APPLYING GOD’S WORD TO YOUR LIFE!

Three thousand years ago Solomon wrote, “Wisdom is more profitable than silver, and her wages are better than gold. . . . Nothing you desire can compare with her” (Proverbs 3:14-15 NLT). From a series of articles written by Mart DeHaan, you’ll gain insight into the wisdom of the Bible. Discover how you not only can have knowledge of Scripture but also understanding to apply it to your daily living.

Mart DeHaan is heard regularly on the Discover the Word radio program, seen on Day of Discovery television, and is also a writer for Our Daily Bread and Discovery Series study booklets.

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introduction

Better Than Gold
The Life-Changing Wisdom of the Bible

Three thousand years ago Solomon wrote, “Wisdom is more profitable than silver, and her wages are better than gold. Nothing you desire can compare with her” (Proverbs 3:14-15 NLT).

Today we are experiencing information overload and unsolved problems that show why we need the wisdom Solomon was talking about.
I hope the following pages, adapted from a series of articles I’ve written over the last few years, will help you understand why, at Our Daily Bread Ministries, we say our mission is "to make the life-changing wisdom of the Bible understandable and accessible to all."

_Mart DeHaan_
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Managing Editor: J. R. Hudberg
Cover Design: Stan Myers
Cover Image: Image Bank
Interior Design: Steve Gier
Interior Images: (p.1) Image Bank; (p.5) Billy Frank Alexander Design via Stock.xchng; (p.9) Ron Jeffreys via Stock.xchng; (p.13) Hagit Berkovich via RGBStock; (p.17) Jason Krieger via Stock.xchng; (p.19) iStockPhoto; (p.23) Andy Stafiniak via Stock.xchng; (p.27) David Abernethy via RGBStock.

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Printed in USA
If I could write an open letter to reflect some of my own spiritual journey, it might read like this:

"Dear Aaron, I hope you are doing well. I regret that we haven’t kept in touch after your move. I miss our conversations about life, religion, and the Detroit Tigers.

"I’m writing now because I am beginning to see my need for wisdom. Wisdom you didn’t see in me. "

"You used to say, ‘As a group, church people aren’t better than anyone else; they just think they are. The best people I know never darken the door of a church.’ "

"Even though I argued with you at the time, you helped me see that people who build hospitals, orphanages, and rescue missions in the name of Christ..."
aren’t the only ones working for the benefit of humanity.

“I remember your letters to the editor, and the streets you walked protesting the wrongs of racism, the evils of war, or the pollution of the environment.

“Since the last time we talked, I’ve seen the hospitality and goodwill of people from all lifestyles and faiths. I’ve seen that a person doesn’t have to believe in Christ to be loving, gracious, and even heroic in the face of human need.

“Such experiences remind me of the disbelief I saw in your eyes whenever I talked to you about becoming a new person in Christ. I remember the questions you asked when I quoted the words of the apostle Paul, ‘If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.’ You didn’t believe it because you had grown up in church and knew firsthand that not all things had become new.

“Aaron, I wish I had been quicker to listen and slower to speak. I’ve seen enough, especially in myself, to give me second thoughts about what I said. Somewhere along the line I started to ask: Why does conversion produce changes that are more like emotional reactions than a lasting change in life?

“At this point, my spiritual journey has run parallel
to what I've learned in marriage. The greatest similarity is the emotional baggage we bring into both. My inclinations before and after marriage were also a part of me before and after I put my faith in Christ. The self-centeredness that makes it difficult for me to hear the concerns of my wife also makes it hard for me to hear the voice of Christ living in me.

"It took time for me to discover that in faith and in marriage, growth and maturity do not come automatically or easily. And I wasn't prepared for what turned out to be the greatest challenges of my life. I didn't realize that the biggest enemy I would ever face would be my own natural self-centeredness.

"I don't mean to downplay all the wonderful parts of marriage or conversion. But I see how wrong my expectations had been. I thought salvation would make me good, and I expected marriage to make me happy. I didn't see that in both cases my own faults stacked the deck against me if I didn't learn and live the wisdom of Christ.

"As I look back on some of our conversations, I was wrong to assume that my whole life had already changed through faith in Christ; faith didn't automatically make me good or wise.

"Yes, my thinking has changed since the last time we talked. Life has been harder than I expected and I now see more clearly the

The biggest enemy I would ever face would be my own natural self-centeredness.
parallel between being married and entering a relationship with Christ. Upon a couple’s public confession, a minister declares a man and woman married, but not mature in their love. And when we put our faith in Christ, God declares us legally blameless, but not good or wise. In both cases, there is a difference between the legal declaration and the resulting quality of life.

“I now believe that church people, in our best moments, have a lot in common with support groups. We follow the program, not because we are better than others but because we know we need God and one another to overcome the problems that are consuming us. I wish I had understood sooner that believing in Christ is not the same as sharing His wisdom.

“Thanks for reading. If you’re ever inclined, I’d love to hear where life has taken you.”
The Wisdom of Realism

Realist artists paint life with blemishes, wrinkles, and scars. Idealists paint a subject as they imagine it could be. Both are important. Ideals give us direction. Realism gives us traction.

However, without wisdom, both have their downsides. Realism can cost us our dreams. Idealism can consume our days in a futile search for perfection.

We need wisdom to see how idealism and realism relate to each other, especially in matters of faith. The Bible says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of a wisdom that ends up showing us how much He loves us (PROVERBS 9:10, 1 JOHN 4:18-19) and acknowledges that God is good enough to inspire us with His ideals, merciful enough to accept us as we are, and too loving to leave us as He finds us.
The idealism of the Bible. In a perfect world, we would live forever. That's how the drama of the Bible opens and closes. Everything is good—paradise at the beginning and paradise at the end.

Someday weapons of war will be recycled into garden tools (Isaiah 2:4), and lambs will eat safely beside wolves (65:25). The apostle John wrote, “God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away” (Revelation 21:4).

Yet, the idealism of the Bible is not just about the future. It calls us to love God with all our heart and to love our neighbor as ourselves. It emphasizes the moral rule of “love,” and the virtues of “joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, [and] self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23).

No one consistently lives up to such ideals. How can we relate to a God who removed the first man and woman from their garden paradise after doing nothing more than eating a piece of fruit He had warned them about? How could we ever feel safe with a Creator who imposed pain and death on our world for what appears to be a minor breach of trust? (Genesis 3:16-19).

The realism of the Rabbis. One answer comes from first-century Judaism. Some rabbis taught that if...
we keep just one law because God commanded it, it is as if we have kept the whole law.

At first look, this approach sounds like a great solution. We all know that none of us can keep all of the law all of the time. Maybe we can keep some rules some of the time, or at least one rule one time.

But would any wise teacher of the law really mean that as long as you don’t kill your neighbors it’s okay to steal from them? We must be missing something. They must have been talking about keeping one law in such a way as to honor the rest.

The realism of James. Whatever the rabbis meant when they took a “one for all” approach to the law, another teacher expressed our accountability to God differently: “Whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10). And the rest of James’ letter shows a wisdom that is realistic about the ideals of God. When James presses the logic of law, he is pushing people who have already been forgiven to remember the principle of love that is at the heart of every law of God (2:12-13).

James was writing as a follower of Christ (1:1) whose faith in Christ compelled him to pursue the ideal of loving his neighbor, because he had received the forgiveness and mercy of God (2:8). In down-to-earth ways, he urged those who had accepted Christ to reflect His heart (1:26,2:8).

James was writing to people who were being persecuted for believing in Christ. He knew they needed wisdom to demonstrate their faith while they were being battered by all kinds of troubles and temptations. So he wrote, “If any of you
lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him” (James 1:5).

The wisdom James offered was the insight that God Himself wanted to give His people so they could reflect Jesus in the most realistic of conditions.

The realism of Jesus. In contrast with religious leaders who condemned and separated themselves from those they regarded as morally inferior, Jesus was a friend of sinners. Luke took note of the way Jesus linked these friendships with wisdom. He quoted Christ as saying, “The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ But wisdom is justified by all her children” (Luke 7:34-35).

If Jesus had avoided and condemned those who needed Him, He would not be remembered and loved for His life-changing wisdom.

Instead of condemning people caught in self-destruction, Jesus was kind to them. He reached out to people others avoided. He touched lepers, respected women, and loved children.

Jesus personified the wisdom of God. By His example and teaching, He brought together inspiring idealism with rugged realism. Nowhere do we find a clearer picture of what it means to be faithful to the highest principles while offering mercy to the most broken people.

When Jesus pressed the self-righteous with the logic of their moral idealism, He did so to lovingly humble them (Matthew 5:20-48). When He offered mercy instead of morality, He did so to show that He had come not to condemn but to rescue (John 3:17; 12:47).
In a series of TV commercials for online yellow pages, actor David Carradine plays a guru to young seekers. When asked how to find enlightenment, the guru tells his students that yellowbook.com makes it possible to find whatever they are looking for by just typing it in.

Could it be that easy? James did say that followers of Christ can have wisdom just by asking: “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him” (James 1:5). It almost sounds too good to be true. There was only one condition—our request for insight must stem from our trust of God (vv. 6-8).

**Why would we need wisdom from God?** James was writing to people whose faith was being tested (1:2-3). They
may have anticipated religious and social persecution. But they may not have foreseen all of the ways they would disappoint and disillusion each other.

Jesus taught His disciples to love one another (John 15:17). Yet, just a few years later, these first followers of Jesus showed that those who belong to Him may not always act like it (James 4:1-2). With prejudice, hurtful words, and outright hypocrisy, the family and friends of Jesus acted like enemies.

In this conflict-filled setting James assured his readers that the wisdom we need is closer than we might think (1:5). But he did more than tell us how to find it; he taught us to recognize a wisdom that comes from “above” rather than from “below” (3:13-17).

**What does wisdom from God look like?** After writing about prejudice and poverty, James gave his readers a description of the kind of wisdom God gives His people. In the third chapter of his letter he wrote:

> **Who is wise and understanding among you?** Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy (3:13-17).

James said wisdom from above is . . .
“Pure.” The wisdom from “above” doesn’t mix faith in Christ with self-centered desires (3:14-17; 4:1-3).

The fact that wisdom starts with motive can be startling for those who, in the middle of a conflict, are ready to do anything we can to get what we want. As honorable as it may seem to be ready to do whatever we can to solve a problem, James revealed that the wisdom of God first asks some other questions: Why am I so upset? Where is my heart? What motives am I bringing to this conflict? Is my first intent really to trust Christ and His ability to provide for me?

Only to the extent that our motive is to trust Christ and show His presence in us can we respond to conflict in a way that is genuinely . . .

“Peaceable.” When our hearts resonate with God’s, we long for real peace. Wisdom that enables us to value rightly motivated peace over conflict (1:5) is a gift from God. It is a new ideal that gives birth to wisdom that is . . .

“Gentle.” In the ancient world, this word was used of kings who used their authority with dignity, forbearance, and appropriate leniency toward their subjects. This is the kind of wisdom that enables subjects of King Jesus to represent His authority with a spirit of kindness.

Gentleness becomes a basis for wisdom that is . . .

“Willing to yield.” A willingness to return good for evil is an expression of strength rather than weakness.

Relying on God, rather than focusing on the one who has hurt us, enables us to work patiently for an outcome that is . . .

“Full of mercy and good fruits.” When our heart is yielded to the wisdom of Christ, we see the value of
undeserved kindness while waiting for the fruit of peace. With the insight that comes from God, we give others the space they need. In patience, we give one another time to experience the growing influence of Christ in our own lives.

When we don’t respond to others in a near-sighted and superficial way, we show a wisdom that is...

"Without Partiality." Earlier in his letter, James wrote about followers of Christ who treated people of wealth and influence better than the poor and needy (2:1-10). But in chapter 3 he says that responding to others without partiality is a way of showing the wisdom and heart of God.

Rising above the influence of wealth, social standing, or appearance enables us to show the presence of Christ so that we may live with a wisdom that is...

"Without Hypocrisy." This identifying mark of wisdom caps the rest. James used it to celebrate the integrity of the wisdom God wants to give us. In our better moments none of us wants to talk the language of faith while practicing the goals and politics of envy and ambition.

What can we expect from God’s wisdom? James showed that God doesn’t make wisdom easily accessible just to help us get what we want when we want it (1:2-5; 4:1-3). His insights were given to enable us to develop patience and a maturity that is full of the spirit of Christ.

These characteristics may not give us the quick resolution we hope for. But they will give us hearts that are marked by the attitudes of peace rather than the appetites or impulses of war (3:18).
In April 2006, Jeb Corliss attempted to parachute from the top of the Empire State Building. At the last minute, security guards restrained him and New York City police charged him with reckless endangerment.

There is another jump we make that is even more dangerous—wrong conclusions about important issues. The Bible gives us a classic example of such a leap. It happened over 3400 years ago but sets a precedent for us today. The conquest of the “Promised Land” was ending and soldiers that had settled on the east side of the Jordan River were going home to reunite with their families (Joshua 22).

As peace settled, someone heard that east-side families had built an altar. Word spread that “the east side” was sliding back into idolatry. Tempers flared.

Only a few years earlier, God had sent a plague that
killed 24,000 (Numbers 25:9) for worshiping idols.

National disaster fresh in their minds, the west moved quickly. “When the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered together at Shiloh to go to war against them” (Joshua 22:12).

Before rash action was taken, wisdom prevailed. If a community in Israel turned away to worship other gods, the law said they were to “inquire, search out, and ask diligently” prior to taking up the sword against their countrymen (Deuteronomy 13:14-15). So the west formed a delegation to do some fact-finding and asked a man who had earned their respect to lead the group (Numbers 25:1-9; Joshua 22:13-14). When the delegation reached their brothers in the east, they were ready for the worst. They accused the eastern tribes of ignoring the past and endangering the future of the nation.

After listening to the accusations, spokespersons for the east assured them that the altar was not for sacrifice. It was a memorial so that future generations would remember their relationship to the whole nation and the God of Israel (Joshua 22:24-27). All Israel celebrated the news: The altar was “a witness between us that the Lord is God” (v. 34).

If the initial conclusion had been acted on, many would have died. A family would have gone to war with itself.

We need to learn what the children of Israel learned. There are many ways to jump to false conclusions. Hearing only one side of a conflict (Proverbs 18:17), assuming guilt by association (Luke 7:34), and repeating unconfirmed information as fact (Joshua 22:11) are only a few of the leaps that harm. We all need to hear the wisdom of James: “Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry” (James 1:19 NIV).
From a distance, it would be easy to idealize Solomon. The Bible tells us about his enormous wealth and influence. His building projects are a tribute to his vision. His down-to-earth proverbs reflect his wisdom. But Solomon had a difficult and troubled life that can tell us a lot about God and ourselves.

His compromised beginning. Solomon’s kingship was in an atmosphere of cultural and religious compromise. In an effort to encourage good relations with Israel’s southern
neighbor, he married the daughter of the Pharaoh (1 Kings 3:1). In addition, Israel was worshiping at high places used by the people of the land (3:2-3). Yet Solomon had a place in his heart for the Lord, and God was patient with him. In our broken world, God can work with our desire to honor Him—even when we don’t understand how messed up we are.

**His sleep to success.** One of Solomon’s most famous decisions happened while he slept. He was given an opportunity the rest of us dream of. When the Lord appeared to him and offered to give him the desires of his heart, Solomon asked for understanding and discernment. God promised to give him not only that but wealth and honor as well. Some have overlooked the fact that Solomon made his request in his sleep (3:15). God can work with us in ways that say far more about His goodness than our own.

**His unimpressive showcase.** God could have showcased Solomon’s wisdom by leading him to match wits with world-class minds. Instead, Solomon’s first act of recorded wisdom was to settle a conflict between two prostitutes. Both had recently given birth. But one of
them had lost her baby through an accident and was now claiming to be the mother of the living newborn. The women appealed to Solomon to settle their dispute. With God-given insight, Solomon was able to give the rightful mother her baby (3:16-28). *God has a heart for the kind of people many would dismiss as unworthy.*

**His double-vision.** Solomon showed us how to look for the two sides of human nature. By the alarming but effective method of threatening to “divide the baby” between the two women, Solomon found two responses. One woman was willing to see the baby dead rather than in the arms of the other. The second showed she would rather give the child away than to see it die. By surfacing the best and worst sides of human nature, Solomon brought justice and mercy to a messy conflict. *Wisdom looks for the difference between lingering evidence of our creation in the likeness of God and emerging expressions of our rebellion against Him.*

**His sad ending.** Unfortunately, Solomon’s wisdom did not keep him from foolish choices. Solomon broke the laws set down for kings of Israel. *(Deuteronomy 17:14-20).* He used his position to serve himself at the expense
of the citizens. In outrageously self-indulgent ways, he multiplied personal wealth, wives, and sexual partners. But it didn’t end there. Solomon even built altars to the pagan gods of his wives (1 Kings 11:1-8). Wisdom can help only if we obey God and use the insight He gives us.

His lessons about failure. The reality of Solomon’s life may be his most important contribution to us. Through Solomon’s foolishness we see that all the wisdom in the world does not change human nature. We all live below God’s standards, and if we’re honest, even below our own expectations. Who among us does not wish to be more loving, more self-controlled, and more focused on what is really important? As followers of Christ, we long to show more of Him in us.

That’s why it’s so important to think about what the apostle Paul meant when he wrote that Jesus became the wisdom of God for us (1 Corinthians 1:30).

Jesus did what Solomon could not. Although Solomon could recognize and collect wisdom, Jesus personified wisdom in everything He did.

Solomon suffered for his own wrongs, but Jesus suffered, and died, for our sins—and then offered us His own relationship with God.

In the process, Jesus became the means by which we can use knowledge to come to Him, and—in Him—to find safety, significance, and satisfaction.
The Wisdom of Multiple Counsel

Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety" (Proverbs 11:14).

This ancient proverb offers wisdom for people who are hurting and for family members and pastors who are called upon to help them.

The challenges of real life. Many of us have family members or close friends living with the pain and confusion that seems so much a part of life: addictions, Alzheimer’s, autism, clinical depression, marital abuse, or
life-threatening eating disorders. We can only imagine how many others are struggling with post-traumatic stress, gender confusion, panic attacks, schizophrenia, or obsessive-compulsive disorders.

These are only a few of the sorrows that need the wisdom of Solomon and the Spirit of the One who came to rescue (John 3:17; 12:47).

The additional pain of criticism. It’s important to think about how we respond to those who are struggling with issues of emotional and mental health. If we are not careful, we can unintentionally add to their pain by suggesting that their struggle reflects a lack of faith, prayer, or time in the Word of God.

How many of us understand the intimate connection between body and soul when it comes to trauma and memories that sear the soul like a hot iron? How many of us have the insight to deal with those who have been devastated by sexual abuse, the front lines of war, or a history of domestic violence?

The pressures of faith. Anyone called upon in such crises can feel overwhelmed. Many realize their limitations, but feel compelled to act as if the Bible, prayer, and fellowship are the only God-honoring ways to deal with
emotional and mental problems. The tension between what we think of as biblical solutions and secular resources are understandable. As followers of Christ, we don’t want to make the mistake of treating a spiritual condition as a physical or mental illness. But neither should we treat a physical or mental illness as a spiritual condition.

**In pursuit of answers.** Our dependency needs to be on God alone. But within what boundaries does the God of the Bible provide for His people? Haven’t many of us thanked God for the help of health professionals and social workers who have walked with us through medical problems, mental illness, addictions, and the trauma of war or poverty?

If our intent is to find help that reflects the wisdom of God, we lose nothing if we ask a doctor to look for factors that might be clouding our minds. Faith does not suffer if we ask professional specialists to help us explore our thoughts, emotions, and choices.

No one should have to stand alone under the weight of spiritual problems complicated by the possibility of real mental, emotional, and physical illness. Nor can we safely assume that our desire to trust God needs to be
kept separate from the combined counsel of pastoral and health professionals.

**The need for perspective.** Counselors, doctors, and support groups can never replace our accountability to God. Nor can medical or professional counseling ever replace the need for pastoral and congregational care. We would be better off dying early, diseased in body and troubled in soul, than to live long, peaceful, and healthy lives without a daily awareness of our reliance on Christ.

Christ is the Lord of all truth. We should remember that God provides through many men and women, whether they know Him or not.

Yes, there are dangers. Along the way, any doctor, counselor, or spiritual leader might unintentionally mislead us. That’s why we need to pay special attention to the wisdom of Solomon. Because bad advice can come from trusted sources, we need to weigh multiple perspectives to sort through difficult problems. “Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety” (Proverbs 11:14).
According to Buddhist folklore, two traveling monks reached a river where they met a young woman. Wary of the current, she asked if they could carry her across. One of the monks hesitated, but the other quickly picked her up onto his shoulders, transported her across the water, and put her down on the other bank. She thanked him and departed. As the monks continued on their way, the one was brooding and preoccupied. Unable to hold his silence, he spoke out. “Brother, our spiritual training teaches us to avoid any contact with women, but you picked that
one up on your shoulders and carried her!” “Brother,” the second monk replied, “I set her down on the other side. But you are still carrying her.”

**A Question of Wisdom.** The insight of the monk raises an interesting question. If followers of Christ acknowledge moral and spiritual insight in another religion, do we weaken our case for the distinctiveness of our own faith?

I believe it strengthens our case when we acknowledge that the Bible helps us see wisdom outside its pages. As our inspired standard for wisdom, the Bible shows how to recognize natural, religious, and moral insights from the world around us. Most important, the Bible shows us how these first three kinds of wisdom help us see our need for the redemptive wisdom of the cross.

Let’s take a closer look at how the first three kinds of wisdom can help us build bridges to those outside our faith, without compromising the distinctiveness of Christ in the process.

**Natural Wisdom.** The book of Proverbs gives us examples of insights that abound in the cultures and religions of the world. Solomon shows us how to learn from animals, agriculture, and from personal reflection.

For example:
• Wise is the one who is not too big to learn from the ant (Proverbs 6:6-8).

• The most important battles are fought in the mind (16:32, 25:28).

Natural wisdom can help anyone live a more thoughtful life. But it does not by itself give us hope in a world where all of our accomplishments are subject to change and loss (Ecclesiastes 1:1-11).

Religious Wisdom. People of many cultures have found it difficult to think that the wonders of the natural world have no counterpart on the other side of death. As a result, many religions try to give hope beyond the grave. The following statements from the Bible have parallels in other religious systems:

• Those who hope only in this life are destined for despair (2:15-20).

• Nothing is more relevant than the eternal (12:13-14).

By believing in life after death, people of many religions have found the courage to make sacrifices for a better world beyond. But some minimize the importance of this life, and so waste the earth’s resources, wage unnecessary wars, and sacrifice their lives at the expense of others. Religious wisdom does not make people good merely by offering the hope of immortality.
merely by offering the hope of immortality.

**Moral Wisdom.** Spirituality without morality can result in everything from false gods to religious exploitation of the poor. According to the Bible, moral wisdom is so important that our Creator wrote His laws not only in stone but also in our hearts (Romans 2:14-15). The Bible resonates with a universal human conscience when it says things like, “Do to others what you would have them do to you” (Matthew 7:12 NIV) and “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21).

Once again, we have an incomplete insight. When we think about the moral wisdom of love, our problem is not in knowing but in doing. No matter how much we want to love, we easily slide into self-centered thinking. None of us can give or receive as much love as our heart longs for.

**Redemptive Wisdom.** We are all wounded. We need more than natural, religious, or moral wisdom to do the right thing. We need redemptive insight to help us deal with the wrongs of others and our own wrongs.

Jesus offered redemptive wisdom when He said, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will
give you rest” (Matthew 11:28) and “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance” (Mark 2:17).

Christ’s invitation to hurting and helpless people was not new. For centuries, Jewish prophets had been declaring that God lives not only in the heavens but also in the dark valleys of crushed and shattered people (Psalm 34:18; Isaiah 57:15).

What was new with Christ was that at the crossroads of the world, and on the center page of human history, God unveiled the secret of His redemptive wisdom. By an act of immeasurable love, our Creator became our substitute, dying in our place (1 Corinthians 1:17-31).

Wisdom doesn’t get more profound than this. The darkest moment of human history was the means by which our Creator offered us His forgiveness and His everlasting life.

By the redemptive wisdom of Christ ruined and hopeless people learn to love as they have been loved, and to forgive as they have been forgiven.

Seeing Jesus as the fulfillment of God’s gift of wisdom to us (1:30), we can read Solomon’s love for wisdom with even more
appreciation. Now we can do more than celebrate the value of practical insight—we can see the source of all wisdom. “Joyful is the person who finds wisdom, the one who gains understanding. For wisdom is more profitable than silver, and her wages are better than gold. Wisdom is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her” (PROVERBS 3:13-15 NLT).
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