



Theme: Summer Wisdom

"The Beginning of Wisdom"

Sermon preached by Jeff Huber, June 27-28, 2026, at Summit Church, Durango

Weekly Memory Verse:

⁵ Jesus replied, "I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit." – John 3:5

SLIDE Summer Wisdom: The Beginning of Wisdom

Today we begin a new series of sermons on Biblical wisdom that we find in the books of Proverbs in our Old Testament, or Hebrew Bible, and the book of James in the New Testament. My hope is that this series will give us a better understanding of the wisdom literature in our Bible and that as we look at God's word, the Holy Spirit will move you. Today we are going to look at the background of the book of Proverbs and Hebrew poetry, and the Meditation Moments of this series will allow you to read through large sections of the book Proverbs and the letter of James. I want us to begin with this question.

SLIDE Where do we find wisdom in today's world?

We live in a world that tells us wisdom is found on our phone and every question can be answered by some form of AI, but we all know

this is not true. AI can give us information but cannot tell us how to use it. Wisdom is meant to take us deeper than definitions. It is meant to give us a perspective that looks at life from a bigger picture.

I found myself this week as I thought about wisdom thinking about my grandfather who was like a dad to me growing up when my biological father was far away after he and my mother divorced and struggling with my stepfather who was an alcoholic. Grandpa lived to be 97 and he always had wisdom for me when I needed it. As I was thinking about golf, I remember that he was the one that taught me to play when I was about 11 or 12. He had very bad golf habits so he didn't teach me very well and my golf game wasn't very good but what I remember most was getting super angry on the golf course and throwing a club on the ground. I looked around and grandpa was gone and he was walking up towards the clubhouse, finished dealing with me.

GRAPHIC Jeff and Grandpa Lane 1968

GRAPHIC Jeff and Grandpa Lane 1990

I got up to the clubhouse and asked him why he had left and he told me that he just didn't enjoy watching me throw a tantrum so he decided to head in figuring a good walk would do me good. He said that golf was meant to be an enjoyable game even if you weren't very good because you were outside and you only compete against yourself. He said, "Golf is a great game to teach patience and clearly you need to work on that so you should keep playing." I quit playing after that until I got to grad school and they had a special deal where you could play any of the Denver courses for \$1.00 if you are a pastor or in school to be a pastor.

Grandpa and I got to play again and my cousin who was about my age and like a brother, also played and so we played together with grandpa on one occasion that I remember. My cousin Andy has a bigger

temper than I do, and I have learned not to get upset playing golf because it just wasn't worth it, and I didn't want grandpa to walk off the course again. At this point, he was pretty old and needed a cart. Sure enough, and he got frustrated, and he threw a club up in the air, and he got stuck in a tree. It didn't come down. I thought grandpa was going to have me drive him up to the clubhouse or get out of the cart and walk but instead he laughed! I told him about how I remember last time I got upset on the golf course he walked off and he told me that he had learned that if someone he's playing with wants to get angry then that's their problem and he's just going to ignore it and, in some cases, laugh.

It was a good reminder to me that wisdom grows over time. Proverbs is an interesting book because it is written from the perspective of an elder sage writing to their children or grandchildren. Frequently in the book you will hear things like, **“Listen my child to the wisdom I share. Listen, my children to what I have to say.”** The idea is that there is a parent or grandparent who is passing along wisdom to a younger generation. This is a person who has experienced a lifetime of wisdom and a desire to share this with their children so they might walk in the path that follows God's ways.

SLIDE Where do you turn for wisdom?

Again, I want to ask you this question. Where do you turn for wisdom? I don't mean where do you turn for knowledge because we can get information in lots of places. **Where do you turn when you're trying to figure out what life means or trying to make a decision?** I suspect there are people like grandparents or parents or other older adults that you trust and turn to when you need advice. But maybe you don't have that as many people don't live near parents or grandparents or sometimes, they don't have that kind of relationship.

Maybe you turn to the **internet to see what an influencer** has to

say, or the news where we look at what some **commentator** thinks. They have reflected upon life, and they invite others to come and share their experiences and so there is some wisdom that can be found there. Maybe you have written to **Dear Abby**, and you are seeking advice from her column. Of course, Abby doesn't have all the wisdom of the world and there are times that **she has been stumped** by questions. As I have read the Dear Abby column over the years, which is written by someone other than Abby, these are some questions that have been asked that she did not know the answer to.

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“Dear Abby, what can I do about all the nudity, profanity and violence on my VCR?”

SLIDE

“Dear Abby, my mother is short tempered and grouchy these days. Do you think she is going through her mental pause?”

One woman said that when she and her husband need wisdom and they are trying to make a decision, they order **take-out Chinese** food. Then after the meal is over, they take the **fortune cookies** and open them up to see what they have to say. One day this woman and her husband were trying to decide what to do with their lives and where to move. They opened the fortune cookie, and it said, **“The next call you receive will be an important one.”** They got a telephone call late that night offering them jobs in California, and so they moved! I'm not suggesting this is a way to make decisions or gain wisdom, but it is the way some people turn.

During the sermon series we are going to turn to sources that people have been turning to for more than 3000 years—the books of Proverbs in our Old Testament and the Letter of James in our New Testament, which are both considered wisdom literature. These books reflect the combined wisdom of Jewish and Christian culture and the

cultures that surrounded them in the ancient near East such as Egypt and Assyria. These pieces of wisdom were reflected upon in the light of their faith in Yahweh, and the Jewish sages reflect upon them generation after generation and finally wrote them down so that generation after generation since then have turned to these pages for wisdom.

GRAPHIC Organization of the Old Testament

GRAPHIC Organization of the New Testament

Let's do a little refresher on our Bible and the types of literature we find in it. The Old Testament is organized into five major groups. There are 39 books and the first five are called the Law or the Pentateuch, which means 5 books, or the Torah. The next grouping is 12 books of history followed by the five books of poetry and wisdom which include the book of Proverbs. We also find much wisdom in Ecclesiastes. We then have the major prophets of which there are five of them and finally the 12 minor prophetic books.

Our New Testament begins with the four gospels which contain the stories of Jesus followed by the book of acts which is history and contains words about the early church. There are 13 letters of the apostle Paul which we call epistles which is a fancy word for letter. The next grouping is general letters which include the book of James and is also considered wisdom literature. We finally have apocalyptic literature which is the Book of Revelation and in the Old Testament it would be the book of Daniel.

SLIDE Biblical Wisdom is not a fad or quick.

SLIDE Wisdom is a gift over time from God's Spirit.

There are two advantages we have as we turn to the book of Proverbs. First, we recognize that the wisdom in these pages is not a fad or the latest and greatest sound bites from the latest guru. Second,

we recognize that this wisdom comes from God's Spirit himself. So, we can look to this book and find wisdom for our lives that is **eternal and from the Eternal One and not simply a passing fancy.**

SLIDE What is wisdom?

Let's begin with this important question: what is wisdom? We all want to be wise people and have some wisdom, but what exactly is it and **how do we get it?** There is a difference between wisdom and knowledge.

If you think about the people that you know who have wisdom, they are not always the people who get straight A's in school. In fact, some of the wisest people that I know probably **never got an A** on a report card, yet there is wisdom when you listen to them. And there are people who I know that did well in school and yet they **lack wisdom** when they open their mouths.

We also know that the **opposite of wisdom is not ignorance but rather foolishness.** So, having wisdom is not necessarily about knowing a lot of stuff. **Wisdom is more about understanding how things operate,** understanding how the world works, understanding what it **means to be human,** and understanding that when you do this thing that is not good, there is a consequence. In this sense, wisdom might be understood as insight.

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"Wisdom is the ability to discern or judge what is true, right or lasting."

In the book of Proverbs, wisdom is understood in two different ways.

SLIDE

Wisdom is the divine order to creation – how God's world works

God's wisdom is literally **poured into the creation** around us. God's wisdom is the **code by which everything takes place**. The laws of **science come from God's wisdom** and God's way of ordering universe. The human sciences that tell us how to understand each other and relationships were **put in place by God's wisdom**. It was by God's wisdom that the world and all that is created in the way that it works came into existence.

You will find wisdom personified in Proverbs **has the mind of God** that created everything just as it is. Proverbs speak about the mind of God and the rationale and the reason of God that brought everything into existence. There is a divine order that comes from God's wisdom who designed us.

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Wisdom is our understanding, apprehension and choice to live by God's order.

This second part of Proverb's understanding of wisdom is very important because the **Proverbs are very practical**. The book is not just about helping us to understand how God works but it is also about helping us to **live according to that wisdom**.

The law of gravity is a great example of realizing that you **can't separate understanding of wisdom from applying wisdom**. I understand that what goes up must come down. When I throw this apple up in the air, it's going to come down. **I know it's going to come down** because I understand the law of gravity.

But real wisdom is not simply understanding that the apple is going to come down. **Real wisdom is stepping out of the way**, so it doesn't end up hitting me on my head. Wisdom is not just knowing what is going to happen, but it is **ordering my life and living according to God's divine wisdom in order**. This is what we find in the book of Proverbs. It is going to be about practical living. Much of what we read

is common sense.

Wisdom comes with reflection, which is one of the reasons I think we are often in a **short supply of wisdom** today. We don't spend enough time reflecting on our lives. There was a day and time when people came home from work and there **wasn't much to do in the evening**. You might have family time with dinner or maybe you read or perhaps you listen to the radio. Then there was **still time at the end of the day to reflect** upon the day.

But we don't have that kind of time today, do we? We go home and eat on the run. We got off to a meeting or a soccer practice or a music rehearsal. Then we go home and check our e-mail and watch television or doom scroll. We learned last week that the average American checks their phone 205 times a day, so we finally collapse in bed exhausted, sometimes taking our phone and work with us to bed! We then get up and check our phone again just to make sure we didn't miss anything during the night.

Very rarely do we take time to stop and ask, **“God, what did I learn from this day? What should I do differently tomorrow than I did today? What lessons were you teaching me?”**

This is why we put together Meditation Moments, so we might take time to stop and reflect and meditate on God's word and invite the very presence of God to speak to us and give us wisdom. Wisdom comes with age, and if we take time to reflect upon our lives over time then we will learn certain things and see certain patterns in life. We start to see those patterns only when we reflect on life.

We often think about wisdom coming with age. Just look at how we name our teeth. What are the **last teeth** to come out of your mouth? They are your **wisdom teeth**. Wisdom teeth are those that come last after you have a few years under your belt. You're **not necessarily extremely wise when your wisdom teeth** come in because

it is typically your sophomore year in high school.

You might remember that sophomore is the combination of two words, “sophia” which means wisdom and, “moron”, which means fool. **A sophomore is a wise fool.** You are just old enough by the time your wisdom teeth come in to know enough to be dangerous. But even as sophomores in high school we are gaining some wisdom over our elementary years. I thought you might appreciate this video for kids about what the book of Proverbs is all about.

VIDEO Proverbs for kids

The book of Proverbs is meant to give us guidance as we seek to become wise through our years, even when it comes to dog vomit! The book of Proverbs is associated with the towering figure of King Solomon in the Hebrew Bible. **Moses** was the great lawgiver. **Elijah** was the great prophet. **David** was a great warrior. **Solomon** was the great sage of Israel. Not all the Proverbs were written by Solomon, but he is associated with the book.

Solomon's wisdom was a gift from God. If you read 1 Kings chapter 4 there comes a time where Solomon becomes king. There was King Saul and then King David and then King Solomon. Solomon comes to the throne inexperienced. He has a dream one night and God comes to him in this dream and says, “Solomon what would you have me give you? I'll grant you any wish. What do you wish for?”

Solomon says, “Oh God my King, I have so little experience. I don't have the wisdom to rule over your people. Please grant me the gift of wisdom.” God was pleased with that answer and said, “**Solomon, because you do not ask me for riches. Because you did not ask me for fame, but because you asked me for wisdom, I will grant you wisdom and riches and fame.**”

Then we read these words in 1 Kings 4:29 and following:

BIBLE

29 God gave Solomon very great wisdom and understanding, and knowledge as vast as the sands of the seashore. 30 In fact, his wisdom exceeded that of all the wise men of the East and the wise men of Egypt. 31 He was wiser than anyone else...His fame spread throughout all the surrounding nations. 32 He composed some 3,000 proverbs and wrote 1,005 songs. 34 And kings from every nation sent their ambassadors to listen to the wisdom of Solomon.

The Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon are all associated with King Solomon and his wisdom. In the Catholic Bible, you also find the Wisdom of Solomon added as an additional book. This is why Solomon is seen as the father of wisdom in the Old Testament.

Solomon was also drawing on wisdom from other cultures in the ancient-near East. There were many sages in that part of the world who were known as **philosophers**, which means, **“lover of wisdom.”** These philosophers read ancient wisdom, and you can find proverbs that look very much like our **Proverbs from other ancient near Eastern traditions**. But the Israelite philosophers took that wisdom and reflected on it **considering the God of Israel**, and then they gave us the wisdom that we find in our book of Proverbs.

SLIDE Not Promises, But General Rules

Proverbs are not meant to be seen as a book of guaranteed promises but as general principles for living. Sometimes we want to take the **Bible and look at it very simplistically**. There are those who want to take every verse and say that every verse is **100% true all the time**. They would say, “These are words from God, and we must take them **word for word** is the argument they make.”

But the book of Proverbs is not meant to be read that way. Proverbs tell us that this is **how life generally works**, or in the ultimate

sense this is how life works. But we recognize that when we read it, we can't claim every verse of the promise. Let me give you an example from Proverbs 13:21.

BIBLE

21 Trouble chases sinners, while blessings reward the righteous.

In a general sense this is true. In an **ultimate sense**, this is true. Ultimately trouble will pursue sinners and blessings will be the ultimate reward of the righteous. **But is this always true in our lives now?** It doesn't always work that way, **does it?**

There are moments in which **we see the wicked prosper**, and there are moments where we **see the righteous suffering**. This last week I read about **CEOs** of failed banks and mortgage companies being given **\$100 million to go away**. These leaders **failed miserably, and many of them lied**, and they still walked away with millions. Is that right? That's not what the Proverbs say is going to happen!

If we look at these Proverbs as **guaranteed promises**, then **we will be disappointed and confused**. But if we understand that these are ultimate truths and how life generally works and how the **God's creation operates in a big picture sense**, then we will be able to read these words and understand them.

You might be interested to know that some scholars believe the book of **Job is meant to be a counterbalance to the book of Proverbs**. These two were meant to go hand-in-hand because Proverbs gives us these wonderful general principles, but **Job comes back and says, "Yes, but it is not always that way."** Job is the story of a righteous man who was pursued by trouble. **He looked at his own life and wondered why the wicked seemed to prosper.**

You need **Job and Proverbs to balance each other** but in an ultimate sense we know that **those who pursue God and righteousness**

will receive an ultimate reward and inheritance at the end of their lives. And those who continually **pursue wickedness will find that comes back to haunt them** at some point in this life or the next. So that can help us understand this as a general principle.

While these are not guaranteed, Proverbs are often statements of profound truths of how life works. Let's look at Proverbs 11:12. This is a wonderful proverb that you were taught as a child but in different words.

BIBLE (Please use this form of poetry on two lines.)

***¹² It is foolish to belittle one's neighbor;
a sensible person keeps quiet.***

I want to notice several things about this proverb as we leave it up on the screen. **First let's notice how Hebrew people wrote poetry.** The book of Proverbs is written in Hebrew poetry which operates under a structure called **parallelism**. There are typically **two lines separated by a semicolon**. You will notice that Hebrew poetry is **not about rhyming**. There is some rhythm to the phrases, so they have a **general cadence** at work and some meter to them.

More importantly, Hebrew poetry works this way. **I make one statement and then the following statement does one of three things.** It will either **build upon the first statement; restate the first statement** and say it in different words; or it will **state the opposite** of the first statement. Which one of those three **does this one do?** It is the **opposite of the first statement**, isn't it? Scholars call this **antithetical parallelism**. It is foolish to belittle one's neighbor **BUT** a sensible person keeps quiet.

This form does two things. First, it makes it **easier for you to remember**. Second, the first verse sets up a **strong conclusion** in the second verse because this is what you are supposed to do. You will see various kinds of parallelism as you read the book of Proverbs which is

why is laid out as parallel or poetry with indentations in the way you read it.

I also want you to notice that this is really a **commonsense** kind of proverb. It is **foolish to belittle one's neighbor**. You know this is true because if you say something bad about someone who is a neighbor or lives near you or who you interact with on a regular basis, the **word eventually gets back to that person about** what you said about them, doesn't it? Then they come to you, and you have **ruined a friendship**. Or you find yourself **making excuses** for what you said. Or you **must lie** and blame somebody else and then ruin another friendship as well.

Also, when you belittle another person the person you are talking to loses respect for you. You diminish your own self by talking poorly about someone else, and you make the other person wonder what you are saying about them behind their back! You also diminish your relationship with God, and you separate yourself from God.

So, whoever it belittles another person lacks sense and they are a fool, but a wise or sensible person remains silent. You learned this proverb from your mother or father or grandparents when you were a child, but it was said differently. Do you remember this proverb?

SLIDE If you can't find anything good to say about someone...

... don't say anything at all. Your mom taught you that, too!

This saying draws upon the wisdom of Proverbs and tells us that this is how the world works and this is how God designed us to work. When we don't live according to that, we find ourselves being sorry that we didn't operate in that way.

We look at this **proverb we learned as children**, and we can all repeat it, and yet how often do we **struggle to live this out?** It's just like this **apple**. Even though I understand the principle that what goes up will come down, I still must get out of the way.

When you read Proverbs, you probably find yourself saying, **“I knew that.”** The book of Proverbs says to us, **“Of course you know it. Now do it!”** That is the whole idea in reading the book of Proverbs. His practical wisdom encourages you to actually live what you find in the Scriptures.

SLIDE Appreciating the Proverbs

Proverbs can be an overwhelming book to study. It is not that hard to read it and understand it, but you get into the chapters in Proverbs after the first few chapters, and you find that each chapter has 24 to 31 **stand-alone verses which have very little** to do with each other. **It is not like each chapter has a theme.** More often you will find that each verse has **nothing to do with the verse following** it or the verse before it. Let's say you read chapter **25 which has 28 verses.** When you get to the end, you find you have **26 different things** you must remember, and it is hard to do that.

So let me give you **one way to read Proverbs** that might not be so overwhelming. If you don't have a Bible with Proverbs in it then you can get a **pocket Testament** from back in the narthex. We have these little pocket Bibles that are gifts to you if you would like one, and they have in them the New Testament, Psalms and Proverbs. These are free and you can put them in your purse or your pocket. Take it with you to work or use it to read each day during the series of sermons.

Get out the book of Proverbs and have your notebook with you. Start off with prayer and simply ask, **“God, speak to me from your word today. Help me hear that one verse that is most important for me to hear from you today.”** Did you catch that? Don't try to cram all 28 verses in your brain. Read them all but listen to see **which one** is most important for you to hear right now. God will touch your heart and help you see the one verse that will stand out to you.

Once you have found that verse or two that speaks to you, then

underline those, or highlight them in your Bible app. You might even put the **date next** to it in the column because you probably will read the book of Proverbs again. It is meant to be read over and over again. The next time you read it **you might find a different verse** that speaks to you and that God laid on your heart from that chapter.

Take the verse that speaks to you and write it down in your notebook. Then ask yourself this question: **“Why do I need to hear this verse today?”** You might even write down an answer to that question in your notebook. As you write that verse down, you might begin to let that verse shape your prayer.

Let's say that the verse you focused on was the one that we just read from Proverbs 11:12. ***It is foolish to belittle one's neighbor; a sensible person keeps quiet.*** Your prayer might look like this.

God, forgive me for the things I said about those other people this week. I realize I should not have said that. Would you please wash me clean and make me new? I pray oh God that you would help my words not bring harm to another human being. Forgive me oh God. Help me use my lips for blessings and not for tearing others down. Give me wisdom that I might keep silent rather than speaking. Help me oh Lord in this I pray, in Jesus' name.

So, you take a chapter and before you read, you pray. You find a verse that speaks to you, and you write it down. You then meditate and pray on that verse and begin to ask for God to do this thing in your life.

SLIDE The Beginning of Wisdom: The Fear of the LORD

Let's spend a few moments on a particular theme we find in Proverbs for this week. One of the main themes in Proverbs is what we find in chapter 9, verse 10.

Fear of the Lord is the foundation of wisdom.

Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment.

What kind of parallelism that we have in this verse? The second verse restates the first one, doesn't it?

SLIDE What is the “fear of the LORD”?

“The fear of the LORD” appears **26 times** throughout the Bible and another **five times we learn that people feared the Lord**. This is an important idea throughout the Scriptures, but it is one that often **confuses us**. If we are going to be wise and walk the path of wisdom, then we have to understand the fear of the Lord.

Some of us **grew up in churches** where the pastor put the fear of God in you. But that was not a good thing. You walked out the door every week and you were **convinced that God was an angry God**. You received those Jonathan Edwards type of sermons about, ***“Sinners in the hands of an angry God, dangled from the thread over the fires of hell.”*** God was someone to be feared and you were terrified.

The Hebrew word “*Yarah*”, which is the Hebrew word for fear, can be understood to be cowering in fear when we are terrified. But when we read the Scriptures, it does not seem that this is what God had in mind. We read in Deuteronomy 10:12 these words.

BIBLE

12 “And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you? He requires only that you fear the Lord your God, and live in a way that pleases him, and love him and serve him with all your heart and soul.”

When we read that passage of Scripture, it does not seem that God wants us to cower in fear. **What father or mother would want their children to cower in fear of them?** I don't want my kids to flinch

when they walk by. I don't want my kids to be terrified of me. I want to love my children, and I want them to love me.

SLIDE **“Yarah” = respect, reverence, awe**

So, what does fear of the Lord mean? Primarily this word **“Yarah”** in Hebrew means respect and reverence and awe. I **do want my children to have respect for me**. I don't want them to be afraid of me. I do want to love them, and I want them to love me in return. But at the same time, I want them to know that I'm their dad.

When I tell my children, **“Here are the rules.”** I want them to say, **“You know, I better follow that because I will get in trouble, and if I don't and my dad ALWAYS find out!”**

I also want my children to follow what I say not just because they're afraid of the **consequences**, but I also want them to say, **“I want to do this because I respect my dad. I want to honor my mom.** I want to do that because I know my mom and dad love me more than anybody else in the whole world, and so I want to live according to the rules they have laid out before me.”

I know it is hard for us to respect and honor our parents in this way when we are teenagers. When I was a **teenager, I rolled my eyes at my mom**, and I **stomped off and slammed my door** on more than one occasion. I said things I **never should have said**. It was so hard when you were a teenager to always show respect and reverence to your parents. **I grieve that and I look back** and realize that I failed as a teenager on many occasions. **I wish I had treated my mom better.**

We are called to **look at God with reverence, respect and awe**. I think there are times when we are to be afraid of the consequences of our actions. I think there are times when we go about doing things in our lives and we **act as if God is not watching**. We think that **God is on vacation right now** and God is not watching while I do this thing. But the Lord is always watching, and God always has **laid out his precepts**

and his way in which the world is supposed to operate. God wants me to obey those things and there are consequences that **naturally spring forth** from my actions when I don't follow.

We have several **local police officers** in our congregation. They are fine people and I love them. They are **kind, loving and caring** people. Though I know them and I believe that, when I drive down **Florida Road** and I see a squad car parked on the side of the road with a little thing on their dashboard **pointed at my car** as I drive by, I get a bit terrified! **My heart starts to beat faster**, and I look at my speedometer. I slam on the brakes **no matter how fast I'm going**, and I always look in the **rearview mirror** to see if he's coming after me.

Yes, I have been **stopped before with my kids** in the car, and I played the **“my kids were fighting in the backseat”** card and I got off with a warning. Even when you **get grace** and you get a warning, my **arms are like Jell-O**, and my **legs are like spaghetti** for the next eight minutes of driving. I drive away and I am sure cut by the experience.

You know what? **We are supposed to feel that way! We** were supposed to feel that way so that you **don't do it again**. Part of a **fear of the Lord** is our recognition that you **don't want to step across the line**, not because I think that God is going to hurt me, but because there are consequences and I want to please the Lord. Sister Irene Powell said:

SLIDE

“The fear of the Lord is simply recognizing your place in all of creation. The fear of the Lord means that I understand that God is God and I am not, and I am glad about that.”

The fear of the Lord is about understanding that **I am a small speck in the universe** and that God is the one who rules the cosmos. When I was a youth pastor, I once had a young girl come to me and say, **“Pastor Jeff I am so excited about my faith. God is like my boyfriend!”**

As lovingly as I could I said to her, **“No, God is not like your boyfriend. God is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. God rules over the entire cosmos and with one bat of an eye he could wipe us all out, but he chooses not to, and he knows your name, and he knows your story, and he does love you but it is more than a boyfriend will ever love you. That is the awesome God that we love and serve.”**

Anne Robertson is a United Methodist Pastor in Massachusetts who authored the book, Blowing the Lid Off the God Box. On her blog she writes this about the fear of the Lord.

So... the *beginning* of wisdom is just here. Fear. Yikes...there is something bigger than me. Human beings are not ultimate...there is something infinitely larger and more powerful who can obliterate the world as I know it without consultation with anybody else. BUT that is only the beginning of wisdom. Our journey starts there but does not end there.

That fear is why, I think, that we call the news of Jesus “gospel,” which means, “good news.” Good news is what we call news that has calmed our fears, and there is no better news around than that the God who holds our lives in his hand is the God revealed in Jesus. While at the beginning of wisdom our teeth chattered and our knees knocked... knowing that God was in control but not knowing what that God was like... Jesus relieves our fears. We sigh, “Ah... so THAT is what this God is like. This is a God who loves me, who will forgive, and go to all lengths... even to death... to prevent my destruction.” Jesus shows us that our fears were groundless... that God is love.

We might **start our Christian life in fear**. I remember meeting a young man once who became a Christian and at first, he was **terrified of hell**. He had **done so many bad things** in his life that he was afraid of the judgment and the wrath of God. He gave his life to Christ just

hoping to be saved from that and delivered from it. When he started his Christian life, he **didn't do bad things simply because he was afraid** of hell and the wrath of God.

But over time he came to understand the mercy of God and the love of God and the grace of God. The more he came to love God, the less he stopped doing bad things because he was afraid, and the more he **stopped doing those harmful things because he loved.**

Hopefully we all get to that place where **we avoid doing the wrong thing because we simply want to honor God** and love God with our whole heart. **We still will fall short**, but our desire to do good should be out of our love and reverence for God. What is interesting is the more you come to know God and know God's wisdom for **more you begin to love God with honor and reverence.** This is how it is supposed to work. We are supposed to move from fear to love.

The reformed and repentant slave trader turned pastor penned these words that capture the idea.

SLIDE

**Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me,
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind by now I see.**

SLIDE

**'Twas Grace that taught my heart to fear,
And Grace my fears relieved,
How precious did that Grace appear,
The hour I first believed.**

Let's wrap up with our Scripture memory verse. Let's say it together out loud.

BIBLE

5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. 6 Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.

SLIDE Prayer

Let's bow in prayer.

Gracious God, we give you thanks and praise that you created all things and that you made them good; that there is an order to creation; that there is a wisdom and a rationale and it is not chaos; and that you desire to help us understand how we should live. During this study of Biblical wisdom, help us as a congregation to read your words, to reflect upon them, to journal, to study, and to memorize it. But more than that, help us to live it. May we walk in that fear which is Holy respect, reverence and awe. May we live for you in all things not because we cower in terror but because we love you. Bless this congregation as we seek to walk in your ways, in Jesus' name, amen.

June 27-28 Order

1. Countdown
2. Ryan welcomes people and invites them to stand in body or spirit.
3. Song – “Great Things”
4. Song – “Lord, I Need You”
5. Jeff welcomes and shares:
 - A. QR Code
 - B. Invites people to greet each other
6. Announcement – Parking Lot Closure this weekend
7. Sermon Video Intro
8. Sermon
9. Med Moments
10. Offering (Parking Lot and Middle School Mission – Slide in here on Sunday)
11. Song – “In Christ Alone”
12. Prayer and Lord’s Prayer
13. Care Ministers
14. The Bridge
15. Middle School Mission Commissioning (Saturday only)
16. Closing Prayer