

Article 2: Supreme Wisdom

Therefore seek the supreme wisdom, not by verbal debate, but by the perfection of a good life, not with the tongue but with the faith which issues from singleness of heart.

- Columbanus, *Sermon I* (Irish, 7th century)

*"I, wisdom, dwell with prudence,
And find out knowledge and discretion.
The fear of the Lord is to hate evil;
Pride and arrogance and the evil way
And the perverse mouth I hate.
Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom;
I am understanding, I have strength.
By me kings reign,
And rulers decree justice.
By me princes rule, and nobles,
All the judges of the earth.
I love those who love me,
And those who seek me diligently will find me.
Riches and honor are with me,
Enduring riches and righteousness.
My fruit is better than gold, yes, than fine gold,
And my revenue than choice silver."*

- Proverbs 8.12-19 (ESV)

"Where does wisdom dwell?" Job wanted to know (Job 28.12). Wisdom is much to be desired. Every culture, regardless of how it has defined wisdom, has touted the value of it and urged its young people to find it.

But wisdom can be difficult to find. If we think that wisdom is just more or better information about this, that, or the other, then we're on the wrong track already. Wisdom is not as much about *knowing* as it is about *being*.

The Biblical idea of wisdom is not about aphorisms, pithy statements, and morals to stories. It's about living skillfully, living in a way that brings love and justice to people and reflects the righteousness of God. Wisdom, as God intends it to be known, is embodied in Jesus Christ. If we would be wise, we must be like Jesus.

Or, rather, we must *be* Jesus. That is, He must be so *assimilated* into us, and at work in and through us, as His Spirit transforms us, that what comes out in our words and deeds is the righteousness of Jesus – Jesus Himself. In Proverbs 8 we hear the pre-incarnate Wisdom of God – the Word Who became flesh in Jesus Christ – declaring His virtues and calling all who would have wisdom to know Him.

Wisdom does not flow from mere intellectual apprehension. Wisdom is the application *to* our lives of the Wisdom of God Who dwells *in* us. You can read all the philosophy you want and never become wise. Of course, the mind is involved in gaining wisdom, as are the heart and the conscience. But unless these, the components of the soul, are daily assimilating Jesus, Who is the very Wisdom of God, we will not be able to practice love for God or our neighbor in ways that refract Wisdom's presence in us.

To be wise, we must know Wisdom Himself. Draw near to Jesus. Hear Him in His Word; pour out your praise and thanks to Him in prayer; sing His virtues and celebrate His steadfast love and faithfulness. Then go in and with Jesus wherever you go, whatever you do. With Jesus assimilated in you from His Word and by His Spirit, Jesus will be your every application in all you say and do.

And then the fruit of Wisdom, issuing in your words and works, will bring the blessings of God to the people around you, to the praise of the glory of His grace.