

The Bible in One Year Week 32: How to Live Well (The Books of Solomon)

(Proverbs 3:1-18; Ecclesiastes 12:1, 6-7, 13-14; Song of Songs 8:6-7)

• Google and the Human Soul

- We're all searching for something. We're all searching *desperately* for how to *live well*.
- How many of you remember when Google first became a thing? (*And how many of you never knew a time when Google was not a thing?*) Believe it or not, it's been almost 25 years since Google was founded. Two Stanford students named Larry Page and Sergey Brin met in 1995 and launched a new search engine from their dorm, at first called, "*Backrub*" (it used "backlinks" for searches, whatever that means?). Luckily for them, they changed the name to "Google." It's a play on the mathematical concept, "Googolplex," because their mission was "*to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful.*" It wasn't long before they exploded and now they have the 12.2 square mile "Googplex" headquarters in California.
 - There's a fascinating site called "Google Trends" where you can see in *real time* what the current top searches are in any part of the world. So, this is a live look at the current most-searched-for topics in the USA: <https://trends.google.us/trends/hottrends/visualize?nrow=5&ncol=5&pn=p1> That for me is a pretty powerful visual that sums up life in the 21st century.
- Why would humans create such a thing as *Google*? A *search engine*. What purpose does it serve? It's not just survival, to get what you require for the task at hand; it's this almost compulsive need to know *everything* we can about *everything* there is, all the time. There is this relentless, restless need of the human mind and heart for truth and knowledge. *We need to know. Why else would Google have become one of the largest companies in the world?*
 - And today, over half of the world's population has access to the internet (most of them carry it around *in their pockets*) with this seemingly *limitless* database of information where you can find answers to almost *any conceivable question in a split-second*. What do you want to know? "*How old do scientists think the universe is? Who won the Super Bowl in 1967? When is the next full moon? Where was Henry V born? How do you say 'Duck' in Mandarin? How many slaves are there in the world today? When is the next season of the Mandalorian?*"
- We have constant access to limitless knowledge, which over half of the world literally *carries around in their pockets*. We can find anything we want, any time. We have more access to information *than all the previous civilizations combined*. Now think about this: has the world become a better place? Has having all this access to *knowledge* made people *better*, improved the overall character of the world? There are definitely pros and cons, but most of us feel in our gut that the obvious answer is, *no*. A case could be made that a lot of things are *worse*.
 - *Because knowledge is not the same as wisdom. Information does not equal understanding.* And here's where the Bible comes in to teach us something hugely important which you *can't afford to miss* if you want to *really live well*. That's what we're really after, right? That's the reason we create search engines: we want to know how to live well. What is "the good life"? That's the basic question through the ages. "*Show me how to make life work. I have all these questions, these desires and longings and needs, these pressures and fears and expectations, these hopes and dreams and disappointments, my heart and mind are constantly searching and I just want know how to find life. Who will show me the way to live?*"

• God's Answer to the Ultimate Question

- In the middle of our Bibles, between the Psalms and the Prophets, there are three really interesting books, all attributed to King Solomon: *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes*, and *Song of Songs*. Individually and collectively they have *much* to teach us. Let's watch this video from our friends at the Bible Project to learn more: <https://youtu.be/WJgt1vRkPbl> ("The Books of Solomon").
- So, the ultimate question of humanity is, "*What is the good life? How do we live well?*" The greatest minds through the ages have all asked this. The Bible has its own answer to this question—and, because it's the Bible, really the claim is that this is *God's* answer to the ultimate

question. Wouldn't you like to know his answer? If the one and only *God*, the one above it all and the source of it all, had an answer for what makes life "work," wouldn't you want to know?

- The Bible's answer is profoundly simple: ***God created the earth and all life by his wisdom; therefore, it takes wisdom to live well.*** If we want to *live well*, we need to become *wise*. To make it shorter, *wisdom equals life*. When I see most people trying to figure out life today, I see us searching in a million different ways (like Google Trends), but I don't see many people really searching for Wisdom. The Scriptures say true wisdom, God's wisdom, is the key to life.
- Biblically, wisdom is understanding how life is meant to work under God. Because there is a good Creator, there is a way things are meant to work, a created order in the fabric of the world. It's like *spiritual gravity*. When we tap into it, life and peace; when we go against it, chaos and death. (What happens when you try to oppose gravity? It ranges from discomfort to death.)
 - Proverbs 1:32 says, "*The waywardness of fools will destroy them, but the one who listens to wisdom lives in security.*" Lady Wisdom says in Proverbs 8, "*Those who find me find life and receive favor from the Lord. But those who fail to find me harm themselves; all who hate me love death.*"
 - Here's the clincher. The Wisdom of the Bible says again and again: *do not be wise in your own eyes*, and, *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*. Now, that's way easier said than done, because *we've been trying to be wise in our own eyes since the day we learned to walk!* Have you ever tried to work with a toddler? Teenagers? (Sorry teens!) But it's about humility, dependence, surrender to the one who made it all. A proper sense of awe, reverence, awareness of your place before the almighty Creator is the absolute foundation of wisdom, and therefore, life. It's a trust that comes from knowing *who God is* and *who you are before him*. To the world, this can look like *foolishness*. To God, it's *the key to life*. One of my favorite verses, Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him and he will make your paths straight.*"
- There is a way that leads to life and a way that leads to death. The difference is how we choose to relate to our Creator. There is provision from God for *wisdom* in your life: to help you navigate your heart, navigate your marriage, navigate your singleness; your disappointments, your success, your vocation, your parenting, all life's swiftly changing seasons. We need to seek his wisdom like it's *treasure!* And the wisdom of the Bible says, *start young*. Start *now*. Ecclesiastical says, "*Remember your Creator in the days of your youth...*" If you're not young, chances are you know one of two things: either you know *how blessed it is* to seek the wisdom of God from a young age; or you know *how important it is because you know the pain of what it's like to live without it*. And, by the grace of God, both of those perspectives are wisdom.
- Fast forward to the New Testament: it says that Jesus is the true Wisdom of God, through whom all things were made. Jesus is the Word made flesh, who came among us to show us the way. He called us to choose between the way of life and the way death—and ultimately he says *he is the way*. If you put your faith in Christ, it might seem foolish to some, but it's the wisdom and power of God that leads to *life in all its fullness*.
 - So, where are you today? Do you want to live welfare? If so, are you *wise in your own eyes*? Or are you living in the *fear of the Lord*, trusting God *with all your heart*? That's the difference between a trajectory of really living well, no matter what comes, or crashing and burning. All you're asked to do is *trust him*. *God created everything by his wisdom, so it takes wisdom to live well*. Choose wisdom today, choose Christ today. Amen.