

I. Introduction

- A. Put these two facts together:
 - 1. First fact: Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived.
 - 2. Second fact: Solomon had 1,000 wives and concubines.
 - a) Think about it.
- B. In what universe can these two facts possibly go together?
- C. Really. Think about it.
 - 1. He can lead a nation. He can resolve disputes — cut the child in two. He can accumulate more wealth than Bill Gates, Warren Buffet, and Oprah put together. And he can build a temple so glorious — layered in polished gold so that when the sun hits it the thing lights up for miles around — a temple so glorious the Queen of Sheba's mind was blown. He can plan cities, organize armies, bring about peace, and be declared by God in Heaven the wisest man who ever lived. Kings and queens travel across the world to hear his wisdom. Even his servants live better than royalty in other lands. Solomon has it together. He is the wealthiest and wisest king of all time.
- D. And... he has the raging hormones of a teenager. He couldn't control himself. He couldn't stop collecting wives (700 of them) and concubines (300 of them).
- E. In what dimension of space and time can those two facts both be true?
- F. I have 5 confessions for you to write down, and here's the first one:
 - 1. *Confession 1: I cannot possibly in a million years do all the things God wants me to do or be the person God wants me to be.*
- G. You come to a conference and go to church and hear Christian speakers or maybe read Christian books, and what do you hear?
- H. Fine print.
- I. An endlessly expanding to-do list.
 - 1. Be a better husband. Be a better wife. Be a better Christian. Date wisely. Give. Tithe. Pray. Read your Bible. Give back. Go forth. Get real. Be good. Be happy. Be like Jesus. WWJD. Serve. Stop sinning. Be holy. Do good. Love love love. Get involved. Plug in. Practical application. Practical application. Practical application.
 - 2. It keeps adding up. It's never done.
 - 3. And pretty soon life with God feels like Math Class where somewhere around week two, you got lost, but the whole class kept chugging ahead without you. And now you show up and smile but you're more lost than a Baptist in a mosh pit.
 - 4. Your Christian to-do list expands faster than you can keep up. You're trying as hard as you can, or you're faking as hard as you can. Either way, the whole Christian enterprise is exhausting.
 - 5. All of this in the name of the one who said, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light."
 - 6. When the simple fact is that you cannot possibly in a million years do all the things God wants you to do or be the person God wants you to be.
 - 7. A Christian lifestyle is not hard, it's impossible. Utterly, eternally, out of reach impossible.
 - 8. Unless your Jesus, then it's easy because it's doing what comes naturally.
- J. Let's look at two Bible verses, and then I want to answer the question I posed a minute ago.
 - 1. *In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Colossians 2:3)*
 - 2. *And you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. (Colossians 2:10)*
- K. In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And you are complete in him.
- L. In Christ. In him. In Christ. In him.
 - 1. Not in yourself. In Christ.
 - 2. Not in religion. In Christ.
 - 3. Not in self-effort. In Christ.
 - 4. Not in performance. In Christ.
 - 5. Not in endlessly expanding to-do lists. In Christ.
 - 6. Not in out holy-ing the next person. In Christ.
 - 7. Not in forcing a happy smile. In Christ.
 - 8. Not in faking it. In Christ.
 - 9. Not in striving. In Christ.
 - 10. Not in running out with your checklists and to-do lists to conquer the world of sin. In Christ.
 - 11. Not in self-improvement. In Christ.
 - 12. Not in human wisdom. In Christ.
 - a) All the treasures are where? In Christ.
 - b) All the wisdom is where? In Christ.
 - c) You are complete where? In Christ.
 - (1) I invite you to meditate with me on the topic...

II. The Heart of Wisdom

- A. Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived.
- B. Solomon had a thousand concubines and wives.
 - 1. I asked in what universe, in what dimension, in what space-time continuum those two facts could ever go together.
- C. The answer is only in the Grace-Filled Heart of God.
- D. Because only there, only in that expansive realm called amazing grace, can your brokenness become your strength and your enemy become your ally, your failures are never final, and your sins are not you.
- E. That is the physics of God's grace-filled heart. Impossible things can go together.
 - 1. Like Solomon being the wisest man who ever lived, and Solomon having a thousand concubines and wives.
 - 2. Like David being a man after God's own heart, and David conspiring to murder so he could satisfy his predatory lusts.

- a) Impossible things can go together in the grace-filled heart of God.
- 3. Like God justifying the ungodly.
- 4. Like sins as red as scarlet being made as white as snow.
- 5. Like a prodigal getting a feast for just coming home.
- 6. Like God saving *you*.
- a) Impossible things can go together in the grace filled heart of God.
- 7. Like a guy with stage fright preaching week after week for 38 years.
- 8. Like an introvert, going on camera, on stage, and online and being on all the time because I live in a small town.
- 9. Like me...
 - a) A guy schooled in legalism preaching grace.
 - b) A pastor struggling with inadequacies and chronic unworthiness standing before you to preach.
 - (1) The only way I can do it is because in him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge and I am complete in him.
- 10. See, impossible things can go together in the grace-filled heart of God. It's the physics of heaven.
 - a) This is the heart of wisdom.
- 11. And every time the devil whispers...
 - a) Bill, you can't do this!
- 12. I whisper back...
 - a) You're right, devil. I can't. It's impossible. But Jesus can, and I'm in him, and he's in me. And no, I cannot possibly do all the things God wants me to do, or be all the things God wants me to be. But Christ can himself, and that is all I need. So shut your ugly mouth, devil, and tuck your pointy tail, and slink away. I've got some burdens to cast on the Lord today.
 - (1) *Not I, but Christ (Galatians 2:20).*
- 13. This is the heart of wisdom.
- 14. Please turn to the most messed up verse in the whole Bible.
- 15. I want to get to the nature of wisdom and heart of wisdom. So let's look at the most messed up verse in the whole Bible (one of the top two) and get into it.
 - a) *"And yet this was a small thing in Your sight, O Lord GOD; and You have also spoken of Your servant's house for a great while to come. Is this the manner of man, O Lord GOD? (2 Samuel 7:19)*

III. What is Wisdom?

- A. What's messed up is the translation into English from Hebrew. Hold on tight. I need to rewind and set it up.
- B. This is King David. Life is good. He's defeated his giants. He's got Goliath's head mounted over his fireplace. He's got money. He's got women. The nation is at peace. His kingship is secure. There's a chicken in every pot. Land flowing with milk and honey. Everything is great.
- C. One day, David wakes up with an idea.
- D. He says, Hey, I have this awesome palace. I spared no expense. There's a pool out back. A gourmet kitchen. It's contemporary craftsman. Hardwood floors and quartz counters and a lake stocked with bass, and ten ton air conditioning. I have this awesome palace.
- E. But God doesn't even have a temple. Seriously. The ark of the covenant sits in a tent. The Tabernacle. The portable, moveable, collapsible tabernacle.
- F. I know what I'll do.
- G. I will build a house for God! I will build him a temple!
- H. That was David's idea.
- I. Let's call it a religious spasm.
- J. So what does he do? It's early in the morning. He doesn't care. He runs to Pastor Nathan's house, and bangs on the door.
- K. "Pastor Nathan, Pastor Nathan. Get up! Quick! I have an idea!"
- L. Nathan hops out of bed, pulls on his yoga pants, runs to the door, and there's King David.
- M. David grabs him by the arm. He has this look in his eyes, kind of wild. Kind of holy. Fervor. Religious spasm.
- N. David's speaking. "Nathan, it is not right for me to dwell in a contemporary craftsman palace, and the ark of the covenant is shoved in a tent. I have a plan. I will build a house for God! Nathan, it's awesome. I will build a house for God! What do you think?"
- O. Nathan scratches his head. He fidgets. Scratches his belly. His mind is racing... all he sees is how much this thing's going to cost.
- P. That's when David adds... "Oh, by the way, I'm gonna pay for the whole thing. No capital campaign. This one's on me. I will build a house for God."
 - 1. I gotta be honest. If you ever come to me with a building idea and want to pay for the whole thing, I'm saying yes. So don't resist that urge.
- Q. Nathan certainly didn't hesitate.
 - 1. Then Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you." (2 Samuel 7:3)
- R. Great.
- S. Let me pause the story here for a moment to talk about wisdom. The nature of wisdom and then the heart of wisdom.

IV. The Nature of Wisdom

- A. When you came squirting out of your momma, all slimy and still adorable, your mind was pretty much a blank slate.
- B. As you grew up, little snippets of truth began entering your soul. You learned about good food and bad food, and hot and cold and how to talk and walk and tie your shoes.
- C. All these bits of knowledge come into you in snippets. They're random. They're not organized.
- D. But your brain is a supercomputer. It's a massive data compiler. Your brain takes snippets of truth and organizes them, like a Lego masterpiece. Your brain assembles all these information bits into your very own OS (operating system).

1. Life Operating System (LifeOS)

- E. Your Whole Life OS guides your relationships. It governs your finances. Your hopes, your dreams, your desires, your habits, everything — all trace back to this.
- F. And most of all, your Whole Life OS determines what you think about who you are, and what you think about who God is.
- G. This system was not pre-formatted at birth, it was assembled inside you over time. Bit by bit. Truth by truth. Or, unfortunately, lie by lie too.
- H. This is the reason why God urges parents to drip God's truth into their children, drop by drop, all day long, starting at birth.
- I. But let's assume that wasn't your story. Let's assume two things:
 - 1. That your Whole Life OS is a lot like Frankenstein's monster. It was assembled from parts that maybe don't go together. A little of this, a little of that... it's just how you were raised. It's a mish-mash. It's like a Mr. Potato Head with lips where the ears should go and two noses for legs.
 - 2. Let's also assume that your Whole Life Operating System is incomplete. In fact, it's missing the most mission critical pieces of all: it's missing the essential building blocks of God, and Christ, and his Cross, and his salvation, and the power and life of his Spirit. In other words, most people's Whole Life OS was not assembled with God's nature, love, and grace at the core.
- J. If you forgot to put sugar in the batter when you baked cupcakes, once you bake it it's too late. You can't just smear it on the top and call it good. You have to remix the batter and rebake the cupcakes. You missed an essential ingredient when you constituted the thing.
- K. You need a new operating system.
- L. This is Wisdom.
 - 1. *Confession 2: Wisdom is enough of God's Word in my heart to install my LifeOS.*
 - a) The raw material is the Bible.
 - b) The catalyst is Faith.
 - c) Put them together long enough, and you get wisdom, a simple faith in a strong God.
 - d) By the way...
 - (1) It's the Bible, not emotion. Not hype. Not motivational speeches. It's the Bible displacing the devil's lies. Theology. Promises. Doctrines. Truth. Organized thoughts about God.
 - (a) When you open the Bible's hood, there's an engine of grace inside, and that's what you want driving your life.
 - (2) It's the Bible, not the voice of God. Not a fresh word. That's unreliable. The voice of Scripture IS the voice of Christ, and that's reliable all the time.
 - (3) It's the Bible, not morality, not religion, not philosophy, not pragmatism.
 - (a) When there's a critical mass of Bible in you to create a Whole Life Operating System, that's wisdom.
 - e) Wisdom makes sense out of life.
 - f) Wisdom is orderly. It creates internal order. Internal structure.
 - g) Wisdom gives you a whole new set of instincts.
 - (1) It's wax on, wax off, remember? Karate Kid. He did the same moves over and over again so many times they became second nature. When the attack came, his instincts were ready.
 - (2) Wisdom creates those instincts, the very same instincts Jesus had.
 - (a) *Confession 3: Wisdom is how Christ lives through me effortlessly instead of me imitating him laboriously.*
 - h) You can't live like Christ unless you think like Christ, and wisdom is how you think like Christ.
 - 2. Wisdom is your biggest treasure. It's better than rubies, better than silver, better than gold.
 - 3. Wanna know why?
 - a) *Confession 4: Wisdom is my handshake with Christ.*
 - (1) *"In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Colossians 2:3)*
- M. It's relational.
 - 1. Yes, it's truth-based.
- N. But it's relational.
 - 1. Wisdom how you love God, trust God, rest in God because you know God all the time.
 - 2. Wisdom is your handshake with Christ. And if that's too cold for you, call it a hug, or call it an embrace, or call it a sloppy wet kiss. I don't care. I'm a dude, I'm good with handshake.
- O. And here's the crazy thing about wisdom. You can be wise in finances, and stupid in relationships. Wise in leadership and stupid in sexuality. Wise in one area of life, and stupid in others. The system upgrade takes a long time to install everywhere, it's a process. You haven't opened all the doors to Christ yet. It's okay. It's happening.
- P. Which is why no matter how stupid David was, no matter how violent, how hormonal, how much of a drama queen he was, he was still a man after God's own heart, because he profoundly knew the Lord.
- Q. It was drip, drip, drip with the Word of God, for decades, till he could say, Oh, how I love your Law, Lord it is my meditation all the day. He meditated on God's Word day and night, and he was wise.
- R. Hi, my name is Bill. And if you're going to call me a loser, I don't care. I'll just be a loser after God's Own Heart.
- S. Scripture creates wisdom, and wisdom makes you person after God's own heart, even if you're still an idiot on a whole bunch of things.
- T. Like David. Who declared I will build a house for God. Nathan the prophet gave a green light. All systems go.
- U. Until that night. That night, God paid a visit to Nathan the prophet, and turned everything over. Here's how it went.
- V. God's Visit to Nathan.
 - A. *But it happened that night that the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying, "Go and tell My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: "Would you build a house for Me to dwell in?" For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought the children of Israel up from Egypt, even to this day, but have moved about in a tent and in a tabernacle. "Wherever I have moved about with all the children of Israel,*

have I ever spoken a word to anyone from the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, ‘Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?’” (2 Samuel 7:4-7)

1. Then God reviews everything he did for David.
2. I took you from the sheep fold.
3. I made you a king.
4. I have been with you.
5. I have made your name great.
6. And on and on...
7. Until in verse 10 he says, You will not build a house for me, David, but I will build a house for you.
8. And David says:

B. *“And yet this was a small thing in Your sight, O Lord GOD; and You have also spoken of Your servant’s house for a great while to come. Is this the manner of man, O Lord GOD? (2 Samuel 7:16-19)*

VI. What just happened?

- A. What just happened was what we call an arrow-reversal-maneuver. Hang on. We’re getting to one of the most messed up verses in the Bible, and it will blow your mind.
- B. Let’s use arrows.
- C. Here’s you at the bottom, and there’s God at the top.
- D. When you do something for God, let’s make an arrow pointing up. You serve him. You obey him. Good works. Giving. All the post-salvation fine print. *The arrow up represents WORKS.*
- E. When God does stuff for you, let’s make an arrow pointing down. He sent Jesus for you. Jesus died for you. He forgives you. Adopts you. Justifies you. Loves you. Provides for you. Heals you. Blesses you. *The arrow down represents GRACE.*
- F. David said, God, I will build a house for you. Which way is that arrow? Up. What I do for God. What everybody hears at church and conferences and in books and podcasts. Arrows up. Martha in the kitchen 24/7. Go go go. Serve serve serve. More more more.
- G. That night, God comes down and he says, No way. Did I ask you to build me a house? Do I look homeless? Do I need favors from you?
- H. Here’s how this goes down, David. You don’t build a house for me, I build a house for you. That is the essence of your whole life. And David, all that stuff you learned in the Bible boils down to this — this is the heart of wisdom —
 1. *Confession 5: God is glorified, not by what I do for him, but by what he does for me.*
- I. Arrows down. That is the message of the Bible. Ninety nine percent of messages and sermons and churches and music and books is arrows up. But ninety nine percent of Scripture is arrows down.
- J. There’s a problem here.
- K. And David got it, and it blew his mind.
- L. And he said, “Is this the manner of man, O Lord God?” (2 Samuel 7:19)

VII. The Terrible, Horrible, No Good Messed Up Verse

- A. The translations are all over the map here:
 1. *Is this the manner of man? (NKJV)*
 2. *And this is the custom of man. (NASB)*
 3. *Is this your usual way of dealing with man? (NIV)*
 4. *Do you deal with everyone this way? (NLT)*
 5. *... [nothing] (CEB... footnote: “Hebrew uncertain”)*
 6. *And this is a revelation for mankind. (HCSB)*
- B. Okay. So what? Who cares?
- C. I do, and I’m going to go Hebrew because you can get this. The translators didn’t. But you can.
- D. This sentence has 3 words in Hebrew.
 1. *v-ZOAT = this is*
 2. *TORAH = the law (fundamental operating system)*
 3. *ADAM = of mankind*
- E. Put it together. What does David exclaim?
 1. This is the law of mankind!
 2. This is the fundamental operating system of the human race!
 3. What is? Grace is! Arrows down is! That’s the big deal. That’s what matters most. Not what I do for God, but what he does for me. His love. His grace. His provision. His sacrifice. His Cross. His shed blood. His resurrection. His triumph. His victory. His salvation. His redemption. His power. His perfection. His constant care.
 4. Christianity is Christ! Christ alone. Christ above all. Christ in me through me all around me.
 - a) *The heart of wisdom is the Grace-Filled Heart of God.*
- F. And here is David with a lifetime of Bible study inside his head, but it was all upside down. The arrows were wrong.
- G. And now in one dramatic scene the whole thing gets flipped right side up and for the first time in his life, David gets grace.
- H. You don’t know your Bible until you know grace. Grace isn’t an app. You can’t just add it beside the other apps. Grace is an operating system, and God wants to install it in you. Just open your Bible.
- I. And when David sees this he says, Who am I, Lord, that you should be this good to me?
- J. When you can say those words in your darkest hour, that’s when you have the heart of wisdom.
- K. And that is the Art of Thriving.