

"Knowledge Comes, but Wisdom Lingers." – September 3, 2017
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"Knowledge Comes, but Wisdom Lingers."
(Alfred Lord Tennyson)
Proverbs 8:22-36

Some people say that "wisdom" comes with age, but I've noticed that this is not always true. Sometimes, wisdom comes from the mouths of children.

For example, Patrick, age 10 said, "*Never trust your dog with your food.*"

Michael, age 14 said, "*When your dad is mad at you and asks you, 'Do I look stupid?' Don't answer him.*"

Samantha, age 8, said, "*Never tell your mother her diet isn't working.*"

Kyoyo, age 9 said, "*Never hold a dust buster and a cat at the same time.*"

And, Lauren age 11, said: "*Felt markers are not good to use as lipstick.*"

If I say the word "prudence," what comes to your mind? Both the Old and New Testaments use the word "wisdom" rather than 'prudence' or 'understanding.' When I think of wisdom I think of people: my parents, mentors, and friends, who have prevented me from making poor choices, while inspiring me to take the next step.

The Book of Proverbs provides an exceptional picture of God at work, for Wisdom pokes her head out of the sand in a variety of ways. In chapter eight the Holy Spirit is presented as Wisdom. We discover that Wisdom has existed since the beginning; That Wisdom is feminine, and that Wisdom is active today.

In this chapter, Wisdom tells us who she is and who she is not: she only speaks the truth, offering sound advice that is better than precious metals or

jewels. She is looking for people whose sole desire is for justice and righteousness. Today, she would be the friend who tells you are about to step over the line, or when you need to rise above a difficult situation.

Wisdom was present during creation, before the mountains, hills, fields, heavens, skies, and seas were formed, she was nearby. She rejoiced and delighted when humanity was created in God's image.

Wisdom asks all her children to listen to her and keep her ways. When we do this, we receive blessing from God, and we unearth a meaningful life.

Edward Kimball was a Sunday School teacher at a little church in Chicago, and his class was for teenagers. Kimball had a small Sunday School class that consisted of just a handful of kids.

One Sunday a new kid showed up in church all on his own. This young man just arrived at church, he didn't come with his family, and no one from the church brought him. He just appeared.

He went to Edward Kimball's Sunday School class that morning. Kimball quickly discovered that this young man had never been to church before, and was completely unfamiliar with the Bible and Christianity.

Edward Kimball knew that he needed to speak with this kid one on one about Jesus, so that week Kimball walked down to where the young man worked, a shoe store. Kimball saw him through the window working, but hesitated to go in. Kimball turned to enter, but again, he hesitated.

Who was Edward Kimball anyway? He was just a guy at with a little Sunday School class. He wasn't brilliant or exceptionally articulate, he was just a Sunday School teacher. Had anyone here ever heard of him?

Still, this kid needed to hear about Jesus, and so, one more time Edward built up the courage to enter the store and talk to him. Edward presented the Gospel as best he could....and the kid responded by giving his life to Jesus, right there in the store.

The odds are fairly high that a good percentage of us here today, know Jesus Christ as a result of this single act of Edward Kimball. This small act that he almost let pass by, quite possibly could have been the end of our chance to hear about Jesus, had he not acted. We owe our gratitude to this man for our opportunity to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

You see, that kid who gave his life over to Jesus Christ that day was Dwight L. Moody, who later became one of the greatest evangelists in the world, with thousands becoming Christians as a result of his witness.

One of those who came to Christ as a result of Moody's ministry was the Reverend Billy Graham, who in turn brought millions to Christ, worldwide.

A man few people could name today, a man who didn't have a chance of winning the Sunday School teacher of the year award, yet, in one single act, this man set in motion the creation of more followers of Jesus Christ than anyone in the history of Christianity. Obedience to the Holy Spirit in small things leads to far reaching blessings.

When we study Wisdom in the Book of Proverbs, when we allow ourselves to experience the feminine side of God, we make ourselves accessible to the female side of God and we experience God in a new way. Sometimes, too often perhaps, we rely on our narrow knowledge of God to guide our understanding of God.

Chapter eight challenges us to view God differently: to see the compassion and understanding from a mother or grandmother's perspective who, with a simple kiss, could make everything better. God comprehends the human family because God created it with Wisdom at his side, cheering him on.

Wisdom shares a glimpse of the seriousness of the Holy Spirit. She has one objective: to keep us on the right path toward God. Wisdom knows about righteousness and expects it from each of us. When we listen and obey we become prepared to love and serve the people we meet daily. It is Wisdom, the Holy Spirit, that enables us to grow spiritually and in our relationship with God and one another.

When you think back to the women of wisdom in your life, isn't this the same thing they wanted from you? Those who know and love us best desire to see the best in us. They push and pull us to forgive, to grow, to love God and each other. They cultivate our souls and assist us in developing our gifts.

Wisdom, with God the Father and God the Son, desires each of us to become the person we are intended to be. It is only our lack of wisdom that blocks our way. Alleluia. Amen.