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Wisdom is Better

Chasing the Wind: Searching for Meaning Series

Ecclesiastes 8:1-9:18

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God made the world. He made you and me, human beings. He made everything just right. But then humans came along, and we messed everything up. That's my little paraphrase of Ecclesiastes chapter 7, verse 29. The Preacher said God made men upright, but they sought after their own devices. They looked to solve problems and to find fulfilment in something other than God. And when that happened, chaos came into the world; everything got messy. And every person who walks this earth, is bound to walk in the midst of this messiness. Now, the question that arises, of course, is, "If the messed-up world, the brokenness of the world, the twistedness of the world, affects everyone—wise and foolish alike—then is there really any benefit to being wise? Is there any benefit to wisdom?"

That is what we want to consider together this morning, so open your Bibles with me to Ecclesiastes, Chapter 8. We're going to be going through two chapters this morning. Before we get into it, I do want to offer a warning. I made the mistake on Friday of picking something up, while also being 45 years old, and I threw my back out, and so I might be wincing up here. I'll let you decide, "Is it because the text is so depressing, or is it because (Oh, just did it right there.) my back hurts so badly?" I made it through the 9:00 service. We'll see if I can make it through 10:45. So, Ecclesiastes, chapter 8, verse 1. The Preacher says:

> **Who is like the wise man and who knows the interpretation of a matter? A man's wisdom illumines him and causes his stern face to beam.** (*NASB, Ecclesiastes 8:1)

Consequently, I should let you know my wife and kids said that could be my life verse, because they complain that my face is always way too stern. And so I have to explain to them that it's just the face the Lord gave me. So the Preacher begins by saying, **Who is like the wise man**? Now last week, Bryan talked to us about two ladies that show up in biblical Wisdom Literature. There is *Lady Wisdom*, and *Lady Folly*. We can all affirm the fact that wisdom is the better course; that's the answer that we know is correct. But we can also affirm that what generally happens is that wisdom is affirmed, but actually not all that followed. So, when we look at a broken world, when we admit the world is messy and it's crooked, what we are admitting, in part, is that human beings have run away from wisdom and have embraced folly. The messiness in the world is the result of a rejection of wisdom.

So, what is wisdom? Biblically speaking, wisdom is something like this. To be wise, is to understand the way God made the world, to understand Him and His ways and His design, and then to align your life with the way things were designed. It's to look at the world and see: This is how God made it. This is how things are supposed to work. And although there are agents of chaos and corruption, there is a way that God designed things to run. So to walk in wisdom, is to align your life with the way that God designed things to run, and to reject wisdom, is to reject God

and also God's design. And we have to admit that is the most frequently chosen path in our world. That's why the Preacher asks: ***Who is wise?***

Most commentators agree that the phrase that starts verse 1 of chapter 8 is essentially a rhetorical question that implies a negative answer. The answer it implies is, "*Not many people."* Wisdom is very rare. It's possible that we'd say no one is wise. Wisdom is rare, but just because it's rare does not mean that it isn't valuable. Wisdom is very valuable. The second part of the first verse just highlights what wisdom does. Wisdom has this capacity to transform someone, to take a **stern face**, and cause it to **beam**, to shine, to be illumined. Wisdom changes a person as someone comes and walks in alignment with the way things are supposed to be. There's a transformative effect when someone shines like light, in the midst of a dark world that is ruled by folly. Wisdom is incredibly valuable, but it is very rare. So, as he continues, the Preacher is going to turn his attention once again to the political realm. As you go before a king, what does wisdom look like? Verse 2:

> **I say, "Keep the command of the king because of the oath before God. Do not be in a hurry to leave him. Do not join in an evil matter, for he will do whatever he pleases." Since the word of the king is authoritative, who will say to him, "What are you doing?"** (Vs. 2-4)

So, it's pretty obvious that the context here is a royal court. Maybe this is advice or counsel for an advisor to the king. The question is, "What does it look like to approach the king with wisdom, and to act wisely when you're with a king?" And the answer is pretty clear. It's to, "Be obedient; be brief, and then to be honest." And there is this diligence, this caution that should accompany someone when they approach the king, because the king is someone who has absolute authority. And because he has absolute authority, he should be approached with caution. Now, because we live in a broken world, we have to acknowledge, even in this statement, that just because someone acts with wisdom in front of the king, that does not guarantee that the outcome with the king is going to be good. He says that, when he says that the king essentially **will do whatever he pleases**. So, even as someone approaches the king with wisdom, that doesn't mean that it is going to go well, because kings are people with absolute authority. No one can question them. Maybe they are going to embrace wisdom; maybe they're going to embrace folly. And that means that the person who approaches with wisdom, actually has to approach with some concern, because things aren't predictable. The world is unpredictable. Rulers and people that oversee us can embrace folly. Even if we approach with wisdom—we approach rightly—but someone who is overseeing, someone with absolute power, can just do something that is the exact opposite of wisdom. That means that, as you approach the king, approach with caution, because the world is very unpredictable, and an unpredictable world is a world that is wearying. It's a world that creates anxiety. It's a world that leads to misery. You always wonder, "What am I going to get?" That's precisely what the text goes on to describe in verse 5:

> **He who keeps a *royal* command experiences no trouble,** (Well, that sounds that sounds pretty good, doesn't it?) **for a wise heart knows the proper time and procedure. For there is a proper time and procedure for every delight, though a man's trouble is heavy upon him.** (Vs. 5-6)

So that sounds like pretty standard wisdom. Just approach with wisdom, and there'll be no trouble. But then in verse 7, he starts to go negative:

> **If no one knows what will happen, who can tell him when it will happen? No man has authority to restrain the wind with the wind, or authority over the day of death; and there is no discharge in the time of war, and evil will not deliver those who practice it. All this I have seen and applied my mind to every deed that has been done under the sun wherein a man has exercised authority over *another* man to his hurt.** (Vs. 7-9)

There's a lot of words there, and it's a little confusing. He jumps back and forth between kind of positive and negative statements. But we can be certain that he begins in verse 5 with pretty standard proverb language…kind of standard proverb wisdom. And the wisdom is this: If you come before the king and you obey his command, then you're not going to experience any trouble. That sounds really good to us. That's the way proverbs work. Proverbs are generally true. Proverbs are wisdom, but they aren't promises. And in a world that is chaotic, in a world that is filled with sin, that means that there are going to be exceptions. There are going to be times where, even when you act with wisdom, it is not going to automatically result in a good outcome. The Preacher implies that when he says, ***"No one knows what will happen***; everything is up in the air." You just aren't sure exactly how it's going to go, even when you act with wisdom. And so, because of that, as you approach the king, approach with caution. As you seek after wisdom, seek after it because wisdom is good. But it cannot guarantee that everything is going to work out. So, again, the question is, "Is wisdom good?" And the answer clearly is, "Yes". But also know that, in our world, an unwise king can cause absolute destruction in your life, even as you live according to wisdom.

Not only that, but he says, "***Who can stop the wind?"*** Can you stop the wind with the wind? It just comes and it goes. Death is going to sneak up on everyone, and it's going to sneak up unexpectedly. Those in authority over us, even if it's just a boss, they can act indiscriminately against us, and we have no way of necessarily safeguarding that harm won't come in. And so, again, the question is, "What is the value of wisdom in a chaotic world?" The Preacher is going back and forth. "Wisdom is very good. Yes, act with wisdom," but then he simultaneously is saying, "But being wise is no guarantee; your life still could fall apart." That's the tension he is walking through. As the passage continues, he's going to give us a detailed analysis of just the frustrating reality of life. Verse 10:

> **So then, I've seen the wicked buried, those who used to go in and out from the holy place, and they are *soon* forgotten in the city where they did thus. This too is futility. Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil. Although a sinner does evil a hundred *times* and may lengthen his *life*, still I know that it will be well for those who fear God, who fear Him openly. But it will not be well for the evil man and he will not lengthen his days like a shadow, because he does not fear God.**
>
> **There is futility which is done on the earth, that is, there are righteous men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked. On the other hand, there are evil**

> **men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous. I say that this too is futility. So I commended pleasure, for there is nothing good for a man under the sun except to eat and to drink and to be merry, and this will stand by him in his toils *throughout* the days of his life which God has given him under the sun.** (Vs. 10-15)

Oh, in so many ways, those six verses—verses 10-15—kind of sum up what has been going on throughout this entire book. He clearly names the problem, that righteousness and wisdom do not guarantee an easy life. The righteous person might have a very hard life. And, in the same way, wickedness and folly do not guarantee a bad life or a difficult life. For the Preacher, and for us, today, that runs against our sensibilities. That's not the way we think the world is supposed to be set up.

In the ancient world, this idea was called *the retribution principle*. Here's what it is. If you do good, then automatically good will occur in your life. If you do evil, if you do wrong, then you can count on bad things coming into your life. And so in the pagan world, they would say, "Okay, you must obey the gods. Obey the gods just right, and the gods, then, will bless you. Or if you upset the gods, then it's surely because they are punishing you." And so, maybe even if something goes wrong, you go back and you say, "Okay, well, how did I step out of line, because, clearly, that's the way life works. If you do this…then…that."

Now that idea is still true today. I think humans just always struggle with thinking this way. Even in things like the New Age Movement, we called that karma. Or in the self-help world, it's the power of positive thinking. If you just put enough positive stuff out there, then the positive will come back to you. That's the way humans want to orient the world and design the world. But all you have to do is just look at our world, observe things for just a moment, and you will realize that is not reality. That is not the way the world works. The best person in the world could have horrible things happen to them. And the Preacher says, "That is **futility**; that is **vanity**." Verse 14 sums that idea up so well. ***The righteous men, it happens to them, according to the evil deeds. It's the evil men, it happens to them, according to the righteous deeds.*** That is a devastating setup. That's a devastating reality to come to grips with.

So, what's there to do? Well, the Preacher in verse 15 says, here's what you should do. ***"Embrace pleasure. Eat, drink, and be merry."*** Imagine with me for just a moment that you call the church, and you say, "Hey, I want to line up a meeting with a staff person, with a pastor. I want to come meet with them." You come and you talk to him and you say, "Everything is going horrible. Everything is unraveling; my life is falling apart." And they look at you and they say, "Here, I know what to do. I want you to run over to Runza. Grab yourself a Runza. Get the Frings, you know the ones that come with the fries and the onion rings. Get your favorite soft drink and just enjoy that. That's the solution!" Pretty shallow, isn't it? Pretty hollow advice.

We talked a few weeks ago about how these moments for the Preacher—what we call the Carpe Diem text—to kind of "Seize the day". The best you can do is just enjoy what's right in front of you. And there is truth in that. We are given today, and that is something that we need to affirm. And it's a day that we are called to rejoice and be thankful to God for it. That is absolutely true! But I think we can also answer, that thus far into the book, that answer is starting to feel a little empty. Is **Eat, drink and be merry** really the best we can do? It's pretty obvious, as well, that

the Preacher is not as satisfied by that answer as he once was, because as soon as we finish chapter 8 and turn to chapter 9, we enter into what many commentators say is "the lowest of lows" in the entire book. So he continues in verse 16:

> **When I gave my heart to know wisdom and to see the task which has been done on the earth (even though one should never sleep day or night), and I saw every work of God, I *concluded* that man cannot discover the work which has been done under the sun. Even though man should seek laboriously, he will not discover; and though the wise man should say, "I know," he cannot discover.** (Vs. 16-17)

As we began chapter 8, he asked that rhetorical question, "**Who is wise**?" That implied an answer of, *"Very few people*. Very few people are wise." But one thing we can clearly say about the Preacher is that his perspective is coming from someone who has diligently sought to find meaning, diligently sought to understand what is wisdom and what does it look like to live a life of wise and a fulfilled life? And so he has diligently sought understanding. And here he comes to a preliminary conclusion in verse 17. His conclusion is, "It just doesn't matter how hard someone searches. It doesn't matter how much they think they know. The search for wisdom and the search for meaning is elusive. It's a treasure that is never going to be found."

Why does he come to that conclusion at this point? Well, his answer is going to sound familiar to us. It's two common problems that we face in the world: the unpredictability of life, and the absolute certainty of death. Chapter 9, verse 1:

> **For I have taken all this to my heart and explain it that righteous men, wise men, and their deeds are in the hands of God. Man does not know whether *it will be* love or hatred; anything awaits him.** (Chapter 9:1)

Life is unpredictable. He's affirming that God oversees all things. But even in this statement, ***"Is it going to be love or hatred?"*** he's saying, "I don't know. I don't know, as God oversees, whether He is going to bless or whether it's not going to go well for me…whether I'm going to feel as though I am living through a curse." God oversees all things, but the way the world works, I still see that He does not prevent bad things from happening to good people. And, ultimately, if you're the best person on earth, you can't count on being the best person as something that will ensure that you never have bad things happen to you. We would like it that way, though, wouldn't we?

The way we'd design the world, I'd want it to be the kind of thing where if someone walks with wisdom, if someone is full of character, that means no sickness, no disease, no hardship. The people who are evil, the people who embrace evil devices, I want those people to be the ones that, "Okay, that's the person where cancer hits. You kind of get what you put out." That's the way human beings conceive of the world, but that is not the way God has designed the world. So, the Preacher looks at this and he says, "What am I to do with this?" Everything is unexpected. Life is unpredictable. That is confusing, and that makes me ask the question, "Is there any purpose, any point in even trying to walk a right path?" He continues, and he reflects on the fact that while life is unpredictable, death is very predictable. Death is inevitable. Verse 2:

> **It is the same for all. There is one fate for the righteous and for the wicked; for the good, for the clean and for the unclean; for the man who offers a sacrifice and for the one who does not sacrifice. As the good man is, so as the sinner; as the swearer is, so is the one who is afraid to swear. This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that there is one fate for all men. Furthermore, the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil and insanity** (madness) **is in their hearts throughout their lives. Afterwards, they *go* to the dead. For whoever is joined with all the living, there is hope; surely a live dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know they will die; but the dead do not know anything, nor have they any longer a reward, for their memory is forgotten. Indeed their love, their hate and their zeal have already perished, and they will no longer have a share in all that is done under the sun.** (Vs. 2-6)

My grandpa, when we used to drive by a cemetery, he'd say, "Ryan, do you know how many people are buried in there?" And I'd say, "No, how many?" And he'd say, "All of them…all of them!" It's a good grandpa joke. Everyone dies. Death is very predictable. It is guaranteed. The Preacher says one fate…***one fate for all men.*** He goes through a list of opposites: ***Wicked and righteous, clean and unclean, the good and the sinner.*** In other words, everyone will meet death. He said, "This is a grave evil." Furthermore, he laments that while they live, men just seem to live lives of insanity—lives of madness—just kind of on this endless cycle of futility…and then they die.

And here's what we need to remember: We need to remember that he did not have a very robustly-developed theology of the afterlife. His concern was primarily with life and, "How do I live life well?" And what he's struggling with is, it doesn't seem like it goes all that well. It doesn't seem like there's a way to live in a way that is flourishing, and that is good, and that is blessed. It seems as though the best he can do is this very meager little positive reflection. He says, "You know what? Maybe it's better to be alive, because then, at least you know you're going to die. But if you're dead, then you know nothing." How's that for positivity? You can stencil that above your fireplace!

He says, ***"It's better to be a live dog than a dead lion."*** What a depressing state he is in! A live dog? Dogs are scavengers, right? Dogs were the bottom of the food chain at that time. These weren't highly cultivated breeds, you know…Goldendoodles, things like that. Better to be a live dog than a dead lion? I think if we could chart the preacher's mood throughout the book of Ecclesiastes, I think this would be the point where he would almost hit bottom. He's absolutely confounded…confused…has come to the point where he says even wisdom seems elusive. It seems pointless to him.

I do want to reflect for a moment on just the fact that this is incredibly honest. This is life. For so many people, this is life. This is where they live. And we want to affirm that even in this room, there are people who are struggling in this moment, who long to get to the release of tension, to where there's some resolution…and we are going to get there in the weeks to come.

But before we do that, I just want to linger here for just a moment. If that's you, this is just a very honest place for Scripture to take us. If it's not you, I just want to encourage you to think, for just a moment, about those people in your life—your co-workers, your family, your friends, your

neighbors. There are so many people that are living, and this is about the best they can do. They're living in cycles of frustration, cycles of madness. And we know that Ecclesiastes is one book of the Bible, and there are 65 other books in the Bible. And so, this is one part of the story that God is telling in the world. But there are so many people that walk around the world today, and this is the entire story.

When we were in Spain, my wife had a tutor. And this tutor said to Jenee at one point, "You know what? We're just animals; we're no different. We live; we die. That's it." So many people live right there. So, in this moment, I want to do something a little different. I'm going to have Mike come join me on stage, and we're going to have him play a song for us, a song that is not a Christian song. It doesn't resolve this tension; it's a song that kind of just reflects on the struggle of life. And as we do that, I want to just invite you to ask God to come and speak to you, by His Spirit, about maybe ways that you're stuck in a bad cycle, a cycle of futility. But more than that, I also want to encourage each of us to think of people that we know that live in this state of futility, people who struggle to believe there's any hope. And during this moment, or in these few minutes, just lift up a prayer that God would meet them, that God would encourage them, and maybe even that God would use you to bring the hope of the gospel into the darkness of the futile world that so many people walk in. *(Mike sings "Mad World" by Tears for Fears, written by Roland Orzabal)*

You don't have to look very far in our world to find people living with an attitude, with a reality that's like that song. You know, it's interesting if you just do a quick search of popular songs, songs that are listened to broadly, and you say, "Hey, show me those songs that have the themes of Ecclesiastes throughout them." There's just an endless list, because this is where people live. They live without hope…live without light in the world…live without a sense of connection to their Creator, and without wisdom, to line their life up with the way that He designed things to be. And oh, let us be a church that doesn't just feel bad about that, but let it be a pity that causes us to pray, to pray for them, and to pray for opportunities to bring the gospel and the hope of Jesus Christ to a world that is broken, that is living in a cycle of madness. We don't have to live there. Ah, but so many other people in the world do.

So the first step in evangelism, so often, is just to be prayerful, to pray for opportunities to bring hope to the hopeless, to help them see a way out of the mad cycle of life. It's where the Preacher is, and we should all be used to the fact, by now, that he is very quickly going to, now, swing the pendulum the other direction. We're going to go from that moment, into a little moment of hope, a little moment of life. Once again, he's going to come with the encouragement to enjoy the moment that is right in front of you, as we continue in verse 7:

> **Go *then*, eat your bread in happiness and drink your wine with a cheerful heart; for God has already approved your works. Let your clothes be white all the time, and let no oil be lacking on your head. Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life which He has given to you under the sun; for this is your reward in life and in your toil in which you have labored under the sun.**
>
> **Whatever your hand finds to do, do *it* with *all* your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going.** (Vs. 7-10)

He's not quite as enthusiastic as he's been in other moments, but still the call is to enjoy life; seek to enjoy the moments that God has given. It's all we have. And we can affirm it's not all we have, but we are still called as God's people to enjoy the moment that's in front of us, to take advantage of today, to live with purpose, live with meaning today, and to invest in that which truly matters. But we can admit, now nine chapters into Ecclesiastes, that he is stuck in this tension, and he's struggling to get out of it…the tension of observing the world and seeing lives of meaninglessness all around him. But then, also, this view that affirms that God created the world good, and life is good, and so he's still trying, in this moment, to sort that out. We're going to find that, as soon as he cheers up as he did just for those few verses, he now is going to come back down, and as chapter 9 draws to a close, he is going to reflect on two more common challenges of life. Verse 11:

> **I again saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift and the battle is not to the warriors, and neither is bread to the wise nor wealth to the discerning nor favor to men of ability; for time and chance overtake them all. Moreover, man does not know his time: like fish caught in the treacherous net and birds trapped in a snare, so the sons of men are ensnared at an evil time when it suddenly falls on them.** (Vs. 11-12)

Well, once again, as soon as he's positive, he bounces right back to the unpredictability of life. It does not matter if you are fast or slow, or strong or weak, or well-fed and wealthy, life is unpredictable. You don't know how it's going to go, and death is going to sneak up on you. That's what he means when he says *a person's time*. In other words, death is going to come. It's going to catch you off guard. And it doesn't matter who you are, it is coming. That's why it's always tragic. It's the great equalizer. Every person alive is going to experience it. So that being the case, I suppose the question is, "Do we just throw up our hands and say, 'Futility!'" as he has so many times? Is that the solution? What about wisdom? Is wisdom worthy of our pursuit? Verse 13:

> **Also this I came to see is wisdom under the sun, and it impressed me. There was a small city with few men in it and a great king came to it, surrounded it and constructed large siegeworks against it. But there was found in it a poor wise man and he delivered the city by his wisdom. Yet no one remembered the poor man. So I said, "Wisdom is better than strength." But the wisdom of the poor man is despised and his words are not heeded. The words of the wise heard in quietness are *better* than the shouting of a ruler among fools. Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good.** (Vs. 13-18)

Well, he and we are not out of the woods yet. His quest is going to continue, but it seems as though here, as he finishes chapter 9, he is kind of stuck in these recurring themes. Death meets everyone, the wise and the unwise alike. So we say, "Is that true?" And of course we affirm, "Yes, it is true; the unwise and the unwise…everyone will die." "Is life equally unpredictable for the wise and the unwise?" "Yes, it absolutely is." "Will both the works and the deeds of the wise and the unwise eventually be forgotten?" "Yes, all of that is true." That is the world that we are living in. And if you are trying to seek after wisdom, in order to avoid death, or to avoid trouble, or to be remembered, then you are going to be sorely disappointed. That is not what wisdom promises to deliver. None of those things will be held off by walking with wisdom.

But in these closing verses, he does suggest that even though wisdom doesn't guarantee any outcomes, it is still a very worthy pursuit. It's not worthy because it automatically makes life good, not worthy because it promises that everything will go well, but worthy because it aligns us with what is good and what is right. It aligns us with God's very wisdom and God's very goodness. If wisdom is that understanding of God's ways in the world…understanding of God's design for the world, and then having a knack, having an aptitude for aligning your life with the way God designed the world, if that's what wisdom is, then it's clear why wisdom and righteousness so often go hand in hand, in Ecclesiastes, in Proverbs, and elsewhere. Because to seek to be wise, is to seek to align with the God that created everything. It's to seek to understand God and His ways, to seek His righteousness first, to seek Him first. And with that…to have wisdom be the outcome of your life. It's a life that can align with the purposes of God. That is what a righteous life looks like.

There's a theologian, Cornelius Plantinga, that had this to say about wisdom, he says, "Wisdom is, broadly speaking, the knowledge of God's world, and the knack of fitting oneself into it." The wise person knows creation; the wise person gives in to creation and to God. And she does the first: That is she gives in to creation, because she does the second: she gives in to God. She knows the Earth is the Lord's, and so is its fullness.

Wisdom is a worthy pursuit, because wisdom ultimately draws us up into worship. To seek to live a wise life, is to seek to understand God, the One who created all things. And then to say, "Lord, how are things supposed to go?" Let me align my life to that and, in so doing, by seeking wisdom and to live wisely in that way, we ultimately are bringing glory to God, and affirming the way He designed things, is exactly the way things are supposed to go. Does that guarantee that trouble is not going to come? No, there is sin in the world. There is chaos. It comes in and it cuts across the right way, the right and straight path. But that doesn't devalue the rightness of God's ways in any way. To seek after wisdom is worthy because God designed the world to be just right, and we want to know Him and we want to do things in the way that He designed. That's who we want to be.

The question of course, is, "How do we do that?" And the first step in growing in wisdom is to seek after the Lord, to know His Word. Proverbs says, "**The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge**." To seek to know God, to surrender to Him, to surrender to the way He designed the world, that is the first step towards wisdom, and that is glorifying to Him. Is wisdom a cure-all? No, it's not a cure-all. But is wisdom better than folly? Absolutely! Because as we seek to live in accord with the way God designed the world, we come to fully worship Him. We come to experience the life with Him that He intended for you and for me, a life of complete surrender, fulfilled in Him, and Him alone, and seeking to walk according to His ways, even in the midst of the messiness of our world. Let's pray together.

> *Our Father, we do acknowledge that we are prone to wander; we're prone to go our own way. We seek after our own devices, sometimes, and, Lord, we want to say to You publicly, we repent of that. Lord, we want to know You so that we might know the right way to walk, the way You intended things to be, the way You designed our world. Lord, but in acknowledging that, we're acknowledging that our life is going to be meaningless as we seek to do it our own way. And so, don't allow us to be people like that. But by Your Spirit, stir up in us a desire to know You more and to know Your ways, that we might*

walk according to wisdom. And that we might do that, not only for our own good, because we're living according to Your design, but also, Lord, for Your glory. Because there is no one more worthy, there is no one wiser, no one more deserving of our praise than You. Father, we lift these things up to You in the name of Your Son, Jesus, Amen.

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