

What Following Jesus Takes

I'm busy. You're busy. We're all busy. One primary objection Christians have to living the full Christian life is their own busyness. In other words, we aren't making space for the things that matter most because our lives are filled with other things. We're also overwhelmed by the tension of being finite beings with infinite expectations for our lives and our families. We burn ourselves out working in our jobs, trying to be parents, and even doing good things in our churches. *Most of us feel stretched so thin that we don't even have space to think about our lives, much less follow Jesus intentionally.*

Essentially, I hear many Christians say, "I can't follow Jesus beyond Sunday because I don't have time to do that." The problem is, that's true. We don't have space to be intentional, faithful followers of Jesus. We need to create space in our lives to do the right things at the right time with the right people. That's a recipe for wisdom! We need wisdom. Wisdom is applying the right truth at the right time in the right way. Wisdom always produces abundant life for ourselves and others. The result of walking in wisdom is a satisfied life, not a hurried life. Can you imagine a week when you're deeply satisfied and experience greater joy in your work, family, relationships, and home?

Following Jesus means living in His wisdom every day.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.
Proverbs 1:7

Who is the LORD?

Proverbs 1:7 is the guiding statement for the entire Book of Proverbs. Often when we read Proverbs, we're looking for helpful nuggets to guide our busy lives. Many of the ways we look to conquer our chaotic lives is through organization, rules, boundaries, and new technology. But Proverbs isn't about us. It's about the Lord. Fear of the Lord means looking to Him with reverent awe. We can't understand wisdom apart from an understanding of the Lord Jesus Christ. Proverbs places wisdom within the context of the fear of the Lord. Who is the Lord? Jesus is gracious, compassionate, hospitable, ever-present, hardworking, generous, loving, and brave. His character might be most readily expressed through His submission to the Father and Holy Spirit in every moment and aspect of His life.

What has the LORD done?

Jesus is the true wisdom of God. Paul, writing about the power of the cross and the resurrection, declared this reality 1 Corinthians 1.

... to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 1 Corinthians 1:24-25

Jesus faithfully pursued, listened to, and walked with God the Father and the Holy Spirit to the cross and into the resurrection. His work in the gospel displays and offers abundant life to

everyone for every aspect of life.

Who are we?

Because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." 1 Corinthians 1:30-31 According to this Paul, who are you because Christ is the wisdom of God? What areas of your life do you boast in yourself? (These are likely areas in which you're trying to prove your own righteousness, fix yourself, and redeem your past.) What does it mean to be someone who boasts in the Lord and is in Him? How does that identity differ from someone who boasts in himself? If we want to be wise, we must acknowledge that we've been fools who need Jesus—the wisdom of God for us. Wisdom comes to us as a gift from God. Because God saved us, called us, and chose us, the wisdom of God has come to us in Christ.

How should we live?

To know wisdom and instruction,
to understand words of insight,
to receive instruction in wise dealing,
in righteousness, justice, and equity;
to give prudence to the simple,
knowledge and discretion to the youth—
Let the wise hear and increase in learning,
and the one who understands obtain guidance,
to understand a proverb and a saying,
the words of the wise and their riddles.

Proverbs 1:2-6

What are the activities of people who fear the Lord and seek wisdom? How could you pursue these activities in the areas of wisdom you want to grow in? How would that pursuit lead to wisdom? How can you implement one of these activities in the next week? What will you do? Jesus says if you look to Him and follow Him, He will be wisdom for you. That means you're not only forgiven for your foolishness, but you also get the Spirit of wisdom, who comes to dwell in you, giving you power and direction for a new life.

(Taken from *Making Space* by Jeff Vanderstelt, ©2018 LifeWay.)

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