

I didn't see it coming. A few years ago our son Stephen gave us an Alexa dot and put it in the living room. This past fall our daughter Suzanne got a Google Nest mini that she didn't want and put it in our bedroom. I just had to replace my Kindle. My new Kindle came with Alexa already installed on it. All I have to do is ask a question or request information and get an answer in a human like voice almost immediately. I get the spooky feeling these devices are always listening. Do I need to turn on running water if I don't one of these devices listening to?

Alexa is almost always turned off in our living room unless we are listening to music. I may ask Google to play some music when I go to bed and turn itself off in 15 minutes. I may ask them for the weather forecast to answer an occasion question. These digital assistants can give us information, but not wisdom. No matter how sophisticated they may become, they will never replace what God can do.

The book of Proverbs is a collection of wisdom and wise sayings. The introduction to Proverbs tells us, *"Their purpose is to teach people wisdom and discipline, to help them understand the insights of the wise."* (vs. 2) Wisdom is the gift God gives to us to show us how to live, to make the right decision, to walk with Him in faith. *"Let the wise listen to these proverbs and become even wiser."* (vs. 5) This wisdom is available to all who listen and respond. *"Wisdom shouts in the streets. She cries out in the public square."* (vs. 20)

Our digital assistants have to be hooked up to a Wi-Fi network to work. We have set up a guest login for people to be able to get on the internet when they are here. But they are just guest. They are not part of our network. God wants us to be part of His network. That is why he calls out to us. God invites us to network with Him. Wisdom is not hiding in the church. Wisdom moves out into the chaotic high tech world we live in. God doesn't want us to just be His guests. His gift of wisdom invites us into His network.

The introduction to Proverbs concludes by saying, *"Fear of the Lord is the foundation of true knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline."* (vs. 7) It is foolish to reject God's wisdom. So what does it mean to be a fool according to Proverbs. Fools make anything but God the center of their lives. But how many people try to do that either by denying there is a God, claiming that all so called gods are the same or by putting personal opinion ahead of what God has to say. Fools make things like careers, success, happiness, sports, children, status, power or prestige the focus of their lives.

Fools can be mocker, having an attitude that says I know it all, refuse to listen or submit to anyone or anything. They may appear to be wise or sophisticated, but they are willing to make fun of anything. Jesus didn't mock people. He reached out to help those who were hurt or hurting.

Pride can block wisdom. Pride leads us to think too much of ourselves, makes us hard headed when it comes to God. The Apostle Paul had to address the attitude of pride in his day when he wrote, *“So when we preach that Christ was crucified, the Jews are offended and the Gentiles say it’s all nonsense. But to those called by God to salvation, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.”* (1 Corinthians 1:23-24 NLT) How many smart people think they have all the knowledge they need and have turned their backs on Godly Wisdom?

Wisdom challenges us to look at life in a different way, to realize that we are not in charge, that we don’t have all of the answers. God gave us the Ten Commandments to show us how to live, to teach us how life should work. But when we ignore or break those commandments, we not only hurt others, we hurt ourselves.

Jesus tells us that the two greatest commandments are to love the Lord with all our heart and to love the people around us as we love ourselves. When we fail to love God and don’t reach out in love to the people around us, we miss out on what it means to live a Christ like life and our relationships suffer because of that.

Jesus invites us to follow Him, to bring all our cares and concerns to Him. But if we turn our back on the Lord and on our family of faith, we are going to lose our connection with Him. We are going to miss out on the wisdom that God wants to give us through His Word and Spirit, through the experiences and advice of fellow Christians. We can move out of the range for our connection with His network before we even know it.

Proverbs warns us about what happens to those who reject God and His Wisdom. *“Therefore, they must eat the bitter fruit of living their own way, choking on their own schemes. For simpletons turn away from me—to death. Fools are destroyed by their own complacency.”* (vs. 31-32)

That is why it is important for us to stay connected to God and His Wisdom. We are living in the shadow of the University of Michigan. We live in an area where a college degree is almost a necessity. Advanced degrees are important for success. But how much have we grown in our knowledge of God’s Word? How much do we really know about the Christian faith or what it means to walk with God in faith? Have we settled for what we learned in Sunday School class or do we even bother to send our kids to Sunday School anymore? Do we look at confirmation as graduation, thinking we’ve learned all that we need to know about Christianity?

Are we just looking for the minimum entrance requirements to get into heaven? Some people are. I have heard people say that they don’t need to go to worship services anymore because they already know everything they need to get into heaven. Really? That is just wrong.

The week after Christmas I read John Ortberg's book *"Eternity Is Now In Session."* He wrote  
*"Salvation isn't about getting you into heaven; it's about getting heaven into you.  
It's not about relocation; it's about transformation.  
It's not about what God wants to do to you; it's about what God wants to do in you.  
It's about allowing Jesus' Kingdom life to permeate our little lives one moment, one choice at  
a time."*

I think Ortberg is right. Listening to Wisdom is a smart thing to do! Let me finish with this  
promise from Wisdom. *"But all who listen to me will live in peace, untroubled by fear of harm."*  
(vs. 33)

So what do we do with Wisdom this week? How do we Take Out Our Faith? In the week ahead,  
take the time to talk about a time you were given really good advice and who gave it to you.  
Then talk about what went wrong when you disregarded God's Word and did your own thing.  
That may be a good example of why you and I need God's gift of wisdom.