

# Wisdom (Take a Walk with Her)

Proverbs 3:13-20; 4:5-9; 8:1-9:5

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*Video and audio versions available online:*

<https://relentless-love.org/sermons/wisdom-take-a-walk-with-her/>

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*This document was prepared by Heather Eades using Peter's notes and the video version of this sermon. If you encounter any significant discrepancies or errors in this document, please let Heather know. Thank you!*

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## Prayer

Oh Lord God, we hang on to glory, and power, and wisdom so tightly. (Peter exhales and opens his clenched fist in release.) ...But we let it go. And Lord Jesus, I worked hard on this sermon...but it's worthless unless I let it go and let you breathe upon it. Would you breathe upon us, Lord God, and bring us to Life? Cause us to preach in Jesus's name. Amen.

## Message

Over the years, I think I've preached least of all from the book of Proverbs. And I suppose that's because it's been my least favorite book of the Bible... And I suppose that's because people have chopped it up into a bunch of little sayings that they put on desktop calendars and sell in Bible bookstores; they treat it like a box of fortune cookies, or a set of laws, which they use to justify themselves and judge others.

And yet in recent years, I've noticed that Proverbs says some truly fascinating things—things I used to discount as just poetry and hyperbole. Proverbs says some fascinating things about Wisdom—which if taken seriously imply that Wisdom is far more than a set of pithy sayings to crossstitch on a pillow, paste into a calendar, or even write in a book, let alone, use to justify yourself and judge others.

**Proverbs 3:13 · “Blessed is the one who finds wisdom...”**

**Proverbs 4:5 · “Get wisdom; get insight...”**

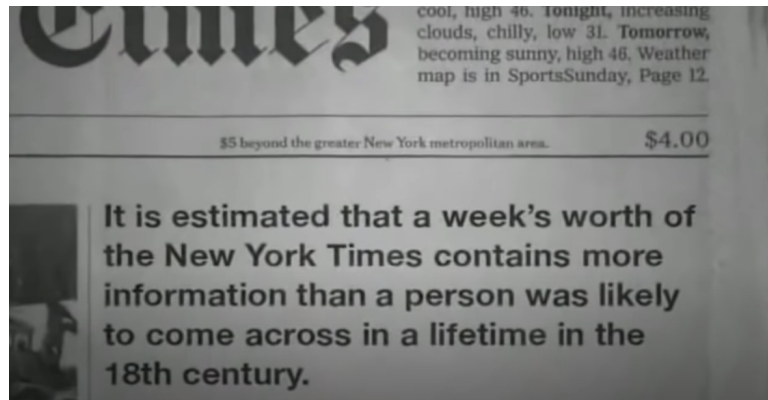
**Proverbs 4:7 · “The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom...”** [“The first thing is Wisdom—get wisdom.” (Young's Literal)]

I don't know about you, but the older I get and the more I look at the world, the more I think to myself... “Yep, that really is what we all need: wisdom.” And that's kind of ironic, because never before in the history of our world have we had so much knowledge.

“Wisdom” and “knowledge” are two very closely related words in Scripture, but they are not the same.<sup>1</sup> Closely related but not the same, in Scripture and in our everyday thinking.

So, it's all a bit ironic. We desperately need wisdom, and yet it's like we're just choking on knowledge—we have so much knowledge.

In 2008, I shared a little video on the exponential growth of information in this information age.



In the video, they say, “It’s estimated that a week’s worth of the New York Times contains more information than a person was likely to come across in a lifetime in the 18th Century.”

[Image: Slides sharing following information.]

Then it said: “4 exabytes ( $4 \times 10^{19}$ ) of unique information will be generated this year.”

“That is more than the previous 5,000 years”—that was just in 2008.

In 2025, the amount of new data generated on the internet is expected to be 463 exabytes in just one day. All the words ever spoken by human beings amount to an estimated 5 exabytes.<sup>ii</sup>

[Image: Slide showing graph with information below.]

This is a graph of the estimated increase in data created, captured, copied, and consumed worldwide each year in zettabytes.<sup>iii</sup> One zettabyte is 1,000 exabytes. Who knows if any of that is accurate? I’m just pointing out that since Proverbs was written, we’ve obtained an insane amount of knowledge, but I doubt we’re much wiser... We each know more and more about less and less.

My son is working on a PhD and now knows more about Helium isotopes in a series of hot springs in Peru than perhaps anyone in the world. And that’s great; but Coleman will tell you, it’s not wisdom.

**Proverbs 3:13 • “Blessed is the one who finds wisdom.”**

“Blessed” means “Happy.”

In 2021, we have countless zettabytes of information, but we don’t seem to know what any of it means... and we aren’t happier.

Ever since the Enlightenment, we've been on a mad quest for knowledge and don't seem to know what any of it means. Sometimes we call that science... sometimes we call that Religion.

In 1873, Charles Hodge of Princeton Seminary published what is perhaps the most influential systematic theology in American history. In it, he states, "The Bible is to the theologian what nature is to the man of science. It is his storehouse of facts; and his method of ascertaining what the Bible teaches is the same as that which the natural philosopher [the scientist] adopts to ascertain what nature teaches..." So, you reduce the Word to a set of facts that you can use.

Well, the Pharisees had all the facts; they knew every word, and then they crucified the Word on a tree in a garden.

Some will say, "Well, it's not just Knowledge that we need; we need knowledge of the Good and the evil... so, we can choose the good." Well, I think that's what Saint Paul called "the law."

I did some research on this as well: it turns out that in the United States of America, we have more laws than anyone has been able to count. And that reminds me of my home when my four kids were little—we had more laws than anyone could count, and the kids always wanted more: "Can I do this? Can I do that? You said that I could eat ice cream in the living room. Jon touched me. I'm calling my lawyer... he crossed the line!" I remember making a law that they could only pretend to talk out of their bottoms three times a day... and yes, you heard correctly.

One night we made the mistake of letting the kids watch Ace Ventura Pet Detective, in which Jim Carry pretends to talk out of his bottom. And then, our four children wouldn't stop pretending to talk out of their bottoms. I knew it wouldn't go over at Grandma and Grandpa's house...and I knew that strict prohibition only incites a greater exhibition—that is, more pretending to talk out of one's bottom. So, I made one more law: Just three times a day is each child allowed to bend over and pretend to talk out of their respective bottom.

I made a law, but what I really wanted was wisdom—Wisdom, which would notice that Grandma was getting uncomfortable, and so just stop, stand up, and talk like a normal person would talk in 1952.<sup>iv</sup>

The Law is "the knowledge of Good and evil." God wrote ten laws on stone, gave them to the Jews, and it didn't go so well. But the first place we encounter the knowledge of Good and evil, it's not written in stone or on pages in a book, but hanging like fruit on a tree in the middle of a garden—we took that knowledge, and it hasn't gone so well.

We saw that the fruit of the tree "was good for food, a delight to the eyes, and to be desired to make one wise"—to make one wise. So, we took the fruit, but now we don't seem so wise... And yet, we still seem to think we can get Wisdom by taking more knowledge. But the more knowledge we take, the less Wisdom we seem to have.

**Proverbs 3:13 · "Blessed is the one who finds wisdom..."**

**Proverbs 4:5 · "Get wisdom; get insight..."**

**Proverbs 4:7 · "The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom."** ["The first thing is Wisdom—get wisdom. (Young's Literal Translation)]

So, what is Wisdom? Where is Wisdom? And how do we get Wisdom?

So, think with me: What is wisdom?

#1 It's a gift, right? You really can't earn wisdom.

You can study hard, take a test, and get a degree in all sorts of things, but not Wisdom.<sup>v</sup> That's because you really can't earn wisdom or even judge wisdom; it's wisdom that judges you and all things.

King Solomon wrote most of what we call "Wisdom Literature"—that would be the Song of Solomon, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. In 1 Kings 3 and 2 Chronicles 1, you can read how Solomon asked God for Wisdom for the sake of judging Israel. He asks for "Wisdom and Knowledge"<sup>vi</sup> that he might be able to "discern between good and evil."<sup>vii</sup> This so pleased God that Solomon asked for this ability to discern between good and evil that he not only gave wisdom to Solomon, but just about everything else that Solomon knew how to desire.<sup>viii</sup>

So, the knowledge of Good and evil isn't evil. But taking it in the wrong way is the very definition of evil; it's sin and death. And yet, receiving it as a gift is something else entirely.

#1 Wisdom is a gift.

#2 Wisdom is now.

I mean by that, that it's a gift in each moment. "For everything there is a season," wrote Solomon in Ecclesiastes chapter 3. There is a season for pretending to talk out of your bottom on a camping trip with Dad. And there is a season for *not* pretending to talk out of your bottom, like during a nice dinner with Grandma and Grandpa.

Wisdom is now; you can't keep it in a book to use whenever you desire. You can't keep wisdom in a book, but you can keep knowledge in a book—in fact that's exactly what you do whenever you make a law.

Right after Solomon gets Wisdom, two prostitutes come to him pleading for a judgment. I'm sure you remember the story. They both claim that a particular baby is their own baby. And so, Solomon says, "OK, cut the baby in half, and each of you can have a half."

One woman agrees to this, and the second cries, "No, give the baby to the first." Solomon then says, "Take the child from the first and give it to the second... the baby belongs to the second." That's wisdom... But it would make a terrible law: "In every custody battle, take the child, declare that you will cut it in half... etc., etc."

You can't reduce Wisdom to knowledge in a book, without killing Wisdom.

Wisdom is a gift. Wisdom is now. But...

#3 Wisdom comes with time...

Even if we receive Wisdom in a moment, those moments come in time. (That's why we say things like, "That kid is wise beyond her years.")

Wisdom comes with time... and involves quite a bit of pain.<sup>ix</sup>

(So of course, people will always opt for taking knowledge rather than receiving wisdom, but there really is no shortcut to Wisdom that bypasses pain.)

I think that my favorite movie about wisdom and knowledge is a movie that most of you have probably seen: *Good Will Hunting*. Matt Damon plays Will Hunting, and Robin Williams plays his court appointed counselor. Will Hunting is a janitor and a genius who stuns the faculty at MIT when he solves a math problem left on a chalkboard; he has knowledge. He knows about everything, but struggles to know anyone, and so he's always fighting. And so, he now has a court appointed counselor.

Will hunting uses his knowledge like a weapon; it protects him from pain, and ironically, it protects him from Wisdom... and love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness. When he first meets his counselor, he uses his knowledge of art and psychology to dissect his counselor's heart, mock his love for his deceased wife, and avoid talking about the thing that scares him most. The next day, his counselor takes him to a garden and says this:

Video Clip: *Good Will Hunting*  
Miramax Films, 1997

*Sean Maguire (Robin Williams) and Will Hunting (Matt Damon) sit on a bench in this famous monologue scene.*

Sean     If I asked you about women you'd probably give me a syllabus of your personal favorites. You may have even been laid a few times. But you can't tell me what it feels like to wake up next to a woman and feel truly happy.

You're a tough kid. I ask you about war, and you'd probably, uh, throw Shakespeare at me, right? "Once more into the breach, dear friends." But you've never been near one. You've never held your best friend's head in your lap and watched him gasp his last breath, looking to you for help.

And if I asked you about love you probably quote me a sonnet. But you've never looked at a woman and been totally vulnerable. Known someone could level you with her eyes. Feeling like! God put an angel on earth just for you...who could rescue you from the depths of hell.

And you wouldn't know what it's like to be her angel and to have that love for her to be there forever. Through anything. Through cancer. You wouldn't know about sleeping sitting up in a hospital room for two months holding her hand because the doctors could see in your eyes that the term "visiting hours" doesn't apply to you. You don't know about real loss, because that only occurs when you love something more than you love yourself. I doubt you've ever dared to love anybody that much.

I look at you; I don't see an intelligent, confident man; I see a cocky, scared shitless kid. But you're a genius, Will. No one denies that. No one could possibly understand the depths of you. But you presume to know everything about me because you saw a painting of mine and you ripped my f-in' life apart. You're an orphan right? Do you think I'd know the first thing about how hard your life has been, how you feel, who you are because I read *Oliver Twist*? Does that encapsulate you?

Personally, I don't give a sh\*t about all that, because you know what? I can't learn anything from you I can't read in some f-in' book. Unless you wanna talk about you, who you are. And I'm fascinated. I'm in. But you don't wanna do that, do you, sport? You're terrified of what you might say. Your move, chief.

Will Hunting knows all about Love but refuses to be known by Love. Will hunting has knowledge but not Wisdom.

“That boy is wicked smart,” comments one of his friends after Will utterly humiliates a grad student in front of some girls in a bar. You can be wicked smart and use knowledge to crucify Wisdom. And yet, with Wisdom, Will's counselor, Sean, performs surgery on Will's heart and creates something utterly new—Good Will... hunting.

If you saw the movie, you know that Wisdom—not just in the counselor and not just in Will—Wisdom actually does surgery on each of their hearts through the other. Wisdom creates a communion called Love and courage to keep walking, for each of them had gotten stuck in a moment of hidden pain.<sup>x</sup>

I think it is Wisdom that creates good will in each one of us. Good will is the will to Love, the courage to Love, the decision that is Love.

#4 Wisdom creates; but with knowledge, we often desecrate.

When I reflect upon my own heart, I have to admit that:

- When I lust for knowledge, I'm usually defending myself and attacking another.
- When I lust for knowledge, I'm looking for fig leaves to cover my own vulnerability, and exposing another's vulnerability by attempting to take knowledge from them.
- When I lust for knowledge, I'm trying to win the argument, to save my own soul. But when I've spoken with Wisdom, it was in a moment in which I lost myself, all the fig leaves fell away, and my vulnerability romanced the vulnerability of another, for we had both surrendered to Love. And Love saved our soul, as if Wisdom is the Logic of Love.

All lose and all win; all are humbled and all are exalted; all are last and all are first; all join the dance—the Logic of Love.

# 5 Wisdom is a spirit to whom we must surrender.

The Gospel of John reveals that the logic of God (that is the *Logos* of Love) is “the light that enlightens all people.” That's John 1:9. And yet, not all people walk in the light.

In the same way, all people must experience Wisdom, but not all people are wise, for not all people surrender to Wisdom. Some try to capture Wisdom, which is like trying to keep the wind in a jar... or trying to nail it down.

In Ecclesiastes, Solomon recounts his journey with Wisdom.

Ecclesiastes 1:16 · “I said in my heart, ‘I have acquired great wisdom, surpassing all...’<sup>17</sup> And I applied my heart to know wisdom... I perceived that this also is but a striving after wind.

<sup>18</sup>For in much wisdom is much vexation, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.”

It’s striving after wind, in order to keep it in a jar. The word which is translated “Wind” is also translated “Spirit”—it is the *Ruach* of God, and you, yourself, are the clay jar.

All our life we strive after the *Ruach* of God, and all our life the *Ruach* of God is striving after us. Wisdom is striving after us. Did you know that? Wisdom wants to know you.

Well, let’s just read a good chunk of Proverbs. This isn’t just poetry; this is the Gospel according to Solomon, Prince of Peace.

Chapter 1:

<sup>7</sup> **“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge...”**

Chapter 3:

<sup>13</sup> **Blessed is the one who finds wisdom,  
and the one who gets understanding,**  
<sup>14</sup> **for the gain from her is better than gain from silver  
and her profit better than gold. [That should be a song!]**  
<sup>15</sup> **She is more precious than jewels,  
and nothing you desire can compare with her.**  
<sup>16</sup> **Long life is in her right hand;  
in her left hand are riches and honor.**  
<sup>17</sup> **Her ways are ways of pleasantness [“ecstasy” is a better translation],  
and all her paths are peace.**  
<sup>18</sup> **She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her;  
those who hold her fast are called blessed.**  
  
<sup>19</sup> **The LORD by wisdom founded the earth;  
by understanding he established the heavens;**  
<sup>20</sup> **by his knowledge the deeps broke open,  
and the clouds drop down the dew.**

Chapter 4:

<sup>5</sup> **Get wisdom; get insight;  
do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth.**  
<sup>6</sup> **Do not forsake her, and she will keep you;  
love her, and she will guard you.**  
<sup>7</sup> **The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom,  
and whatever you get, get insight.**  
<sup>8</sup> **Prize her highly, and she will exalt you;  
she will honor you if you embrace her.**  
<sup>9</sup> **She will place on your head a graceful garland;  
she will bestow on you a beautiful crown.”**

**V.13 Keep hold of instruction; do not let go;  
guard her, for she is your life.**

Chapter 8:

**Does not wisdom call?  
Does not understanding raise her voice?  
2 On the heights beside the way,  
at the crossroads she takes her stand;  
3 beside the gates in front of the town,  
at the entrance of the portals she cries aloud:  
4 "To you, O men, I call,  
and my cry is to the children of [Adam].**

(She's seeking you; hunting you!)

**V.8 All the words of my mouth are righteous...**

**V.12 "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence,  
and I find knowledge and discretion.**

**V.15 By me kings reign,  
and rulers decree what is just;  
16 by me princes rule,  
and nobles, all who govern justly.**

**V.19 My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold,  
and my yield than choice silver.  
20 I walk in the way of righteousness,  
in the paths of justice,  
21 granting an inheritance to those who love me,  
and filling their treasuries.**

**22 "The Lord possessed me at the beginning of his work,  
the first of his acts of old.  
23 Ages ago I was set up,  
at the first, before the beginning of the earth.**

**V.27 When he established the heavens, I was there;  
when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,  
28 when he made firm the skies above,  
when he established the fountains of the deep,  
29 when he assigned to the sea its limit,  
so that the waters might not transgress his command,  
when he marked out the foundations of the earth,  
30 then I was beside him, like a master workman,  
and I was daily his delight,  
rejoicing before him always,  
31 rejoicing in his inhabited world  
and delighting in the children of [Adam].**

**32 "And now, O sons, listen to me:**



- blessed are those who keep my ways.**  
33 **Hear instruction and be wise,  
and do not neglect it.**  
34 **Blessed is the one who listens to me,  
watching daily at my gates,  
waiting beside my doors.**  
35 **For whoever finds me finds life  
and obtains favor from the Lord,**  
36 **but he who fails to find me injures himself;  
all who hate me love death."**

Chapter 9:

- Wisdom has built her house;  
she has hewn her seven pillars.**  
2 **She has slaughtered her beasts; she has mixed [poured] her wine;  
she has also set her table.**  
3 **She has sent out her young women to call from the highest places in the town,**  
4 **"Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!"  
To him who lacks sense she says,**  
5 **"Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed.**  
[She's built a house. And she serves bread and wine. What a thought!]

**V.10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom...**

In chapter one, he wrote, "The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge..." You see, it's like they're the same thing, but different somehow.

- Wisdom is alive; in fact, Wisdom says, "I am your life."
- Wisdom is alive; in fact, "in the beginning was Wisdom." It's like, "Wisdom was with God, and was God, and all things were made through Wisdom."
- Wisdom is alive, and Wisdom says, "I find knowledge... my fruit is better than Gold."
- Wisdom is alive, but Solomon doesn't speak that way about knowledge.

Actually, Wisdom is Life and has knowledge. So you could, theoretically, try to kill Wisdom in an attempt to take her knowledge. And you might succeed, in a way: Dead Wisdom is a certain type of knowledge—it's knowledge of evil. So, you might gain knowledge of evil, but you would lose your life, for wisdom is your life. Then you would know and be dead... or at least be choking on knowledge.

#6 Wisdom is a person...that looks just like Jesus.

Now you may think: "Hey! Jesus is a guy... And Wisdom is a gal." And you'd be right. Jesus is a guy, but Jesus also has a Spirit—actually he has the Spirit: the *Ruach*, the Spirit of God. In Hebrew, *Ruach* is a feminine noun.

So maybe we're all male, if in fact, we are the Body of Christ. And maybe each of us is female, if in fact, we've got any Wisdom—the logic of Love and the Spirit of God.

In the Gospels, Jesus talks as if he is wisdom. In Matthew 23:34, he says, "I send you prophets." In Luke 11:49, he says, "The Wisdom of God said, I will send them prophets." He talks as if he's Wisdom, and as if he's pregnant.

Luke 7:35 · After he is criticized by the lawyers and Pharisees, he says, "Wisdom is justified by all her children." I suspect that's you.

In Colossians 2:2, Paul writes about [quote] "God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Jesus is like a pinata named Wisdom full of knowledge.

To the Corinthians, Paul writes about the wisdom of this world in this age. He claims that God destroys the wisdom of this age at the cross. And yet, there he reveals his Wisdom.

Paul then writes, "He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption." And so... "I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified."<sup>xi</sup> He's crucified on a tree in a garden that can be found at the beginning of time, the end of time, and right now in the Sanctuary of your own soul.

#7 Wisdom is a tree of Life. Did you catch that in Chapter 3, verse 18?

Wisdom is a tree of Life, and we know that Jesus is the Life. And in Jesus is hidden all the treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge.

Wisdom must look like this...

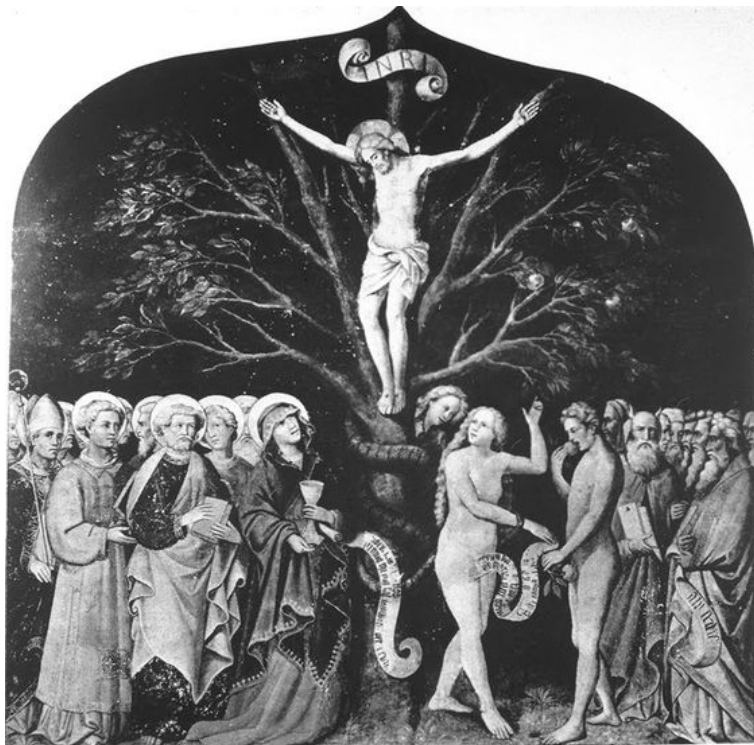


Figure 1 "Mystery of the Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena (1420)

Or like this...

[Image: on screen is a still of Jesus on the cross from the movie *The Passion of the Christ*.]

Wisdom is a tree of life...



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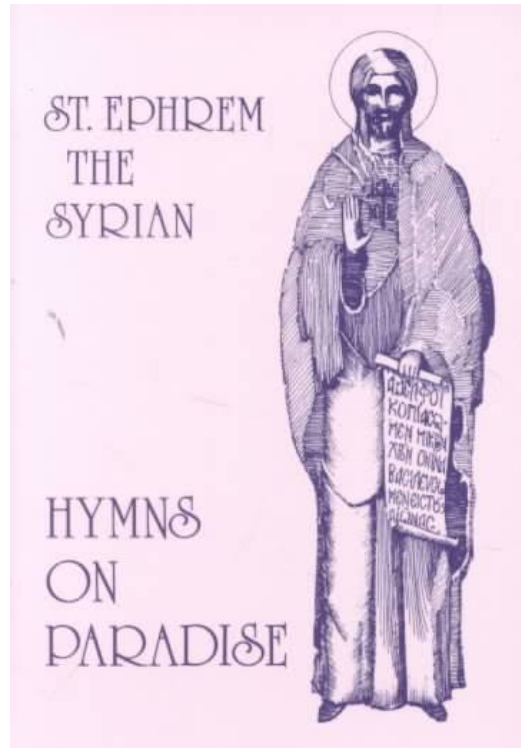
**Proverbs 4:7 · “The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom.”** [“The first thing is Wisdom—get wisdom. (Young’s Literal)]

So, how do we get Wisdom?

You see that’s not just a question for two naked people in a garden thousands of years ago—That’s the question asked of you in every moment that you decide. Will it be Bad Will or Good Will that decides... that judges, that chooses?

We think we’re judging and perhaps we’re being judged. We think we’re choosing and perhaps we’re being chosen. Perhaps Wisdom is our Counselor, who is constantly hunting for Good Will in us?

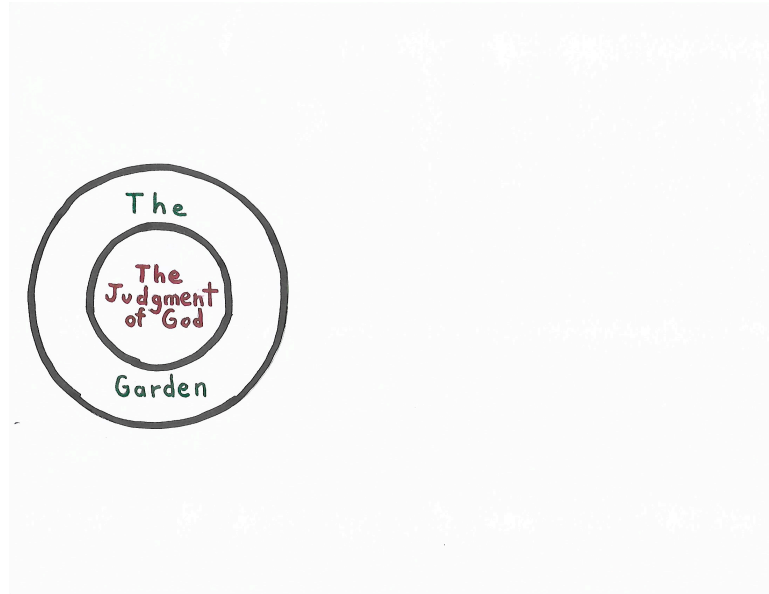
So, how do you get Wisdom...who claims to be your life?



Recently I've been reading St. Ephrem the Syrian, who died 1,648 years ago this Wednesday, which is also my dad's 102<sup>nd</sup> birthday. I'm fascinated by Ephrem because he seems to see what so many just don't seem to see... and what I can't seem to take my eyes off of.

He writes, "God established the tree as judge... the Tree was to Adam like a gate; it's fruit was the veil covering the hidden tabernacle"<sup>xii</sup> (That's, the Holy of Holies.)

St. Ephrem read Genesis and noted that the Tree of Life was in the middle of the garden, and so was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. He also realized that the Garden was a temple—a temple at the beginning of time, the end of time, and with us on our journey through time, like a tabernacle in the Sanctuary of the human soul.



And so, he pictured the Garden of Eden as looking something like this. (Hopefully, you remember this amazing graphic from our message two weeks ago.)

The garden had an outer court and an inner court which contained the Wisdom of God, Judgment of God, the Throne of God, that is the Mercy seat on top of the Ark of the Covenant.



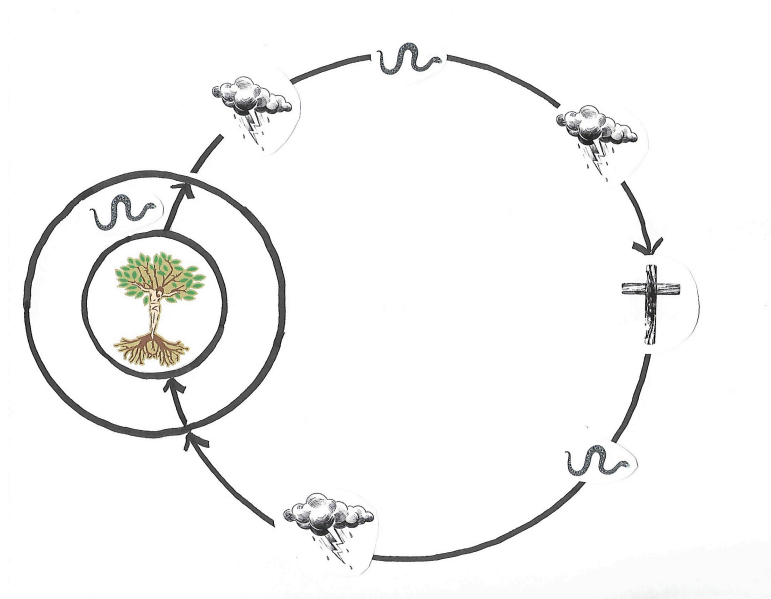
He pictured the outer branches of the Tree of Knowledge as the veil separating the outer sanctuary from the inner sanctuary, which contained the Tree of Life between the cherubim, upon the Mercy Seat.

The Book of Hebrews tells us that the flesh of Christ is that veil which separated us from the inner sanctuary and the Eternal Life that is God.<sup>xiii</sup> As Christ's flesh was torn on the cross, the veil in the temple was ripped from top to bottom. We got in, and Wisdom got out; Wisdom is the Logic of Love.

We took the Life of Love on the tree in a garden—that's Bad Will.  
And Love gave his Life on the same tree in the same garden—that's Good Will; that's the Logic of Love that is Wisdom, who is your life.

We took his body; we tore his body, and the blood poured out—the life is in the blood... And so, before we took, he fore-gave, saying, "Drink of it, all of you..." That's how we get Wisdom.

He lifted his head on the tree and delivered up his Spirit—his Spirit is Life. So we exhale our spirit, and inhale his Spirit. That's how we get Wisdom...



Do you understand? This is the diagram we studied two weeks ago.

Salvation is not a decision you make once and for all time. Salvation is the eternal decision that God makes once and for all time... and then imparts to you on this journey through time, as you learn to lose your life and find it, as you learn to Love.

Hell is getting stuck in a moment on the journey. Salvation is surrender to Wisdom who is with you all the time. Salvation is surrender to The Logic of Love.

Love is who God is and what God does; Love is his decision.

Two weeks ago, we said: Love is three persons and One Decision—the Trinity.

Last week, Frances gave a brilliant sermon on how Satan tries to trap us in a false trinity of Perpetrator, Victim, and Enabler. (What psychologists call “Karpman’s Drama Triangle”—What a great name: “Someone help me! I’m trapped in an evil drama triangle!”)

Satan traps you in an evil drama triangle. But God invites you into his Triangle—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Lover, Beloved, and the Life of Love.

Now, Frances is a counselor and she gave us some great examples of how this looks, but it is next to impossible to think it all through in each and every moment. And yet, you don’t have to think it all through in each and every moment, for the decision is near you, on your lips, and in your heart.<sup>xiv</sup>

That decision is Wisdom—The Spirit of Jesus: Your Counselor. She is not dead knowledge; she is your Living Lord and your Life.

In Fyodor Dostoevsky’s *Myth of the Grand Inquisitor*, you may remember that Jesus is imprisoned by the Grand Inquisitor during the Spanish Inquisition in Seville Spain. For pages and pages, the Grand Inquisitor unloads every possible argument upon Jesus, as to why Jesus utterly “failed” by choosing to suffer and die on that tree in the middle of the garden. And why the Church had now succeeded where Jesus had failed, for the church embraced the sword and rejected the cross.

The Grand Inquisitor’s knowledge of human nature is impeccable; his argument is profound and most convincing. Finally, he falls silent, longing for Christ to answer, to argue. But then our Lord stands, and without saying a word, he crosses the room and kisses the Grand Inquisitor on his old bloodless lips, and that is his only answer. I would call that wisdom.<sup>xv</sup>

Before you answer, before you engage, perhaps you could just picture what is always true—he gets up, crosses the room, and kisses you on your lips. Let the kiss glow in your heart—and your next word will be “Wisdom.”<sup>xvi</sup>

Once, the Lord told me—in a very miraculous way, something that I really struggle to believe—he said, “Peter, I have never stopped kissing you. Sometimes my kisses are sweet. Sometimes they burn. But believe this: my kisses never stop.”

## Communion

On the night our Lord was betrayed, he took bread and broke it, saying, “This is my body given to you. Take and eat.” And he took to cup saying, “This is the covenant in my blood, poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it all of you.”

[Peter takes the bread and wine as communion.]

This is the kiss. Plant it on your old bloodless lips, and then let it glow in your heart.

“Wisdom has built her house...” (Proverbs 9:1 ). And now she calls, “Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine [that] I have mixed” (Proverbs 9:5).

In the name of Jesus, get Wisdom. Amen.

## Benediction

I know I said some things that are new and hard to follow. But everything I said is to help you to simply believe that God is with you and his Judgment is Love; it's always Love.

When you are aware of Him and his Judgment, you will get Wisdom, you will speak Wisdom, and you will incarnate Wisdom. In fact, you will become a tree of Life.

Proverbs 11:30 · “The Fruit of the righteous is a tree of Life.”

You see, it's true that we took the life of the Righteous One on the tree in the garden, but it's also true that there is a seed in that fruit. Jesus said a seed must die to come to life. Jesus dies and comes to life in you, and so you return to the Garden and know it for the first time.<sup>xvii</sup>

You become a tree of Life, and you plant trees of Life.

Proverbs 15:4 · “A gentle tongue is a tree of life.”

See? It's almost as if Christ is in you and you are the Body of Christ. In other words, all I'm saying is believe the Gospel, in Jesus's name. Amen.



## Endnotes

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ii <https://seedscientific.com/how-much-data-is-created-every-day/>

iii [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Volume-of-data-information-created-captured-copied-and-consumed-worldwide-from-2010-to-fig1\\_348937287](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Volume-of-data-information-created-captured-copied-and-consumed-worldwide-from-2010-to-fig1_348937287)

iv Every child wants their parent's knowledge, but not so much... wisdom.  
Every child, wants to be grown up, but none want to "grow up."  
But there really is no shortcut to wisdom that bypasses pain.  
We experience pain when we lose control.

v One *can* get a PHD... ironically. It stands for "Doctor of Philosophy." And "Philosophy" is Greek for "love of wisdom;" "Philo" (love) of "Sophia" (wisdom). But does a PHD make you any wiser than the average grandma or grandpa that's lived a full life and suffered some pain?

vi 2nd Chronicles 1:11-12

vii 1 Kings 3:9

viii In Romans 8 Paul writes, "He's given us his Son. Will he not also give us all things with him?"

ix Aeschylus writes, "In our sleep, pain that cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart and in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God."

- Madeleine L'Engle, *Walking on Water* (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1980), p. 30

x For Kierkegaard there are two kinds of knowledge. One is objective knowledge, such as that handled by scientists and mathematicians, and the other is religious knowledge, which can only be grasped inwardly. Kierkegaard argues that truth that answers the ultimate questions of human existence is not available to the detached speculative mind but is experienced only by those who struggle and suffer their way toward an understanding of life. . . . For Kierkegaard, philosophy was folly, because God is not a thing to be analyzed as He weaves His way through history, but a Person to be encountered in the depths of one's being. . . . But there is another kind of knowledge-the kind that comes to those who suffer and suffer until they reach despair, the kind of knowledge that comes *only in the midst of despair*.

- Tony Campolo, *Partly Right* (Waco, TX: Word Books Publisher, 1985), p. 86-87

xi "God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption; <sup>31</sup> therefore, as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord." -1 Corinthians 1:28-32 RSV

xii St. Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns on Paradise, Popular Patristic Series*, translation: Sebastian Brock (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1990), pp. 94-95

xiii Hebrews 10:20

xiv "For this commandment which I command you this day is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' But the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it.

- Deuteronomy 30:11-14

Now ask yourself "What is the Word?"

And now let Scripture answer the question:

Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on the law shall live by it. But the righteousness based on faith says, Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven?" (that is, to bring Christ down) or "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach); because, if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. -Romans 10:5-9 RSV

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Is the Word not “Christ” and at the same time “faith?”

Which means the Word of Faith on your tongue is a gift of grace named Wisdom.

<sup>xv</sup> Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, translation: Andrew MacAdrew, (NY: Bantom, 1970) p.316

<sup>xvi</sup> *“If, as is properly understood, the Father is he who kisses, the Son he who is kissed, then it cannot be wrong to see in the kiss the Holy Spirit, for he is the imperturbable peace of the Father and the Son, their unshakable bond, their undivided love, their indivisible unity.”* — St. Bernard of Clairvaux, in Sermon 8, Sermons on the Song of Songs

<sup>xvii</sup> There are two ways of knowing:

1. We know dead things by taking knowledge. This is often called the empirical method; it’s science. It’s great for knowing dead things like hydrogen, carbon, equations, etc., etc. It produces all sorts of modern technologies.

2. We know living persons, by allowing them to know us. In Scripture this type of knowing often results in fruit, that is babies. This type of knowing is life—eternal life (“And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” John 17:3) This is allowing “the Good” (God alone is Good, said Jesus)—this is allowing “the Good” to know you.

To simply know Christ in the first sort of way is to take his life on the tree in the garden—this is how the Scribes and Pharisees and rulers of this world sought to know him.

To be known, and thus, to know Christ in the second way, is to be his bride and body and bear the fruit that is life—eternal life.