

# FROM ABOVE | The Invitation of Wisdom

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October 4, 2020

**How do you tell the difference between when you should speak up or when you should be quiet?** How do you know when you should take a risk, or play it safe? When should you cooperate and when should you push back? How do you know when to submit, or when to take a stand? *The answers to these questions are not always that obvious.*

Our country is divided — we've got social unrest, political polarization, and an enormous wave of moral confusion. Everyone has a platform to lob emotional grenades at no one in particular.

***The question for us is, “How in the world do we navigate the incredible difficulties and complexities of the world that we’re living in right now? How do we remain steady and unfazed in the whirlwind that is life.***

For the next nine weeks, through the election season, what we're going to be talking about is what the Scripture invites us to over and over again, from Genesis to Revelation, from Cover to Cover...

**What the Scripture tells us is —  
what we need in order to navigate life,  
no matter what circumstances we face is: WISDOM**

## **Proverbs 8:10-23**

Take my instruction instead of silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold, for wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her. “I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and I find knowledge and discretion. <sup>13</sup>The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate. <sup>14</sup>I have counsel and sound wisdom; I have insight; I have strength. <sup>15</sup>By me kings reign, and rulers decree what is just; <sup>16</sup>by me princes rule, and nobles, all who govern justly. <sup>17</sup>I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me. <sup>18</sup>Riches and honor are with me, enduring wealth and righteousness. <sup>19</sup>My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold, and my yield than choice silver. <sup>20</sup>I walk in the way of righteousness, in the paths of justice, <sup>21</sup>granting an inheritance to those who love me, and filling their treasuries. <sup>22</sup>“The Lord possessed me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old. <sup>23</sup>Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth.

**WHY WE NEED WISDOM  
WHAT WISDOM IS  
HOW TO GET WISDOM**

## **WHY WE NEED WISDOM**

According to a study done by Cornell University — on average, adults make 35,000 decisions per day — that's roughly 2000 decisions per hour or one decision every two seconds! Some of those decisions have very low impact on the trajectory of your life — and others have the potential to completely change your life for better or worse!

This is why entire book of Proverbs is an invitation to get wisdom. In this passage, wisdom is calling out, inviting us to obtain it.

## **Proverbs 1:20-22**

Wisdom cries aloud in the street, in the markets she raises her voice; at the head of the noisy streets she cries out; at the entrance of the city gates she speaks:

*Wisdom is extending an invitation to all who will listen... calling out to those who would receive her.*

**Proverbs 8:10-11** tells us of the importance of Wisdom — why we desperately need it.

Wisdom essentially says in verse 10, “*I’m more valuable than silver, choice gold, the finest jewels...*” and even goes so far as, “*I’m more valuable than anything else you could ever want.*”

- Wisdom says, I’m more valuable than anything you could ever desire in life.

In other words, wisdom is infinitely more important than all the wealth, power, convenience, control, influence, or all the fame in the world. More important than anything you could ever desire — is having wisdom, having the ability to navigate, grow, and flourish in whatever circumstances you find yourself.

There are only a fraction of people in the world whose lives have ended up where they truly want them to be. And once they finally arrive, once they finally get there one of two things will happen:

1. Those circumstances only last for so long
2. Or they realize how empty of a dream it actually was. It doesn’t bring the satisfaction they thought it would.

Then there are those who have all those things, and yet somehow, they’ve done incredibly well — *What’s the difference? It’s wisdom.*

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## WHAT WISDOM IS

In verse 12 it says this...

### **Proverbs 8:12-16**

“I, wisdom, dwell with **prudence**, and I find knowledge and discretion. <sup>13</sup> The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate. <sup>14</sup> I have counsel and sound wisdom; I have **insight**; I have strength. <sup>15</sup> **By me** kings reign, and **rulers decree what is just**; <sup>16</sup> by me princes rule, and nobles, all who **govern justly**.”

1. In verse 14, wisdom says “I have insight, prudence, and discretion.” In the original language, it means that wisdom is a deep **understanding of reality**. *It’s an understanding of the way things really are — how things really work in the world.*
  - a. Wisdom is not naïve, not pie in the sky, nor overly pessimistic or negative. There is a grasp of the way things really are. There’s insight into the reality of the world we live in and how the world works.
2. Verses 15 and 16 say that wisdom is how rulers and kings, princes and nobles govern justly. It’s saying that wisdom is what enables you to have good judgment — *to understand what course of action to take in a particular situation, and how that will impact the world around you.*

“Wisdom is becoming competent with regard to the realities of life –  
Knowing how things really happen, knowing how things really are,  
and knowing what to do about it.”<sup>1</sup>  
~ Gerhard Von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*

Wisdom isn’t simply just intelligence or knowledge. Or even morality. **It’s the ability to bring knowledge, experience, morality, foresight together in such a way that the decisions you make bring about what is productive, beneficial and good.**

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<sup>1</sup> Von Rad, Gerhard. *Wisdom in Israel* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 1993) 310

A quick and familiar biblical example of this kind of wisdom is seen during King Solomon's reign in **1 Kings 3:16-28**. Two women gave birth in the same house. One of the children died, and the woman whose child died took the surviving child from his mother, and laid the dead child at the other woman's side in the middle of the night.

### **1 Kings 3:22**

But the other woman said, "No, the living child is mine, and the dead child is yours." The first said, "No, the dead child is yours, and the living child is mine." Thus they spoke before the king.

Look at how he deals with this...

### **1 Kings 3:24-28**

<sup>24</sup>And the king said, "Bring me a sword." So a sword was brought before the king. <sup>25</sup>And the king said, "Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one and half to the other." <sup>26</sup>Then the woman whose son was alive said to the king, because her heart yearned for her son, "Oh, my lord, give her the living child, and by no means put him to death." But the other said, "He shall be neither mine nor yours; divide him." <sup>27</sup>Then the king answered and said, "Give the living child to the first woman, and by no means put him to death; she is his mother." <sup>28</sup>And all Israel heard of the judgment that the king had rendered, and they stood in awe of the king, because they perceived that the wisdom of God was in him to do justice.

That's true wisdom! And in our day — we need the ability to navigate the complexities, the realities, the difficulties of life.

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## **HOW TO GET WISDOM**

Pastors Jonathan, Jimmy, and I were discussing a number of weeks ago the reality that there are a bunch of verses in the book of Proverbs that essentially tell you... "If you live this way, you get this result."

*For example:*

*"If you work hard, you'll have a good life. If you're lazy, you'll be poor."*

*"If you train a child right, everything will turn out good for them."*

*And it seems to be saying that this is the way things always are. This is the formula. These are the rules for life.* Those that are conservative among us love this! Yes, it's all about individual responsibility. If you make good decisions, if you work hard, if you do the right things, life will turn out great for you!

This is the very perspective of Job's friends when they come to give him advice. "If you honor God you'll live a good life — so you must have sinned against God at some point, or else your life wouldn't be so bad right now." **A+B=C**

But — then you keep reading in Proverbs and it also says, "that a poor person that honors God by how he lives, is better than the wicked who live with wealth." Wait... I thought someone that honored God would prosper, not be poor — but in that proverb, the wicked seem to be prospering!? **A+B=X**

"Those proverbs are contradicting one another!" *And if Proverbs were there to give you a formula, and rules for life you'd be right. But that's not what the book of Proverbs is doing.*

**What Proverbs does is it gives you an idea of how life GENERALLY WORKS.**

Look at what Wisdom says in vs 22-31...

### **Proverbs 8:22-31**

The Lord possessed me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old. <sup>23</sup> Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth. <sup>24</sup> When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. <sup>25</sup> Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth, <sup>26</sup> before he had made the earth with its fields, or the first of the dust of the world. <sup>27</sup> When he established the heavens, I was there; when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, <sup>28</sup> when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, <sup>29</sup> 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, <sup>30</sup> then I was beside him, like a master workman, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, <sup>31</sup> rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the children of man.

Wisdom is saying, the world was made through me... God created the world with me at His side as a master craftsman... I was there, and He delighted in me, and I rejoiced in the His inhabited world and I delighted in the children of man. The world we're living in was created to be a place of beauty, of order, of joy. None of this is random, and if what we live in and experience is not random, there is a pattern that wisdom is built into the very fabric of our universe.

- **Unless you understand that the world was made through wisdom, you'll never understand your desperate need for wisdom in order to understand the world.**
- **Unless you understand that the world was made with intentionality and purpose, you'll never understand your purpose within it — and you'll flounder, being tossed back and forth by the current of culture.**
- **Unless you understand that there is a pattern the God built into the very fabric of your life, you'll never understand how to navigate the complexities of your life.**

### ***So how do I get wisdom?***

The book of James has been called the New Testament's book of wisdom...

### **James 3:13-16**

Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. <sup>14</sup> But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. <sup>15</sup> This is not the wisdom that comes down **from above**, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. <sup>16</sup> For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. <sup>17</sup> But the wisdom **from above** is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.

What **Proverbs 8** and **James 3** are telling us is — that while wisdom is **something that you can grow in** — it's much less a thing that you get than it is a **person you must know**.

See, **Proverbs 8** sounds very similar to **John 1**... where it says...

### **John 1:1-3, 14**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. <sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

*And the word for "word" is the word "Logos," which in the original language literally means, logic, reason, or even wisdom...*

*In other words, if you take “wisdom calling out” in **Proverbs 8, James 3, and John 1**... what you have is this...*

**In the beginning was WISDOM, and WISDOM was with God. WISDOM was in the beginning with God. Everything that was made was made through WISDOM. In fact, WISDOM FROM ABOVE put on flesh and dwelt among us... and we’ve seen His glory...**

**Jesus Christ is the personification of Wisdom.  
He is first pure, peaceable, gentle, open to reason,  
full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.**

**Wisdom is calling out on the busy streets to all who would listen and receive.  
Jesus is calling out to anyone and everyone who would receive him.**

*Jesus is saying to us today, “I’m the wisdom of God. Invite me in. Receive me. Respond to my invitation. Welcome me into your life. And allow me to open your eyes to how I’ve made the world, how I’ve made you, how I’ve made your relationships to operate and function best... lean in to me, and let me guide you in a world that is unraveling. Let me be your true north, your organizing principle, seek me and find me and see the world as it really is.”*

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## **PRACTICAL**

### **9 WEEK READING PLAN — PRINTED ON A BOOKMARK**

- Read a verse a day
- Get in the Word, seek wisdom
- A .pdf version of the reading plan is available to download on [gracechapel.net](http://gracechapel.net)

### **Q&A LIVE — WEDNESDAY NOON**

- On Grace Chapel’s Facebook or Instagram Live
- Rob will be available to answer any questions you have
  - in regard to the message
  - or how to navigate the time we’re living in with wisdom
- Text your question: gcwisdom to 97000

### **IF YOU DESPERATELY NEED WISDOM FROM GOD NOW**

- Incredible invitation from God in James 1
- **James 1:5**  
If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

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## **Discussion Questions**

1. Would you agree that wisdom is more valuable than anything you could ever desire in life? Why or why not?
2. Discuss: *Wisdom is a deep understanding of reality.*
3. What are the external physical results of your making wise decisions?
4. Why do some proverbs seem to contradict each other?
5. Discuss the similarities between **Proverbs 8** and **John 1**.
6. Will you commit to the “From Above” 9-Week Bible Verse-a-Day Plan?

# NOTES