and successful if the rules and instructions are followed. People of all levels of society can therefore be optimistic about human life, their potential as individuals and the possibilities for happiness (Park, 2009:457; Whitwell, 2009:82; Cox, 2007:67-68). Wisdom is, however, not about getting the right answer, but about probing for the possible response amid the contradictions of life (McGuckin, 2007:430; Branick, 2006:70). The ultimate value of wisdom lies in the religious context from within which it operates. The teaching of
Wisdom is instruction to promote trust, and trust is the beginning of wisdom. Wisdom instructs the kind of life that will lead to the fulfilment of the life that God has intended (Averbeck, 2006:122; Nel, 2002:447-448). The wisdom teachings of the Old Testament were communicated within the sphere of a specific religious context and this context frames the value of the wisdom for the contemporary reader. So, from this perspective, it is deduced that the analysis of life’s challenges can lead to the discovery of an optimistic and positive approach to the possibilities of happiness in daily living.

These observations and experiences will lead the individual to discipline, tact and self-control when evaluating their communication style. Communication is essential to attain an ordered and successful lifestyle. It is not only the content of communication that needs to be wise, but also the form of expression that is essential. The timing of an utterance should also indicate wisdom. What is said, how it is said and when it is said determines whether it will lead to being a guide to a lifestyle of wisdom, where wisdom encourages synchronization between God and humanity (Fox, 2007:679; McGuckin, 2007:434; Wendland, 2002:508). It is through the expression of wisdom in behaviour that the person can determine whether the choices that he is making can be considered wise. Only behaviour can lead to feedback, growth and further investigation.

Park (2009:457), Lang (2002:27) and Pyper (1993:25) indicate that ordinary people can triumph over their limitations in reasoning, intuition and perception by using the principles of wisdom. It can be used effectively to reduce anxiety by empowering the individual in analysis of other people's motives and behaviour towards them. McGuckin (2007:429-430), Lucas (2003:112) and Wendland (2002:507) are of the opinion that traditional Hebrew doctrine of wisdom is affirmative in its analysis of whether retribution really works and whether it is really possible for humans to understand the orderly purpose of God in the universe. People were encouraged to carefully observe the world, to experience and reflect on the order in God's perfect plan. Wisdom, which is expected to bring advantages into one's life (Pr 3:13-18), was achieved by cognitive study.
and intensified through committed individual study, insightful judgment, and the
dutiful commitment in interpersonal relationships to be virtuous and honourable
(Pr 1:1-6; 2:7-11). As a result of applying these wisdom principles, the limits
posed by human nature can be overcome effectively. This internal and external
process of change is measurable for the person who chooses to respond to
God's call.

2.4.6 Wisdom and justice

Wisdom includes a strong element of justice. In order to follow the route of
wisdom, justice must play an important role. The underlying theory of justice is
found in detail later in the book of Proverbs. In the first nine chapters of the book
the route of justice is identified as wisdom. The most basic and constant
characteristic of the just is that they both choose for Sophia and are chosen by
her. By this, God's justice becomes one with his righteousness and kindness, his
compassion and his love and so trains people in wisdom (Park, 2009:456; Fox,
Green, 2003:55). As the person immerses himself into this activity of exploration,
incongruities in his life and being may be exposed. The awareness of these
uncomfortable insights may cause the person to re-evaluate the content and
context of his life.

2.4.7 Wisdom and order

According to Wiebe (2007:86-87), Branick (2006:75-77) and Dell (2002:108) the
book of Proverbs contain instructions on the ordered life. Human life is
constructed within a universal order, and wisdom implies order. The exploration
for order includes integrity (Pr 10:9), instruction (Pr 10:17) and good sense (Pr
13:15). The reader can choose to align himself with the divine order or choose to
go against the order of the whole. The association with the greater order implies
that the person will circumvent negative consequences in the future. The wisdom literature indicates that the order progresses from an impersonal context to a relationship with the Creator himself. Wisdom, according to Park (2009:462), Dell (2006:413), Whybray (2005:14); Lucas (2003:111), Corley et al. (2002:294), Levering (2002:19-20) and Waltke and Diewert (1999:299), is seen as the awareness and understanding of order, the precedent by which the world functions. Therefore wisdom is accessible, discoverable and teachable.

During the time of Job's struggle, he perceived a lack of order. Job believed that Yahweh would relate to him in a particular way, determined by Godly order. Job's problem was that he had an expectation of a particular type of interaction with God. Because his expectation is not met, his crisis is activated (Grant, 2003:109). This developmental move indicates the essence of the faith in a God who is loving and effective in his care. There are three main ideas in the wisdom psalms, namely the Law of Yahweh, the fear of Yahweh and reckoning. There is a valid relationship between these themes. This relationship infers that in order to ensure well-being, humans have to fear Yahweh by abiding to his Law. The reward from Yahweh is received as a blessing for the correct choices in good behaviour. The interrelating factor in this logical association is the order in the universe, which was fashioned and is preserved by Yahweh. By choosing to live according to wisdom instruction, people can find their place in the order of the created universe, and thereby attain a secure life in God (Edgar, 2004:85; Bauckman, 2003:137-138; Groenewald, 2002:668). Thus the need for a secure and happy life lies in the acknowledgement of the need for order, created by God for successful living in his universe. The acceptance and adherence to his order takes the person into his design for personal happiness. As Christians start to employ wisdom thinking, they are also able to celebrate and enjoy life.
2.4.8 Wisdom and the design of creation

Wisdom demonstrates the design of creation (Pr 3: 19-20). God the Creator is the originator of true wisdom. The theme of God the Creator is the most evident in Proverbs. Wisdom itself is seen as the structured assumption of creation itself (Whitwell, 2010:95; Jenkins, 2008:110; McIntosh, 2008:29; Fee, 2007:17; Ford, 2007:56; Waltke, 2007:206-207; Deane-Drummond, 2006:25-26; Osborne, 2006:246; Weeks, 2006:433; Hooker, 2003:119; Dell, 2002:119; Atkinson, 1996:44). According to Grant (2003:111) the wisdom writers of the Old Testament were Israelites through and through. They acknowledged the prophetically revealed word of God. In their approach in the wisdom literature, they looked at man and his choices in the world at large, making their writings applicable to and appropriate for successful living. Goff (2009:380), Deane-Drummond (2006:25-26), Walton and Hill (2004:318-319), Bauckman (2003:129-130) and Nel (2002:441) state that the established pattern of behaviour of wisdom indicates that wisdom is most basically linked to the order of creation and that man should have a cognition and understanding of this organized arrangement. The knowledge of wisdom can be experienced as having more than one meaning in that wisdom is transcendental, and therefore beyond human instruction, but at the same time immanent, and therefore within the reach of human understanding.

So when man’s choices lead to order, it can be expected that man and God will be involved in the subsequent measurability of wisdom that will flow from those decisions.

2.4.9 Wisdom and caring love

At the heart of wisdom is caring love. The universal offer of wisdom is supported by love and all who love wisdom and continue to seek her. The only reason for not acquiring wisdom is a lack of pursuit thereof. The rewards include riches,
honour, wealth, prosperity, righteousness and justice (Weeks, 2006:434-435; Edgar, 2004:96; Atkinson, 1996:47-48). In ancient Israel wisdom was seen as an all-inclusive evaluation the world. All of creation was seen as infused with wisdom. This pervasive way of thinking about the world was meant to reveal a lifestyle that was characterized by a set of positive individual traits – for example from Proverbs: conscientiousness (10:4), patience (14:29), modesty (11:2), prudence (8:5), generosity (19:17) and honesty (12:19). Wisdom instructed the individual to conform to accepted standards and provided them with a far-reaching perspective on life. This set of interpretations focussed on the principle that there is divinely ordained retributive justice in the world. From this viewpoint, good or evil human behaviour will unavoidably result in success or penalty in the person's lifetime. This is related to the principle of fear of the Lord, which is the essential point of reference for the entire book of Proverbs. This Yahwistic faith-style attitude guided and maintained the religious orientation of wisdom in Israel. Thought and life were guided by this view on wisdom and headed the people into the direction of safety and stability (Anstey, 2009:6-6-608; Averbeck, 2006:121; Wendland, 2002:506-507). This approach is rule-bound and emphasizes the reckoning style of the Old Testament teachings. The Old Testament also provides wisdom teachings that have a different approach.

Within the context of love, the Song of Songs is seen as wisdom literature as it instructs the wise person on coping with life within the context of love and sex. The main teaching involves keeping passion, longing and anticipation at bay until love can manifest within a situation of safe and caring love, identifiable in the relationship that God seeks with the person. It demonstrates and enlightens the reader to the many aspects of love and the dangers involved when dealing with love in a foolish manner, as demonstrated by the case of Solomon. As the person chooses to follow the course of wisdom, constraint becomes an achievable reality (Walton & Hill, 2004:314-315, 336-337; Lucas, 2003:176-178).
2.4.10 Realistic wisdom

In the Psalms we find a more realistic attitude to wisdom. This methodology is expressed in the recognition that the just and the virtuous can, in spite of their devotion to God, become victims of suffering as a result of the flawed world that we live in. But in spite of this realization the psalmists of these psalms stick to the certainty that sooner or later the wicked will receive their just punishment and the good will be rewarded. The doctrine of retribution is maintained (Averbeck, 2006:122; Groenewald, 2002:669). Nel's (2002:780) analysis of Daniel 1 shows that the Daniel narratives are part of the wisdom literature, as is the case with the Joseph and the Esther tales. The set of beliefs of reckoning, which is one of the most important themes of wisdom, is displayed in Daniel 1, indicating that his tale should be understood as wisdom. The narratives indicate that loyalty and devotion to God result in well-being for Daniel and his friends.

Wisdom has certainly developed into more than a theological code. It has become a general set of instructions against which the respected non-wisdom traditions can be assessed as a guideline for functional behaviour (Roberts, 2009:9-11; Anstey, 2009:608; Sheppard, 1980:119). Wisdom, that is part of a religion of healthy spirituality, should aid in the balance between serving the purpose of the individual and serving the purpose of the group or community by prescribing action in particular context. Wisdom entails far more than effective life management, but requires effectual community involvement (Charry, 2009:298-301; Scheffler, 2004:787).

The Old Testament viewed the wise man or sage as an equal of the priest and prophet (Jer. 18:18). To live in wisdom, man needs the guidance of the priest, the prophet and the sage. Wisdom was the principled direction given by the law in the Old Testament and the role of the sage was seen as a major part of God's ministry to Israel. The role of the wise counsellor should not be underestimated, but should have great significance (Park, 2009:457; Fox, 2007:670; Johnson, 1995:185-186). It is within this context as counsellor that a significant impact can
be achieved in teaching and conveying the message of practical wisdom for contemporary living.

Wisdom includes a wide range of teachings from experience and includes the attentive observations of nature, individual life and community. These parts of life show perceivable regularities and the outcomes and consequences of the behaviour can be predictable to a certain degree, and lead to a better life (Charry, 2009:298; Whitwell, 2009:82; Fox, 2007:670; Lucas, 2003:80; Nel, 2002:437).

2.4.11 Wisdom and the sage

Park (2009:457), Charry (2009:296-298) and Johnson (1995:196-198) indicate that the Old Testament sage fulfilled the following roles:

- Searching for wisdom. The sages had a great passion for the search and observation of truth.
- Observing life. The sages were committed to integrating truth with practical life, studying the lives that they could observe in order to deliver the truth.
- Giving of wise council. The sages ministered the truth to the people.
- Living an ordered life. The sages lived an ordered life, as they believed that what is wise, is ordered.

Sages usually claim to have had wisdom revealed to them. They also claim to have been taught by other wise men. As a sage, Solomon uses two concepts in wisdom: the just and the ungodly. The visible and measurable change that the just achieve is precisely the result of their wise, adaptable commitment to God. The unjust are never in danger of changing, but stagnate in their own previous,
unwise choices, even if they see and hear a comprehensible and unmistakable substitute (Davis, 2009:272; Park, 2009:462; Levine, 2006:332; Green, 2003:44).

Job is portrayed as the personification of a wise man. He is irreproachable, respectable, fears God and abhors evil. As is the case with Job, the motivation for change is an internal shift, brought on by insight, and manifesting in the life situation that the person finds himself growing into. The sage demands of the authority of wisdom to direct and protect his values because human inspection of wisdom is often restricted by the workings of God. The sage has to develop skills to acquire a successful life pattern by combining practical wisdom, keeping the commandments and fearing the Lord (Ford, 2007:97; Fox, 2007:672; Du Toit, 2005:139; Harrington, 2005:52; Lucas, 2003:80).

**2.4.12 The full picture of wisdom**

In Proverbs 8 we see the full picture of wisdom. It starts with a call for attention that is detailed and comprehensive (1-11), which opens into a section on the values and advantages of following the way of wisdom (12-21), and followed by a splendid salutation of wisdom's authority as God's creational partner (22-31). The chapter ends with a final petition to attention (32-36). All humans are addressed in this call, with no exclusion on the basis of race, class, sex or tribal loyalty (Ford, 2007:56; Weeks, 2006:436; Atkinson, 1996:45-46).

Wisdom counsel and sound judgment is offered so that understanding and power, and great blessing can be put within the reach of all. The goal of a good result is guaranteed by good advice and practical teaching. Everyone has it within their power to attain this goal. In admitting that the Lord is the source of wisdom, these abilities are loosened within all who are willing to apply practical wisdom by letting go of learned behaviour and limited theoretical knowledge (Anstey, 2009:607; Wilson, 2009:109; Pinker, 2008:190; Averbeck, 2006:125; Weeks, 2006:437; Atkinson, 1996:46-47). ‘The fear of Yahweh is the beginning
of wisdom’, (Proverbs 1:7). Zimmerli writes that in his opinion wisdom is the artful direction that a person uses to achieve a well-lived life (cf. Grant, 2003:107). In order to achieve a well-lived life, the person must understand and accept that human knowledge and wisdom are grounded in the fear of the Lord, as Van Leeuwen comments in Grant (2003:110). Fear of God places the person in the position to acknowledge the power of God, to be motivated to be obedient to the commandments and to hate all evil. If valued highly, it is attainable by all people (Anstey, 2009:208; Waltke, 2007:914; Coetzee & Van Deventer, 2004:499). The fear of God can be seen as the basis for a relationship that an individual has with God on a daily basis (Roberts, 2009:9-11; Garrett, 1993:10).

The wisdom authors of the Old Testament not only composed the wisdom literature, their role also incorporated guidance to the kings and the encouraging and counselling of the people. Their intent was to point the people to the moral demands of biblical law. These wise men or sages were students of the Word and professional observers of life, guiding people to live within the law. In training people in the skills of the living of God's Word, the wisdom teachings provided down-to-earth, good advice (Weeks, 2006:441; Johnson, 1995:188). There are different values accompanying wisdom instruction on life, such as love, respect and obedience. The dominant value is justice. This is the most obvious virtue in wisdom as it demonstrates a commitment to orderly behaviour and a fair and impartial community. No trust is possible outside a just society. The details in wisdom literature are clear when it comes to directing the individual towards the order intended by God. In this lies the safety of the individual's choices that are guided by wisdom towards carefully chosen priorities (Charry, 2009:299; Waltke, 2007:915; Nel, 2002:448-449). The individual is the foundation of the community. If the individual person is guided by biblical wisdom in everyday life, the community will be infiltrated by wisdom principles and will stand a far better chance of being a just and fair environment.

Within the context of the wisdom literature not only the Israelites are seen as the people of God. Every person who understands who and what God really is, and
therefore has a relationship with God based on the wisdom literature, is seen as belonging to God. The fear of God opens the door to a relationship with God and a relationship with people (Anstey, 2009:606-608; Roberts, 2009:9-11; Coetzee & Van Deventer, 2004:509). The inference is then made that the obedience to and cognizance of the wisdom teachings open the connection for people to experience the loving God.

At the heart of wisdom is God. The wisdom literature guides the reader towards a complete picture of wholeness when all aspects of wisdom are addressed, and in the process God is found to be the connecting and core force behind everything.

2.5 SUMMARY

From the literature review on Old Testament wisdom it is apparent that biblical wisdom has to be applied in order to attain successful living. The most obvious of wisdom elements were explored for the purpose of a valid process in psychotherapy, and it became apparent that the roots of the wisdom teachings are measurable and traceable and therefore considered empirically correct. Wisdom informs behaviour. Wisdom is strongly connected to the order that God had selected for the world. We can correctly surmise that even today present action directly influences future results. The ultimate knowledge lies with God himself. Wisdom is practiced by the living, and is directly associated with behaviour in the here and now. People have to make basic choices regarding their lives and these choices are manifested publicly, while they are aware and acknowledging that God is the regulator of all wisdom. Without trust and belief in God these actions are not possible. In order for wisdom teaching to be accepted, belief in God is a pre-requisite. The reader has to listen to God on a daily basis, because God has an intention with the world and every person. God reveals his heavenly wisdom through obedience and trust. Then life becomes pleasant and the person can assimilate the wisdom on an emotional level. The
heart of God becomes the heart of man. A constant probing for God’s love should be evident in the person's life. Celebration of life is the result of constant seeking of the correct way to live in relation to God and the world. The person can observe life and be observed as wise. Parents then understand and act within the rules of raising children with concern, closeness and authority, helping the child to discover wisdom. Wisdom reduces anxiety and leads the individual to a just life, characterized by order. God the Creator is honoured by a life that is lived according to Godly values and Godly order. Wisdom is available to all people, so that counsel and wise judgment are made available to all.

2.6 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

From the information in the article, it is deduced that Old Testament wisdom could be used effectively to connect the individual with the teachings in a realistic way so that the person is enabled to apply the principles of Old Testament wisdom literature to everyday circumstance. The researcher will incorporate these principles into the psychotherapeutic process for the Christian client to measure the potential positive influence of Old Testament wisdom.
2.7 REFERENCES


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY CONCEPTS</th>
<th>KERNBEGRIFFE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>Wysheid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Testament</td>
<td>Ou Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief</td>
<td>Geloof</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Godly order</td>
<td>Goddelike orde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>Liefde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>Gedrag</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 3
(ARTICLE 2)

Basis-theoretical perspectives from the New Testament on practical wisdom as found in the Sermon on the Mount

ABSTRACT

This article explores the wisdom teachings of the Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon on the Mount is considered to be a manifesto for life, proclaimed by Jesus Christ himself. This article aims to delve into the wisdom elements in the Sermon on the Mount to search for applications in a valid psychotherapeutic process. The norms advocated by the Sermon on the Mount will be evaluated for everyday life. Then the commands given by Jesus Christ will be analyzed for relevance and finally there will be an investigation into which elements of life will empower Christians to comply with these warrants issued by Jesus. The communication in the Sermon on the Mount is constructed in a process where God empowers his followers to make judgments in their lives in order to be able to do his will. Making internal shifts of attitude will not be enough; the person will have to engage in a relationship with God where dependence on God is an absolute necessity. Following the order of God's world and his reign can lead to a successful life and happiness. The Beatitudes, which forms part of the Sermon on the Mount, identify virtues that are seen as the directors of behaviour to educate and empower the reader towards a more successful and balanced life.
Hierdie artikel ondersoek die wysheidsliteratuur wat voorkom in die Bergrede. Die Bergrede word beskou as 'n manifes vir die lewe wat deur Jesus Christus self geproklameer is. Die artikel beoog om te delf in die wysheidselemente van die Bergrede om te soek na geldige toepassings binne 'n psigoterapeutiese proses. Die norme wat in die Bergrede voorgehou word, word geëvalueer vir toepaslikheid in die alledaagse lewe. Die opdragte wat deur Jesus self gegee is, word beoordeel. Die moontlike elemente wat Christene motiveer om hierdie opdragte uit te voer, dui daarop dat Jesus sy volgelinge motiveer om 'n oordeel oor hulle lewe te maak en te sien dat Goddelike orde sal lei tot groter geluk en tevredenheid. Dit is slegs moontlik as daar 'n persoonlike verhouding met God gevestig is. Die persoon is dan in staat om die wil van God effektief uit te leef. Die interne veranderinge by die persoon sal nie al wees wat die gedragsverandering teweeg bring nie, maar 'n afhanklike verhouding met God is noodsaaklik. Die afhanklikheid van God is van uiterste belang in die toepassing van die orde wat God daar stel. Die saligsprekinge, wat deel is van die Bergrede, identifiseer deugde wat as die aanduiders van gedrag funksioneer en wat die mens in staat stel om gedrag effektief te rig na 'n meer suksesvolle en gebalanceerde lewe.
3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this article the wisdom teachings of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) will be explored to determine whether these teachings are applicable to a valid and responsible psychotherapeutic process with Christian clients. The researcher posed the question whether these clients would be motivated to explore the issues presented in the Sermon on the Mount as a guideline for their therapeutic interventions.

The basis theory refers to the scriptural perspectives that are part of the model proposed by Lotter (2007). The findings from the scriptural perspectives will influence the context and empirical study and will inform the pastoral-theological model that will be proposed.

Figure 1: Lotter (2007:4)
3.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

3.2.1 Background to problem statement

Foshaugen (2004:186) presents the following opinion that the researcher shares: 'Christianity is a religion where values are demanding to be actualized and thus I believe that the Sermon on the Mount can be seen as an ideological intervention in the context of an existing social practice' (italics by the researcher). The focus of this article will be on the teachings on wisdom as contained in the Sermon on the Mount, as these elements are directly addressed by Jesus Christ and made relevant to a wide context of living and a wide variety of people.

The researcher agrees with Emmet Fox (1934:1-2), in the belief that the life, death and teachings of Jesus Christ have had the most profound effect on the history of mankind. His presence and teachings have influenced mankind more than any other person in the history of the world. Seventy years later Stassen and Gushee (2003:198) agree with the opinion of Fox expressed in 1934. The Sermon on the Mount is commonly accepted as Jesus' most commended teaching, having extensive and far-reaching ethical impact, and becoming the foundational teaching in Christianity (Lundborn, 2009:440; Charry, 2005:161; Easley, 2004:33; McKnight, 2004:22). According to Osborne (2006:250) and Dell (2002:107) Jesus is identified as an astute teacher and a divine intermediary within the wisdom traditions. Jesus goes beyond the limited boundaries of Old Testament law and Old Testament wisdom to teach within the light of the new world (Matthews, 2009:119-120; Langs, 2008:147; Corley et al. 2002:145). It would therefore make perfect sense to the researcher to explore what it is that Jesus Christ stood for and to apply the principles as contained in the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount in his daily activity as a Christian psychologist.

The purpose of this article is to explore the wisdom elements in the Sermon on the Mount to search for the applications in a legitimate and appropriate process of psychotherapy. The usability of the teachings in the Sermon on the Mount for
contemporary Christians experiencing stressful circumstances will be evaluated in terms of three questions:

1. What should Christians be doing in their daily lives?
2. Why should they be doing it?
3. How can they do what they should be doing?

These three questions will address three topics in Christian living: (Lundborn, 2009:444; Charry, 2005:162; Shore, 2002:9-10).

1. What are the norms that are advocated by the Sermon on the Mount?
2. What are the commands given by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount for successful living?
3. How will the Christian be empowered to comply with these warrants issued by Jesus?

The purpose of Scripture for the Christian is to have one's mind transformed by coming to a better understanding of what it is that God really expects of the believer. Scripture is not there to substantiate our preconceptions and biases of modern day ideologies and cultures. Most Christians today may declare a willingness to be changed from the inside, but few really see the purpose of the change to true discipleship in Christ as called for in the Sermon on the Mount. The high standards set in the sermon becomes a feasible procedure for holy living (Lundborn, 2009:445; Haverley, 2008:133; Easley, 2004:34; McKnight, 2004:23; Danaher, 2002:38). This is an awareness that the researcher would propose to cultivate within the field of Christian psychology. This awareness refers to a consciousness that the believers develop of the kind of life they should be living. Furthermore, they should be aware of changes that should take place and they should follow up on that insight by actively choosing the behaviour expected by the directive.
3.2.2 Problem statement

The wisdom elements in the Sermon on the Mount can be used as applications in a legitimate and appropriate process of psychotherapy.

3.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

3.3.1 A manifesto for life

The Sermon on the Mount is considered a manifesto for life, uttered by Jesus Christ himself. It is probably the best known of his teachings but is seldom fully understood and even more seldom obeyed. It can be seen as a summary of his own description of what He wants his followers to be and do. These instructions communicate the clear message from God that practical wisdom is grounded in the presence and power of Jesus Christ, where Jesus is personified as Wisdom of God (Moser, 2009:2; McIntosh, 2008:29; Werpehowski, 2007:60; Blomberg, 2004:3; Bockmuehl, 2003:57; Hooker, 2003:127; Morgan, 2003:28; Stott, 1978:15). Van der Walt (2007:183) states that God's grace and his blessing are mentioned first in the Sermon on the Mount. This is followed by an in-depth attention to the requested response that is needed from the reader. Thereafter examples are given of the extent of the permeation into the life of the obedient follower that is needed for successful living. Because these teachings are so seldom explored to the point of behaviour change, a renewed awareness needs to be cultivated to achieve much needed insight and growth by the world at large.

The Sermon on the Mount was addressed to a large, diverse group of people with an array of problems. It was not only intended for Jewish believers, but also for the surrounding cultures. Therefore today the message of the Sermon on the Mount is applicable to all those willing to hear the message that originates from the biblical narrative of God, Israel and Jesus, with God's faithful love for Christ at the centre (Di Luccio, 2009:350; Werpehowski, 2007:60-61; Van der Walt,
2007:11; Blomberg, 2004:3). The relevance of the message has to be advocated in appropriate contexts of learning so that people busy with their everyday life, can benefit from the teaching in the same manner as the original receivers of the message.

3.3.2 The genre of the beatitudes

Beatitudes are considered emotionally touching, to the point, prosaic, morally instructive and realistic. The beatitude genre is not limited to Jewish or Christian literature. Egyptian and Jewish wisdom literature are sources of beatitudes, they appeared in early Christian wisdom aphorisms, in other New Testament writings and also in rabbinic sources. They are commonly found in Greek writing, in poetry and philosophical wisdom. As a result, it can be stated that the genre of the beatitude is common and well within its place at the time of the New Testament. The beatitude form is used to support the quest for wisdom by presenting a short statement expressed in uncomplicated words that carries a weighty meaning (Goff, 2009:394; Bailey, 2008:65; Dear, 2008:6; Blomberg, 2004:3; Klouda, 2004:21; Betz, 1995:96).

The literary style identifiable in the Sermon on the Mount is suggestive of the writings initially seen in the Old Testament book of Proverbs. Many of the sayings can be classified as proverbs. Many parallelisms are present, which is the main attribute of Hebrew poetry. A close association with Hebrew scripture is noticeable (Bomberg, 2004:3; Klouda, 2004:22; Tilley, 1992:16). Günther Bornkamm draws the attention to the careful construction and symmetrical order that is found in the Sermon on the Mount (cf. Stassen, 2003:267). According to Bornkamm, Matthew encourages the reader to investigate the unresolved matters addressed in the Sermon on the Mount. This directive to delve deeper into the issues that are discussed so clearly by Jesus Christ is what is needed to attain the courage to develop the awareness within the individual, as discussed earlier.
Betz (1995:93) provides a critical analysis of the beatitudes as literary phenomenon and deduces that the following conclusions on beatitudes in general can be made:

- Their first existing purpose is in the ritual
- Their nature is that of public announcement
- The point of reference is future orientated as well as current
- Their affiliation with ethics and morality is evident

In the tradition of wisdom some people’s choices do not meet the standard set by the law. If these people would amend their choices and apply the standards set by the law, they would see an effect of having victory over difficulties and their general well-being as individuals would increase. The Beatitudes (Mt 5: 3-12) constitute the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount and here Jesus starts to instruct the listeners and readers on the principles of a worthwhile life. Joyful participation in the supremacy of God in everyday life is the clear message. Jesus offers guidance as to the correct virtues so that the reader can be directed to follow his word. The traditional wisdom teachings do not convey the same message as these verses. The people addressed in these wisdom teachings are already in the presence of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. This is not a message of well-being and victory somewhere in the future. The wisdom communicated here is that God can actively deliver the individual from difficulty. The essence of this wisdom teaching is that the grace of God is available through Jesus Christ through repentance (Bailey, 2008:66-68; Charry, 2005:163; Blomberg, 2004:2-4; Klouda, 2004:20; Stassen & Gushee, 2003:33-34). Jesus Christ therefore opens the door for actively living a great life here and now. Because of his grace the person can experience protection from negative results if the wisdom principles are pursued and followed.
3.3.3 Jewish wisdom literature and the Beatitudes

The Beatitudes portray elements of Jewish wisdom literature. This clarifies the appearance of a large number of parallels found in the apocalyptic and rabbinic Judaism. These teachings state in one way or another that some people deserve their blessed life because of their wisdom displayed before God and other people. The Torah reveals the wisdom of divine justice and righteousness. It is in the Sermon on the Mount that the devoted follower is referred to as wise (Cherry, 2005:164; Blomberg, 2004:3; Klouda, 2004:20-22; Betz, 1995:94).

Matthew offers Jesus to the reader as the ultimate interpreter of God's will. The answers to successful living come from Jesus. An account of the words of Jesus is given by Matthew: 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me ... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you' (Mt 28:18-20). From this passage in Matthew it can be deduced that the authority to interpret scripture has been given to Jesus. His comprehension of the scriptures sheds light on the correct way to interpret the word of God (Viljoen, 2006:138; Blomberg, 2004:3; Klouda, 2004:22). So, the faithful devotee is considered wise and starts to see the effect of the wisdom when the teaching of Jesus Christ shows the way for action that will lead to a positive outcome of events.

The speaker in the Sermon on the Mount is Jesus Christ himself. Divine justice is the source of the Beatitudes. The principle of Godly justice was well known to Jesus, as He was a Jewish teacher. God's justice is the final authority on which the Beatitudes are based. This is the primary hypothesis to the Sermon on the Mount (Bailey, 2008:68-69; Blomberg, 2004:3-4; Klouda, 2004:21; Betz, 1995:94-95). As the disciple of the teaching then accepts Jesus as the authority for instruction on correct, and therefore wise, action an entry for divine justice is created in the person's life.

God's grace and the reader's joyous participation in the life He has intended, is the message of the Beatitudes. Various authors are of the opinion that too much
emphasis has been put on the virtues (poverty of spirit, purity of heart, peacemaking) and not enough emphasis on the teaching of Jesus - God's presence, his active deliverance, his deliberate sharing of the deliverance and his free gift of blessing and joy (Vanden Berg, 2009:343; Blomberg, 2004:7; Charles, 2004:53; Stassen & Gushee, 2003:35). The openness to God's presence that is a consequence of adhering and, ultimately submitting, to the instructions given by Jesus Christ, is achieved and maintained by God's grace.

### 3.3.4 The concept of participative grace

The concept of participative grace is the key to understanding and internalizing the teaching of Jesus in his wisdom commands in the Sermon on the Mount. It differs from Old Testament teaching where the law and adherence to the law were the centre of the command. In the New Testament the primary focus is to urge the reader to realize that Jesus Christ should be the centre of life. Jesus never contradicts the Old Testament law, but seeks to strengthen, alter, correct or surpass old knowledge. Success and well-being will be the result of personalizing this teaching. A sense of empowerment is achieved when God actively delivers a person and the Holy Spirit gains access to the person's being. The Beatitudes describe this act of grace where the reader is provided with an insight into the way that Jesus says life should happen in the New Testament. This grace is received as a gift from God, through Jesus Christ and is not based on works that will ensure entry into God's kingdom (Vanden Berg, 2009:345; Klouda, 2004:28; Stassen & Gushee, 2003:35-37). This personalized experience of connection with the Holy Spirit allows the internal experience of God's grace to become measurable and visible for the person involved in active obedience. Jesus Christ is the focus and therefore the activator of the behaviour through grace.

The experience of God's reign brings blessing into the life of the obedient and enables them to have more of it in their future. God's gracious deliverance is the
theme in each of the Beatitudes, which begins with the joy, the happiness, the blessedness of this good news and ending by pointing to the reality of God's coming supremacy and sovereign rule. Jesus himself is the realisation of this knowledge. God's grace and deliverance, justice and righteousness, peace and presence are the highest standard and are supreme over any behaviour or virtue. God's wisdom certainly includes virtuous living, but virtues cannot be seen as the way to attain God's grace. They are a way of taking part in that gracious deliverance (Vanden Berg, 2009:343; Bailey, 2008:87; Stassen & Gushee, 2003:37). An inner righteousness is the requirement from God and therefore the key verse spoken by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount is that the reader's righteousness has to be essentially different in quality – who the person is, is more important than what the person does. The righteous attitude will inspire righteous acting (Mt 5:20), which is what the Sermon on the Mount portrays in essence as wisdom (Bailey, 2008:82-83; Bockmuehl, 2003:57; Robinson, 1991:24). Thus the person hears the teaching, makes a decision to obey by coming into awareness that he falls short, receives the Holy Spirit by grace and is able to change his attitude so that inspiration can be received for doing the right thing.

3.4 BODY OF RESEARCH

3.4.1 Focus on God

According to the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount, God is the source of all spiritual blessings and in this we should look to him. In the search for happiness the believer has to come to the realization that happiness cannot be found, it has to be received from the hand of God. The first impact that the Beatitudes have on believers is to focus their attention on God. Forgiveness of sin is the starting point for receiving blessing from God, as sin is an obstacle between man and God. Jesus introduces the person to a life of true happiness and teaches how this life can be available to all by studying the practical instructions on this
wisdom. Jesus is describing the life that He leads in the Sermon on the Mount. This example of Jesus' life is conveyed to Christians by the Holy Spirit who comes to live within them and hold their life together (Moser, 2009:9; Vanden Berg, 2009:344; Van der Walt, 2007:13; Collins, 2005:119; McKnight, 2004:23; Bockmuehl, 2003:57-58; Boice, 1972:16).

In analysis of the Sermon on the Mount it becomes clear to the readers that it is impossible for anyone to live up to the standards set by the teaching of their own accord. It should be understood that only those who accept that they cannot achieve success without the help of God, will be able to commit themselves successfully to the teaching. This is a clear repetition of what is found in the Old Testament when Moses received the law from God. The content of the Sermon on the Mount offers the reader guidance and instruction for the standard of ethical living that is demanded. Believers also had to surrender their will to God in humbleness, they had to confess their sins and make themselves available to be cleansed. A new nature in man becomes the measurable evidence of the fulfilment of the law of God in a person's life. This new nature, made possible through Jesus Christ, has to be identified and acknowledged as the prerequisite for the first principle of Christian ethics, teaching and wisdom. Jesus meant to inspire ethical behaviour amongst men, instead of an absence of guilt regarding wrong behaviour. A radical obedience is called for (Vanden Berg, 2009:345; Hays, 2005:188; Shore, 2002:9-10; Boice, 1972:21-22).
3.4.2 The Lord's Prayer

The Sermon on the Mount provides for its hearers a way of asking from God what they need to adhere to the instructions in the sermon. Amidst the important details communicated to the disciples a smaller piece of communication is found where the needs of the follower are addressed. The Lord’s Prayer (Mt 6:9-13) provides the means to acquire what is needed to live the sermon. It is readily applicable to any aspect of a person's life. As God answers the prayer, people are empowered to adhere to the guidance and demands of the sermon. The example of the life of Jesus can then be modelled where suffering and adversity bring emotional and spiritual thriving and a healthy dependence on God is created and maintained (Bailey, 2008:92-93; McGrath, 2006:304; Blomberg, 2004:11-12; Easley, 2004:42-45; Jacobson, 2002:88; Shore, 2002:11).

3.4.3 Code of conduct

The communication in the Sermon on the Mount is constructed as a process whereby God empowers his followers to make adjustments to their lives in order to be able to do his will. The sermon is not a recipe for entering God's kingdom, because He is speaking to people who are already in his presence. The Sermon on the Mount states clearly and explicitly the code of conduct expected of these followers. God's grace has already been laid as the foundation for the choices made by believers; the Sermon clarifies the demands for behaviour. It is implied that no person can comply of their own accord with the requirements stated in the sermon. The goals are only reached by the power supplied by God and his grace should motivate the person to comply. Commitment to engage with the scripture will lead to knowledge of the wisdom of God (Moser, 2009:3; Bailey, 2008:82; Ford, 2007:52; Van der Walt, 2007:187; Blomberg, 2004:14; Easley, 2004:35). In order to follow this process, the believer has to admit dependence on God, pray the Lord's Prayer, experience the empowering position in Christ.
and then start to engage in the behaviour and choices that will lead to a well-lived life.

Making internal shifts in attitude will not suffice and the person needs to submit to the sovereignty of God with the entire being in order to be successful in effective change. Repentance takes a person to the very specific time in history of the sin and this moves the individual to compassion, justice and peace as he experiences legitimate citizenship of Christ's new order. Repentance happens right in the middle of predicaments and choices and is bound to a specific time and place. Within this very specific context the person needs to make the choice with integrity to walk away from the situation, with the whole self. Choices within this paradigm involve loving one's enemy as God does, making peace and working towards faithfulness among people, which should involve faithfulness in living and telling the truth. Loyalty to God demands a return to worship and service. It restores the practice of mutual forgiveness, replacing judgment. Repentance brings about the emotion of regret and motivates the whole self to return to God in faith and obedience (Vanden Berg, 2009:345; Stassen, 2006:176-177; Blomberg, 2004:14). Thus the return to God is the crucial element to start the process where the believer can once again live wisely within the boundaries set clearly by the Sermon on the Mount.

3.4.4 Virtues identified in the Beatitudes

The virtues identified in the Beatitudes are seen as directors of behaviour to educate and empower the reader towards a more successful and balanced life. Firstly the virtues in the Beatitudes are God's virtues, which point to deliverance and the sovereignty of God. Secondly the virtues are those to which man can aspire (Stassen, 2007:246). According to Easley (2004:36) and Stassen and Gushee (2003:47) the active participators in these virtues can be seen as actively living a life of being
• modest before God, living as the humble, the poor and the outcast around them;
• sorrowful, showing genuine remorse towards God, reassuring others who mourn;
• surrendered to God, showing commitment to follow God's way, and being peace-loving;
• motivated for deliverance, that shows in justice that rebuilds shattered community values;
• actively involved in compassionate activities, which shows covenantal faithfulness towards those who have less;
• constantly committed to seeking God's will for their whole life, in all that they are and what they do;
• committed to making peace with people who have done them harm, using the example of how God shows love to his enemies in being willing to suffer because of loyalty to Jesus and justice.

Christians who choose to live according to the Sermon on the Mount could be considered wise. They should therefore be wise enough to realize that the teachings in the Sermon are biblical truths and that wisdom should be applied to the execution of these commands. They should be wise enough to heed of the words of Jesus and then to take the necessary action in a disciplined way (Stassen, 2007:250-251; Easley, 2004:36-37; McKnight, 2004:23; Adams, 1999:592). As a result these individuals can then start to effectively evaluate whether these acts of wisdom will provide them with the life that they actively seek and believe in.
3.4.5 Psychological steps identified in the Beatitudes

Augustine interprets the Beatitudes as psychological steps the soul takes in its development. The first step is humility (Mt 5:3), which is the consequence of the fear that the person has for God's judgment. From this beginning phase the soul rises to the knowledge found in scripture. The highest point to attain is that of wisdom itself (Mt 5:9). To enable the person to become one with God he has to contemplate truth and find peace (cf. Betz, 1995:107). Peace is found when the person can release anxiety regarding the future into God's will and therefore become one with the will of God, knowing that it is good (Ford, 2007:57; Shore, 2002:15). Therefore the development of the soul is dependant on the wisdom teachings and it is implied that the higher levels of consciousness is needed before this development can only fully develop into wisdom.

In Matthew 7:6 the principle of traditional righteousness is addressed. The assignment given here is to not waste things that are holy in one's life by giving them to someone or a context undeserving of the holiness. If the choice is made by the person, a fiercely negative cycle will be activated in which the person will experience loss and injury. The receiver of the holy gift will return the gift with destruction. The ferocious cycle can only be broken by choice and only then will the damage cease. The power that the world offers in terms of prestige, honour and wealth is a topic that Jesus Christ deals with in detail. The focus on these worldly rewards replaces the more important matters addressed in the Law of Moses, i.e. justice, faithfulness and mercy. Jesus managed to withstand the temptation himself during the forty days in the wilderness by teaching loyalty to God and serving God exclusively (Mt 4:1-11). Satan failed in trying to tempt Jesus to give in to his own agenda to rule over the world. This is what Jesus teaches in verses 6 through 12. Followers should choose to worship God alone, and avoid the traps of the prestige and power of the Roman Empire (Stassen, 2006:167-170; Easley, 2004:38).
3.4.6 The vicious cycle and the transformative initiative

The vicious cycle of wrong choices can only be broken by a plan that involves change of the individual's attitude and behaviour. This is referred to by Stassen as the 'transformative initiative'. In this endeavour all allegiance must be given to God. The mission is to do to others what you would want done to yourself. The teaching is clear that the reader should be focussed on God in trust and prayer. God will then care as parents care for their children. This transformative initiative brings the person into the company of the 'dynamically present Father', who has abundant grace in handing out what is good. This part of the teaching ends with the person acknowledging that God is worthy of the trust and loyalty of the person making the choice and that the correct choice will lead to redemption (Moser, 2009:2; Ford, 2007:57, 159; Stassen, 2006:170-171).

According to Lundborn (2009:447-449 & 454) and Stassen and Gushee (2003:134-141) the perception that the teachings in the Sermon on the Mount are based on high morals and really difficult to achieve expectations causes the believer to avoid the content of the Sermon on the Mount. They illustrate that the issue of anger, addressed in Matthew 5:21-26, is an effective example of how the transforming initiative can be used to change behaviour and attitude within the individual.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Righteousness</th>
<th>Vicious Cycle</th>
<th>Transforming Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matthew 5:21</td>
<td>Matthew 5:22</td>
<td>Matthew 5:23-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have heard that it as said to those of ancient times: 'You shall not kill'; and who whoever kills shall be liable to judgment.</td>
<td>But I say to you that everyone being angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council, and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire.</td>
<td>So if you are offering your gift to the altar, and you remember that your brother and sister has something against you, leave your gift here and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then coming, offer your gift. Make friends quickly with your accuser.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jesus' commands here are transforming initiatives that have as a direct result the deliverance from anger and killing. These are not intended as an illustration only, but should be read as the crux of the teaching. In this excerpt the actual commands are found, it is longer than the other two sections and in biblical teaching the culmination of the teaching is usually communicated in the third component.

The third element of the Beatitude contains the imperatives and therefore demands the greatest focus. Transforming initiative implies three types of changes:

1. It transforms the angry person into an active peacemaker.
2. It transforms the relationship that is typified by angry behaviour into a peacemaking process.
3. It hopes to transform the adversary into an ally.
From Matthew 5:21 through 7:12 this configuration of transforming initiatives is followed as a consistent theme through the focal section of the Sermon on the Mount. The understanding of the Sermon on the Mount is transformed by this understanding. The focus of the teaching is not on pessimistic prohibitions that are experienced as teachings that are impossible to adhere to. The accent shifts to the positive transforming initiatives that lead the readers to their personal liberation received by grace. Christian ethics are therefore fed by these real, practical and grace-based teachings of transformation. Christian wisdom is promoted effectively by the very real consequences that follow from obedience to the teachings.

Stassen (2003:296) summarizes this pattern for the fourteen triads of the Sermon on the Mount:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Righteousness</th>
<th>Vicious Cycle</th>
<th>Transforming Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You shall not kill</td>
<td>Being angry, or saying:'You fool!'</td>
<td>Go, be reconciled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You shall not commit adultery</td>
<td>Looking with lust is adultery of the heart</td>
<td>Remove the cause of the temptation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whoever divorces, give a certificate</td>
<td>Divorce involves you in adultery</td>
<td>Be reconciled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You shall not swear falsely</td>
<td>Swearing by anything involves you in a false claim</td>
<td>Let your yes be yes and your no be no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth</td>
<td>Retaliating violently or revengefully, by evil means</td>
<td>Turn the other cheek, give your tunic and your cloak, go the second mile, give to the beggar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love your neighbour and hate your enemy</td>
<td>Hating enemies is the same vicious cycle that you see with the Gentiles and the tax collectors</td>
<td>Love your enemies, pray for your persecutors, be all-inclusive as your Father in heaven is</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When you give alms | Practicing righteousness for show | But give in secret, and your Father will reward you
When you pray | Practicing righteousness for show | But pray in secret, and your father will reward you
When you pray | Heaping up empty phrases | Therefore pray like this: …
When you fast | Practicing righteousness for show | But dress with joy, and your Father will reward you
Do not pile up treasures on earth | Moth and rust destroy, and thieves enter and steal | But pile up treasures in heaven
No one can serve two masters | Serving God and wealth, worrying about food and clothes | But seek first God's reign and God's righteousness and justice
Do not judge, lest you be judged | Judging others means you'll be judged by the same measure | First take the log out of your own eye
Do not give holy things to dogs, nor pearls to pigs | They will trample them and tear you to pieces | Give your trust in prayer to your Father in Heaven

### 3.4.7 The concept of character formation

According to Talbert (2004:29-31) the primary catalyst for forming character of the reader is instructions in the Sermon on the Mount. When they are read within the context of the whole of the Gospel of Matthew, the whole New Testament and the Old Testament, i.e. the whole Bible, the instructions can be of assistance to the reader when decisions are to be made. Norms for ethical decision-making are provided by the Sermon on the Mount. The importance of healthy relationships with God and other people is the key element contained in these verses. The Sermon on the Mount communicates the importance of covenant faithfulness to God and fellow men. The character of the follower is shaped by the obedience to and acceptance of the teaching (Moser, 2009:9; Ford,
2007:248). So, it can be observed that the person who adheres to the teachings will start to change as the process of obedience grows.

The need to be obedient to God will lead the reader to righteousness. The follower will want to be virtuous before God. Righteousness should be actively pursued on a horizontal and vertical relational level. Righteousness is based on the covenant God has with man. Because God is righteous, man should strive towards righteousness as well. Righteousness can be manifested in man’s life in there ways: charitable giving, prayer and fasting. The balance lacking in the personal needs of man has to be re-established. The relationship with God must be the primary focus. The correct and appropriate relationship with God leads to a balanced relationship with the world and with other people. Righteousness should therefore be an active pursuit of right actions and godly living (Vanden Berg, 2009:345; McKnight, 2004:23; Volschenk, 2003:1347; Day, 2005:164). For that reason the focus should be on the relationship the person has with God, and the balanced life can then originate from that defining connection of sustainability and accountability.

When Jesus mentions being blessed nine times in the Beatitudes (Mt 5:3-11), it means that everyday life has the potential to be filled with a sense of joy and happiness that is achieved by knowing that God approves of the person and the life that he is leading. Approval is only found with God when the instructions of the Beatitudes are followed and the person displays obedience to the guidance contained therein. True contentment will follow (Vanden Berg, 2009:345; Ford, 2007:248; Robinson, 1991:28) and in this personalized satisfaction the relationship to God is the key.
3.4.8 The concepts of righteous living

The call to follow Jesus Christ is not a legal code, but a call to *righteous living* in Jesus Christ. This call can only be heeded when the death of Jesus Christ becomes the driving force in the person's life (Vanden Berg, 2009:345; Stassen, 2007:250-251; McKnight, 2004:23-24; Tilley, 1992:14). It is not enough to simply abstain from wrong behaviour and thoughts. Through repentant behaviour and conversion of thoughts, the person can redirect false loyalties to the world and turn towards the loyalty that Jesus Christ shows in his life and teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. If the positive alternatives given by Jesus Christ are followed, peace is the logical and guaranteed result. Matthew addresses these practices of the ethic of just peacemaking in Chapter 5, verse 9. The analysis indicates that Jesus suggests an active approach to a balanced life rather than an avoidance of the negative.

Jesus Christ is not merely a wise person who counselled because He was familiar with the ways of life. Biblically He is the ultimate personification of wisdom as He taught about the ethical, moral and emotional character of God (Leftow, 2009:125; Ford, 2007:15; Easley, 2004:33; Johnson, 1995:189) and lived it. Wisdom that is drawn from everyday life is the key to live successfully, with regard to practical, everyday decision-making and following the guidance of the traditions (Ford, 2007:159; Ceresko, 1999:2). From this perspective the Sermon on the Mount teaches that the focus of the follower of Christ should be on other people, and not on self. This will lead to forgiveness and compassion. The second requirement is the commitment to live a simple life. From the sermon it is clear that even in the time of Jesus, people tried to compensate for personal insecurity by having more things. The issues addressed are applicable to daily living in current culture and still bewilders the modern-day Christian who needs to come into obedience (Ford, 2007:248; Mc Knight, 2004:23-24; Charry, 2003:40-41). Being mindful of the needs of others and having an awareness of the effect of one's actions on the lives of others are the issues being addressed by the authors. These principles will direct a wise life.
3.4.9 Jesus as the fulfilment of the Old Testament Law

The fundamental conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount is that Jesus came to fulfil the Law of the old covenant. He is the bridge between the old nature of the person and the new possibilities that are found in obedience to the teaching. The Old Testament Law and the Prophets are manifested through Jesus' perfect union with the will of God. He adds nothing to the Law that is not already there, but simply complies with and fulfils it completely. In this act of obedience He had to die, for He understood the true nature of God's Law. The Law is not God and nor is God the Law. For the Law to be fulfilled, personal communion with God is needed, and this is only possible through Jesus Christ (Ford, 2007:16; Mc knight, 2004:23; Bonhoeffer, 1959:122). Consequently the death of Jesus Christ brings the life for his followers through his work as Mediator.

As with the contrast of his death that brings life, contrast is an element noticed in the ethics that Jesus communicates in the Sermon on the Mount. The world is seen as an object of God's kingdom. God cannot leave the world on its own. The Sermon on the Mount speaks to the individual as well as the community. The moral principles contained in the Sermon on the Mount have to be visible in the community of God's church, and be taken from there into the world (Ford, 2007:58; Luz, 1985:459). When the believer conforms in wisdom to the principles, and these become visible to the world, internal motivation to continue with the behaviour will increase and the behaviour will become even more visible and more desirable. Hope is therefore created.

The hope expressed by the Sermon on the Mount is that the believer will become motivated to conform to the teaching of Jesus Christ in a personal, living relationship and in obedience. The believer would want to live by the rules and principles and make a valiant effort to be successful at the effort. Realization of failure should lead to prayerful communion with the Holy Spirit because of the desperate need for righteousness. What follows is a blessed experience of the promises being realized in his daily life (Ford, 2007:177-178; Shore, 2002:11;
Matthew 7:12 sums up the Law and the Prophets and indicates the change in behaviour that should be undertaken by the believer. Jesus does not frame it in the light that one should avoid bad behaviour towards others in order to avoid bad behaviour to self, but communicates it in a positive light. He promotes confidence that the right behaviour should be an act of service to others and should be a reflection of obedience to God's Law. There should be an active obedience to Jesus Christ (Ford, 2007:46-47; Charry, 2003:37; Carson, 1978:120-121).

Covert dispositions and motivations as well as overt behaviour will change with the development of higher righteousness. The recognition of inner disturbances of balance is addressed by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount and He motivates his disciples to recognize these inner malformations of the self and it requires fundamental obedience, which is only possible when the person is willing to enter into a conversion of character. This new character will allow the person to not only obey the Law but to also experience an inner obedience from the heart. Jesus offers the solution for a successful life (Ford, 2007:46-47; Hays, 2005:177; Porter, 2005:480). As a result then the pursuit of righteousness before God becomes a process of inner change.

In order to be free from any form of addictive behaviour the person needs to break the brutal cycles (as indicated above) in their lives. The Sermon on the Mount teaches a way that delivers people from these patterns of choice in a practical way of wisdom. It certainly is far more desirable to be delivered from negative life scripts than to stay stuck in a rut of failure. The person needs to make the decision about the content of their life. Do they want to continue to live out of control and be driven by negative patterns in their life, or do they want the peace that comes with faithfulness and truthfulness, and sincere prayer? Stassen (2006:13) summarizes it as follows:

Living the Sermon on the Mount is the way of grace. It is the way of Jesus. It is the way of the breakthrough of the reign of God.
Matthew portrays Jesus Christ as presenter of the new Law, as the One who clarifies the connection between the human soul and God and as the interpreter of the Torah. He is seen as the Messiah, bringing the revelation that is changes people's hearts. Jesus becomes the facilitator that affirms, judges and then transforms people by his teachings (Ford, 2007:54-55; Ford, 2007:183-184; Viljoen, 2006:152). For that reason Jesus is seen as the role-model for effective living, his life can be held up for evaluation of his intentions and motivations and should be viewed as an example of wise living.

This example set by Jesus Christ is communicated in such a way in the Sermon on the Mount that the reader can identify with the reality of God in everyday life. God is the creator and the provider for all the details of a person's life. His care is intensely personal and shows God as being fully present in measurable and visible experiences of his followers. Jesus expects his followers to live the life that He advocates in the Sermon by dependence on God. This dependence will open the door for God to provide what the person needs to fulfil these demands by example of God's ultimate wisdom (Moser, 2009:9; Welch, 2009:217; Ford, 2007:208; Olley, 2003:22; Perkins, 1985:334-335).

Taking a decision is an urgent call towards the end of the Sermon. Alternatives are given with great emphasis on actually making up one's mind. Hearers and readers are encouraged to meditate on the alternatives, but to realize that their lives literally depend upon their decision to adhere to God's judgment or to ignore it (Welch, 2009:165; Tilley, 1992:18). The privilege of being part of God's kingdom, because He chooses that, is to be followed up by the responsibility of actually doing what is just and right (Ford, 2007:164-165; Rukundwa & Van Aarde, 2005:947). An action is required by the person with the insight in order for the acquired intellectual wisdom to become practical wisdom.

By responding to the teachings of the Beatitudes, many modest believers have managed to change their reaction and attitude towards troubles and sufferings. The Beatitudes function as a practical argument in defence of God's goodness
despite the existence of evil. The trials that believers face are put into perspective by these instructions, although they do not explain evil or human suffering. The expectation is that the suffering should be transcended by joy. Those who have citizenship of the Kingdom of God can have the expectation that their current situation can change to positive outcomes. Christianity is characterized by a joyous attitude in times of trouble. The Beatitudes issue a challenge to Christian readers to examine the results of an actively Christian life. The double call for joy in Matthew 5:12 demands of Christians to live their faith actively among other people (Welch, 2009:53; Viljoen, 2008:218).

The Sermon on the Mount ends with one of two alternatives, directing the reader towards one of two choices. The one choice implies wisdom and the other implies foolishness. The wise man seizes his definitive heavenly character, while the foolish man is blinded by his lack of wisdom. The one ends in life, according to Matthew 7:14, good fruit (Mt 7:17), entrance into the kingdom of heaven (Mt 7:21), stability (Mt 7:25), the other ends in destruction (Mt 7:13), bad fruit and fire (Mt 7:19), exclusion from the kingdom along with other evildoers (Mt 7:23), ruination (Mt 7:27). A clear communication of a guaranteed result is given where God has the final say in this teaching (Welch, 2009:180; Ford, 2003:13; Carson, 1978:130).

These meanings and instructions are derived from the religious tradition. Spirituality can now be examined within the field of psychology to explain and motivate behavioural change within the individual during a therapeutic process. Religion and spirituality are significant coping strategies for individuals who employ these teachings in everyday life where it is suggested that religion may possibly encourage psychological health (Lundborn, 2009:448; Emery & Pargament, 2004:20; Francis & Jackson, 2003:89; Emmons, 2000:22).
3.5 SUMMARY

The Sermon on the Mount can be considered a manifesto for successful living, as given to us by Jesus himself. This is of great importance as Jesus Christ is regarded as the Son of God. It is mentioned that God has grace for people and that He intends to bring blessing into the life of the obedient.

Jesus instructs the reader on the principles of life and explains the concept of joyful participation in everyday life. Jesus brings the only truth, as this is what He lived. God’s justice is the final authority on which the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount are based.

The teaching includes the principle of deliverance from negative issues by the grace of God and the fact that happiness is received from God as it is available to all people who choose to be obedient to the teachings of Jesus. The follower has to realize from the outset that it is only possible to follow the instructions in complete surrender to and dependence on God. The self needs to be emptied before God before the blessings from God can then fill the person's life.

The Beatitudes are seen as directors of behaviour to educate and empower the reader towards a more successful and balanced life, which is typified by modesty, mournful remorse, surrender to God, a hunger for deliverance, compassion, seeking God's will and seeking peace.

The Beatitudes are also steps in the psychological development of the soul, from humility to ultimate wisdom. The Sermon on the Mount gives advice on how to break the vicious cycle of behaviour that leads to destruction, called the transforming initiative. Personal deliverance from wrong focus is the aim of this activity.

The teachings of the Sermon on the Mount are applicable to the individual as well as the community. It directs the reader towards knowledge on everyday
happiness. The Old Testament wisdom teachings focussed on the Law, where the Sermon on the Mount focuses on love. The commandments are summarized by Jesus and He instructs on an internal adjustment that becomes evident in behaviour.

The life of Jesus is seen as the practical example of a wisdom living. The follower of Jesus should therefore aspire to attain the same behaviour patterns as Jesus. This is only possible in acknowledgement of dependence on God.

3.6 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

From the information summarized from the article, it is deduced that wisdom teachings found in the Sermon on the Mount can be used effectively to enable the reader to achieve personal happiness in everyday life. It is concluded further that the principle of the transforming initiative can be used in a valid psychotherapeutic process by the Christian psychologist with Christian clients.

To expand further on these preliminary conclusions, attention will now be given to the concept of wisdom in philosophy and psychology.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY CONCEPTS</th>
<th>KERNBEGRIPPE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basis-theoretical perspectives</td>
<td>Basisteoretiese perspektiewe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sermon on the Mount</td>
<td>Bergrede</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical wisdom</td>
<td>Praktiese wysheid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependence on God</td>
<td>Afhanklikheid van God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioural change</td>
<td>Gedragsverandering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful life</td>
<td>Suksesvolle lewe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>Geluk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 4
(ARTICLE 3)

Meta-theoretical perspectives on the virtue of practical wisdom

ABSTRACT

Wisdom is usually regarded as a basic understanding and application of knowledge relating to the problems faced by people within the disciplines of philosophy, psychology and specifically positive psychology. To have wisdom is considered to be good. Wisdom is characterized by traits displayed by people. Wisdom has always been closely associated with philosophy and philosophy is generally seen as the 'love of wisdom'. The historical search for a better understanding of the world and of life led the philosopher to the exploration of matters that would help the individual make wise choices and select good behavioural patterns. The psychologist may be considered a philosopher. The psychologist must assist with the reasoning process in order for the person to gain inter alia greater control over emotions. Psychological research in wisdom reflects the different interests of social-psychological, personality, cognitive and life-span researchers. The Berlin wisdom paradigm and the balance theory of wisdom relate well to the topic. The field of positive psychology identifies wisdom as a character strength, with five key elements as the essence of wisdom: creativity, curiosity, open-mindedness, love of learning and perspective. The problems of relevance, conflict and specificity of strengths are addressed by introducing the importance of the Aristotelian virtue of practical wisdom. Wisdom is evaluated on a behavioural continuum and the aim of the process is authentic happiness.
**OPSOMMING**

Wysheid word gewoonlik beskou as die verstaan en toepassing van basiese kennis oor die moontlike probleme en uitdaginge wat mense mag beleef binne die dissiplines van filosofie, sielkunde en spesifiek positiewe sielkunde. Om wysheid te openbaar, word as goed beskou. Wysheid word gekenmerk deur die karaktereienskappe wat mense openbaar. Wysheid het tradisioneel 'n noue verbintenis met filosofie en filosofie word beskou as die 'liefde vir wysheid'. In die historiese soeke na 'n beter begrip van die wêreld en die lewe het filosowe die kwessies wat met persoonlike geluk te make het begin ondersoek sodat mense wyser keuses kan uitoefen in hulle lewe. Die sielkundige kan ook as 'n filosoof beskou word. Die sielkundige moet help met die redeneringsproses sodat die persoon meer beheer kan kry oor emosionele aspekte van sy lewe. Sielkundige navorsing oor wysheid fokus op die sosiaal-sielkundige, persoonlikheids-, kognitiewe en ontwikkelingsielkundige aspekte. Die 'Berlin wisdom paradigm' en die balansteorie van wysheid pas goed in by hierdie studie. Die veld van positiwesielkunde identifiseer wysheid as 'n karaktertrek met vyf elemente wat die essensie van wysheid bevat: kreatiwiteit, nuuskierigheid, openheid, die liefde vir leer en perspektief. Die probleme van toepaslikheid, konflik en spesifiekheid wat by karaktertrekke 'n rol speel word oorbrug deur die Aristoteliaanse beginsel van praktiese wysheid. Wysheid word beoordeel op 'n kontinuum van gedrag met die uiteindelike doelwit van ware geluk.
4.1 INTRODUCTION

From the analysis completed in Chapter 3 it can be deduced that wisdom teachings found in the Old Testament and in the Sermon on the Mount are applicable to everyday life and can be used to promote behaviour change with the believer. It is further concluded that these principles can be used in a psychotherapeutic process with believers who wish to enter into a therapeutic context with a Christian psychologist. In this chapter the literature study of wisdom in the fields of philosophy, (general) psychology and more specifically, positive psychology will be presented. The specific role that wisdom has to play in these fields of study will be discussed as the objective of the study is to bring wisdom into the therapeutic process in a valid and scientific manner.

The meta-theory refers to the context (which includes literature study and the empirical research) as part of the model proposed by Lotter (2007). The findings from this literature study will influence the exegesis and scriptural perspectives as well as the empirical research and will in hermeneutical interaction form the pastoral-theological model which will be proposed.

![Diagram](figure1.jpg)

Figure 1: Lotter (2007:4)
The customary meaning of wisdom implies a basic understanding and application of knowledge regarding the problems people face. Having the answers to these questions about life implies a presence of wisdom thinking. This is an attitude towards living that becomes visible. Practical wisdom differs from theoretical wisdom in that it tries to counteract anxiety, doubt and fear by making a life of peace and happiness a possibility through insight into functional living. Wisdom provides the expert knowledge system within which hope that change is possible is created within the individual, and this hope manifests on a spiritual and emotional level. The practical application of wisdom principles directs the person towards behaviour that will overcome obstacles and instil behaviour that will be goal-driven. Theoretical wisdom cannot provide any directives to living wisely in itself, but creates the context for practical wisdom to be applied. Wisdom can be seen as the most effective guide to having a good life by exploring and gaining insight into the meaning of life (Kok, 2009:55-56; Taliaferro, 2009:215, Bailey et al., 2007:168; Jordan, 2005:168-169; Sternberg, 2003:446; Lorenc, 2001:15-16; Baltes & Staudinger, 2000:122, Sternberg, 1990:32). For this reason the theoretical principles of wisdom will be evaluated and used to determine possible behavioural and attitude changes.

To have wisdom is considered to be good and as the wisdom increases in a person's life, the effect is seen in the presence of love, intelligence and decency. Wisdom includes cognitive, emotional, motivational and social factors within the contexts where individuals may live. It is considered by many theorists as defective to be foolish and their focus turns to emotional intelligence in order to understand the construct of wisdom (Baltes & Smith, 2008:56; Jordan, 2005:172; Baltes & Kunzmann, 2004:290; Jason et al., 2001:586). Wisdom can only be cultivated if there is a basic understanding of the theory, so that the motivation for behavioural change is enhanced by the experience of the practical results. As the person acquires more wisdom, and better insight into the effects of certain behaviour, the motivation to change behaviour will increase.
Wisdom is characterized by certain traits displayed by the person. Wisdom also implies that knowledge and insights should be communicated to others so that they can benefit from the understanding and grow towards well-being. Individuals who keep their wisdom to themselves cannot be considered wise. Wisdom may be expressed in diverse forms and many contexts; art, religion and ethics being examples hereof (Leary, 2005:176; Seeberg, 2005:143; Birren & Svensson, 2005:3, 360-361; Lapsley, 1985:262-263). Brugman (2006:461), Blanshard (cf. Khatadourian, 2005:324) and Sternberg (1990:107-108) hold similar views that reflectiveness, judgment, exceptional understanding and foresight are some of the most important character traits of wise people.

In this chapter, building on the previous chapters of Old and New Testament wisdom elements, attention will be given to the concept of wisdom in the related disciplines of philosophy and psychology and more specifically the field of positive psychology to show how these disciplines are relevant to this study.
4.2 PHILOSOPHY

4.2.1 Introduction

For centuries wisdom has been regarded as the culmination point of knowledge and action, mind and virtue. Wisdom has always been closely associated with the study of philosophy. Philosophy is seen as the love of wisdom (Baltes & Smith, 2008:56; Deane-Drummond, 2006:22; Khatchadourian, 2005:321; Seeberg, 2005:141; Birren & Svensson, 2005:4; Rensenbrink, 2004:199; Staudinger & Leipold, 2003:171; Guorong, 2002:457; Mis, 2001:33-35). According to students of philosophy, true wisdom is the wisdom as defined by philosophy. This concept of wisdom was made more accessible to the common man by the Greek philosophers Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. The role of wisdom in everyday life has subsequently been studied by Western scholars to determine the role that wisdom has to play in living a good life within a society. This dialogue remains active in present-day investigations of ethics, politics, science, morality and the meaning of life. The complications of life can be acted upon with good judgment if the virtue of wisdom is applied in an intellectual manner. Because of the uncertainties associated with life in general, philosophical wisdom can aid the person in the making of choices that will serve the situation and the person well. Therefore, the researcher suggests that in order to make better and wiser choices, the need for a more defined understanding of the world becomes necessary and the basic regulations of society have to be discussed.

The historical search for a better understanding of the world and of life led the philosopher to the exploration of rules and laws that would help the individual with wise choices and behavioural directions. Some philosophers (Descartes, Hume, Kant, Darwin, Pierce, Einstein, Whitehead, and Carnap) began defining a style of thought towards knowledge and wisdom where cognition was emphasized. Others focussed on the issue of a better existence (Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Sartre). The content of these processes led to a variety of
opinions regarding wise action (Targowski, 2006:50; Jordan, 2005:175; Johnson, 2003:78; Sternberg, 1990:28). These issues would then be considered the vital parts of wisdom.

4.2.2 The components of wisdom

Ancient philosophers have also considered how wisdom could be encouraged and nurtured. Knowledge, action and judgment have been connected with wisdom by these philosophers. Aristotle was adamant that only persons who displayed a good character would be able to develop practical wisdom, and he maintained that both good character and practical wisdom could be taught. Only the person with a consciously realized life will be able to attain and investigate whether wisdom is present in his life and whether positive emotions and mindfulness can enter into his existence (Kashdan & Knight, 2009:303; Baltes & Smith, 2008:57; Brugman, 2006:447; Seeberg, 2005:142; Watts et al., 2002:70-71). This realized consciousness brings to light the possible sources of wisdom that the person has employed to attain a developed character.

The deliberation regarding the essential components of wisdom has been an ongoing discussion. Aristotle introduced the argument for the supremacy of practical wisdom over theoretical wisdom when ethical ways of conducting one's life is at stake (Mick et al., 2009:99; Baltes & Smith, 2008:57; Osbeck & Robinson, 2005:65-66; Cooper-White, 2004:58-60; Dixon, 2003:36; Sternberg, 1990:15-18). He advocated that practical wisdom enables the individual to effectively use theoretical knowledge in daily living. In his model he presupposes that a wise man is by definition morally virtuous. The individual who is of good temperament has the ability to develop practical wisdom to a level of excellence. The process of applying practical wisdom is directed by intuition and the developed values of the person. The person's emotions will temper these insights. Practical wisdom is thus used to set priorities for individual behaviour and choices. This is a constant challenge without which there would not be a
philosophy that could be a personification of true wisdom (Fowers et al., 2010:140; Smith, 2007:369; Brugman, 2006:447; Watts et al., 2002:70-71; Mis, 2001:44). The obvious importance of the implementation of practical wisdom is therefore dependant on the cultivation and promotion of these principles, without which it would become pointless.

4.2.3 Practical wisdom

Aristotle refers to the virtue of practical wisdom as *phronesis*. The virtue is visible in a person's life when the person acts in a way that indicates clearly that he has the knowledge of correct behaviour and communication for the specific situation in which he finds himself (Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006:379; Osbeck & Robinson, 2005:70; Sternberg, 1990:17). In contrast to Aristotle's view that the highest expression of wisdom is *contemplation*, Rensenbrink (2004:199-200), Faraklas (2000:41) and Sternberg (1990:28-30) state that the foundation of wisdom is *learning*. In order to acquire knowledge, the person has to work to acquire wisdom. Wisdom is directly involved in the life of the person who strives to live according to these principles. There is direct participation in the life of the person by bringing energy and insight into life. Wisdom can therefore be seen as something one would look for, but it cannot be possessed. Wisdom is related to all aspects of life. The process of acquiring wisdom can unleash energy that has been pent up within the individual and will bring insight into questions of life. Now the person can start to explore the multitude of aspects that wisdom entails and that wisdom speaks into. According to Werpehowski (2007:63) Christian practical wisdom becomes a reality in the person's responsibility towards God in Jesus Christ. This responsibility is seen where members of the Christian community live with accountability towards the world.

Machiavelli, Nietzsche and Gadamer highlighted the diversity of wisdom and minimized the importance that has been placed on the character of the person (Baltes & Smith, 2008:57; Osbeck & Robinson, 2005:67; Sternberg, 1990:43-44).
Their argument is supported by the view that there are many versions of the good life, which would indicate that there could be several avenues to follow to achieve excellence within societal boundaries. Practical wisdom has been seen as the process of knowing how, where and when to take risks and to deal with uncertainty. This study would then indicate that it is in the interaction with other people that the individual can evaluate these potential risks and wisdom principles can be applied to deal with these uncertainties.

4.2.4 The Socratic dialogue

Within the field of philosophy, the Socratic dialogues are well known. These dialogues aspire to reveal the truth about the most important issues of life by people collectively engaging in dialogic contact. Wisdom can therefore be regarded as the integration of a variety of opinions and different perspectives voiced by people with an assortment of life experiences. The aim of the dialogue is to challenge opinions and possibly replace existing ideas with new thought patterns. It is within this context that the possibility exists that a new idea might be discovered. A single perspective on an idea cannot be considered as truth within the framework of the Socratic dialogue. A number of opinions are required to create the possibility of understanding of a topic. The dialogue is seen as an ongoing occurrence, and coming to a logical conclusion or final statement. The proposition is considered that there might still be another opinion to be considered on the topic. This also implies that a reader might join the conversation years later and so become an active participant in asking and understanding the questions of life (Charry, 2009:305; Claassens, 2006:1107-1108; Stark, 2005:134; Birren & Svensson, 2005:5; Sternberg, 1990:13-15).
Szasz (quoted in Bernstein, 2005: 540-541) thus said:

The older I get, the more I realize that the work I do as a psychoanalyst resembles a Socratic dialogue more than anything else – especially since it contains mainly an exchange of words and feelings between two persons.

This connectivity to other people through conversation or dialogue or psychotherapy, involves the participant, by definition of the content of the process, in a contextual philosophical exploration.

According to Spinoza (cf. Lemmens, 2005:49; cf. Pargament, 1997:36) the acquisition of wisdom by an individual will occur through philosophical involvement that will lead the way for the person to attempt to live a good life as the person becomes aware of what they would then expect of life. Attainment of wisdom will fill the person with a deep love of eternal life and will allow the mind to focus on the joy of successful living. The wise person will therefore gradually be aligned with the infinite in and through the experience of joy and love. The dialogue opens the opportunity and context for this experience.

Hume holds that only exceptional people have a partiality for philosophy (cf. Lemmens, 2005:55). Hume does admit that in the quest for wisdom, the person might come to the realization that wisdom might not live up to its full promise. He is of the opinion that an overly zealous and demanding attempt to attain wisdom might have opposite effects on the psyche and well-being of the searcher. The researcher is of the opinion that it is then certainly the province of the psychologist to regulate the flow of the dialogue to prevent an over-analysis and aid the person to focus on the desired behaviour change that becomes possible through insight. The psychologist, as philosopher, is positioned as a sage sharing knowledge and insight.
Within the perspectives of Hellenistic philosophy, all psychologists may be considered philosophers, and therefore were identified as sages by their schools of thought. These schools of thought were focussed on emotions and reasoning in their explanation and interpretation of human nature. Emotional problems were identified as basic human issues and the solution to emotional problems lay in the ability to reason and therefore achieve a conclusion as to the source of the problem (Roberts, 2006:127; Sternberg, 1990:305-306). For that reason the psychologist, within this context, will help the reasoning process in order for the person to gain greater control over emotions. This may be a continuation of the role of the earlier philosopher.

According to the Stoics and the Sceptics, who thought it best for people to be emotionally tranquil, disturbing emotions such as fear, anger and jealousy were best to be avoided. The Stoics believed that detachment from emotion implied an understanding of the said emotion. The Sceptics attempted to help the emotionally unstable by deferring judgment regarding the source of the disturbance. People were encouraged not to have any judgment at all. The Aristotelians supported the attitude that appropriate emotional response was far more functional than emotional denial. The therapeutic process would entail encouragement to set up correct priorities in emotional responses. The person would then be supported to interact with other people in conversation about truth so that these priorities could be identified (Brugman, 2006:454; Roberts, 2006:127-128; Osbeck & Robinson, 2005:66-69). The conversations or interventions that are aimed at appropriate emotional response, require from the individual intellectual understanding and growth manifested by a process of having greater knowledge.
4.2.5 Eastern wisdom philosophy

According to Takahashi and Bordia (2000:2) Eastern interpretations of wisdom accentuates an assimilation of multiple aspects of human consciousness. The Chinese philosopher Feng Qi believed that wisdom is acquired when the person has made two advancements: being theoretical and growing intellectually. The first process means that the person moves from ignorance to knowledge (Guorong, 2002:441-443). The second process involves moving from knowledge to wisdom. Knowledge is acquired when the person experiences life. The reality of the process enables the person to gain knowledge. In contrast to knowledge, wisdom is connected to the essential ideology of human life. By taking the leap from knowledge to wisdom, the person activates basic biological nature that is then altered into virtue and freedom. From this process, the ideal personality is created. It may therefore be hypothesized by the researcher that this process of thinking and growing opens the mind for further behavioural change and intra-psychological advancement.

4.2.6 Wisdom in the psychotherapeutic process

The application of wisdom is a requirement when psychoanalytic knowledge is implemented in the psychotherapeutic process. Psychodynamic psychotherapy accentuates the detection and adjustment of patterns of thoughts, feelings, impulses and defences (Shafranske, 2009:147). The discussion regarding wisdom begins with the definition of terms, as concluded by Socrates. Wisdom is defined when the application of knowledge is refined by the experiences of the person and the development and implementation of common sense. Bernstein (2005:541) and Watts et al., (2002:186-189) state that wisdom is seen as the essential prerequisite for effective psychotherapy and psychodynamic counselling. Aristotle referred to rhetoric or persuasive speech, which is closely associated with the psychotherapeutic process today. This could be regarded as a special branch of philosophy. Fleeson (2007:511), Stark (2005:139-140) and
Kunzmann and Baltes (2005:119) verify that when a person is receptive to questions in conversation, a progression of personal growth can be ignited, which may lead to a renovation of the person within. If the person desires regeneration of the self, the psychologist takes the role of guiding the person through the change event by increasing wisdom-related knowledge.

The philosophy that a psychotherapist has developed is used as a navigational tool in the therapeutic process. Without a philosophical framework, the therapist might not be able to achieve the desired goals set at the start of the intervention. These theoretical orientations lead the process along a specific path to recovery. If these theoretical guidelines are vague, the process might get sidelined and the ultimate goal of healing might not be achieved. These theoretical and philosophical maps aid in the direction and purposeful evolvement of the therapeutic process, where the client can develop positive emotions and outcomes (Kashdan & Knight, 2009:303-304; Bernstein, 2005:542; Davis et al., 2003:356; Lopez et al., 2003:5-6). The method of growth is not focussed on the acquisition of wisdom, but on applying wisdom principles to achieve change and insight into the self.

Perfect wisdom is inaccessible and not something a person should strive to attain. The goal should be to live the best possible life and in order to achieve this the person should strive to be as wise as possible. Therefore the goal should be on the actualizing of the good life and not merely on the theory of what a good life entails. The person should strive to find a functional balance between the objective evaluation and the subjective well-being. It certainly is good that basic needs are met and that interests can become part of one's life. One should also feel good about the content of the life and appreciate the measurable success that a wise life brings. Consequently the objective measurement of success should be in combination with a subjective appreciation of life (Ong et al., 2007:12-14; Exline, 2002:246; Diener et al., 2002:63-64; Kohl, 2001:87-88).
It is certainly the chief goal of the philosophical approach to ensure that wisdom is realized by analyzing personal experience and meaningful reflection in a process that will enable the person to be more directive in the approach to a well-lived life, with a balance between certainty and uncertainty, a balance between knowing and doubting (Baltes & Smith, 2008:57; Brugman, 2006:463, Takahashi & Overton, 2002:269). It leaves the reader with the conclusion that philosophical thought is the measurable basis for wisdom principles in psychology.

From a theological perspective (Werpehowski 2007:55) the virtue of practical wisdom marshals the need to apply morally correct reasoning regarding behaviour. This includes counsel, judgment and command of the self and others as commanded by God in Jesus Christ. Within this reality, Christians can choose to live and behave both sinfully and righteously, exploring and attaining their integrity and maturity in a process of repentance, renewal and perseverance.

4.3 PSYCHOLOGY

4.3.1 Introduction

The relatively young element of psychological research on wisdom, which has its foundation in philosophy, is characterized by approaches that reflect the different interests of social-psychological, personality, cognitive and life-span researchers. Many philosophical ideas on wisdom have been integrated into psychological theories (Mick et al., 2009:100; Baltes & Smith, 2008:57; Kunzmann & Stange, 2007:306-308; Baltes & Kunzmann, 2004:290-2910, Exline, 2002:182).
4.3.2 The Berlin Wisdom Paradigm

In the cultural-historical work of Paul B. Baltes on wisdom, known as the *Berlin wisdom paradigm*, wisdom is defined as expert knowledge regarding basic questions about the meaning and manner of life. Five criteria are identified to elaborate on expert knowledge:

1. factual knowledge – i.e. plentiful factual knowledge on human nature

2. procedural knowledge – i.e. plentiful procedural knowledge about ways of dealing with fundamental questions about the meaning and conduct of life

3. lifespan contextualization – i.e. knowledge about the many contexts of life, how they influence the context, and how they adapt to changing seasons in the life of the person

4. value relativism and tolerance – i.e. the admission of personal and cultural differences in values

5. awareness and management of uncertainty – i.e. an appreciation that decisions in life, evaluations or plans will always have a measure of uncertainty


The three interdependent dimensions to wisdom – cognition, reflection and affect – can therefore be applied in relation to these criteria. When applying all five these criteria, expert knowledge regarding the meaning of life and the required
behaviour will take the person to wisdom, which is then considered to be a personality trait rather than merely behavioural choice (Linley & Joseph, 2004:505-506; Baltes & Kunzmann, 2004:292-293; Ardelt, 2003:279; Baltes & et al., 2002:338-339; Sternberg, 1998: 361).

4.3.3 Balance theory of wisdom

In the balance theory of wisdom by Sternberg (1998:347) wisdom is defined as follows:

The application of tacit as well as explicit knowledge as mediated toward the achievement of a common good through a balance among a) intrapersonal, b) interpersonal, and c) extra-personal interests, over the a) short- and b) long-term to achieve a balance among a) adaptation to existing environments, b) shaping of existing environments, and c) selection of new environments. (See also Brugman, 2006:451; Staudinger et al. 2005:196-197; Linley & Joseph, 2004:182).

In this theory the focus is on balance. There must be a balance between multiple interests with short- and long-term consequences. These consequences have an effect on the environment. The theory does not imply that every interest, consequence or response is weighted equally. The process is driven by the contribution that the variable has to make to the potential outcome. Values lie at the core of wisdom principles in this theory. Values not only determine the idea of the common good, but influence the weighting of the various elements. Determining the right values is a question that arises in this theory. The focus is on the fundamental values that span cultures and various belief systems and can be identified as universally good. The theory differs from other balance theories in that Sternberg's ideas pertain to the idea of balance in the interactions within and between people, as well as their environment. The balance has to exist
between intrapersonal interests, interpersonal and extra-personal interests, and environmental responses have to be taken into consideration (Brugman, 2006:446; Sternberg at al., 2007:14-150; Staudinger et al., 2005:196-197; Carr, 2004:168-169; Linley & Joseph, 2004:183-185; Sternberg, 2001:229-230). The application of the balance theory can only take place within the social context of human contact and therefore wisdom has to be evaluated from a social-psychological aspect as well.

4.3.4 Social-psychological context of wisdom

Wisdom is viewed from a social-psychological context by Birren and Schroots, (2006:488) and Leary (2005:176-179) identifies three types of situations in which wisdom should be studied within a social-psychological framework:

1. A significant variety of methodical prejudices in perception and information processing taints people's thinking about themselves and others – social psychology highlights these possibilities for misinterpretation of the context and content of a person's life.

2. The fundamental social nature of humans leads to the understanding of people and the resolution of their human problems. Social psychology has brought valid insight into the necessity of studying human nature within the context of the social environment, where the content of an individual's life story or history is important.

3. Wisdom indicates the direction for acquiring the correct information and insight and will lead the way for insights about human nature that may be discovered and tested scientifically.

Psychological studies have shown that the concept of wisdom is closely related to the psychological concepts of cognition, the affect and reflective characteristics. Maturity, tolerance, empathy and intuitiveness are traits
characterizing the wise individual (Baltes & Smith, 2008:57; Brugman, 2006:461; Baltes et al., 2005:330-331; Bluck & Glück, 2005:99). The level to which a therapist and the client can elevate the psychotherapeutic process in terms of these traits will directly influence the efficacy of the intervention. The level of development will also indicate the level of wisdom exchanged during the process, and this is driven by the perspective of the therapist.

Staudinger (2008:109-110), as also shown by Brugman (2006:461-462), Baltes et al. (2005:336) and by Day and Rottinghaus (2003:1-19) reports that the rationale of wisdom in everyday life is to enable a person to be more competent in three areas of life, viz.:

- Empathy and support
- Self-determination and assertion
- Knowledge and flexibility

It can therefore be deduced that a therapeutic process characterized by wisdom will have as the goal the development of the client's abilities in these three areas of functionality. The focus will be on individual development and the empowerment of the client to eventually transmit these insights to other people. Strauss and Allen (2006:159) and Lohman (2005:230) state that individuals can be aware of the outcomes of their thought processes, but can also be aware of the process itself. The cognitive process of increasing awareness of thoughts can lead to positive outcomes for emotional experience. Positive emotional experience has been shown to increase verbal fluency and therefore the therapeutic process itself can become a clear goal for attaining wisdom.

Wisdom is described as a set of skills that involves a well-developed ability to listen, evaluate context and content, and the ability to filter these aspects by giving advice that can be used for the well-being of self and others. A therapeutic process characterized by wisdom will always incorporate the final step towards wholeness of the client, i.e. that the knowledge and insights
attained during the process will be shared with others. Knowledge related to wisdom deals with the most personal and socially significant issues in the lives of people (Brugman, 2006:462-463; Baltes et al., 2005:340; Kunzmann & Baltes, 2005:115; Baltes & Kunzmann, 2003: 131; Baltes & Staudinger, 2000:133-134; Carr, 2004:158).

Psychological findings on wisdom include how different cultures view wisdom, how wise people are described, and how wise acts are identified. Four findings seem noteworthy:

1. Wise people are carriers of wisdom.
2. These sages are expected to balance components of mind and character and to manage multiple interests and choices.
3. The interpersonal and social aspect of wisdom requires a regard for its function and the recognition of its incidence.
4. Wisdom certainly makes an impact when the person can come to the realization that the wisdom was attained, and he does not display an attitude of ownership (cf. also Staudinger, 2008:110; Brugman, 2006:452-453; Baltes et al., 2005:340; Jordan, 2005:169-170).

These findings indicate to the researcher that a developed view on human nature is needed in order to evaluate wisdom effectively.

4.3.5 Advances in psychological research on wisdom

Staudinger (2008:118), Kunzmann and Stange (2007:307) and Baltes and Kunzmann (2004: 290-293) indicate that productive advances on the topic of wisdom have been made in psychological research, viz.:
1. the study of wisdom draws the attention to the search for continued exploration of the human condition; and

2. within a functional model the study of wisdom creates the opportunity for alliance between the cognitive, emotional and motivational processes of human life

It is within these advances that wisdom’s realistic, pragmatic features focus on elements that lead to freedom of the inner world of the individual. These elements have been the focus of contemporary research in psychology and wisdom. Problem-solving skills are incorporated in the repertoire of skills that the wise person will display. Wisdom is therefore so much more than acquisition of information. The degree of skill that is involved is of a high standard so that the wise person can evaluate content and take this evaluation to a level where life context problems can be resolved. Cognitive ability leads to a better understanding of life. An increasingly interesting field of study in psychology has been the awareness that a crystallized intelligence of a person can lead to the multi-dimensional intellect that enables the person to understand life and its challenges, and to apply knowledge so that a well-lived life becomes the product. (Kunzmann & Stange, 2007:312-313; Ardelt, 2003:278; Kohl, 2001:73; Sternberg, 1998:349). In order to make a valid evaluation of this understanding of wisdom, the elements of wisdom that play crucial roles have to be identified.

In their efforts to define wisdom, psychologists tend to define the content and identifiable elements of wisdom, such as calmness, impartiality and moral integrity. These elements are closely related to thought and judgment, and are categorized psychologically. A description of the characteristics of persons who attain a state of wisdom is also possible. A further focus is the ability of the wise person to pass wisdom on to others. A judicious course of action between the extremes of choice and a vigorous dynamic between knowledge and doubt is to be chartered by the individual. Also a sufficient detachment from the problem at hand and a well-balanced co-ordination of emotion, motivation and thought are
required by the wise person. A deeper understanding of life is essential to attain wisdom through the reflective process, which aids the person in becoming more objective. Wisdom is knowledge about the human condition, knowledge about the most difficult issues on the meaning of life and conduct. Insight into what cannot be known, and how to deal with imperfect and inadequate knowledge, is a requirement for wisdom to be crystallized. Self-centeredness is reduced, and that allows the person to gain insight into the true nature of events, emotions or things (Staudinger, 2008:108; Loewenthal, 2007:137; Brugman, 2006:462; Ardelt, 2003:278).

Seven properties of wisdom are identified by Paul Baltes (cf. Smith, 2007:368) in his unfinished book on wisdom, titled *Wisdom as Orchestration of Mind and Virtue*. He believed these should be considered and defined in a psychological model:

1. Wisdom takes up imperative and complicated questions and strategies regarding the demeanour and meaning of life.
2. It necessitates a level of knowledge that is a cut above the rest.
3. It is characterized by an exceptional capacity, gravity and equilibrium.
4. Wisdom allows for an appreciation of life's uncertainties.
5. This information is used responsibly, and there is a social awareness of well-being of oneself and that of others.
6. Wisdom is complex to realize and stipulate, but in its manifested state it is easily recognized.
7. Wisdom requires a balance of mind and character, knowledge and virtues.

These properties indicate the course that will lead to the desired outcome. The person gathers information along the way and these essential components indicate the route towards wise living. These elements draw a complete picture of human life and the quest to attain wisdom.
In Erikson's stage model of human development wisdom is described as the virtue that is attained during stage eight, integrity versus despair, of the model. The person is confronted with the developmental crisis of integrity versus despair and wisdom leads the person to acceptance of the past. This process can only take place if all the dimensions of wisdom, cognition, reflection and affect are applied successfully (Brugman, 2006:445; Pargament, 1997:93; Sternberg, 1990:161; Erikson et al., 1986:56-58).

The origin of the title of 'psychologist' implies that understanding of the soul would be crucial to the focus of this profession. In Western culture the concept of mind often replaces soul as a word and refers to the psychological aspect of the person. The study of the soul of anything therefore implies the study of life. The psychologist is by definition someone with a (superior) comprehension of human life (Roberts, 2006:127; Savina, 2001:55). This study proposes that it is in this process of evaluation and observing human life that suggestions for a good life are exposed. Hambrick et al. (2005:215) suggest that all people have the inherent ability to increase their base knowledge to achieve wisdom. Ardelt (2003:283) reports findings that psychologists tended to score higher on wisdom measures than other professionals.

Hunt (2005:3-4), Diener et al. (2002:63) and Kohl (2001:76) suggest that wisdom shows itself when a person knows how to live well. The person chooses how they want to represent the world to themselves and this quest for wisdom will expose exceptional theoretical ideas and will lead to great experiences in everyday life. The process of emotional commitment and knowledge will direct the wise person to well-being, happiness and a fulfilled existence. The insight in acquiring wisdom is an essential growth experience.

Wisdom, by its nature, is a process of growth. Therefore wisdom facilitates movement, mostly indicated by an internal awareness that change has occurred. The person then has to facilitate a process of adaptation to the new context. This might imply that the person would have to transcend beyond familiar
knowledge or content. The current culture and psychological development of the individual might aid or strain the change. Because of the complexity of the process, different kinds of wisdom might be required for the process to be successful at that given time. The aim of wisdom, be it in whatever form, is to aid in the welfare, development, adjustment or growth of the person and others who are influenced by his behaviour within the given context. Because of the involvement of others, compassion is a crucial component of wisdom – compassion for self and others, that will promote the common good. Wisdom facilitates an integrative and holistic approach towards the challenges faced by individuals who choose to live a fulfilled life (Kunzmann & Stange, 2007:306; Brugman, 2006:454; Johnson, 2005:24). When the person enters into a process of change, in order to move beyond what is known at that given time, the guidance and facilitation can only happen through contact and exchange with others. The psychotherapeutic process may be considered to be one possible context of change and growth. As it is primarily a verbal process, words and the mutual understanding of words are crucial.

Because the psychotherapeutic process is primarily driven by words, it is important to acknowledge that when evaluating the judgments made by a therapist regarding the presenting problem of the client, they are expressions of the therapist's acquired wisdom. The words become the expression of the mind of the therapist. Consequently, the words themselves do not have to be wise, but the words that are expressed should share wisdom. Wisdom is therefore not located in words but associated to the psyche of the people in interaction with each other. Wisdom is therefore more closely related to wise people than to expert knowledge (Roberts, 2006:129; Ardelt, 2004:257; Day & Rottinghaus, 2003:18-19). It is within the intra-psychic and inter-psychic exchange that the wisdom is shared, absorbed and/or created. This is a highly individual process or event that will be determined by the complexities of content and context.
Knowledge is imperfect and wisdom is only possible when the person takes this limitation into consideration. The person can then avoid becoming overconfident and appreciate wisdom more fully. The practice of the balance between knowing and doubting is important to the wise person. There should be balance between recognizing positive and negative character traits and emotions within the individual. Learning and growth can continue effectively because the person acknowledges the constraints of the intellectual process. Only then can development take place in the domains of the affective, spiritual and relational aspects of psychological functioning. The therapist and the client become dependant on this shared insight and have to be in constant agreement regarding the awareness of the limitations. In this awareness lies the constant reminder of the delicate balance that is required for wisdom to transpire (Brugman, 2006:463-464; Johnson, 2005:25; Diamond & Aspinwall, 2003:149; Snyder & Forsyth, 1991:160).

4.4 POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

4.4.1 Introduction

Martin Seligman introduced the concept of positive psychology to the psychological establishment, shortly after he was elected President of the American Psychological Association. This new approach coincided with the start of the new millennium. Positive psychology is an encompassing term for theories and research pertaining to what makes life worth living, and has as its root the Aristotelian tradition of evaluating human nature. The focus in positive psychology is on positive experiences and positive character and virtues (Csikszentmihalyi, 2009:203; Joseph, 2009:341; Loewenthal, 2007:136; Brugman, 2006:462; Strümpfer, 2006:145; Linley & Joseph, 2004:16; Park et al., 2004:603; Cohen & Koenig, 2003: 215; Fava & Ruini, 2003:47; Sheldon & King, 2001:216; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000:1). There certainly is a need amongst psychologists for a more realistic and broader-based perspective on
human behaviour. Positive psychology has provided a new forum for evaluation of mental health. Within positive psychology the therapeutic process is aimed at the development of positive character traits and civic virtues for effective living, by focusing on positive emotions. The focus on positive emotions is of current concern to behavioural scientists. It can be said that the focal point is on determining what works, what is right, and what improves the individual.

In positive psychology the focus is on subjective experiences of the past, such as well-being, contentment and satisfaction. People should feel better about their lives. There is also a focus on the present, by evaluating experiences such as flow and happiness. It focuses on experiences in the future, such as hope and optimism. Positive psychology is also concerned with finding the contexts within which people experience greater happiness, and then enabling the person to create these situations more frequently. For the individual, the theory is concerned with positive individual traits such as perseverance, courage, spirituality and wisdom. The group focus is on civic virtues and good citizenship, which cultivates traits such as altruism, responsibility and tolerance. Science, like religion, has woken up to the realization that individuals have a responsibility beyond themselves. The focus is not only on how people feel about their lives, but also on what they can do to change the way they live. Adopting a continuum model of positive and negative interventions, negativity is decreased by increasing positivity (Csikszentmihalyi, 2009:204-205; Diener & Tov, 2007:439; Froh et al., 2007:29; Joseph & Linley, 2006:333; Joseph & Linley, 2005:507; Seligman, 2005:3, Baltes et al., 2005:328-329; Peterson & Seligman, 2004:95; Chafouleas & Bray, 2004:1; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000:5).

The question of what would be considered good within people and how their lives should function optimally has long been a field of interest in psychology. James, in 1902, was interested in the development and evaluation of best possible functioning in individuals. Jung, in 1933, developed the concept of individuation, focusing on how people reach their full potential. Jehoda, in 1959, focussed on seminal thinking and Allport, in 1966 did work on the mature self. Rogers, in
1963, worked on the fully functional person, with Maslow, in 1968 defining the concept of self-actualization. Ryff, in 1989, integrated much of the research on well-being. The most important contribution that positive psychology has made, was the creation of a universal identity for researchers and practitioners who share a focus on healthy living, well-being, optimal experience and positive outcomes (Csikszentmihalyi, 2009:204-207; Delle Fave, 2009:296; Hackney, 2007:212; Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 2006:3-5; Tan, 2006:68; Seligman et al., 2005:410; Baltes et al., 2005:328-329; Carr, 2004:1-2; Daaleman & Frey, 2004:499-500; Linley & Joseph, 2004:3-4; Peterson & Seligman, 2004:408; Bingham, 2003:289; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000:5).

4.4.2 Optimal functioning in positive psychology

Where Aristotle spoke of human excellence, modern psychology refers to optimal functioning (Charry, 2009:301). According to Csikszentmihalyi (2009:205), Larsen (2009:249), Maddux (2008:67), Pearson at al., 2008:110, Kashdan and Steger (2007:159), Linley and Joseph (2004:4-6), Gable and Haidt (2005:104), Diener et al., 2003:405; Harris and Thoresen (2003:199-200) and Faller (2001:9) optimal functioning is the main focus of positive psychology. In order to achieve this level of functioning, the person must be able to evaluate subjective well-being. In this process, positive individual traits are identified, such as forgiveness, emotional intelligence and wisdom. The desired outcomes of this process are happiness and well-being. Well-being is evaluated by the subjective experience of pleasure and the psychological outcome of enjoyment. Enjoyment is experienced when the person is fully engaged with and participates in the challenges of everyday life. The full range of human functioning is evaluated, from pathology to full functionality to preventative living. Linley et al. (2006:8) define positive psychology as the scientific study of optimal human functioning.
4.4.3 Psychological research on wisdom

In current psychological research on wisdom there are five character strengths studied by psychologists in which cognition is prominent, and on which Van Eeden and Wissing (2008:85), Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi (2006:32-33), Frisch (2006:280-281), Baltes et al. (2005:330-331), Glück et al. (2005:198) and Peterson and Seligman (2002:95-107) comment:

1. Creativity – the person must construct ideas that are recognizably original and these ideas have to make a contribution to the lives of others.

2. Curiosity – the person is recognizable as an individual with an observable interest in new and relevant experience.

3. Open-mindedness – the person has the ability and eagerness to be challenged by complex judgment in which substantiation for and against a belief must be scrutinized and evaluated.

4. Love of learning – a motivation to attain further knowledge and expand current standards of information and skill is required.

5. Perspective – this trait is generally described in psychology as wisdom. Perspective is the outcome of knowledge and experience, but it is not merely the accrual of information. Perspective implies that the person has the ability to evaluate in broad context so that self and others are incorporated in the thought process. All should be coordinated and used deliberately to enhance well-being.

The following problems arise when strengths and virtues are evaluated within the field of positive psychology:
1. The problem of relevance: specific virtues or strengths that are required to deal with situations in day-to-day living are not identified up front.

2. In reality different virtues often cause conflict in day-to-day living.

3. Virtues and strengths are not communicated as actions. Imagination and perception are needed to translate the virtue or the strength into measurable and appropriate actions.

In order to resolve these three issues – relevance, conflict and specificity – the Aristotelian virtue of practical wisdom becomes essential (Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006:381; Pasupathi & Staudinger, 2001:410).

**4.4.4 Criteria for wise judgment**

Baltes and Staudinger (2000:128-137) and Baltes et al. (2005:333-334) identify five criteria by which the quality of wise judgment or behaviour may be evaluated.

1. Wisdom entails a vast amount knowledge regarding the development and context of the human condition.
2. Wisdom entails a wide range of procedural knowledge, implying knowledge of the performance of a variety of skills, such as decision-making regarding interpersonal problems and conflict resolution.
3. Wisdom includes involvement with the person's family, peer group, school, workplace, community, society, and culture and the variations and interrelations among these across the person's lifespan.
4. Wisdom demands tolerance for differences in values and priorities in the lives of individuals as they progress along their life path. Wisdom will lead the person to acceptance of others and a respectful attitude to the insights of others.
5. Wisdom will demand that the individual develop a tolerance for ambiguity. Uncertainty is simply part of daily living.

The therapist should always be cognizant of the objective evaluation of his theoretical viewpoint during a therapeutic process (Loewenthal, 2007:9-10; Bernstein, 2005: 548; Watts et al., 2002:268). A fanatical commitment to a specific theoretical viewpoint becomes an obstacle in the way of the therapist, who will become unable to appreciate any other point of view either from colleagues or patients. If wisdom is replaced by theory during the therapeutic process, the feelings of the therapist may be disqualified and this makes the evaluation of even his own common sense problematic. Therapists have to be able to move toward objective evaluation of their theoretical system in order to apply the principles of practical wisdom in the therapeutic process. In the wellness model proposed by Adams et al. (2000:166) a spiritual dimension is defined as a practical objective to developing a sense of meaning and motivation in life. The psychological dimension is seen as the awareness that one will experience positive results to the events and situations of life. The findings of Tugade et al. (2004:1162) sustain the idea that positive emotions have a distinctive role to play in adding to psychological and physical well-being. Walsh (2003:97), Watts et al. (2002:16) and Allen and Yarian (1981:5) propose that spiritual wellness should be developed within the field of counselling, and Opatz (1986:61) suggested that spiritual wellness is found in seeking meaning and purpose in life.

4.4.5 Disorders of wisdom

Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi (2006:39) provide an objective table to effectively diagnose behaviour in terms of the disorders of wisdom and knowledge:
By using this table, the therapist can effectively determine whether the client is lacking or overcompensating in terms of wise behaviour, and adjustment can become part of the therapeutic process. When these adjustments or growth opportunities have been achieved, the person can begin to move on to a state of happiness. The behaviour of the person can be placed along a continuum:

Opposite → Absence → Strength → Exaggeration

4.4.6 Eudemonia

The aim of life, according to Aristotle, is eudemonia, which Seligman also refers to as 'authentic happiness'. He describes three possible ways to happiness: the life of pleasure, the life of engagement and the life of meaning. When an individual starts to tend to the virtues, he starts to claim this aim. The growth that is experienced is focussed on a variety of virtues that will lead to flourishing in life. The virtues must be balanced in terms of proportions and value, which implies the pursuit of meaningful goals. The balance within a virtue is needed for effective execution, for example: courage can only be effective when the person finds balance between cowardice and recklessness. Too much of a virtue can sabotage the virtue as much a too little of it. Practical wisdom is essential to

A variety of factors may be at play in the differences observed in wisdom. Not all individuals are equally committed to achieving goals that are for the common good. Their values might be different when evaluating whether something is right or wrong. Not all people have the same capacity to deal with the demands of creating and maintaining balance, as this requires a higher consciousness regarding values. Some people are at the beginning of the learning process, while others have progressed in terms of superior knowledge. Age, life experience, motivation, personality style and crystallized intelligence are some of the other factors that can influence the level of wisdom (Csikszentmihalyi & Nakamura, 2005:237; Carr, 2004:170, Assagioli, 1965:17).

Self-realization and personal happiness are not the only goals to be reached by applying wisdom principles. Wisdom is focussed on managing information in such a way that the rights of others are not violated in the process of personal growth. Another part of the process should be the development of social structures that will enable others to develop as well. Therefore a key character trait of a wise person would be the ability to translate knowledge into behaviour that would encourage and orchestrate growth for self and others in a context where the individual strength is supported by a positive institution (Linley & Joseph, 2004:511; Clonan *et al.*, 2004:101). The personality style of the person,
the internalized value system and the positive institution has to be aligned if wisdom is to transpire. Wisdom pertains to personality as well as cognitive processes. Wisdom creates the connection between the mind and the values of the person that can re-direct focus towards fellow men. The focus on the possibility of finding meaning in helping others can bring great satisfaction into the life of the individual (Frisch, 2006:136; Clonan et al., 2004:101; Baltes & Staudinger, 2000:127) and may be described as 'wisdom' in the context of the study of a complex psychotherapeutic process.

Peck (1978:12) comments of the complexity of this process:

> Psychotherapy, if it is to provide substantial assistance to the process of mental and spiritual growth, is not a quick or simple procedure.

### 4.4.7 Problem areas in positive psychology

Schwartz and Sharpe (2006:381) identify three problem areas in the system of virtues and character strengths by Peterson and Seligman:

1. **Relevance** – problem situations in life need specific virtues or strengths to be dealt with effectively. How does the person select the appropriate virtue or strength?

2. **Conflict** – problem situations can bring virtues or strengths in conflict with one another. Which virtue or strength is the more appropriate one to use in a given situation?

3. **Specificity** – imagination and perception are needed to translate virtue into action. What do these virtues require the person to actually do?
According to Robbins (2008:100), the idea of positive psychology has moved towards a different vision grounded in Aristotelian concepts, and Schwartz and Sharpe (2006:383) suggest that problem areas in positive psychology can be overcome by the following Aristotelian perspectives:

1. Strengths and virtues should be seen as integrated and not autonomous.
2. More of a specific virtue or character trait is not necessarily better.
3. There is a master virtue, namely practical wisdom, which is indispensable for directing the application of the other virtues and character traits towards a happy and well-lived life.

Baltes et al. (2005:329), Bluck and Glück (2005:95) and Peterson and Seligman (2004:95) identify strengths of cognition when discussing the principles of wisdom and knowledge. These traits are defined as positive as they allow the person to gain information in order to achieve a well-lived life. Robbins (2008:100-103) and Linley and Joseph (2004:187-189) discuss this classification system in which many cognitive aspects are found, for example social intelligence, fairness, hope, humour and spirituality – it is clear then why many philosophers who discussed virtue consider wisdom or reason as the executive virtue.

Robbins (2008:106) and Schwartz and Sharpe (2006:380) comment on the classification system of Peterson and Seligman, pointing out the strong connections to humanistic psychology that have been ignored. They are of the opinion that without practical wisdom as an executive skill to manage the developed traits, these traits cannot be successfully employed by the individual. The lessons of history in humanistic psychology can be of great benefit to the positive psychology movement in that they emphasize that virtues cannot be studied in isolation. It is articulated that positive psychology will not provide valid insights into the fulfilled life until it acknowledges the presence of the central virtue of wisdom.
Sheldon (2009:268) is of the opinion that a main problem area in positive psychology is the absence of a framework to conceptualize the idea of \textit{optimal functioning}. This leads to the confusion regarding the content of what an optimally functioning life should entail. The author suggests that a systems-theoretical view should be developed as to the content of the concept. Lazarus (2003:107) is of the opinion that better and more diversified research methods should be used within the field of positive psychological research.

\textbf{4.5 SUMMARY}

An analysis of the philosophical and psychological approaches to wisdom makes it clear that the psychological perspectives on wisdom are firmly rooted within philosophical thought. The perspective within the positive psychology movement is closely connected to the Aristotelian viewpoint of wisdom and effective living.

The premise that wisdom is possibly the executive virtue that all people should cultivate to achieve a well-lived life, is proposed and endorsed by philosophers and some of the supporters of the positive psychology movement. Wisdom can certainly be seen as a virtue that will integrate the life of a person who wishes to achieve a balanced life. This will have an impact on the emotional well-being of the individual as it will direct the thought pattern of the person. As the person becomes immersed in wisdom, a different value system will be used. It is within this value system that the virtue of wisdom can become the main director of the choices and behaviour.

If a psychologist has the philosophical perspective that wisdom is required to achieve an effective psychotherapeutic process and applies these principles, the client can reap the benefits of a process driven and maintained by wisdom.
4.6 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

The literature study done in this chapter is aimed at creating a better understanding of the concept of wisdom from the theoretical perspectives of philosophy and psychology and especially the field of positive psychology. The conclusions from this chapter will be used to direct the empirical research on the executive function of wisdom.

From the information summarized from the article, it is deduced that wisdom is an essential part of the psychotherapeutic process and can be used effectively to enable the client to achieve personal happiness in everyday life. The directive and executive function of wisdom as a virtue will be evaluated in the empirical research.
4.7 REFERENCES


CSIKSZENTMIHALYI, M. 2009. The promise of positive psychology. Psychological Topics, 18(2):203-211.


**KEY CONCEPTS**

| Meta-theoretical perspectives | Meta-teoretiese perspektiewe |
| Wisdom                        | Wysheid                     |
| Knowledge                     | Kennis                      |
| Philosophy                    | Filosofie                   |
| Psychology                    | Sielkunde                   |
| Positive Psychology           | Positiewe Sielkunde         |
| Virtue                        | Deug                        |
| Character trait               | Karaktertrek                |
| Practical wisdom              | Praktiese wysheid           |
CHAPTER 5
(ARTICLE 4)

Meta-theoretical perspectives on the virtue of practical wisdom by means of an empirical investigation

ABSTRACT

The aim of this empirical study is to investigate the possibilities of using practical wisdom as the executive virtue within the framework of positive psychology with Christian clients in a psychotherapeutic approach. The goal was to evaluate the psychotherapeutic process of the participants while the executive virtue of practical wisdom is applied. The researcher wanted to come to relevant and valid conclusions regarding the application of the concept of practical wisdom in the psychotherapeutic process with Christian clients. These conclusions can then be used in guidelines to enable the Christian psychologist to use a more effective psychotherapeutic process. The study thus addresses the executive style of functioning of the client and determines whether there will be an adjustment in behaviour when the biblical principles of wisdom replace the current executive style of functioning. The investigation has its focus on human functioning and therefore a qualitative research approach was chosen. A concise overview of qualitative research is provided. The process of the two-phased study is discussed and the results obtained from the 16 participants are summarized. During phase one of the research, most participants focussed on obedience to biblical law as a form of wisdom. During phase two of the research this perspective had shifted to include active dependence on God and a relationship with God based on daily interaction.
Die doel van hierdie empiriese studie is om vas te stel of praktiese wysheid as 'n uitvoerende funksie binne die veld van die positiewe sielkunde 'n effektiewe rol sal speel binne 'n psigoterapeutiese proses met Christen-kliënte. Die doel is om die terapeutiese proses te evalueer waar praktiese wysheid toegepas word. Hierdie riglyne word gebruik om 'n meer effektiewe terapeutiese model vir Christen-sielkundiges daar te stel. Die studie het die uitvoerende funksies van die kliënte onder die soeklig geplaas en die veronderstelling beklemtroon dat bybelse wysheid hierdie uitvoerende funksie moet wees. Die ondersoek was gereg op menslike funksionering en daarom is daar op 'n kwalitatiewe navorsingsmodel besluit. 'n Kort oorsig oor kwalitatiewe navorsing word gegee. Die twee fases van die proses is bespreek en die resultate van die 16 deelnemers is weergegee in 'n opsomming. Tydens fase een van die navorsing was die fokus op gehoorsaamheid aan bybelse wette as 'n vorm van wysheid. Tydens fase twee van die navorsing het die fokus geskuif na aktiewe afhanklikheid van God wat plaasvind binne 'n daaglike verhouding met Hom as 'n vorm van wysheid.
5.1 INTRODUCTION

Based on the conclusions made from the basis-theoretical perspectives of the Old and New Testament and the meta-theoretical perspectives of philosophy and psychology on the virtue of practical wisdom, the objective of this chapter is to evaluate by means of an empirical research project whether practical wisdom can be used effectively as the executive virtue in the process of psychotherapy with Christian clients.

Empirical research is part of the context (the literature study is the other part) which is a component of the model proposed by Lotter (2007). The findings from the empirical study (as well as the literature search) will influence the exegesis and scriptural perspectives and will determine the outcomes of the pastoral-theological model that will be proposed.

![Figure 1: Lotter (2007:4)]
In this chapter the following aspects of the empirical research project will be discussed:

- Research design
- Aim of the study
- The therapeutic process
- Data gathering
- Participants
- Analysis of data
- Summary of results

Strümpfer and Wissing (cf. Coetzee & Viviers, 2007:487) both recommended that qualitative research is necessary to promote the field of positive psychology. According to the authors, only a few qualitative studies have been registered in this field. It is their recommendation that more studies should be undertaken in the field of positive psychology. Coetzee and Viviers (2007:280) also identify the factor of spirituality that has to be incorporated into studies to ensure a holistic model for positive psychology. When doing research into spirituality the rationale of the human inquiry is not simply investigation into knowledge, but rather the improvement of good practice in everyday life (Coghlan, 2008:211).

According to Coetzee and Viviers (2007:486) Wissing suggests that current research in positive psychology should concentrate on processes that bring about wellness. According to the authors, researchers in South Africa had not engaged in this field of research actively enough. Wissing's further recommendations include research regarding systems perspectives and research related to group functioning. In this investigation the group identified for the research purpose was composed of Christians who reported for psychotherapy.
I claim that Christian theology is properly the source of concepts of human flourishing that should inform the hard core of any research program in psychology (Murphy, 2005:25).

Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi (2005:89-92), Wing Sue and Constantine, (2003:152-153) and Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000:5) hold that the basic argument in positive psychology is that optimal psychological functioning is directly influenced by the values the person adheres to in subjective experiences. Ryff and Singer (cf. Seligman et al., 2005:410) state that positive psychologists have played a crucial role in showing how, why and under what conditions positive emotions, positive character, and the contexts that enhance them, thrive.

According to Staudinger (2008:118) future research on personal wisdom should concentrate on the way wisdom is associated with internalized approaches that the individual can develop to achieve an excellent life. Loewenthal (2007:9-10), Cohen and Koenig (2003:232), Watts et al. (2002:285-289) and Argyle (2000:11) are of the opinion that healthcare professionals should be aware of the theological perspectives of their clients, as spirituality directly influences clients' physical and psychological health.

5.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

5.2.1 Qualitative research

The study is based on qualitative research design with an interview as the data collection technique. Qualitative research attempts to describe and understand human behaviour and has an open-ended, inductive exploration as the goal. The aim of the research is to place the weight on the description of the experiences of the participants and on the researcher's own involvement and experience during the interview. The consistent and logical approach in qualitative research is essentially a positivist perspective. In this view, qualitative research should be

Qualitative research can be identified by four characteristic elements (Steyn & Lotter, 2006:107-108):

1. a relationship is identified between meaning and actions;
2. meaningful actions are observed within the most natural context;
3. the researcher's role is one of interpretive subject;
4. participants are active sense making subjects, because the content of the participant's description of the experience is part of the world that is described.

In this study the interpretive paradigm was applied. The participant's subjective experience was taken seriously, as the essence of what is experienced as real is of importance. In this research an effort was made to understand the person's experiences by interacting and listening carefully to what is expressed. The qualitative technique of the semi-structured interview was used to collect the information. A non-experimental, qualitative, survey design approach was used in the study. The interpretive approach does not focus on separating and calculating variables, but on connecting and expanding the authority of ordinary language and expression to help understand the social world we live in (Maree & Pietersen, 2007:157; Henning, 2004:103-105; Silverman, 2001:13; Mouton & Marais, 1996:99-104).

Two key principles of qualitative research were applied in this study. The research required an understanding of spirituality and psychotherapy. Secondly the researcher was positioned as the primary means by which the information was collected, analyzed and interpreted, so that the researcher had the advantage of observing and analyzing what was taking place in reality. The
mode of inquiry was descriptive and facilitated the researcher’s understanding of the participants’ perceptions and perspectives. (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:102; Terre Blanche et al., 2007:272-273).

The valid and ethical methodology in research is driven by concerns and conflicts regarding the scientific way of doing research. These ethical parameters help define the guidelines towards valid research procedures (Neuman, 2006:129). The ethical viewpoints used in this study are those of the University of the North-West, Potchefstroom Campus.


5.2.2 Empirical research

5.2.2.1 Aim of study

The aim of the study was to come to relevant and valid conclusions regarding the application of the concept of practical wisdom with Christian clients in the psychotherapeutic process. These conclusions can then be used in guidelines to enable the Christian psychologist to use a more effective psychotherapeutic process.

5.2.2.2 The therapeutic process

Spiritually-orientated approaches in psychotherapy are consistent with professional guidelines when treating clients to whom religion and spirituality are important. These approaches do not deviate from the fundamental principles of psychological treatment modalities. They pay attention to the roles that religious beliefs, God-representations and spirituality play in the life of the client. Nurturing
spirituality can be used as an intervention to augment psychological well-being, by moving beyond effective life skills towards Christian wisdom that entails striving towards divine justice and Godly discernment. God's wisdom is seen as bringing good out of sin, which is the highest claim wisdom can make (Deusterman, 2010:138; Charry, 2009:304; Shafranske, 2009:149; Temane & Wissing, 2006:593).

For the purpose of this study, the therapy plan was designed to be used once a week until the desired level of wisdom-related behaviour was achieved. The assumption was made that all the participants have psychological strengths and the ability to move towards more positive experiences regarding fulfilment in their lives. It was postulated that positive emotions have the effect of undoing the negative effects of negative emotions, and that individuals are responsible for the outcomes of their lives when choosing to develop the virtue of practical wisdom. Practical wisdom prepares the way for the achievement of these goals of personal growth. Positive emotions may sway thought processes and behaviour with little exertion for most people. Individual strengths are necessary for individuals to attain psychological growth. These developed strengths are the platforms the person uses for accessing healthy processes and fulfilment. These healthy processes may not develop and human fulfilment may not be attained without the development of personal strengths. The goal was to cultivate strengths with the younger clients and to re-establish strengths among the more mature clients to adapt functioning. Wisdom was identified as a human strength that has the potential to improve the personal life and relational well-being of the person (Delle Fave, 2009:296; Werpehowski, 2007:56-59; Heintzman & Mannell, 2003:207; Francis et al., 2004:315; Terjesen et al., 2004:164).
The sessions were designed as follows:

a. Initial sessions

These sessions were focussed on the identification of wisdom-related behaviour and choices that needed development, in terms of exaggeration, absence or opposite of the wisdom strengths according to the objective table of Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi (2006:39) to diagnose behaviour effectively.

b. Intermediate sessions

Once these developmental areas were identified, the behaviour and thought pattern change processes were facilitated, to achieve the desired outcomes. During these sessions the stumbling blocks for growth and the faulty learning styles were explored to enable the client insight into current and past behaviour and feelings. The therapist encouraged and educated the client in wisdom-related choices and theory to enhance the possibility for change and growth.

c. Final sessions

During the final sessions wisdom growth was re-evaluated to measurably demonstrate to the client that wisdom-related choices have improved and led to possible positive change in his/her life experience. Errors in thinking were discussed. The aim of the therapist was to guide the client from an impaired level of wisdom functioning to an optimal level of wisdom functioning within the framework of the five aspects of wisdom.
There are many pathways for psychological growth, and during the therapeutic process followed with the participants the focus remained on the qualities that were needed to lead a good and fulfilled life. For the purpose of this study, it was assumed that an association exists between religious orientation and personal growth and development. The focus of the process was on healthy living that would lead to positive emotions enabling the person to be spiritually well and emotionally stable. The model of healthy psychological growth was followed where the interrelatedness of strengths, resources, healthy processes and fulfilment was used as a therapeutic structure. As the virtue of practical wisdom is applied, the counselling context opens the opportunity for the person to become more open to the work of the Holy Spirit and the process can then be directed by God through discernment (Ruini & Fava, 2009:510-513; Froh et al., 2008:214; Pearson et al., 2008:110; Werpehowski, 2007:62; Maddi, 2006:226; Joseph & Linley, 2005:5-9; Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000:647).

Wisdom was identified as a possible executive virtue and a new, and hopefully, more healthy therapeutic process was attempted with the participant. Existing measures for growth within the participant were evaluated and if any healthy measure was identified, it was validated by the therapist and used in the therapy. Thereafter measures for fulfilment were discussed and the virtue of wisdom was developed towards the attainment of a better, and ultimately, good life. The mastery of this measure was encouraged to enhance positive emotions of a good outcome. The goals of the therapeutic process were an increase in positive emotions, an increase in the general level of satisfaction with life over time and the reduction or absence of negative emotions. When other strengths were identified, attention was given to the interrelatedness of the strengths, but the main focus for this study was on the wisdom strength. The aim was to bring potential empirical evidence into the practice of Christian psychology and practical theology within the framework of positive psychology. Enhancing strengths and virtues can also effectively prevent psychological problems (Falkenstern et al., 2009:370; Maddux, 2008:66-67; Tugade & Fredrickson, 2007:323; Harris & Thoresen, 2006:34; Tan, 2006:69; Park et al., 2004:628;

5.2.2.3 Data gathering

For the purpose of data collection, and subsequent qualitative analysis, a number of interviews were conducted with participants. The interview schedule served as a point of departure for the semi-structured interviews. The focus of the qualitative study was to create the opportunity to arrive at knowledge that reflected the genuine and unique experience of the participants by using the possibility of a personal and deep relationship that can develop during a psychotherapeutic process. The participant was also given the opportunity to respond outside the boundaries of the interviewing schedule.

Possible participants were identified during intake interviews at a private psychological practice and asked if they would like to participate in the research regarding wisdom within the Christian framework of their psychotherapeutic process. It was discussed with them that a number of investigations have found that religious viewpoints, motivations, cognitions, practices and relationships are regularly drawn into the process of dealing with stressful life events (Loewenthal, 2007:7; Koenig et al., 2001:53-55; Argyle, 2000:13; Roberts, 2000:90-91; Pargament et al., 1998:77; Hood et al., 1996:23; Wulff, 1996:43-45). It was explained to them that a semi-structured interview would be the starting point in their therapeutic process and that they would have to repeat the interview at the end of their therapeutic process. It was made clear to them that they would have a valid psychotherapeutic process, but that the process would be guided by the identifiable wisdom principles as the executive virtue in their life.

The reliability of qualitative research is dependant on the consistency and neutrality of the researcher’s approach. The researcher maintained a neutral and unconditional attitude throughout the interviews in order not to influence the
responses from the participants. The researcher took detailed notes during the interviews to ensure that the data collection would be reliable over time. The participants did not complete the table of wisdom strengths, but the scores were deduced by the researcher from the information given by the participant during the evaluation (Maree, 2007:215; Hofstee, 2006:54; Henning, 2004:146; Mouton & Marais, 1996:79).

The detailed clinical notes and the evaluation forms used for the summaries of the research data are in the safekeeping of the researcher.

Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi (2006:39) provide an objective table to effectively diagnose behaviour in terms of the disorders of wisdom and knowledge. An adaptation of this table was used during the interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opposite</th>
<th>Absence</th>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>Exaggeration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Triteness</td>
<td>Conformity</td>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Eccentricity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boredom</td>
<td>Disinterest</td>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>Morbid curiosity / Nosiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gullibility</td>
<td>Unreflectiveness</td>
<td>Judgment</td>
<td>Cynicism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodoxy</td>
<td>Complacency</td>
<td>Love of learning</td>
<td>Know-it-all-ism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foolishness</td>
<td>Shallowness</td>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In using this table, the therapist can effectively determine where the client is lacking or overcompensating in terms of wise behaviour, and adjustment can become part of the therapeutic process. When these adjustments or growth opportunities have been achieved, the person can begin to move on to a state of happiness. The behaviour of the person can be placed along a continuum:

Opposite → Absence → Strength → Exaggeration
The aim of the therapeutic process, driven by the virtue of practical wisdom, was to *reposition* the client's behaviour towards the developed strength that is required for wise and successful living.

**Phase 1:**

Those clients who were willing to participate in the research took part in a semi-structured interview to determine their perspectives on the use of practical wisdom as the executive function of motivation for behaviour change in their lives.

The interviews were conducted as intake interviews for a psychotherapeutic process in a private practice of a registered psychologist. (See Appendix I.)

The interview explored the following:

- Biographical information (name, age, gender, home language, marital status)
- Evaluation of wisdom strengths in terms of absence, opposite or exaggeration
- Description of executive style of functioning in terms of decision making and motivation for behaviour change
- Description of biblical wisdom principles that the participant applies to his life at present

The researcher explained the concept of the research to the participants and clarified the importance of personal honesty. Interviews were conducted in English or Afrikaans, depending on the home language of the participant.
Phase 2:

A re-evaluation of the participants' thought processes regarding wisdom was done by repeating the interview and gaining their insights into how their knowledge had changed and whether the wisdom principles applied had influenced their process of behaviour change. (See Appendix II.)

The academic terminology in the interview was explained fully and a list of terms with their meaning was provided for clarification. (See appendix III.)

The study was done over a period of 18 months with the focus on short to medium term psychotherapy that entailed therapeutic processes that ranged from three to nine month periods.

5.2.2.4 Participants

The qualitative approach to research requires that a small number of participants should be identified in order for the diversity of elements in the research to be highlighted (Maree, 2007:38; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006:61; Richards, 2005:200; Corbetta, 2003:49-50; Furlong at al., 2000:533). The parameters of the sample were adult clients between the ages of 20 and 50 years. The sample had a mean age of 35.44. A total of 18 participants were identified of whom 11 were female and 7 male. 16 participants (eventual sample n=16) completed their therapeutic process, 9 female (56.25%) and 7 male (43.75%). The ethnic make-up of the sample was 100% Caucasian. The two participants who did not complete their therapeutic process terminated their therapy. As the research had its focus on biblical wisdom principles, all the participants who were selected indicated that they have a Christian faith perspective.
5.2.3 Data analysis

5.2.3.1 Personal information

Case 1: 45 year old Afrikaans-speaking, single woman, personal assistant to a CEO, Christian upbringing and active Christian life for approximately 20 years

Case 2: 27 year old English-speaking single man, chartered accountant, Christian upbringing and active Christian life for 5 years

Case 3: 46 year old English-speaking divorced man, businessman, Catholic upbringing and 2 year active Christian life

Case 4: 31 year old Afrikaans-speaking, single woman, writer, Christian upbringing and active Christian life for approximately 20 years

Case 5: 37 year old Afrikaans-speaking, married, but separated woman, advertising executive, Christian upbringing and active Christian life for approximately 20 years

Case 6: 40 year old Afrikaans-speaking married man, teacher, Christian upbringing and active Christian life for 4 years

Case 7: 28 year old Afrikaans-speaking single man, computer operator, Christian upbringing and active Christian life for 2 years

Case 8: 35 year old English-speaking divorced woman, attorney, Jewish upbringing and active Christian life for 15 years

Case 9: 32 year old Afrikaans-speaking single woman, banker, Christian upbringing and active Christian life for 10 years
Case 10: 49 year old Afrikaans-speaking married man, business analyst, Christian upbringing and 4 years of active Christian life

Case 11: Withdrew from study

Case 12: 39 year old Afrikaans-speaking married woman, accountant, Christian upbringing and active Christian life for 15 years

Case 13: 24 year old Afrikaans-speaking single woman, insurance broker, Christian upbringing and active Christian life for 12 year

Case 14: Withdrew from study

Case 15: 20 year old Afrikaans-speaking single woman, student, Christian upbringing and active Christian life for 7 years

Case 16: 32 year old Afrikaans/English-speaking married, but separated woman, housewife, Christian upbringing and active Christian life for 15 years

Case 17: 32 year old Afrikaans/English-speaking married man, IT manager, Christian upbringing and active Christian life for 5 years

Case 18: 50 year old Afrikaans-speaking widower, public servant, Christian upbringing and active Christian life for 30 years
5.2.3.2 Evaluation of information during phase 1 of research

5.2.3.2.1 Evaluation of wisdom strengths

The wisdom strengths of the 16 participants were evaluated by the researcher according to the information gathered during the interview in phase 1 (see Appendix I) and the totals of the 80 interpretations are summarized in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opposite</th>
<th>Absence</th>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>Exaggeration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Triteness</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Conformity</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boredom</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Disinterest</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gullibility</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Unreflectiveness</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodoxy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Complacency</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foolishness</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Shallowness</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Summary of wisdom strengths of participants during phase 1

From the results it can be seen that all the participants rated themselves as lacking in the developed strengths of wisdom. Only one participant rated himself as already having developed curiosity and perspective during phase 1 of the research.

5.2.3.2.2 Executive style of functioning

During phase 1 of the research the participants described their executive styles of functioning, their chief motivators and guidance in their life, as follows:

- Avoidance of emotional and physical pain
- Advice from other significant people
• Need for happiness
• Need for superior knowledge
• Money
• Career and personal success
• Physical beauty
• Wanting the 'good life'
• Success in life
• Status
• Wanting personal happiness
• Greater connection with God
• Avoidance of disappointment
• Avoidance of people
• Wanting to be emotionally safe and secure
• Changing the cycle of hurt
• Happiness with her husband and children
• Success as wife and mother
• Guidance from God through prayer
• Seeking the will of God
• Avoiding abuse
• Being independent from others
• Avoiding anxiety
• Using knowledge through books to improve life
• Need to be seen as clever and happy
• Avoidance of depression
• Power
• Beauty
• Wants to be in control
• Wants a safe life
• Avoiding risks
• Predictability in life
• Happiness with wife and children
• Wants to feel good about his life
• Wants his life to be real
• Wants peace and joy
• Wants to please God
• Wants to be a good example to others
• Has avoided making choices about her life
• Anger and resentment drives her
• Avoidance of conflict
• Wanting happiness for herself and her son
• If it sounds right, she does it
• If it feels right, she does it
• Excitement
• Sometimes she asks her parents for advice
• Better quality of life
• Wants to perform well in life
• Success – wanting to be the best
• Wants to be considered wise

5.2.3.2.3 Biblical wisdom principles

The results from the evaluation during phase 1 of the research regarding the biblical principles of wisdom used by the participants are the following:

• Read parts of Scripture
• Obedience to God
• Avoidance of sin
• Forgiveness
• Obeying the Ten Commandments
• Taking care of the poor
• Being generous with what he has
• To be a good parent as it is an instruction from God
• To be conservative in behaviour
• Listen to the voice of God
• Asking for God's grace
• Take care of the needy and the old
• Try not to gossip
• Follow the laws of the Bible
• Avoid situation were I can stumble in sin
• Take care of my mother
• Grace for others
• Surrender to God
• Help others
• Loving God and others

5.2.3.3 Evaluation of information during phase 2 of research

5.2.3.3.1 Evaluation of wisdom strengths

During phase 2 of the study the wisdom strengths of the 16 participants were evaluated by the researcher according to the information gathered from the interview during phase 2 of the research. Some of their strengths were adjusted and is shown after their psychotherapeutic process (see Appendix II). The totals of the 80 evaluations are summarized in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opposite</th>
<th>Absence</th>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>Exaggeration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Triteness</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Conformity</td>
<td>2 Creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boredom</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Disinterest</td>
<td>0 Curiosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gullibility</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Unreflectiveness</td>
<td>0 Judgment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodoxy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Complacency</td>
<td>4 Love of learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foolishness</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Shallowness</td>
<td>0 Perspective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the results it can be seen that the participants rated themselves as having developed well in terms of the strengths of wisdom during the process of psychotherapy, where they were exposed to the principles of practical wisdom.

5.2.3.3.2 Executive style of functioning

During phase 2 of the research the participants described their executive styles of functioning, their chief motivators and guidance in their life, as the following:

- Less focus on what others want and more focus on one's needs
- Clearer value system
- Clearer knowledge of my beliefs
- Less focus on emotions
- Focus on what God wants for my life and less focus on status symbols
- Knowledge of God's character
- Responsibility for my life's outcomes
- Greater connection to God
- Less driven by money and status
- Positive outcomes in relationship with daughter
- An understanding of what I want from life
- Happiness and a full life
- Obedience to God
- Connection with people and God
- Knowledge and wisdom – knowing what I am busy with
- Greater insight into personal choices
- Dependence on God
- I want to please God
- Peace in my life
- Good relationships with people
• I want to be successful
• Being wise has a direct impact on the balance of my life
• I want to validate my own life by my value system
• I do not want to do any harm to people
• Honesty with self and others
• Excellent relationship with God
• Peaceful life
• A safe life in Christ
• Wisdom shows my value system for what it is and motivates me to live by my own values
• I use my knowledge to choose well
• Wisdom can change old patterns of behaviour
• I evaluate the context before deciding
• Responsibility to my religion by active choice
• Guided by God's character and my own character in him
• I choose actively to change my behaviour in accordance to new information about wise living
• Applying the principles of biblical wisdom
• I see wisdom change my behaviour
• Responsibility and maturity in choices
• I see wisdom integrating my life
• God gives me status because He is my Father
• God gives me wisdom by my dependence on him

5.2.3.3 Biblical wisdom principles

The following results were obtained from the evaluation regarding which biblical principles of wisdom the participants had developed in their lives during phase 2 of the research:
• Dependence on God
• Without God's input in my life, nothing is possible
• Reading and applying specific scriptures from Proverbs
• Compassion for self and others
• Trust in God and believing that He intends good for me
• I must want to change and surrender to God
• I must be humble
• God has the final say – his justice is final on a matter
• I have to be creative and active in my relationships in order to grow emotionally and spiritually
• I must be connected to God on a daily basis
• I must love God
• Wisdom brings down my levels of anxiety
• God is always available to me
• There has to be order in my life
• Wisdom brings freedom to my life, I am no longer bound by old habits
• I create the order in my life
• I must choose to surrender to God
• Wisdom brings new behaviour
• I am free to choose God's will
• I have to know who God is
• I must trust God
• I must be humble about myself
• I live by God's grace
• The life of Jesus is the example of wisdom to follow practically
• I am part of God's plan
• I have the right to choose
• My dependence on God must be visible to others
• I can only know who I am if I know who God is
• Life needs God's order
• My body, my emotions, my intellect and my spirit needs God's order for me to accept his guidance
• God is the number one priority in my life
• Love is wisdom
• God is my provider, not people
• I have trust in God and I order my life
• I have to surrender my will to God's will

5.3 DISCUSSION OF EMPIRICAL RESULTS

The detailed clinical notes from which the summaries of the research have been made are in the safekeeping of the researcher. The responses from the participants were categorized by the researcher according to the five identified strengths of wisdom and the Old Testament and New Testament wisdom principles identified in Chapters 2 and 3. From the clinical notes and the evaluation forms the researcher interpreted and categorized the experiences by the participants. The findings are discussed below.

PHASE 1:

At the onset of the study the participants indicated that they had not developed their strengths in terms of wisdom. Most indicated an absence of these strengths, some indicated that their behaviour was of the opposite nature of the strength and some indicated that there was an exaggeration of the strength. Only one participant indicated that he was of the opinion that he had already developed two of the strengths during the intake interview.

The results show a high frequency of responses in the executive function part of the interview that indicated that most of the participants were using avoidance as
a motivator for behaviour. Other high frequency responses included the motivators of money, status, power and the need for happiness.

During the intake interview participants frequently indicated that their perceptions regarding biblical principles of wisdom meant adhering to the Ten Commandments. Avoidance of sin was also a high scorer in this phase. It was clear that the participants focussed primarily on the aspect of obedience to biblical law during this phase of the research.

PHASE 2:

Phase 2 interviews were conducted at the end of the participants' therapeutic processes. During these interviews they evaluated their developed levels of wisdom in terms of the wisdom strengths. All the participants indicated that their level of wisdom had developed into strengths. There were indications from participants that some of the strengths needed further growth, but for the most part they were satisfied with their development. Most realized that it would entail a process of maintenance to keep these strengths in balance.

The results from the executive function section of the interviews indicate a high frequency of the participants with of a better insight into their value system. Most of them indicated that their level of knowledge had increased substantially and that they have a far more informed view on wisdom. Most of them indicated that their change of behaviour is more informed by the principles which they now know and employ to stay motivated.

The participants' perceptions and knowledge regarding biblical wisdom changed significantly during the therapeutic process. The focus shifted from being merely obedient to biblical law, to an active interaction with God and relationship-based behaviour. Most of the participants indicated that dependence on God was the most important wisdom principle to which they now adhered. The active seeking
of God’s will for their lives rated high in the responses. Many indicated that love was a significant insight into wisdom. The discovery that God's order and an ordered life imply wisdom was a high frequency insight.

5.3.1 Summary of results

5.3.1.1 Wisdom strengths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wisdom strength</th>
<th>Highest frequency interpretation Phase 1</th>
<th>Highest frequency interpretation Phase 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Conformity</td>
<td>Creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>Disinterest</td>
<td>Curiosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judgment</td>
<td>Cynicism</td>
<td>Judgment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love of learning</td>
<td>Complacency</td>
<td>Love of learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td>Shallowness</td>
<td>Perspective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Summary of wisdom strengths evaluation during phase 1 and phase 2

From the table it is clear that, during the second phase interviews on the wisdom strengths evaluation, it was the perception of the researcher and the participants that an adjustment towards attainment of the actual strength of wisdom had taken place.
5.3.1.2 Executive style of functioning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executive style of functioning</th>
<th>Executive style of functioning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Phase 2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>Insight into personal value system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money, status, power</td>
<td>Far more informed view of wisdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for happiness</td>
<td>Principles motivate behaviour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Summary of executive style of functioning during phase 1 and phase 2

From the table it is clear that, during the second phase evaluation of the executive style of functioning, it was the perception of the researcher and the participants that an adjustment had taken place regarding choice of style. This perception included the possibility that these driving forces may be replaced by higher level styles of functioning such as value system, principles and wisdom.

5.3.1.3 Biblical wisdom principles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biblical wisdom principles</th>
<th>Biblical wisdom principles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Phase 2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adhering to the Ten Commandments</td>
<td>Active interaction with God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance of sin</td>
<td>Relationship-based obedience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obedience to biblical law</td>
<td>Dependence on God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Active seeking of God's will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Love as an insight into wisdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An ordered life brings wisdom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Summary of biblical wisdom principles during phase 1 and phase 2
From the table it is clear that the interpretation by the researcher and the participants regarding the knowledge and application of biblical wisdom principles had changed during the course of the therapeutic process. These interpretations show a shift from Old Testament wisdom knowledge toward the wisdom principles advocated by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, as discussed in Chapter 4.

The researcher was invited to attend and present the research findings of this investigation by means of poster presentations at the First World Congress of Positive Psychology in Philadelphia in June 2009 (International Positive Psychology Association, 2009:33).

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Some of the limitations of the present research should be noted. Generalizations based on the current findings should be made with caution as the study relies on a sample of clients at a private psychological practice, indicating a narrow cultural context. Although the character of the sample impacts external validity, the findings are not without value when elucidated within context of a psychotherapeutic process for Christian clients. Future research could be carried out on a more varied population.

The therapeutic process was directed at the wisdom strengths, but it is acknowledged that other aspects of the psychotherapeutic process could have impacted the change in the behaviour and thought patterns of the participants.
5.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter the research within the qualitative approach was discussed. Research dynamics such as data collection, reliability and ethical considerations were addressed. 18 clients in a psychology practice were identified as participants and 16 completed the study. Participants found that the principles of practical wisdom were applied with some success in their psychotherapeutic process, and they acquired some new and possibly applicable knowledge regarding a more successful and well-lived life.

5.6 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

From the conclusions drawn from the empirical research, it can be said that practical wisdom as executive virtue in the psychotherapeutic process has possibly been used with some positive effect to drive a process of personal growth and exploration for the clients in this study.

In the next chapter the researcher will present his integrated pastoral-theological model of the executive virtue of wisdom within the context of positive psychology. The perspectives which were gained from the Biblical data from Old and New Testament analysis on wisdom, as well as the insights attained from the fields of philosophy and psychology will be incorporated with the empirical findings in a hermeneutical interaction to form a model.
5.7 REFERENCES


**KEY CONCEPTS**

- Meta-theoretical perspectives
- Positive Psychology
- Practical wisdom
- Empirical study
- Executive style of functioning
- Wisdom principles
- Human functioning

**KERNBEGRIFFE**

- Meta-teoretiese perspektiewe
- Positiewe Sielkunde
- Praktiese wysheid
- Empiriese studie
- Uitvoerende funksioneringstyl
- Wysheidsbeginsels
- Menslike funksionering
CHAPTER 6

(ARTICLE 5)

Pastoral-theological perspectives on applying practical wisdom as foundational virtue within the positive psychology framework

ABSTRACT

In this article an integrated pastoral-theological model on the executive virtue of practical wisdom in positive psychology is presented. Perspectives on wisdom from scriptural viewpoints are used to guide the client towards replacing existing executive functions with biblical wisdom principles. Old Testament wisdom elements and the Sermon on the Mount are used as a manifesto for successful living and from reading the Beatitudes as part of the Sermon on the Mount, the deduction is made that successful living is dependant on a relationship with God. The life of Jesus Christ is a visible and measurable practical example of successful and wisdom living. There are psychologists and philosophers who support the notion that practical wisdom is the executive virtue that enables all other virtues to operate more effectively. The goal of a balanced life is easier to achieve when practical wisdom is employed, allowing the person greater control and insight. The value system of the person is supported (or upheld) by wisdom principles. Increased knowledge regarding virtues and character traits will lead to a higher level of personal functioning and ultimately increase the probability of a well-lived life characterized by authentic happiness. The executive virtue will have the primary influence on the efficacy, functionality and execution of the rest of the set of virtues. Using the transformative initiative, which is part of the therapeutic intervention, will help the person to focus on the positive outcome of behaviour change.
In this article a integrated pastoral-theological model for the executive function of practical wisdom within the field of positive psychology is proposed. Perspectives on practical wisdom from a scriptural angle is brought to the client with the assumption that old thinking patterns will be replaced. Old Testament wisdom elements and the Sermon on the Mount are used as a manifestation for a successful and happy life. When the promises are read, it can be concluded that a successful and happy life depends on a relationship with God. The life of Jesus Christ is a measurable and visible example of a life led by the executive function of practical wisdom. There are psychologists and philosophers who support the principle that practical wisdom is a virtue that enables all other virtues and character traits. It is easier to achieve the goal of a balanced life when the person applies practical wisdom to gain more control and insight into their life. The value system of the person is revealed when the person begins to strive for practical wisdom in their life. An increased level of knowledge about virtues and character traits leads to the person achieving a more developed level of personal functioning. This lifestyle is characterized by genuine happiness. The executive function in the person's life will directly influence the effectiveness and executability of the other character traits and virtues. The use of the transformative initiative helps the person to focus on the positive outcomes of behavior change and not on how difficult or impossible the challenge may seem.
6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher presents the integrated pastoral-theological model on the executive virtue of wisdom in positive psychology. Perspectives were gained from the biblical data from Old and New Testament analyses on wisdom, and insights from the fields of philosophy and psychology were assimilated. These will be incorporated with the empirical findings and all the components will be put into a hermeneutical interaction to form the proposed pastoral-theological model.

At no point in the proposed model is it implied that practical wisdom principles can or should replace any clinical or counselling insights, diagnoses or interventions. Practical wisdom, for the purpose of this proposed model, is seen as the motivator for therapeutic change within the context of a Christian client's therapeutic process.

6.2 PROPOSED MODEL

The model of Lotter (2007) was implemented during this investigation. The theory behind this model is only discussed in Lotter's inaugural address and has not been explained elsewhere, and one trusts that this will be done sometime in the future. The model correlates with the basic components of the models of Zerfass and Heitink (as was explained in Chapter 1). Lotter's model consists of three dimensions: scriptural perspectives, the context and the pastoral-theological model. In the model it is proposed that the scriptural perspectives that are attained through exegesis will have influence on the context of the proposed study, on the empirical aspects of the study undertaken and the literature that will be used. These scriptural perspectives will impact on the proposed theological model. The context of the study, the literature research and the empirical study will also have an effect on the scriptural perspectives. It is in
the reciprocity and inter-connectedness of the process that the pastoral-theological model is formulated.

Figure 1: Lotter (2007:4)

6.3 PERSPECTIVES ON WISDOM FROM SCRIPTURAL PERSPECTIVES AND THE CONTEXT

From the literature review on Old Testament wisdom, as shown in Chapter 2 of this investigation it was concluded that successful living is dependant on the application of wisdom principles. These principles are measurable in behaviour. Applying wisdom to behaviour results in a new and valid perspective. The order that God intended for the world is closely associated with wisdom teachings. The outcomes of future behaviour are dependant on the choices of the present. God is seen as the ultimate source of wisdom, and wisdom is directed to the world. God is seen as the regulator of wisdom. Therefore man needs to trust God and surrender to his intentions, because wisdom is not possible without belief in God. Obedience and trust creates the context for revelation of wisdom. It is in this
interaction with God that man can access the heart of God. Anxiety is alleviated by the practice of wisdom principles. The person can now create greater order in his life, submitting to God the Creator.

Old Testament wisdom literature can be applied to everyday life and may lead to a well-lived life.

The Sermon on the Mount can be regarded as a manifesto for successful living, as discussed in Chapter 3 of this investigation. The grace that God shows to people stands foremost, bringing abundant blessing to the person's life. Jesus instructs the reader on the principles of life and explains the concept of joyful participation in everyday life. The life of Jesus is an example of truthful living. When reading the Beatitudes, the deduction is made that the final justification for life lies in the authority of God.

The teachings state that happiness is received from God and that through his grace negative circumstances can be overcome. This is available to all people but has a pre-requisite of surrender to God. In this surrender, dependence on God is implied and understood.

The Beatitudes can be used effectively as directors of behaviour to educate and empower the reader towards a more successful and balanced life. This life will be typified by modesty, mournful remorse, surrender to God, a hunger for deliverance, compassion, seeking God's will and seeking peace.

In following the instructions given in the Beatitudes, a process of psychological development of the soul, from humility to ultimate wisdom can be identified. The Sermon on the Mount gives guidance to changing the vicious cycle of behaviour that leads to destruction, called the transforming initiative. To change an incorrect focus is the main aim of the activity. Jesus instructs on an internal adjustment that becomes evident in behaviour.
The life of Jesus is a visible and measurable practical example of wisdom living. The behaviour patterns displayed by Jesus Christ should be followed. The acceptance of full dependence on God is the pre-requisite for this insight to become reality in the life of the person.

It is deduced that wisdom teachings found in the Sermon on the Mount can be used effectively to enable the reader to achieve personal happiness in everyday life. It is concluded further that the principle of the transforming initiative may be used in a valid psychotherapeutic process by the Christian psychologist with Christian clients.

Wisdom is closely related to the fields of philosophy and psychology, as discussed in Chapter 4 of this investigation. The point of departure within the positive psychology movement is closely connected to the Aristotelian viewpoint of wisdom and effective living.

There are philosophers and psychologists who support the notion that practical wisdom is the executive virtue that enables all other virtues to operate more effectively. The goal of a balanced life is easier to attain when practical wisdom is employed, allowing the person greater emotional control and insight. The value system of the person is highlighted by the application of the wisdom principles. It is within this value system that the virtue of wisdom can become the chief operator of choice and measurable behaviour change.

The philosophical viewpoint of a psychologist will determine whether the client has the benefit of a therapeutic process driven by wisdom principles and insights.

From the information gathered through the literature study it can be concluded that the practice of wisdom principles is an essential part of the psychotherapeutic process and can be used successfully to facilitate personal growth and personal well-being in the client.
In order to confirm what had been researched on practical wisdom as the executive virtue by the scriptural perspectives and the literature study (as part of the context), an empirical study was also undertaken. During the intake interviews the participants evaluated their levels of developed wisdom as weak. Most of them indicated an absence, an opposite reaction to the strength or an exaggeration of the strength. The participants were mainly using avoidance of negative outcomes, money, status, power and a need for happiness as their primary motivators for behaviour. The perceived biblical wisdom was seen as obedience to biblical law and avoidance of sin.

The final interviews were done at the end of the therapeutic process. The participants reported that their wisdom strengths had developed from absence, opposition and exaggeration to effective behavioural motivators. They reported that their motivators for behaviour had shifted to a better insight into their value system and that their level of knowledge regarding wisdom had increased. The perceptions and knowledge of the participants regarding biblical wisdom changed significantly during their therapeutic process. The Old Testament focus on the obedience to biblical law had developed to an understanding that the New Testament focus was on love and relationship with God. They came to the understanding that order was needed to function within wisdom and that dependence on God was essential.

The findings from the empirical research indicate that the psychotherapeutic process could have been effectively influenced by employing wisdom as the executive virtue to promote personal change and individual exploration for the clients in this study, and therefore support and validate the preceding research.
6.4 PROPOSED PASTORAL-THEOLOGICAL MODEL

Keeping in mind the results of the above-mentioned research on wisdom as executive virtue, the model will now be presented and proposed as a guideline to be used in therapy. This will be done in the following way:

1. The use of wisdom strengths
2. Determining of executive style of functioning
3. The use of biblical wisdom principles

6.4.1 The use of wisdom strengths

During the initial evaluation process of a therapeutic intervention the Christian client can be made aware of the concept of practical wisdom as an executive virtue that will direct and guide the internal process of personal growth. The virtue can also direct visible and measurable behaviour change by bringing the person into contact with his value system.

The wisdom strengths identified in and clarified by Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi (2006:41-43) are used to educate the client regarding the presence, absence, opposition or exaggeration of practical wisdom. The client has to evaluate his position in terms of the five desired strengths. A description and clarification of each of the terms are provided and the therapist assists the client in an objective process of identifying possible growth areas in wisdom.

It is explained to the client that behaviour can be placed along a continuum in order to determine therapeutic goals and possible growth areas. As soon as these areas have been identified, the main presenting problem or complaint or symptom can be addressed within the framework of wisdom strengths. This will give an indication to the therapist and the client of where the therapeutic focus should be. It is the contention of the researcher that these identifiable growth
areas on the wisdom continuum are often the stumbling blocks in the path to successful resolution of the presenting problem. The underlying behavioural, emotional, intellectual or spiritual principle that blocks wisdom is often the source for the dysfunctional behaviour, inappropriate thought, negative emotion or lack of spiritual insight. Given enough time, powerful modelling and/or conditioned responses, this faulty principle becomes entrenched in the life of the person and renders the person dysfunctional on a variety of levels.

**Table 1: PRACTICE-THEORETICAL INTERVENTIONS REGARDING WISDOM STRENGTHS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Practical arrangements: Set up a therapeutic process with the client, indicating an approximate number of sessions and provide the client with a basic outline of the therapeutic process.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td><strong>Therapeutic action:</strong> Ensure that the client understands that there is no right or wrong positioning, but that the intervention is aimed at a desired outcome, determined by himself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td><strong>Therapeutic action:</strong> Explain the principles of positive psychology and the focus on wholeness of the individual, incorporating physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual components.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td><strong>Therapeutic action:</strong> Give the client reading material regarding the strengths of wisdom and allow the client to evaluate his behaviour subjectively. (See Appendix III for clarification and definition of wisdom terms.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td><strong>Therapeutic action:</strong> Determine whether the client has people in his life who can aid with objectivity – encourage the client to ask about his behaviour and to incorporate these comments into his evaluation of measurable and visible behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td><strong>Therapeutic action:</strong> Explain the continuum and ensure that he understands that he will determine through choice where he eventually ends up in terms of visible and measurable behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td><strong>Therapeutic action:</strong> Ensure that he understands that an adjustment on the continuum is a process and not an event.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. **Therapeutic action:** Ensure that he understands that it is certainly possible for all people to grow in wisdom.

9. **Positive psychology therapeutic foundation:** Increased knowledge regarding virtues and character traits will lead to a higher level of personal functioning and ultimately increase the probability of a well-lived life, characterized by authentic happiness.

### 6.4.2 Determining executive style of functioning

The second part of the intervention entails an awareness exercise that enables the client to identify and accept the most important motivators in his life. The functions of these motivators are discussed during the interview and the therapist assists in the evaluating process in terms of the continuum of wisdom strengths. The client then identifies potential growth areas in relation to his presenting problem. The principles of wisdom are then applied in a process to achieve the desired outcomes of behaviour change, emotional insight, personal decisions or activation of a new thought pattern.

| Table 2: PRACTICE-THEORETICAL INTERVENTIONS REGARDING EXECUTIVE STYLE OF FUNCTIONING |
| --- | --- |
| **1. Therapeutic action:** determine primary internal motivators, such as need for recognition, happiness, peace |  |
| **2. Therapeutic action:** determine primary external motivators, such as money, status, beauty, recognition by peers |  |
| **3. Therapeutic action:** evaluate these motivators in terms of the wisdom strength continuum – determine to what extent these motivators influence the positioning on the wisdom scale |  |
| **4. Therapeutic action:** identify possible areas of desired development that the client would like to achieve in the therapeutic intervention |  |
| **5. Therapeutic action:** connect these desired outcomes to measurable |  |
behave change that would be motivated by the wisdom principle and would move the client on the continuum towards the desired position

6. **Therapeutic action**: set a realistic timeline for the internal and/or external changes to become visible and measurable

7. **Therapeutic action**: identify possible sabotaging behaviour, thoughts and actions by exploring the clinical history of the patient and then creating a therapeutic awareness of the possibilities of old and negative behavioural patterns

8. **Therapeutic action**: identify clearly defined therapeutic goals that are attainable within the client's context

9. **Therapeutic action**: suggest the possible outcome that wisdom can integrate the person's life

10. **Therapeutic action**: clarify that wisdom impacts on the general well-being and balance of life

11. **Positive psychology therapeutic foundation**: the executive virtue and/or trait will have the primary influence on the efficacy, functionality and execution of the rest of the set of virtues and/or traits

---

**6.4.3 The use of biblical wisdom principles**

During the third part of the interview it is determined what biblical principles of wisdom the client is aware of and if any of these are being implemented in his life at present. The evaluation of the current behaviour will provide the context for possible growth areas in terms of biblical wisdom principles. As the therapeutic process continues, the biblical wisdom principles are made practical by introducing them to the client as an appropriate intervention. The client then starts to apply the principle within the context of the presenting problem.

Christian clients who choose to employ the biblical teachings of wisdom during their psychotherapeutic process must then identify for themselves that the teachings from scripture are truths and that wisdom should be applied to the
execution of therapeutic goals. These clients accept the direct instructions from
the words of Jesus and have to take the necessary action (Adams, 1999:592).
As a result, these clients can start to change effectively and motivate their
behaviour so that the therapeutic interventions can facilitate them with the life
that they actively seek and believe in. As they broaden their base of knowledge
regarding positive outcomes to problem areas, they have a greater chance to
experience well-being (Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002:175).

The Sermon on the Mount can be used effectively in practical wisdom application
during this phase of the therapeutic process. As seen in Chapter 3 of this
investigation, Augustine interprets the Beatitudes as psychological steps that the
soul takes in its development. The first step is to develop humility, being the
consequence of the fear that the person has for God's judgment. From this
position of humility the soul rises to the knowledge found in scripture. The
highest point to attain is that of wisdom itself. Therefore the client has to identify
with the notion that practical wisdom will be the executive virtue that will drive the
development and maintenance of all other virtues and strengths.

To enable the person to experience interaction with God during the therapeutic
process, the client has to contemplate truth and find peace amidst the presenting
problem. Peace is found when the person can release the anxiety regarding the
future into God's hands and therefore become one with the will of God, knowing
that it is good (Shore, 2002:15).

The researcher applies the principle that personal development of the Christian
client in psychotherapy is dependant on acquiring knowledge on practical
wisdom and it is implied that the higher levels of consciousness that are needed
for this development can only fully develop in wisdom.

The principle of the *transformative initiative* discussed in Chapter 3 of this
investigation is used during this phase of the model. The vicious cycle of wrong
choices can only be broken by a plan that involves change of the individual's
attitude and behaviour. During this intervention, there has to be a commitment and faithfulness to God. The teaching is clear that the reader should be focussed on God in trust and prayer. This transformative initiative brings the person into the company of the 'dynamically present Father', who becomes an active partner in the therapeutic process (Stassen, 2006:170-171).

Transforming initiative implies three types of changes that can be expected:

1. It transforms the client who is experiencing dysfunction.

2. It transforms the relationship that is characterized by dysfunction.

3. It hopes to bring change to the people in relationship to the client.

These therapeutic interventions focus on the positive and measurable outcomes of the transformation and not on pessimistic prohibitions that are experienced as teachings that are impossible to obey. The accent shifts to the positive transforming initiatives that lead the client to his personal growth experience. From the results achieved by Aspinwall (1998:27) laughter and happiness may have a maintaining role to play in well-being over time. The person learns to see the good in life, even in adverse situations. Christian ethics are therefore fed by these real, practical and grace-based teachings of transformation. Christian wisdom is promoted effectively by the reality consequences that follow the obedience of the teachings.

For example, the client presenting with high anxiety starts to apply the principle that wisdom is connected to God’s order and is regulated by God. If the client has the developed value that this is the internalized truth by which he now chooses to live, the symptom of anxiety can be addressed by releasing control to God in a process driven by the stabilized value of the wisdom principle. Another person may be experiencing relationship discord and he can start to apply the biblical wisdom principle that forgiveness and compassion are elements in
biblical wisdom living. Then the client can start to choose the principles of forgiveness and compassion in the relationship and be motivated by the internalized value. The wisdom principle therefore aids the therapeutic process because the client is highly motivated by a value and belief system.

According to Powlinson (2000:222) faith, within the context of psychotherapy, calls for 'radical reorientation demanded by God-centered, God-interpreted and God-ruled reality'.

As Christians develop on intellectual, practical and institutional levels within the field of psychology and psychotherapy, a distinctive field of psychology emerges, which can have great impact on the practitioners of psychology.

Table 3: PRACTICE-THEORETICAL INTERVENTIONS REGARDING BIBLICAL WISDOM PRINCIPLES

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Therapeutic action</strong>: determine whether the client would be interested in using practical wisdom as the executive virtue in his therapeutic process/life by explaining the theory of this model and the implication of the <em>transformation</em> initiative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Therapeutic action</strong>: determine whether the client has the perception that wisdom is primarily an Old Testament attitude of adhering to biblical law and avoidance of sin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Therapeutic action</strong>: determine whether the client has a perception of the New Testament principles of wisdom involving the teachings of Jesus Christ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>Therapeutic action</strong>: provide the client with the biblical wisdom principle that wisdom inspires behaviour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <strong>Therapeutic action</strong>: provide the client with the biblical wisdom that wisdom is connected with Godly order</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. <strong>Therapeutic action</strong>: discuss the insight that biblical wisdom is aimed at the reality of daily living for the believer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Therapeutic action:</td>
<td>evaluate with the client the belief that wisdom is regulated by God and received from God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Therapeutic action:</td>
<td>confirm the insight with the client that practical wisdom needs trust and belief in God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Therapeutic action:</td>
<td>provide the client with the challenge that practical wisdom is revealed through obedience to the teachings of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Therapeutic action:</td>
<td>challenge the client with the insight that love for God and fellow man activates wisdom behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Therapeutic action:</td>
<td>allow the client to experiment with the knowledge that practical wisdom actually reduces anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Therapeutic action:</td>
<td>enquire from the client if there is proof in his life that wisdom leads to order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Therapeutic action:</td>
<td>bring insight to the client that wisdom is available to all people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Therapeutic action:</td>
<td>challenge the client to explore the possibility that practical wisdom will lead the person to a hunger for deliverance from negative aspects of his life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Therapeutic action:</td>
<td>motivate the client to explore the will of God for his life, also concerning the presenting problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Therapeutic action:</td>
<td>provide the client with the possible choice of allowing compassion into his life as an act of practical wisdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Therapeutic action:</td>
<td>suggest a process of surrendering to the will of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Therapeutic foundation:</td>
<td>a consciously developed spirituality regarding practical wisdom as the executive virtue aids in the well-being of Christians in a psychotherapeutic process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Positive psychology therapeutic foundation:</td>
<td>the <em>transformative initiative</em> is focussed on the positive outcome of behaviour change and not on the impossibility or difficulty of the teaching</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.5 THERAPEUTIC PROCESS

Once the client has identified the principles of biblical wisdom with which he is most comfortable, application of these principles can begin on a practical level. This process of clarification might take some time as the client has to explore his belief system and evaluate whether what he has always believed is still applicable in his life today. This knowledge, new or rediscovered, forms the basis of the therapeutic process driven by practical wisdom.

6.6 EVALUATION OF personal AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Wisdom is not the primary aim of the therapeutic intervention, but a tool to assist the therapist and the client to achieve a more effective, outcomes-based, measurable result of personal growth.

Towards termination of the therapeutic process a follow-up interview is conducted to enable the client to effectively evaluate his personal growth during the therapy. During this interview the client evaluates his developed levels of wisdom in terms of the wisdom strengths.

Knowledge and insight into executive styles are also re-evaluated to determine measurable change. The result of this evaluation can indicate to the client that an advanced level of knowledge and insight has developed compared to when the therapy was started. The perceptions and knowledge regarding biblical wisdom are also evaluated during this interview to determine whether the client has developed a sense of practical wisdom in their day-to-day living. This model could possibly be applied to some therapeutic contexts, providing the client has the ability to comprehend the concepts and that the spiritual dimensions fit into his religious frame of reference.
From the findings it appears that the group selected for the study had a positive predisposition regarding attaining the personal strength of wisdom because of their Christian frame of reference.

6.7 SUMMARY

In this chapter a pastoral-theological model for the executive virtue of practical wisdom within the positive psychology framework has been proposed for a psychotherapeutic approach, following the research which was described in the previous chapters. It was concluded that this proposed model could possibly be applied during the process of psychotherapy with Christian clients and may be recommended to other therapists for evaluation and possibly to follow and apply certain principles as well.
6.8 REFERENCES


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY CONCEPTS</th>
<th>KERNBEGRIFFE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral-theological perspectives</td>
<td>Pastoral-teologiese perspektiewe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical wisdom</td>
<td>Praktiese wysheid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtue</td>
<td>Deug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive psychology</td>
<td>Positiewe sielkunde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformative initiative</td>
<td>Transformerende inisiatief</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY AND COLLECTIVE INFERENCE OF PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS, FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

7.1 SUMMARY

This study, titled 'Practical Wisdom as executive virtue for Positive Psychology: a Pastoral-Theological evaluation', was written in article format as permitted by the rules of the North-West University, but is presented as a research unit for the purpose of this thesis.

The central theoretical statement of this investigation is that practical wisdom as an executive virtue within positive psychology may be applied in a pastoral-theological paradigm.

The rationale of the investigation was to suggest possible guidelines to equip Christian psychologists with an effective and valid methodology to treat clients within the framework of positive psychology, using the guidelines of wisdom as an executive virtue. In order to attain a valid methodology, the researcher met the proposed objectives:

- To investigate and clarify the scriptural perspectives found on practical wisdom in the Old and New Testament
- To investigate how positive psychology defines and explains the main virtues in the theory
- To investigate how practical wisdom can be used as an 'executive' virtue
- To investigate by way of an empirical study how practical wisdom can be applied in order to incorporate it into a valid theory so that
Christians can have the benefit of relevant psychological theory practiced within the boundaries of Christian belief.

- To propose a counselling model founded on the theoretical principles of positive psychology that can be effectively defended and integrated from a balanced biblical point of view.

Chapter 2 evaluated whether biblical wisdom, as found in the Old Testament, can be applied to achieve a level of successful living. The most apparent concepts of wisdom were evaluated for the purpose of determining their possible application in a psychotherapeutic process. The chapter consists of a historical literary study, focusing on the biblical text. Early wisdom literature in the Old Testament dealt explicitly with ethical instruction. Applying these teachings to contemporary psychotherapy required from the researcher to connect the times we live in to the social structures of the time when the teachings were written.

In Chapter 3 the wisdom teachings of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) were explored to determine whether these teachings are applicable in a valid and responsible psychotherapeutic process involving Christian clients. The question arose whether these clients would be motivated to explore the issues presented in the Sermon on the Mount as a guideline for therapeutic interventions.

Chapter 4 provided a literature study of wisdom in the fields of philosophy, general psychology and more specifically, positive psychology. The specific role wisdom has to play in these fields of study was discussed.

Following the conclusions made from the basis-theoretical perspectives of the Old and New Testament and the meta-theoretical perspectives of philosophy and psychology on the virtue of practical wisdom, the objective of Chapter 5 was to evaluate by means of an empirical research project whether practical wisdom can be used effectively as the executive virtue in the process of psychotherapy with Christian clients.
In Chapter 6 the researcher presented the integrated pastoral-theological model on the executive virtue of wisdom in positive psychology. The perspectives gained from the biblical data from Old and New Testament analysis on wisdom, as well as the insights obtained from the fields of philosophy and psychology, was incorporated with the empirical findings, and all the elements will be put into a hermeneutical interaction to form the proposed integrated pastoral-theological model.

In this chapter preliminary and final conclusions will be given. Topics for further research will be suggested.

7.2 CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS

Chapter 2 concluded that Old Testament wisdom should and can be used very effectively to connect the reader with the teachings in the books of Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes in a realistic way, enabling the person to apply the principles of Old Testament wisdom literature to everyday circumstance.

From the findings in Chapter 3 it was deduced that wisdom teachings as contained in the Sermon on the Mount can be used effectively to enable the reader to achieve personal happiness in everyday life. It is further concluded that the principle of the transforming initiative can be used in a valid psychotherapeutic process by the Christian psychologist with Christian clients.

From the information collected in Chapter 4 it became clear that wisdom principles found in the framework of philosophy and psychology (and especially positive psychology) form an essential part of the psychotherapeutic process and can be used effectively to enable the client to achieve personal happiness in everyday life.
Chapter 5 contained the conclusions from the empirical research, showing that practical wisdom as executive virtue was used in the psychotherapeutic process to manage a process of personal growth and exploration for the clients in this study.

In Chapter 6 the proposed pastoral-theological model for the executive virtue of practical wisdom within the framework of positive psychology was presented and it was concluded that this proposed model could possibly be applied during the process of psychotherapy with Christian clients.

7.3 FINAL CONCLUSION

In the central theoretical argument of this investigation it was proposed that practical wisdom may be applied as the executive virtue within the positive psychology paradigm in a pastoral-theological model. It was also proposed that wisdom principles from the Old and New Testament could be effectively applied as the wisdom directors during this process of psychotherapy for Christian clients. This investigation revealed that biblical wisdom principles could possibly be used to develop practical wisdom within Christian clients during a psychotherapeutic process. Practical wisdom could possibly be used as the executive or foundational virtue to motivate and maintain the process of personal development and to overcome psychological challenges. The pastoral-theological model proposed in Chapter 6 is the result of these conclusions and this model may be evaluated and used successfully by other therapists.
TOPICS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The following may also be researched in further studies:

- Research on practical wisdom would benefit from further investigation into personal virtues that support and maintain the virtue of wisdom.

- Further collaboration and qualitative research between theology and psychology would benefit the Christian client base in psychology, where greater focus should be on wellness rather than on pathology and/or judgment. The research could apply a more biblical approach to positive psychology, where focus is on the whole person, incorporating body, emotions, intellect and spirit.

- Other specific features within Christian ethics, like honesty, discipline etc. may be researched from the perspective of positive psychology.

- Old Testament biblical figures could be researched as epitomisers of positive psychology (i.e. Abraham).

- Research could be done on Proverbs as the antique manifestation of positive psychology.

- Research could be done on Jesus Christ as the ultimate paradigm for positive psychology.
SUMMARY AND KEY TERMS

Practical wisdom as executive virtue for Positive Psychology: a Pastoral-Theological evaluation

The central theoretical statement of this study proposes that practical wisdom as an executive virtue within positive psychology may be applied in a pastoral-theological paradigm.

One of the main virtues in positive psychology, namely wisdom, is investigated and defined in this study. The article format has been used in this thesis, ultimately consisting of five articles.

In Article 1 the scriptural perspectives found on practical wisdom in the Old Testament are discussed. From the information contained in the article, it is deduced that Old Testament wisdom should and can possibly be used to connect the reader with the teachings in a realistic way so that the person is enabled to apply the principles of Old Testament wisdom literature to everyday circumstance.

Article 2 deals with the wisdom principles found in the Sermon on the Mount. It can be said that wisdom teachings found in the Sermon on the Mount could possibly be used to enable the reader to achieve personal happiness in everyday life. It is further concluded that the principle of the transforming initiative could possibly be used in a valid psychotherapeutic process by the Christian psychologist with Christian clients.

In Article 3 the meta-theoretical fields of philosophy, psychology, and specifically positive psychology, are investigated in terms of wisdom principles. The study focuses on how practical wisdom can be used as an executive virtue within the context of a Christian psychotherapeutic process. The conclusions from this
Chapter are used to direct the empirical research on the executive function of wisdom. Wisdom is an essential part of the psychotherapeutic process and can be used to enable the client to achieve personal happiness in everyday life.

Article 4 deals with the empirical research where practical wisdom as executive virtue in the psychotherapeutic process was used to drive a process of personal growth and exploration for the clients in this study. It is stated further that wisdom is not the primary aim of the therapeutic intervention, but a tool to assist the therapist and the client in a more effective, outcomes-based, measurable result of personal growth.

In Article 5 a pastoral-theological model for the executive virtue of practical wisdom in positive psychology is formulated. This model could possibly be applied to a therapeutic context, providing the client has the ability to comprehend the concepts and that the spiritual dimensions fit into his religious frame of reference.

**KEY CONCEPTS**

- Positive psychology
- Practical wisdom
- Pastoral theology
- Virtues (Executive virtue)
- Psychology of wisdom
OPSOMMING EN SLEUTELTERME
Praktiese wysheid as uitvoerende deug in positiewe sielkunde: 'n pastoraal-teologiese evaluasie

Die sentrale teoretiese stelling van hierdie studie veronderstel dat praktiese wysheid as die uitvoerende deug binne positiewe sielkunde toegepas kan word en as beginsel binne 'n pastoraal-teologiese paradigma saamgevat kan word.

Een van die hoofdeugde in die positiewe sielkunde, naamlik wysheid, is in hierdie navorsing bestudeer. Die artikelformaat is vir hierdie proefskrif gebruik en die tesis bestaan uit 5 artikels.

In artikel 1 is die skriftuurlike beginsels van wysheid vanuit die Ou-Testamentiese benadering bestudeer en bespreek. Hieruit is afgelei dat Ou-Testamentiese wysheidsbeginsels moontlik effektief gebruik kan word in die huidige samelewing. Die toepassing van hierdie beginsels kan daartoe lei dat die lewens van die mense groter betekenis kan hê.

Artikel 2 handel oor die wysheidsbeginsels wat voorkom in die Bergrede. Hier word afgelei dat die wysheidsbeginsels wat in die Bergrede voorkom die daagliksle lewe van die mens wat gehoorsaam is daaraan, moontlik betekenisvol kan beïnvloed. Die *transformerende beginsel* kan moontlik effektief gebruik word om tydens die terapeutiese proses met Christen-kliënte op die positiewe uitkomste van gedragsverandering te fokus.

In artikel 3 word gefokus op die meta-teoretiese velde van filosofie, sielkunde, en spesifiek, positiewe sielkunde. Hierdie velde word ondersoek vir insigte met betrekking tot praktiese wysheid. Hier word gekyk na die moontlikhede van hoe praktiese wysheid as die uitvoerende deug binne die konteks van 'n Christelike psigoterapeutiese proses kan funksioneer. Die empiriese navorsing vloei vanuit die kennis wat uit hierdie velde verkry is. Wysheid is moontlik 'n essensiële deel
van die psigoterapeutiese proses en kan moontlik aangewend word om die kliënt te lei na persoonlike geluk in sy/haar daaglikse lewe.

Artikel 4 gee die empiriese navorsing oor die uitvoerende deug van praktiese wysheid in positiewe sielkunde weer. Praktiese wysheid is as die uitvoerende deug tydens die terapeutiese proses van die deelnemers aan die navorsing aangewend. Wysheid is nie die primêre fokus van die terapeutiese proses nie, maar word moontlik aangewend om die terapeutiese proses te bestuur en te rig sodat die kliënt 'n meetbare en sigbare resultaat kan behaal vanuit die terapeutiese ingreep.

Die pastoraal-teologiese model vir die uitvoerende deug van praktiese wysheid binne positiewe sielkunde word in artikel 5 aangebied. Hierdie model kan moontlik in terapeutiese kontekste toegepas word. Die effektiewe toepassing daarvan word bepaal deur die kliënt se vermoë om die konsepte te kan verstaan en deur die aanvaarding van die geestelike konsepte wat aangebied word.

**KERNBEGRIFFE**

- Positiewe sielkunde
- Praktiese wysheid
- Pastorale teologie
- Deugde (uitvoerende deug)
- Sielkunde van wysheid


CSIKSZENTMIHALYI, M. 2009. The promise of positive psychology. *Psychological Topics, 18*(2):203-211.


APPENDIX I

PHASE I - INTERVIEW

A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. NAME AND SURNAME : _____________________________
2. AGE : _____________________________
3. GENDER : _____________________________
4. HOME LANGUAGE : _____________________________
5. MARITAL STATUS : _____________________________
6. TODAY’S DATE : _____________________________

B. RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

1. YEARS AS CHRISTIAN : _____________________________
2. CHRISTIAN UPBRINGING: _____________________________

B. WISDOM EVALUATION

Evaluation of wisdom strengths:

Opposite → Absence → Strength → Exaggeration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opposite</th>
<th>Absence</th>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>Exaggeration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Triteness</td>
<td>Conformity</td>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Eccentricity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boredom</td>
<td>Disinterest</td>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>Morbid curiosity / Nosiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gullibility</td>
<td>Unreflectiveness</td>
<td>Judgment</td>
<td>Cynicism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodoxy</td>
<td>Complacency</td>
<td>Love of learning</td>
<td>Know-it-all-ism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foolishness</td>
<td>Shallowness</td>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Which of these would you like to attempt to change during the therapeutic process?

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

C. EXECUTIVE STYLE OF FUNCTIONING

Describe in a paragraph what you would consider to be the chief motivators and guidance in your life when making decisions regarding behaviour change

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________
D. BIBLICAL WISDOM PRINCIPLES

Which biblical principles of wisdom are part of your value system and which do you generally apply to your life?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX II

PHASE II - INTERVIEW

A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. NAME AND SURNAME : _____________________________
2. TODAY'S DATE : _____________________________

B. WISDOM EVALUATION

Evaluation of wisdom strengths:

Opposite → Absence → Strength → Exaggeration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opposite</th>
<th>Absence</th>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>Exaggeration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Triteness</td>
<td>Conformity</td>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Eccentricity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boredom</td>
<td>Disinterest</td>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>Morbid curiosity / Nosiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gullibility</td>
<td>Unreflectiveness</td>
<td>Judgment</td>
<td>Cynicism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodoxy</td>
<td>Complacency</td>
<td>Love of learning</td>
<td>Know-it-all-ism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foolishness</td>
<td>Shallowness</td>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which of these do you feel you have managed to shift positively during the therapeutic process?

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

293
E. EXECUTIVE STYLE OF FUNCTIONING

Describe in a paragraph what you would consider to be the chief motivators and guidance in your life when making decisions regarding behaviour change after completing the therapeutic process

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

D. BIBLICAL WISDOM PRINCIPLES

Which biblical principles of wisdom are part of your value system and which do you now apply to your life after the therapeutic process?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX III

Explanation and clarification of terms used by Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi (2006:41-43):

1. **Opposite**

   - *Triteness* – the opposite of originality and ingenuity, overused and consequently lacking in interest or originality, dullness, tiredness, staleness, corniness, banality, unoriginal

   - *Boredom* – opposite of curiosity, tedium, monotony, dullness, tediousness

   - *Gullibility* – the embracing of unsubstantiated and incorrect information, tending to trust and believe people, and therefore easily tricked or deceived, unwariness, acceptance, lack of caution, credulity, trustfulness, innocence

   - *Orthodoxy* – an active stance against gaining new knowledge, not wanting to gain any further insight and being content with it

   - *Foolishness* - showing, or resulting from, a lack of good sense or judgment, stupidity, idiocy, silliness, imprudence, thoughtlessness
2. Absence

- **Conformity** – the absence of creativity and originality, stagnation, compliance with a fixed standard, regulation, or requirement, agreement, correspondence, or similarity in structure, manner, or character, compliance, obedience, submission

- **Disinterest** – absence of curiosity, indifference, lack of concern, unconcern, lackadaisical attitude, lack of interest, apathy

- **Unreflectiveness** – simply accepting information without evaluating the truth or validity of it, not evaluating the fact that there might be different perspectives and opinions on a matter

- **Complacency** – the absence of wanting to know more or new things, absence of the need to grow intellectually, complacency creates boredom

- **Shallowness** - having or displaying little intellectual or emotional complexity or value, triviality, superficiality, inconsequentiality, nonsense
3. **Strengths**

- **Creativity** – engaging in novel and new ways to engage with problems, the ability to use the imagination to develop new and original ideas or things, especially in an artistic context, originality, imagination, inspiration, ingenuity, inventiveness, resourcefulness, vision

- **Curiosity** – an openness to experience situations and contexts that do not fit preconceptions, eagerness to know about something or to get information, inquisitiveness, interest

- **Judgment** – critical thinking that allows the person to think through matters and examine them from all sides before making a decision, not jumping to conclusions, an opinion formed or a decision reached in the case of a disputed, controversial, or doubtful matter, the ability to form sound opinions and make sensible decisions or reliable guesses, decision, finding, verdict, conclusion

- **Love of learning** – the person displays an motivation to acquire new knowledge in a field of interest with enthusiasm and commitment

- **Perspective** - a measured or objective assessment of a situation, giving all aspects their comparative importance, viewpoint, standpoint, outlook, view, perception, point of view, angle
4. Exaggeration

- **Eccentricity** – exaggeration of originality, novelty for its own sake, exhibitionistic tendencies, being unconventional in a whimsical way, peculiarity, strangeness, weirdness, oddity, unconventional behaviour

- **Morbid Curiosity / Nosiness** – an exaggerated curiosity that deadens sensitivity, showing a strong interest in unpleasant or gloomy subjects such as death, murder, or accidents, morose, gloomy, dark, melancholic, gruesome, sinister, macabre / Prying into the business of others pathologically, too curious about other people's affairs, prying, snooping

- **Cynicism** – criticism without providing solutions, pessimism, scepticism, distrust, doubt, scorn, suspicion, disparagement

- **Know-it-all-ism** – being pedantic, the person is unable to apply superior knowledge in an acceptable social way, too concerned with what are thought to be correct rules and details

- **None** – the authors of this classification is of the opinion that it is impossible to have too much perspective on a matter
APPENDIX IV

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY ETHICS APPLICATION FORM:
INFORMED CONSENT

PART 1: General Project Information

This part below provides you as participant in this study with more information, so that you can make an informed decision about your voluntary participation or not.

1. Title of the Project:

   Practical wisdom as executive virtue for Positive Psychology: a Pastoral-Theological evaluation

2. Institution / School / Subject group / Institute:

   Faculty of Theology, North West University, School of Church Sciences

3. Names & contact details of study leader:

   Title, name & surname : Prof. Dr. George Lotter
   Full names           : George Adrian
   Function in Project  : Promoter
   Qualifications       : B.A.; Th.B; Min; Th.D
   Professional Registration :
   Telephone (home)     : 018 297 7634
   Telephone (work)     : 018 299 1840
   Cellphone            : 083 284 7599
   Emergency Number     : 083 284 7599
   Postal address       : P.O. Box 20777, Noordbrug, 2522
4. **You are approached to take part in this study and may now have the following questions:**

- What are the set requirements that persons must meet to be able to take part in the study?
- Why and how was I chosen?
- All participants must at some point or currently have been or be confessing Christians. The participants were chosen out of a random sampling method.
- What is the purpose of this study? To investigate the executive function of wisdom as a virtue within the psychotherapeutic process.
- What will be expected of me as participant? In which interventions / procedures will I have to take part? What exactly will it involve? It will be required of the participant to respond during the interviews. This is referred to as the giving of written descriptions in a phenomenological study. The researcher will then interpret the data and construct a model that will serve as a foundation for practical wisdom as an executive virtue.
- What are the potential discomfort and/or potential dangers and/or potential permanent consequences (however negligible) that participation in this project holds? Not applicable.
- What precautions have been taken to protect me as participant? The researcher will do everything possible to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. The name of the participant will not appear anywhere in the study. The records of the written descriptions will be safely kept by the researcher in a fireproof safe for three years.
- How long am I expected to be involved in the project (e.g. number and duration of exposures to questions)? The interview will be conducted by the researcher as an intake interview for a psychotherapeutic process.
- What direct benefits can I expect from the study? What remuneration (monetary or services) can I expect from my
participation? The fact that the participant is taking part in a psychotherapeutic process, may have a positive effect on him/her, but no remuneration is allowed to be paid to the participant.

- What potential general benefits which may arise from the study are there for the broader community? The researcher aims to provide a framework where the participants can develop the skills of successful living according to wisdom principles.

- How will the findings of this study (general results, as well as individual about me as participant) be made available or conveyed to me? The results will be part of a published doctoral thesis

- If applicable, what is the policy for the handling of results of genetic and familial genetic information to ensure its confidentiality? Not applicable

- If applicable, where drugs are tested and if they appear to be effective, will they continue to be made available to me after the study, or will I have to pay for them myself? Not applicable

- If applicable, how will biological samples that are not used immediately be destroyed, stored or used later? Not applicable

- How will I and other participants or the community share in any future commercial use of the data's profits? Not applicable
As study leader, I confirm to participants that the above information is complete and correct.

__________________________________
Signature of Project Leader                                        Date: ________________

Signed at ____________________________
Place of Signature

_______________________________________________________________
NWU Etiekaansoekvorm: Ingeligte Toestemming
PART 2: General Principles

To the signatory of the consent contained in Part 3 of this document:

You are invited to take part in the research study as described in Part 1 of this informed consent form. It is important that you also read and understand the following general principles, which are applicable to all participants in our research study:

1. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and no pressure, however subtle, may be placed on you to take part.

2. It is possible that you may not derive any benefit personally from your participation in the study, although the knowledge that may be gained by means of the study may benefit other persons or communities.

3. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without stating reasons, and you will in no way be harmed by so doing. You may also request that your data no longer be used in the study. However, you are kindly requested not to withdraw from the study without careful consideration, since it may have a detrimental effect on, inter alia, the statistical reliability of the project.

4. By agreeing to take part in the study, you are also giving consent for the data that will be generated to be used by the researchers for scientific purposes as they see fit, with the caveat that it will be confidential and that your name will not be linked to any of the data without your consent.

5. You will be given access to your data upon request, unless the Ethics Committee has approved temporary non-disclosure (in the latter case, the reasons in Part 1 will be explained to you)

6. A summary of the nature of the study, the potential risks, factors that may cause you possible inconvenience or discomfort, the benefits that can be expected and the known and/or probable
permanent consequences that your participation in the study may have for you as participant, are set out for you in Part 1 hereof.

7. You are encouraged to ask the researcher any questions you may have regarding the study and the related procedures at any stage. The researcher will gladly answer your queries and will also discuss the study with you in detail, if that is your need.

8. If you are a minor, the written consent of your parent or legal guardian is required before you participate in this study, as well as (in writing if possible) your voluntary assent to take part – no coercion may be placed on you.

9. The study objectives are always secondary to your well-being and actions taken will always place your interests above those of the study.

______________________________
NWU Etiek aansoekvorm: Ingeligte Toestemming
PART 3: Consent

Title of the Project:

Practical Wisdom as executive virtue for Positive Psychology: a Pastoral-Theological evaluation

I, the undersigned

__________________________________________________________________________

Full names & Surname

have read the preceding premises in connection with the project, as discussed in Part 1 and Part 2 of this informed consent form, and have also heard the oral version thereof and I declare that I understand it. I have also initialled every page of Part 1 and Part 2. I was given the opportunity to discuss relevant aspects of the project with the researcher and I hereby declare that I am taking part in the study voluntarily.

__________________________________________________________________________

Signature of Participant

Date: __________________________________________

Signed at ______________________________________

Place of Signature
WITNESSES

_____________________________________
Signature of Witness 1

Date: ________________________________

_____________________________________
Signature of Witness 2

Date: ________________________________

Signed at _____________________________
Place of Signature

NWU Etiekaansoekvorm: Ingeligte Toestemming