

We are starting a new series tonight called “How to Ruin Your Life,” and I hope that by the end of these four weeks you will have a full working knowledge on how to really screw up your life.

Let me reassure you, though—the point of all of this isn’t necessarily to lead you to destruction, but rather to lead you into a life that is filled with success. So for the next four of weeks, we’re going to be talking about topics like creating friendships that will stand the test of time, how to date in a way that will last, and using your phone wisely.

If you haven’t guessed it yet, this is a series on wisdom. Typically, when we mention in church that we’re talking about wisdom, everyone’s eyes seem to glaze over. In the church, we make some really big claims about wisdom. We claim that if only you could live life wisely, *your entire life will change for the better!*

See, the world has become suspicious of claims like this. When we make a claim like this about something, and it ends up not delivering what it promised, our tendency is to disregard that something altogether.

This phenomenon is called clickbaiting. You know clickbaiting. It’s when internet videos or articles have titles like, “He walked up to her with a bag of cheeseburgers and you won’t BELIEVE what happened next!” “When she tried this simple solution, you won’t BELIEVE how her life changed!” “6 tips to finding the perfect boyfriend . . . number 3 will SHOCK you!”

Clickbait is all around us, and 9 times out of 10 when it says “You won’t believe this,” the truth is we *can* believe, and those videos and blog articles that baited us into clicking make us hate them for wasting our time.

But the truth is wisdom is not clickbait, and it doesn’t promise an automatically fulfilled life. In fact, it promises hard work and taking the difficult road. Wisdom is not a BuzzFeed article that promises to get your life straight in five easy steps: it is a day-to-day struggle. Wisdom is definitely not a life hack. You know what a life hack is right? Here’s a video just in case you need some examples of life hacks:

[Show video clip.]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ACy3SxHktzA>

Life hacks are these “simple” solutions that are supposed to add more time to our lives or give us quicker ways to get things done. Wisdom is not a life hack. Wisdom will always fail you if you treat it like one. Wisdom is a continual choice you have to make, and more

importantly, wisdom must be something you *want* in your life.

1 Peter 2:2 says it like this: *“Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation.”*

Like newborn infants depend on milk to live, we have to depend on wisdom to grow—and not *just* to grow, but to *survive* you must be connected to wisdom.

Next, if you think that wisdom is free, then wisdom will always fail you. Wisdom is always bought with a price. Sometimes that price is your own blood, sweat, and tears, but often it’s bought with someone else’s. Wisdom is payed for by our own experiences, so if you’ve never experienced what you need to, you either end up paying for it with your own life, or you can find someone who already has.

Proverbs 13:20 says it like this: *“Whoever walks with the wise gains wisdom, but if all your friends are fools you will suffer great harm.”*

If you find those who have already paid for their wisdom, who have already experienced what you’re going through, you will never have to pay for it yourself. But if you think that your friends, who are in the same boat as you, have the wisdom that you need, then you will end up paying for it yourself. You’ll suffer consequences. *Wisdom that was never paid for, can never be considered wisdom.*

In Proverbs 4:7, a father gives his son this advice: *“Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight.”* What the father is telling his son is that when we seek wisdom, we need to also gain insight. When we ask others for advice we need to be willing to accept whatever they say, and know that they’re giving us a perspective that isn’t ours.

The leaders in your life and the older people who are pouring into you have already faced the situations you will experience and know how to navigate life safely. Friends, however, are often just as clueless as you. *In order to gain wisdom, you must walk with the wise and ask them to mentor you.*

*Wisdom is not free, and it’s not something that we just casually turn to when we feel like it. The cost of not gaining wisdom is too high, and when you don’t seek wisdom you will experience pain.*

Middle school and high school students don’t typically think about their life in the grand

scheme of things—in fact, your focus is typically on what happened yesterday and what’s happening today. James warns us about that thinking when he wrote in James 4:14: *“What is your life? For you are a mist that appears a little while, and then vanishes. You are here now, but where will you be tomorrow.”*

Wisdom will always guide us away from thinking so small about our lives, and will urge us to spend today wisely so that we have a better tomorrow.

Like I mentioned earlier, wisdom isn’t clickbait and it isn’t as simple as a life hack. On the surface, wisdom looks simple, but it is actually pretty complex. Check out Proverbs 26:4: *“Do not answer a fool or else you will be a fool yourself.”* But then one verse later, in Proverbs 26:5, it says: *“Answer the fool, or else he will think himself wise.”*

So which is it? Do we answer the fool or do we let him talk? Well, the answer is both—depending on the situation. It requires wisdom to decide whether or not to deal with a fool. Both verses in Proverbs 26 give us a clear solution, but we must know which one to pick. If you really want to know which answer is right, you have to know wisdom intimately.

Finally, if you really want to see wisdom fail in your life, only think of wisdom as a collection of knowledge. Just because you *know* a lot doesn’t mean you’re wise. If you want to really see wisdom take hold of your life, you need to get in a relationship with wisdom. Sounds weird, right?

Here’s how the father describes wisdom to his son in Proverbs 3:13-18:

*Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding, for the gain from her is better than gain from silver, and her profit better than gold. She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her. Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called blessed.*

The father wants his son to think of wisdom as his spouse. It sounds awkward, but stay with me here. When you are married, your world revolves around that person. Every

decision you make doesn't just affect you; it affects the marriage. So when you're married to wisdom, every decision requires wisdom to weigh in on it, as well.

Wise spouses don't move somewhere, make a career change, or even decide on dinner without inviting their partners into the process. That's what a relationship with wisdom looks like: It's you inviting wisdom into every aspect of your life. When we become married to wisdom, the father says that wisdom will grant us a long life, and wisdom connects us to a purpose that is more valuable than money. When we make a decision without wisdom, we are cheating on wisdom itself, and the result is we cheat ourselves out of a valuable life.