

Lady Wisdom

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Lady Wisdom who comes to us as God's Holy Spirit, amen.

Most of the time we consider wisdom comes with age and experience. Sometimes it comes directly from the mouths of children. Patrick, age 10, said, "Never trust a dog to watch your food." · Michael, 14, said, "When your dad is mad and asks you, "Do I look stupid?" don't answer him." · Michael said, "Never tell your mom her diet's not working." · Katie, age 9, said, "Never hold a dust buster and a cat at the same time." · Naomi, 12 said, "If you want a kitten, start out by asking for a horse." Lauren, age 9 said, "Felt markers are not good to use as lipstick." Joel, 10 years old, said, "Don't pick on your sister when she's holding a baseball bat." And finally, Eileen, age 8 said, "Never try to baptize a cat."

Wisdom is a commodity we prize; we all want to be known as wise people. The question we have, of course, is, "How do we become wise?" "Does wisdom only come with age or with experience?" The eighth chapter of Proverbs gives us some interesting insights to wisdom—some may even surprise us.

The author of the 8th chapter of the book of Proverbs starts out by introducing us to Lady Wisdom who is not out there somewhere, but out there, everywhere. She is literally standing on every street corner and at the very gates to the city. She is calling out to all people with her invitation to learn prudence and to acquire intelligence. Wisdom is the God people say they meet on Sunday

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mornings in nature, on the lake, or even in the roughs on the golf course. Wisdom is the God who meets you right where you are, accepts you, and includes you. Wisdom meets you where you are and then invites you to hear and heed God's Word. If the personified Lord God called Wisdom is everywhere calling us into relationship, what is our response? Do we stay where Wisdom finds us? Out there... Certainly not! Wisdom is calling us to learn and to be sensible. Our translation calls us to be prudent, but that's just another word for having common sense, to be sensible, or to be wise. As I started out saying, we tend to think of wisdom coming to older folks who've been around the pike a few times and have learned the ropes. They pass on their acquired knowledge to the younger generation as teachers and mentors. If that were the only way we can become wise then how do you explain the 12 year old who already knows the way to get her parents to agree to a family cat is to start out by asking for a horse... Maybe she read Donald Trump's "The Art of the Deal..." Or maybe there's something more going on here...

I'm going with the latter. There's something more going on here... That something is the gift of the Holy Spirit, the very Wisdom of God... God gives us the gift of Lady Wisdom when we hear her voice calling us from the crossroads and street corners. God's Wisdom comes to us also in Baptism and in the promises made when we were Baptized. We teach our youth the foundations of God's story.

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We provide for their education in the ways God created the world and continues to create still today. We appoint mentors to lead and guide our youth so they can follow the ways of God's will. In these ways God imparts a spark of wisdom into each of us. We're invited into the creative activity God began all the way back at the beginning. If you have a talent for painting or singing or playing an instrument, all these are God's gifts to you for the purpose of becoming a co-creator with God in making joy for a fallen and sinful world. What if you're not a gifted artist? I'm just a regular person working a job in a factory. Does that mean I missed out on God's gift of wisdom? By no means! The lowest paid job in any factory still needs your spark of God's Wisdom. Luther famously said being a Christian shoe maker doesn't mean putting little crosses on every shoe. Rather, it means making the best shoes possible and praying for the one who wears them that they might be a blessing and protection for the feet of the one who wears them.

Let's look at the Gospel Good News in this scripture... We religious folks talk a lot about how sinful and despicable humans are, with good reason... Lutherans are known for laying great guilt trips on everyone. We confess every week just how depraved we are. We talk so much about the fallen state we find ourselves stuck in, we almost completely overlook how much joy God finds in us. Read again the words of Lady Wisdom from proverbs... ²⁷When he (GOD) established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,

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²⁸ when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, ²⁹ when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, ³⁰ then I was beside him, like a master worker; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, ³¹ rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race. Did you catch that last verse? God and Lady Wisdom are rejoicing in God's inhabited world and God delights in the human race. We don't hear that enough. To be honest, we can't hear that enough. God rejoices in you! God loves you! God isn't ashamed or angry with you.

I think of God kind of like this... God the Father, God The Holy Spirit, and God the Son all created you and all do this happy dance everyday, all day long. God doesn't sit up there in heaven counting your transgressions. God's far too busy rejoicing over what a crowning achievement you are. Don't get me wrong, God still hates wrongdoing and injustice, but this God who rejoices over you is willing to overlook all those transgressions in order to love you and care for you.

Just because God's Lady Wisdom persona meets us wherever we happen to be, doesn't mean we should stay where we are, wallowing in our sin and transgressions. Lady Wisdom wants to lead us, to guide us, to mentor us into a better version of ourselves where sin and transgression becomes less and less, until

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that day when Jesus returns and finds us still trying to live up to the high standards of perfection God created us to become.

Proverbs tells us happiness comes to those who listen to Lady Wisdom. Is there anyone here who doesn't want to be happy? All of us want to find happiness. Wisdom says listen to her and you will find true happiness. This doesn't mean we'll never experience suffering or pain. Even Jesus said he came to call us to pick up our cross and follow him. Remember at the time Jesus said this, the cross was the instrument the Roman Empire used to impose extreme suffering and death on anyone who recognized God as the supreme being and Jesus as their Lord. Happiness isn't the lack of pain or suffering, but is knowing God and being known by God in spite of and in the midst of our suffering and pain.

Wisdom's teachings are valuable—more valuable than gold or silver. They are life transforming and open the door for us to experience life in the manner for which God created us. Wisdom—the Holy Spirit—doesn't teach us a bunch of rules. Instead, Wisdom teaches us about God and the more we know about God the more precious we find Wisdom to be. Wisdom teaches us about this God who creates order out of chaos. We learn that our God is a God of relationships and love. God longs to care for us and for us to live our lives in constant conversation with God. It is both humbling and fascinating to realize Wisdom, who has been present since before the beginning of time, has taken residence in our beings.

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Wisdom in the person of the Holy Spirit is our mentor who enables us to see creation and understand who God is, who we are, and the nature of God's creation. This is life transforming and it is a life-long journey of discovery.

May you hear the voice of Lady Wisdom calling to you from every crossroad and streetcorner. May you rejoice in knowing Wisdom has come to dwell within you and wants to be your helper, advocate, and mentor. May God continue to pour out God's wisdom on you so you can be happy and live your life in the favor of the Lord your God. Amen.